

Russia, Germany, Poland, Ireland, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, Taiwan, Vietnam, and Hong Kong.

They are cutting business taxes or capital gains taxes or turning to a flat tax in the name of economic growth. A study of 86 countries last year by KPMG International showed that tax cuts attracted business investment with minimal loss of old revenue. And that loss was offset by new revenue from increased hiring and spending.

Does that sound familiar? It is the economic plan that in the 1980s helped raise our Nation out of one of our worst economic situations and reach new, undiscovered heights. But instead of maintaining a tried and true economic path, the party in power is proposing to do just the opposite and raise taxes. The rest of the world is competing to lower their tax rates the fastest in order to attract businesses, jobs, investment, and wealth. But here, in the United States, Democrats want to spend more than \$1 billion of the Social Security surplus, increase the national debt by \$2 trillion, and raise taxes by an estimated \$900 billion—the largest tax hike ever. And their plans contain no proposals to cut or eliminate wasteful spending.

In a Nation where we have always thrived when given the opportunity to grow, the Democrats' plan just doesn't make sense. We need to return to the principles of Ronald Reagan—we need to trust the American people with their hard-earned money. Let them keep more of it so that they can provide for their families, save and invest for their futures, and maybe even take a chance on a business they have been dreaming about.

We also need to give businesses the tools to compete in this very global economy. When countries around the world are lowering their tax rates to attract businesses, it puts us in a difficult position. Companies flock to the best environment, so higher tax rates clearly put American businesses that want to grow here at a disadvantage. It also puts our workers at a disadvantage when competing against workers all over the world.

Taxing, spending and stifling opportunity have never been the answers to our economic woes. Presently, our economy is healthy and strong because of tax relief that the Republican Congress provided.

But that is the past. The question now becomes, what are we going to do today? The corporate income tax rate in America is the second highest in the industrialized world. Instead of looking at ways to raise taxes, I believe this Congress should be looking at ways to make us more competitive by lowering taxes. That is the big challenge that is before us today: to keep the economy strong, to provide better-paying jobs to America. Do we raise taxes, or do we keep taxes low? Do we try to lower those taxes that are too high?

I believe the answer is simple. It has been proven by history. It has been

proven by John F. Kennedy and has been proven by Ronald Reagan and has been proven by George W. Bush. We need to take those lessons of history, learn from them, and expand our economic opportunities, the opportunities for jobs in America.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

IRAQ

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, as we approach the sixth anniversary of September 11, 2001, we are reminded of the consequences of ignoring the threat al-Qaida and other “mufsidoon” terrorists pose to our Nation. Al-Qaida and radical extremists declared war, or “Hirabah,” on this Nation in the early 1990s, and not until 2001 did we finally take that threat seriously. While some in our own country refuse to believe this reality, that terrorists—Osama bin Laden, Ayman al Zawahiri—agree that Iraq is the central front in the war on terror, our entire intelligence community testified in open session before the Senate Intelligence Committee last January that to retreat from Iraq prematurely on a political timetable would invite disaster. They testified that a precipitous withdrawal of American forces would lead to chaos, regional sectarian conflict, Shias and Sunnis killing each other. It would create a safe haven from which al-Qaida could launch further and much more robust attacks on America, and it could lead to the possible deployment of troops, this time not to a fledgling democracy but to prevent the spread of a radical Islamic Caliphate, with a capital in Baghdad and borders reaching from Spain to Indonesia. A precipitous withdrawal would also send a message to the enemies of freedom all over the world that the American people lack the resolve to win; that while our brave military cannot be defeated, politicians in Washington can; that when the going gets tough, America gets going—home.

Next week, General Petraeus will deliver a progress report on the new strategy in Iraq. I expect this report to show that finally we are seeing real progress in the security situation in several key areas. This issue should not be a political one, but unfortunately there are those who are politicizing our fight there. This battle is too important to be used by those who want to declare defeat in Iraq for their own short-term political gains in 2008, claims such as, “the war is lost,” and claims that the success of the surge “misses the point” are troubling at best and dangerous at the worst.

Sadly, there are some in this body who are vested politically in defeat. I find it disappointing that some in Congress would now say they will refuse even to believe General Petraeus, despite the fact Democrats and Republicans unanimously approved his appointment in February.

General Petraeus takes his responsibility for our troops on the front line seriously. He is highly respected, has an outstanding military career, and should be listened to. I am confident he will deliver a report based on facts on the ground and not political conditions at home.

I hope more of my colleagues will listen to our military leaders when they deliver Iraq's progress report. The worst case scenario would be for a majority in Congress to ignore our military leaders and continue to demand timetables, withdrawal dates, and attempts to control troop movements. Military decisions must be made by our military commanders on the ground, not micromanaged by Congress in our wonderful air-conditioned hall, thousands of miles away.

