

to prioritize the needs of our troops. They are the ones who know what needs to be done and what the timing is. They have left no doubt that this funding is urgently needed, without arbitrary deadlines or unrelated pork, both of which are in the bill.

Unfortunately, there are a number of Members who want to call the shots and micromanage the execution of the war. I understand there are different views about the war. There are different views about what our role should be. But the fact is, we are there now. We have had a change in direction. We have some new ideas, new leadership. But we have the troops there. They need to be supported financially so they cannot only do their job, certainly, but protect themselves. If we don't get this funding to the troops, the first thing to be cut without this supplemental will be facilities maintenance throughout the services, particularly the Army.

In addition, counseling programs for both troops and their families will have to be cut back. As to this idea that there is no hurry, that we can find the money somewhere else, Members need to be sure they understand that finding it somewhere else takes it away from someone else who has earned it, either through service or families of service people. More and more troops and their families are seeking counseling, and reducing funding at this critical time certainly needs to be avoided.

Failing to act immediately will have real-life impacts on military personnel. I should think we could come to that understanding. I don't know quite what the timing is seeking to do—apparently, impress on the President the points of view being made on the other side of the aisle or whatever. But he has made it clear what he is going to do. We know that. We know we have to go there and get it vetoed, come back and find something that is acceptable. All that takes time. All the time we spend puts more risk on the military and their families.

I believe failing to enact this legislation very soon will have real-life impacts on our military personnel. I can't find much reason for that. If we can't take care of our troops' mental health and see that they aren't living in dilapidated barracks, we will have a hard time ensuring they are able to fight when the Nation calls. I hope we can continue to remember what giving these people are doing, what they are sacrificing. We need, of course, to support them.

It is very simple. If our troops don't have the training to deploy, then our soldiers and sailors overseas cannot come home, and that is kind of the situation we are increasingly in now. At this point the only priority should be funding our troops in the field. Even though we have other work to do, certainly if we look at priorities, what could be more important than dealing with the needs of our troops overseas.

I don't know if James Baker would have been any clearer when we reiter-

ated that the Iraq Study Group report does not set timetables or deadlines for the troop withdrawal.

James Baker said:

The [Iraq Study Group] report does not set timetables or deadlines for the removal of troops, as contemplated by the supplemental spending bill the House and the Senate passed. In fact, the report specifically opposes that approach. As many military and political leaders told us, an arbitrary deadline would allow the enemy to wait us out and strengthen the positions of extremists over moderates.

Several months ago the President indicated he would establish a new direction in Iraq. General Petraeus is back in Washington today to report on the counterinsurgency plan. Certainly, it isn't doing everything we want it to yet. It hasn't achieved success yet. But it is moving in the right direction. We have a change in people. We have a change in leadership. We have a change in the plan. It has only been 3 months since we installed the general and only 60 percent of the troops are in place he had wanted and suggested were necessary. Despite these modest improvements, the other side wants to pack up and admit defeat. They are also claiming the war is lost, and that is unfortunate, especially when our troops hear those comments. In any event, I hope this Congress does what is responsible and sends the President a bill. Our troops deserve to know Congress will provide them with the funding they need to succeed.

I wanted to talk on that issue. It is one of the most important we have. I look forward to proceeding with what will be before us on the floor now, education. Sharpening up our competitiveness is very important. I am hopeful we can assure Members that this program with this money and additional spending will have some impact. As we look at it, we have lots of programs that are designed to strengthen education, yet we don't have a very good measurement of whether those dollars are causing things to happen that we hoped they would.

I look forward to that.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, may I inquire how much time remains in morning business on our side?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Nine minutes.

Mr. CORNYN. I thank the Chair.

EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, for the past several weeks, there has been a lot

of debate and discussion about the emergency supplemental appropriations bill that has been pending now before Congress for more than 2 months. Completion of this emergency supplemental is critical for our troops serving on the front lines and for their families here at home.

The President has requested, and Congress should be prepared to send immediately to the White House, a clean bill that meets our obligations to the troops. This legislation should not be used as a vehicle to pass billions of dollars of unrelated Federal spending or impose artificial deadlines on our commanders in the field. We have to move forward with this important military funding legislation because our troops deserve nothing less.

I want to highlight a few of the items that are included in this supplemental appropriations bill so our colleagues can appreciate how essential it is to get these funds to our troops as soon as possible.

This funding will ensure that our forces who are engaged in operations overseas have the very best force protection equipment available, as well as the most effective weaponry, communications gear, munitions, and other essential items.

For example, high priority items in the supplemental for our forces in Iraq and Afghanistan include: funding for body armor and other personal protection items; aircraft survivability components, radios, night vision equipment, armored vehicles, and high mobility, multipurpose vehicle Fragmentation Kits; funding for Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Systems, at \$2.4 billion.

Yes, that Improvised Explosive Device Defeat System is the very type of technology we need to protect our troops from the type of weapon that has been more responsible than virtually any other for injuring our soldiers.

In the supplemental, more than \$5 billion in funding is designed for the ongoing surge of U.S. forces to support General Petraeus's revised strategy in Baghdad. Nearly \$4 billion in funding is to accelerate the transition of two Army brigade combat teams and establish a new Marine Corps regimental combat team. Nearly \$2 billion is to increase the size of the Army and Marine Corps to build combat capability, and lengthen the time soldiers and marines have between deployments.

There is some very important equipment our troops are being denied while we linger in passing this important supplemental. As I mentioned a moment ago, IEDs, or improvised explosive devices, continue to strike our troops during ambushes, and IEDs are responsible for a substantial number of the casualties.

