

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this morning there will be a period of morning business for 60 minutes, Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the last portion of the time. Following the period of morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 378, the court security legislation. Cloture was filed on the bill. Members have until 1 p.m. today to file any first-degree amendments to the matter.

I am confident and I am hopeful that we will finish that bill today and be able to move, either this evening or tomorrow, to the matter dealing with competitiveness. Everyone should be made aware of the fact that we have at least 50 cosponsors of that legislation, so there will be no cloture filed to move to it or after we are on it. This is a bill that we should be able to complete without any procedural blocks of any kind from either side. But we are going to finish the court security bill before we leave this week. That may take a little extra time, but I think it is something we all need to do.

Coincidentally, yesterday, as I indicated on the Senate floor, the head of the Marshals Service, Mr. Clark, came to see me. The meeting had been long since scheduled. It was not scheduled as a result of this matter being on the floor of the Senate. He indicated that violence against Federal judges was up 17 percent last year; that there were more than 1,000 open threats against members of the Federal judiciary last year. This does not take into consideration the many instances of threats and actual violence in the State courts. This legislation will not only make safer the people who work in the Federal courts, including the judges, but also has the ability to make our State courts safer.

We need not be reminded too often of what has happened in recent years. In Illinois, a crazed litigant waited in a judge's home. When the family came home—not the judge, just the family members—they were killed. In Nevada, a man who was dissatisfied with what a judge was doing shot the judge. We know what happened in Georgia, where violence took place and people were killed.

This is something we really need to do. Time is of the essence. I understand there are some amendments today, and that is fine. We will dispose of those just as quickly as we can. I hope we do not have to file cloture on the bill.

That is the next thing. I appreciate very much the Republican leader doing what was necessary so we could move to the bill immediately after cloture was invoked on the motion to proceed. This is important legislation, and we should finish it as quickly as we can.

I also want to acknowledge that all Judiciary Committee members are tied up in the Judiciary Committee today, Democrats and Republicans, because Attorney General Gonzales is appearing before them in his much antici-

pated hearing. As a result of that, we didn't have a manager of the bill. SHERROD BROWN, a longtime Member of the House and new Member of the Senate, has agreed to manage this bill, and that will be done on this side. There are no excuses. We need to move forward. We have a manager. We will make sure everything is done in an appropriate manner.

We hope anyone who has amendments to offer will do so. There is nothing pending at this time, as I understand it. I say to the Chair, is that true, that this bill is open to amendment at the present time?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is correct.

Mr. REID. The bill is open to amendment. We hope if people, Democrats or Republicans, think this bill can be improved, they will offer amendments.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

FINISHING LEGISLATION

Mr. McCONNELL. Let me say to my good friend, the majority leader, I think there is an excellent chance of finishing the court security bill fairly soon. He is, indeed, correct that the competitiveness bill which he is calling up after that enjoys broad bipartisan support, so I think these are two pieces of legislation the Senate has a good chance of enacting in the very near future.

NATIONAL COMMEMORATION OF THE DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE

Mr. McCONNELL. With regard to today's remembrance of the Holocaust, at today's 2007 National Commemoration of the Days of Remembrance ceremony, I will have the honor of lighting a candle alongside Holocaust survivor Eva Cooper. Eva was 10 years old when Nazis invaded her hometown of Budapest. She survived in hiding until Soviet forces liberated her and her family in 1945.

Hearing stories like Eva's reminds us that the Holocaust was not one act of evil, but millions, an evil that slaughtered little children and horrified nations. Today, we remember evil and the strength and courage of those who lived under its dark reign.

As time marches ever forward, fewer survivors like Eva Cooper will still live to tell us firsthand of the horrors they saw. That is why the mission of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the host of today's event, is so very important. History must never forget the horror committed against the Jewish people, so that horror of such magnitude can never, never happen again.

Today's ceremony will also serve to remind us of the strength of the Jewish

people in the face of atrocity. The resilience of those who survived, and the determination of those who remember, is proof that the dignity of the human soul will never be trampled by oppression, injustice, or terror.

I yield the floor.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we have had a number of inquiries already in the cloakroom whether there will be votes tomorrow. I will be in consultation with the distinguished Republican leader during the day, and that decision will be made later.

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. There will now be a period for morning business for 60 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the first 30 minutes controlled by the Republican leader or his designee, and the last 30 minutes controlled by the majority leader, or his designee.

The Senator from Florida is recognized.

