The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. MURKOWSKI). Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that there be a period of morning business for debate up to 90 minutes, with the first 45 minutes under the control of the Democratic leader and the remaining time under the control of the majority leader or his designee.

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

HURRICANES

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, I rise to speak this morning about a very important issue for the country, particularly for the gulf coast region and the State of Louisiana.

Madam President, as you know, although your State of Alaska is not located in the southern part of the Nation, you and other members of society are well aware of the devastation that occurred to our coastal communities, whether on the eastern coast or southeastern coast or the central gulf.

As is the case this morning, Hurricane Ivan, a category 4 hurricane bearing down on the gulf coast region, according to the latest weather reports and indications based on good research that is being done here by many of our Federal agencies, we can somewhat predict the path of the hurricane. With our most sophisticated systems, radar and weather tracking, pinpointing with some accuracy, there is a projection of where this killer storm, this major storm, may hit. It seems as though it has turned north and is headed right now to the Mississippi-Alabama line, but it could move within the next 12 hours to the east or to the west.

As we wrap up our business here in Washington, the entire gulf coast, and the State I represent, Louisiana being one of those Gulf Coast States, Mississippi and Alabama and the panhandle of Florida, is under a mandatory evacuation. Why? It is because this is a huge storm. It is a category 4. We hope and pray, and there are some indications, that it will change to a category 3. But it is a major storm with high winds of 165 miles per hour.

It is not the first time a storm of this size or intensity has hit the gulf coast. We know by reading history. Several decades ago, some of us actually lived through extremely powerful and killer storms like Camille or Betsy in Louisiana and other States throughout the gulf coast that proved to be very dangerous, with loss of life and billions of dollars in property loss.

We don't have to be reminded that Florida has just been hit in the last 3 weeks twice already. This one will be of historic devastation in Florida, having had three hurricanes hit in such a short period of time.

I want to speak this morning about what we can do here in Washington a little better, with a little more energy, with a little more focus to help the people in Louisiana and throughout the gulf coast area. Not only do they deserve our help, but because of the energy industry and the economic benefits they bring to the whole country, they not only need our help, they deserve our help. They deserve our attention.

As I have stated, the hurricane is to make landfall sometime in early Thursday morning, sometime between 1 a.m. and 6 or 7 a.m.

The people of Louisiana know the devastation this kind of storm can bring. Let me show a picture because I think a picture is worth a thousand words. While this looks terrible and horrible—and it is very frightening, as you can see a woman, standing water rising over her waist, trying to get to safety—this is not a hurricane. This is only a tropical storm. This was Tropical Storm Isidore that hit the gulf coast in 2002. This wasn't a category 1 hurricane. We are talking about severe devastation when a category 3 or category 4 or category 5 hurricane pushes that water out of the gulf, out of Lake Ponchartrain into the tremendously populated areas around the gulf coast.

This is what people have been fleeing from for the last 36 hours. When I say fleeing, I mean all of the interstates going north out of Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana, and interstates going west, as people try to leave the east and head for safety toward Houston. They have been, at times, in bumper-to-bumper traffic for hours. People can walk faster than the rate the cars are moving. Luckily, the Governors of these States are very skilled and able, the local elected officials have been through this many times and were quick to see the danger, even though the path could not be predicted, and were quick to call for evacuations days ago. This morning, we received reports that the highways are clearing in some parts along the Gulf of Mexico. Some families spent yesterday 12, 13, 14 hours in automobiles, going less than 5 miles per hour as they tried to find safety and shelter all along the gulf coast to flee a storm of this magnitude.

Again, this is not a picture of a hurricane. This is a tropical storm. That is why people are fleeing in the gulf area.

I will speak for a moment about energy and about what the gulf coast contributes to the energy independence and energy security of this Nation. As millions of people have been leaving their homes to flee to higher ground, 442 rigs or platforms have been deserted by companies in the Gulf of Mexico. When I say deserted, not just, of course, left to wreak havoc, but they have been tied down, secured, supported. All nonessential emergency personnel have had to move out of the Gulf of Mexico. This evacuation represents 50 percent of the manned rigs and platforms in the gulf.

