

not land safely as we have had where people have fallen asleep in the tower?

Let's talk about our military. At the end of the day the other side is saying, oh, is it not awful that those of us on this side are not going to pay the military? We are going to vote over and over to pay our military. Our leadership is going to make consent requests over and over to pay our military if we are going to be shut down.

What about our intelligence apparatus, the very apparatus that in far distant lands gets a snippet of information that is passed through the governmental centers that allows us to avert the terrorists from ever doing the attack in the first place? Is that going to be affected? Oh, essential personnel will be there. But what about some of those extended personnel we rely on for our intelligence apparatus?

Ladies and gentlemen, we are not only playing with fire, we are playing with superheated fire. What about GABBY GIFFORD's husband, the commander of the next space shuttle mission? They are supposed to launch April 29. Are all of those workers at the Kennedy Space Center who are preparing the next to the last space shuttle flight going to continue that preparation? Are they going to lay off the astronaut crew because they are not essential as they are training in split-second, very precise training?

Is CAPT Mark Kelly, United States Navy, going to be able to command that mission to take the final components up to low-earth orbit to connect those final components of the International Space Station? What kind of effect is that going to have and be felt throughout the NASA centers all over the country?

What about the Securities and Exchange Commission? What about the banking regulators? What about the Internal Revenue Service going after the people who are trying to defraud us? Do you know that we have prisoners in the State prison system in Florida—more than any other State—who have been putting in fake income tax returns and getting refunds? We have finally got the IRS working with the State prison system, and they are going to shut that off in the next week. Are we going to be able to stop that fraud upon the taxpayer? What about the fellow who just received a \$250,000 IRS refund check, and he has not even filed his income tax return, because somebody has stolen his identity and put in a fake return, and fortunately the check got to him, not to the shy-ster. Are we going to have those IRS personnel to continue to go after that? You can go on and on.

What about our court system? What about the administration of justice? This is what we are facing.

Rigid ideology, in some cases placed on top of excessive partisanship, is now bringing us almost to our knees. If we shut down at midnight tomorrow night, and if we go through the weekend, guess what is going to happen to

the Asian financial markets come Sunday afternoon, Sunday evening here, when it is Monday morning there, and those Asian markets open up. Oh, and by the way, have not the people of Japan suffered enough? The 20 or so ships we have over there trying to assist the people of Japan, are they going to have to go on furlough too?

This is the time, as the Good Book says, for people to come. Let us reason together. This is the time for people of good will—and there are plenty of those people who are Members of the Senate—on this side of the Capitol and on the other side of the Capitol to come together. Come, let us reason together.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FRANKEN). The majority leader is recognized.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Would the Chair be kind enough to announce, are we in a period of morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We are in morning business until 5 o'clock.

Mr. REID. I have cleared this with the Republican leader. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate extend the period of morning business until 9:30 p.m. tonight, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each during that period.

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

The Senator from Illinois.

BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, like the majority leader, I was here the last time there was a government shutdown. I never believed it would reach that point. I certainly didn't believe it would be a long shutdown, but it turned out to be over 2 weeks before it was over. It was a period of profound embarrassment for all of both political parties who served in Congress that it had reached a point where our efforts to find common ground had failed, and we had basically failed by closing down the government and calling an end to basic government services.

The Senator from Florida went through a partial list. The list could go on and on. What about the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Men and women who risk their lives every day guarding the most dangerous people, what is to happen to them as we shut down the government? He raised questions about our efforts to monitor terrorist activities. Those efforts are not only exclusively among the military. He mentioned the intelligence-gathering operations of the United States. I don't think most people outside our walk of life have any idea how many men and women get up every single morning, monitoring transmissions of information, monitoring activity all around the world, looking for that one shred of

evidence that there is something dangerous about to occur. These are Federal Government employees, subject in many respects, many of them, to a government shutdown.