We have seen what has happened in the past when politicians have tried to run a war—from Vietnam to the Iranian hostage crisis.

On the political front, I agree that Prime Minister Maliki is not getting the job done, at least not getting the job done on the timetable that we have artificially set, but that much more work needs to be done. However, as we have seen for months now, progress is occurring from the bottom up at the local level. Our military, our leaders, and our troops in the field tell us that they are being successful. They are making progress. This is no time to quit.

The Al Anbar Province, where I and several Intelligence Committee members visited a few months ago, has been demonstrating tremendous signs of progress, even back then. This was the area controlled by al-Qaida just a year ago, where al-Qaida said they were going to establish the headquarters of their evil empire, the Caliphate.

In fact, today, General Jim Jones will be releasing his report that reached the same conclusion I did after my visit. You saw different headlines in the paper today about that report—not surprising. They wanted to focus on other sites. But today's Washington Post reported:

U.S. and Iraqi alliances with Sunni tribal forces in Anbar province have produced “real and encouraging” military progress and intelligence cooperation, and there are promising signs they can be replicated elsewhere.

It is here, where local tribal leaders and sheiks are cooperating with American and Iraqi Army commanders to take their neighborhoods back from al-Qaida. As a result, we have seen a decrease in sectarian violence, an increase in weapons cache discoveries, and some relative stability.

This is a classic example of how General Petraeus's counterinsurgency strategy, or COIN strategy, is working.

We should have had this policy 2 or 3 years ago. But General Petraeus has written a book, the Army and Marine field manual. When he talks about dealing with the counterinsurgency, you go in, you clear, you hold, you work with local forces, and you help

them rebuild. Show them that there is progress that can come when they cooperate with those of us who are trying to prevent violence and terrorism from taking over their country.

When we were there, the marines in Ramadi had just finished rebuilding the Blue Mosque, the sacred point for Sunnis in Al Anbar, and they are using that. We are working with them.

Our military is beginning to replicate these successful lessons in other parts of Iraq. Sure progress is slow, but progress is real. With a new counterinsurgency strategy in place, our military shows the momentum going our way, and with this momentum it is clearly the wrong time to cut the legs out from under them with a new strategy. We are witnessing the increasing likelihood that our troops can find success and return home victorious. Even previous critics such as the Brookings Institution's O'Hanlon and Pollack, writing in the *New York Times*, said this is "a war we just might win." But let me be very clear about one thing.

Our U.S. national security interest is seeing relative peace and stability established and maintained in Iraq for the short and intermediate term because only by assuring that stability, and our coalition forces working with Iraqi security forces, can we ensure we will avoid the genocide among Shias and Sunni, the opening of Iraq to a safe haven for al-Qaida and its related terrorist elements, and the likelihood of a regionwide sectarian war, bringing in other countries in the region, creating havoc, chaos, threatening Israel, cutting off oil supplies, and having an international crisis.

Long term, we have an interest in seeing real reconciliation and political accommodation accomplished by the elected officials of the Iraqi Government. Iraqis are going to have to make those decisions for themselves—who does it and how they do it—but we have to realize that before you can have political compromise and success, you have to have stability.

Secondly, political reconciliation takes time. It took a long time to put the United States of America together. If you read, as I hope you have, the book about Lincoln's Presidency, "A Team of Rivals," you see even in 1860–1864, we were still fighting those battles in a war at the same time, but Abraham Lincoln persevered and we came through.

So not only as a policymaker but as a father concerned about our future generations, I understand the tremendous sacrifice our troops have made in support of a policy in Iraq. Our troops on the ground have told me, in many different ways, they understand they are making progress. They understand they are making these sacrifices; they are willing to do this for the good of our country. One particular quote sticks in my mind when they were first told about the possibility that Congress would set arbitrary time limits for withdrawal. Their response was: We

have made far too many contributions and too many sacrifices to see it all be for naught.

This coming from troops on the ground who have seen their colleagues shot up and sent the belongings of lost comrades back home. They made a contribution to the peace and security of the United States, and they do not want us pulling the rug out from under them.

Let's remain committed to seeing the job done to protect this country from the radical and extremist attacks of al-Qaida and others. Our Nation's security, our credibility in the world, the freedom of millions of Iraqis and many other people threatened by this kind of terrorist attempt to establish a caliphate are depending upon us.

I urge my colleagues to listen carefully and accept the recommendations of General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, two men of unquestioned integrity who will be presenting the situation on the ground, not as we view it on TV, not as some mischaracterize it but from the people who have the responsibility for our missions, our vitally important missions, important not only for Iraq and the Middle East but to our own national security.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, I wish to follow on my distinguished colleague's remarks regarding the situation in Iraq.

