

to lead on the environmental issues but also helps us on the economic front. Clean energy will mean new jobs, good jobs in America. We developed the technology for alternative and renewable energy sources. Let's keep the jobs in America. These are good jobs. This bill means more jobs in America by investing in technology that other countries are now investing more in than America. They understand the future is going to be in wind power and solar power and, yes, in nuclear power. This bill allows us to move forward so we can keep jobs in America.

Lastly, I think everyone will agree that from a strategic point, we need to use less energy and produce more in America. The bill Senator KERRY has brought forward will help us achieve those goals.

I look forward to debating global climate change and energy policy. I hope we can come together for the sake of the Nation, for the sake of the future, and develop an energy policy that not only will keep us safe, will not only help our economy, but will be responsible on international environmental issues and be an international leader.

UNEMPLOYMENT EXTENSION

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, shortly we will be voting on a cloture motion on the motion to proceed to the unemployment compensation issue. Senator DURBIN addressed this issue a few minutes ago. I want to underscore how important it is for us to move forward.

Yesterday I had the opportunity to visit one of our employment offices in Maryland. We have a one-stop location where people looking for work can come and get the services of not only governmental agencies but nonprofit agencies to help them find employment. I have been to these offices in the past in Maryland. I have had a chance to talk to people who are seeking employment.

When I walked into that office yesterday, I was shocked to see how many people were there. It was hard to get through the door. People were coming in desperate to try to find jobs because there are no jobs out there for them to find. They are desperate to be employed, not only for the sake of having income but for the dignity that comes with employment. We have a problem out there. I think we all understand that.

I will give you two people with whom I talked yesterday: Bernice from Anne Arundel County, a resident who worked for a mortgage company until it went out of business, she has been unemployed since September 2008. She is about ready to lose her UI benefits. She talked about how difficult it was for her to talk about this, how difficult it was for her to tell her story. All she wants is a job. She wants the dignity and income of a job.

Charlene from Baltimore talked about being employed by Business Manager for Watermark Media. She

lost her job in September 2008 when the company went out of business. She is a very qualified individual. Yet she cannot find employment. Her UI ran out on October 25. Her husband is expected to lose his job this week, and it is possible she will lose her family home.

That is what we are talking about, people in our communities who are unemployed and cannot find employment. We now know there is about 1.9 million Americans who will run out of unemployment benefits by the end of this year unless we act, unless we take action. That includes about 25,000 Marylanders who will find themselves without any benefits. Currently, there are over 15 million Americans who are unemployed and over 200,000 Marylanders who can't find jobs. We need to act. We need to act on behalf of Bernice and Charlene and the literally hundreds of thousands of Americans who shortly will be running out of their unemployment benefits.

The bill before us is an extension of an additional 14 weeks of benefits for every State in the country. The original bill that came over from the House had a trigger mechanism of 8.5 percent unemployment. I brought this chart to show my colleagues why it is important to extend benefits in every State in this Nation. I think Maryland is a typical State.

Our unemployment numbers may be a little bit lower than the national average. We are in the 7 percent unemployment rate. But look at the orange counties in my State of Maryland: Cecil County, 8.6 percent unemployment; Caroline County, 8.8 percent unemployment; Dorchester County, 10.9 percent unemployment; Somerset County, 9.5 percent; Washington County, one of the growth counties not far from here, 9.4 percent unemployment—some of those people commute to Washington to work—and then Baltimore City, the center of our State, 10.6 percent unemployment.

I thank the leadership for bringing forward an unemployment compensation proposal to extend benefits that apply to every State because we need it in Maryland. I could talk about minority unemployment and the fact that the African-American unemployment rate in this country is around 15 percent. The Latino unemployment rate is around 12 percent. There are pockets of unemployment in all of our States that are at extraordinarily high numbers, and that is why we need to extend the unemployment benefits.

Let me also point out that these are not benefits that aren't paid for. These are insurance benefits. They are paid for by the current workforce. They pay into a fund so we have money available in a recession to help those who lose their jobs and can't find employment. That is why it is called unemployment insurance benefits. It is there for this circumstance.

Is there anyone here who denies that we are not in a tough time if you are looking for a job? We all know that. So

now is the time to extend unemployment benefits so people have income in order to be able to literally survive until our economy can rebound.

Let me also point out, I know there are a lot of us who are always looking for bills on which to put amendments. I understand the frustration of some of my colleagues. Here is a bill, it is a tax bill, let's put a provision on it. Quite frankly, I have a few provisions I would like to see enacted into law. This is not the right bill to do it on. If we put amendments on this bill and let it go back to the House with issues that are unrelated to unemployment compensation, it could take a long time to reconcile those differences.

