

frequently gets. In trying to answer and re-answer the most important issue of this election, central to the struggle for freedom today and tomorrow, we have a Presidential candidate who constantly changes his mind. This is not some little issue; this is the biggest issue confronting the country today. We are 6 weeks from the election, and this is a man who flip-flops like a fish on the deck of a boat, back and forth, back and forth, who doesn't know where he stands on the most important issue we are confronting in our era.

For example, when asked if he would have gone into Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein, KERRY recently answered:

You bet, we might have.

Let me read that one more time. When asked if he would have gone into Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein, KERRY recently said:

You bet, we might have.

Not exactly Winston Churchill. Perhaps there is some nuance here, such as an exclamation point or a question mark, that tells whether this is a declaration or a question, but the answer to the most critical issue in this election should not leave the world wondering and more confused than before.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina is recognized.

HURRICANE DEVASTATION

Mrs. DOLE. Mr. President, so many States have been devastated this hurricane season. My own home State of North Carolina has been ravaged by the effects of not one, but four hurricanes in the last few weeks.

Most recently, western North Carolina suffered extensive damage caused by the torrential wind and rain of Hurricane Ivan. Initial estimates from the storm's destruction in Buncombe County alone are already topping \$100 million. Sadly, this same county had already projected that exact amount in damages following Hurricane Frances.

Counties in western North Carolina had barely begun to recover from the flooding of Frances before Ivan roared through town late last week. The death toll from the storm, so far, is 10 people. In the town of Henderson, a man and his wife were sleeping soundly when a huge tree crashed through their house into their bedroom. The husband was pinned beneath the fallen tree, which ultimately took his life as the home had to be stabilized before the tree could be removed. In the Peeks Creek community in southern Macon County, a landslide sent homes crashing against each other, killing at least four people, including an unborn child whose mother was forced to have a leg amputated and remains in critical condition.

Houses have literally been washed away, and some left standing have been split in two by fallen trees. Main roads and neighborhood streets have been

shut down from landslides and pavements giving way. Well over 200,000 residents were left without power over the weekend. Needless to say, it will take time before western North Carolina can return to a sense of normalcy.

I have been down to the devastated areas twice over the past two weeks. While my heart broke at the sight of destroyed homes and washed out roadways, my hopes were buoyed by the goodness of neighbor helping neighbor. It was an image played out all over the towns I visited. Local officials and first responders, some from as far as Raleigh and Charlotte, have done—and continue to do—a phenomenal job in the midst of challenging circumstances.

I think of the heroic efforts of families like Aileen and Glenn Holland. They are not strangers to offering aide after a natural disaster. Long time volunteers through the North Carolina Baptists Men Disaster Relief, they have traveled all over the United States. But last weekend, they didn't have to travel anywhere. The destruction came right to their front door. Fifteen homes were annihilated in Macon County, but the Holland's was left standing. When they heard the screams of neighbors, Aileen and Glenn began taking people in. They even found a toddler covered in mud crying from fear. The Hollands remained in their home, providing shelter for friends and family until fellow volunteers from the Baptist Men Disaster Relief arrived on the scene.

I also applaud the efforts of local churches, nonprofits, and groups such as the Red Cross for the helping hands they're extending all over western North Carolina. I had the chance to stop in and thank the volunteers at the Red Cross Shelter in Henderson County. I was touched to see the families finding refuge and reassurance there.

These are the memories I will keep with me as I think back on the far-reaching effects from this hurricane season. Yes, there is destruction. Yes, there is great pain. But I find encouragement in the selfless hearts of North Carolinians who are going to great lengths to help those struggling through the wreckage left behind.

It is my desire that we, too, can add to that goodwill and deliver the financial aide these areas need to get back on their feet. Fifteen Western North Carolina counties have been declared federal disaster areas, including Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson and Macon. This designation means that homeowners and businesses are eligible for assistance in the form of loans or grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA or the Small Business Administration. There is a \$60 million request for North Carolina included in the President's emergency budget. We're obviously going to need much more. I would encourage Congress to expedite this aid to those who need it most.

I can only hope the end of this devastating hurricane season comes quick-

ly. The autumn season makes western North Carolina one of the most beautiful places on earth—and the good folks from the mountains are well suited to give some southern hospitality to visitors from around the country. It is important that we get the word out that this magnificent part of the country is open for business during its prime tourism season. My thoughts and my prayers are with every person touched by these hurricanes, not only North Carolina but throughout the southeast and east coast. May God bless each and every one of them.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

INTELLIGENCE REFORM AND THE WAR ON TERRORISM

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I believe it is appropriate, as we move toward the end of our session, to take a look at those issues that are before us that are most important. Certainly, we have had a difficult 4 years. Unusual and difficult events have happened which have been very hard to deal with, and they have made this a challenging and difficult time for all of us.