In the Department of the Treasury is a foreign assets desk that monitors every single day the movement of money, looking for evidence of drug cartels and terrorist activities and criminal activity in the United States and around the world. They share that information with law enforcement at every level—State, local, and international—to keep us safe. These are Federal employees affected by a government shutdown. We just learned our Secretary of State is canceling a major conference on Tuesday, bringing in leaders from around Washington and the world to talk about critical issues, because of her fear that the Department of State will be shut down on Tuesday. We also know, in embassies all around the world, men and women literally risk their lives to be there representing the United States, offering their services for Americans and others in terrible circumstances, and they are going to be subject to a shutdown, skeleton crews.

We ask ourselves: Is this necessary? Have we reached a point where there is no alternative? The answer is there is an alternative. The alternative is for people of good will to come together and find common ground.

I am closer to the position of Senator REID because I know, I have followed his conversations, his reports on the negotiations. I am certain of what I say. When it comes to the dollar amount for budget deficit reduction, we are virtually in agreement. The differences are minuscule. We have agreed on the amount of spending to be cut. That is no longer a matter of debate.

What happened in the last 24 hours is a dramatic shift away from the budget deficit discussion. Now Speaker JOHN BOEHNER, who is my friend, on behalf of his caucus, is arguing it is no longer about the budget. It is no longer about the deficit. It is no longer about cutting spending. It is about a social agenda, some issues.

No. 1, Speaker BOEHNER insists we have to accept language from the House which says the Environmental Protection Agency will basically shut down its operations when it comes to certain environmental hazards such as greenhouse gas emissions. Some of us think that is a catastrophic decision, a disastrous decision. The House Republican caucus voted for it, the Republican majority. Now they are saying to us: Accept it.

Yesterday, we debated that issue. We debated it in the Senate for many hours. The Senator from Florida was here. We had four separate votes on the issue of taking the power away from the EPA. The first amendment offered received seven votes in the affirmative. The second one received seven votes in the affirmative. The third one received 12 votes in the affirmative. The fourth

one failed with a 50-50 rollcall vote, offered by the Republican leader. Has the Senate spoken on this issue? It has. If I remember correctly, under the Constitution that both House and Senate Members are sworn to uphold, there are two Chambers. We disagree profoundly with the House Republican position. For Speaker BOEHNER to now insist that despite all the debate and activity, it is a "take it or leave it" on taking away the powers of the EPA is not only unreasonable, it is unfair and totally unrelated to the issue of budget deficit reduction.

But there is a second issue. The second issue, which I find hard to believe they are now making the fulcrum of the decision on whether we shut down the government, is whether we should shut down the access of people across America, particularly poor women and children, to primary health care in clinics. They have an amendment under title X which would basically stop the funding for access to private health clinics funded by that program. What kind of services do these clinics offer? They offer cancer screening, breast cancer screening, screening for infectious diseases. The basic care we provide to women and families across the country would be shut down by the provision the Republicans in the House insist we agree on if we want the government to stay open and do business. Is that what the last election was about? I missed that part. I missed the part where the tea party stood and said: We are for fiscal sanity, and we want to close down the access of women to basic health services. I don't remember that at all.

I welcome that debate. In the next hour or two or perhaps tomorrow morning, we are going to offer to the Republicans, if they want to debate on the floor that rider that is in the House approach, let's have the debate. Let's have the vote. It isn't as if we are ignoring it. We are prepared to face it and vote on it. I know what the outcome will be, and I think the Speaker knows as well. He is going to lose. So why are we allowing this ship of state to founder over two social issues, closing down the EPA's function and closing down women's access to health care?

That is where they are. It is no longer about the deficit. All the deficit hawks and all the speeches we have heard, that is over. I find it hard to believe there are actually people who think a government shutdown is a good thing politically. There was a statement printed in the Washington Post this week on April 5:

Republicans gave the speaker an ovation when he informed them . . . to begin preparing for a possible shutdown.

An ovation? So some people in that caucus apparently believe a government shutdown is a good thing. Some of them, Congressman PENCE of Indiana, has been forthright and direct. Let's shut it down, he says.