We already have some differences with the House with regard to the States that qualify. Let's reconcile that quickly so that individuals such as Charlene, who currently are losing their benefits, know soon that they are going to be able to continue to get these unemployment benefits. It is important that we act quickly to get the job done.

One last point for my colleagues. This is important. It is the right thing to do. It is what government is here for—to help people who are literally out of luck because of no fault of their own but the economy. It is what we are supposed to do as far as the right type of social programs to protect people during tough economic times. But there is a tradeoff that helps our economy. This money goes directly back into our economy. Every dollar we pay out in unemployment insurance benefits will come back and have a multiplier effect of more money than we give in benefits in helping our economy grow. So this is the right remedy to help our economy. It is the right thing to do for the 1.9 million Americans who otherwise would lose their benefits by the end of the year.

We have a chance in just a few minutes to move this bill forward so it can be reconciled with the House quickly, and then we can assure the people of our community that, indeed, we responded and provided the appropriate type of relief for those who cannot find employment today.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

AFGHANISTAN TROOP REQUEST

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I believe it is now time for President Obama to move forward with General McChrystal's plan for executing the war in Afghanistan and to fully support his troop request.

The President has correctly called Afghanistan a "war of necessity." The counterinsurgency strategy that he announced last March is a good one, and it has been widely accepted. Having read General McChrystal's August report, I believe it may represent our only chance to successfully implement

the March strategy, and it will require the forces that General McChrystal has recommended.

There is no reason to delay the decision regarding a troop increase until after the Afghan election, a point that I will talk about in a moment. Our national security is at stake regardless of the government in Kabul. The outcome of the Afghan runoff election on November 7 will not change our mission there. Whether Abdullah or Karzai wins, our mission will be the same, and time is not on our side. General McChrystal's August report said we have only 1 year. It is now down to 10 months, and it will take time to get troops in-country.

I want the President to know and the American people to know that Republicans will support the President if he follows through on his strategy and provides General McChrystal with the resources he needs. But this must be done in a timely fashion. The strategy can only succeed if it is implemented within the next 10 months and with the resources that have been recommended.

The stakes are high in Afghanistan. When President Obama announced his strategy last March, he said:

If the Afghan government falls to the Taliban or allows al-Qaida to go unchallenged, that country will again be a base for terrorists who want to kill as many of our people as they possibly can.

Mr. President, he was right. The Afghan people are watching. When I was in Afghanistan this past April and visited with tribal elders in Kandahar, for example, it was very clear the Afghan people were looking to the United States for a commitment to their security. If we can't provide that security to them, they will be forced to make accommodations with the Taliban.

Pakistan is also under threat, as Secretary Clinton recently pointed out. She said:

The extremists in Pakistan, whatever their titles or whatever their affiliation, are increasingly threatening the authority of the state.

We all know if nuclear-armed Pakistan were to fall into extremists' hands, the world would face a monumental crisis. Moreover, if Pakistan senses a lack of commitment on our part, how long will it be until it seeks accommodation with al-Qaida and affiliated terrorist groups?

For these reasons, we must not short-change the mission in Afghanistan. General McChrystal was very clear about the need for more troops. In his assessment he said the following:

ISAF, [the International Security Assistance Force]—

Of which the United States is a part—

requires an increase in the total coalition force capability and end strength.

During an August speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, President Obama made this pledge to our Armed Forces:

I will give you a clear mission, defined goals, and the equipment and support you

need to get the job done. That is my commitment to you.

Of course, the President can now demonstrate that commitment by following the advice of his general and providing the resources that have been requested.

What exactly is General McChrystal's plan? Well, I think his assessment demonstrates both a thorough understanding of the Afghan people and the enemy we are fighting. He described the situation as:

Three regional insurgencies [that] have intersected with a dynamic blend of local power struggles in a country damaged by 30 years of conflict.

Not an easy situation, obviously, and he described the enemy as follows:

The conflict in Afghanistan can be viewed as a set of related insurgencies, each of which is a complex system with multiple actors and a vast set of interconnecting relationships among those actors. The most important implication of this view is that no element of the conflict can be viewed in isolation.

In other words, we can't defeat al-Qaida without also addressing its support networks—the Taliban and the so-called Haqqani groups. These are the groups that work with al-Qaida, protect it, and give it a place to hide when we attempt to deal with al-Qaida.

