to restore regular order to the fiscal year 2008 budget process so we can avoid this type of situation in the future. I know that is the goal of my friend from West Virginia, and I pledge to him my best effort to help accomplish this goal.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SALAZAR). The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I thank the Senator for his views. I am absolutely committed to bringing 12 individual bipartisan and fiscally responsible fiscal year 2008 bills to the floor this year. However, for the nine remaining 2007 bills that we must have, we are now 131 days into the fiscal year. Over one-third of the fiscal year is gone, it is over, it is past.

I very much appreciate the Senator and his colleagues for joining me in the bipartisan development of this bill, and I believe we must move forward.

Again, I thank the Senator very much for his cooperation.

I was about to suggest the absence of a quorum, but I yield the floor. I see the distinguished Senator seeking recognition.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now proceed to a period for the transaction of morning business.

BASE REALIGNMENT AND CLOSURE

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I have heard the remarks of the distinguished majority leader, the distinguished chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and the distinguished ranking member. All I have now is hope because the distinguished majority leader has said he will still work to get the BRAC amendment, which I am going to offer, or attempt to offer, this afternoon. I know there will be an objection. But I want it to be on the record what we are trying to do, with the hope, as the leader said, that perhaps we can adopt this amendment and still make the deadline.

The deadline is actually over a week away, and I think if all of us want to fully fund our Base Closure Commission projects, we can do that.

I also will say I am very hopeful from the chairman's remarks that we will have bipartisan bills. As has been noted on this floor already today, I have been chairman and ranking member of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Subcommittee for some 6 years. I have never noticed a difference when I was chairman and when I was ranking member because Senator FEINSTEIN and I were working together, trying to accommodate the needs of every State in our country. We worked so well together that when she was chairman, it wasn't any different from when I was chairman.

I want that to be the case for our appropriations bills again. But I have to say, in all honesty, I don't feel I have had any input into this particular bill. I don't see the bipartisanship. I don't see the cooperation. We could have done what the Senate normally does, and that is allow some number of amendments—not a filibuster amendment tree, not an unreasonable number. But I think some of the issues that have been brought forward today and in recent days, since the H.J. Res. 20 was made known, are legitimate. I believe we would agree on a bipartisan basis, if we had the ability to offer amendments and debate them, that we should be funding the Base Closure Commission recommendations that were ours, with a deadline that is ours so that we can meet our own standard.

I believe we could work that out. We have already passed the exact same $3.1 billion—actually $5 billion—appropriation in this body, so I know we can do it. We have a week. I suggest it would be a wonderful gesture on the part of the majority to allow that to happen.

In addition, what Senator COBURN talked about earlier today, the HIV/AIDS testing of babies, I know there is not one Member on that side who wouldn't make it a priority to give babies a test that would allow them to be inoculated immediately and give those children a chance to have a life. But the funding for the Ryan White Act was cut back, so that is not going to be allowed to go forward.

I don't think that is the intention. I ask, if that is not the intention, can we not sit down as responsible Members of the Senate and work out these few items, work with the House and do a preconference? Nobody wants to delay this legislation, but we would like to have a say.

Where I have talked bipartisanship, that is what we do in the Senate. That is the way we act, in a bipartisan way, which, in the past, the Appropriations Committee has certainly done.

I am disappointed in this resolution. I am disappointed especially in the process that does not allow for an amendment.

Mr. President, is it in order to call up amendment No. 242, the Hutchison-Inhofe amendment to H.J. Res. 20?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in morning business.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. It is not in order then, Mr. President?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct, it would not be in order to call up the amendment at this point.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, the Hutchison-Inhofe amendment is cosponsored by 27 Members of our Senate. The cosponsors, besides myself and Senator INHOFE, are Senators ALLARD, BAUCUS, BENNETT, BROWNBACK, BUNNING, BURR, CHAMBLISS, COBURN, CORNYN, CRAPO, DEMINT, DOLE, ENZI, GRAHAM, KYL, LOTT, MARTINEZ, MCCAIN, ROBERTS, SESSIONS, STEVENS, THOMAS, VITTER, VOINOVICH, and WARNER. That is a good number. That is almost a third of the Senate, and there are many who said they would like to cosponsor the amendment, but they were concerned about stopping the bill or going against the leadership on the Democratic side.

