

this 12-month timeframe set out by General McChrystal in order to retake the momentum of this war.

Finally, I mentioned earlier the Afghan election should not delay the President's decision. I disagree with the argument some have made that there should be some sort of test to determine whether the Afghan Government will be a reliable partner before we decide to commit additional troops.

The very reason U.S. troops are fighting in Afghanistan is because there is no strong government to maintain security and fight corruption there. The point is to make it more reliable, to influence it to be less corrupt, and to protect the Afghan people so they will reject Taliban control and support their government.

We need to help foster a situation in which the Afghan Government can grow into an institution that can provide for its people. That is what a successful exit strategy will look like. We should not curtail our effort in Afghanistan because of a less-than-ideal political situation today.

President Karzai noted last week:

The [Afghan] institutions are just young toddlers in this democracy that resembles a toddler. It walks and falls. We have to understand that, and we have to accept the Afghan elections in the context of the Afghan situation and the poverty and lack of means in this country.

I add to that that President Karzai and his administration need to be more forceful in helping to bring those institutions about, to ensure that the election is not fraudulent and to ensure that his government is not corrupt and to do what is necessary to gain the trust of the Afghan people.

But are we likely to have more influence in achieving that result by deciding that we can't commit the troops necessary to carry out the recommendations of General McChrystal, all of which will probably push the Afghans further toward the Taliban or by making the point that we are going to help establish the kind of government that is reliable and we are going to do that by engaging in this counterinsurgency strategy with everything that it takes, including the additional troops that are required, and thereby have the kind of influence over the Afghan Government that will bring it into a more reliable situation and enable them to rely on the security we provide rather than making accommodation with the Taliban?

General McChrystal stated in his assessment that one of the key sources of the Taliban's strength is the perception by Afghans that a victory by the Taliban is inevitable. We need to make sure it is not. How can the United States expect to influence matters in Afghanistan if we are viewed as looking for a way out and not putting in the troops General McChrystal has requested?

Very importantly, this same question applies to Pakistan. We ask Pakistan to help us fight the Taliban and al-

Qaida and other terrorist groups who are active in Afghanistan. But if we are viewed as an unreliable partner because we are not willing to commit sufficient troops, the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan will hedge their bet with the terrorists and their supporters. That is what has happened there in the past.

When I went there last April and talked to Ambassador Holbrooke before I went, I said: Mr. Ambassador, what message would you like us to try to convey?

He said: Help them understand we are there for the long run. We are not going to cut and run; we are going to stay with them and help them and do whatever is necessary for them to gain control of their country.

I conveyed that message, and I believed it, and I want to believe it. But if we do not make the decisions to carry out this strategy the President announced in March, then the Pakistanis are going to be asking the same questions we did a few months ago: Will you be with us? Will you stand with us or are we going to have to make accommodations with people neither you nor we like very much? One individual said: Why would they make enemies with the people they are stuck with long after we have left? In other words, they don't live in a very good neighborhood. I think that is what General McChrystal's request is about—proof that we are committed to seeing this fight through against the common enemy.

Interestingly, we faced a similar situation in Iraq. If we had opted against the surge in 2007, at a time when Iraq's central government was extremely weak and unable to protect its citizens from the insurgency there, the Iraqi people most likely would not have been able to eventually take ownership of their own security. But they did.

Similarly, if President Obama were not to provide the additional troops General McChrystal needs, I believe we risk allowing Afghanistan to become the country it was on September 10, 2001—a result that none of us want.

In Iraq, the surge created the space for Prime Minister Maliki to take greater control and reduce corruption in the Iraqi Government, and a troop surge in Afghanistan would allow President Karzai—or a new President Abdullah if he were to win—to do the same.

A stable and legitimate government in Kabul is critical to the security of Afghanistan. But the United States cannot hinge its strategy on the current reliability of the Afghan Government, and the President should not wait until after the election to announce his troop decision. To do so would suggest that the United States doesn't have a core national interest of its own in Afghanistan, one based on our security. Yes, we aim to help establish the rule of law in Afghanistan, but our core national interest in that nation does not change based on who is elected in their November 7 runoff.

