Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Nevada for his

courtesy and his previous offer to let me speak. I am glad to have this

opportunity to talk about a number of things that have come up today.

We have talked a little bit about the war in Iraq. We have talked a

little bit about the environment because Earth Day is tomorrow. We have

talked a little bit about overtime and we have talked a lot about

energy. I am going to cover those topics as well as some other things

that need to be known.

I am going to start with the war in Iraq because last week I had the

opportunity to go with Senator Sessions and Senator Chambliss to visit

NATO and then to go into Germany and to visit with some of the troops

that have been wounded in Iraq. Some of them have been wounded very

severely. In fact, those who are not severely wounded do not leave

Iraq. There are hospitals in Iraq that take care of them and then get

them back into the fray. Those who have been injured worse are flown to

Landstuhl Hospital in Germany where they are stabilized, treated, and

then sent back to the United States for more treatment.

The three of us had an opportunity to visit that hospital. We split

up into three groups so we could talk to more of the soldiers. We

thought we would be able to perhaps pump them up a little bit after

what they had been through. Quite the reverse happened. They pumped us

up. It was a tremendous experience.

These people, men and women, to a person said: We are making a

difference in Iraq. We know the people over there, we know our job, we

are doing our job, the people are responding to what we are doing, and

we are making a difference.

The other side is so worried that they are bringing in people to take

us on. Every one of them wanted to be patched up as fast as possible

and go back to help their buddies. They knew what the job was. They

knew the people there. It was tremendously inspirational.

The next day we went to an Army training base that a lot of U.S.

soldiers in the past had been assigned to and are still assigned to,

but they have been moved to Iraq. They have been assigned to Iraq and

they had just been on another overseas assignment, had been back about

8 months and were assigned to Iraq. Some of the spouses there had had

husbands extended in Iraq. We wanted to find out what they were

feeling, what they were thinking. It was a chance to visit with them,

and so we did.

Again, we were the ones who were encouraged. I remember one of the

spouses explaining that part of the job of a soldier is to watch the

back of his buddy, and when some of the troops are pulled out

prematurely there is nobody to watch somebody's back. Then the lady

said:

What I noticed at both of those meetings was that other countries of

the world say the reason we are the most powerful country in the world

is because of the money we spend on being powerful. Some people would

say it is because of the technology we have developed that makes us

more equipped with more advanced things than any other country in the

world. Both of those play a small role, but what makes the difference

between the United States and the other countries is the people of this

country, the young men and women who are serving in our Armed Forces--

their dedication, their innovation, their ability to think, their

ability to react, and their patriotism.

Then we have another secret weapon, and that secret weapon is the

spouses and the families who are praying for and supporting the troops.

That is a force other countries cannot reckon with, and we should be so

appreciative.

I want to mention one other thing that might seem unusual. When we

were meeting with one of the generals, the general prayed. Now, I am

not sure that is acceptable under the Constitution as it might be

interpreted by some judges, but he prayed. He knows that will make a

difference.

One of the things that occurred to me while he was doing that is we

often almost always remember to pray for our troops, but I think we

probably ought to be praying for the opposition as well. We ought to be

praying for the opposition to soften their hearts, for the opposition

to realize what is happening in the world and the role they are

playing. Praying can make a difference, and it is up to all of us to

try that, with faith, and see if it will not support these admirable

troops, their spouses, and their families.