In order to effectively counter this enemy, General McChrystal proposed a comprehensive plan that would effectively implement the President's strategy—improve the performance of the Afghan security forces, prioritize responsible and accountable governance, gain the initiative to reverse the insurgency's momentum, and focus our resources on areas where vulnerable populations are the most threatened.

One of the key principles of General McChrystal's plan is increasing Afghan ownership of its own security. He said in his assessment:

ISAF, with the Afghan National Security Force, must shift its approach to bring security and normalcy to the people and shield them from insurgent violence, corruption, and coercion, ultimately enabling the Afghan government to gain the trust and confidence of the people while reducing the influence of insurgents.

Further, General McChrystal describes this step as necessary to fix what he calls the "crisis of confidence" in the Afghan Government and coalition forces.

General McChrystal has also said that more effective integration and partnership between Afghan and coalition forces will enable a more rapid expansion of the Afghan security force's capacity and responsibility for security. The same method was implemented in Iraq, resulting in a dramatic increase in the quality of Iraqi security forces.

So those who say we should only train more Afghan troops and police present a false choice. General McChrystal proposes a total counterinsurgency strategy with both more Afghan police and military forces; but until they are trained sufficiently to do

the job, an adequate and sufficient group of U.S. and NATO forces to both train the Afghan forces and provide the security that is necessary during that interim period of time.

General McChrystal stated in his assessment:

Ideally, the Afghan National Security Forces must lead this fight, but they will not have enough capacity in the near term given the insurgency's growth rate. In the interim, coalition forces must provide a bridge capability to protect critical segments of the population. The status quo will lead to failure if we wait for the ANSF to grow.

That is to say, the National Security Forces of Afghanistan.

So, again, to simply argue we should train more NATO and U.S. security forces in the interim is a false choice. We need to do both. But in order to do the former, we must do the latter; that is to say, we have to increase our own troop strength in order to have the ability to both hold the line and train the Afghan forces who will ultimately be able to provide security for that country.

Now to the matter of time. General McChrystal said in his assessment:

Time matters; we must act now to reverse the negative trends and demonstrate progress.

One of the key points the general made in his assessment was this: He said:

I believe the short-term fight will be decisive. Failure to gain the initiative and reverse insurgent momentum in the near term (next 12 months)—while Afghan security capacity matures—risks an outcome where defeating the insurgency is no longer possible.

As he said, time is of the essence. By the way, this 12-month clock started ticking in August when he submitted his report. So at this point, 10 months remain on the general's stopwatch to turn the tide of this war.

Even if the President makes the right call without further delay and gives General McChrystal the resources he needs to prosecute the strategy the President ordered in March, it will take months before additional troops are available for the mission.

Unlike Iraq where we did have at least a nominal infrastructure in place, in Afghanistan there are few roads and fewer other amenities and facilities with which to support the troops. All of that takes additional time to create.

The troop surge in Iraq didn't turn the tide of that war until 6 months after President Bush announced it. As I said, that was on terrain significantly easier to navigate than Afghanistan's mountainous border region where many of our soldiers are fighting today.

Coalition forces are losing ground to the Taliban with current troop numbers. According to General McChrystal:

Many indicators suggest the overall situation is deteriorating, despite considerable effort by ISAF.

So I submit that President Obama should delay no longer a decision to deploy troops that are necessary within

this 12-month timeframe set out by General McChrystal in order to retake the momentum of this war.

Finally, I mentioned earlier the Afghan election should not delay the President's decision. I disagree with the argument some have made that there should be some sort of test to determine whether the Afghan Government will be a reliable partner before we decide to commit additional troops.

The very reason U.S. troops are fighting in Afghanistan is because there is no strong government to maintain security and fight corruption there. The point is to make it more reliable, to influence it to be less corrupt, and to protect the Afghan people so they will reject Taliban control and support their government.

We need to help foster a situation in which the Afghan Government can grow into an institution that can provide for its people. That is what a successful exit strategy will look like. We should not curtail our effort in Afghanistan because of a less-than-ideal political situation today.

President Karzai noted last week:

The [Afghan] institutions are just young toddlers in this democracy that resembles a toddler. It walks and falls. We have to understand that, and we have to accept the Afghan elections in the context of the Afghan situation and the poverty and lack of means in this country.

I add to that that President Karzai and his administration need to be more forceful in helping to bring those institutions about, to ensure that the election is not fraudulent and to ensure that his government is not corrupt and to do what is necessary to gain the trust of the Afghan people.

