

these men and women in uniform—our soldiers, marines, sailors, air men and women—have every resource they need to successfully carry out their mission. Whether stationed in Nevada or on one of our many bases around the world, all America's troops are depending on us to do something and do it quickly.

The managers of this bill, Senators INOUE and COCHRAN, were here last Thursday and Friday. They are back this afternoon, ready to complete action on this legislation. This is an extremely important piece of legislation. The Senate needs to act on it very quickly so we can get to conference and minimize the time the Department of Defense has to operate on a stop-gap continuing resolution.

I hope people who have amendments to offer will offer them. We have already had 2 days to offer amendments. We have two of the most experienced managers in the Senate with Senators INOUE and COCHRAN. I hope people would offer their amendments because we are not going to be on this bill all week. We are going to get off this as soon as we can.

RECOGNITION OF THE REPUBLICAN LEADER.

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

DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, this afternoon we resume consideration of the Defense appropriations bill, and among our most immediate concerns are the protection of our troops and allies in Afghanistan and the success of our mission there.

The President's pick to lead our efforts in Afghanistan, GEN Stanley McChrystal, has made clear that more forces are necessary to accomplish the mission. And while the administration has not yet reacted to General McChrystal's report, in my view, the President must soon explain to the American people his reasons either for accepting The McChrystal Plan or for taking a different course.

Timing is important. A failure to act decisively in response to General McChrystal's strategy, and his anticipated request for additional forces, could serve to undermine some of the good decisions the President has made on national security.

That said, no President decides to commit troops lightly; all such decisions have far-reaching consequences. And that is why General McChrystal and General Petraeus should also come to Washington to explain to Congress and to the American people how their strategy will work. A counter-insurgency strategy will require a significant investment in time, troops, and resources. We need an explanation from our generals why that investment is needed.

The recent disruption of an alleged al-Qaida plot against America was a re-

minder to all of us of the seriousness and urgency of our efforts in Afghanistan. There should be no doubt that al-Qaida remains a serious threat. We cannot allow al-Qaida to establish a safe haven in the very place where it plotted and planned the 9/11 attacks.

The Taliban is gaining ground in Afghanistan. And our commanders in the field are in the best position to tell us what is required to complete their mission. General McChrystal says that without adequate resources, we will likely fail. In my view, we should listen to his advice. And hopefully, we will be able to get that advice in person in a timely manner.

I yield the floor. 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.

Mr. AKAKA. Madam 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.

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. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business until 1:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. AKAKA. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

TROPICAL STORM KETSANA

Mr. AKAKA. Madam President, I rise today to stand in unity with our friends in the Philippines, China, and Vietnam, who are recovering from a terrible natural disaster.

Tropical Storm Ketsana struck the Philippines Saturday near Manila, causing massive flooding across the island nation. According to news reports, more than 80 percent of the capital city was submerged by the floods. Footage shows people being swept away by raging torrents, stranded on rooftops without supplies, or wading through waist-high flood water. According to the Associated Press, at least 284 people in the Philippines are confirmed dead, and nearly half a million people have lost their homes. As I speak, rescuers are searching for any remaining survivors. Family members are mourning lost loved ones. Millions of Filipinos across the country are struggling to find clean water, food, medicine, and shelter.

I commend the U.S. Embassy in Manila for pledging financial aid to help the Philippine government get life-saving necessities to people living in emergency shelters.

I am proud and honored by the work of members of the United States Armed Services, based in the Philippines. Their important mission is to provide counterterrorism training, but in the face of disaster, our troops have heroically conducted a number of life-saving rescues. Now they are helping to distribute supplies.

I also thank UNICEF for its large pledge of financial support.

In Hawaii, a number of organizations have stepped up to help. The Filipino Community Center, the United Filipino Council of Hawaii, and the Philippine Consulate General of Honolulu are among the organizations raising funds. I am encouraged by all those offering assistance in Hawaii and across the Nation.

Unfortunately, Ketsana's path of destruction was not finished at the Philippines. The storm picked up strength over the South China Sea, brushed against the coast of China's Hainan Island, and at full typhoon strength today slammed directly into Vietnam, where at least 23 people have been confirmed dead.

Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand are now bracing for heavy rains as the storm moves inland.