Mr. President, in conclusion, I believe General McChrystal's assessment really rises above the political fray. It offers an objective description of what is happening on the ground and what resources are needed to turn the tide of this war. This report may represent our only chance to successfully implement the President's March strategy—as I said, a strategy with which I think we all agree—and it will require the forces General McChrystal has recommended.

Regardless of the current status of the Afghan Government, we must foster a situation in which it can grow into a government that can provide basic services, and that will require, first of all, providing security for its people. Our influence over this process will be far greater if we make it clear that we are there to stay until our goals are achieved.

It has been 2 months since General McChrystal sent his assessment to Washington. I respectfully submit my recommendation to the President that he approve this full troop request and that he do so as soon as possible. If he does, as I said, I believe Republicans will be very supportive of his policy.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KAUFMAN). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, what is before the Senate at this time?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in morning business.

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS EXTENSION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in about 50 minutes the Senate will be called upon to vote on a motion to invoke cloture on a very important piece of legislation extending unemployment benefits for American workers.

Another 7,000 jobless Americans will lose their unemployment insurance today, just as 7,000 did yesterday and 7,000 more will tomorrow. The Republicans have held up this matter for approximately 3 weeks. What does that mean? It means that the first week, 49,000 Americans were people whose unemployment insurance ran out, and they had nowhere to turn. In 2 weeks—the math is simple—it was 98,000 Americans from all over America, including the State of Delaware and the State of Nevada. In 3 weeks, it was 147,000 people, just the same. These are people who are desperate. To say I am disappointed in the way Republicans have shown a complete lack of regard for the people behind those staggering numbers is an understatement. Approximately 150,000 people have been hurt as a result of the intransigence of the Republicans in the past weeks.

The Presiding Officer and the Senator speaking are from States that have small towns and cities; 150,000 is a huge city by Nevada standards. A city of 150,000—that is what has happened these last 3 weeks. That is 150,000 people without anywhere to turn. Their government is not helping them. They have likely begged and borrowed from family as much as they could. Their savings are gone.

We know that when the economy recovers, the unemployment rate is one of the last numbers to rebound. That is what economists call a lagging indicator. That is just the way it is and has always been. So even as the economy begins to turn around, jobs will turn around slower.

That fact, incidentally, is all the more reason for us to fix our economy faster, to stop putting off reforming a broken health insurance system that bankrupts so many families. In America today, people are at the courthouse filing bankruptcy. Last year in America, 750,000 people filed bankruptcy because of medical costs.

How many people do you think filed for bankruptcy in France, Germany, Japan, Switzerland, England, Canada? How many filed for bankruptcy as a result of health care costs? Zero. People say: Oh, socialized medicine. France, Germany, and Japan have private insurance.

Our health care system bankrupts many families. We need to do a lot of things to get us out of this hole we are in. The sooner we do these things, the sooner jobs will come back. But they are not back yet. The people of Nevada and others across the Nation are hurting. Unemployment is at a 26-year high in our country and at an alltime high in Nevada. We became a State in 1864. It is the highest unemployment rate we have ever had.

These good, hard-working people lost their jobs most of the time through no fault of their own, and many lost their health care along with it. They are having trouble finding new jobs, and so they are burning through whatever savings they have, if they have any, if they put away for their old age or children.

Some of these unemployed Americans are beginning their careers, some were at the prime of their careers, and some are scrambling to finish, with dignity, what they earned over decades of hard, honest work.

This is the Democrats' simple proposal. It is not very complicated at all: Let's support those families who have been the victims of this recession. They need to put food on the table, send their children to school, and pay the ever-rising medical bills.

If you want to do something that will help jump-start the economy, that will stimulate the economy, how about giving these people who are out of work and have been out of work for an extended period of time a check? What are they going to do with it? They are going to spend it. Why? Because they have to.

