

French military and economic assistance the will of the American Revolutionaries would have been broken long before our final push was fought to gain a free, independent, and sovereign republic.

To cut and run today, especially in light of our recent successes, would be equivalent the U.S. colonies fighting without French assistance.

Simply put, without foreign military assistance to this country none of us would be standing here today in the world's greatest deliberative body and the bell of liberty would never have rang.

So, today, I ask my friends on the other side of the aisle to step up, look in the mirror, and recall how our very own country was established. Failure to stay the course on this endeavor is short-sighted, hypocritical, and goes squarely against the principles and the very reason this country was conceived and founded upon.

Mr. President, we have much to be thankful for today. As such, I urge my colleagues to help give the Iraqi people what this country so desired in 1776, freedom.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

#### EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT FOR DEFENSE, THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR, AND HURRICANE RECOVERY, 2006—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 4939, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 4939) making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes, having met, having agreed that the House recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate and agree to the same with an amendment, and the Senate agree to the same, signed by a majority of the conferees on the part of both Houses.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the supplemental appropriations bill has had a

long and arduous course getting here. I congratulate the chairman and ranking member for working so hard to get it here.

This legislation will provide funds to support the brave men and women who risk their lives every day in Iraq and Afghanistan on behalf of our country. The legislation will provide assistance to those in the gulf coast still struggling to recover from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and also will help bolster border security and prepare for the threat of bird flu. These matters are all vitally important, so I expect the conference report to win broad support in the Senate. It should.

But while I strongly support the goals of this legislation, I also have real concerns about the many Senate-backed provisions that have been left out of this conference report.

For example, the Senate included \$648 million to bolster port security. One would think that protecting our ports would be a priority for this Congress, given the ongoing threat of terrorism and the grossly inadequate safeguards for our Nation's ports. But the House leadership completely rejected any additional funds for port security. That is a serious mistake.

We learned during the Dubai Port debacle, the Dubai Port what I call scandal in our country, of the inadequacy of the security of our ports. We knew it before that, but it was certainly much worse than we ever expected.

The House conferees almost completely eliminated the relief the Senate proposed for farmers who have been suffering from recent drought conditions. Many of these farmers, particularly in the Midwest, are struggling financially, just as farmers in regions directly affected by Katrina. Yet they will be shut out from any assistance under this legislation.

This is very typical. Always the farmers, it seems, when there is an emergency, look to the Democrats for help, as they should, because if history is any example—and it usually is—Republicans simply don't pay attention to farmers' and ranchers' problems.

I have talked about port security, I have talked about the ranchers and farmers, but there is something else that was dropped in conference, and that is the proposal to beef up VA medical care for our Nation's veterans. As Senator MURRAY said yesterday and Senator AKAKA today, our Nation's veterans are in peril, but in this bill the move to help them was dropped.

Another proposal to include compensation to health professionals, first responders, and others who may be harmed in the future by experimental flu vaccine has also been dropped.

I wonder why the majority leadership is so opposed to improving port security and helping farmers and veterans. I don't understand. They say they are concerned about cost. It is hard to take such statements seriously when we consider what else has happened in the Senate this week. Costs? At the same

time the majority was stripping a few hundred million dollars to bolster port security, to help our farmers, and to help veterans, they, the majority, proposed spending \$1 trillion to provide a windfall to a handful of our Nation's wealthiest families. When I say "handful," I mean that of a country of 285 million or 290 million people, they want to help, at the most, 12,000 individual estates, less than two-tenths of 1 percent. At the same time they are asking for this trillion dollars that would have to be borrowed—of course, we have borrowed from China, Japan, Saudi Arabia; more than half the money we use to finance our country's operations is borrowed from foreign countries. At the same time they are dropping help for veterans, farmers, and port security, the majority has proposed a tax break worth—for example, they say Paris Hilton's tax break alone would be in the \$14 million-\$15 million bracket.

At the same time they are eliminating these programs I have mentioned for farmers, ranchers, veterans, and security for our country, they are proposing a tax break for the family of the former Exxon CEO worth \$164 million, all paid for by more debt, largely from countries, as I have indicated, such as China, Japan, and Saudi Arabia.

So I think we should erase from the equation the majority's commitment to fiscal responsibility. The Republican majority in the Senate has proven, along with President Bush, that fiscal responsibility is not part of their mantra. When it comes to helping average Americans and the middle class, Washington leaders are all for spending cuts. When it comes to handing out tax breaks that explode the deficit, they insist no billionaire be left behind.

I am disappointed by what has been left out of this conference report and by the values and priorities these decisions reflect. Still, at the end of the day, the items contained in this legislation are vitally important. We must support our troops. We must assist the gulf coast. We must tighten border security and prepare for a possible bird flu outbreak. But this legislation should never be here. Why? Because it should have been included in our regular budget. We are in the fourth year of the war in Iraq—the fourth year—but he didn't put it in his budget. Why? Because it would demonstrate clearly when that budget was given to us how much more red ink there was in the budget.

I read in the papers that Senator JOHN MCCAIN of Arizona is going to offer legislation on the bill that we will have before us this afternoon, the Defense authorization bill, to no longer let the President do that, to no longer use the unusual procedure; that is, we are in the middle of the war, we have ongoing expenses, not to include these expenses in his budget.

As I read the paper this morning, Senator MCCAIN said he is going to