In the United States, we are no strangers to the horrors of tropical cyclones. We all remember the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina. It hit the gulf coast more than 4 years ago, but many areas are still recovering. In Hawaii, we will never forget Hurricane Iniki, which struck the island of Kauai in 1992, killing six people, destroying homes, hotels, and businesses, and leaving residents in some areas without electricity for months. It took parts of Kauai more than a decade to recover, and some historic buildings have never been rebuilt.

The United States stands with our friends in the Philippines, China, and Vietnam as they work to help the survivors. I want to thank everyone who has pitched in to help our friends recover from this terrible disaster.

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.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam 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.

ENERGY SECURITY THROUGH TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2009

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I take this time to bring to the attention of my colleagues legislation that has been introduced by Senator LUGAR,

the Energy Security Through Transparency Act of 2009. I have joined Senator LUGAR as a cosponsor, as have Senator SCHUMER, Senator WICKER, and Senator FEINGOLD.

Let me first tell you the problem this legislation is attempting to deal with; that is, there are these mineral-wealthy countries, countries that have oil, countries that have gas, countries that have valuable resources and minerals, and sometimes it is called a curse because in many of these countries there is horrible poverty, there are conflicts, open war, and very poor governance. The reason, in most cases, is corruption.

Quite frankly, there are individuals and groups and sometimes leaders within these poor nations that have wealthy resources who make their own individual deals with companies that extract these minerals and use them for their own purpose rather than sharing it, as they should, or using it, as they should, for the people of the nation in which these resources are located.

This is happening in so many countries in the world. It is in the interest of the United States to change the way these nations deal with their resources, their wealth. It is in our interest for many reasons. There are American businesses that would like to do business in these countries. They would like to help the economy of America by having business relationships with countries that have oil and gas and countries that have other mineral wealth. The problem is, they cannot do that because they cannot participate in corruption. It is against our laws for American companies to be coconspirators in corruption in another country, as it should be against our laws. It is also not very stable for them to do business in a country that is corrupt, that does not have the rule of law, that does not have the protections necessary to make sure their business relationships will be honored.

So for all those reasons, it is important for us to clean up the way these nations deal with their mineral wealth. It is also in our interests as far as energy security. I hope we will get into this debate in this Congress on the floor of this body: how we can become energy secure in America. But part of that is having a much more open relationship with those countries that have mineral wealth so we know the arrangements, so we know how the gas and oil and other minerals are entering into the international marketplace, so we can have an open policy in America to deal with our energy. It is important for this country, as I pointed out, for our economics, it is important for our national security to get this done. I might add, it is also going to be important for our environment, and we are going to have that debate, I hope, later this year in this body.

The international community has understood this. As a result of recognizing this problem, the international

community came together with the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, known as EITI. I mention this because this international effort is to try to bring transparency in what a company pays for mineral rights in a country. So if you are a company, and you are paying a royalty to a nation for extracting its minerals, you need to disclose that so the citizens of that country have the basic critical information necessary to effectively monitor government stewardship of their natural resources.

That is basically what the EITI initiative is. It is all about transparency so companies and governance can be held accountable. I would think we all agree on that. I am proud of the role the United States Helsinki Commission has played on this issue. I have had the honor of chairing that Commission, and we have made the EITI initiative a major priority of our Commission's work because we know if we can get the mineral wealth to the people of that nation, so many of the issues we are charged to deal with on human rights, on the environment, on the economy, and on security can be dealt with, if we could just get that mineral wealth to the people of that nation. That is the reason why the Commission has had a very high priority in getting more participation by countries around the world in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

That brings me to the Energy Security Through Transparency Act of 2009 that Senator LUGAR has introduced and on which I have joined him as a cosponsor. It would suggest that the United States should be an implementing country of the EITI, that we should subject ourselves to those provisions, that we should lead by example by showing the United States of America believes there should be transparency in all the contracts we enter into resulting in extraction of mineral wealth from America. That would require the proper disclosure of payments from companies that use public lands for mineral extractions. That is the right thing to do. We should have been doing this all along. The public should know what is being paid by companies to take their wealth. This is Americans' wealth. It does not belong to any one of us. There should be transparency in it. It is the right thing to do.