Right now, oil and gas from the Gulf of Mexico and coastal Louisiana represents 60 percent of the entire Gulf of Mexico production. For the time being, that has been shut down because of Ivan. I have discussed with Members of this Senate the importance of our LOOP facility. The Louisiana Offshore Oil Port sits right out on the Continental Shelf, near Port Fourchon Louisiana, and is a superport responsible for the entrance of 1 million barrels of oil a day.

We are in Iraq, in an important battle, but part of our objective there is to secure an oil supply for the region and for the Nation and to use that for the betterment of the people of Iraq, for their growth and development and the security and stability of the world, as well as to fight for other issues. We are fighting to get 1 to 3 million barrels out of Iraq, and right here in the Gulf of Mexico, today, we have a facility that has virtually been shut down because of a hurricane. Nearly a million barrels is being imported in this country, and exported, a year.

Port Fourchon is a small port that sits at the very edge of Highway 1. It is unbelievable to view the picture. This is Highway 1 in Tropical Storm Isidore. That was another storm, not a hurricane. This damage occurs in a tropical storm. We cannot see the highway because it is covered with water. The highway leads down to the gulf. Port Fourchon, the LOOP facility, is right off of this shore where 18 percent of the offshore oil and gas revenues flow into this country through this little road called LA 1 that we have been fighting now for several years. With the leadership of Senator MURRAY and Senator REID and others, Senator JEFFORDS and Members on the Republican side, as well, we have been able to get a designation as a special highway, but we are still waiting for the big bucks to help with lifting this highway and expanding it so we can have a functioning port.

The hurricane is scheduled to hit Mobile or west of Mobile right now. I just spoke to the Port Fourchon Port Director and they expect this highway to be underwater by 1 p.m. today—again. This is the major route of oil and gas into the United States of America. This is Highway 1, Port Fourchon, and the LOOP facility, which is the only facility in the Nation that imports and exports oil and gas at that rate and at that level.

My point is, I hope we will again use this opportunity to focus on the critical infrastructure needs necessary for Louisiana and the gulf coast of Mississippi and Alabama primarily to protect itself not just from homeland security threats from terrorists but real threats of weather.

People might say: Senator, why did they build the port here in the first place? I understand that. If we could do it again, knowing what we know now, perhaps that would not have been done. I will speak for a minute about that because I want people to understand the argument. Men and women are here because the oil and gas is here. If we

could figure out a way to have people live in Chicago and commute every day down to the Gulf of Mexico to get the oil and gas out of the ground, then people would not have to live here, but we have not figured that out yet. So real life men and women and children and families live here. They have to live here to serve as the platform for the oil and gas that keeps the lights on all over the country. Yet we ask them time and time and time again to literally risk their lives to do so, and we cannot find a few million dollars in this budget to lift this highway so either they can get out or they can be safe.

This is a heavy rain. This occurs in a tropical storm in a heavy rain. I don't know what will happen with the hurricane. That is why people are not panicked but are most certainly concerned. This picture shows the main bayou that runs inland. The only way the rigs can get out of the gulf, they can either dock along the ports—Morgan City, New Iberia, Galveston, and come into Houston for some protection, the only way they can get in is through the Mississippi, up inland, through this bayou. They cannot get in when this bridge is down. The people cannot get out unless the bridge is down. So every time there is a storm, the local officials in my State have to say: OK, kids and families, you all go over the bridge. And they hold up the rigs. Then they let some of the rigs through, and they hold up the families trying to get out.

This is outrageous. We have money in the budget to build this bridge so we can move our infrastructure out of the gulf. And the Presiding Officer understands the magnitude of the barges, cranes, and sheer weight and size of the equipment I am talking about. It is not a Tonka toy. It is not Legos. It is big, heavy equipment that has to be moved at great danger to the men and women who have to move it to save insurance companies money, to save taxpayers money, to save shareholders money for these companies.

