

has been working with Senator ROCKEFELLER, and they have done what has been good work. There has been very little infighting between them.

The Attorney General of the United States, newly selected, has said he will launch an inquiry. We will see what this inquiry will be. I expect both the Intelligence Committee and the Attorney General of the United States to investigate aggressively the answers to questions regarding this coverup.

But the CIA, the Justice Department, the Bush White House, every American should know that if these investigations encounter resistance or are unable to find the truth, I will not hesitate to add my voice to those calling for a special counsel. For example, this weekend, JOE BIDEN, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, called for a special prosecutor. He may be right. I am willing to wait and see what develops before I join in that call.

We must take every step necessary to protect our country's integrity and defend this country's great moral responsibility and authority that we have.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

MOVING FORWARD

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, let me say I share the view of the majority leader that there is clearly a way forward on the farm bill. We are now making substantial progress and should be able to complete that bill in the near future.

Also I think there is a way to get a Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act measure out of the Senate that could be signed by the President.

With regard to the remaining efforts here on the spending issues, it is, indeed, hard to understand the complaints we are hearing from the other side on our supposed lack of compromise on spending. We have sought actually compromises all year in dozens of appropriations committee and subcommittee hearings, which is the normal process. But we are now a quarter of the way into the fiscal year. Responsible people understand the time to get the work done is now. As the majority leader indicated, Christmas is 2 weeks from today. We can keep going back and forth with the House maybe endlessly. But that would only further delay our fundamental responsibility of getting these spending bills signed into law.

So what is the way to do it? The way forward: Let's protect the taxpayers' wallets, fund the troops, and end this otherwise unproductive exercise.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period of morning business for 60 minutes with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half.

The Senator from Texas.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I believe we have two speakers on our side in morning business this morning. I would ask unanimous consent that I be allotted 15 minutes of that, and Senator GRAHAM from South Carolina be allotted the second 15 minutes.

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

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about an issue that should be the first priority of this Congress, and that is to fund our troops during a time of war, to make sure they have the funds they need, to have the equipment, to have logistical support and other support they need in order to fight this global war on terrorism.

There have been a lot of rumors circulating around Congress about what the way forward is going to be on the appropriations—I can only call it a mess—that confronts us when only 1 appropriations out of 12 bills has been signed by the President.

Yesterday I heard the reports from the chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, DAVID OBEY, which said he was pulling the proposed omnibus appropriations bill because he was upset with negotiations on that.

He said this—and this is the one part I do agree with—

I want no linkage whatsoever between domestic [spending] and the war. I want the war to be dealt with totally on its own. We shouldn't be trading off domestic priorities for the war.

I would rephrase that that we should not be doing anything to tie the fate of our troops to wasteful pork projects or excessive Washington spending.

I am glad to see the distinguished majority whip on the floor because I do have a unanimous consent request that I know he will be interested in.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2340

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 484, S. 2340. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid on the table, and that any statements relating to the bill appear at this point in the RECORD.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. DURBIN. Reserving the right to object, I ask unanimous consent that the remarks I am about to make not be taken from the time allotted to the Senator from Texas in terms of morning business.

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

Mr. DURBIN. Reserving the right to object—and I will object to this request—let me say at the outset that what the Senator has asked for is to return to a bill which was considered by the Senate on November 16, 2007. There was a failure of a cloture vote, which is a vote requiring 60 Senators to vote affirmatively before the bill goes forward. The final vote was 45 to 53. In fact, three Republican colleagues of the Senator from Texas joined in opposing that cloture vote. This is a Senate appropriations bill. As the Senator from Texas knows, the Constitution requires that spending bills originate in the House. So the House would either object or ignore this bill or blue slip the bill in a way that would mean that whatever we would do here would not achieve the result asked for by the Senator from Texas.

As of today, we have lost 3,888 American lives in Iraq. The amount of money which we have provided, according to the administration, would allow them to continue the war at least to the end of March and perhaps beyond. So the troops are not without the resources they need. What the Senator from Texas has proposed is an approach which is on its face unconstitutional and has been rejected by the Senate on November 16, including three Republican Senators. For that reason, I object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

Mr. CORNYN. I differ with the distinguished Senator from Illinois. Obviously, the bill that was voted on earlier contained numerous restrictions and deadlines on deployment of our troops in Iraq. For that reason, cloture was denied. It is not that there wasn't support. Indeed, I would hope there would be unanimous support to make sure our troops get the emergency funding they need in order to continue military operations until such time as Congress can appropriate the remainder of the President's request of \$196 billion.

