

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

The amendment is as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 3192

(Purpose: To fund Operation Jump Start, the deployment of National Guard personnel, to the southern border, through September 30, 2008)

On page 114, lines 6 and 7, strike “\$22,445,227,000: *Provided,*” and insert “\$23,239,227,000: *Provided,* That not less than \$794,000,000 of such amount shall be made available for Operation Jump Start in order to maintain a significant durational force of the National Guard on the southern land border of the United States to assist the United States Border Patrol in gaining operational control of that border, in addition to any other amounts made available under this Act for such purpose: *Provided further,*”.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that Senators DOMENICI, DOLE, and ENSIGN be added as cosponsors.

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

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, it is unfortunate and sad, I think, that the Senate—and I would say the administration—has made a decision to prematurely draw down the National Guard presence at the southern border. That is an unwise event, and it signals uncertainty about our commitment to completing the lawful strategy we have for immigration at our border.

It is not impossible for us to create a lawful system of immigration, but we have to do some things. We have allowed unlawfulness to continue for an extraordinary amount of time, to the extent that it is going to take us some effort now to reestablish a rule of law. But the whole world will be better off and everyone who wants to come to our country will be better off if they know what the rules are, how to apply, and have an understanding that their competitors who would like to come here are not going to be allowed to come illegally and then be rewarded by amnesty while they wait in line to come lawfully.

So the amendment I have offered will fully fund Operation Jump Start at its original level—the 6,000 National Guard troops—through the end of fiscal year 2008. Currently, the Department of Defense has plans only to keep 3,000 at the border instead of the full 6,000 who were to be deployed through 2008. Furthermore, Operation Jump Start is actually now scheduled to end completely on July 1, 2008. So the increased funding provided for here—and I do believe it is an emergency and it is a legitimate emergency expenditure to create lawfulness at our border, which will protect the national security of the United States—this increased funding will be needed to do these things: keep Operation Jump Start at the deployment level that has been so successful and keep Operation Jump Start running until this time next year.

On May 15, 2006, President Bush announced Operation Jump Start, which was the employment of up to 6,000 National Guard members to the southern

land border. According to Operation Jump Start Year 1 Review, its intent was to provide:

An immediate means to enhance border enforcement operations while Border Patrol increased its own internal enforcement resources through hiring additional Border Patrol agents, mission support personnel, and procuring and applying new technology and infrastructure.

It goes on to say:

OJS is providing interim support as Border Patrol recruits, hires, and trains 6,000 additional Border Patrol agents by the end of calendar year 2008—

End of calendar year 2008; that is December of 2008.

My amendment would simply carry the strength of the National Guard through September 30, 2008, the fiscal year. That is important because we are facing a rather substantial drawdown without this amendment.

So deployments began on June 15, 2006, to give us a bit of a background. By August 2006, an average of 5,677 National Guard personnel were deployed. By June 2007—that is June of this year—an average of 5,759 were deployed.

Since the beginning, on the border, the National Guard has supported the Department of Homeland Security by providing, among other things, the following skills: construction of tactical infrastructure; that is, fencing, roads, and lighting and those kinds of things that are really critical if we are serious about making sure people just don't walk across our border. You have to have those things. We made some progress in that regard, although, in truth, we should have made more. They are involved in fence repair, welding, and facility maintenance. Many of these are engineer Guard units with a lot of capabilities in this area. They provide vehicle and fleet maintenance. Many of these are transportation units that are skilled at fleet maintenance. Entry identification teams, surveillance and reconnaissance teams, law enforcement communication assistance, intelligence analysis—we have a lot of those capabilities in the National Guard.

So I would say they are not being utilized on a daily basis to patrol the border and make arrests. We decided that would not be what they are deployed for. But they are really providing a lot of capability that frees up a limited number of Border Patrol agents to be the front-line troops, to go out and make the arrests and do the day-to-day work that has to be done.

The success of the operation is undeniable. By early December of 2006, just 6 months after the deployment began, Robert Gilbert, the chief Border Patrol agent for the Border Patrol's El Paso sector, stated:

Jointly, we are making a definite impact on the border. The professionalism and dedication and training the Guard units have brought to our mission and our fight, the way they have made it their mission and their fight, is more than we expected.

That same month, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, LTG Steve Blum, stated:

I was here 2½ months ago and things that I didn't think would be possible in a year have already been accomplished. Infrastructure is up, fencing is up, roads are built, lighting is up, and apprehensions are down.

Those aren't just words. The success of Operation Jump Start is tangible.

According to the Year 1 Review:

Force multiplication has allowed more Border Patrol agents to remain in the enforcement mode, not the support mode. The additional manpower has allowed DHS to return 563 agents to frontline positions. The result is referred to as “badges back to the border.”

The Guard presence has added 337 miles of expanded border surveillance capabilities along the southwest border. Guard personnel provide 6,500 hours of camera monitoring. Somebody has to monitor the cameras. There is no doubt that an electronic fence, as some have said, is not a worthless idea. You can use cameras and electronic technology to enhance our capabilities at the border, but in the high-traffic areas, it is not a question of seeing people, it is a question of how you can detain them if they are coming illegally. So I think we made progress there with the help of the National Guard.