Let me talk about what else is going on. Louisiana wetlands are not a beach. I have spent a lot of my life growing up in the gulf area, and I have spent a lot of time on the Florida beaches, and I have never seen anything more beautiful. We in Louisiana support those beaches. We understand the tourism. We are some of the tourists that go there. But our coast is not a beach. We do not have a beach unless you want to count Grand Isle. It is beautiful and wonderful, but does not look like Destin, Florida. It is a lovely small beach. That is about the only beach we have. The rest of our coast is not a beach. It is a wetlands. It is not the wetlands of Louisiana, it is America's wetlands. It has been washing away at an alarming rate. The difference between a major hurricane coming out of the gulf in 1940 and a major hurricane coming out of the gulf this year in 2004 is we have lost thousands and thousands of acres. The size of the State of Rhode Island has been lost in the last 50 years, so the buffer has been shrinking that protects the city of New Orleans and much of the populated portions of Mississippi. That has been lost.

So the people who live on the gulf coast of Mississippi and the southern part of Mississippi and Louisiana are at greater and greater risk because those barrier islands that once existed, those acres and acres and square miles of wetlands, have been eroded. Why? For two reasons. One, we leveed the Mississippi River for commerce, not just to benefit Mississippi and Louisiana but to benefit the Midwest, the Northeast, the West, to open up trade and opportunity up and down that Mississippi River. We had no choice.

If you want to go to before the trade and go to when the country started, we had to anchor the mouth of the Mississippi to literally create the Nation—unless we wanted to stop at the Kentucky border or the Shenandoah Valley, which was a choice at one time. We could have just made the United States go from the east coast to the Shenandoah Valley, and we could have had a wonderful nation right there in the East. But we decided to go West. We decided to go all the way to the Oregon Trail with Lewis and Clark. President Jefferson had a vision, but that vision could not possibly happen without anchoring the security of the mouth of the Mississippi River. So we did. We had to basically try to tame this very wild place, very wet place, very low-lying place.

But we did it not just for ourselves; we did it for the whole Nation, with the Nation's help and support. We did not pay for everything, but we contributed a great deal. Today we continue to give billions of dollars out of the gulf coast in oil and gas revenues and taxes that go to this country. We continue to send our labor and our support and our money to this Nation. Yet time and time again, when Louisiana comes to ask, Could we please have just a portion of the revenue that we send?—we are not asking for charity; we are asking for something we earned; we are happy to share with the rest of the country to help invest in infrastructure—we are told: We cannot do it this year. We do not have enough money. It is not a high enough priority.

Well, I do not know when it is going to get to be a high enough priority. I hate to say maybe it is going to take the loss thousands of lives on the gulf coast to make this country wake up and realize in what we are under-investing. Again, we lose a football field every 30 minutes. We have lost more than 1,900 square miles in the past 70 years, and the U.S. Geological Survey predicts we will lose another 1,000 square miles if decisive action is not taken now.

Now, we have made good plans in the last several years to save the Everglades. We are well on our way to do that. We have plans underway to restore the Chesapeake Basin, which is an extremely important ecosystem to this part of the country. We have some preliminary plans underway in the Great Lakes. But no area—not the Everglades, not the Chesapeake, and not the Great Lakes—of this great Nation contributes more economically or energy-wise than the wetlands of America that lay to the south along the gulf coast. They do not compare to the energy contribution; they do not compare to the fisheries contribution; they do not compare to the commerce contribution of this Nation or the port contribution when you put it together. Yet we seem to be getting less, not more.

So we have to stop the vanishing wetlands. We have plans in Congress. We are going to continue to push, with LAMAR ALEXANDER's help, on the Energy bill. We have a new bill moving through Congress called the Americans Outdoors Act that seeks to dedicate a portion of those revenues for coastal States, even States that do not produce oil and gas off of their coast. I think we should be willing to share some of these coastal revenues for coastal-related issues. Some people disagree.

The people of Louisiana do not mind sharing. It is sort of our natural way. We are happy to do that. We do not even want it all. We just want our fair share. That is what this bill does.