It is important to note that this is emergency bridge funding for the troops. While I don't disagree with the distinguished Senator from Illinois that the military can borrow from Peter to pay Paul and move funds around within their budget to avoid disaster up until about mid-February, the fact is, the White House has now warned that 100,000 civilian jobs depend on this emergency funding.

Here is a story from the Army Times dated December 10, 2007, that says the Department of Defense is sending notices of layoffs this week—2 weeks before Christmas—to 100,000 civilian employees warning them, unless Congress

acts, they are going to be out of a job. This is not the way to show our support for the troops. In fact, this is non-support for the troops.

It is important to note what is included in this emergency funding that should be voted on today and decoupled from the debate over the Omnibus appropriations bill or any other continuing resolution. Here are the most notable provisions: One, operation and maintenance funding—this finances a broad range of activities, including combat operations, transportation of personnel and equipment, fuel, equipment maintenance, and general base support for our troops.

It also funds the Iraqi security forces and Afghanistan security forces. If we have any hope of bringing our troops home sooner rather than later, it is because we have succeeded in training the Iraqis to take our place, to provide that security so we can bring our troops home as soon as possible. By not providing the funding, we are delaying that prospect, not advancing it.

The third general category is funding for the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization—the Joint IED Defeat Organization—which is dedicated to finding new ways to neutralize the primary threat to our troops in Iraq, which is improvised explosive devices. We ought to be providing the funding for this Joint IED Defeat Organization so they can save the lives and limbs literally of American troops.

This emergency funding being blocked by Senate Democrats would go to repair, replace, and upgrade military equipment. It also provides for military personnel funding, special pay and benefits, including hazardous duty pay for our troops, as well as the Defense Health Program. Those are the categories of items being blocked by today's objection by the Democratic leadership.

I am disappointed by the decision to block this emergency funding for our troops in Iraq. This is the material support we can provide to show our troops we are behind them, regardless of our differences on the war or how the war is being conducted. We see time and time again how this Congress, egged on by special interest groups such as Moveon.org, has been willing to use our troops as part of their political debate. This is particularly appalling when we are the ones who first asked and voted—by a vote of 77 to 21, I believe, 77 affirmatively—for the use of force in Iraq. We are the ones who voted and have the responsibility for authorizing that use of force. For us now to deny the funding they need to foster a situation where money has to be moved around from accounts just to get by and 100,000 civilian employees are being put on notice that they are going to be out of a job unless Congress quits playing a game is simply unsustainable.

Last January, of course, we unanimously confirmed GEN David Petraeus to lead our forces in Iraq. As we all

know, there was serious concern about the way the military operations in Iraq were being conducted, and many, if not all, of us called for a new way forward. We unanimously agreed that General Petraeus was the right man for that job. In fact, I am proud to say that vote to support General Petraeus's nomination and that vote of confidence in the new strategy, the so-called surge of forces in operations in Iraq, proved to be a correct one.

General Petraeus, with his counterinsurgency strategy and with the hard work and dedication of our men and women in the military, has brought us closer to a stable Iraq that many had simply given up and thought not possible. Reports are appearing daily in the newspaper and on the electronic media showing that violent attacks continue to decline in Iraq and communities across that country. Reports show people not only feel safer, they are safer. Refugees who have left Iraq to go to Syria and other places to protect their lives and their families are now returning to Iraq because Iraq is safer. Taxi drivers have resumed their old routes in neighborhoods without regard for whether predominantly Shiite or Sunni, and neighbors and families previously separated by the war are reuniting as refugees are returning by the busload.

My colleagues have had a chance to show their support for the troops. Unfortunately, we see that support sorely lacking. The call of groups such as Moveon.org seems to be so loud and has such command on the other side of the aisle that it drowns out these positive reports about the improved security situation in Iraq. It leads some, unfortunately, to block emergency funding that our troops need in order to carry out continued security operations and training for Iraqis to take our place so we can bring our troops home. Unfortunately, they end up being part of the partisan political games that tend to dominate Washington, DC. My colleagues who continue to insist that Iraq is lost and that the surge has failed or that Iraq is not making political progress are not talking about the Iraq of today.