How do we answer the basic question posed so many times: What does that

do to the reputation of the United States around the world, that our government is going to shut down? What does it do in terms of the state of our economy which is coming out of a recession, trying to put people back to work? We know what the predictions are. Any government shutdown will reduce economic growth at a time when we desperately need more economic growth and more jobs. The longer the shutdown goes on, the worse it is in terms of unemployment and economic growth. We also know that even though some Republicans in their caucus were cheering on the idea of a shutdown, basic services essential to the operation of this government and the safety of our Nation will be in peril and danger. People who literally give their lives in service to the country will be wondering from day to day and hour to hour whether we will continue to finance the government.

The clock runs out at midnight tomorrow night. Between now and then, I hope Speaker BOEHNER comes to his senses and appeals to his Republican caucus and tells them we cannot have everything. Take what we have, this cut in spending, this reduction in spending, which is a step in the right direction. I hope he will say it to even those who are cheering the idea of a government shutdown. It is not the right thing for America.

It is time for men and women of both political parties to stand and to represent the best in this country, to make the concessions that keep us moving forward. We have plenty of work to do beyond this. I am leaving here to go to a meeting to discuss a bipartisan approach to dealing with our budget problems way beyond the next 6 months. If we are going to create an environment for bipartisan cooperation, it does not start with a government shutdown. If there are any Republicans who believe this is a sound strategy, that somehow this will endear them to the American people, I think they are making a mistake. A shutdown could cost the government dearly, and it could certainly cost the United States in its reputation around the world. I don't want to see that occur.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, sometimes when my constituents come to Washington I tell them: Welcome to the District of Columbia, 68 square miles of logic-free environment, where perception is reality.

I can't think of anything more surreal than the situation we find ourselves in with the House of Representa-

tives having passed an appropriations bill that would keep the government open while negotiations continue and would fund our men and women fighting now three wars around the world to make sure they get paid.

I have also had occasion to tell my constituents that Washington, DC, is a lot like Disneyland. It is a fun place to visit, but it is not real. When we get in trouble, when Members of Congress get in trouble is when they think Washington is real because it is not. What is real is what is back home, where people have common sense, try to solve problems working together, rather than play endless political games.

I find it outrageous that Senator REID, the majority leader, and the President of the United States would refuse to fund pay to the men and women in uniform by threatening a veto to the House bill sent over here. We know that unless Senator REID and the President agree to keep the government open, they will be responsible for the shutdown of the Federal Government and all the disruption that goes along with it.

After the government shuts down, we are still going to have to pass an appropriations bill at some level to keep the government functioning. A shutdown doesn't solve anything, except cause disruption, concern, and heartburn among a lot of good people about whether they will get paid. First and foremost among those are our men and women in uniform.

The President has threatened to veto the troop funding bill, which is H.R. 1263, by saying: "This bill is a distraction." That is according to the President's own Statement of Administration Policy issued by the White House earlier today—"a distraction." An attempt by the U.S. House of Representatives to make sure our men and women in uniform are being paid while they are fighting three wars around the world is a distraction to the President of the United States. That is outrageous. That is irresponsible. That is an abdication of Presidential leadership, and I hope the President will reconsider because funding our troops is not a distraction, it is a responsibility. A veto threat is not what they deserve nor what they should be hearing from the Commander in Chief.

About 1 in 10 people who wear the uniform of the U.S. military calls Texas home. Those Texans are among the roughly 100,000 U.S. troops currently deployed in Afghanistan, many of whom are serving multiple deployments away from home and away from their families. Some of them are, for example, members of the Texas Army National Guard's 176th Engineer Brigade headquarters that is currently handling engineering projects for about one-half of the country. Other Texans are among the roughly 40,000 troops still deployed in Iraq. Some of these are members of the Texas Army National Guard's 36th Infantry Division

headquarters that is currently providing command and control for about one-third of that country.

Texans are also supporting the mission in Libya, although many are perhaps unclear about what the mission is. Texans are onboard more than a dozen Navy vessels currently providing humanitarian assistance off the coast of Japan.

The President's threat to veto funding for these troops is irresponsible and shows his willingness to risk a shutdown of the government and deny them the pay they are entitled to rather than to accept responsibility and to face the fiscal facts.

