

just want to make sure that people understand what the facts are on this bill, and I think the Armed Services Committee did an extremely good job in committee.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, it is no secret that Americans are unhappy with the way our friends on the other side have handled things over the past few years, and especially the last year and a half. Americans have been speaking out across the country about the need to return to a smaller, more competent, more accountable government that lives within its means. Instead, Democrats in Congress have given them more government, more spending, more debt—and now they are threatening a massive tax hike to top it all off.

What has been most remarkable to me in watching this all play out is the way our friends on the other side have doubled down on their plans in the teeth of public outrage. Yesterday, we saw a CNBC survey showing most Americans don't like the idea of seeing taxes raised on anybody at this point. CNN says that most of the economists it surveyed said the best thing we can do for businesses is to assure them their taxes won't go up at the end of the year.

Yet Democratic leaders are still clinging to the discredited idea that government needs more power, more money for more Washington programs. Maybe the reason is that the Democratic vision of recovery—their idea of success, according to the assistant majority leader—is 9 percent unemployment. That is right. Yesterday, the No. 2 Democrat in the Senate said that Congress could “breathe a sigh of relief” at 9 percent unemployment or less. That is their idea of success.

Well, our idea of success is for businesses to start hiring again and to get this country back on track. It seems the more Americans say they want Democrats to stop what they are doing and focus on jobs and the economy, the more determined they are to press ahead with their various liberal agenda items while they have still got the chance.

That is basically what today's vote on the Defense authorization bill is all about. The Defense authorization bill requires 4 or 5 weeks to debate. But instead of having that debate or turning to the Defense appropriations bill, which funds the military, they want to use this week for a political exercise. They want to weigh this bill down with controversy in a transparent attempt to show their special interest groups ahead of the election that they haven't forgotten them.

It is quite astonishing. Democrats have called up this bill not to have a vote on it or to consider amendments to help our troops in the field but to put on a show—to use it as an opportunity to cast votes for things Americans either don't want or aren't interested in seeing attached to a bill that is supposed to be about defense.

My friend, the majority leader, has already said this bill isn't going to pass with these items attached to it before the election. But he is keeping them on there anyway. So this is not a serious exercise, it is a show. And it is because of shows such as this our friends have lost credibility with the public.

Americans want us to take care of the basics and do it competently—take care of the basics and do it competently. This isn't too much to ask. But evidently it is too much to ask of Democratic leaders in Congress right before the election.

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

I withhold my request.

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, there will now be a period of morning business until 11 a.m., with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the second half.

The Senator from Washington.

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, today I am joining with Senator BROWNBACK to introduce a bipartisan amendment to the Defense authorization bill that will save and create jobs in one of the most important sectors in our economy—our aerospace industry.

Our amendment is about protecting skilled family-wage jobs—manufacturing jobs, engineering jobs, and jobs with technical skills and expertise that are passed from one generation to the next. These are jobs that not only support families during this difficult economic time but that are also helping keep entire communities above water—jobs in communities such as Kansas, Connecticut, California, and in my home State of Washington. They are jobs that support small businesses, pay mortgages, and create economic opportunity, and are jobs that right now are at risk because of illegal subsidies that undercut workers and create an uneven playing field for America's aerospace workers.

The amendment Senator BROWNBACK and I are offering is a commonsense,

straightforward way to protect American aerospace jobs from unfair European competition, and it is an amendment that specifically targets a major job-creating project—the Air Force's aerial refueling tanker contract—as a place where we can begin to restore fairness for our aerospace workers. This amendment says that in awarding that tanker contract the Pentagon must also consider any unfair competitive advantage aerospace companies have. And there is no bigger unfair advantage in the world of international aerospace than launch aid.

As you may know, Mr. President, launch aid is direct funding that has been provided to European aerospace company Airbus from the treasuries of European governments. It is what supports their factories and their workers and their airplanes. It is what allows them to roll the dice and lose. And it is what separates them from American aerospace companies such as Boeing, which bets the company on each new airplane line. In short, it is what allows them to stack the deck against our American workers.

In July of this year, the World Trade Organization handed down a ruling in a case that the United States brought against the European Union that finally called launch aid what it is—a trade-distorting, job-killing, unfair advantage. In what was one of our Nation's most important trade cases to date, the WTO ruled very clearly that launch aid is illegal. It creates an uneven playing field. It has harmed American workers and American companies and it needs to end.

