

Committee, asked this of General Casey. General Casey is the chief of staff of the Army. He asked:

And I want to ask General Casey, if I might, a question because earlier this year the Army—it was at an Army posture hearing, I believe, that your predecessor, General Schoomaker, raised concerns about the effect of not delivering adequate and predictable funding, particularly in the form of supplemental funding for the war effort.

We're 46 days into the first quarter of fiscal year 2008. We don't have an authorization bill. We don't have a bridge funding bill for the [Department of Defense]. And we don't have an [fiscal year 2008] global war on terror supplemental.

Senator THUNE goes on:

We recently sent a defense appropriations bill to the president which he has signed into law, but that has little effect on the war effort.

So my question is what will be the effect of no timely bridge funding or supplemental funding. Will you have to cancel service contracts, lay people off, slow down work at depots, those sorts of thing? If you could, address that subject.

This is what General Casey said, a career military man:

Secretary [of Defense] Gates has instructed us to begin planning for that possibility. The signing of the appropriations bill did two things. One, it gave us money for our base budget, but it also stopped the continuing resolution funding that was going to support the war.

So now we're faced with having to fund the war without a bridge out of the base budget. Our Army O&M account is about \$27 billion. When you look at our Army base budget . . . you're talking about \$6.5 billion, \$6.6 billion a month.

If the Army is asked to fund this without any type of bridge or without any additional resources, we're going to run through that \$27 billion . . . around mid February. And we cannot wait until then to start making some of the decisions that will have to be made.

Our employment contracts, many of them, require 60 days' or 45 days' notice before you can furlough somebody. We have many of the services that are provided by civilians, by contractors, and it would have a hugely detrimental effect on the home base.

We will beggar the home front to make sure our soldiers that are in theater have everything they need, and it will put a terrible burden on our soldiers, on families, on the institutional Army, our ability to train.

Timely funding is absolutely essential. An organization of our size cannot live effectively with unpredictable funding. And we need that supplemental passed soon, or we're going to have to start planning for the possibility that we're not going to have it.

Can anybody dispute that General Casey is exaggerating about that? Can anybody dispute that uncertainty in funding has a terrible impact on the Pentagon?

Senator THUNE asked another question:

General Schoomaker also testified that the Army was forced to cash flow itself through the first quarter of . . . 2006. Could you explain what that means? And will the Army have to do that again?

General Casey:

We're in that position now. The O&M account is our account that offers us the greatest flexibility. Most of the other accounts are constrained by specific—we call the term color of money.

But we would find ourselves having to spend the O&M money not only to support the Army but to support also the war effort. So we are in that position today and using up the funds at a rate of \$6.5 billion a month against a \$27 billion total.

So I hope in the weeks to come our leaders in the Senate will begin to work together in a way that can allow us to approve this funding—that I think with certainty we will ultimately approve—sooner rather than later and not go through this painful exercise.

I have to say, I really think it would be a lot better for our country, I think it would be a lot better for our military, I think it would be a lot better for our allies, and I think it would put us in a much better position against our enemies if the leader of the Senate, the majority leader, would quit saying this is a doomed, failed effort. It is not helpful.

We have voted to support this effort, and we do not need to be saying publicly it is not going to work when, in fact, we are achieving more success today than any of us would have thought possible just a few weeks ago.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business.

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

RECESS APPOINTMENTS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Senate will be coming in for pro forma sessions during the Thanksgiving holiday to prevent recess appointments.

My hope is that this will prompt the President to see that it is in our mutual interests for the nominations process to get back on track.

While an election year looms, significant progress can still be made on nominations.

I am committed to making that progress if the President will meet me halfway.

But that progress can't be made if the President seeks controversial recess appointments and fails to make Democratic appointments to important commissions.

As Democratic leader, I recommend nominees to the President for many important commissions like the Federal Communications Commission, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

These independent agencies are required by law to have Democratic representation.

As a result, the President has a statutory obligation to honor my recommendations and move on them in good faith.

And, up until recently, the President has generally discharged that obligation.

In the last several months, however, the administration has been stalling progress on Democratic appointments.

This problem existed before the August break.

In an effort to solve it, I worked hard to confirm over 40 administration nominees in exchange for a commitment by the President to make progress on a number of important commissions.

When we reconvened after the August break, I also worked to quickly move on the President's new Attorney General.

I did this despite my own opposition to that nominee.

Even with all this hard work on our side, the commitments the administration made to me before the August break were not met.

In the almost 3 months since that break, we have received no Democratic nominees to full-time commission positions.

For some, in fact, absolutely no discernible progress has been made.

With the Thanksgiving break looming, the administration informed me that they would make several recess appointments.

I indicated I would be willing to confirm various appointments if the administration would agree to move on Democratic appointments.

They would not make that commitment.

As a result, I am keeping the Senate in pro forma to prevent recess appointments until we get this process back on track.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on October 31, President Bush proclaimed November 2007 as National American Indian Heritage Month.

American Indians influence and enrich our culture. I am proud of the contributions that Nevada's tribes have made and continue to make in my home State. The 26 tribes, bands, and colonies support their tribal and surrounding communities with their diverse tribal enterprises. Working on a government-to-government basis, they join Federal and State agencies to protect many of Nevada's natural resources and the environment—our wildlife habitats in mountains and valleys and our lakes and waterways for fish and fowl. The tribes in my State, like tribes throughout the country, provide education and health services to their children, elders, and members.