I had the opportunity to visit there a week ago today. I went to Iraq because I wanted to see for myself, on the ground, the conditions there in advance of General Petraeus's and Ambassador Crocker's report. I am happy to report I believe what I saw was significant military progress.

My first stop on the visit was in Tikrit. I got a full briefing there of the conditions in this area, which was Saddam Hussein's birthplace, a place that was well known as a place of a lot of al-Qaida and Sunni insurgent activity.

This area was under control. This area was moving in the right direction. Significant progress has been made in pacifying and bringing Tikrit to a better situation.

I had a very interesting visit then to Patrol Base Murray. Patrol Base Murray is about 12 to 14 kilometers south of Baghdad by the Tigris River. It is an area that was totally controlled by al-Qaida a few weeks ago. Our brave men and women in uniform moved in as the last brigade of the surge. See, the surge began in the middle of February, I guess, but it did not conclude until the last brigade reported for duty, and that was in early June, late May. This brigade, the Stryker force, moved into this area under very difficult circumstances, and they have had a battle on their hands. But their commanders reported to us that under the most difficult of circumstances, they have made incredible progress, and that area is beginning to turn and turn dramati-

cally. They are working with the locals. I spoke with an Iraqi gentleman who is cooperating and working with our forces there in trying to bring a normalcy of life to people who live in this part of Iraq and is making progress. It is working not without some losses, not without the grief of losing one of our valued soldiers and many casualties, but at the same time progress has been made.

Under the most difficult of circumstances and intense heat, their morale is incredibly high. The fact is that by all measures, this is a successful outcome to this particular aspect of our surge. The surge is doing precisely what it was intended to do, to clear and sustain and work with the locals as partners. All of those things seem to be working as intended, as General Petraeus laid out.

I had the opportunity to spend some time with General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker to hear their assessment of the situation and hear some indication of what their report might yield. While we certainly need to allow them to speak for themselves when they come, I did get the definitive impression that the metric they utilized to sense and see whether, in fact, progress is being made, all seem to be moving in the right direction—not evenly, not without setbacks, but certainly significant progress is being made.

The strategy has shifted dramatically. It so happened that as we were shifting our strategy, al-Qaida and their excesses had been more than the local Iraqi communities could stand, and so we have had a confluence of interests, as many Iraqi leaders and tribal leaders and provincial leaders have turned against al-Qaida, understanding the way of al-Qaida is not the way that would be best for the Iraqi people. So this is a good confluence. This confluence has brought about the kind of incredible results the Senator from Missouri was speaking of in Al Anbar Province. So I believe a political reconciliation is ultimately the only way in which this will be a successful outcome. But the conditions on the ground are beginning to be such so as to allow the kind of a peaceful country to then begin the difficult process of political reconciliation.

There is no question that the Maliki Government has not delivered as hoped, but at the same time, some hopeful signs are beginning to emerge. There is no question the political progress lags behind the military progress. But I would expect it always would be so. The reason the military surge went ahead is so there could be the conditions for political progress.

Over the last several weeks, there have been meetings that have resulted in the beginnings of what I believe to be the political accommodations that need to take place. I think particularly important are the debaathification law and also the law that would allow for local and provincial elections. These

will go a long way toward setting the stage for the kind of political reconciliation that ultimately will make Iraq a peaceful country.

I wish to touch a moment on the report by General Jones on the conditions of the Iraqi military. I got a very positive assessment from General Petraeus. Their casualty rate is 3 to 1 to ours. They are taking the fight to the enemy, and they apparently are conducting themselves in stellar fashion.

However, they do need our help and will continue to need our help. I think it is important we note, as General Jones reports, that while he sees progress by the Iraqi military, surely they are going to be needing our help in logistics and air cover and things such as that for some time to come.

There is a big difference between them taking the brunt of the fight, which I think they are poised to do in the months to come, and still continuing to need the kind of backup and support that undoubtedly will take longer for them to build. It is a big difference for our military to be assisting in logistics than it is to be at the front of the battlefield. I think the Iraqis might be in a position to do so. I do not think there is any question that our goal is a successful Iraq, an Iraq that will not be a safe haven for al-Qaida, nor will it give Iran the kind of political control over this country that would be cataclysmic to the security and stability of the region. That is our goal.

As a result of that goal being achieved, then we will be able to withdraw our troops. But the goal ought to not be troop withdrawal at all costs. That would be a mistake for our country. It would be a mistake for the region. I believe that while progress is difficult and the sacrifices are great, that enough progress is being made for us to understand the way forward is a way of continuing involvement there until such time as Iraq has reached the point of stability that they can govern themselves and also provide for their own security.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Colorado.