Another part of this legislation would require companies that are listed on the U.S. Stock Exchange that are regulated by the Securities and Exchange Commission to disclose their payments to other countries for extraction of mineral wealth. In other words, we use the leverage of participating in the U.S. Stock Exchange—to be a listed security that Americans invest in—they have the right to know what that company is paying to other countries to extract mineral wealth. That at least gives us part of the disclosure necessary to find out what a country, which is so poor in the way it treats its people, is doing with the moneys that

are being paid for the extraction of their national wealth. That would go a long way to helping us get transparency.

This legislation would urge the President to work with our partners in the G8 and G20 to promote similar efforts by the industrial nations of the world so we can get more credibility on the EITI, where passage of the EITI, joining the EITI becomes a matter of respectability for a nation internationally to make sure the contracts that are entered into with that government are shown to the people of that nation.

The bottom line is, the Energy Security Through Transparency Act of 2009 is asking the United States to take a leadership position in fighting corruption. Unfortunately, in too many of the developing countries of the world there is corruption. You have to deal with that corruption if you are going to be able to develop the type of relationships where that nation can deal with the poverty of its own people and work with us on our international priorities.

It helps developing countries. We give significant resources to date for humanitarian efforts in these nations. These nations should use their own wealth. This is a humanitarian issue. This is a human rights issue. It also provides economic opportunities for the people of that nation as well as the international community so they can participate in an open way to help that nation solve its economic problems.

It helps us with energy security globally. We cannot afford to waste the world's resources, as we look internationally at problems of energy security and global climate change. And it certainly helps in removing conflicts in many parts of the world. It is in our national security interests to make the world safer because it is usually the United States that is called upon first to deal with these conflicts.

For all these reasons, I urge my colleagues to take a look at the Energy Security Through Transparency Act of 2009, and to join us in moving this legislation forward because I believe it does present great hope for America to lead the world in helping these nations take advantage of their wealth in furthering U.S. international goals.

With that, Madam President, I yield the floor and 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.

Mr. DORGAN. Madam 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. DORGAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for such time as I may consume.

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

MAJOR REFORMS FOR AMERICA

PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICES

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, today a news story had the title "Leading Dem Plans to Blow Up Deal with Big PhRMA":

A Senate Democratic leader is hoping to blow up the deal reached between the White House, drug makers and Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus by introducing an amendment on the floor to allow prescription drugs to be imported from Canada . . . et cetera.

There is a picture of me. I woke up this morning not thinking I was going to try to blow up anything. So I want to respond to this.

The question is, are those of us in this Chamber—a bipartisan group of 30 ranging from myself and Senator SNOWE as the lead sponsor, Senator STABENOW, Senator MCCAIN, and so many others who want to deal with this issue of fair pricing of prescription drugs—are we trying to blow something up? The answer is no. We have been trying for a long time in this Chamber to say we ought to have fair prescription drug pricing for the American people, and presently it is not fair.

This is a pill bottle that would contain Lipitor made by Pfizer. It is made in Ireland and then sent around the world. These two bottles are identical. One is red, one is blue, but had the same pill made by the same company put in the same bottle, this one shipped to Canada, this one shipped to the United States. This was \$1.83 per tablet. That is what the Canadian consumers paid. Our consumers got to pay \$4.48 per tablet. The same pill, same company, same bottle, different price—American consumers get to pay the higher price: \$4.48 per pill compared to \$1.83. It is not just Lipitor. That is the most popular cholesterol-lowering drug, widely taken. It is not just consumers of Lipitor, it is consumers—this happens to be Canada, but in here I could put France, Germany, Spain, Italy, and so on—it is that we are charged the highest prices in the world for brand-name drugs. Plavix is 73 percent higher than Canada. Boniva is 90 percent higher than Canada. Zocor is 103 percent higher than Canada. The list goes on—157 percent higher than they pay in Canada; 194 percent. It is just not fair.

One day, I sat on a hay bale at a little farm reception with a guy in his eighties. We sat there just talking. He said: My wife has been fighting breast cancer for 3 years. He said: For 3 years, we have driven to Canada to buy Tamoxifen, where she could buy it for 80 percent less than it cost her in North Dakota. That is the only way we could afford to pay for her drug to fight her breast cancer.

I am just saying that is not fair. So a group of us have been trying for a long time to pass legislation that allows the consumer freedom, the freedom to say: If this identical drug is being sold in Winnipeg, Canada, at a fraction of the price why can't our con-

sumers in this country access that drug? Why don't they have the freedom to access that drug?