I have said it before and I will say it again: Betting against the men and women of the U.S. military is always a bet you will lose. When our colleagues on the other side of the aisle said that all is lost even before the surge started, frankly, they have been proven wrong. They lost that bet by betting against the men and women of the U.S. military.

Michael Totten, a reporter embedded in the once volatile region of Fallujah, wrote last week in the *New York Daily News*:

There's a gigantic perception lag in America these days. The Iraq of the popular imagination and the Iraq of the real world are not the same country.

Secretary of Defense Gates said on Saturday that:

Civilian deaths across Iraq are down about 60 percent.

Recently, there was the lowest number of single-day attacks across the nation in three and a half years.

The progress is real. But it is also fragile.

Why in the world, given this progress and given the fragility of the conditions in Iraq, would my colleagues on the other side of the aisle deny the emergency funding that our troops need? What possible rationale could there be for making that part of the political games and dysfunction that seems to dominate the Congress?

We have to make our policy decisions based not on the Iraq many have remembered from the past but the situation on the ground today which is improving, rebounding, and growing. Yet we still hear the doomsayers and those admonishing General Petraeus and his strategy. I am reminded of something a professor once told me when he said speaking louder doesn't make you any more right. We need to listen to the facts and not the loudest voices.

We all have an important question to ask ourselves. It is not about should we have gone into Iraq or why we went into Iraq. Those questions are now relegated to the history books. The fact is, we are there. The question we must ask now is, Given the current situation in Iraq and the Middle East, what is the best course of action for the United States? We should ask ourselves, Will withdrawing troops from Iraq before securing it make us any more or less secure at home? I have no doubt—and history will agree—that the more stable we can make Iraq, the better chance they have of becoming a fully functioning partner in the Middle East, a democracy governed by Iraqis.

A precipitous withdrawal, whether caused by deadlines imposed by Congress or by cutting off funding or by leaving funding in doubt, as our Democratic colleagues have done by objecting to this unanimous consent request today, would be detrimental to the security and stability of Iraq and would endanger American lives at home.

How could that be? The intelligence community tells us that a power vacuum in Iraq left by a rapid American withdrawal would create a failed state and an opportunity for al-Qaida to reassemble and reorganize.

It would create an opportunity for a training ground and an organizing location for al-Qaida and Islamic extremists to launch future terrorist attacks against the United States or our other allies or American forces in the Middle East. Such action would also likely necessitate future American military operations in the region that would put us behind where we are today, not advance where we are today.

I think we can all agree that kind of scenario is completely unacceptable and certainly not in the best interest of the United States. The situation in Iraq, as it stands now, needs a continued military presence with a force large enough to handle potential problems until the Iraqis are able to govern and defend themselves. The more capable the Iraq military and police forces

become, the fewer of our troops are necessary to assist them in that effort. But it does not help them to cause them to question whether we are going to provide the financial support for our troops and for the training of Iraqi military and police forces. But that is exactly what the Senate is doing today by blocking this unanimous consent request.

Many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, still now, are left to claim that the lack of Iraqi political reconciliation is the reason they are dissatisfied with the outcome in Iraq, having lost the argument by the improved security arrangements as a result of the surge and the counterinsurgency strategy of General Petraeus.

I have to wonder whether we are holding the Iraqi Government—Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 2 more minutes.

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

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, by now moving the goalposts, saying first the surge would not work to now having to declare the obvious, that the surge is working and the military situation is better, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle and the naysayers are saying: Well, really the problem is a lack of political reconciliation. But I have to ask whether we—a Congress that has proven itself to be dysfunctional over the last 8 months or 11 months now—whether we are holding the Iraqis to a different standard than we would actually hold ourselves to. We have not exactly been a model for how Congresses should function.

I think it is unfair for us to continue to move the goalposts and say that the significant reconciliation efforts that are occurring in tribal areas, in the provinces, and local areas do not count because clearly they do count, with things like the Anbar awakening and the work being done around Iraq now from the bottom up, as opposed to the top down, which is helping to make for a more secure Iraq, and making sure that Iraqis, rather than Americans, are principally responsible for maintaining security and safety in Iraq, in conjunction with American military troops.

I am discouraged and disappointed that our colleagues have blocked this emergency funding for our troops, putting 100,000 civilian employees of the Department of Defense in doubt during this Christmas season as to whether they are actually going to have a job come February and causing our troops to question our commitment to support them during a time of war. That is not the message this Senate ought to be sending, and I urge my colleagues to reconsider.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, is it my understanding I am recognized for 15 minutes. Is that correct?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Fifteen minutes, without objection.

