Mr. President, at midday

today I attended the prayer service

at the National Cathedral which President

Bush called. It was attended by

President Bush and four former Presidents,

and many Americans, of course.

And I think millions of Americans

watched on television. It was a remarkable,

moving, and emotional prayer

service.

As I sat in the prayer service, I

thought about something that happened

yesterday as I toured the damage

to the Pentagon with my colleagues,

Senator DASCHLE, Senator REID, and

others. Yesterday, we were touring the

Pentagon where, of course, many

Americans died as a result of an airplane,

loaded with jet fuel and commercial

passengers, which was flown by

a terrorist into the Pentagon and

caused a fire and collapse and so much

damage.

Yesterday, as we were being briefed

at the Pentagon about the damage that

was caused and the loss of life, my colleague,

Senator Reid, will remember

that there was a crane near the building.

The crane had a long steel cable

attached to it. On the end of the steel

cable was one of these little baskets.

There was a man standing in the basket

in uniform. The crane hauled this

basket up to the fourth floor of this

gaping wound in the middle of the Pentagon

building. This man, who is a soldier,

reached around from this basket

deep into the hole of the Pentagon

building, and from outside of this hole

he pulled out a red and gold flag. He

put it into this basket, again, dangling

from a crane. They brought him back

to the ground. It turned out he had

pulled out of this gaping hole in this

burned-out structure at the Pentagon a

U.S. Marine flag that had for some reason

not burned. It appeared to be the

only thing that could not have possibly

burned in that entire area.

This young Marine, who grabbed this

U.S. Marine Corps flag—this beautiful

gold and red flag—marched over to

where we were, and he stopped and said

he was taking this flag to the U.S. Marine

Corps Commandant.

He said he saw the flag as he looked

through the wreckage up on the fourth

floor in an office, and miraculously

this flag had not burned. He wanted to

get to it, so he got somebody to take

him up in a crane in a basket, and he

retrieved this flag.

As he held this flag proudly, on his

way to the Commandant of the Marine

Corps, he said to us: They couldn’t destroy

this flag, and they can’t destroy

this country. And I thought, wow, what

a thing to say. This morning I woke up

and looked at the Washington Post,

and there is a full color picture of this

young Marine holding that U.S. Marine

flag as he came away from that building.

It was just before he came over to

greet us on his way to the Marine

Corps Commandant.

It was but one act—a symbolic act, in

many ways—of a young soldier who

used that flag that he saw, that had

survived the fire and survived the carnage—

the one flag that was left standing—

to make a point that those who

committed these heinous acts, those

madmen who perpetrated these acts of

evil that murdered so many innocent

men, women, and children in this country,

could not destroy that flag and

cannot destroy this country.

As I said the other day, all of us are

heartbroken in America today. We express

that in many ways. Prayer services

across the country, recommended

by our President, have reflected a common

understanding—the ability to

grieve together and the ability to come

together. It was important to do that.

It is important to do that.

But there is something else that is

important for us to understand. The

terrorists did something they could

never have possibly imagined: They

created in this country a togetherness

that has not been here for some long

while. People want to show the flag

these days.

My 12-year-old daughter yesterday

said: Dad, let’s put out the flag. People

all over this country are putting an

American flag out in full view. And

people around this country are doing

things that we know represent the inherent

goodness of people.

Within hours of the terrible tragedy

at the World Trade Center—within

hours of those evil acts—we had scores

of people lining up to give blood in this

country. I saw the interview of one person

who was in a 5-hour line, and she

was asked: Why are you in line 5 hours

waiting to give blood? And she said:

Because it’s the only thing I can do,

and I want to do something today.

The terrorists could not have possibly

imagined what their acts would

do to bring Americans together. This

country has a common purpose. Yes, it

has a great deal of grief and, yes, our

heart is broken, but our spirit is not

broken.

The common purpose in this country

is to grieve together, to pray together,

and then understand that we want to—

and we must—find those who planned

and committed these acts, and those

who harbored them, and punish them

and at the same time take the kind of

precautions we know we must take to

prevent this from happening again.

It is a free country. We are proud of

that freedom and liberty. And it is also

understood by everyone that we have

the risk of acts of terrorism committed

in free countries precisely because of

that freedom. Perhaps we can never

make certain that we will not ever see

a terrorist act again. Perhaps we can

never do that. We can certainly exert

all the energy and all the genius available

to all of us in this country to take

the steps we think can try to prevent

these acts again.

But notwithstanding the challenges

and the tragedies, and notwithstanding

the common grief that was born of

these evil acts, this country will remain

a free country. We will remain a

country of which all of us are enormously

proud.

There is a spirit about America: A

spirit to prevail, a spirit to build, a

spirit to come together. It is reflected

by a lot of things, a couple of which I

just mentioned. And that spirit is, in

my judgment, not dimming; that spirit

is growing. In the coming weeks and

days, I think manifested today on the

floor of the Senate, that spirit will nurture

all of America.

Today, on the floor of the Senate, we

passed a piece of legislation, without a

dissenting vote, that said we want to

help people in need. We provided the

resources to say to the people who were

victims of this: You are not alone.

Your families are not alone. Your loved

ones are not alone. Your cities are not

alone. And then we passed, without a

dissenting vote, an authorization to

the President, who asked for an authorization

from Congress, to be able

to take appropriate action against

those who committed these evil acts.

Without a dissenting vote, the Congress

said to the President: Yes, we are

with you. That is quite a remarkable

thing to have done. And it reflects a

spirit not just here in the Senate; it reflects

a spirit, in my judgment, borne

in the breast of every American today,

proud to be an American, and determined

to make sure we are able to retain

and nurture this way of life, to defeat

terrorism wherever it exists, and

to nurture freedom and liberty.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.