

Our military leaders are in the best position to know the needs of our troops. They have left no doubt that the funding is urgent and needed without strings and pork.

Last week, my staff met with General Mattis and General Lehnert of the U.S. Marine Corps at Camp Pendleton. For those of you who do not know General Mattis, he is a straight-shooter, my kind of marine. He offered a grim assessment of the barracks the marines will be returning home to. His report concluded that conditions are unacceptable for the marines and sailors who have just returned from the combat environment. Repairs and maintenance are needed. The service is ready to act. Unfortunately, the first items that will be cut when funding begins to dry up will be this maintenance. So, even though certainly we will have to get money to the troops, this delay will have an impact on the troops who are returning. More and more marines and their families will be seeking counseling, and there will be cuts in the counseling programs that are available for our returning service people. These programs may not be available if we do not move forward. Of course, as I said, it has been 64 days since the start of this issue. Certainly we need to take care of our marines' mental health and see to it that they are not living in dilapidated barracks and we are going to have to work hard to get this done. It is very simple. We can do that.

Over the Easter break, I joined with others welcoming home the Wyoming Army National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery Unit. Let me tell you, to get these troops back home was one of the great events I have seen in a very long time. Like those who came home before them, I am so proud of their service and their sacrifices. Given the lack of passage of the supplemental that was submitted to Congress 64 days ago, I am not sure their return would have happened if it had been scheduled for a few months from now.

Our first and only priority should be the funding to our troops in the field. Unfortunately, the emergency legislation is larded up with pork and extraneous measures. Not only does the legislation attempt to tie the President's hands by micromanaging, but the majority is trying to push through pet projects at the expense of funding our troops.

When the House does return and finally appoints conferees, I hope this Congress does the responsible thing and sends the President a clean bill. Our troops deserve that the Congress give them the funding they need to succeed.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Utah.

#### THE ECONOMY AND SYRIA

Mr. BENNETT. Madam President, during the week we were back in our home States getting acquainted with

our constituents, there was more good news on the economy. I had expected to spend my 10 minutes here talking about the economy. I will do that briefly, but I intend to move to another issue which came out during the week of recess which I think deserves comment.

The news came out about the number of new jobs created in the month of March and a revision upward of the number of new jobs created in February. Without going through the details, I will summarize what this news really means with respect to the recovery as a whole.

Ever since the economy started its recovery after the recession that began in mid-2000, we have created, now, more than 150,000 new jobs every month; every month, 150,000 new jobs over a period of more than 40 months. That sounds impressive, but let's go behind the figures and look at what is really happening in the economy to understand how impressive it should be.

Oversimplifying but taking a number that describes what is happening, every month approximately 900,000 Americans lose their jobs. Their company goes out of business, the company cuts back, things change, they retire and the job is not replaced—whatever it may be, every month roughly 900,000 jobs disappear.

In order for us to be able to say accurately that we have created more than 150,000 new jobs every month, that means the number of new jobs created every month is not 150,000, it is 1,050,000, to produce a net of 150,000. To produce 1,050,000 new jobs every month for over 41 months—which is the record of this economy and this recovery—is pretty extraordinary. Frankly, it is unusual. We take it for granted in America because it happens in our dynamic economy almost automatically. If you go to other economies in the world, you find that this does not happen. Unemployment is high, is stagnant, is continual.

I was in Europe a month or so ago, and picking up an international paper, it said: The German economy is coming back. Unemployment is now down. And then there was another headline that said: The American economy is fairly stagnant; unemployment is stable.

We found, during the break, unemployment hit 4.4 percent. It is as low as it was at the end of the last economic boom. The Germans were excited that their unemployment record was now out of double digits, getting down into the 9, maybe even 8 percent level. That is exciting for them.

The American economy is doing well and does not get the credit it deserves. Perhaps it is the political atmosphere in which we operate, but we keep hearing this described as the Rodney Dangerfield recovery.

It is strong. It is powerful. It is creating new jobs. But if you listen to some, it is in a state of constant disaster. The figures that came out during the break made it clear: The economy

is not in a state of constant disaster; the economy is still strong.

