

and rest for 15 months, train for 15 months. The way it is happening now, they are being rotated very quickly. This isn't the first time this has happened.

The Senate has constitutional authority to act. Take for example the Korean war. We were rushing people over to Korea with inadequate training. Congress stepped in and passed a law saying they needed 120 days of training before they could go to Korea. The Webb amendment is in keeping with what the American people want; that is, to change course in Iraq. This helps do that by dictating that our Guard and Reserve and our Active military have time to come home and retrain and relax before being sent into battle. Statistics show that the second and third and fourth tours of duty are literally deadly. People are getting killed more regularly on the second and third and fourth tours of duty than they are on the first tour for obvious reasons.

The obvious reason, first, is fighting is becoming more fierce, and it is more dangerous in Iraq, but also the soldiers are tired. I called a family in Las Vegas whose son was killed. He went back for his fourth tour of duty and he told everyone there: I won't come back. He didn't. He was killed. That is what this amendment is all about. A simple majority of the Senate should be able to respond to that.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I am sure the majority leader and I will debate the substance of this later this morning. The Webb amendment is a clear interference with the President's authority to deploy troops, the authority of the Secretary of Defense, and the authority of the generals. Suffice it to say, getting 60 votes for a measure is not unusual in the Senate. It certainly has been the case with regard to controversial issues like Iraq all year long. That will continue to be the case on this bill throughout its consideration.

Mr. DURBIN. Will the Republican leader yield for a question?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I won't, only because I have a meeting in my office. But I look forward to engaging the majority whip later in the morning.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period of morning business until 10:30 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the first half of the time under the control of the majority and the second half of the time under the control of the minority.

The Senator from Illinois.

RESTING THE TROOPS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am sorry the Republican leader would not yield for a question. My question would have been, the 60-vote requirement for this amendment so that our troops have time to rest before they are redeployed into combat, this 60-vote requirement which the Republican leader says is routine and normal, I was going to ask the Republican leader, in the two previous Defense authorization bills brought to the floor of the Senate, how many times did we impose a 60-vote requirement on amendments to that bill? The answer is none, never. It was always a majority vote. Now the Republican side has said: We insist on 60 votes for every amendment to the Defense authorization bill. Those following this debate, watching it either in the galleries or on C-SPAN, may wonder what is the big deal. Why? What is the difference?

The difference is obvious. We are about to consider a debate on the war in Iraq. This Senate is evenly divided. With Senator JOHNSON recuperating, it is a 50/49 Senate with 50 Democrats and 49 Republicans on the issue of Iraq. One of the Democratic Senators votes on the other side. So on any given issue, it is 49 to 50, closely divided. Now the ranks on the Republican side are breaking and changing. We now have Republican Senators who are stepping out and publicly saying they disagree with the President. At least five of them have publicly said we need to change the direction of our policy in Iraq. Do the math. If we start with 49 and pick up 5 Republicans, we have 54. That is a majority. We could start carrying amendments to change the policy of the war in Iraq. The Republican leader knows that. So how does he protect the President's position? How does he stop the will of the Senate? By imposing a new standard of 60 votes. Now it takes 60 votes, not just a majority. For the last 2 years, a majority was good enough when it came to every amendment on the Defense authorization bill, including amendments about the war policy in Iraq. But not this time. This time, Senator MCCONNELL has come up with a new McConnell standard when it comes to the Iraq war policy, that it takes 60 votes in the Senate.

The Republican leader can come up with procedural obstacles also. He can make it more difficult. He can continue to slow down the debate on ethics reform. He can slow down the debate when it comes to the war in Iraq. But there are a lot of Senators on this floor on both sides who are going to stick to this task. We are not going to give up that easily. We understand what is at stake. We have lost over 3,600 of our best and bravest American soldiers. For us to prolong this debate, to set up these artificial obstacles in order to perpetuate a policy which is taking the lives of our men and women in uniform, is unacceptable.

The Senator from Kentucky, of course, has his rights under Senate

rules. I respect that. But to impose this new standard of 60 votes and then to say on the floor that this is routine and normal is not a fact. That is why I wanted to ask him that question. In the last 2 years, a majority vote was what was used on the Senate floor over and over again when it came to these important issues. We should return to that same majority standard.

