

The global struggle against terrorism has compelled us to increase our foreign policy engagement in places such as the Horn of Africa, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

In the coming decades, we must realize that China and India are two countries that will play a larger role on the world stage.

One would have hoped that as India takes on a greater role as a regional power, and as a growing economic power, that pro-democracy elements within Burma could look to associate with its next-door neighbor, the largest democracy on the planet.

Our Nation is pursuing a closer relationship with India in terms of military-to-military contacts and in the development of nuclear energy. India should be wary of coddling the junta in Burma.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ASEAN, recently put out a strong statement condemning the brutality in Burma. Instead of echoing the sentiments of Burma's ASEAN neighbors, the Indian Government has only issued tepid statements at best.

In so doing, India has put itself in league with China and Russia.

This is all the more troubling since India had been supportive of Burmese reformers in the early 1990s.

As India assumes a greater role on the world stage, more will be asked of it, and this is just such a case. India needs to recognize that responsibility and abstain from supporting the military junta in Burma.

India needs to use its influence as Asia's longest-lived democracy to associate with the pro-democracy forces of Burma and press for reforms.

Understandably, India has important interests in its neighbor to the east. For one, India wants to counter the influence of China in Burma. That said, it should look beyond its near-term interests.

What better way to blunt Chinese influence in Burma than to work to bring about a Burma that reflects the Indian values of democracy and openness, rather than a Burma that reflects the antidemocratic values of the Chinese Government?

Mr. President, I strongly urge the Indian Government to reconsider its position on Burma; to speak directly to the regime's recent actions; and to work for the cause of democracy and reconciliation in Burma.

Only then can the combination of bad men leading Burma be checked.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

#### 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 for the transaction of morning business for 60 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak therein for 10 minutes each and with the time equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the second half.

#### PASSING APPROPRIATIONS BILLS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, yesterday marked the beginning of a new fiscal year, when all of our projected spending for the next year ought to have been budgeted and allocated to the appropriate programs and Federal agencies. Unfortunately, we have yet to see a single appropriations bill be sent to the President. Four appropriations bills that have been passed are still in conference: the Homeland Security appropriations bill, the Military Construction and Veterans' Affairs appropriations bill, the State and Foreign Operations appropriations bill, and the Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development appropriations bill. But those are stuck in conference and none have been sent to the President for his signature.

What is worse, the remaining eight were never even brought to the floor for consideration by the Senate majority leadership before the end of 2007. One, of course, will be taken up this week—the Defense appropriations bill.

Any business leader or small business owner in America can tell you that entering the fiscal year without an approved budget plan is disastrous policy. But in Washington, we have grown to accept that the Federal Government can basically hold the American taxpayer to a double standard: Do what we say and not as we do. In Washington, we have come to accept that we don't have to budget or pay our bills on time to keep the lights on. Instead, we can pass a law saying it is OK—which we did last week, a continuing resolution, which keeps Government basically on autopilot until November 16 and, as I said, that is a double standard the rest of America is not allowed to meet. Only Congress, only Washington, can do that.

This mentality of fiscal irresponsibility is a disturbing trend. Americans rightly expect us to keep the country running, but to keep it running efficiently and keep it running well, and to be good stewards of the taxpayers' dollars. We can't do that when we legislate on borrowed time and fail to pass any appropriations bills by the end of the fiscal year. Zero

for twelve is a dismal average, even for the Senate.

Despite harsh criticisms for failing to pass all appropriations bills last year, the new majority has failed to pass a single appropriations bill when given the chance this year. Passing appropriations bills is "the most fundamental job Congress is expected to do." That is a quote from our colleague, majority whip DICK DURBIN, December 2006 in the New York Times.

Senator HARRY REID, the current majority leader, said in May of 2007: "The 'Do-Nothing' Republican Congress failed to pass the appropriations bills."

Now we find that notwithstanding their promise of new leadership and change, that situation bears all too similar a comparison to what they complained about last year.

But the lack of urgency in passing these bills is only a part of the problem. My colleagues in the majority have used a few appropriations bills that have been brought forward as a vehicle for their political agenda, and increased spending on expanded social programs and pet projects.

As we debated the Defense authorization bill week after week, the majority party delayed the bill's approval by trying to add and, in fact, successfully adding, in some instances, unrelated amendments—amendments dealing with Federal hate crimes legislation, and immigration was even considered during the debate. Ultimately, these tactics wasted valuable time and delayed essential resources our military is counting on.

As each minute, each day, and each week passes by, we come closer and closer to what is known as an omnibus appropriations bill. For those outside the Washington bubble, let me say that "omnibus" is sometimes translated as "grab your wallet." An omnibus appropriations bill tends to be loaded down with a lot of excess spending and unrelated pork.

If the appropriations bills we have debated thus far are any measure, we are in for major trouble. The spending proposals—an extra \$205 billion on top of the President's budget request over the next 5 years—will force American taxpayers to send even more of their hard-earned pay to the Federal Government. We should instead be working to return their hard-earned money to the American people, or rather allow them to keep it in the first place as much as possible.

Now that we have already missed our own deadline for appropriations, it is time we get serious about these spending bills. I encourage all of my colleagues to join me and vote to pass timely and responsible appropriations bills and reverse this trend of fiscal apathy.

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.

Ms. STABENOW. 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.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak and to have that time allocated toward the majority time in morning business.

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

#### THE BUDGET PROCESS AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH CARE

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, a colleague and friend of mine on the other side of the aisle spoke a few minutes ago about the budget process. I come today to specifically talk about children's health care, but I think it is important to respond to what was said as it relates to the budget process and adopting a budget by October 1.