Specifically, the WTO found that European governments have provided Airbus more than 15 billion Euros in launch aid, subsidizing every model of aircraft ever produced by Airbus in the last 40 years, including the model they plan to put up for our tanker competition. They ruled that France and Germany and Spain provided more than 1 billion Euros in infrastructure and infrastructure-related grants between 1989 and 2001, as well as another 1 billion in shared transfers and equity infusions into Airbus. They ruled that European governments provided over 1 billion Euros in funding between 1986 and 2005 for research and development directed specifically to the development of Airbus aircraft. In fact, the Lexington Institute estimates that launch aid represents over \$200 billion in today's dollars in total subsidies to Airbus.

Launch aid has had very real consequences. It has created an uphill battle for our workers and for American aerospace as a whole. Because of launch aid, our workers are now not only competing against rival companies, they are competing against the treasuries of European governments. At the end of the day, that has meant lost jobs at our American aerospace companies and suppliers and in the communities that support them.

I have been speaking out against Europe's market-distorting actions for

many years because I know and understand that these subsidies are not only illegal, they are deeply unfair and anti-competitive. My home State of Washington is home to much of our country's aerospace industry, and I know our workers are the best in the world. On a level playing field, they can compete and win against absolutely anyone. Unfortunately, Airbus and the European Union have refused to allow fair competition. Instead, they use their aerospace industry as a government-funded jobs program, and they have used billions in illegal launch aid to fund it.

They are going to do just about anything to keep those illegal subsidies in place. We saw evidence of that in recent days in news on Airbus's attempts to distract and hide their job-killing subsidies through their retaliatory WTO case against Boeing. Unfortunately for them, it was a smokescreen that failed. News reports and analysts have all shown that the two WTO decisions are worlds apart. In fact, leading aerospace analyst Loren Thompson wrote after the Boeing ruling that it "found nothing comparable to European launch aid." The most recent WTO ruling really only reinforces that American aerospace workers have been at a competitive disadvantage, and that needs to change.

Let me be clear about one thing. Our objective here is not to limit competition; our objective is to make sure everyone can compete on a level playing field. Airbus has made it clear they will go to any lengths to hurt our country's aerospace industry. We need to make it clear that we will take every action to stop them because this is not only about the future of aerospace, right now it is about jobs that will help our entire economy recover.

In fact, as we look for ways to stimulate job growth and keep American companies innovating and growing, we should look no further than this amendment. This amendment is commonsense policy. It makes sure the U.S. Government policy translates to Pentagon policy because the fact is that the U.S. Government, through our Trade Representative, has taken the position that Airbus subsidies are illegal and unfair. Yet the U.S. Department of Defense is ignoring that position as we look now to purchase a tanker fleet, and that does not make any sense—not for our country, not for our military, and certainly not for our workers. The WTO made a fair decision. Airbus subsidies are illegal and anti-competitive. Now the DOD needs to take that ruling into account.

When I talk to our aerospace workers back home in Washington State, I want to tell them we have evened the stakes. I want them to know their government is not looking the other way as policies continue to undercut their job opportunities. I want them to know that while they are working to secure our country by producing the best airplanes in the world, their government is doing every-

thing it can to make sure there are fair opportunities that will keep them on the job.

I know our workers will win a fair and open competition, and I urge the DOD to do the right thing to make this competition fair and open by considering illegal subsidies in awarding these critical contracts.

I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan amendment when we adopt it and help us protect our American aerospace jobs as a result.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, in a few hours we are going to be voting on whether we want to take up the Defense bill. That should be a no-brainer, for, after all, defense of the country is one of the most important things the U.S. Government can do. We are going to consider that. Yet we have some highly inflammatory issues that possibly are going to derail this bill.

I have the privilege of sitting on both the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Intelligence Committee. The provisions in this bill, from my standpoint, are going to ensure that our service men and women who are putting their lives on the line for this country will have the training, the equipment, and the resources they need and deserve.

Back in February, the Secretary of Defense told our Armed Services Committee that the Department's top priorities are "rearming and strengthening the nation's commitment to care for the all-volunteer force, our greatest strategic asset" and "rebalancing America's defense posture by emphasizing capabilities needed to prevail in current conflicts while enhancing capabilities that may be needed in the future." That is what the Secretary of Defense said. What more can you say? That is what this bill does. This National Defense Authorization Act is going to authorize over \$700 billion in discretionary budget authority for the programs and initiatives to carry out what the Secretary of Defense said.

