

The numbers we are dealing with today are hard for many to grasp but boil down to the American taxpayer, according to a recent USA Today article, this way: Each year American households spend about 1 percent of their income on alcoholic beverages, another 1 percent on tobacco products, and we spent about .7 percent of our income on cosmetics. To put it into context, if this request were approved, our combined operations to combat terror in the Middle East and Afghanistan will have cost .8 percent of our income next year, a bit more than we annually spend on makeup and shampoo and a bit less than we annually spend on alcohol and tobacco. Significant? Yes. Budget busting? No. Worth it? Yes.

The American people are well aware that we are engaged in a Presidential election season and they recognize the difference between those with an honest difference of opinion and those who seek to exploit the President's handling of the war purely in order to gain political advantage. I find something particularly unsavory about the comments of those who seek political advantage in questioning our commitment to our troops and our dedication to winning the war on terror. Those who spend their time playing political games with our mission in Iraq, even as our young men and women labor to secure and stabilize that fledgling nation, do a dishonor not only to themselves but to our soldiers in the field and the memories of those who have sacrificed everything they had opposing Saddam's blood thirsty regime.

There are clearly obstacles to overcome in Iraq and there will certainly be setbacks along the way, as we have seen. I only hope the politics of the moment do not drive criticism that only serves to undermine our commitment to winning the war on terror and American resolve. We must not cut and run. We must not leave the Iraqi people with a promise unfulfilled. We owe it to our young men and women in uniform to give them our unequivocal support as they labor on in a dangerous place for an honorable cause.

Our troops, I am convinced, have the will to win. I only hope our politicians share that will to win.

As President Kennedy said 42 years ago:

Let every nation know whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, to assure the survival and the success of liberty.

I only wish those who are consciously or not intent on denying our troops what they need to finish the job and to get home as soon as possible will stop to reconsider. We have liberated Iraq of Saddam Hussein and now we must simply finish the job. We seek to make Iraq secure, to make it a place where the rule of law can be established so that civilian leaders, including the Iraqi Governing Council, can establish a new government for a new nation. This is not an easy task and it is not

without cost. But it must be done, so Iraq can flourish as a free nation, and so that the victories won, the lives lost, will not be in vain.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CONFIRMATION PROCESS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I understand Senator DOLE is coming to the floor, and I just want to, until she gets here, say a few words about what happened at the Environment and Public Works Committee yesterday when the confirmation of Governor Leavitt of Utah was being considered.

I have the honor of serving on four committees in the Senate, including the Judiciary Committee, which, as we all know, has proven to be a particularly contentious committee, with the unprecedented filibuster of some of President Bush's most highly qualified nominees.

But yesterday, for the first time, we saw some of the politics of the Judiciary Committee, the obstructionism there, pervading the Environment and Public Works Committee, for the first time, when it came to considering and voting on the nomination of Governor Leavitt of Utah to serve as the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Rather than have a debate, rather than have an honest debate, and then an up-or-down vote on this important nomination, what we saw was simply a boycott. Members of the committee on the other side of the aisle simply decided not to show up, making it impossible for us to achieve a quorum and impossible for us to vote on the confirmation of Governor Leavitt.

For the life of me, I cannot understand how those who claim to be pro-environment would simply obstruct the confirmation of a highly qualified nominee and leave the Environmental Protection Agency headless. Denying leadership to that large agency concerned with the protection of our environment and enforcement of our environmental laws and claiming to be pro-environment strikes me as inconsistent.

So I fear that as the primary season approaches for the Presidential race in 2004, what we are seeing again is the unfortunate intrusion of Presidential election politics into the work of the Senate.

Unfortunately, what that means is the people's work is not being done; the Environmental Protection Agency is denied the confirmation of a highly qualified nominee and is left leaderless.

Certainly that cannot be pro-environment under any stretch of the imagination.

Some said there were 400 questions in writing that had been submitted to Governor Leavitt, which, in fact, he did his best to answer. But at least one Senator said: Well, I don't really care about the answers to the questions. I am going to vote to confirm him, but I want him to go through the exercise of answering those questions anyway so we can get him on record.

Well, the problem is that the nominee is somebody who has not yet served in that position. He is hobbled, to some extent, to be able to answer some of the questions that have been proposed. So he has to say: Well, if confirmed as Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, I will do everything within my power to investigate this issue, and to get to the bottom of it, and to respond to your concern, Senator.

But, otherwise, he is left without the opportunity for an up-or-down vote, and the EPA is left without a head—hardly a place where we need to be. We would not be in that condition if it were not for Presidential election politics pervading yet another committee's work when it is concerned with the protection of our environment.

I know in the Judiciary Committee this morning we have another nominee of the President who we are going to take back up, Judge Charles Pickering. It remains to be seen whether Judge Pickering's name will be added to the growing list of those who are being denied an up-or-down vote in this body because a minority of the Senate refuses to allow that up-or-down vote—an unprecedented act of obstruction and something which has not occurred before the obstruction of Miguel Estrada's nomination, that of Priscilla Owen, that of Bill Pryor. I hope that list is not further lengthened by adding the name of Charles Pickering.

Mr. President, with that, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is my understanding that the time of the majority has expired; is that right?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The time of the majority has expired.

CONFIRMATION OF JUDGES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I was not planning on speaking this morning. However, my friend from Texas, the junior Senator from Texas, talked about something that I think deserves a response.