

The administration either knew better at the time or should have known better.

And our troops and the American people certainly deserved better. Over 500 Americans have been killed and over 3,000 wounded in Iraq. Unfortunately, these numbers are likely to continue to grow before our mission there is complete.

We have already appropriated over \$150 billion for this operation, and this cost could easily double before we are through.

Let me take another example—the administration's statements about the post-war environment we would encounter and the challenges we would face.

Although there are a few instances where administration officials went on the record before the war warning that a war with Iraq could require a lengthy commitment, administration officials repeatedly painted the most optimistic portrait possible in order to gain support for its strategy.

Vice President CHENEY's remarks 3 days before the start of the war typify much of what the administration was telling the American public.

When asked if the American people are prepared for a long, costly battle with significant casualties, the Vice President said, "Well, I don't think it's likely to unfold that way . . . because I really do believe we will be greeted as liberators."

This tragic miscalculation allowed the administration to abandon the intelligence-based, analytical process needed to plan successfully for the occupation of Iraq. The administration sent a smaller force than our senior military officials initially recommended.

Our personnel were not suitably prepared for the immense economic, social, and political complexities that we should have known would inevitably arise after the fall of Saddam Hussein. And our troops and the American people were not adequately equipped for the guerrilla tactics that have become all too common since President Bush declared an end to major combat operations.

Overall, the administration's overly optimistic attitude about post-war Iraq has contributed to a far more costly and arduous effort than needed to be the case.

Mr. President, not long ago, many of my colleagues and I had the honor of having dinner with more than 100 soldiers and their families at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. These soldiers had all been wounded while serving their country in Iraq. I hope my colleagues will take the opportunity to visit these young men and women. After seeing first-hand the kind of people our country has produced, I have never been more proud to be an American.

As I think of my night with these brave men and women who have sacrificed so much and asked for so little

in return, I cannot help but think: Did we do right by them? Did we do everything possible to put them in a position to succeed at the least possible risk? Did we provide them with a plan for success and the tools needed to carry it out?

In a statement last year, General Anthony Zinni, one of the most respected and distinguished military leaders this country has produced, commented on what we owed those who we placed in harm's way.

He said:

They should never be put on a battlefield without a strategic plan, not only for the fighting—our generals will take care of that—but for the aftermath and winning that war. Where are we, the American people, if we accept this, if we accept this level of sacrifice without that level of planning?

The administration based its post-war planning on blind hope, and hope is not a plan. We owe it to our troops and ourselves to determine whether we did everything we could to succeed in Iraq. Our success in Iraq and future conflicts depends on it. Our need to ensure that we do right by our troops demands it.

I yield the floor.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business until 10:30, with the time equally divided, and the time under Republican control to be equally divided between the Senator from Alaska, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and the Senator from Maine, Ms. COLLINS.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a unanimous consent request I wish to make.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we have only 40 minutes left until 10:30 a.m. We have on our side, and I am sure on the other side, more than 20 minutes. On our side, the Senator from Oregon wishes to speak for 15 minutes, the Senator from Connecticut wishes to speak for 10 minutes, which is 25 minutes. I don't know how much total time the two Senators on the majority would like. I am sure it is more than 20 minutes total.

I ask unanimous consent that the time be extended to 25 minutes on each side for morning business—not in addition to but 25 minutes total to each side.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. On both sides, for a total of 50 minutes.

Mr. REID. A total of 50 minutes, yes, and that on our side, the Senator from Connecticut be recognized for 10 minutes and the Senator from Oregon be recognized for 15 minutes.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Alaska, Ms. MURKOWSKI, is recognized.

#### ALASKA GAS PIPELINE—NO LONGER A PIPE DREAM

Ms. MURKOWSKI. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, we will soon begin debating the merits of the tax bill that will bring the United States into compliance with our World Trade Organization's obligations and assist domestic manufacturers. I understand this bill has been renamed the Jumpstart JOBS Act, referring to the number of manufacturing jobs that have been lost in the past few years, whether it is from businesses relocating their plants overseas, the outsourcing of jobs, or increased efficiency that does not require as much manual labor.

I believe that every Senator in this body wants to help those Americans who have been laid off to find new employment and to provide assistance to our domestic manufacturers that will lead to real job creation. But when we talk about job creation, too often this body overlooks a project that would produce those jobs for Americans, that would create jobs in all 50 States, and not just a few jobs but by at least one estimate we would create over 1 million jobs across the country.

Certainly, the number of jobs nationwide will at a minimum—at a minimum—be in the thousands, and that project I am speaking of is the construction of a natural gas pipeline from Alaska to the lower 48.

With the reality in mind that this project will lead to real job creation, I would like to speak to the body this morning about three very exciting announcements relating to the Alaska natural gas pipeline.

Three consortiums have filed applications to build a gas pipeline from Alaska's North Slope. These proposals would transport the 35 trillion cubic feet of known technically recoverable reserves to the starved markets in the lower 48. This would happen at a rate of roughly 4.5 billion cubic feet per day. Many believe there is upwards of 100 trillion cubic feet of natural gas on the North Slope and quite possibly more than that.

The first announcement from MidAmerican Energy Holdings Company, a major U.S. pipeline company and a subsidiary of Berkshire Hathaway whose chief investor is financier Warren Buffett. Partnering with MidAmerican will be Cook Inlet Regional Corporation and Pacific Star Energy, which is a consortium of Alaska Native corporations.

This is great news for Alaska, and it is great news for America. Individual Alaskans, Alaska Native corporations, and Alaska-owned corporations will have ownership opportunities in the pipeline under this proposal—this is good for Alaska's economy—and oversight of the main transportation project that will be used to move Alaska's commonly owned resources to market.

Rather than just benefit from the jobs and influx of short-term construction spending, as we saw during the construction of the Trans-Alaska pipeline, this represents a significant long-term benefit to individual Alaskans and their families.