

Department of Defense completes a comprehensive review of the repeal. The President, the Secretary of Defense, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs—once that review is done under the bill—must certify to Congress that they can implement the repeal while maintaining readiness, effectiveness, and unit cohesion. This provision obviously has received a great deal of attention. I believe that proceeding in this way—very cautiously—will allow the DOD to examine all the implications of repealing this policy while moving forward with this change.

It is clear that this Defense bill is a key piece of the legislation for our military. For 48 consecutive years, the Senate has completed work on a Defense authorization bill. This year, a year when we have forces engaged in ground combat as we speak, is not the year for the Senate to suddenly say: No, we are not going to pass this kind of legislation.

I urge the Senate this afternoon on this vote to allow us to proceed to the discussion and the amending of the Defense bill.

Mr. President, how much time is remaining?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. There is 5½ minutes remaining.

#### COLOMBIA

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I also wish to share some observations of a recent visit I made to another troubled part of the world. In Colombia, I witnessed a country transformed. I went there with our four-star commander, General Fraser of the U.S. Southern Command. We went to a former FARC base in southern Colombia, the little village of La Macarena. It is now a headquarters for the special operations forces of the Colombian military.

It is interesting, this place out in the middle of the jungle, a violent narco-trafficking insurgency that had completely controlled this territory and had intimidated and terrorized the people. The FARC leadership used to hold press conferences under a large tree that is now in the middle of that Colombian military base.

There are actually vacationers from around the world that are coming to a nearby stream that used to be the vacation destination for FARC leaders and their friends. Well, those days of the FARC controlling that part of Colombia are over. In recent years, the Colombian military has killed, captured, disarmed hundreds of FARC fighters, and those who remain are on the move.

The FARC is not defeated, but they are certainly diminished. Just before General Fraser and I arrived, the military carried out another daring hostage rescue, raiding a FARC camp and freeing four Colombian hostages. Some of those had been in captivity for well over a decade. I met with the President of Colombia. He was the Defense Min-

ister a couple years ago, before he was elected President, when they pulled off that miraculous deception that rescued the three American hostages who had been there for years in captivity with the FARC. Two of those three American hostages were from Florida.

So the Colombians, with U.S. assistance, have transformed their military into a 21st century counterinsurgency force, and it has been very effective. They are even sending their forces now to help train the Mexican security forces, where there is so much trouble brewing.

Since the time is drawing nigh, I will share at a later date the troubles that Mexico faces. It is substantial, with the narco-traffickers basically penetrating all levels of the Mexican Government but especially the local and State governments of Mexico. It is of enormous importance to the United States that we have success with our neighbors, our friends to the south, to be able to get control of their country just like the Colombians did as they diminished the FARC.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. I ask unanimous consent to be recognized for up to 20 minutes, to be followed by Senator COLLINS for 7.

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

Mr. CORKER. If the Chair will let me know when I have 2 minutes remaining.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator will be notified.

#### NATIONAL DEBT

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I wish to talk about our Nation's indebtedness. I know very few people watch these presentations. But to my friends on the other side, before they turn their monitors off, this is not a partisan presentation. Hopefully, it is a presentation to cause us, together, to look at our Nation's indebtedness from a different viewpoint and, hopefully, when we get to real business in January, we will focus on this in a way that brings us together and does not separate us.

I wish to start by looking at where our country is today as it relates to debt to our gross domestic product. Most countries in the world look at the amount of debt they have as a country in relation to the gross domestic product the country has. That is the sum of all the output.

For a lot of businesspeople who may be tuned in today, it is not unlike a company that looks at its revenues and compares the amount of debt the company has to those revenues or gross profits. So, today, our country's debt-to-GDP is at 62 percent debt to gross domestic product.

I think most of us understand the problem we have as a country today is

that we are very rapidly moving to 146 percent of debt to GDP within the next 20 years. I would like to point out the reason this dot is here. That is where Greece was when the European Union had to come in and bail it out. It was at 120 percent of GDP. I do not wish to compare our country to Greece. Greece is very different. I was just there visiting with the Prime Minister, their Finance Minister, and several bankers. There is much about their economy that is very different than ours.

But I do think it is important to look at the fact that they were at 120 percent of debt to GDP when they had to be bailed out by European Union members. We are quickly moving beyond that over the next 20 years.

This is a slide I hope everybody who may be tuned in will focus on and remember. There are three important components. It begins by looking at the revenues, which is the blue line. The spending is the red line. There are three elements of this that I would like for people to focus on, if they would.

For those people who think Republicans and Democrats cannot work together, I do wish to point out a period of time when we had a Democratic President and a Republican Congress, and the line actually passed. We had revenues that were higher than our expenditures. I do want to say that the fiscal issues during that time were far different than the ones we have today.

Where we are today, in 2010, is far different. We have a huge gap between spending and revenues. People might say: Well, during a recession, maybe there are some extraordinary things that may occur. Maybe the spending rises tremendously, maybe revenues drop. Here is the problem. Here is the part of the slide I hope almost everybody will focus on into the future; that is, that gap never goes away.

Where we are today is at 1.47 more in spending than we have in revenue. The problem is, where we are as a country is that this gap never goes away. In 2020, we still are spending \$1.25 trillion more than we are taking in.

In Tennessee, the average household, in most recent data, earned about \$43,000 a year. If they used the kind of logic we are using today in Washington, the average Tennessee household would spend \$74,000. In other words, the average Tennessee household would borrow 40 cents for every \$1 they spend. Fortunately, that is not what is happening in Tennessee, or at least not with most families.

I think when you look at a problem, you need to sort of look at trends that have taken place. If you look back at 1970, 62 percent of what we spent as a country was on what is called discretionary spending, things such as defense, highways, and education. Only 31 percent of what we spent at that time was on mandatory spending, things such as Medicare, Social Security, Medicaid and only 7 percent on interest.