We are not asking for much, and we have the money to help them. Over the years, workers have contributed a little bit each paycheck to fund a safety net in the event they lost their jobs. It was insurance against unemployment. That is what it is called—unemployment insurance. That is exactly what has happened. Now they want to take that money—money set aside for this purpose—to keep them afloat until they land the next job.

We have a proposal—a paid-for proposal, one that does not add a dime to the deficit—to extend to workers their unemployment insurance by up to 14 weeks and up to 20 weeks in States such as Nevada that have been hit the hardest. We have the power and the ability to do it. That is what we should do. It is the right thing to do.

The Republican response to that idea might sound familiar. It is a word we have heard from them more and more in recent days. The Republican response in helping the unemployed is two letters: No. Republican Senators from Louisiana, Alabama, Arizona, and Kentucky are among those saying no to helping unemployed citizens in Louisiana, Alabama, Arizona, and Kentucky. I doubt that is the kind of legislating their constituents had in mind when they sent them to the U.S. Capitol and asked them to be their voice in Congress.

When we first brought up this bill 3 weeks ago, Republicans decided they would rather fight a partisan fight, as they have been doing now, than help unemployed men and women in their own States. This unemployment is not targeted to just a few States. The Republicans decided to make a political statement by demanding completely irrelevant amendments, amendments not germane, amendments that have little, if anything, to do with unemployment or even the economy, generally, and they decided the political statement was more important than helping constituents afford to pay bills. That is wrong. It is an outrage.

That day when we started this legislation, when we first brought it to the Senate floor to help unemployed Americans, Republicans said no. The sad part about it, they are still saying no. I hope, after all we have been through and when that vote comes at 6 o'clock, we will have some brave souls step across the aisle and help us get this done.

When we started this process 3 weeks ago, they said no. The next morning, 7,000 people woke up without the unemployment insurance on which they had been counting. The next week we tried again. By now, we have 49,000 people who have lost their unemployment benefits. Once again, Republicans said no. Again, 7,000 Americans lost the help they needed to get by. Then, last week, we tried again. Once again, the Republicans said no. Again, we had a week of 7,000 people losing their work benefits.

In the days since Republicans first said no to helping unemployed Ameri-

cans, we have about 150,000 who have lost the relief they desperately need. Today, while Republicans continue to waste time, to stall so we cannot get things done here, another 7,000 will be added to the approximately 150,000 who have already lost their unemployment insurance. If we do not act, that number, by the end of the year, will be 2 million. I wonder how much higher does that number have to climb before Republicans put people ahead of their partisan excuses.

I suggest the absence of a quorum. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 7 minutes on the Republican time of the time allotted after 5:30 p.m.

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

SUDAN POLICY

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I wish to draw the attention of the body today to a policy initiative that was put forward by the Obama administration last week. It is on a topic a lot of people have been involved in for a long period of time. It involves Sudan, Darfur, and the genocide taking place in Sudan. It now involves new policy steps the administration is proposing to take to build a relationship and overtures to the Sudanese Government.

This is engagement to the extreme because President Bashir of Sudan is an indicted war criminal whose government is conducting a genocide, as declared by the Congress of the United States and the administration. For the first time in the history of America, we would be engaging an individual who is both an indicted war criminal, being pursued by the International Criminal Court, and also who has conducted a genocide in Darfur. We are talking about: OK. We need to start maybe engaging, and now there have been visas issued to top members of President Bashir's inner circle to come into the United States and discussion of a carrot-and-stick approach to Sudan, when he is running a genocide in Darfur and is an indicted war criminal. This is atrocious on its face. It is engagement to the extreme. It is wrong, and it would be harmful to long-term U.S. interests.

What happens the next time an individual is involved in genocide? Do we say: If you start behaving a little less worse on your genocide, we will start to give you some carrots to help you out. What about the next indicted war criminal, do we say: If you are a little less bad, if you only kill 500 a day instead of 1,000, we are going to start offering you carrots instead of sticks in