

and Marines must continue to develop and field a mine-resistant ambush protected, MRAP, combat vehicle fleet capable of sustained operations on an IED-heavy battlefield.

A type of the so-called MRAP is depicted on this chart I have in the Chamber. I believe this particular one shown here is known as the Cougar. What is distinctive about this vehicle, which is so important to get to our troops, is it represents a change in technology, with a V-shaped hull underlying this vehicle, which actually will disperse the energy from an improvised explosive device away from the troops located inside the vehicle.

I had occasion to visit a manufacturing facility located in Sealy, TX, owned by Armor Holdings, which is constructing these very same vehicles, which are the subject of some of the funds contained in the supplemental.

The President's fiscal year 2007 supplemental request asked for \$1.83 billion for mine-resistant ambush protected, or MRAP, vehicles like this one shown in the picture. In addition, Senator BIDEN offered an amendment, which passed the Senate 98 to 0, that provided an additional \$1.5 billion in funding for these critical MRAP vehicles. The total MRAP funding in the supplemental is now almost \$4 billion.

From what I saw in Sealy at the Armor Holdings facility, and from what I have heard from our troops, this is exactly the kind of equipment they need but which is now being delayed as Congress continues to debate this supplemental appropriations bill.

The mine-resistant ambush protected vehicle is an armored combat vehicle capable of providing superior protection to our warfighters against these kinds of IEDs.

According to Marine Corps BG John Allen, Deputy Commander of Coalition Forces in Anbar Province, in more than 300 attacks since last year, no marines have died while riding in a new fortified MRAP armed vehicle. There has been an average of less than one injured marine per attack on the vehicles, while attacks on other types of vehicles caused more than two casualties per attack, including deaths, according to Brigadier General Allen.

Our deployed servicemembers in Iraq and Afghanistan deserve this latest class of armored protection to protect them against the ever-present IED threat, and they do not need funding for this important vehicle to be held up.

Let me close by highlighting the effect of delayed supplemental funding on our military.

The Army announced on April 16 that because of the lack of passage of this supplemental, it will materially slow spending to various places. In order to stretch the money it has, the Army will tell commanders to slow spending in certain areas so war-related activities and support to families can continue. The Department of Defense will also request that Congress approve the

temporary reprogramming of \$1.6 billion from Navy and Air Force pay accounts to the Army's operating account.

Beginning in mid-April—about this time—the Army has begun to slow the purchase of repair parts and other supplies, relying instead on existing inventory to keep equipment operational. Priority will be given to repair and refurbishment of immediately needed war-fighting equipment, while training and other nonmission critical equipment repair will be deferred.

In addition, the purchase of day-to-day supplies with governmental charge cards will be restricted, nonessential travel will be postponed or canceled, and shipment of equipment and supplies will be restricted or deferred altogether, unless needed immediately for war efforts. The Army has added it will also delay the repair of facilities and environmental programs unless the work is for safety or health reasons, or has effects on family support.

These actions carry significant consequences, including substantial disruption to installation functions, decreasing efficiency, and potentially further degrading the readiness of non-deployed units.

These decisions may actually add to the Army's costs over time. Just as importantly, as Army Deputy Budget Director William Campbell said in the *New York Times*:

Frankly, what I worry about is that second- or third-order effect that might affect a soldier or a soldier's safety or his ability to do a mission.

Mr. Campbell said:

As we put these brakes on, I do worry about the impact that we don't know about, that someone will take some action trying to do the right thing, but it will have a negative impact on the ability of a soldier to do his or her job.

The *New York Times* also reported that unless the budget standoff is resolved by the end of June, Pentagon officials have warned that units preparing to go to Iraq may not have enough money to undertake all of their required training.

It should go without saying, but apparently it needs to be said again, our troops need this funding, and they need it soon. Without it, it is simply a fact that our troops will be put at increased risk. We have been ready for weeks to work in good faith to pass a clean supplemental funding bill the President can sign as soon as possible. But every day we do not fund our troops is a day their ability to fight this war is weakened and they are exposed to additional danger.

Mr. 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. BINGAMAN. Mr. 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.

## CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

## AMERICA COMPETES ACT

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 761, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 761) to invest in innovation and education to improve the competitiveness of the United States in the global economy.

### AMENDMENT NO. 904

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk on behalf of myself and Senator ALEXANDER.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New Mexico [Mr. BINGAMAN], for himself and Mr. ALEXANDER, proposes an amendment numbered 904.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To strike the NIST working capital fund provision)

On page 44, beginning with line 16 strike through line 2 on page 45.

On page 45, line 3, strike "(d)" and insert "(c)".

On page 47, line 8, strike "(e)" and insert "(d)".

On page 47, line 21, strike "(f)" and insert "(e)".

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, at this point I will yield the floor. I know my colleague from Tennessee wishes to speak about a variety of issues, and then there is another amendment which we also will be sending to the desk for Senator INOUE, who will be here fairly shortly, related to provisions that have come from the Commerce Committee.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, we have Senator INOUE here, who has played a major role in the development of this legislation, and I believe we will have a little later Senator STEVENS, who is right behind me now, and Senator DOMENICI after that. So I am going to let the two distinguished chairs of the Commerce Committee speak.

Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, technological innovation is the lifeblood of U.S. economic growth and well-being. To achieve growth and success, the United States must continue to support the two critical components necessary during the early stages of the innovation ecosystem: education and basic research.

A pipeline of well-educated secondary school students feeds into the college ranks, which in turn feeds into the graduate schools. Graduate students engage in challenging and cutting edge