The Marines and the Army have responded to enemy tactics with the acquisition of substantial numbers of up-armored HMMWVs and advanced armor kits for other vehicles. But the Army

and Marines must continue to develop and field a mine-resistant ambush protected, MRAP, combat vehicle fleet capable of sustained operations on an IED-heavy battlefield.

A type of the so-called MRAP is depicted on this chart I have in the Chamber. I believe this particular one shown here is known as the Cougar. What is distinctive about this vehicle, which is so important to get to our troops, is it represents a change in technology, with a V-shaped hull underlying this vehicle, which actually will disperse the energy from an improvised explosive device away from the troops located inside the vehicle.

I had occasion to visit a manufacturing facility located in Sealy, TX, owned by Armor Holdings, which is constructing these very same vehicles, which are the subject of some of the funds contained in the supplemental.

The President's fiscal year 2007 supplemental request asked for \$1.83 billion for mine-resistant ambush protected, or MRAP, vehicles like this one shown in the picture. In addition, Senator BIDEN offered an amendment, which passed the Senate 98 to 0, that provided an additional \$1.5 billion in funding for these critical MRAP vehicles. The total MRAP funding in the supplemental is now almost \$4 billion.

From what I saw in Sealy at the Armor Holdings facility, and from what I have heard from our troops, this is exactly the kind of equipment they need but which is now being delayed as Congress continues to debate this supplemental appropriations bill.

The mine-resistant ambush protected vehicle is an armored combat vehicle capable of providing superior protection to our warfighters against these kinds of IEDs.

According to Marine Corps BG John Allen, Deputy Commander of Coalition Forces in Anbar Province, in more than 300 attacks since last year, no marines have died while riding in a new fortified MRAP armed vehicle. There has been an average of less than one injured marine per attack on the vehicles, while attacks on other types of vehicles caused more than two casualties per attack, including deaths, according to Brigadier General Allen.

Our deployed servicemembers in Iraq and Afghanistan deserve this latest class of armored protection to protect them against the ever-present IED threat, and they do not need funding for this important vehicle to be held up.

Let me close by highlighting the effect of delayed supplemental funding on our military.

The Army announced on April 16 that because of the lack of passage of this supplemental, it will materially slow spending to various places. In order to stretch the money it has, the Army will tell commanders to slow spending in certain areas so war-related activities and support to families can continue. The Department of Defense will also request that Congress approve the

temporary reprogramming of \$1.6 billion from Navy and Air Force pay accounts to the Army's operating account.

Beginning in mid-April—about this time—the Army has begun to slow the purchase of repair parts and other supplies, relying instead on existing inventory to keep equipment operational. Priority will be given to repair and refurbishment of immediately needed war-fighting equipment, while training and other nonmission critical equipment repair will be deferred.

In addition, the purchase of day-to-day supplies with governmental charge cards will be restricted, nonessential travel will be postponed or canceled, and shipment of equipment and supplies will be restricted or deferred altogether, unless needed immediately for war efforts. The Army has added it will also delay the repair of facilities and environmental programs unless the work is for safety or health reasons, or has effects on family support.

These actions carry significant consequences, including substantial disruption to installation functions, decreasing efficiency, and potentially further degrading the readiness of non-deployed units.

These decisions may actually add to the Army's costs over time. Just as importantly, as Army Deputy Budget Director William Campbell said in the *New York Times*:

Frankly, what I worry about is that second- or third-order effect that might affect a soldier or a soldier's safety or his ability to do a mission.

Mr. Campbell said:

As we put these brakes on, I do worry about the impact that we don't know about, that someone will take some action trying to do the right thing, but it will have a negative impact on the ability of a soldier to do his or her job.

The *New York Times* also reported that unless the budget standoff is resolved by the end of June, Pentagon officials have warned that units preparing to go to Iraq may not have enough money to undertake all of their required training.

It should go without saying, but apparently it needs to be said again, our troops need this funding, and they need it soon. Without it, it is simply a fact that our troops will be put at increased risk. We have been ready for weeks to work in good faith to pass a clean supplemental funding bill the President can sign as soon as possible. But every day we do not fund our troops is a day their ability to fight this war is weakened and they are exposed to additional danger.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

AMERICA COMPETES ACT

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 761, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 761) to invest in innovation and education to improve the competitiveness of the United States in the global economy.

AMENDMENT NO. 904

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk on behalf of myself and Senator ALEXANDER.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New Mexico [Mr. BINGAMAN], for himself and Mr. ALEXANDER, proposes an amendment numbered 904.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To strike the NIST working capital fund provision)

On page 44, beginning with line 16 strike through line 2 on page 45.

On page 45, line 3, strike "(d)" and insert "(c)".

On page 47, line 8, strike "(e)" and insert "(d)".

On page 47, line 21, strike "(f)" and insert "(e)".

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, at this point I will yield the floor. I know my colleague from Tennessee wishes to speak about a variety of issues, and then there is another amendment which we also will be sending to the desk for Senator INOUE, who will be here fairly shortly, related to provisions that have come from the Commerce Committee.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, we have Senator INOUE here, who has played a major role in the development of this legislation, and I believe we will have a little later Senator STEVENS, who is right behind me now, and Senator DOMENICI after that. So I am going to let the two distinguished chairs of the Commerce Committee speak.

Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, technological innovation is the lifeblood of U.S. economic growth and well-being. To achieve growth and success, the United States must continue to support the two critical components necessary during the early stages of the innovation ecosystem: education and basic research.

A pipeline of well-educated secondary school students feeds into the college ranks, which in turn feeds into the graduate schools. Graduate students engage in challenging and cutting edge