We also have a bill through the WRDA legislation, which is the traditional funding for the Corps of Engineers, the Federal agency primarily responsible to keep the waterways dredged, to keep the levees up as high as possible, to work with our local flood control folks, particularly our levee boards in Louisiana, which are some of the most important public entities we have, that literally keep people dry from heavy rains and from floods and storms of this nature.

But let me also repeat, again for the record, I know every time a hurricane hits in North Carolina or South Carolina or Florida, other people who are not familiar with hurricanes say: Why do the people live along the coast? Why do we let people live along the coast? I think that is a legitimate argument that could be made for resort communities. It is not mandatory they live there. They choose to live there because, of course, the coastlines are very pleasant and beautiful places to live. In fact, Americans really agree with that because two-thirds of the entire population of the United States live within 50 miles of the coast. So that is an issue that could be debated, and we could talk about that.

But Louisiana people who live in Port Fourchon, while they enjoy living there, believe me, and while they love to shrimp and they love to fish, they are there doing a great service for this Nation, working in an energy industry and trying to dig out of the gulf the resources this country needs. Where people live along these bayous, they are fishing and they are contributing to industries. They do not have a lot of fish

in downtown New York. They do not have a lot of fish in Chicago. The only place you are going to catch fish is in the water. So you have to live there basically to catch the fish. They are living there for a livelihood.

In addition, New Orleans itself was settled as the security as this Nation grew. Now people want to say, maybe we should—if a big storm hits—just move New Orleans. I do not know how you move a major metropolitan area. But I also say this about my great city, where I grew up and have represented, still to this day—and in many different ways throughout my life—the people, the city is 9 feet generally below sea level. But we have some of the most sophisticated pumping systems in the world.

In fact, the engineers who built the pumping stations that supply New Orleans with flood control were the engineers who helped Holland and studied in Venice. We do not have halfway pumping systems. We have the best in the world. We have the best engineers, the finest pumping systems. We are an old city, and we spend a lot of our money to keep those pumping systems up to date. In fact, the Federal Government has been a major partner. I am proud to have led the effort. The Southeast Louisiana Flood Control program has invested hundreds of millions of dollars, Federal and State money, to upgrade those pumping systems. So we are not Pollyanna about this. We are not Johnny-come-lately. We have great engineers. We are smart. If fact, we have taught the world how to drain floodwaters because we have been doing it the longest, for over 300 years.

But the city can do just so much, when it has a population that is challenged. We are not the wealthiest State. We are not the richest State. We need our Federal Government to understand that we are happy to share our resources and riches with the world, but we do deserve a greater portion of these revenues to keep our people safe, to keep our infrastructure intact, and, most certainly, to be respectful of what the people of Louisiana and the entire gulf coast contribute to our national well-being and security.

I want to put up another picture. This is another picture of LA 1. This is on a day when you see the traffic backed up. Obviously, there was something wrong with the Leeville Bridge. But this is what the traffic looks like trying to get out before a hurricane: the trucks, the cars, the schoolbuses, trying to leave a place where they were working on behalf of not only themselves but on behalf of this Nation. The least we can do is send a little money to fix this highway and to keep people safe and high and dry in these storms.

Let's pray, Madam President, that Hurricane Ivan does not hit the city of New Orleans directly. I am going to submit a front-page article from the Washington Post for the RECORD. It is an article about what that might be like. One of our emergency personnel who has been working on an emergency plan has stored several thousand body bags in the event of a major flood in the city of New Orleans. Let's hope that never happens. But I have to say, as a Senator representing the State of Louisiana, the chances of it happening sometime are pretty good. If we do not improve our transportation evacuation routes, invest in protecting this infrastructure, and focusing on reinvesting some of the tremendous wealth that has been taken from this area, and reinvesting it back, we will only have ourselves to blame.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the article entitled ''Awaiting Ivan in the Big Uneasy'' be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Sept. 14, 2004]

AWAITING IVAN IN THE BIG UNEASY

NEW ORLEANS GIRDS FOR MAJOR DAMAGE

(By Michael Grunwald and Manuel Roig-Franzia)

NEW ORLEAN, SEPT. 14.—Walter Maestri, an emergency manager here in America's most vulnerable metropolitan area, has 10,000 body bags ready in case a major hurricane ever hits New Orleans. As Hurricane Ivan's expected path shifted uncomfortably close to this low-lying urban soup bowl Tuesday, Maestri said he might need a lot more.

