

Finally, the report makes it very clear we need a diplomatic offensive to help change the equation in the Middle East. Under this diplomatic push, we would reach out to potential partners in the region, engaging those partners in the region as we strive to have a stake in creating long-lasting peace and stability in Iraq.

I wish to spend a few minutes now speaking about the Iraq war provisions in the supplemental which is later on in the day formally before the Senate. The bill before us contains many of the propositions that would change our Iraq policy in ways that are consistent with the Iraq Study Group's core recommendations. First and foremost, the bill expresses the sense of the Senate that our troops' mission should change from combat operations to counterterrorism, training and supporting Iraqi forces, and force protection. It would set a reasonable goal—not a deadline, a reasonable goal—of June 2009 to complete this transition. This goal is some 15 months past the date of March of 2008, which the Iraq Study Group originally proposed as its target date for the completion of this transition.

This bill would require the Iraq Government to stand up to its own responsibilities in important ways. It would be required to match any funds we spend for training of Iraqi security forces or for reconstruction. This legislation would ensure that the U.S. military pays the same price at the pump as Iraqi civilians are paying today, by requiring the Iraq Government to provide the same kind of support for the fuel costs we are using to protect Iraq today. We are spending \$12 billion of America's taxpayer dollars each month in Iraq. We are spending \$12 billion of American taxpayer dollars each month in Iraq. After more than 5 years of this war, in my view, it is time for the Iraq Government to share this financial burden.

We also need to recognize that this administration's policies have stretched our military to the breaking point. Our troops are away from their families too long, they do not get enough time to train, and readiness is suffering. Under this legislation, the President would have to certify that troops are fully trained and equipped before they are deployed to Iraq. It would place a time limit on combat deployments and ensure that our troops have sufficient dwell time between tours.

Finally, the bill would ban permanent U.S. bases on Iraqi soil and require that any mutual defense agreements with Iraq must be approved by this Congress and by this Senate.

It is not enough to simply endorse a set of military tactics and hope for the best, which is what the President of the United States has done. The solution in Iraq, our military commanders tell us, is one which is not a military solution but one which combines all those elements that were set forth in the Iraq Study Group.

Henry Kissinger once said America needs to rid itself of "the illusion that there are military answers to our security, and that policy ends where strategy begins."

We would be wise to heed Kissinger's advice in this age of turmoil. There are no easy answers in Iraq, no easy exits, no certainty of success. To stay on the President's path of more of the same is simply to embrace a policy that is not working—the same dogmatic leadership that led us into war, the same dogmatic leadership that failed to make a postinvasion plan, the same dogmatic leadership that chases the hope of a mission accomplished without regard to learning the lessons of the failures of the past.

To charge a new path—to build a political, diplomatic, and military strategy in Iraq—is to embrace the role of a statesman. For it is a statesman, Kissinger used to say, who takes responsibility for all the favorable results if everything goes as planned but also for all the undesirable results if they do not.

To serve as statesmen is our role. This is our role as Senators. It is up to the wise heads of this body to take the long view in Iraq, to be realistic about our options, and to consider all our national security interests—from terrorism to nuclear threats—when pursuing our goals of stability and peace in the Middle East.

Thank you. I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 5 minutes.

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

FARM BILL VETO OVERRIDE

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I wish to spend a few minutes speaking about the farm bill. We will be considering an override of the President's veto hopefully later on this afternoon.

As I understand, a few hours ago, the President went ahead and vetoed this bill which we worked on so hard in this Chamber for the last 2½ years, under the great leadership of Senator HARKIN, Senator CHAMBLISS, Senator BAUCUS, and Senator GRASSLEY, along with Senator CONRAD and so many of my colleagues on the Agriculture Committee as well as the Senate Finance Committee. Hopefully, we can override the President's veto quickly because what is at stake is the security of America in so many different ways.

From what my colleagues tell me, this is the best farm bill we have written in the Congress in the last several

decades. For me, there are significant portions of this bill which open whole new opportunities for America, and I wish to spend a few minutes talking about what I think some of those opportunities are.