We have put out a piece of legislation that establishes much greater security for the safety of our drug supply with batch lots and pedigrees and everything that attaches to the security side, and then we say the American people can access the FDA-approved drugs in the countries that have the same chain of custody we have and that have the same kind of safety we have. Give the American people freedom. When they have that freedom to access those identical drugs at a lower price, sold at a fraction of the price in other parts of the world, then the pharmaceutical industry will be required to reprice those drugs in this country and give the American people fair pricing. That is just a fact.

I understand the White House negotiated with the pharmaceutical industry and came up with a plan by which the pharmaceutical industry over 10 years would fill part of what is called the doughnut hole. It is complicated to explain—the doughnut hole is a portion of the drug benefit in which the seniors have to pay their own drug costs. So I understand there was an agreement between the White House and the pharmaceutical industry to provide a discount to seniors in the donut hole, but nobody here was a part of that agreement.

The 30 or so of us who have been very strongly working to address this issue feel that when the health reform bill comes to the floor of the Senate, we intend to offer this amendment. If you don't deal with the increasing cost of prescription drugs when you try to put downward pressure on the cost of health care, in my judgment, you have failed. One of the fastest areas of cost increases has been prescription drugs. You are just going to leave that aside and say: Don't pay any attention to that; it doesn't matter. You can't do that. So we are trying to find a way to put some downward pressure on health care prices, and that must include putting some downward pressure on prescription drugs.

Let me be quick to point out that the pharmaceutical industry does important things. I don't wish them ill at all. I have done things that support them, including research and development tax credits and so on. But I am not interested in just waiting to allow them to continue to price their brand-name pharmaceutical drugs much higher to our consumers than they do to virtually every other consumer in the world. It is not fair.

When the health care reform bill comes to the floor of the Senate, I and my colleagues—Senator STABENOW, Senator MCCAIN, many others; a bipartisan group—intend to offer this bill as an amendment. It is not intended to blow up anything. We weren't a part of constructing anything; we are not going to blow up something. All we are going to do is demand that some com-

mon sense and basic fairness be established in the pricing of prescription drugs in this country. The way to do that is to give the American people the freedom to access this identical prescription drug in other areas where it is sold at a fraction of the price.

So, again, I wanted to disabuse anybody of the notion that we are going to blow up something. It is not true. I understand the pharmaceutical industry does not like what we are trying to do. They would like to have absolute pricing capability to price our drugs, in the case of Lipitor, at \$4.50 a tablet when they sell it to others for less than half of that. I understand they would like that opportunity. On behalf of the American citizen, I say it is not fair. It is wrong, and it ought to change. If we pass the legislation we have introduced—a broad bipartisan group here in the Senate—it will give the American people freedom and force, in my judgment, a repricing toward fair prices for prescription drugs in our country.

Again, I wanted to make the point that we are not trying to blow up anything; we are trying to fix something that is wrong, and we are going to try to do that when the health care reform bill comes to the floor of the Senate.

We have been guaranteed an opportunity. Senator MCCAIN and Senator SNOWE and I intended to offer this earlier in the year, and as a result of that, the majority leader said: Don't offer it here, but I will make certain you have the opportunity on the floor of the Senate. That is why we will be in line right toward the front end of the health care reform bill to offer the amendment and have a debate.

FINANCIAL INDUSTRY REFORM

If I might, for a couple of minutes on another subject, say that I have spoken often about an issue on the floor of the Senate that goes back some decade or so on the matter of financial reform. I am not going to revisit all of that, which happened 10 years ago, but I do want to say this: I happen to think one of the first items of business this year should have been financial reform. I know others disagreed. I know the President wanted to do health care and some other items first. But I know the President and his team are working very hard now on financial reform. It is very important to get this right.

I wish to make a point. I have been reading recently about what is happening, and I would like to demonstrate what is happening.

Last fall, a whole series of things steered this economy into the ditch, the deepest economic downturn since the Great Depression.

So now, September 12, 2009, The New York Times, "A Year Later, Little Change on Wall Street":

One year after the collapse of Lehman Brothers, the surprise is not how much has changed in the financial industry, but how little. Not much change on Wall Street.

September 15, the Washington Post, "The Wall Street Casino, Back in Business." Think of that. A year after the