It is clear we can work this out, that people want to have this amendment. The amendment is very simple. It restores $3.136 billion that was taken out of the Department of Defense base closure account, and it is paid for so that we keep the fiscal responsibility with a rescission of .73 percent—that is three-quarters of 1 percent—across the board of all of the accounts, except for defense, homeland security, and veterans.

With a .73-cut, which I think any agency or program could take without any disruption whatsoever, I believe we could fully fund our military and the important operations they are doing, and that is what I think is essential.

I have a much longer set of remarks, but at this point, I will yield for a question from the Senator from Alabama, who I know is on a timetable.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I thank Senator HUTCHISON so much for her leadership on this important matter. While she is here, I wish to ask the Senator a few questions about the situation in which we find ourselves.

I believe it was the year before last that we voted, after much anguish and concern and fear by local communities, to go forward with the BRAC, which is the Base Realignment and Closure Commission. Nobody was sure how that would come out and whether some of our bases would be closed. When the dust settled and the long process concluded, a number of bases were closed. At the same time, we are also closing facilities around the world and bringing back more of our troops that are deployed around the world. Isn't it true that the continuing resolution that is proposed would take 55 percent, or $3.1 billion, out of a little over $5 billion that was set aside to carry this forward? Isn't that correct?

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, the distinguished Senator from Alabama is right. Actually, he may be a little under because the original need was $5.6 billion, and we are cutting it by $3.1 billion. We are cutting it by $3.1 billion. I think that it is a huge cut. It is going to affect the whole synchronization.

We gave the Defense Department 6 years in which to accomplish what the Base Closure Commission recommended, passed and then was adopted by Congress and signed by the President. We have given them a deadline, and yet as the Senator points out, of the $5.6 billion that was in the budget that has been approved by the Senate before, we only have $2.5 billion.

Mr. SESSIONS. In other words, the only way to have a savings under the BRAC is to consolidate facilities and avoid waste. To go halfway with this

project seems to me, clearly, will cause all kinds of backlogs and make it very difficult for our military people to plan. It could actually drive up costs significantly, could it not?

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Yes, and I point out the cost savings projection is $20 billion over the period we would be closing and then gearing up the bases that are being consolidated.

In addition to that, it has been said the majority intends to bring this $3.1 billion back in the supplemental, but the supplemental is outside the budget process; therefore, it is going to be $3.1 billion added to the deficit, which will have to be subtracted from the $20 billion savings we were envisioning from the BRAC.

I have to say to the distinguished Senator from Alabama, I didn't like some of the recommendations of BRAC, but we passed it, the President signed it, and Congress has mandated the Department of Defense to go through with it. We certainly cannot do it halfway if we are going to be responsible stewards of the security of our country, as well as its tax dollars.

Mr. SESSIONS. I agree. I don't think there is anyone here who is more committed to frugality and trying to manage our dollars well in this Senate. I certainly believe in that strongly. We knew upfront we were going to have to have some initial moneys to make these moves and consolidations to save money for years and years to come.

This has the potential to eliminate the whole process, to eviscerate the process and actually run our costs up over the long run; wouldn't the Senator agree?

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I am very concerned about it. I think we are going to cut back on the savings. We are thwarting the mandate we set down by not going forward.

We should have governed last October 1. We should have gone forward in November and December, but for a variety of reasons, including some on our own side, we didn't do that. Now we have an opportunity to do it, and do it right. I am just hoping, and I haven't given up hope, that we will do this the right way; that we will pay for it so that we achieve the objective of staying within that budget because we can do that. It has been planned for, it has been in the budget, and we shouldn't have to add it to a supplemental and increase the deficit for these particular projects.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I thank the excellent Senator from Texas for her work, and I believe she is doing it the right way. She is doing it by staying within our budget.