First and foremost, we need to remind the Nation this is a bill about feeding the hungry. It is a bill about nutrition. Nearly 70 percent of the money under this legislation will go to feed the most vulnerable people in America, including providing healthy food—fruits and vegetables—for the young people of America. For my State alone, what this will mean—I come from a small State of some 5 million people—is that about \$45 million a year in fruits and vegetables will go to help our young kids who are in school so they can learn healthy eating habits and so they can be in an environment where they can truly learn. So nutrition is a very big part of this legislation. It is why hunger advocates, the faith community, schools, and so many others have been beating the drum so loudly for us to get this bill completed.

Second is rural development. Rural development is a huge issue for much of this country. Today across America there are some 1,700 counties, and more than half the counties of America are designated as rural. About 800 of those counties lost population in the last few years. It is part of the America that is withering on the vine. Many of the provisions of this farm bill, including rural development sections of this farm bill, will help this part of America, which seems to be left out, to be put into a position of being second class. This farm bill invests heavily in rural America through the rural development programs that are included in this legislation.

Third is conservation. Through the leadership of Senator HARKIN and his vision for what we do with conservation, the \$3 billion-plus that is added for conservation in this farm bill will help us make sure the conservation ethic we have pursued in this country is something we can preserve for a long time to come.

Fourth, title IX of this farm bill is the energy title. In that title of the farm bill, we continue a policy which has been a bipartisan policy of this Congress to try to get rid of our dependence on foreign oil and to try to harness the power of the wind, the power of cellulosic ethanol, the power of hydroelectricity, the power of geothermal, and so many other renewable energy resources. Rural America stands ready to grasp the reins of responsibility and opportunity to help us achieve energy independence in a real way. So the energy section of this bill is a very important part of it, and so many people have been a part of this and have worked on this legislation.

Finally, I would say this is work which has involved the administration now for 2½ years. It baffles me that this President would turn his back on the people of America by vetoing this

farm bill, knowing his administration has been helping us craft this bill. The excuse I have heard, which has been out there in public, is this farm bill raises taxes. This farm bill doesn't raise any taxes at all. Unlike the fiscal recklessness we have seen over the last 7 years with this administration, what we have done is we have paid for this bill. This bill is 100 percent paid for, and it is paid for without a tax increase. It is paid for with the reforms we have included in this farm bill.

So I am hopeful when this legislation does get over here to the floor for the consideration of the override of the President's veto, we will have a near acclamation of a vote against the President's veto of the farm bill.

I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MENENDEZ. 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.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for approximately 10 minutes.

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

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, as we debate the supplemental, I want to speak about the importance of extending unemployment insurance to our economy and to so many of our fellow Americans.

I know if Senator KENNEDY were on the Senate floor today, he would be leading this effort, lending his powerful voice, as he always does, with fervor and passion on behalf of those in this Nation who are in need. I certainly hope and pray that he will be with us once again lending his voice to this and so many other critical issues.

Mr. President, we know there are Americans in need. These are difficult economic times, not just for Americans on the bottom of the economic ladder but for Americans from all walks of life.

In the past year alone, as this chart indicates, losses in the stock market and in home values have totaled \$2.7 trillion each—that is trillion with a "t." Foreclosures have risen 130 percent since 2006. Some 20,000 families lose their homes every week. This combination of a credit and housing crisis isn't just affecting Wall Street or homeowners, but it is reaching throughout our economy and putting a strain on businesses, large and small, from factories to restaurants.

Under the pressure of this economic squeeze, the economy has lost 260,000 jobs in the last 4 months alone. Beyond

just the loss of the jobs, what is hurting those who have lost a job is the time it is taking to find a new job. These are not individuals who are just sitting back and waiting for someone to offer them a job. These are people who are actively engaged in the labor market and looking for gainful employment, looking for the dignity of a job.