EMERGENCY APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, I want to use some of the minority time in morning business this morning to discuss H.R. 1591, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2007. We are here now, some 73 days after the President sent us the emergency wartime spending request, and 73 days later we are still waiting to send to our troops the resources they desperately need while they are in harm's way.

On March 23 the House passed their version of the bill, and on March 29 the Senate did as well. We are now in the middle of April and the two bodies have yet to meet to work out their differences. More distressing still, the House has yet to even name conferees.

I know yesterday the leaders of the Congress had a meeting with the President to discuss the progress, or maybe the lack of progress, on this bill. In the 10 weeks since the Congress began consideration, we have turned a bill intended to fund troops into a bill that seeks to put a hasty and misguided withdrawal deadline from Iraq. In addition to that, not only does it not prioritize the war funding and leave it at that, but it also contains about \$20 billion in projects that are neither emergencies and, most of all, are not related to the war effort.

In addition to that, it is clear from the conversations that leaders have had with the President that in this current form this bill will be vetoed. So

where are we today then? We clearly have a bill that is going to be unacceptable to the Executive. We still have not even conferred on the bill. And worse yet, the Democratic leadership shows no signs of changing the path on which they are set, which is one that attempts to put an artificial deadline on the commanders on the ground and attempts to put other restrictions on their ability to fight the war from the ground as they best see fit.

So at the end of the day, we should not be using a war supplemental, at a time of war, when our troops are in harm's way, to do things such as put \$25 million for spinach farmers—that is not an emergency, that does not relate to the war effort, \$75 million for peanut storage. Again, I am sure peanuts being stored is an important thing, but is it a wartime supplemental issue? Is it an emergency? No. And \$250 million for a dairy subsidy. We all enjoy ice cream, but do we need to have an emergency appropriation in order to subsidize dairy farmers? Do we need to have an emergency appropriation for the war with bin Laden now with this kind of special interest pork?

There is \$3.5 million in this bill for Capitol tours. They are important, too. They are not an emergency. They certainly do not relate to the war. And \$2 million for the University of Vermont.

The President has said:

The longer Congress delays, the worse the impact on the men and women of the armed forces [will be]. Our troops, [the President said] should not be trapped in the middle.

I think that is true. I think it is very important that we move this process forward and that we allow for the troops on the ground to receive the kind of funding they desperately need to continue the fight forward.

There is something here we must recognize. Whenever the Congress does not timely fund an agency or department of the Federal Government, then we need to find ways in which to get the job done. I can remember, during my days in the Cabinet, that as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, it is very disruptive for a stream of funding for a given project to be disrupted, because then you have to make amends in order to continue to pay your bills, bills you are obligated to pay, while at the same time having to rob Peter to pay Paul.

It is the most inefficient way to run Government. It is more costly than any other way of doing it and, most of all, when you are dealing with our Armed Forces, it has dire consequences.

Here are a couple of things that are wrong with the situation we are in today: We are delaying for no good reason. Secondly, we are attempting to impose a political deadline on a bill that is intended to provide the troops the resources they need to continue to fight the war.

The Iraq Study Group has been cited as having some good guidance on the

way forward. The experts in that group, the Iraq Study Group—I know they are quoted frequently by my friends on the other side of the aisle, but we can't be too selective about what we choose to like from the Iraq Study Group and what we don't.

The Iraq Study Group says that: Near-term results—and this is referring to an untimely or an early withdrawal—would result in a significant power vacuum.

Unquestionably, if we withdraw untimely, there will be a power vacuum in Iraq. There will be greater human suffering, and the region will be destabilized, and a threat to the global economy would also be a part of what the Iraq Study Group found would be the result of a hasty withdrawal.

Al Qaeda would depict our withdrawal as a historic victory.

Make no mistake about that. The Iraq Study Group said: Our premature departure from Iraq, leaving a power vacuum, will provide al-Qaeda with a victory of historic proportions.

If we leave and Iraq descends into chaos, the long-range consequences could eventually require the United States to return.

This is the Iraq Study Group. This is what they are saying about an untimely and hasty withdrawal from Iraq. There is no question there would be a power vacuum left, not only within Iraq but also in the region. And as a result of that, only those who do not wish us well and who are, frankly, the enemies of our country today would find this vacuum a great opportunity as a way that they could then descend. So there would be a power vacuum within the country, which would surely be filled by the radical elements of the society, who are not the ones who were elected by the people but are the ones who will have the ability, through their own thuggery and armed intervention, by their own militias, to take over the country.