This funding of BRAC was put in at $5.5 or $6 billion. It was within the budget. What has happened is that money was spent on other programs, and now it looks as though if we are to fund it, we are going to have to add it to the supplemental, which is extra spending and extra debt, more than we should have.

I thank Senator HUTCHISON for her leadership.

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for a question?

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I will be happy to yield to the Senator from Kentucky.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The gentlewoman yields to the Senator from Kentucky.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I still control the floor. I am yielding for a question.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is yielding for a question.

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I also rise to express my complete dismay at the events that have unfolded on the floor of the Senate this week concerning not only debate on Iraq but the BRAC itself. I hope the American people are watching this debate.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, will the very distinguished Senator just allow me 1 minute to make a response to the discussions that have been going on here? Just for 1 minute.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I will be happy to yield to the Senator from West Virginia for a response for 1 minute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I thank the Chair, and I thank the Senator.

I want to assure all Senators that this resolution does not reduce funding for AIDS. In fact, it has significant increases with regard to funding for base closures. This resolution has a $1 billion increase above the levels available under the current continuing resolution. The remaining $3.1 billion that the Senator from Texas is seeking can be addressed—and I assure her can be addressed—in the war supplemental that the Senate will consider next month. There is no need to cut funding for the FBI, the NIH, for NASA, or for our Nation's highways.

I thank the Senator, and I thank the Chair.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I yield to the Senator from Kentucky for a question.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky is recognized.

DOING THE SENATE'S BUSINESS

Mr. BUNNING. First of all, I hope the American people are watching the debate and paying close attention to it. This debate is not just an important lesson in civics and civility, it is a debate that goes back to the days of our Founding Fathers. The Founding Fathers created the Senate to be a body of unlimited debate. This institution was created to be a deliberative body. It was not created for speed or for quick action.

I would like to remind my friend, the majority leader, whom I wish were on the floor, that the Senate is not the House of Representatives. The majority leader and I both served in the House of Representatives. Unlike the House, however, we do not have a rules committee in the Senate that sets the rules for floor debate. Any Senator can come to the floor seeking recognition to speak and offer amendments. In the House, the majority can roll the minority through the Rules Committee. This cannot be done in the Senate. The minority party cannot be ignored. Yet our friends on the other side of the aisle are trying to dictate the terms not only of the debate on Iraq and the resolutions concerning them, they are telling 49 Republicans in the Senate how business will be conducted in the Senate.

I want to be very clear that I would vote in opposition to the Warner resolution. Nonbinding resolutions that question military decisions made by our Commander in Chief and top military generals are not in the best interests of our Nation. But I do support the right of Senator WARNER to get an up-or-down vote on his resolution, even though I would oppose it.

Earlier this week, we had a vote to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed with the Warner resolution. Forty-seven Republicans voted against the motion because we believe we should have more debate, not less, and the ability to offer other resolutions. Yet many of my friends on the other side of the aisle accuse my Republican colleagues of not wanting to debate this issue and not wanting to vote on the Warner resolution. And, not surprisingly, the media is regurgitating the talking points from the other side of the aisle. But nothing could be further from the truth.

Senator WARNER, the author of the resolution favored overwhelmingly by the Democrats, voted against invoking cloture on his own resolution because he believes in Republicans keeping their rights as Senators. We want a fair debate, not a one-sided conversation. We are asking for more debate, not less, like many on the other side of the aisle suggest.

Our request is a simple one. If we are going to vote on the Warner resolution, those of us who oppose this resolution should at least be allowed to offer our own resolution, and the senior Senator from New Hampshire offered his resolution concerning funding for the war in Iraq. Some have said his resolution is incorporated in the Warner resolution, but they are missing two key points. The Gregg resolution expresses our full support of our troops and not support that is just cloaked behind other language that criticizes their mission.

My friend, my good friend, General Petraeus, whom the Senate unanimously confirmed, said in his confirmation hearing that a resolution condemning the President's new Iraq strategy would have a detrimental effect on troop morale. It must be our top priority to assure American troops that we will not cut off their funding midmission. We already are cutting some of their funds, as seen in this year's continuing resolution.

I find it ironic that some of the same Senators who have been on the Senate