

Pakistan. This bill supports President Obama's new direction in addressing these priorities. In June, our military redeployed from Iraq's cities under the Status of Forces Agreement concluded by the government of Iraq and the previous administration. The Iraqis must continue to take responsibility for their own future.

I commend the President's increased focus on defense and development in Afghanistan; preventing the reemergence of the Taliban and al-Qaida; and strengthening economic, agricultural, educational, and democratic development. These goals are important to development in Afghanistan, but they are essential to our military's strategy. I support the National Defense Authorization Act and commend Chairman LEVIN and Senator MCCAIN for their leadership.

Almost 3,000 soldiers from the Illinois Army National Guard are currently deployed to Afghanistan. Members of the Illinois Guard's 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team are helping train the Afghan National Police and providing force protection at military bases. It has been a difficult deployment, with many casualties. Gen William Enyart, the Adjutant General of Illinois, has had to attend the funerals of too many of his soldiers. He sent me an article he had written this spring. Why do the young soldiers serve, he asked? This is what he wrote. They serve because:

They are our kids, they are our protectors. They are what stand between us and chaos. They don't have to be asked to serve. They don't have to be asked to go into danger. They do it, not out of hate, not out of vengeance, but out of love. Love of family, love of community, love of fellow soldier.

I think he is right. Members of the Armed Forces and their families make these sacrifices to keep our country safe. We owe them much in return. This bill takes one step by providing them the resources they need. I ask my colleagues to support this legislation and to send it to the President for his signature.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senator HATCH to be recognized for 15 minutes, then Senator MURRAY for 8 minutes, then Senator BURRIS for 6 minutes, and Senator BROWN for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, there will be, then, no more amendments we will be able to take up tonight on the Defense authorization bill. We will pick up that bill tomorrow.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

GUANTANAMO BAY

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise to express my concerns about the administration's failure to make the deadline of issuing a report on the Guantanamo detainee policy. Today's deadline, similar to the January 2010 closure deadline, was self-imposed. It concerns me that the administration maintains that closure will occur even though the execution of this process has been less than stellar.

In January, on his very first full day in office, President Obama signed the order to close the Guantanamo Bay detention facility in 12 months. The President created separate task forces to examine closure and detainee issues. These task forces were developed and staffed by the Obama administration to achieve successful closure in 1 year. The product of this review is to include a report on a broader detainee policy.

Today marks the first deadline in this process. It was set to be the date of release and publication of the task force report on a broader detainee policy going forward. The administration's failure to meet the deadline appears to me to be the "canary in the coal mine" that a January closure of Guantanamo without a detailed plan is an exercise in futility.

Yet the White House downplays the missed deadline and publicly states that the January closure is still on track. Is it? Despite not having a plan and missing a deadline for a key integral part of the closure process, the administration claims it can still meet the overall deadline of closure by January 1. I find that notion suspect at best and completely absurd at worst.

In May, a Gallup Poll indicated that 65 percent—65 percent—of Americans oppose the closure of the Guantanamo Bay detention facility. Even so, the administration intends to follow its timeline and close Guantanamo by January 2010. The task force examining the cases of the remaining 229 detainees has only reviewed half the necessary caseload thus far.

The Justice Department hopes to complete its review by an October reporting deadline, but that benchmark is quickly slipping away too. This review process has taken twice the amount of time the administration thought it would take. Yet keeping Guantanamo open beyond January is inexplicably still not an option in the administration's view.

Recently, media reports are circulating that the administration's Guantanamo closure plan has been fraught with political miscalculation and internal dissension. Moreover, the complex nature of this issue will undoubtedly force the transfer of detainees inside the United States. Since the announcement of the President's intention to close Guantanamo, I have joined other Senators in pointing out the lack of planning and clear miscalculation of this decision. That pool has grown and a groundswell of bipartisan support is signaling the White House to "pump the brakes."

In May, the Senate voted 90 to 6 to strip out funding in the fiscal year 2010 war spending request that would authorize \$80 million for the transfer of detainees to the interior of the United States of America. Now that the failure to meet this deadline has been reported by outlets such as the Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, and New York Times, the administration still does not get it. Senior administration officials are letting hubris get in the way. This is neither the proper manner nor the time to close Guantanamo.

There should have been more study of this issue prior to setting us on a course for closure. It is easy to say that Guantanamo can be closed when you are a candidate for President. It is even easier to sign an order on your very first full day in office as President that says in 12 months Guantanamo will close. What is hard is taking a deliberative, methodical approach and then formulating the proper plan to balance the safety of this country with the needs of lawful detention. Had the administration conducted a careful and thorough review of this issue, the conclusion would have been that Guantanamo fulfills both requirements. Instead, the administration has painted itself into a corner.

Clearly, the administration miscalculated and underestimated the depth and breadth of this issue. From the onset, the administration has tried to reverse-engineer the process for closing Guantanamo—starting from the end and working backward. If changes are not made immediately, administration officials will force this issue on American cities and towns in just 185 days. They will limp across the finish line. We have 185 days until Guantanamo is closed. The days until the plan is released ARE a big question mark. They are going to limp across the finish line on January 22, 2010, and herald their accomplishments a victory despite their ill-conceived planning and three stooges-like manner of execution.

Guantanamo is still an asset to this country. It complies with international treaties and exceeds the standards of domestic corrections facilities. I don't see how anyone who is honest about this matter can characterize it in any other way, especially when there is not a sufficient replacement located domestically to meet the Justice Department's needs. It is my fervent hope that the President and Attorney General will reconsider their ill-considered plan to close Guantanamo and recognize the obvious, that a \$200 million facility that is already operational and in compliance with international treaties should not be shuttered.

This is an important issue. I don't think the American people are going to stand to have these very dangerous people brought on shore to our country when we have a \$200 million facility that meets international treaty obligations sitting there doing the job. I think the administration needs to get