

funds. My amendment would give us another year to determine whether this is the wise thing to do. I believe it is a reasonable approach.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. I thank the Senator from Oklahoma for coming to offer his amendment. He has my commitment that we will take the time to review it. We have not had a chance to do so as yet. We want to know what the impact is on the FAA budget, as well as the training needs we have, but we will evaluate it as quickly as possible and work with him in order to dispose of it.

Mr. INHOFE. I thank the Senator.

Mrs. MURRAY. I encourage, again, Senators to come to the floor and offer their amendments so, like the amendment we are currently looking at, we have time to review it and get it done in a timely fashion. I remind all Members that if they wait until the last minute to get their amendments here, they may likely not be considered or adopted simply because of time. Again, if Members are here, come tonight quickly, get your amendments up. We will have a chance to review them and hopefully be able to dispose of them.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Mr. SALAZAR). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 7 minutes.

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

IRAQ

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, it is time for us to review our policy in Iraq. We have been aware this day was coming for some time.

To recap how things have occurred, we had hearings in the early part of this year to confirm General Petraeus. This has been General Petraeus's third tour in Iraq. I first had the opportunity to meet with him when he commanded the 101st Airborne in Mosul. He was part of the initial invasion—a brilliant combat commander who impressed all of us on our CODEL.

I later visited him in Iraq when he was in charge of training the Iraqi military and their police. It was a critical moment in their development. He was asked to go back early to do that, and he agreed to do so.

He then returned to the United States and wrote the counterinsurgency manual for the Department of Defense. Before the ink was dry on that manual, the President asked him to go back to Iraq, for the third time, to lead this critical effort at this critical time.

So I wish to first say how disappointed I have been that some have seen fit to attack this man, attack what he might say. I am afraid, frankly, the purpose of that was to sort of preemptively smear his testimony. I saw most of his testimony this afternoon. As a member of the Armed Services Committee, I expect to see more of it tomorrow and to be there tomorrow when he testifies before our committee and to hear it all in complete form.

So let me say this: It is right and just and appropriate this Congress, which sent him there in January, I believe, which voted on May 24 to fund the surge—we had a lot of debate about this surge, whether we should do it, whether we should increase our troop levels. The situation in Baghdad was not good. The situation in Al Anbar had made some improvement but was not where we wanted it to be. The country was in a difficult time.

The President said: Let's step up the troop level. Let's have a surge. We had much debate about it. I know our leader, HARRY REID, went to the White House along with NANCY PELOSI, the Speaker of the House. They came out with an agreement, and only 14 Senators opposed—in a truly bipartisan vote—funding of this effort.

So I have been disappointed that some announced it a failure even before it got started good. But we all committed to one thing; and that is that General Petraeus would come back and he would report to us and we would hear from him.

Some thought we needed more than that. So we as a Congress included in our funding legislation a requirement that another commission be set up, an independent commission, with retired officers and so forth. GEN Jimmy Jones, former Commandant of the Marine Corps and former Supreme Allied Commander Europe, chaired that commission. He reported last week.

Also, we had the Government Accountability Office do an independent analysis of the benchmarks in Iraq.

Now we are having General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, who is clearly one of the best respected Ambassadors in the State Department with experience in this region of the world. They are giving us their report today and tomorrow.

If Congress concludes this effort ought not to go forward, so be it. But we ought to do it after listening to our generals. In fact, I noticed some of the polling data showed more than two-thirds of the American people prefer to have their decision process be informed by the military, and only less than 10 percent, I think, or maybe 20 percent, said the Congress should set the military standards.

Here is an article by Bing West I noticed in the National Review in May. He has been to Iraq multiple times. He has written two books on the Iraq war. He said:

The new American military team has infused the effort with energy and strategic

clarity, and seized the initiative. In this war, the moral/psychological element outweighs the physical by 20 to 1.

I think there is a good bit of truth in that. I think we have seen a more coherent, focused strategy under General Petraeus's leadership.