For nearly 200 days, our Federal Government has operated without a budget because of an irresponsible approach to one of the most basic functions of the Federal Government: to keep the lights on, to keep the government operating, and to accept responsibility for those decisions.

We know Democrats, while they controlled the White House and both branches of the legislature, the House and the Senate, failed to pass even a budget last year—even a budget. Every family in America, every small business, everyone other than the Federal Government and Congress has to operate on a budget, but only Washington could continue to spend money it does not have—about 40 cents on every dollar. Yet I would say the President remains either oblivious to that fact or, I think probably more accurately, in denial about the fiscal crisis that is impending and is apparently unwilling to try to work across the aisle to try to address it.

I think it is imperative that the majority leader allow the Senate to vote on the House-passed measure, which we could do by unanimous consent if not today then tomorrow before the looming shutdown tomorrow night. It is clearly in Majority Leader REID's hands, and it is in the hands of the President of the United States if he would withhold his veto, allow negotiations to continue, and to make sure our troops were funded as they should be.

The troop funding bill would fund the Department of Defense through the end of the fiscal year, and it represents a bicameral, bipartisan agreement that was reached last December on funding of the Department of Defense. It is past time for this legislation to be enacted, particularly given that in the months that have passed since December, America now finds itself engaged in a third war—entered into without congressional authorization, without any clear mission and, frankly, only 21 percent, according to a recent poll I saw, actually believe the mission is clear. Well, I am with the other 79 percent. I do not know what the mission is.

The President said it was a humanitarian mission, although when he obligated the U.S. military to go in he immediately outsourced the responsibility for it to NATO, which did not

have the assets and the resources in order to protect the rebel forces who continue to be killed by Qadhafi's troops.

The President said Qadhafi must go. Yet he is doing nothing from a military perspective to accomplish that goal. What does that do to America's stature and reputation in the world community? What other tyrants are watching this President say Qadhafi must go, and yet have this President unwilling to do what is necessary to remove him from his office?

Well, I think it not only damages American prestige, it emboldens other tyrants like Qadhafi, and it does not solve the humanitarian crisis in Libya.

Well, some have said—and the majority whip was here talking about so-called riders that accompany this piece of legislation, but let me first say what this troop funding bill also does. It cuts \$12 billion in additional spending. When 40 cents out of every dollar the Federal Government has spent is borrowed money, and we are spending money we do not have, doesn't it make sense to cut Federal spending? Well, I think it does. I think anybody who thinks we can continue business as usual is just deluding themselves, living in a la-la land that has no bearing, has no semblance with reality.

This bill would also keep the government operating for another week. This would avoid the shutdown that would occur tomorrow night, and it would allow for more time for bipartisan negotiations to occur.

So far as the so-called policy riders go, prohibiting taxpayer funding of abortion in the District of Columbia, well, that has been supported by both Republicans and Democrats in the past. President Clinton signed similar legislation six times. Vice President JOE BIDEN and Senator HARRY REID have voted for it many times; and President Obama himself signed this same provision into law in 2009.

This troop funding bill also prevents Guantanamo Bay detainees from being transferred to the continental United States. I think if there ought to be a consensus about anything, it is that we do not want dangerous terrorists detained at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, transferred to the United States. This bill prevents that.

This language is virtually identical to existing law that was included in the National Defense Authorization Act. This bill also includes full funding for our commitment to the U.S.-Israel Memorandum of Understanding for fiscal year 2011 and was passed Thursday afternoon, this bill, by a vote of 247 to 181 in the House of Representatives.

I do not know what could be any clearer than if President Obama were to veto this legislation—after it was passed by the Senate—that closing the government would be on their hands.

Mr. President, may I ask how much time I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has used 10 minutes.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for an additional 3 minutes.

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

Mr. CORNYN. So this bill has been passed by a substantial majority in the House of Representatives. For Senator REID to say he will refuse to take this up or President Obama to say—if it were passed in the Senate—that he would veto it is irresponsible, and the shutdown of the government would clearly be on their hands.