We had an economic downturn starting before the beginning of this 4 years. So we have taken steps to develop and strengthen the economy, which is still a job before us. However, we are making good progress, I believe, with respect to that issue.

We had September 11, which is a tragedy we will all always remember. And then, as a part of and following that tragedy, we have had the war on terrorism.

Certainly one has to understand that we have had a tough time. I think we have done rather well moving through this kind of a background and dealing with this situation that is very unusual.

We continue to face tough decisions and the followup on those decisions. We have made an excellent start in the economy. We have made an excellent start in the war on terrorism and, indeed, are moving forward in that regard. We are faced with responsibilities and issues that have an impact on the movement we are seeking. It is up to us to deal with those issues.

In the short term, we are dealing with the budget, appropriations—those items having to do with spending. One of the impacts of what has happened is a spending deficit. All of us, I think, would agree that under the circumstances, it was a reasonable and necessary thing to do. Most of us understand it is time we begin to do away with that deficit and get back to a balanced budget, about which I certainly feel strongly.

We are going to be faced as well with the reorganization of our intelligence-gathering situation. Today, we will be faced with a new Director of the CIA, which is a place to begin. Obviously, there need to be some changes there.

Along with that, during the next several weeks, we will be involved in the reorganization of the entire intelligence operation which, again, is very important. Of course, the most important aspect of our future is winning the war on terror and support for what we are doing in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We will take up the reform of our intelligence services. All of us recognize the hard work the Commission has done in putting together a plan, 41 suggestions and recommendations. We will look at those recommendations. They have done it under tough circumstances. We need to do our best to put into place the best program we can. This is not a political issue. This is an issue we ought to take a look at and say: How do we best avoid the kinds of problems we had in the past in collecting and putting to good use information and intelligence?

I do not think we should rush to complete this job. Obviously, it is something we need to do, and there is interest in getting it done as quickly as possible. I hope our target is to do it in the best way we know how as opposed to the fastest way we know how. Perhaps we need to do both.

We all agree there are weaknesses. Our Government institutions have not adapted to the growing threat of terrorism over more than a decade. We need to understand again, in terms of war, that the situation has changed so much. Not long ago, we fought a war with 17 divisions, landing boats on shores. That is not the case anymore. That is not the case at all. That is not the challenge. The challenge is not often knowing who the enemy is or where the enemy is. We have a totally different circumstance surrounding the need for intelligence.

We have to deal with the fact that terrorists are there to exploit the weaknesses in our defenses and in our knowledge of what needs to be done. Fortunately, this election year has focused some on that point. We have seen fingerpointing attempts to lay blame partly to political advantage, but that is not what it is about.

As we move forward with the debate in the Senate, I am hopeful we will never forget that the blame for the attacks on 9/11 rests solely on the al-Qaida terrorists and Osama bin Laden and the people involved in the Middle East for a long time working at these kinds of things. We need to understand also that the threat is not over, and we need to continue to deal with it.

So our focus is trying to figure out ways to improve the situation and correct the problem so the events of September 11 will not happen again.

So this obviously involves increasing both the quality and quantity of human intelligence, and we need to take a look at our overall situation, intelligence as well as military, because things, indeed, have to change. We need to have coordination certainly among all the intelligence agencies throughout the country, in different agencies

than they have been in the past. Whether they put them all into one is one of the questions before us, but whether we do or not there has to be coordination and conversation and information exchange among them. There has to be sharing. We have to define the goals we are seeking so we understand what it is we are putting forth and that each of these various units within our intelligence agencies know what their responsibilities are and their goals are and we can put them together to equal what our totals are. We need, obviously, to invest more in the technical intelligence capabilities. Those things change constantly.

So more importantly, I suppose most importantly, we need to ensure the coordinated use of these resources and the personnel and improve communications. It sounds like an easy thing, but apparently it is not. In the end, this type of reform and reform of our intelligence gathering process is necessary. I look forward to the debate we will have soon and I suppose some starting today, as a matter of fact, with the recommendation before us for Director of the CIA.

Again, I hope that we can aim toward fixing the problems, aim toward moving to solutions rather than again finding ourselves in the 40-some days from elections where nearly everything is talked about having to do with the elections.

Of course, overall, the most important challenge we have before us now is to win the war on terrorism in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

The problems and the failures in pre-war intelligence gathering are troubling, and I am pleased we are doing something about it so our leaders will have the best accurate information on which to make decisions.

And we acknowledge errors in the past. However, the coming debate should not draw from the central fact that operations in Iraq are and always have been a critical part of the war on terrorism. The war being fought in Afghanistan and Iraq is one that is designed fundamentally to change the environment that has given rise and power to Islamic extremism.