With regard to his testimony and its truthfulness, I remember interviewing him before he was to testify in January, before being sent to Iraq, and he said: I will tell you one thing, Senator. I am going to tell you the truth as I see it if you send me there.

So the next morning I thought I would ask him that very question before the committee while he was under oath. I said:

You've indicated, I think, in your opening statement [General Petraeus] that you would, but I'd like you to say that so the American people would know that a person who knows that country [Iraq], who's written a manual on counterinsurgency—if you believe it can't be successful, you will tell us so we can take a new action. That was my question to him: Will you tell us if you think this will not work? Because he told us and made the public statement our effort in Iraq was difficult, but he did not think it was impossible.

He replied to me this way:

Sir, I firmly believe that I have an obligation to the great young men and women of our country who are putting themselves in harm's way, and certainly to all Americans, to tell my boss if I believe that the strategy cannot succeed at some point.

I believe this man told us the truth today as he saw it and will tell us the truth before the Armed Services Committee tomorrow, as God gives him the ability to do so. He finished near the top of his class at West Point. He was No. 1 in his class at the Command and General Staff College. He has a Ph.D. from Princeton. He has been in combat. He has led one of the Army's finest combat divisions in combat. He has trained the Iraqi Army. He knows most of the Iraqi leaders pretty well because of his time there. We could not have a better person. We need to listen to him and then make our independent judgment after he testifies.

So I thank the Chair for this time. I hope all Americans will participate, as Congress should, in evaluating where we are today. Then, once we make a decision about what our next step will be, I would call on my colleagues to not do things that undermine the strategy once we have established it. Don't come up 2 weeks after we have voted on what to do and then say it is a failure. Let's don't do that this time. Let's agree to—no matter what it is, no matter how it comes out—have our debate and then our vote, and let's establish a policy and stick together and work hard to make it a success.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed to morning business, with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MEXICO TRUCKERS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I wish to be heard on this Dorgan amendment, the pending amendment, with regard to the Mexican trucker demonstration project. I wish to speak on it because I was involved in it the last time this issue came up.

I have always urged that we deal with this in a fair way and in a responsible way. We don't want unsafe trucks or unsafe drivers coming into our country, whether they are coming from Mexico or Canada. But I have always felt that maybe we had an attitude toward trucks coming in from Mexico; it was very different from those which might be coming from Canada. I think we need to have rules in place and we need to have proper precautions, but I think we also need to be rational and reasonable. If we don't have at least a demonstration project, what is going to happen when our trucks want to go to Mexico? I will guarantee you one thing: If I were the President of Mexico, I would say there are not going to be any American trucks coming down here. Can't we use some common sense? This is not some enemy satellite sitting on our border. This is a place where we can begin to make progress.

I know it is easy to demagogue this issue and get into all kinds of flights of fancy about, oh, yes, this is the beginning of a superhighway coming from Mexico; that the border is just a bump in the road and this is part of the one nation movement in North America. I don't know where all this comes from. Maybe I am naive. I don't advocate that. But I think we are really turning this into another case of trying to make a bogeyman out of our neighbor to the south.

I don't have a vested interest in this. I was in the trucking business once upon a time in my life. I know a little bit about trucking. This is not a case where my State is on the border and is going to be abused one way or the

other. So I have the ability to try to look at this objectively and to ask that we try to make sense in how we deal with all of this.

This is not a new issue. We have been working on this, planning for this, preparing for this for 14 years to make sure it is done properly, including proper inspections, proper requirements. There is a program we are trying to put in place which would be subject to an additional audit at 6 months and when the project concludes. Remember, it is a pilot program. We are not putting it in place in perpetuity. We want to check it and see how it works and if it is done correctly.

Since 1982, trucks from Mexico have only been able to drive in a 25-mile commercial zone along U.S. borders. Think about that. They can come across the border, and they must stay in a 25-mile commercial zone and then offload to U.S. trucks before they can come into the United States.