However, there was something else that came out during the break which I think deserves some comment. I turn for my text in this matter to a source that is not usually thought of as being particularly friendly to Republicans. I am talking about the Washington Post editorial page.

I was a little stunned, out in Utah dealing with my constituents and getting reacquainted with some real people who have different kinds of priorities than those we normally have here in Washington, to read about Speaker PELOSI's venture into the Middle East. I picked up, via the Internet, an e-mail, a copy of the editorial that ran in the Washington Post.

I think it deserves some review. It is entitled: "Pratfall in Damascus," and the subhead is: "NANCY PELOSI's foolish shuttle diplomacy." The opening paragraph begins this way: House Speaker NANCY PELOSI offered an excellent demonstration yesterday of why Members of Congress should not attempt to supplant the Secretary of State when traveling abroad.

I have traveled abroad, Madam President, as have you. I went abroad when Bill Clinton was the President of the United States, and I traveled with Phil Gramm of Texas. I do not think anybody has ever accused Phil Gramm of Texas of being particularly fond of Bill Clinton. Every country we went to where Senator Gramm was leading the delegation, the first place we went was to the Embassy. Senator Gramm said over and over again to these ambassadors, every one of whom had been appointed by President Clinton: We are here to help you, Mr. Ambassador, or Madam Ambassador. Tell us what we can do in this country where you are representing the United States that can be of value to you. How can a congressional delegation of varying sizes—usually fairly large—be supportive of the work you are doing in this country?

Then when we met with leaders of the country, whether it would be the chief of government or the chief of state, sometimes both, or lower level officials, we always had in mind what we could say and do to support the Clinton State Department's position as represented by the Clinton Ambassador.

I have traveled with the majority leader, Senator HARRY REID. We have gone to various places in Europe and in South America. In every instance, Senator REID went out of his way to make contact with the U.S. Ambassador appointed by President Bush, and to make sure our delegation was properly briefed by that ambassador to make sure we did not do something stupid out of our ignorance while we were in that particular country.

I contrast that behavior by Republicans traveling abroad, behavior by Democrats traveling abroad, with the kind of behavior we saw from Speaker

PELOSI. I go back to the Washington Post editorial. I must read in its entirety the final paragraph, because it lays it out far better than I can.

The paragraph refers to a statement by NANCY PELOSI:

We came in friendship, hope and determined that the road to Damascus is a road to peace.

Then the editorial says, and I quote:

Never mind that that statement is ludicrous: As any diplomat with knowledge of the region could have told Ms. Pelosi, Mr. Assad is a corrupt thug whose overriding priority at the moment is not peace with Israel but heading off U.N. charges that he orchestrated the murder of the former Lebanese prime minister. The really striking development here is the attempt by a Democratic Congressional leader to substitute her own foreign policy for that of the sitting Republican President. Two weeks ago Ms. Pelosi rammed legislation through the House of Representatives that would strip Mr. Bush of his authority as commander-in-chief to manage troop movements in Iraq. Now she is attempting to introduce a new Middle East policy that directly conflicts with that of the President.

We have found much to criticize in Mr. Bush's military strategy and regional diplomacy, but Ms. Pelosi's attempt to establish a shadow Presidency is not only counterproductive, it is foolish.

That happened while we were on break. There are some who hope it disappears in memory, and in the words of George Orwell, that it goes down the memory hole and never gets called up again.

I was going to talk entirely about the economy, but I think this is something, now that we are back in session, that we should take time to talk about. I hope with this kind of scolding from the Washington Post—I understand there were other newspapers also that took the same position, newspapers that are not favorable to Republicans generally—I would hope the Speaker would realize she has made a rookie mistake and that she will not do it again.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas is recognized.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, listening to the distinguished Senator from Utah, I could not help but agree with him that it is refreshing to go back to our States to talk to people whose priorities are different from those in Washington, DC, and to sort of decompress a little bit and get in touch with reality once again.

Washington, DC is a fascinating place, but it is kind of like coming to Disneyland in some ways. It is not real in many respects, although as we all know, important decisions are made here that affect the lives of all 300 million people in the United States and people all across the world.