The factional killings would rise even higher than they are today, and then the region will be destabilized, because there is no question that Iran would move into this power vacuum created by the hasty departure of the United States, the only stabilizing force in that area at the moment.

In addition, we would find the other countries in the region, the Sunni states, the moderate Sunni states that are friendly to us, would find this situation untenable. They would then have to act. I think the whole region would be in greater chaos than it is today. This would then necessitate a return of the United States into Iraq in a way that would be, frankly, undesirable.

So what are we doing today? Well, I am not one of those who believes we owe a commitment for the end of time and to all time. But I do not think we are at the point in time when retreat is the only option. Retreat will be followed by defeat, and all of those consequences are not what we want to see.

At this point in time we have two top-rated commanding officers in the

field. General Petraeus has been on site a scant couple of months. His plan for this surge, his plan to try to pacify Baghdad, is underway, and while there are daily setbacks, and last night, this morning, we received the news of yet more fighting and more killing and more bombs, the fact is there are some overall trends that seem to be moving in a more positive direction.

Lieutenant General Odierno, who is the commanding general of the Multi-national Corps in Iraq, reported on a number of aspects of military progress. He said: "We are seeing a drop in sectarian murders in Baghdad and some displaced families are returning to the city."

Again, these are modest signs of something going in the right direction.

The number of caches we are finding per week has doubled since February.

All of the troops of this reinforcement action that many choose to call a surge have yet to be on the ground. The capacity of the Iraq security forces continues to grow. There are currently 10 Iraqi divisions, 8 of which have transitioned to Iraqi control. I believe yesterday another province was turned over to Iraqi control, the Iraqi forces. Security across Al Anbar has dramatically improved. The people of Al Anbar are fighting back and winning against al-Qaeda. And I think that is true. We are receiving unparalleled and unprecedented cooperation from the locals in that area to help us defeat al-Qaeda.

This, make no mistake about it, is a fight with al-Qaeda. There may be sectarian and factional fighting in Iraq, and certainly in Baghdad, but in Al Anbar we are fighting al-Qaeda.

Last week in Ramadi, there were nine attacks in total. During this same week a year ago there were 84 attacks. In the north, petroleum products from the Baiji oil refinery have increased 20 percent in the last 6 weeks alone, due to the Iraq security force's effort to protect the distribution tankers.

The bottom line is, there is a drop in murders, there is an increase in finding arms caches, there is an increase in the Iraqi forces continuing to take control of their own country, there is a decrease in attacks, and there is an increase in oil production. It is a perfect picture but certainly something that seems to be moving in a direction that is more desirable.

The emergency supplemental is vital to the troops and vital to our national security. The operations in Iraq over the next several months will determine our future efforts in Iraq and in that part of the world. We do not have the luxury of delaying these funds. You see, it would be a self-fulfilling prophecy not to properly fund the troops, to require that the rotations that are planned not take place; that the National Guard—we value so much the training. And I keep hearing in the Armed Services Committee repeated questions: Are our troops properly trained before they are sent into battle?

Well, we find that right now home State training of National Guard units had to be suspended because of the supplemental not being funded, and deployment of all military units is going to have to be slowed.

In other words, there are people who are part of our Armed Forces who have been in Iraq, who have served their time, who are expecting to come home. Their time of coming home is going to be delayed because their replacement will not have the resources to get back into the fight.

The administration's position on the bill is that the war supplemental should remain focused on the needs of the troops and should not be used as a vehicle for adding on emergency spending, and also for policy proposals that I find are more destined to make a difference in the political fight than they are in the fight against the enemies of our country.

Mr. President, I conclude by reading a letter that was written by Army LTC Charles P. Ferry, regarding the death of his comrade, his fellow soldier, Army Ranger SSG Joshua Hager, a young man who died in the service of his country.

The lieutenant colonel wrote:

On February 22, 2007, the Scout Platoon and I were conducting a vehicle movement at night along a route we had traveled many times before. Joshua and the rest of the Scouts had every inch of this road memorized. About halfway to our destination, Joshua's vehicle was struck by a large, deeply buried improvised explosive device (IED). Joshua was instantly killed by the blast, and the two other Scouts in the vehicle were wounded.

The lieutenant colonel continues to write:

I have been in the Army for about 23 years and served in numerous Infantry, Special Forces, and Ranger Battalions. I have served about three years collectively in combat in Somalia, Afghanistan, and Iraq, and Staff Sergeant Joshua Hager is one of the best Sergeants I have ever served with and I trusted my life with him. He was the consummate professional and the absolute standard bearer for his platoon. He died doing what he loved and what he was very good at and I was proud to serve with him. I hope and pray that our Nation will always appreciate the ultimate sacrifice he and his family have made. I will never forget Joshua and I carry his memory burned into my heart as we continue to fight in the city of Ramadi.