I was thinking as he was speaking, I have been here now—this is my seventh year, my seventh budget process. We have never met the October 1 deadline—never. In fact, I am not sure I remember having done it in the House when I was there for 4 years, either. We all know it is a nice political argument to make on the floor of the Senate, but it has no credibility because the reality is the October 1 deadline is something that is difficult to meet and we usually work through the fall on the budget. Everybody knows that.

What I think is significant, though, is the fact that if we are going to hold to that test as the test of responsible leadership, 6 of the last 7 years the Republican majority was in charge and 6 times they did not meet an October 1 deadline. In fact, last year, they never got a budget passed at all—at all. We came in as the new majority and had to pick up the pieces and figure out how to keep the Government going for the last half of the year. So I find it disingenuous—and I would say this to my friend if he were here—to come to the floor and make great political speeches and great theater. The reality is we all on both sides of the aisle know that the appropriators are working together now, coming to the floor on a bipartisan basis, to do what we do every single year—every single year in October and November and, unfortunately, at times into December.

But what I am very proud of is the fact that our leader, Senator REID, and our leadership in our caucus take very seriously our responsibilities on the budget; not only putting a budget in place, but a budget with the right values, the right priorities. We are changing the priorities on behalf of the people of this country. We are changing the priorities as they relate to funding the troops and pay raises and making sure our troops have what they need. We are changing the priorities. We will be dealing with a bill later this week as it relates to the Commerce, Justice,

and State appropriations where we are going to stop the cuts the President has made in law enforcement, in the COPS program, in the FBI, and in juvenile justice and drug enforcement. We will work to reinstate that and refocus us on those things that keep our communities safe, keep America safe.

I am very proud of that. I am very proud of the priorities we have been putting in place as relates to this budget. On top of that, we are not digging a bigger hole as it relates to the deficit of this country, because we have returned to a policy that was in place under the former administration, under President Clinton, that simply says if you are going to spend dollars, you have to pay for it. You either have to cut some place in order to increase another or you have to raise revenue. It is a basic principle. It ought to be a no-brainer. But that has been suspended in the last 6 years, creating the largest deficits in the history of the country.

I am happy to come to the floor and talk about budgets and process, and I am very proud of the direction we are going in.

I am also very proud of what we have done as it relates to another absolutely critical priority, and that is children's health care. We have a health care system for low-income individuals called Medicaid. If you work, two parents or a mom may be working two jobs, maybe three minimum-wage jobs to try to make sure she pays the bills and has a roof over her children's heads and food on the table, chances are she is a low-income working parent, or a couple working together, a dad working for his children. Chances are health care is going to be too expensive—just too expensive to buy in the individual market if you don't have it through the place where you work.

Ten years ago this Congress came together in a bipartisan way under a different President to say: We want to help families who are working hard every single day, who care about their children and who are doing everything they can to do the right thing—the values we should be supporting in this country, of hard work, family, and caring about our kids.

We want to help them by putting in place a children's insurance program so that at least the children of low-income working families are able to get the health care they need. It has been a huge success. We have overwhelming support from Governors, Republicans and Democrats, and State legislatures. In fact, this is the ultimate in strange bedfellows. We have the U.S. Chamber and the business community, the labor community, health care providers, children's advocates, and consumer advocates; we have the broadest possible group of Americans with the broadest possible interests that have come together to work with us to be able to design an extension of children's health care and, in fact, to be able to include additional children who qualify under that program for working families. We

passed that on a huge bipartisan vote in this Senate—enough to override a Presidential veto. The House of Representatives passed it with a very large bipartisan vote.

Today, the President, we assume, will be getting this bill. There is only one thing standing between 10 million children getting health insurance in this country, the parents of 10 million children being able to sleep a little easier tonight—there is only one thing standing between that happening and those families and that is the signature of the President of the United States.

So I am here today, as colleagues on both sides of the aisle have done, to thank our leadership—Senator REID and the bipartisan leadership of Senator MAX BAUCUS, Senator GRASSLEY, Senator ORRIN HATCH, and Senator ROCKEFELLER. They have done a magnificent job of doing what we are supposed to do: bring people's diverse interests together, develop a true compromise, and get things done.

I urge this President to look deep inside his heart, take a few moments to talk to some of these families before he puts his veto on this bill. This is one of the most significant things we will do in this Congress. It is one of the most significant moments for this President. He asked us, again, to fund a war that is not paid for. For 41 days of funding of that war, we could pay for 10 million children getting health insurance over the next 5 years. This is about values and priorities. It always has been.

In my home State, I can tell you we have 90,000 children and parents—families who are waiting and hoping and praying that this President will join with all of us in doing the right thing. Too many families are struggling. Health care is skyrocketing. These same families are being squeezed on all sides. Gas prices going up, health care costs are going up, they have challenges in keeping their mortgages, and what will happen to their jobs? Will they be shipped overseas? Will they get a pay cut? What is happening in terms of preparing to send their children to college? Middle-class families are being squeezed on all sides.

For a group of parents who are working very hard but don't have health insurance through their job, this Congress has done the right thing by passing a children's health care bill that will say at least your children will be able to get the health insurance they need and deserve.

When this President was at the Republican convention in 2004 accepting his nomination for reelection for his second term, President Bush said:

In the new term, we will lead an aggressive effort to enroll millions of poor children who are eligible but not signed up for Government health insurance programs. We will not allow a lack of attention, or information, to stand between these children and the health care they need.

Since that time, President Bush sent to us a budget that, in fact, as he funded it, would eliminate well over a million children who currently receive