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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is my understanding the time for morning business has expired.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent the Senate now proceed to a period of morning business with Senators allowed to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each until 6:30 this evening.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Louisiana.

HURRICANE ISADORE, WETLANDS, AND IRAQ RESOLUTION

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I rise to speak on three important matters. Let me begin with the most important matter to the people of Louisiana at this moment, which is the pending hurricane. Hurricane Lili is in the Gulf of Mexico, and she is headed Louisiana's way. Unfortunately, this will be the second major storm in less than a week we have had to protect ourselves against and prepare for the consequences of the aftermath.

Let me begin by thanking the President and FEMA, and particularly all of the FEMA officials who are now down in Louisiana helping us prepare again. FEMA Director Joe Albaugh was with us in Louisiana last week, as we dodged a bullet with Isadore—a storm that was huge in its mass but short in its intensity. As a result, while there was some sporadic flooding and some very damaging flooding to approximately 1,000, homes and businesses, including some that were ruined completely, it wasn't the widespread damage we have become familiar with in the Gulf South from hurricanes.

Hurricane Lili is packing winds of 140 miles per hour; barreling toward our coast and is likely to hit somewhere between New Orleans and Galveston. It could hit Lafayette or Lake Charles, somewhere on the coast of Louisiana.

The reason I rise to speak about this storm is not because there is a whole lot we can do in Washington, today. We will be down there this weekend. We will get to assess the damage. We can't do anything today. But there is a great deal we can do from Washington in the future to help the Gulf Coast the coasts of Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, Alabama, Georgia and Florida.

From Washington, we can begin to focus on the kind of investments we should be making along the Gulf Coast that help protect us against the consequences of such storms—particularly as it comes to protecting the energy infrastructure in this Nation, which is so vital and crucial to the economic stability and well-being of the Nation.

We produce about 80 percent of all of the offshore oil and gas in the Nation off the coast of Louisiana. Right now, as I speak, the Gulf of Mexico has been evacuated. I have been on the phone with officers of chemical companies, and oil and gas companies, and they are shutting down refineries and platforms in the Gulf of Mexico. Why? Because you cannot keep them running when you have storms such as this, or you could gravely endanger the lives of those working out in the Gulf. I wish I could paint a more vivid picture, but over 20,000 miles of pipeline, many refineries, and thousands of platforms out in the gulf, all of which are critical to America's energy supply, will be directly threatened by Hurricane Lili. We take a lot of taxes out of the gulf region. There are a lot of taxes that the oil and gas industry pays, and that money leaves south Louisiana and Texas and goes right up to the Federal Treasury. Then it funds various projects all over the country.

You would think some of that money might come back to Louisiana to invest in Louisiana to elevate and improve our highways and provide better security to this infrastructure. After all, its through these highways and this infrastructure that energy is carried and produced to support not just Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas, but to turn the lights on in the entire country. Even when the winds are blowing down south, we keep the lights on up north. At the energy conference—my able partner, Senator BREAUX, is going to be carrying this message as a member of the energy conference. Of course, Congressman TAUZIN from Louisiana is chairing the conference. We are going to carry this message directly into the energy conference to see if there is something we can get the Congress to do in a bipartisan way that says, yes, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas—the oil and gas-producing States—should share in some of these revenues so we can invest on the front end in terms of what the Gulf South needs to secure these energy resources. Congress must be fair to people in Louisiana, who are happy to serve as hosts to this offshore oil and gas industry. We are proud of the way we are doing it in a much more environmentally sensitive way. But we need help to ensure we receive a fair share of the royalties that come from our rich natural resources.

The country does not also realize the great loss of wetlands and the erosion Louisiana has experienced. Think about this. There is a hurricane coming off the Gulf of Mexico. The only thing between it and the cities or towns is the marsh. The bigger that marsh is, the greater the buffer is from the storm. It will break the wind, break the tides. As that marsh erodes away, there is nothing to break the wind or the tide, so the destruction becomes greater and greater, year after year after year.

