

visitors and \$36 million for a new electronic travel authorization for travelers from Visa Waiver Program countries which was authorized by the 911 implementation bill.

I am also pleased that another initiative I advocated—the development of a national strategy for use of closed circuit televisions to enhance national security—was included in the final omnibus package.

The omnibus also helps us strengthen chemical security by providing \$50 million—a significant increase over the President's original request—to protect chemical facilities from terrorist attacks. We know that chemical sites pose a serious homeland security vulnerability and we must ensure that DHS can help them enact meaningful security measures as soon as possible. I am also pleased that this legislation safeguards the ability of states and localities, who are our partners in homeland security, to enact stricter chemical security standards where appropriate.

Finally, the omnibus also includes a \$10-million increase for the Office of Bombing Prevention that Senator COLLINS and I added as an amendment on the floor.

We have to confront the fact that highly lethal and simple-to-make IEDs have become the preferred weapon of terrorists and the Department of Homeland Security must have adequate resources to help State and local officials defend against this likely threat.

But, as I said earlier, there are some problems with this bill and I hope we can improve upon it next year.

To begin with, this bill contains a record amount of earmarks for homeland security—\$443.8 million by my count. Earmarks can be valuable, but I fear that at this kind of record level we run the risk of being forced to take money away from more important initiatives.

For instance, the pre-disaster mitigation grant program, which was not previously earmarked, now contains 96 specific earmarks totaling \$51.3 million—nearly half the total appropriation for this program designed to mitigate the impact of future disasters.

Also, regrettably, the omnibus appropriations bill does not include funding for a consolidated headquarters for DHS, which is essential to establishing a unified culture at the Department.

Currently, DHS is spread throughout 70 buildings across Washington and the Capital region, making communication, coordination, and cooperation between DHS components a significant challenge.

The elimination of this funding simply prolongs an unacceptable status quo and hinders the homeland security mission, and I will work hard to restore this funding in future appropriations.

Finally, I am deeply disappointed that the omnibus bill unnecessarily delays full implementation of the

Western Hemisphere travel initiative, WHTI, until June 1, 2009.

Inadequate inspection of travelers to the United States from Canada, the Caribbean, and Mexico was identified by the 9/11 Commission, the GAO, and the State Department as a critical vulnerability to our travel systems. The language hardening the implementation deadline included in the Omnibus bill ties the hands of DHS and prevents it from finalizing additional security enhancements before such date.

Again, the Omnibus appropriations bill is a good landing but not a perfect one and I hope as we begin wrestling with next year's budget we can make the appropriate fixes that will get certain needed programs off the ground.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, as vice chairman of the Senate Sportsmen's Caucus, I am concerned about misguided efforts by some in Congress to ban Federal funding from flowing to international wildlife conservation organizations and programs that support regulated recreational hunting, particularly on the African continent.

The facts are clear. Twenty-three African countries currently license approximately 18,500 hunters, generating over \$200 million annually in the process. Regulated recreational, sport, and trophy hunting is saving many animal species in Africa. Licensed and regulated tourist hunting boosts local economies and propagates wildlife by providing foreign governments and villagers a financial incentive to protect and conserve local wildlife populations.

In September of this year, I joined my colleagues on the leadership team of the Senate Sportsmen's Caucus in sending a letter to our conferees negotiating the Department of State and Foreign Operations funding bill with the other Chamber. We laid out the facts and noted that even the National Geographic News reported in March 2007 that “trophy hunting is of key importance to conservation in Africa by creating [financial] incentives to promote and retain wildlife as a land use over vast areas . . .”

Tourist hunting has proven to be a valuable tool to conserve wildlife and habitat and has contributed to the survival of the African elephant, white and black rhino, leopard, markhor, argali, and other species.

Trophy hunting organizations such as the Dallas Safari Club located in my State of Texas have a vested interest in promoting the welfare of wildlife and they provide countless resources that eliminate human suffering and improve livelihoods in remote areas of the world by conserving wildlife, growing local economies, and reducing poverty.

It is my hope that all Members of Congress will recognize the positive impact that conservation and hunting organizations have on the preservation of species, and that Federal partnership with these groups leverages significant private sector contribution to global wildlife conservation.

CIVILIAN RESERVE

Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has been pursuing for a number of years the establishment in the State Department of a civilian reserve to work on postconflict reconstruction. Our first meeting on this issue was in December 2003. Its need has become increasingly apparent as time has passed, and it is now urgent that we adopt the legislation authorizing the civilian reserve and providing the Department the funding and authorities it needs to get the job done.