This demonstrates a very disconcerting trend that we are seeing of a failure of leadership at the highest office in the land; that is, the President of the United States—a President who goes to Brazil and talks about, well, I am for free trade, yet has been sitting on the Colombia Free Trade Agreement, the South Korea Free Trade Agreement, the Panama Free Trade Agreement since he entered office, a President who says he is for bringing down the price of gasoline, for making America less dependent on imported energy from abroad, and goes to—believe it or not—Brazil and says: It is great you are going to be drilling for more oil offshore in Brazil. And do you know what. We are going to be one of your best customers—in other words, saying one thing in America and doing another thing abroad.

This is the same President who appointed a fiscal commission that reported in December of 2010, which documents the sobering reality of the debt crisis we are facing in this country and what we must do responsibly to deal with it on a bipartisan basis, but in his State of the Union Message, in his budget he has presented, it is not even mentioned.

We know we have important issues to deal with. This is the most immediate one ahead of us. But this is small compared to the bigger issues we are going to have to deal with in just a month or two, which is the debt ceiling. America has maxed out its credit card, and the President is asking us, the Treasury Secretary is asking us to raise the credit limit to allow us to continue to borrow more money.

We know that is an unsustainable path. We know the American people are sick and tired of the typical gamesmanship and the "gotcha" politics in Washington, DC. What they want, I truly believe, is for us to work together on a bipartisan basis to solve the problems in front of us and not to kick the can down the road, not play a game of "gotcha," setting up our political adversaries for the next election in 2012. That is what this smells like. That is what this looks like.

This is irresponsible on the part of the President. It is irresponsible on the part of the majority leader to fail to take up this bill and to allow us to vote on it tomorrow to prevent the shutdown of the government. It is irresponsible to threaten our men and women in uniform, fighting three wars across

the globe, with being deprived of their paycheck by our failure to act, by the President's commitment to veto any legislation that were to be passed on a temporary basis to stop this government shutdown.

I hope the American people will call, write, e-mail, I hope they will let their representatives know that is unacceptable and that Congress must act tomorrow in advance of the deadline; and if the Senate does pass the bill, that they communicate to the White House, by every means necessary, that, Mr. President, you shall not veto pay to our troops while we are fighting three wars. To do so not only is an abdication of your responsibility as Commander in Chief, but it is an abdication of the leadership people expect from the President of the United States.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I know we are rotating back and forth. I am the only one on the Senate floor, I think, who is requesting time. I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized for, let's say, 15 minutes. I probably will not use that much time, but I ask that unanimous consent.

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

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, let me, first of all, speak in response to what the Senator from Texas talked about. This is very significant. I happen to be maybe one of the few who voted against the last three extensions that were requested—these 1-week extensions. That is no way to run government. I understand that.

But this one is different, and I rejoiced when I saw we had an opportunity to pass a 1-week extension that would do three things: No. 1, substantial cuts—not these just imaginary things we have been talking about—No. 2, continue the funding for what we must do in Israel for the end of this fiscal year; but, most importantly—and I say this as the second ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Committee—this would be a huge help to our military so there would be certainty, they would know what we are going to be doing between now and the end of this fiscal year. That absolutely has to be done.

It is unimaginable to me that in the middle of what I call two, maybe three conflicts right now that we are not lining up and making sure we have the funding that is necessary for what is going on in Afghanistan and other places where we have our troops in harm's way. It is something that is inexcusable, and I just cannot believe there is going to be a veto.

In spite of the veto threat, this is our opportunity to have time to be fiscally responsible, and I hope we are.

COTE D'IVOIRE

Mr. INHOFE. That is not why I am here, however. I want to be sure that

something I have been talking about over the last days has now come to a peak where we must do something.

I have been concerned about what is happening in Cote d'Ivoire, in west Africa. I am very close to the situation. I have had occasion to be there over the last few years nine different times. I know the President is there, the current President and his wife, Laurent and Simone Gbagbo. I was familiar with the election that came around, so I have been on the floor talking about what I believe should happen there, that we should call for a new election. Unfortunately, the United States and our State Department—I will be very critical of them—have joined with the United Nations and with France in taking the side of Alassane Ouattara from the north who was the challenger, who has been challenging this administration now for at least 10 years that I know of.