If a strong Category 4 storm such as Ivan made a direct hit, he warned, 50,000 people could drown, and this city of Mardi Gras and jazz could cease to exist.

''This could be The One,'' Maestri said in an interview in his underground bunker. ''You're talking about the potential loss of a major metropolitan area.''

Forecasters said Tuesday night that they expected Ivan to veer at least 70 miles east of New Orleans before making landfall early Thursday, somewhere along the Gulf Coast extremities of Louisiana, Alabama or Mississippi. But Ivan has consistently drifted farther west than their predictions. This port city's levees are designed to withstand only a Category 3 storm, and officials begged residents to evacuate the area ''if you have the means.''

By evening, the city's few escape routes were spectacularly clogged, and authorities acknowledged that hundreds of thousands of residents would not get out in time. The stranded will not be able to turn to the Red Cross, because New Orleans is the only city in which the relief agency refuses to set up emergency storm shelters, to ensure the safety of its own staff. Even if a 30-foot-high wall of water crashes through the French Quarter—Maestri's worst-case scenario—stranded residents will be on their own.

New Orleans is often described as a disaster waiting to happen—it is mostly below sea level, practically surrounded by water, artificially kept dry by pumps and levees, rapidly losing its natural storm protection. But rarely have its leaders sounded so afraid that the wait could be over soon.

''I'm terrified,'' said Windell Curole, director of the South Lafourche Levee District in the swampy bayous south of the city. ''I'm telling you, we've got no elevation. This isn't hyperbole. The only place I can compare us to is Bangladesh.''

More than 100,000 Bangladeshis died in a 1991 storm, and Curole is genuinely afraid that a similar tragedy could strike New Orleans, most of which sits six to eight feet lower than the surrounding waters of the Mississippi River, Lake Pontchartrain and the Gulf of Mexico. Ivan is the strongest storm to threaten the region since Hurricane Betsy nailed New Orleans in 1965. It brought more than $7 billion in havoc at a time when southern Louisiana was less populated and less exposed.

The doomsayers are quick to add a caveat: Ivan might not turn out to be The One. The National Hurricane Center expects the storm to swerve toward the area between Gulfport, Miss., and Mobile, Ala. Officials in Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi and the Florida Panhandle were urging residents Tuesday to leave coastal areas. ''I beg people on the coast: Do not ride this storm out,'' Mississippi's Gov. Haley Barbour (R) said.

A dozen coastal casinos were shuttered in Mississippi, and Barbour's evacuation order for coastal areas was mandatory. In Alabama, Gov. Bob Riley (R) ordered evacuations from Gulf Shores, Orange Beach and Fort Morgan, and some towns postponed runoff elections scheduled for Tuesday. Evacuation was mandatory in parts of Escambia, Bay and Walton counties in Florida, and most schools in the Panhandle were closed.

Most scientists, engineers and emergency managers agree that if Ivan does spare southern Louisiana this time, The One is destined to arrive some day. The director of the U.S. Geological Survey has warned that New Orleans is on a path to extinction. Gregory W. Stone, director of the Coastal Studies Institute at Louisiana State University, frets that near misses such as Hurricane Georges—a Category 2 storm that swerved away from New Orleans a day before landfall in 1998—only give residents a false sense of security. The Red Cross has rated a hurricane inundating New Orleans as America's deadliest potential natural disaster—worse than a California earthquake.

''I don't mean to be an alarmist, but the doomsday scenario is going to happen eventually,'' Stone said. ''I'll stake my professional reputation on it.''