But are we likely to have more influence in achieving that result by deciding that we can't commit the troops necessary to carry out the recommendations of General McChrystal, all of which will probably push the Afghans further toward the Taliban or by making the point that we are going to help establish the kind of government that is reliable and we are going to do that by engaging in this counterinsurgency strategy with everything that it takes, including the additional troops that are required, and thereby have the kind of influence over the Afghan Government that will bring it into a more reliable situation and enable them to rely on the security we provide rather than making accommodation with the Taliban?

General McChrystal stated in his assessment that one of the key sources of the Taliban's strength is the perception by Afghans that a victory by the Taliban is inevitable. We need to make sure it is not. How can the United States expect to influence matters in Afghanistan if we are viewed as looking for a way out and not putting in the troops General McChrystal has requested?

Very importantly, this same question applies to Pakistan. We ask Pakistan to help us fight the Taliban and al-

Qaida and other terrorist groups who are active in Afghanistan. But if we are viewed as an unreliable partner because we are not willing to commit sufficient troops, the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan will hedge their bet with the terrorists and their supporters. That is what has happened there in the past.

When I went there last April and talked to Ambassador Holbrooke before I went, I said: Mr. Ambassador, what message would you like us to try to convey?

He said: Help them understand we are there for the long run. We are not going to cut and run; we are going to stay with them and help them and do whatever is necessary for them to gain control of their country.

I conveyed that message, and I believed it, and I want to believe it. But if we do not make the decisions to carry out this strategy the President announced in March, then the Pakistanis are going to be asking the same questions we did a few months ago: Will you be with us? Will you stand with us or are we going to have to make accommodations with people neither you nor we like very much? One individual said: Why would they make enemies with the people they are stuck with long after we have left? In other words, they don't live in a very good neighborhood. I think that is what General McChrystal's request is about—proof that we are committed to seeing this fight through against the common enemy.

Interestingly, we faced a similar situation in Iraq. If we had opted against the surge in 2007, at a time when Iraq's central government was extremely weak and unable to protect its citizens from the insurgency there, the Iraqi people most likely would not have been able to eventually take ownership of their own security. But they did.

Similarly, if President Obama were not to provide the additional troops General McChrystal needs, I believe we risk allowing Afghanistan to become the country it was on September 10, 2001—a result that none of us want.

In Iraq, the surge created the space for Prime Minister Maliki to take greater control and reduce corruption in the Iraqi Government, and a troop surge in Afghanistan would allow President Karzai—or a new President Abdullah if he were to win—to do the same.

A stable and legitimate government in Kabul is critical to the security of Afghanistan. But the United States cannot hinge its strategy on the current reliability of the Afghan Government, and the President should not wait until after the election to announce his troop decision. To do so would suggest that the United States doesn't have a core national interest of its own in Afghanistan, one based on our security. Yes, we aim to help establish the rule of law in Afghanistan, but our core national interest in that nation does not change based on who is elected in their November 7 runoff.

Mr. President, in conclusion, I believe General McChrystal's assessment really rises above the political fray. It offers an objective description of what is happening on the ground and what resources are needed to turn the tide of this war. This report may represent our only chance to successfully implement the President's March strategy—as I said, a strategy with which I think we all agree—and it will require the forces General McChrystal has recommended.

Regardless of the current status of the Afghan Government, we must foster a situation in which it can grow into a government that can provide basic services, and that will require, first of all, providing security for its people. Our influence over this process will be far greater if we make it clear that we are there to stay until our goals are achieved.

It has been 2 months since General McChrystal sent his assessment to Washington. I respectfully submit my recommendation to the President that he approve this full troop request and that he do so as soon as possible. If he does, as I said, I believe Republicans will be very supportive of his policy.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KAUFMAN). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. 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. REID. Mr. President, what is before the Senate at this time?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in morning business.

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS EXTENSION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in about 50 minutes the Senate will be called upon to vote on a motion to invoke cloture on a very important piece of legislation extending unemployment benefits for American workers.

Another 7,000 jobless Americans will lose their unemployment insurance today, just as 7,000 did yesterday and 7,000 more will tomorrow. The Republicans have held up this matter for approximately 3 weeks. What does that mean? It means that the first week, 49,000 Americans were people whose unemployment insurance ran out, and they had nowhere to turn. In 2 weeks—the math is simple—it was 98,000 Americans from all over America, including the State of Delaware and the State of Nevada. In 3 weeks, it was 147,000 people, just the same. These are people who are desperate. To say I am disappointed in the way Republicans have shown a complete lack of regard for the people behind those staggering numbers is an understatement. Approximately 150,000 people have been hurt as a result of the intransigence of the Republicans in the past weeks.