Mr. GRAHAM. Thank you, Mr. President.

IRAQ

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, to start this discussion about what to do in Iraq, I think we need to sort of take inventory of where we are, what common ground we do have. I do believe there is a vast, wide, and deep support for the men and women in the military by the average Republican and Democrat and Independent citizen and Members of Congress, and that is indeed good news for our country. It is not one of those situations where people came back from Vietnam and were not well received by their fellow citizens. For that, we should all be grateful.

I would like to put this debate in a little different context. As my colleague from Texas said, whether we should have gone into Iraq is sort of a matter for historical discussion. The question for us as a nation is winning and losing, and can you put Iraq in terms of winning and losing? I think you have to because our enemy has. Our enemy, al-Qaida and other extremists groups, looks at Iraq very much as a battlefield and a battle they want to win and us to lose. That is why bin Laden has rallied the jihadist and al-Qaida sympathizers to go to Iraq and go to the Land of the Two Rivers and drive the infidel out, because I think they understand pretty clearly that if Iraq can reconcile itself, become a stable, functioning democracy, with an Iraqi spin to it, where a woman can have a say about her children, where the rule of law would reign over the rule of the gun, and be a place that would absorb religious tolerance, it would be a nightmare for their agenda. So our enemy is very certain in their own mind about what would happen if we won in Iraq.

Again, winning to me would be a stable, functioning democracy, tolerant of religious differences, where all groups would have a political say, where a woman would have a meaningful role in society regarding her children and their future. And it would contain Iran. It would be a buffer to Iranian ambitions. It would deny extremist groups, such as al-Qaida, safe haven. That, to me, is winning, and that, to me, is very possible. The reason I say it is very possible is because it is in the best interests of the Iraqi people themselves to achieve that goal. There is a Shia majority in Iraq, but they are Iraqi Shia. They are Arabs. The Persian Shia majority—there has been a war between these two countries in the past decades and a lot of animosity. So the general feeling on the streets that I have found from many visits to Iraq is that, generally speaking, the Iraqi population does not want to be dominated by anybody, including Iran.

Now, the biggest news of the surge that is not being reported enough, in

my opinion, is that given a choice and an opportunity, a Muslim population, the Iraqi Sunni Arabs, rejected the al-Qaida agenda in Anbar. The al-Qaida movement in Iraq was formulated and inspired by outside forces. Leaders from al-Qaida internationally came into Iraq to rally people to the al-Qaida cause. They played a very heavy hand in Anbar, which was brutal—from the small things such as banning smoking to burning children in front of their parents who did not cooperate. They imposed a way of living on the Iraqis in Anbar Province for which the Anbar Iraqi Sunni Arabs said: No, we don't want any more of this. And the sheiks and all the tribes came to our side because al-Qaida overplayed their hand. So the real good news for me is that given an opportunity and being reinforced, the al-Qaida agenda will not sell, and people within the region will turn it down and reject it. That would not have happened without the surge.

I think most of us do not appreciate what life is like in a country where if you raise your hand to be a judge, let's say, not only do you become personally at risk, they try to kill your family—the forces that do not want to reconcile Iraq.

Political debates and discourse in this country can be very contentious, but on occasion we find that middle ground to solve our problems. It is hard and difficult to compromise in an environment where the people who want you to fail literally will kill your family. So the lack of security in the past has been our biggest impediment to reconciliation. Thank God for General Petraeus, General Odinero, and all under their command. You have done a wonderful job.

This we should all agree upon: that the surge, as a military operation, has been enormously successful and I think will be the gold standard in military history for counterinsurgency operations. Instead of bleeding it dry of funds and putting it at risk, we should reinforce it politically, monetarily, and in every other way.

A political leader can reinforce a military leader. Our military, because of our system of government, depends on us, those of us in elected office, to give them the resources to execute the mission they have been assigned. Who among us believes we understand Iraq better than General Petraeus militarily? Who among us advocated the surge as proposed by General Petraeus? Who among us understands counterinsurgency operations better than the general and his staff? None of us, if we would be honest with ourselves. He is the expert in this area. He has been given an ability to engage in military operations with a completely new theory, and it is working—undeniably working.

Security in Iraq is better. Anbar has literally been liberated. If you told me a year ago, this time last year, we would be moving marines out of Anbar because the security environment