The North American Free Trade Agreement contains a trucking provision that was put on hold in 1995 by President Clinton, and, without being critical of him, he wanted to make sure we had looked at it enough and that there were safety requirements, and so forth. At that time, I thought, frankly, he was probably doing the right thing. Then, in 2001, a NAFTA dispute resolution panel ruled the United States was violating NAFTA obligations by adopting a blanket ban on trucks from Mexico. So then we kind of got into a fight about it, and that is where I got directly involved, and that was in 2002 on the appropriations bill. It detailed, as a result—again, we didn't say we were going to do it regardless; we said, OK, we are going to try to find a way to do this, but we are going to have some specific requirements. We detailed 22 safety requirements that had to be met prior to allowing trucks from Mexico to drive beyond the U.S. 25-mile commercial zones.

Here are the 22 safety requirements and mandates we included in that bill. I am going to read every one of them because I want to make sure my colleagues understand that this is not something we are doing frivolously or carelessly. We had specific requirements, and they have been met:

Establish mandatory pre-authority safety audits.

Conduct at least 50 percent of the safety audits on-site in Mexico.

Issue permanent operating authority only to Mexican trucking companies who pass safety compliance reviews.

Conduct at least 50 percent of the compliance reviews on-site in Mexico—including any who do not receive an on-site pre-authority audit.

Check the validity of the driver's license every time a truck comes across the border.

Yes, we want these drivers to be licensed. I am sure that when we go forward with this, that some trucker gets in here with an unsafe truck or without a driver's license or with illegal immigrants in the belly of that truck, it will get huge coverage. I don't want any of

that to happen. So we have these safety checks, and we have a check of the validity of the driver's license.

Assign Mexican truck companies a distinct Department of Transportation number.

Inspect all trucks from Mexico that do not display the current CVSA decal.

Have State inspectors in the border States report any violations of safety regulations by trucks from Mexico to U.S. Federal authorities.

Equip all U.S.-Mexico commercial border crossing with weight scales—including weigh-in-motion systems at 5 of the 10 busiest crossings.

Study the need for weigh-in-motion systems at all other border crossings.

Collect proof of insurance.

Limit trucks from Mexico operating beyond the border zone to cross the border only where a certified Federal or State inspector is on duty.

Limit trucks from Mexico operating beyond the border zone to cross the border only where there is capacity to conduct inspections and park out-of-service vehicles.

We must ensure compliance of all—all—U.S. safety regulations by Mexican operators who wish to go beyond the border zones.

Improve training and certification for border inspectors and auditors.

Study needed staffing along the border.

Prohibit Mexican trucking companies from leasing vehicles from other companies when they are suspended, restricted, or limited from their right to operate in the U.S.

Forbid foreign motor carriers from operating in the United States if they have been found to have operated illegally in the United States.

Work with all State inspectors to take enforcement action or notify U.S. DOT authorities when they discover safety violations.

Apply the same U.S. hazardous materials driver requirements to drivers from Mexico hauling hazardous materials.

Provide \$54 million in Border Infrastructure Grants for border improvements and construction.

Conduct a comprehensive Inspector General's review—to be certified by the Secretary—that determines if border operations meet requirements—

That are required.

This is lengthy.

Now, I believe it has been pointed out on the floor that the inspector general may have indicated: Well, it may not be possible to do all this. We may not be able to check every truck—let's see here. Any truck with a safety violation we stop until the problem is fixed.

There are questions about do we have the infrastructure and capability to do that. But the specificity of the 22 mandates have been met, and these are the critical provisions that are important.

The companies in Mexico must pass a safety audit by United States inspectors, including review of drivers' records, insurance policies, drug and alcohol testing, and vehicle inspection records. Every truck that crosses the border as part of the program will be checked every time it enters. There is a question about whether we can do that. Remember, this is temporary and a pilot program. We need to check every one of them. If we don't have the infrastructure to do that, we should add it.