The main problem with southern Louisiana is that it is dangerously low, and getting lower. The levees that imprisoned the Mississippi River into its shipping channel and helped make New Orleans one of the world's busiest ports have also prevented the muddy river from spreading sediment around its delta.

As a result, southern Louisiana is sinking into the Gulf, losing about 25 square miles of coastal marshes and barrier islands every year. Those marshes and islands used to help slow storms as they approached New Orleans; computer simulations now predict that the loss of these natural storm barriers will increase storm surges and waves by several feet.

On a seaplane tour of the region Tuesday, Gerald M. Duszynsi, assistant secretary of the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, pointed out an area near the tiny bayou town of Leesville, where he fished for redfish and flounder 25 years ago. Once a solid patch of green tidal marsh, it is now mostly open water, with a few strips and splotches of green.

''This used to be perfect, and now look at it,'' Duszynski said. ''The buffer is gone. Now even the little storms give a big influx.''

Louisiana's politicians, environmentalists and business leaders have been pushing for a $14 billion coastal restoration project to try to bring back those lost marshes and islands—in order to help protect New Orleans as well as an oil and gas industry that handles nearly a third of the nation's supply.

The Bush administration forced the state to scale down its request to $1.2 billion last year, and a Senate committee authorized $375 million. But Mark Davis, executive director of the coalition to Restore Coastal

Louisiana, believes that even if Ivan bypasses the region, its scary approach could help galvanize support for a more comprehensive fix.

''We're running out of tomorrows,'' Davis said. ''God willing, if there's still a southern Louisiana next week, I'm not talking about the politics of the possible anymore. It's now a question of which side are you on: Do you support the obliteration of a region, or do you want to try to save it?''

On Tuesday, though, most local officials were thinking more about the potential danger than the potential opportunity. If Ivan does pound New Orleans tidal surges could leave the city underwater for months, since its pumps can remove only about an inch every hour, creating a ''toxic soup'' of chemicals, rodents, poisons and snakes.

The local officials said they could not order a mandatory evacuation in a city as poor as New Orleans in which more than 100,000 residents have no cars, but they urged people to find some way to escape. ''If you want to take a chance buy a lottery ticket,'' said Jefferson Parish President Aaron Broussard. ''Don't take a chance on this hurricane.''

New Orleans Mayor C. Ray Nagin seemed flustered as he pleaded with his constituents to flee, at one point suggesting that they take shelter in area hospitals. Visitors were also urged to find somewhere else to go—including 10,000 conventioneers in town for the annual meeting of the National Safety Council

''This is not a drill,'' Nagin said. ''This is the real deal.''

But the logistics of exit are quite formidable in the Big Easy. In 1998, as more than 300,000 people fled Hurricane Georges, Interstate 10 turned into a parking lot. Similar miles-long snarls unfolded Tuesday. Flights were canceled and the airport prepared to close. The town that gave the world ''A Streetcar Named Desire'' idled its streetcars.

The underlying problem, Maestri said, is that the city never should have been built in the first place. It is a teriffic location for business but a lousy location for safety.

''The Chamber of Commerce gets really mad at me when I say this, but does New Orleans get rebuilt?'' Maestri asked. The answer, he said could very well be no.

I thank the Chair for the time and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

LACK OF DIRECTION

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Madam President, I rise to voice deep concern about what is happening in our war with Iraq, what is happening within our country, and a lack of direction that is pronounced as far as I am concerned.

We hear the political debate that goes on: What is your plan for getting us out of Iraq? Well, what is yours?

Since our Commander in Chief is in charge, I would think that he would lead the country and lead the direction of the campaign, telling the American people about when it is we are going to be able to expect our troops to come home, when these families will be reunited.

Last week, the 33rd soldier from New Jersey died in Iraq. Our country has now lost a total of 1,018 of our troops in Iraq. Of these deaths, 877 troops have died since the President announced that major combat operations in Iraq were over, finished. He made that announcement during a political appearance on an aircraft carrier on May 1, 2003.