AMENDMENT NO. 2622

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I rise to speak on amendment No. 2622, which the Senate will be voting on later today offered by Senator SALAZAR.

Mr. President, I regret that I must rise to oppose this amendment from my friend and colleague from Colorado. But this issue is of too great importance to the men and women who are fighting for our freedoms around the world.

My colleague has characterized this as an Army versus the ranchers and farmers issue. I do not think this is our fighting men in the military versus farmers and ranchers, and here is why. Because I believe there are willing sell-

ers and willing buyers in this particular instance. Private property owners, I have been told, approached the Army and said: Look, we have some land available we want you to consider in your plans to expand a needed training area, for the Army to consider looking at dealing with us and selling that land.

So I think this particular proposal does not need to be an Army versus farmers and ranchers. I think this can be worked out with deliberation and thought during this process. Two years ago, the entire Colorado congressional delegation made a successful argument to the BRAC Commission to keep Fort Carson Army Base in Colorado Springs open. We made a commitment that if the Army kept Fort Carson open and even added soldiers, we would make sure our soldiers stationed there would be provided with adequate training to do their job.

The Army kept Fort Carson open and restationed two new brigades, totalling more than 10,000 new soldiers, to the mountain post due to the commitment made by the entire Colorado delegation.

It would be hypocritical for us as a delegation to now tell the Army: We want those new soldiers, and we want the economic benefit from those new soldiers, but we are unwilling to do what is required of us as a State to ensure that our men and women stationed at Fort Carson are provided with adequate training.

This amendment is a horrible precedent that will impact more than Fort Carson. It is a national security issue at a time when our Nation is engaged in armed conflict. Currently, the Army has a backlog of 2 million acres needed for training. The shortfall is expected to increase to 5 million acres by 2011, according to the Department of the Army's response to the National Defense Authorization Act of 2007, which is available for perusal by my colleagues.

This issue could be reaching your State. Congress should be working with the Pentagon to address this serious backlog that is hindering the Army's ability to provide adequate training our soldiers need and deserve.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the letter of opposition to the Salazar amendment from the Secretary of Army, Pete Geren.

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

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. ALLARD. According to the Army, the Salazar amendment is too restrictive. It prevents them from doing anything on Pinon Canyon to resolve even their differences with the farmers and ranchers, including photocopying handouts or maps to the citizens with questions, holding community meetings to find common ground, and even doing a required environmental impact statement.

Senator SALAZAR and I have offered amendments to last year's and this year's Defense authorization bill to address many of the valid issues raised by concerned citizens and elected officials whose communities are affected by the proposed expansion of Pinon Canyon, the need for any expansion of Pinon Canyon by the Army, and the economic and environmental impact to south-eastern Colorado. I agree with my colleague that the Army needs to answer questions. I agree we need to ensure the residents and communities impacted by any expansion are part of the process and their concerns are addressed. I believe this amendment would not accomplish those goals but, rather, actually keep us from getting needed answers to which they are entitled. Where we disagree is on the approach. This amendment will have long-term unintended consequences we could regret. I ask my colleagues to consider those consequences before they vote.

I ask my colleagues to vote no on the Salazar amendment.

EXHIBIT 1

SECRETARY OF THE ARMY,

Washington, DC, September 6, 2007.

Senator JACK REED,

Acting Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Military Construction, and Veterans' Affairs, Washington, DC.

Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON,

Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Military Construction, and Veteran's Affairs, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN AND SENATOR HUTCHISON: I am writing to express the Army's views regarding the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site (PCMS) in Colorado. The Army wishes to expand the PCMS in order to provide our Soldiers with the best, most realistic, and doctrinally sound training possible.

The Army's need for U.S.-based training and maneuver space will increase significantly as a result of the planned return of approximately 70,000 troops from overseas bases. These Soldiers previously conducted much of their training and achieved their readiness standards by using overseas training and maneuver space; the same requirements are now being shifted onto an existing U.S. installation footprint. Adding an increased requirement to a finite amount of training space can be partially managed with work-arounds, but there are limits. At some point, training can become degraded in quality and unrealistic. Moreover, the land itself must also recover from intense training exercises. Adding more training exercises to the same plot of land can pose environmental risks.

In addition, changes to technology and the organization of our units requires each Brigade Combat Team (BCT) to be more agile, be more readily deployable, and be able to secure significantly more territory than their Cold-War era counterparts. To properly train our BCTs, they need to meet higher home-station readiness levels than ever before. To attain this readiness, they need adequate space to maneuver under realistic conditions. Shipping units elsewhere is not an acceptable substitute for home-station training because it would take valuable time from Soldiers away from their Families—Soldiers and Families are already bearing tough sacrifices on behalf of the nation.