The introduction of a stable democracy in that oppressed region of the world will create an environment in which freedom and liberty and peace have the potential to grow and to thrive. I am persuaded that is really the goal of most of Iraqis. When I visited there some months ago, I was very much impressed with the feeling of most people. You would go out to schools, to powerplants, into the streets of Baghdad, and generally there were all kinds of cars and activity, kids standing on the street waving as we went by in military cars.

I understand how difficult it is with the relatively small group of protesters and persons who do not care about the future and are willing to blow you up with a car bomb. But the fact is most people see the merit of having the kind

of government, the kind of country where they can enjoy freedom and the prosperity of freedom. So if we can continue to provide an opportunity for these folks to take care of themselves, form their own government, which is our plan, of course, that is our goal.

Now, it is difficult and I understand politically advantageous to complain about the speed at which or the slowness at which it is taking place. The fact is it is going to be slow. It is going to be difficult. It is a difficult thing to accomplish. We hear complaints about not having a plan. We do have a plan. Is everything perfect? Of course not. But there is a plan. We know what we are doing. I was out to the training facility for the Iraqi police and army, and they are making an effort. It is slower than we thought, of course, but that is the case.

We are going to have the fanatics and the insurgents and they are going to be fighting us and the Iraqis and they will be acting out of desperation, and that is difficult. This is not the kind of war where somebody puts up a white flag and suddenly it is all over. This is not that kind of arrangement. This is much different. People will do it. This will, of course, eventually deny the terrorists and extremists the havens they need. So it is a very important issue. It is a victory that will be long and difficult. I believe we have to acknowledge that.

Again I understand the politics of saying it is too long, we need to get out, and we do and everyone agrees with that. But there is a sequence in completing our task. There is the first sequence. It will take a long time and there will be casualties and it will be difficult. But there are happy things to talk about. There are more than 400,000 security forces conducting stability operations there. The Government is in close consultation, training commanders; 99,000 Iraqis have been trained in various security forces. There is a lot going on there. Have we accomplished what we want yet? Of course not. Or else we would be saying that we have accomplished everything. But it is so important that we focus not only on that but on those things that now are important to us.

We are focused on our budget. We are focused on holding down spending in the nonessential areas so we can make up this deficit. We need to focus on creating jobs so that we can continue to get strength in the economy. We need to focus on having the kind of intelligence that can avoid these things happening in the future. We need to focus on completing the task we have undertaken.

So we will have an opportunity in the next couple of weeks to do some things, and then certainly we will come back later. I guess my only hope is that we can continue to see the tasks clearly before us, seek to complete the task successfully as opposed to trying to make a political issue out of wherever the controversies lie. That is the challenge for us and a challenge I believe we can accomplish.

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

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

Mr. KENNEDY. I understand now that we are on the time that has been designated for Senator DASCHLE, the minority leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. KENNEDY. I have been yielded 10 minutes and then I understand my colleague and friend from Washington has been yielded 5.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. KENNEDY. Would the Chair notify me when I have 2 minutes remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Yes.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, yesterday, JOHN EDWARDS was in Cleveland, OH, and gave a powerful speech on the economy. He pointed out the struggles of the middle class and asked why President Bush made the choices he has to boost the wealthiest Americans and abandon hard working men and women. I urge my colleagues to take a look at this great speech.

I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD.

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

REMARKS OF SENATOR JOHN EDWARDS

It is an honor to be with you.

When I was in school, I remember coming down the stairs at night. I would see the glow of the television, hear the volume on low, and see my Dad working at the kitchen table. He wasn't going over the family bills or paper work from his job at the mill. He was learning math on TV.

After a long day at work, he would come home and turn on a local TV station to learn. Every year, he'd see another young person with no experience and a college degree move past him. And he knew that if he didn't try something his chances of moving up would disappear.

So my Dad—like millions of Americans—did what he could for himself so that he could better provide for his family. I was proud of what he was trying to do. I was sad because he couldn't get a college degree. And I realized that I lived in a country where I could.

Standing in that house, I always had hope. At that time, America was a place where hard work and determination could take you anywhere. My mother ran her own small business, refinishing furniture to help pay for my tuition. Thanks to my mother and father's hard work in that mill, in that business, and at that kitchen table, they were able to buy a house. Later on, they were able to help me become the first person in my family to go to college. And I stand here today because I have lived in the bright light and the blessing of America.

What I saw in that house in Robbins, North Carolina was very American. It was two parents working hard, meeting their responsibilities, and living in an economy that made the American Dream possible. It was a time when you knew that faith, responsibility and hard work would lift your family up. They would give you and your children the future they deserve. And this is the great promise of America.

But I fear today, that that light is flickering and that blessing is no longer there for any but a few. And this great shift away from the power and the promise of our middle class means that the gifts and the graces of too many young people never have a chance to shine.