In order to carry this out for an all-volunteer force, here are some of the things the bill will do. It will improve the quality of life for the service members and their families, authorizing much needed military construction and housing projects.

Here is another example: Ensure that all of the forces preparing to deploy are trained for what they are deploying for and that their equipment is ready so that they can succeed at combat. I remember back in the early days of the Iraq war, I had mamas and daddies calling me because members of the Florida National Guard were in Iraq and they did not even have the adequate body armor. Never again for those kinds of things. But that is another reason for us to have this bill.

Another reason: It will authorize a 1.4-percent pay raise for our service members.

To get ready for the ongoing efforts to prevail in this fight, here is also what the bill would do:

Counterinsurgency. It enhances our ability to go after the bad guys in those counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan, and it would improve the ability of our military to counter non-traditional threats such as those that now threaten us in the cyber warfare domain.

Of course, it would support the highest priority unfunded needs that are identified by the Chiefs of Staff.

It would also authorize over \$110 billion in base budget authority for funding high-priority weapons systems. I will give an example. The Navy's littoral combat ship allows us to get in close to shore in modernized equipment and boats; also, the E2-D Advanced Hawkeye, the Air Force's Joint STARS Program, and the new hot, stealthy F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.

This bill takes several steps to enhance our capabilities to protect our country against emerging threats, including terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This is in a subject area of the subcommittee in Armed Services that I chair.

We are going to have an increased capability for manufacturing and testing capabilities to reduce the time required to produce high-demand items such as body and vehicle armor, the IED jammers, Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles—that is the MRAP vehicles—and to modernize Department test capability facilities to ensure new weapons systems meet the requirements of that warfighter who is out there on the ground, facing the threat.

In this bill is also funding for advanced technologies for weapons systems and further R&D to reduce our dependency on fossil fuels in our military machine.

It is going to add \$113 million for unfunded requirements that were identified by the commander of the Special Operations Command for ground mobility vehicles, deployable communications equipment, thermal and night vision goggles, special operations combat assault rifles, and nonlethal weapons technologies. This is the new kind of war and combat we are facing. It is often these highly specialized, trained units that are going in under stealth with highly sophisticated weapons and equipment to go after a very stealthy enemy who does not wear a uniform and who blends right into the local population.

This bill also goes after getting us improved in the nonproliferation programs.

There is so much in this bill. Yet we are facing not even getting the 60 votes this afternoon to be able to proceed with the Nation's defense. Why is that? Because there is a provision in here, that was voted out of the Armed Services Committee, on the repeal of the standing policy in the military of don't ask, don't tell—a repeal of it once the

Department of Defense completes a comprehensive review of the repeal. The President, the Secretary of Defense, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs—once that review is done under the bill—must certify to Congress that they can implement the repeal while maintaining readiness, effectiveness, and unit cohesion. This provision obviously has received a great deal of attention. I believe that proceeding in this way—very cautiously—will allow the DOD to examine all the implications of repealing this policy while moving forward with this change.

It is clear that this Defense bill is a key piece of the legislation for our military. For 48 consecutive years, the Senate has completed work on a Defense authorization bill. This year, a year when we have forces engaged in ground combat as we speak, is not the year for the Senate to suddenly say: No, we are not going to pass this kind of legislation.

I urge the Senate this afternoon on this vote to allow us to proceed to the discussion and the amending of the Defense bill.

Mr. President, how much time is remaining?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. There is 5½ minutes remaining.

COLOMBIA

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I also wish to share some observations of a recent visit I made to another troubled part of the world. In Colombia, I witnessed a country transformed. I went there with our four-star commander, General Fraser of the U.S. Southern Command. We went to a former FARC base in southern Colombia, the little village of La Macarena. It is now a headquarters for the special operations forces of the Colombian military.

It is interesting, this place out in the middle of the jungle, a violent narco-trafficking insurgency that had completely controlled this territory and had intimidated and terrorized the people. The FARC leadership used to hold press conferences under a large tree that is now in the middle of that Colombian military base.