I would say to the Senator from Kentucky who tried to defend the President's position, he should go back to his State, as all of us have, and speak to the families of the soldiers, understand what they are going through. Of course, every family of a soldier overseas is lost in prayer and worry every single day about their loved one in battle. But this administration, this President sends these soldiers over again and over again without rest, without retraining, without the equipment they need in battle. That is unacceptable. That is not a standard we should allow when it comes to our defense of America.

Senator JIM WEBB, who has offered this amendment, is a ground-combat veteran of Vietnam, as is Senator HAGEL, another cosponsor of this amendment. They and Senator INOUE, a veteran of World War II, know what it is like to put on that uniform and risk your life in battle. What they are asking for is time for these soldiers to come home and have a chance to be with their families, to rebuild their lives, to rest, try to put their lives back together, reassociate themselves with their families, retrain, and be ready if they are called again. What I hear from the Senator from Kentucky is: That is unacceptable. This is the President's call. He can keep sending these men and women over again and again, even though it is more dangerous every time they are sent into battle without appropriate rest and training.

When it comes to the vote, the Senator from Kentucky tells us a majority of the Senate is not enough; we need 60 votes to give our soldiers an opportunity to get the rest and retraining they deserve. That is unfortunate. It is part of the obstructionism we are now seeing every single day from the Republican side of the aisle. That isn't why we were sent to Washington. If five or six Republican Senators want to join the Democrats in trying to change the policy in Iraq, they should be given that chance. Using these procedural obstacles is unfortunate for this country and certainly unfortunate for the soldiers.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Mexico is recognized.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be recognized for up to 12 minutes.

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

(The remarks of Mr. BINGAMAN pertaining to the introduction of S. 1766

are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. BINGAMAN. I yield the floor.

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

IRAQ

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I relish this opportunity. We have before us in the Senate this week, and probably next week, Department of Defense reauthorization, a reauthorization that is critically important because our men and women are deployed around the world carrying out critical missions.

The Department of Defense reauthorization does some interesting and some good things: an across-the-board 3.5-percent increase in the pay for our men and women in the Armed Forces; an increase in our manning document for the U.S. Marine Corps and the U.S. Army to increase our authorized levels; an important increase in funding and capital for those bases and those States and those communities affected by the most recent BRAC, which it is critically important to see to it, as we reposition our military domestically, that those communities that are affected have the capital and the resources to improve their infrastructure to meet that pressure. Equally important is legislation included that was introduced by Senator CHAMBLISS of Georgia, cosponsored by myself, to accelerate retirement benefits for Guardsmen and Reservists deployed in combat, to let their deployments, as they increase, accelerate the time in which they become eligible for their retirement. These are all great benefits.

Unfortunately, we have no debate on the benefits, nor the need. We continue to debate a question that was on the floor most of the month of May when we did the Iraq emergency supplemental, a debate that is scheduled following the report of General Petraeus in September. But for a reason not sure to me, except political, we debate today something we have already debated once before and will debate again in 60 days and that is the issue of whether we do a precipitous, dangerous, scheduled withdrawal from the overall battle in Iraq today.

I wish to address the Levin-Reed amendment from two perspectives. First is the role of Iraq and its battle in the overall global war on terror, and secondly, the consequences of a scheduled, timed, precipitous withdrawal from that battle. First of all, in terms of beginning to withdraw in 120 days and being out by April, you send the clear signal to those we are in combat with today, which is al-Qaida and the insurgencies in Iraq—the enemies of freedom and liberty around the world—you have scheduled the fact that we, in fact, are leaving. You have offered them the opportunity, which they will seize, to declare victory. In the end,

the danger to America and the free world is far greater following that than it is carrying out the tough battle we have today.

I am reluctant to quote anything Osama bin Laden would ever say, but in one of his speeches following the declared fatwah against freedom in the West and America, he said simply: People will follow the strong horse. That is exactly what they will do if we retreat. We may, in fact, have to change our strategy. We may, in fact, reposition ourselves, but we owe it to ourselves to do it when our generals have reported back on their scheduled time. We do it on our timetable and not as a retreat but as a strategy change. We did it earlier this year and are now in the early stages of its implementation.