If we look at this picture, we see our sailors lined up. I know what they are thinking. I was a veteran, and I remember so vividly when I was on a ship bound for Japan after serving in Europe and the war suddenly ended and how relieved I was. I was concerned for myself, of course, but I was concerned for my brothers and sisters in arms as well. So these sailors are standing at attention, and there were rousing cheers when the President made his statement. And he boldly declared: ''Mission accomplished.''

It turned out to be more theater than reality. The mission accomplished debacle is illustrative of President Bush's failure to execute a coherent plan to win the war in Iraq. Even after reaching a thousand dead, President Bush has not come forward with a plan. We have not heard one word about when those troops are expected to come home. When will the fighting really stop? When can we look at the situation in Iraq and say, good grief, it is finally resolved? Every day more and more people are killed, and many are Americans. But lots of times the structure in Iraq promotes this kind of dispute and violence.

I say to President Bush, stop this killing. Our troops are putting their lives on the line for our country.

The President refuses to show the kind of leadership we need to have in a time of war. Even as the fighting continues, we hear promises that somehow or other it is going to get better, when in fact the situation has worsened.

I ask my colleagues: What are we doing there? What is our plan? What kind of a government do we think we are going to see there? We have sort of turned it over to the Iraqis, but since that turnover has been made the violence and the numbers killed each day has accelerated. I don't know whether anyone here knows what, if any, our plans are. As the killing continues overseas, the President is inviting a new risk to begin here at home.

Madam President, this Senate, the Congress, failed to extend the life of the assault weapons ban. Ultimately, the failure to extend this law falls on the desk of President Bush. He has not done anything—not lifted a finger—to urge the Republican leaders to extend this ban. As a matter of fact, in earlier days, he said he would sign a bill. But he knows very well, and all America knows very well, if he doesn't encourage the Republican leadership to present a bill, there is no bill to sign. So all kinds of boastful comments can be made about how he would sign it, but to my knowledge he never has picked up the phone and called the leadership of the House or Senate and said we need a bill, we don't want these crazy weapons around our country.

Assault weapons are semiautomatic, civilian versions of weapons designed for military use. They are the weapons of choice of criminals and terrorists because they are capable of holding large-capacity magazines that allow a shooter to fire up to 150 shots without having to reload.

These weapons are specifically designed for military use in order to kill greater numbers of people more effectively and quickly.

This placard illustrates some of the new products available at local gun stores, thanks to the President's lack of leadership. We took an action here that said we would like to continue the ban, but it fell when the House refused to deal with it.

We could not find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, and we are finding weapons that easily destroy lives right here at home. FBI statistics show that one in five law enforcement officers slain in the line of duty were killed by an assault weapon. That is why police officers across the country are outraged that we did not extend this ban. Why in the world we need these weapons, I cannot figure out. Who do we please when we say let's have these automatic weapons on our streets in New York? For what purpose? Target shooting? Shooting deer? Maybe shooting neighbors. Maybe drug dealers, yes. Maybe policemen. That is who gets shot when these guns are available.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Fraternal Order of Police, the International Brotherhood of Police Officers, the Major Cities Chiefs Association, the Major County Sheriffs Association—every one of them want us to extend the assault weapons ban. But our ears were closed.

Madam President, these law enforcement officers put their lives on the line every day, and they should not have to face criminals armed with an Uzi pistol or an AK–47 rifle, a Street Sweeper, or a TEC–9 pistol during a drug bust or school shooting. This Nation should never forget the school shooting at Columbine High School in Littleton, CO, where two teenage students, using a TEC-DC9 assault pistol and other weapons, went on a shooting rampage that killed 12 other students and a teacher. Who can ever forget the pictures of the students hanging out the windows begging for mercy, begging for a way to escape the rampage that was taking place?

We should never forget it. But we don't want to do anything about it; that is the tragedy. Nor should the Nation forget another school shooting in Stockton, CA, in 1989, where an AK–47 was used in a schoolyard full of kids, firing over 100 rounds in less than 2 minutes and killing 5 children and wounding 29 others.

Then there is the issue of terrorism. If anyone thinks for a second that the