

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. GILLIBRAND). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the time for the cloture vote, now set for 10:30 a.m., be extended until 11 o'clock this morning.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, for the knowledge of all Members, we are very close to being able to work out an agreement on the finalizing of the Interior appropriations bill. There are some language problems the staff is working on now. But we should have a series of amendments—it could be as many as seven, eight amendments—and we will try to do those in a block of time. We have 23 members who are trying to work out something in the Finance Committee as it relates to health care, so we would like to have those votes in a block of time sometime this afternoon. But we should be able to have a consent agreement that will be approved by Senator McCONNELL and me in the near future.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, the time between now and 11 o'clock, I ask unanimous consent that be time for morning business, with Senators allowed to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

Mr. REID. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. BOND. Madam President, are we in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Yes, we are.

#### AFGHANISTAN/PAKISTAN STRATEGY

Mr. BOND. Madam President, I rise today to call for the testimony before Congress of our top military commanders in Afghanistan, GEN Stanley McChrystal and General Petraeus. Congress and the American people need to hear directly and as soon as possible from the generals to ensure that political motivations in Washington do not override the vital needs of our commanders and our troops on the ground.

Ordinarily, I don't like the idea of calling generals away from their duties in theater but, unfortunately, in the often surreal world of Washington politics, all the hard work by our military and intelligence professionals on the battlefield in Afghanistan can be undone very quickly. Unfortunately, the latest verbal wavering by the administration and some of my colleagues in Congress can do just that.

Last November, when I sent my report, the Roadmap to Success in South Asia, to then President-elect Obama and his national security team, I outlined the importance of messaging to our overall success in Afghanistan and Pakistan. For too long, the United States has flailed about with an uncoordinated communication plan. In other words, we have been off message.

Unfortunately, the enemy has continued to hone its own message. Radical Islamic terrorists have staged suicide attacks for maximum publicity, propagandizing their message on the Internet, and convinced their fellow terrorists-at-arms that they will defeat the international community.

Negative and indecisive comments by the President, broadcast worldwide, have now given the enemy a big win in the public information battle.

On CNN, the President questioned: "Are we pursuing the right strategy?"

On NBC's "Meet the Press," the President's words were even more disturbing, signaling a lack of confidence in his earlier strategy. The President said:

If an expanded counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan contributes to the goal of defeating al-Qaida, then we will move forward. But, if it doesn't, then I'm not interested in just being in Afghanistan for the sake of being in Afghanistan or saving face or . . . sending a message that America is here for the duration.

Comments such as these call into doubt America's commitment to Afghanistan. They give hope to the terrorists—hope that America's resolve is not real, and that they only need to wait us out to win the war.

The people of Afghanistan get the message that we are leaving soon. The implied message is that you better work with the Taliban and al-Qaida, because they will be here after America leaves. This is a public bonanza in diplomacy for our terrorist enemies.

At the same time, these comments have done a great disservice to our men and women serving in harm's way. These heroes need our country's un-

wavering support, not vacillation because of political pressures.

President Obama's recent comments present a stark and dangerous contrast to his earlier resolve—resolve that I applauded on this floor and publicly and proudly supported. When President Obama commissioned General McChrystal's assessment of the situation in Afghanistan, I believed that he was genuinely interested in receiving the general's expert, on-the-ground perspective and his informed opinion of what strategic and tactical changes would be required for success.

Unfortunately, it now appears that the President has developed a sudden case of buyer's remorse. It seems increasingly clear to me the Obama administration is inclined to reject the counterinsurgency strategy recently recommended by General McChrystal and endorsed by the head of the U.S. Central Command, GEN David Petraeus and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, ADM Mike Mullen. In a bewildering twist, this is the same counterinsurgency strategy the President himself endorsed this past March.

I have been a strong and vocal supporter of the administration's new strategy in Afghanistan, so I was particularly disappointed by the President's suggestion this past Sunday that he is reconsidering the American commitment to the war in Afghanistan.

I am also deeply disturbed by press reports that Defense Secretary Gates will delay sending General McChrystal's troop request to the White House because the White House is not ready to receive it. Given the President's resolve this spring, I am somewhat puzzled by the strange treatment of General McChrystal's assessment and troop request. Unnecessary delay is not our friend in this war.

The clearest reason for this delay seems to be that the President is considering not granting General McChrystal's request. Instead, we are now hearing that he may push for a more aggressive covert war against al-Qaida leadership in Pakistan.

We all want to eliminate the al-Qaida leadership that plotted and planned the attacks that claimed more than 3,000 American lives on September 11. And depending on the details, more aggressive action in Pakistan may be a good thing. But such action should be in addition to, not a substitute for, giving our troops in Afghanistan all the resources and supporting personnel they need to succeed.

While denying al-Qaida and Taliban militants sanctuary in the border regions of Pakistan is critical, a counterterrorism-only approach, focusing on one part of this regional conflict, will ultimately hand victory to the world's most violent and feared terrorists. This type of counterterrorism-only approach failed us in Iraq and it has failed us in Afghanistan for the last 7 years.