Senator LUGAR has provided leadership in both the committee and in working with the executive branch on this issue, and Senator BIDEN and I have worked closely with him in developing the concept and pursuing its implementation. In April 2007, Senator LUGAR, joined by Senator BIDEN and myself, introduced S. 613, the Reconstruction and Stabilization Act of 2007. Senators WARNER, COLLINS, and DURBIN are also cosponsors of S. 613. We demonstrated that the legislation has overwhelming support in this body when it passed by unanimous consent in the 109th Congress. It should now be taken up again, passed in the 110th Congress, and sent to our House colleagues for their immediate consideration.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have an op-ed by Senator LUGAR and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice that appeared in the December 17 Washington Post titled “A Civilian Partner for our Troops” printed in the RECORD at this point.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Dec. 17, 2007]
(By Richard G. Lugar and Condoleezza Rice)
A CIVILIAN PARTNER FOR OUR TROOPS
WHY THE U.S. NEEDS A RECONSTRUCTION
RESERVE

It is unusual in Washington when an idea is overwhelmingly supported by the president, a bipartisan majority of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the State Department, and both the civilian and military leadership of the Pentagon. But that is the case with the proposed Civilian Reserve Corps, a volunteer cadre of civilian experts who can work with our military to perform the urgent jobs of post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction.

Creating such an institution is essential for our national security, and the Senate should authorize the creation of the corps. Over the past decade and a half, the United States has learned that some of the greatest threats to our national security emerge not only from the armies and arsenals of hostile nations but also from the brittle institutions and failing economies of weak and poorly governed states.

We have learned that one of the central tasks of U.S. foreign policy for the foreseeable future will be to support responsible leaders and citizens in the developing world who are working to build effective, peaceful states and free, prosperous societies.

Responding to these challenges is a job for civilians—those who have the expertise and the experience in the rule of law, governance, agriculture, police training, economics and finance, and other critical areas. The

State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development are working heroically to meet this need.

But the truth is, no diplomatic service in the world has within its ranks all the experts or expertise needed for this kind of work. As a result, from Somalia and Haiti to Bosnia and Kosovo, and now to Afghanistan and Iraq, our government has increasingly depended on our men and women in uniform to perform civilian responsibilities.

The military has filled this void admirably, but it is a task that others can and should take up. The primary responsibility for post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction should not fall to our fighting men and women but to volunteer, civilian experts.

That is why President Bush called for the establishment of a volunteer Civilian Reserve Corps in his 2007 State of the Union address. "Such a corps would function much like our military reserve," he said. "It would ease the burden of the armed forces by allowing us to hire civilians with critical skills to serve on missions abroad when America needs them." Both the State Department and the Pentagon support this initiative.

The Senate has likewise recognized the need for a stand-alone rebuilding capacity, and last year unanimously passed legislation to create a Reconstruction and Stabilization corps within the State Department. Legislation before the Senate would take further steps to establish the operational elements necessary for this work. The bill has three parts:

First, it calls for a 250-person active-duty corps of Foreign Service professionals from State and USAID, trained with the military and ready to deploy to conflict zones.

Second, it would establish a roster of 2,000 other federal volunteers with language and technical skills to stand by as a ready reserve.

Third, it would create the Civilian Reserve Corps the president called for, a group of 500 Americans from around the country with expertise in such areas as engineering, medicine and policing, to be tapped for specific deployments. The corps could be deployed globally wherever America's interests lie, to help nations emerging from civil war, for instance, or to mitigate circumstances in failed states that endanger our security.

If Congress acts soon, the administration may be able to deploy the reconstruction corps in Iraq and Afghanistan. But future conflicts are equally important. If we are to win the war on terrorism, we cannot allow states to crumble or remain incapable of governing.

We have seen how terrorists can exploit countries afflicted by lawlessness and desperate circumstances. The United States must have the right non-military structures, personnel and resources in place when an emergency occurs. A delay in our response can mean the difference between success and failure.

Congress has already appropriated \$50 million for initial funding, and an authorization to expend these funds is required. The bill is widely supported on both sides of the aisle and could be adopted quickly.

Yet this legislation is being blocked on the faulty premise that the task can be accomplished with existing personnel and organization. In our view, that does not square with either recent experience or the judgment of our generals and commander in chief.