Today, I fear that a young boy in Athens who goes downstairs and sees his parents at the kitchen table doesn't sense hope in his house. He sees his parents trying to get through the month. He sees them divide up their bills into piles that say "pay now" and "pay later." And he sees his mother and father work hard and they can't even break even.

That boy thinks, "This is what life will be like." He looks on with resignation and the false belief that this is as good as it gets.

Two people are responsible for causing this great shift in America: George W. Bush and Dick Cheney. Their policies have decimated the economy of Ohio and the American values we believe in.

This campaign is about different leaders and different economic plans. It's about different visions for America. And it's about what's holding our economy down—the callous view of a few at the top who believe that the values that got us here can now be left behind.

It is because George Bush and Dick Cheney abandoned our values that Ohio has lost 237,000 jobs; family incomes have dropped by more than \$1,500; health care costs have gone up more than \$3,600; tuition at Cleveland State and Ohio State is up \$3000; and once every five minutes an Ohio family files for bankruptcy.

The struggles people face in Ohio and the weakness in our economy are a direct result of decisions made by George Bush and Dick Cheney. And those decisions are the direct result of a vision that honors wealth and privilege rather than work and responsibility.

When our economy suffered after September 11, this President made a choice. He fought for tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. And he did nothing to put more money into the pockets of working families.

When our country went 7 straight months of losing jobs, this President made a choice. He proposed \$25 billion in backward-looking tax cuts for big corporations like Enron. But he did nothing to pass tax cuts that would encourage businesses to create jobs.

When the incomes of working families began to fall after 7 years of strong growth, this President made a choice. He slashed the overtime for six million workers. But he did nothing to raise the minimum wage.

When health care costs skyrocketed out of control, this President made a choice. He gave away \$140 billion to the big drug companies and fought to lift the responsibilities of HMOs and insurance companies while taking away the rights of families. But he did nothing to lower health care costs so Americans could keep more of their hard-earned money.

When Ohio schools raised college tuition because of state budget deficits, this President made a choice. He stood up for subsidies to big banks and tried to cut off Pell Grants for 84,000 students. But he did nothing to relieve the burden on our state budgets and increase student aid.

Every choice he made did something to harm our middle class and weaken our econ-

omy. So when it comes to what working people need, this really is a Do-Nothing Presidency: Do Nothing to create jobs, do nothing to relieve the pressure on the middle class, do nothing to bring down health care costs, and do nothing to help more young people go to college.

You can count on George Bush and Dick Cheney to do one thing: look out for their friends at the top. It is very simple: they honor wealth, not work.

Make no mistake. This idea is the most radical and dangerous economic agenda to hit our shores since socialism a century ago. Like socialism, it corrupts the very nature of our democracy and our free enterprise tradition. It is not a plan to grow the American economy. It is a plan to corrupt the American economy and shrink the winners' circle.

John Kerry and I believe that the hard work and responsibility of the middle class are the engine of our economy. We believe our government should honor those values and give everyone who works hard and takes responsibility a chance to do well. We believe in expanding the winner's circle. We believe in one America.

History shows us that our approach works better for America. To have real economic growth in this country, we have to strengthen and expand the middle class.

We saw it with the G.I. Bill. Young men had fought for America, and America invested in them. Millions of young people went to college and triggered the greatest expansion of the middle class the world has ever seen.

We saw it in the 1990s. Government lived within a budget just like our families do. A tight labor market drove up wages. The average family made \$7000 more, and we lifted 6 million Americans out of poverty.

And look where we are today. George Bush and Dick Cheney have replaced that virtuous path with a vicious circle when it comes to our economy.

We have a labor market that cannot keep up with our growing population. We see declining wages even as health care costs go through the roof. And the gap between the Two Americas is growing. Corporate profits are up. Our most expensive stores' sales are up. But average wages are down over the last year, and the Targets and Gaps are seeing their sales stall. Instead of creating good middle-class jobs, we're creating more temporary positions, part-time jobs, and jobs in fast food restaurants.

When you have a government that does nothing to reward work, our economy doesn't pick up and this vicious circle continues. The people at the top do just fine. The people who make this country work struggle to get through the month, and our economy never picks up steam.

John Kerry and I will break this vicious circle. And we will put America back on a virtuous path where work is rewarded, the middle class expands, and the American Dream is there for all who are willing to work for it.

It is time to build one America with one economy that works for everyone. Where no child ever looks on at his parents and thinks, "I can't hope for something better." But dreams only of building something better. And this is the season for change. It is time to build an economy that honors our values and rewards work.

I know personally what it's like when the factory or the plant closes down. The whole town suffers, and that's what happened when the textile mill my father worked in closed down.

We can prevent some of these jobs from leaving America. And there are real steps we can take that will stem the loss of manufacturing jobs in Ohio. But that alone won't be enough.