From a historical perspective, I wish to remind all of us what happened in the last 50 years of the last century. Two great Presidents, one a Republican and one a Democrat, both were confronted with difficult times that threatened America and democracy as we know it: John Kennedy, when the Soviet Union put missiles on the Cuban island and, secondly, when the Iranians took our people as hostages, communism was flourishing and Ronald Reagan was elected and had the will and the courage to confront both. The results of the Cuban Missile Crisis were we did not blink. President Kennedy blockaded the island of Cuba, Khrushchev threatened, but he blinked and they withdrew and missiles are not 90 miles off our shore today. In the case of Iran, and their taking our hostages, and in the case of the Soviet Union, President Reagan stood before the world and said: "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall." Then he had the intestinal fortitude, through the appropriations, to build up our military and the proposal of a mutually shared defense of the United States of America and the free world to finally get the Soviet Union to back away from communism, back down from the Cold War, and today we have a much safer world.

The enemy we face today in the terrorists is no less a threat; they are greater. The policy change our President made in 2001, 9 days after the attack on 9/11, to change it from a reaction to a preemption was precisely right, and the global war on terror and its central battle in Iraq which has been declared so by al-Qaida is, in fact, a necessary preemption in terms of terrorism.

The second point is the consequences of withdrawing precipitously and on a posted schedule. No. 1, before the Foreign Relations Committee, every expert from a Democrat to a Republican, Colin Powell to Madeleine Albright; every institute, every think tank, every foreign Middle Eastern expert said the following: We don't know if the surge will work or what its success will be, but we will tell you this: if the United States withdraws, there will be an outright civil war in the Middle East, hundreds of thousands may die

and, quite frankly, millions could, in an uncontrolled, difficult time. If there is one place in the world where that type of turmoil threatens the security of all freedom and all mankind, it is the Middle East. Withdrawal in that case is absolutely the wrong thing to do.

Secondly, when the Mujahedin and terrorists ran the Russians out of Afghanistan, they created a safe haven for terror from which the ultimate 9/11 attack came at America 20 years later. We should not think for a minute that if we leave Iraq, left to the insurgency and the terrorists, the same would not happen. But it wouldn't be 20 years before the attack came against America; it might be a matter of months. It is important for us to continue to pursue the goals of the surge, give the President the chance to make the report this Thursday, General Petraeus the chance to make the report this September, and then have a debate; not in advance of the facts but after we know the facts as they stand. This is too important. This is too important for America.

September 15 is an important date for us to judge the success of our brave men and women who are carrying out the surge today. To declare a retreat today on a timed, precipitous schedule is wrong for America, it is wrong for our effort in the war on terror, and it strikes a dagger in the heart of our new found policy of preemption.

So I appreciate the time the Senate has afforded me this morning. In closing, I ask unanimous consent that a column on this very issue written by Tony Blankley and appearing around the United States today, being syndicated, be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From MDJOnline.com, Jul. 11, 2007]

SENATE FAILS TO ADDRESS THE REAL QUESTION ABOUT WAR IN IRAQ

The Senate is emitting an embarrassing level of emotional policy twitching on the topic of Iraq. Sen. Harry Reid can't take the war anymore. He "knows" it is lost. Sen. Olympia Snowe has just about had it with the Iraqi government. If they don't meet her benchmarks—that's it. Sen. Mitch McConnell thinks "that the handwriting is on the wall that we are going in a different direction in the fall, and I expect the president to lead it." Who authored that wall graffiti, he doesn't say. After talking with grieving family members of one of our fallen warriors, Sen. Pete Domenici "wants a new strategy for Iraq."

I haven't seen such uncritical thinking since I hid under my bed sheets to get away from the monsters back when I was 3 years old.

Whether they are talking about war weariness, grief over casualties, fear of their upcoming elections, disappointment with the current Iraqi government or general irritation with the incumbent president: What in the world do such misgivings of U.S. senators have to do with whether we should continue to advance our vital national security interests?

None of these senators have even addressed the question of whether the United States is