There are actually vacationers from around the world that are coming to a nearby stream that used to be the vacation destination for FARC leaders and their friends. Well, those days of the FARC controlling that part of Colombia are over. In recent years, the Colombian military has killed, captured, disarmed hundreds of FARC fighters, and those who remain are on the move.

The FARC is not defeated, but they are certainly diminished. Just before General Fraser and I arrived, the military carried out another daring hostage rescue, raiding a FARC camp and freeing four Colombian hostages. Some of those had been in captivity for well over a decade. I met with the President of Colombia. He was the Defense Min-

ister a couple years ago, before he was elected President, when they pulled off that miraculous deception that rescued the three American hostages who had been there for years in captivity with the FARC. Two of those three American hostages were from Florida.

So the Colombians, with U.S. assistance, have transformed their military into a 21st century counterinsurgency force, and it has been very effective. They are even sending their forces now to help train the Mexican security forces, where there is so much trouble brewing.

Since the time is drawing nigh, I will share at a later date the troubles that Mexico faces. It is substantial, with the narco-traffickers basically penetrating all levels of the Mexican Government but especially the local and State governments of Mexico. It is of enormous importance to the United States that we have success with our neighbors, our friends to the south, to be able to get control of their country just like the Colombians did as they diminished the FARC.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. I ask unanimous consent to be recognized for up to 20 minutes, to be followed by Senator COLLINS for 7.

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

Mr. CORKER. If the Chair will let me know when I have 2 minutes remaining.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator will be notified.

NATIONAL DEBT

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I wish to talk about our Nation's indebtedness. I know very few people watch these presentations. But to my friends on the other side, before they turn their monitors off, this is not a partisan presentation. Hopefully, it is a presentation to cause us, together, to look at our Nation's indebtedness from a different viewpoint and, hopefully, when we get to real business in January, we will focus on this in a way that brings us together and does not separate us.

I wish to start by looking at where our country is today as it relates to debt to our gross domestic product. Most countries in the world look at the amount of debt they have as a country in relation to the gross domestic product the country has. That is the sum of all the output.

For a lot of businesspeople who may be tuned in today, it is not unlike a company that looks at its revenues and compares the amount of debt the company has to those revenues or gross profits. So, today, our country's debt-to-GDP is at 62 percent debt to gross domestic product.

I think most of us understand the problem we have as a country today is

that we are very rapidly moving to 146 percent of debt to GDP within the next 20 years. I would like to point out the reason this dot is here. That is where Greece was when the European Union had to come in and bail it out. It was at 120 percent of GDP. I do not wish to compare our country to Greece. Greece is very different. I was just there visiting with the Prime Minister, their Finance Minister, and several bankers. There is much about their economy that is very different than ours.

But I do think it is important to look at the fact that they were at 120 percent of debt to GDP when they had to be bailed out by European Union members. We are quickly moving beyond that over the next 20 years.

This is a slide I hope everybody who may be tuned in will focus on and remember. There are three important components. It begins by looking at the revenues, which is the blue line. The spending is the red line. There are three elements of this that I would like for people to focus on, if they would.

For those people who think Republicans and Democrats cannot work together, I do wish to point out a period of time when we had a Democratic President and a Republican Congress, and the line actually passed. We had revenues that were higher than our expenditures. I do want to say that the fiscal issues during that time were far different than the ones we have today.

Where we are today, in 2010, is far different. We have a huge gap between spending and revenues. People might say: Well, during a recession, maybe there are some extraordinary things that may occur. Maybe the spending rises tremendously, maybe revenues drop. Here is the problem. Here is the part of the slide I hope almost everybody will focus on into the future; that is, that gap never goes away.

Where we are today is at 1.47 more in spending than we have in revenue. The problem is, where we are as a country is that this gap never goes away. In 2020, we still are spending \$1.25 trillion more than we are taking in.

In Tennessee, the average household, in most recent data, earned about \$43,000 a year. If they used the kind of logic we are using today in Washington, the average Tennessee household would spend \$74,000. In other words, the average Tennessee household would borrow 40 cents for every \$1 they spend. Fortunately, that is not what is happening in Tennessee, or at least not with most families.

I think when you look at a problem, you need to sort of look at trends that have taken place. If you look back at 1970, 62 percent of what we spent as a country was on what is called discretionary spending, things such as defense, highways, and education. Only 31 percent of what we spent at that time was on mandatory spending, things such as Medicare, Social Security, Medicaid and only 7 percent on interest.