I have spoken with the father of Sergeant Hager. We talked a number of times about his son and his son's beliefs. I cannot imagine the pain Mr. Hager feels, but I can tell you what he did say to me. The message from Joshua's father that he wanted me to relay here was Joshua understood his mission. He understood what he was over there fighting for. He knew this was a war worth fighting, and worth winning.

Young Joshua Hager told his dad these things and added:

I'll stay in Iraq for another year or however long it takes to defeat the enemy—so that my son won't have to fight this battle when he grows up.

That statement, I believe, embodies the spirit of our soldiers in the field.

They get it. They know their mission. We should know ours as well. We ought to get to work. We ought to strip out of this bill the timelines that would constrain and tie the hands of our military commanders. We should strip the pork, the unnecessary, nonemergency, nonwar-related pork that is in the bill, and send a clean bill to the President that he might sign it and get the resources to the troops they so desperately need, not only in Iraq but just as well as back here at home as we continue to attempt to keep our National Guard properly trained and properly prepared.

This is a difficult issue. I know very much how much this issue can divide our country. But I also know how very important it is to those of us who I believe clearly understand the threat our country faces in the global war on terror, the issues that relate to the security of this Nation, and the very difficult situation we find ourselves in. We should not make this situation more difficult by injecting domestic politics into the atmosphere.

I do believe it is very important that we continue to fund the troops, that we give the troops our support and our backing, and we do so in a timely manner.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. LINCOLN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I know the Republican side has additional time remaining. That will be reserved for them. I wish to speak under the Democratic time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRAGEDY AT VIRGINIA TECH

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I would like to take a few moments to extend my heartfelt condolences to the Virginia Tech community and the families comforting them. The entire Nation obviously is grieving with them over their tremendous loss. We want them to know that all of our States, particularly the great State of Arkansas, stand with them as they cope with this senseless tragedy. We will continue to be with them, keep them in our thoughts and prayers in the coming weeks and months.

I attended Randolph-Macon Woman's College just down the road from Blacksburg in Lynchburg, VA. I remember when I was in college, Virginia Tech was well known for its strong and passionate student body. They had tremendous strength. They had a strong will, a strong determination, and a strong and bright spirit. I certainly

know that all of those strengths remain in today's student body at Virginia Tech. I also know that their alumni will be there to comfort them and steady them well in the coming months. We hope they know we have them in our thoughts and prayers.

WAR IN IRAQ

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, news from the Pentagon last week hit so many families throughout our great State of Arkansas particularly hard. Four years into the conflict in Iraq, the Army National Guard put 13,000 reservists, including nearly 2,000 from the largest National Guard unit in Arkansas, the 39th Infantry Brigade, on notice that they should be prepared for a second deployment at the end of this year. The Pentagon's decision to potentially deploy these troops marks the first time during Operation Iraqi Freedom that full Guard units would be called up for a second tour of duty. Our Arkansas troops already have performed bravely in Iraq, and we know they will do so again.

Today, along with many Arkansans honorably serving in the Active-Duty military, over 1,600 of our citizen soldiers have been activated for service in the Middle East and along our southern border with Mexico. The 142nd Fire Brigade based in Fayetteville, AR, mobilized last week and is expected in Iraq this summer. Eighty members of the 213th Area Support Medical Company are preparing for their mobilization orders in June. Many of these members served in Iraq before with the 296th Ambulance Company. The headquarters company, the 871st Troop Command, is also expected to be mobilized in June.

Since the war began, our troops have performed their mission with incredible bravery and skill in some of the harshest conditions imaginable. Their families have supported them and kept them in their prayers, have been there with them each step of the way, both in the harsh conditions and when they have returned. Their communities have supported them, many of which are rural communities. They are communities that, when these soldiers have been deployed, have to find someone else to fill positions while they are gone, positions such as mayor or principal of the school, fire chief or police chief, small businesses that keep the economies in those small rural communities thriving.

Because of the sacrifice of these brave men and women, their families, and these communities, we have seen a popularly elected government replace a ruthless dictator.

We have seen a democratic constitution approved by the Iraqi people replace the authoritarian rule they had known. Tragically, we also have seen civilian mismanagement of this war which is not reflective of the tremendous sacrifice put forth by our men and women in uniform. Today, more than