It is one of those decisions, or should I say nondecisions, that I will rise to speak on briefly this morning. It is more in sorrow than in anger, but I am speaking specifically of the fact that it has been more than 60 days since the

President sent up an emergency war spending bill to Congress. Now 60 days, more than 60 days, have passed, and the troops still do not have the money and the House of Representatives has yet to appoint conferees so we can move forward on getting that money to our troops. In fact, the House is in recess for an additional week. Our men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan, of course, do not have the liberty of taking a recess in the middle of the battle they have so nobly and valiantly committed themselves to fight. While they are living up to their responsibilities, I think it is important for Congress to live up to its responsibilities too. Of course, the message they are seeing is more than a little bit confusing, and I regret that, honestly, because while the Senate majority leader, Senator REID, at one point has said we are not going to do anything to limit funding or to cut off funds—he made that comment on November 30, 2006—on April 2, 2007, he made the announcement that, in fact, he was going to cosponsor Senator FEINGOLD's legislation that would do exactly what he said he wouldn't do a few short months before; that is, cut off funds to support the troops.

Notwithstanding that position, we did, in fact, pass the funding bill, but, unfortunately, it contained unnecessary spending and in effect a surrender date for our enemy to see. I cannot bring myself to understand how someone can say they support the troops with the surrender date or porkbarrel spending necessary to secure the votes to pass it, because it could not pass on its own merits.

I have, in fact, joined the rest of the Senate and House Republican leadership in sending a letter to Speaker PELOSI, urging her to call the House back into session immediately so Congress can finish its work on this important emergency spending bill.

Keep in mind, funding for these troops has been pending since February 5, and because of the unnecessary strictures on the President's authority as Commander in Chief, where Congress has, in effect, deemed to act like an armchair general, all 535 of us, to dictate the tactics of the battle 6,000 miles away, the President said he is likely to veto the bill unless it is changed substantially through a conference committee. The Senate, of course, appointed conferees on March 29, but the House never did, despite passing the bill a week earlier.

Senator HARRY REID, the Senate majority leader, said he hoped the conference committee would begin on March 30, but, unfortunately, that hasn't happened, and again our troops still do not have the resources they need.

Lest there be any doubt, this is what the Army Chief of Staff, General Schoomaker, has said: Without approval of the supplemental funds in April, we will be forced to take increasingly Draconian measures which will impact Army readiness and impose hardships on our soldiers and their families.

Secretary of Defense Gates also emphasized the danger of delay. He said: This kind of disruption to key programs will have a genuinely adverse effect on the readiness of the Army and the quality of life for soldiers and their families.

Some have suggested this is all a bluff, and that our military can wait until July to get the funding from this emergency supplemental. That is simply not correct. As a matter of fact, Secretary Gates listed the specific cuts the Army would be forced to consider in the upcoming months. He said: If the supplemental is not passed by April 15, the Army—which has the majority of all forces in Iraq—could have to curtail and suspend home station training for National Guard units, slow the training of units headed to the wars, stop paying for facilities upgrades at home bases, and stop repairing gear needed for predeployment training.

He said: If May 15 comes and goes without passage and seeing the funds go to the troops, even more devastating cuts would result, including a slowdown in depot repair work, slowing brigade combat team training, which would force the extension of units in theater—in other words, the troops could not rotate back on a timely basis as they and their families expect they will—and it would cause the implementation of a hiring freeze, among other moves.

I cannot understand how we can claim to support our troops and yet put them in increased jeopardy as a result of our failure to act. That is why I believe it is so important that we get these funds to the troops as soon as we can, stripped of these extraneous strictures on our troops, artificial deadlines sending a white flag of surrender, letting our enemy know when we are going to quit. It needs to be stripped of those provisions as well as the porkbarrel spending our troops ought not to have to bear, in addition to the other burden they and their families bear on our behalf.

Madam President, I yield the floor and 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.

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

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

#### IN MEMORY OF COACH EDDIE ROBINSON

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I rise today in morning business to speak about the passing of an extraordinary man. Today, in Baton Rouge, in the capital, the son of a sharecropper will lie in state. It is a fitting tribute to Coach Eddie Robinson, the winningest