

Congress relegates itself to the sidelines.

How foolish can we be as Members of the Senate to tuck our tails between our legs and just quit and say: "You can have it all, Mr. President. Do anything you want to do with homeland security." Well, not by my vote.

I thank the distinguished Senator for his remarks.

Madam President, I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded and the time for morning business be extended.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. There being no objection to the calling off of the quorum, further proceedings under the call are waived.

The distinguished Senator from New York, Mrs. CLINTON, is recognized.

Did the Senator have a further request?

Mrs. CLINTON. That the time for morning business be extended.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered. For how many minutes would the Senator suggest?

Mrs. CLINTON. Ten minutes, Mr. President.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from New York is recognized.

THANKING SENATOR BYRD

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, I express my appreciation, and I know the appreciation of many of our colleagues, for the Chair's steadfast defense of the Constitution and for his reminder to constant all of us, that the Senate, being the premier deliberative body in the world and, as he often says, one of two such great deliberative Senates ever to be seen by history, has an important role to play in ensuring that the decisions that are made today will stand the test of time and will be made in concert with our constitutional framework and our obligations as Senators.

THREE GREAT CHALLENGES FACING OUR NATION

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, in the recent colloquy and discussion that the Senator from West Virginia, our current Chair, had with the Senator from Florida, many important issues were raised about homeland security and how best to pursue the defense of our homeland.

I don't think anyone argues we now face three great challenges in our Nation. First, we have a national security

challenge. Our men and women in uniform are addressing that challenge even as we speak—all over the world from Afghanistan to the Persian Gulf to the border of North and South Korea, and many other places as well. All of us support our military and have voted to provide the largest appropriations ever in our history to give our men and women who put themselves in harm's way all of the resources, technology and compensations that our great military deserves.

We have a new challenge; that is, the challenge of homeland security. Certainly, many of us have not had to think of this issue as we are now.

On September 11 of last year when we were so grievously attacked, it became clear that we had to begin to apply the techniques of security much closer to home that we have used to defend America's interests abroad for so many generations. We have to take a very hard look at our vulnerabilities, our infrastructure, our borders, and our public health capacity to deal with biological or chemical warfare. And it requires every one of us—not just those in elective office but every citizen—to become more vigilant and to understand that we are truly facing some serious threats.

At the same time, though, there is no reason for us not to debate the best way to defend ourselves. In every generation of America, we have had great debates about how to fight wars and how to structure our national security. Now we are having a debate about how to deal with the new demands of homeland security.

I applaud the Chair for his absolutely rock-solid commitment, his totally uncynical and heartfelt commitment to make sure we do this right. It is a huge undertaking. Are we being asked to merge departments just so somebody can say we did something or are we going to do it right? It is the right of patriotism to ask hard questions. That is who we are as Americans. We are not people who are blindly led. We are not sheep who follow any leader's oratory. We are an independent, free-spirited, liberty-loving people.

When we have debates, either on the floor of the Senate or in the media, about the right way to proceed, those of us who engage in that debate do so out of a deep wellspring of love and devotion to our country. No one exemplifies that more than the senior Senator from West Virginia.

In addition to our national security challenges and our homeland security challenges, we have all of the challenges we had on September 10 of last year. We have an economy that is stalled. We have a so-called "jobless recovery." We can't seem to come together on important issues.

I am delighted to see my colleague from Arizona in the Chamber. Senator MCCAIN has been a leader and advocate for prescription drugs and for patients getting the right to have the treatment their doctors prescribe—not an HMO or some bureaucrat somewhere.

There are many important issues we should be debating that also will determine the quality of our life and the opportunities for our children.

I hope, as people tune in to see what happens on the Senate floor—when they see the Senator from West Virginia or the Senator from Arizona taking to the floor to talk about an issue—that they recognize that we believe we are acting in the great tradition, not only of the American Senate and Congress, but of America's citizenry, because there isn't any greater title than one can have than citizen of the United States of America.

I, as one Senator, appreciate the Senator's vigilance, his constant reminder to the rest of us that we are here because of our Founders, their genius, and the Constitution which they bequeathed to us. The debates we are holding on this important issue of national homeland security and other pressing domestic issues are in the tradition of those Founders.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arizona, Mr. MCCAIN.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask for the forbearance of the distinguished President pro tempore and ask unanimous consent that we extend morning business by about 5 minutes.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Arizona is recognized.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from New York for her kind words about our efforts towards addressing some of the important issues of the day. I thank her.

CONDITION IN GEORGIA

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, despite America's preponderant role in the world, it is not often that foreign leaders tell us that their country would not exist as an independent state were it not for U.S. support. Yet leaders across the spectrum in the former Soviet republic of Georgia, including President Eduard Shevardnadze and his political opponents, frankly and gratefully attribute their national survival to unstinting American support since their independence from Soviet rule eleven years ago. In a troubling display of how history does not always move in a positive direction, Georgia's independence is once again under threat, with repercussions that should concern all who cherish freedom.

In an opportunistic twist of President Bush's policy of pre-emption against clear and present dangers to America and the world, President Putin of Russia has appropriated American rhetoric in the war on terrorism to justify Russian subversion of the Georgian state. A free Russian hand in Georgia is apparently the price