

Kelly Perryman summed up her feelings for her second trip to Iraq in one word: nervous.

Their 4-month-old baby boy, Jeffrey, will stay with her mother in Detroit.

"This will be our first time being apart," Kelly Perryman said about her baby. "That's kind of scary."

Sgt. Derek Trubia, 32, said he was ready for his first tour in Iraq.

"I have no problem," Trubia said. "I expected it."

The brigade, which served in Iraq in 2003 and Kuwait in 2004-05, plays a life-saving role for U.S. and Iraqi soldiers through trauma care and surgery.

Among its other specialties are dental health, preventive medicine and stress control.

In his invocation, Chaplain Maj. Mark Mitera prayed for "healing and hope for those they treat."

He offered thanks "for supplying these soldiers with strength for war and skill for battle."

Col. Patrick Sargent, brigade commander, noted in an interview that U.S. soldiers are more spread out in Iraq, and the numbers of casualties and injuries are rising. Besides treating physical wounds, the brigade will care for the mental health of injured soldiers and its own members who witness trauma, he said.

"We will face adversity, danger," Sargent told the crowd.

But he said the brigade is fully trained and will prevail.

"The soldiers standing before you today embody the essence of patriotism," Sargent said.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that immediately following my remarks, the Senator from Hawaii, Mr. AKAKA, might be recognized for such time as he may consume.

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

Mr. McCAIN. And I would like to thank the Senator from Hawaii for his patience and his courtesy.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

#### NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 1585, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1585) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2008 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Nelson of Nebraska (for Levin) amendment No. 2011, in the nature of a substitute.

Webb amendment No. 2012 (to amendment No. 2011), to specify minimum periods between deployment of units and members of

the Armed Forces for Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Nelson of Florida amendment No. 2013 (to amendment No. 2012), to change the enactment date.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, again, I would like to thank my old friend from Hawaii for his patience so that, as the Republican ranking member of the committee, I may make a statement about the bill itself and about the situation in Iraq. I thank him for his courtesy, and I will try not to take too long a period of time. So I thank my old friend from Hawaii.

Mr. President, we have reached another moment of importance this week in debating the fiscal year 2008 Defense authorization bill. We will help set the course of the Nation's security policy and influence our participation in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Much of the debate, as we all know, will be about Iraq, and before I discuss that and my recent visit, I would note that many provisions in this bill constitute a good defense policy and will strengthen the ability of our country to defend itself.

Under the leadership of my good friend from Michigan, the chairman of the committee, Senator LEVIN, I think we have crafted an excellent piece of legislation. I think a testament to his leadership is that the committee voted unanimously to report the bill, and it fully funds the President's \$648 billion defense budget request. It provides necessary measures to try to bring under control waste, fraud, and abuse in defense procurement, and, frankly, it makes Members more accountable for their spending in the earmark process.

Again, I thank Senator LEVIN, the subcommittee chairs, and all the committee members for their work in bringing this issue to the floor.

Very briefly, we have authorized a 3.5-percent, across-the-board pay raise for all military personnel. We have increased Army and Marine end strength to 525,400 and 189,000, respectively. The committee also approved \$2.7 billion for items on the Army Chief of Staff's unfunded requirement list, including \$775 million for reactive armor and other Stryker requirements, \$207 million for aviation survivability equipment, \$102 million for combat training centers and funding for explosive ordnance disposal equipment, night vision devices, and machine guns.

The bill also authorizes \$4.1 billion for Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles, known as MRAP vehicles, for all of the Services' known requirements.

The committee has come up with the money to support our troops, and I have no doubt the full Senate will follow step.

Money and policy statements are not all that is required at this moment in our national history. Courage is required—courage, not the great courage exhibited by the brave men and women

fighting today in Iraq and Afghanistan, but a smaller measure: the courage necessary to put our country's interests before every personal or political consideration.

In this light, I would like to discuss America's involvement in Iraq, and finally I would like to make several points.

Final reinforcements needed to implement General Petraeus's counterinsurgency tactics arrived just several weeks ago. Last week I had the opportunity to visit with troops in theater. From what I saw and heard while there, I believe our military, in cooperation with the Iraqi security forces, is making progress in a number of areas. There are other areas where they are not. I would like to outline some of their efforts, not to argue that these areas have suddenly become safe—they have not; I want to emphasize the areas have not become safe—but to illustrate the progress our military has achieved under General Petraeus's new strategy.

Last year Anbar Province was believed to be lost to al-Qaida. On the map we see that U.S. and Iraqi troops cleaned out al-Qaida fighters from Ramadi and other areas of western Anbar. Tribal sheiks broke with the terrorists and joined the coalition side. It is a fact that some 16 out of the 24 sheiks in the Sunni area of Anbar Province have now joined with U.S. forces in their commitment to destroy al-Qaida in Anbar Province.

Ramadi, months ago, was Iraq's most dangerous city. It is now one of its safest. At considerable political risk, I point out that I visited, with Senator GRAHAM, downtown Ramadi where the shopping areas were open. I did not visit without protection or without security forces with me. But the fact is, a short time ago it was one of the most dangerous cities in all of Iraq. Attacks are down from 30 to 35 a day in February to zero on most days now.

In Fallujah, Iraqi police have established numerous stations and have divided the city into gated districts. The violence has declined and local intelligence tips have proliferated. Throughout Anbar Province, thousands of young men are signing up for the police and Army, and the locals are taking the fight to al-Qaida. All 18 major tribes in the province are now onboard with the security plan. A year from now, the Iraqi Army and police could have total control of security in Ramadi, allowing American forces to safely draw down.

South of Baghdad, operation Phantom Thunder is intended to stop insurgents present in the Baghdad belts from originating attacks in the capital itself. A brigade of the 10th Mountain Division, which I visited, is operating in Baghdad belts that have been havens for al-Qaida. All soldiers in the brigade are living forward. That means they are in outposts away from the headquarters 24-7, living, working, and fighting alongside Iraqi military. Commanders report that the local sheiks