The reason the marsh is subsiding is that we have tamed the Mississippi River. We have levied it. We levied it not just for the people in Louisiana so we would not flood, but so the ships can take grain from Kansas and Iowa. This commerce then comes down the Mississippi and can go to any number of countries. Louisiana is an importing and exporting station for so many of the goods coming into and out of this country. This benefits everyone. We are telling you and begging this Senate and this Congress to recognize benefits Louisiana provides to the Nation. Louisiana is proud of that, but we need extra Federal help to secure this marshland, to help rebuild it, and protect us. If Louisiana does not receive help the wetlands will disappear, and the people of Louisiana will be sitting ducks for future floods and storms.

I am sure Senator BREAUX and I will be back on the Senate floor on Monday and Tuesday trying to explain to everybody the horrible damage that has occurred because of Hurricane Lili and the importance of trying to be smart and invest some of these monies on the front end in Louisiana. This is not only fair and the right thing to do, but for the taxpayers, we would just as soon pay a little now or we are going to pay a lot in claims when these homes and businesses are destroyed in the Gulf South.

There is nothing we can do about keeping hurricanes from coming ashore. We cannot prevent them. People say: Senator, can't you do something? I say: If I could pass a resolution, I would. But, of course, there is nothing we can do about that. But we can be more prepared than we are.

While we are making progress, we have a long way to go. So whether it is at the energy conference, where I hope we will have a positive outcome, or in the new transportation bill where we can talk about the highways and evacuation routes in south Louisiana and the Gulf South need our attention. Not only do they serve as economic highways that are really necessary for commerce to flourish, but, as you know, when the hurricanes come, it is the only way for people to flee the storm. We don't have trains, as people do in the Northeast, to get out of harm's way. All we have in Louisiana are highways dangerously crowded with automobiles and pickup trucks. We need to make sure people can get north to higher ground. Hundreds of thousands of people in my state are jamming the highways to escape Lili and head for higher ground in north Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Texas. Hotel rooms are scarce, and people will have trouble finding safe-haven from Lili.

So we will be back talking about it. There are opportunities in the transportation bill, and when we debate the Corps of Engineers bill, to try to make right this situation. The Senate will then debate whether to help Louisiana in a direct way—not just Louisiana, but the whole gulf coast region.

The final point I want to share is a figure I came across a couple years ago

that was startling to me. I think I spend a lot of my time worrying and thinking about coastal communities because I represent a large number of people on the coast. Two-thirds of the American people live within 50 miles of the coast. So our country is really a ring. So the coastal communities and their special needs and their special requirements deserve some more attention from Congress.

I have to say that NOAA and the Department of Commerce are really doing some very good work. I think we need a little bit more attention to our coastal communities in this country than we are giving. There are ways we can do that.

Let me turn my attention to another issue on a completely different subject. But, this a grave threat facing our Nation, and that is our potential conflict with Iraq.

I support Joint Resolution No. 46, which was introduced this morning. I am proud to be a cosponsor with Senators LIEBERMAN, WARNER, MCCAIN, and BAYH and to add my name to that resolution. I do so with the greatest of seriousness. I do so because I am convinced that this is the right course.

I commend the President and the Members of Congress who have worked in a bipartisan way to fashion a resolution that does the job, that gives us what we need, which is a tool, a weapon, in some ways, that will try to force a regime that has been recalcitrant and reluctant to abide by international law and dismantle its weapons of mass destruction. In the international community, Iraq is a regime that is quite dangerous to the people it purports to serve—and of course it does not serve—the people of Iraq. It is dangerous also to the people of the United States and to Iraq's neighbors in the Middle East.

I have the great privilege to serve on the Armed Services Committee and to chair the Emerging Threats Subcommittee. I want to stress that it is the Emerging Threats and Capabilities, because I don't want to mention only threats. We have so many great capabilities in this Nation that we do not have to cower in fear. We have the strongest military, the greatest brain power, and great technology. Most importantly, we are founded on freedom and liberty.