This chart shows us the average length of unemployment has risen to almost 17 weeks—longer than at any time Congress has extended benefits in the past 30 years. In my State of New Jersey, each week some 3,000 more unemployed workers are exhausting their benefits. It is not that they are sitting back at home. They are engaged in the market looking for jobs—many times even outside of their field, simply to be gainfully employed.

While we certainly hope some of the recent efforts we have performed in the Congress to stimulate our economy will be successful, there are still troubling signs. Long-term unemployment is higher now than before the last recession. Mr. President, 17.8 percent of people unemployed find themselves searching for a job for over 27 weeks. That is a 58-percent increase since the year 2001. Statistics show those who are unemployed are going to have a very difficult time finding a job, as there are 7.6 million unemployed Americans competing for only 3.8 million jobs. That is two workers for every job.

Some are struggling more than others. Veterans and minorities have been disproportionately burdened by our struggling labor market. Young male veterans who answered the call to protect our Nation after September 11, 2001, are now faced with an 11.2-percent unemployment rate—well over twice the national average. A total of 21,588 newly discharged veterans are now unemployed and collecting unemployment insurance.

It seems to me the last thing these brave men and women who risked their lives dodging bullets and IEDs in Iraq and Afghanistan should have to worry about is finding a job when they come home. And when they cannot, it seems to me the last thing they should have to worry about is not having any income to sustain themselves and their families. Now they are standing in an unemployment line, and pretty soon they will not be able to do that either.

Minorities are also being hit especially hard by our current economic conditions. For Hispanics, unemployment has grown to 6.9 percent. For African Americans, unemployment has grown 8.6 percent. Both are well beyond the national average. We cannot ignore the fact that the subprime crisis has also disproportionately affected some communities more than others. Unfortunately, for many of these hard-working Americans, their hope of obtaining and continuing to keep the American dream has instead become a personal nightmare.

These statistics are not just numbers. The 260,000 jobs lost this year, the 7.6 million Americans who are unemployed, the 21,000 veterans collecting unemployment—this is not just economic data. Behind each number is a story and an American worker who is struggling.

Let's take a moment to imagine what it would be like to be one of these workers. All of the Members of the Senate are gainfully employed. But try to put yourself in the shoes of one of these American workers. Imagine you have two kids, you have a mortgage to pay, and you just lost your job. That alone is a scenario that could lead any family into hard times. If you are also facing foreclosure because of a bad subprime mortgage that has reset to a higher rate, or if losing your job meant losing your health care insurance that provided coverage for your children, imagine how powerless you would feel. Imagine the uncertainty of not being able to find a job, not being able to pay for your child's college education for the next semester, not being able to keep the home in which your children grew up. Imagine what that must be like.

Mr. President, there are hundreds of thousands of Americans facing these very dire circumstances, who know all too well, unfortunately, what it feels like. It is up to us to lend them a helping hand during their darkest days. That is what the extension of unemployment benefits in the supplemental will accomplish.

On top of that, we also know extending unemployment is one of the most effective ways to help the economy. For every dollar the Government provides in unemployment insurance, \$1.64 goes right into our economy.

While I, along with many of my colleagues, believed this should have been part of the stimulus we had earlier, I am pleased we have another chance.

Today, as unemployment and the cost of living continue to rise, it is even more imperative to act now and do what is right. Mr. President, 1.4 million workers have been actively looking for a job for more than 6 months—half a year of their life actively looking for a job. As it is becoming harder to find a job, more families are running out of their unemployment benefits. Thirty-six percent of workers exhaust their benefits before finding a job, and many expect that number to increase. In March of this year, 45 percent of New Jerseyans receiving unemployment insurance exhausted their benefits before finding a new job.

We have a chance to fairly and reasonably address the challenges that long-term unemployment are creating for many fellow Americans. Extending unemployment insurance will help those who are hit hardest and give the economy a much needed shot in the arm.

We have this opportunity to act, and act now. I cannot understand when those who try every day, get up and go