I got a scathing reply from the Ambassador to the United States from France. I am not going to read it. I am not going to enter it into the RECORD. It doesn't make any sense. I only wish to respond to a couple of things in that letter. First of all, they talk about the fact that this was a legitimate election and it was certified properly and it was in accordance with the Constitution of Cote d'Ivoire, and I don't believe that. I will respond to that by saying the independent electoral commission did not fulfill its constitutional mandate to announce the final provision vote tallies within 3 days. That is what the Constitution says in the country of Cote d'Ivoire and west Africa. It announced then, almost 16 hours after it was constitutionally mandated, to report them to the Constitutional Council. It is my understanding it is the Constitutional Council of Cote d'Ivoire and not the electoral commission which certifies and declares the winner of Presidential elections.

On three occasions now I have talked about this election and the abuses that were taking place. In one case we had information that was given to me by members of the opposing party to President Gbagbo where they submitted that in one of the five regions in the north—let's keep in mind the challenger, Ouattara, is from the north, a Muslim area up there. They had, in five of these regions—in one of them—149,598—and I showed how it was calculated. I showed the actual results that were there from the electoral process, and this was just one of five northern cities. But when the total was officially reported in the total vote column, Ouattara received 244,000 votes, a difference of almost 95,000 votes.

If you do your math and you say this happened in all five of these areas in northern Cote d'Ivoire, that would be more than enough to declare—enough mistakes that would take the election away from the duly reelected President, President Gbagbo. If you don't want to get into the weeds that far, all you have to do is look at the results

they had. In that election they came out with the results that said Gbagbo in those northern precincts—we call them precincts, they call them something else—that they actually had thousands and thousands of votes in what we would call the primary, but when the primary runoff came up, he got zero votes. That is a statistical impossibility. So I have given all those things to our State Department, and I haven't gotten any positive response.

In the accusations in the letter the French say he refused to accept—he being Gbagbo—refused to accept proposals by the African union, a high-level group, while these proposals have been formally accepted by President Ouattara. It is not true, just flat not true. As late as March 27 the African Union sent former Cape Verde Foreign Minister Jose Brito to mediate between Ouattara and Gbagbo. Gbagbo accepted the mediation, Ouattara didn't.

I have a whole list of the accusations that were made and my response to these accusations, and I am going to be submitting them at this portion in my presentation in lieu of reading them at this time. I ask unanimous consent that they be printed in the RECORD.

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

INHOFE FACT CHECK ON FRENCH EMBASSY "FACT SHEET"

(From the French Ambassador, April 6, 2011)

French say:

Fact Sheet on Côte d'Ivoire
(April 6, 2011)

"After many delays, including on the part of then-President Laurent Gbagbo, a presidential election was held in Côte d'Ivoire last fall. Since then, its results have been certified by the local monitoring mission and acknowledged by the international community, including the United States, the European Union (EU), the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS), and the African Union (AU)."

Inhofe responds:

In fact the Independent Electoral Commission did not fulfill its constitutional mandate to announce the final provisional vote tallies within three days. It announced them almost 16 hours after it was constitutionally mandated to report them to the Constitutional Council. And it is my understanding, that it is the Constitutional Council of Cote d'Ivoire and not the Electoral Commission which certifies and declares the winner of presidential elections. It seems that this election was not carried out in accordance with the constitution of Cote d'Ivoire.

In addition, there is evidence of massive electoral fraud in the rebel held north. I submitted this evidence in two letters to Secretary Clinton and am awaiting a response to these specific allegations.

I also submitted an electoral document showing official regional electoral returns, where it shows Ouattara receiving a total 149,598 from one of five northern cities. But when the total is officially reported in the total vote column, Ouattara receives 244,471; a difference of 94,873 votes!

The evidence submitted to Secretary Clinton includes tallies of precincts where, in the first round of voting, President Laurent Gbagbo received multiple thousands of votes, but in the second round he received zero votes. That is a statistical impossibility.