Lakes and several major ports along the St. Lawrence Seaway including Detroit, Cleveland, Chicago, Milwaukee, and Green Bay. In addition, Southeast Michigan is home to three of our nation's busiest border crossings and an unparalleled industrial base vital to our economy and national security. I hope you agree that the establishment of a Northern Border Air Wing site in Michigan is a national priority and I would appreciate your timely response to the above questions.

Should your staff have any questions, please feel free to have them contact Michael Noblet of my staff at (202) 224–3999.

Sincerely,

CARL LEVIN.

CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION

Mr. LEVIN. I would like to enter into a colloquy with my friend from New Hampshire, Senator GREGG, and my friend from North Dakota, Senator CONRAD, regarding funds that have been included in this bill for customs and border protection, CBP, air and marine interdiction, operations, maintenance, and procurement.

The Northern Border Air Wing, NBAW, initiative was launched by the Department of Homeland Security, DHS, in 2004 to provide air and marine interdiction and enforcement capabilities along the Northern Border. Original plans called for DHS to open five NBAW sites in New York, Washington, North Dakota, Montana, and Michigan.

The New York and Washington NBAW sites have been operational since 2004. Unfortunately, none of the other three sites have yet been stood up, leaving large portions of our Northern Border unpatrolled from the air. In the conference report accompanying the fiscal year 2006 DHS appropriations bill, the conferees noted that these remaining gaps in our air patrol coverage of the northern border should be closed as quickly as possible.

Given that the threat from terrorists, drug traffickers, and others who seek to enter our country illegally has not diminished, I believe an adequate portion of the funds included in this bill for air and marine interdiction, operations, maintenance, and procurement should be used by customs and border protection to complete the remaining assessments, evaluations, and other activities necessary to prepare and equip the Michigan, North Dakota, and Montana NBAW sites with appropriate CBP air and marine assets.

This bill requires that DHS submit an expenditure plan to the appropriations committee before any of the funds may be obligated. I urge DHS to include in their plan the funds necessary to stand up, equip, and begin operations at the three remaining northern border air wing sites in Michigan, North Dakota, and Montana.

Mr. CONRAD. I agree with my friend from Michigan. The fiscal year 2006 DHS appropriations bill included a small amount of funds to begin initial preparations for a NBAW site in my home state of North Dakota, but more funds are needed for the site to become operational. Secretary Chertoff has told us that the establishment of the three additional northern border air wings will be complete in fiscal year 2007.

A small portion of the air and marine interdiction funds in this bill would go a long way toward meeting this deadline and the goal of securing our long and currently porous northern border. I join Senator LEVIN in encouraging the DHS to include funds sufficient to stand up and equip the North Dakota, Michigan, and Montana sites.

Mr. GREGG. My friends from Michigan and North Dakota raise important points. I agree the establishment and equipping of the three remaining northern border air wings is a priority. The northern border has long been neglected compared to the southern border. As my colleagues are aware, funds were appropriated in the fiscal year 2006 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act to initiate funding of the third northern border air wing in North Dakota. I am committed to seeing that the establishment of the remaining northern border air wings is accomplished as expeditiously as possible

Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DEMINT). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

## MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

## SOLE-SOURCE CONTRACTS AND IRAQ

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, this morning in the Washington Post there was an article announcing a decision by the Defense Department that relates to something I have held a good many hearings on through the Democratic Policy Committee in the past several years. We have been holding hearings on waste, fraud, and abuse with respect to the very large sole-source contracts that have been given to certain companies to do business in Iraq and provide food and fuel and logistics support for our troops. What we have discovered is very substantial waste, fraud and abuse.

This morning, finally, the Washington Post says: ''The Army to End Expansive, Exclusive Halliburton Deal. Logistics Contract to be Open for Bidding.'' One of the side bars of the story talks about: ''Whistle-blowers told how the company charged $45 per case of soda, double-billed on meals, and allowed troops to bathe in contaminated water.'' All of these were issues given us to us by whistle-blowers who came to our Committee to testify because there was virtually no oversight on these issues by the other Committees.

The decision to terminate these sole-source contracts is long overdue. Sole-source contracts are contracts that are, in my judgment, invitations for abuse. The bill that I introduced some months ago, along with 30 other Senators, called S. 2361, the Honest Leadership and Accountability in Contracting Act of 2006, is a piece of legislation that insists on this exact provision, but goes much, much further—the provision that says we ought to break up these contracts and have them competed for so that the competition for contracts will give the taxpayers some feeling they are not being cheated.

A fellow named Henry Bunting testified at a hearing we held. He was a whistle-blower. He actually worked for Halliburton in Kuwait. His job in Kuwait was to purchase hand towels for American soldiers. So he got a requisition to buy hand towels for American soldiers, and he would order the hand towels. But then he was told: No, we don't want you to order those hand towels; we want you to order new hand towels. He brought a sample of the hand towels with him. The reason they wanted him to order different hand towels is they wanted the company name to be embroidered on the hand towels, which tripled the cost of the towels for the taxpayers.

No one would have believed that soldiers need to have hand towels with the embroidered name of the contractor providing the hand towels. That is exactly what happened. And it is exactly what the whistle-blowers told us was happening with respect to procurement.

This whistle-blower, who worked with the company, said: This is something my supervisor said we are going to do, and we did it. He said: We saw $8,500-a-month SUV rentals. We saw $40, $45 a case for Coca-Cola

It is pretty unbelievable when you hear all of the stories. Those stories come from giving billions of dollars of contracts to one company. That is what has happened on contracts called LOGCAP and RIO, and finally the Pentagon suggests maybe it is going to shut these down and require competition.

Looking forward, I am going to ask the Pentagon to consider all of the information that we have uncovered in these hearings, because provisions in defense contracting require that you hold companies accountable for actions they have taken in the past, when you consider new bids for the future.

It is interesting that this also relates to something that is now happening in the Pentagon. The woman who testified before the committee—there has been a great deal of discussion about her—was Bunny Greenhouse, the top civilian contracting official in the Corps of Engineers at the Pentagon. She rose to the top. Every performance evaluation said she was the best. People outside the Government who had dealt with her said she was the best, professional, knew what she was doing. She said:

> I can unequivocally state that the abuse related to contracts awarded to KBR—

That is Halliburton—

> represents the most blatant and improper contract abuse I have witnessed during the course of my professional career.

This woman was honest and public about what she saw. She was demoted. She lost her job. That job has now been filled by someone else, someone who has 40 years experience with the Government but has no contracting experience. A person with 20 years contracting experience, the highest civilian official in the Corps of Engineers