We have tremendous capabilities. But, we are in a great and historic process in this Nation of restructuring our Armed Forces, both in the traditional sense that we know of our Navy, Army, Marines, and Air Force, and in a totally nontraditional way, which is standing up homeland defense to fight these new threats. The new threats are people just like Saddam Hussein—rogue leaders with no decency, who play by no normal rules, who govern by fear, and at the slightest provocation, for reasons we might not understand, could either themselves use weapons of mass destruction, or allow to be used by terrorists or nonstate actors. It is clear for all to see that Saddam Hussein possesses biological and chemical weapons, and he has designs to increase his stockpile. To our knowledge, he does not have nuclear capabilities. However, evidence most certainly suggests Saddam Hussein is actively trying to develop nuclear weapons. Weapons he could use against the United States and our allies. I think a resolution such as this is important for us to express our unity, as an elected institution, that we are prepared to use force, if necessary, to dismantle weapons of mass destruction, to disarm this regime, to change this regime and try to establish for the benefit of the United States, our allies, the people of Iraq, and the world, a more worthy regime for Iraq.

What I support specifically about the resolution, and helped in some ways to craft with words, comments, and suggestions, is that this bipartisan resolution has stressed at least three important principles. The resolution requires—and I think this is very important—all diplomatic means be exhausted. This is critically important and necessary because we never want to rush to war. We do not want to be trigger happy. We want to use all diplomatic means to meet our ends.

For 10 years, we have tried many things with Iraq—economic sanctions, back channel diplomacy, meetings and conventions, and other diplomatic means to compel Saddam Hussein to comply with international law. Nothing yet has worked. But let's hope that something will work, and let's exhaust those means. Once we reach that point, this resolution authorizes the President to use all necessary force to enforce what we know is right.

I am pleased we have the diplomatic requirement in the resolution. But we know all too well that Saddam only respects force. With the threat of force, diplomacy may yet win out.

The second principle outlined in this resolution, which I greatly support, is that it is limited in scope to Iraq. The original language I thought, and many of us expressed, was somewhat vague and called for language to establish stability in the region. Such language created a lot of unanswered questions. This resolution is more clear in its language that the scope is limited to Iraq and greatly strengthens this resolution.

This resolution thoroughly makes clear that our goal is not a war against the people of Iraq, but a war against a leader who has discredited himself, thumbing his nose at 16 resolutions, and not playing by the rules of a civilized government. Should we go to war, this war will be waged to disarm Saddam Hussein, to dismantle his weapons, and to use force to change his regime.

This is not without risk. I am mindful of the risks, and I am mindful of the price that may need to be paid in terms of treasure and lives. I am also confident that it is the right resolution at the right time in the right spirit to give the President the authorization to use force to do what needs to be done, which is to dismantle this dictator's ability to wreak havoc on the civilized world.

The timing of the attack, of course, and all the military strategies should be carried out with great care and the consultation of our best military minds. It could be this year, it could be next month, it could be a year from now—whenever our military believes it is the time and everything is in place. We must be mindful not to second-guess or try to use any political influence to sway the military in terms of their strategy to accomplish this end. What Congress can do is authorize the Commander in Chief to use force, if necessary, with this specific resolution which I think is a very good document for how we should approach this possible war.

Furthermore, this resolution places a necessary vital requirement on the President to report to Congress on a periodic basis on the progress of the war. Because we, under the Constitution, of course, have a responsibility to determine if this effort should receive funding. War comes with so many great costs, and we must regularly re-evaluate the need to pay those costs of war.

I yield the floor and 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.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAYTON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE SENATE'S UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, today is October 2, the second day of the new fiscal year, and this Congress has not passed any appropriations bills. We have passed a continuing resolution that takes us to next Friday, and I guess we will pass another one that takes us into the following Friday, October 11. This may be one of the poorest records we have ever had.

We do only a few things in the Senate. We pass bills, changing some laws. We may occasionally do something very important such as a war authorization or resolution dealing with Iraq. Every once in a while we might create a new Cabinet-level department. We have the Department of Homeland Defense that has been before this body for the last 4 or 5 weeks, but we have not been able to draw it to a conclusion.

Then we spend money and occasionally we change the tax laws. We spend a lot of money. That is something we do every year, but we have not gotten it done this year. We have not passed our appropriations bills. As a matter of fact, this year for the first time since 1974 we have not passed a budget.