It would be penny-wise but pound-foolish to continue to overburden our military with reconstruction duties. We urge Congress to stand up for our troops by giving them the civilian help they need.

HONORING SENATOR TRENT LOTT

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I wish to take a few moments this morning to pay tribute to our colleague from Mississippi, Senator TRENT LOTT.

Senator LOTT has been at the center of every major policy debate in the Congress for more than three decades.

Senator LOTT was a fierce and effective advocate for limited government. No one who has been involved in debating budget, tax, or health policy with Senator LOTT—as I frequently did on the Finance Committee—can question his commitment to conservative principles of government.

But what made Senator LOTT effective was that he understood that others had different views, and he understood the importance and art of compromise. He was driven to produce results, and he was unrelenting in his efforts to build coalitions to pass legislation and make things better for the American people. He recognized that, in the Senate, compromise is necessary to get things done. As majority leader, he was able to find policies that could hold his caucus together and at the same time win support from the Clinton White House and moderate Democrats.

In more recent years, he has played a key behind-the-scenes role in bridging differences between the parties. No one was better at counting votes and knowing the limits of his negotiating flexibility. When TRENT LOTT told you he could produce the votes for a proffered compromise, he delivered. You could count on it.

Perhaps most importantly, Senator LOTT had an uncanny ability to persuade and cajole people to get a deal. He has a great sense of humor and a seemingly unparalleled ability to develop friendships and relationships with members of Congress on both sides of the aisle and both ends of the Capitol. He always knows who the key players are, and what will bring them to the table. These skills have produced a great record of accomplishments for Mississippi and the Nation.

Personally, I will miss his quick wit, his insights, and his friendship. As Senator LOTT prepares to leave the Senate, I wish him and his wife Tricia all the best.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, Senator LOTT is true gentleman: agreeable, good-humored and kind in nature. When I think of TRENT LOTT, the words consensus and congeniality come to mind. These words come to mind because TRENT has become one of the greatest mediators this body has ever seen, his ability to bring all parties on an issue to the table and when the negotiations are done, each person leaves with a smile on their face. Senator LOTT's humor and affable personality made working with him a pleasure, even when a compromise could not be found and the time for negotiating was over, nobody would leave the table feeling alienated, or hurt they left with TRENT still a friend and eager to work on the next solution.

TRENT LOTT'S 34 years of service to his country as a Member of Congress will forever be remembered in chapters of our Nation's history and by his constituents of Mississippi. But the one who deserves just as much thanks and gratitude is his college sweetheart and wife Tricia. While TRENT has been dedicated to his job and country for the past 34 years, he has been devoted to his family.

Senator LOTT's congeniality could be attributed to his humble beginnings, southern upbringing, or a number of things, but no matter the reason he still remains a humble man with many friends and a man who is truly kind to others. As I have grown to know him through our work here in the Senate, I have seen that his kindness stretches beyond the walls of his duties on this floor and to all who encounter him. TRENT always has a smile on his face and extends pleasantries to everyone he passes. Here in Washington, it is easy for one to be consumed by self-importance and it is easy to forget to treat others as we wish to be treated, but he never did. While in the lobby of another office, Senator LOTT will have a candid conversation with the much overlooked staff manning the front desk or anyone in his path—he will go out of his way to make sure everyone is greeted with warm hello.

I have agreed with Senator LOTT on many issues, and I have disagreed with him on many as well, but in each scenario we always ended with a handshake and a good laugh. This institution is losing a man who could bring people together and allow bitter enemies to lay down their swords.

This is a man who will be missed by many and I wish Senator LOTT the best of luck as he retires from his years of political service.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a distinguished colleague from the great State of Mississippi, Senator TRENT LOTT.

As a reformer, a defender and a leader, TRENT LOTT leaves behind a legacy in the U.S. Senate, the fruits of which we will reap for years to come. In 1996, TRENT joined with colleagues to enact an historic welfare reform bill. He pushed for reform again when he supported President Bush's tax cut package early on in the administration. TRENT has never been afraid to step forward in faith toward what he knows is right.

A champion for a strong national defense, TRENT supported the President's military action in Iraq as well as increased defense spending. As a defender himself, TRENT understands the importance of a strong military and the value of rewarding those who valiantly serve this country. In 1998, he urged Congress to raise the pay for our military men and women, an act that hadn't occurred in a decade.

As the first man to serve as the whip in both the House and the Senate, TRENT could not have accomplished