Guard personnel have assisted in apprehending more than 10 percent of the aliens apprehended during the past year—a total of 84,878 apprehensions. Overall, apprehensions of illegal immigrants trying to cross the border are down by 25 percent. What most experts conclude that means is that an estimated 25 percent fewer illegal immigrants are attempting to cross. The Guard's presence is, in fact, having a deterrent effect.

With the help of the National Guard, marijuana seizures are up 22 percent. The Guard was responsible for seizing 201,000 pounds of marijuana at the border.

As a matter of fact, when we talk about security and the need to do something about openness and illegality at our border, we have to consider drugs to be a big part of that. Guard personnel have assisted in the seizure of 4,783 pounds of cocaine, 703 vehicles, and \$60,000 in currency. So this is an important matter in the success we are having.

The Guard presence has produced sizable gains in critically needed tactical infrastructure along the border. They have already repaired 428 miles of roads. You have to have roads if you are going to be effective in maintaining a border. And 16 miles of all-weather roads have been repaired and maintained. They have installed 58 miles of vehicle barriers. At least it prohibits people from driving into our country loaded with drugs or illegal items.

They have constructed 18.2 miles of fencing, which is a disappointing number. After all that we funded in this Congress, which was 700 miles of fencing, we have only 18 miles completed.

We voted for it. We talked about it. We go back home and tell our constituents we have done it. The President says we are doing it. The Secretary of Homeland Security says we are doing it. We have not accomplished much, but the Guard has played a role by using their engineering capability. Frankly, if they had been focused more on actual barriers, they probably would have accomplished more.

The real reason is the way we planned this out has been very slow in development, in terms of building our fencing. In fact, we are informed that the fencing numbers are improving right now; that miles of fencing are appearing and coming much more rapidly on line than before. If you examine the situation closely, you will see there appears to be a move afoot to draw this out and end up with far less fencing than the Congress contemplated both with our authorization and appropriations bills.

The Department of Homeland Security indicates that the Guard's presence will have an even greater impact on tactical infrastructure over the next year:

The deployments will be focused on providing a greater residual value by raising the percentage of troops that are working on tactical infrastructure projects. This infrastructure will greatly enhance the ability of the men and women of the border patrol to access the border and be more effective in the enforcement efforts for many years to come.

OK. What they are saying is they have projected in the coming months that the Guard is going to be even more effective because they will be providing a greater residual value by raising the percentage of troops working on infrastructure projects. Now, there are people who don't want infrastructure at the border, and they would like to bring the troops home, I suppose, before that happens. That would be a big mistake.

The National Guard is helping the border to save lives. In the last year, they have rescued 91 people—illegal aliens—in the area who were in desperate trouble for lack of water or being lost. They rescued them. Now, this is what has happened. Despite the proven success of the program, the operation is scheduled to stop by next July. Troops are already being reduced. By the end of July, troops were down to 4,500; that is July of 2007. By the end of August of this year, troops were down to 3,500. So it dropped even more. Today, only 3,000 personnel are on Operation Jump Start orders, and, of those, only 2,300 are actually at the border.

So already there has been a draw-down of more than half of the National Guard personnel, and not communicating that to the American people is leaving us in a difficult situation, I suggest. The National Guard was supposed to fill the gap until 6,000 new Border Patrol agents could be recruited, hired, trained, and stationed at the border. That goal has only been

accomplished halfway. Only 3,000 new agents have joined the 1,000 who were on the border when President Bush announced Operation Jump Start. The National Guard is assisting in fence and other critical infrastructure construction.

The Secure Fence Act that we passed mandated that the Department of Homeland Security construct more than 700 miles of new fencing. The administration's goal apparently is not to do that. Apparently it is to just complete 300 miles by the end of the whole next year, 2008. So with 2 years of authorization and funding, they will have only completed less than half of the fencing. To date, only 70 new miles have been constructed, for a total of 145 miles of fencing on the border. That is not the kind of signal we need to be sending.

The reason that is important is because it has a psychological impact, as well as an actual apprehension impact. What about alien apprehensions? To date, alien apprehensions on the border are down 25 percent. While this is positive, because it indicates the attempts at crossings are likely down by 25 percent as well, the job is certainly not finished. The year before that, we arrested 1 million people at the border. Can you imagine that? One million people were arrested at the border. It is not an exaggeration to say that it is a wide-open, lawless area that needs attention from our Government. If we don't give it, we are breaking faith with the American people because we have said we are going to fix that, we are going to do something about it. We just haven't.

I have to tell you there are some people who really don't care about it. They talk about it, but they don't care. We have some progress; 25 percent is a lot. It is not insignificant. But if we really got that fencing up and built, if we kept the National Guard down at the border, if we broaden the Border Patrol and motivate them to be as effective as they possibly could be, I absolutely believe—absolutely believe—we can reach a tipping point where the whole world begins to say the border of the United States is no longer wide open; that you can get in trouble going across there. Most people are getting caught. It is an entirely different place, so maybe we better not try it this time. Maybe somebody suggested we can do that, but that is not a good idea. But for the last 20 years-plus, it has been a well-known fact worldwide that you can just walk across our border, if you have very much initiative, and be successful at it. If they catch you, nothing ever happens.

Now, I will conclude by noting that, according to the year review of Operation Jump Start:

OJS is one of the many enforcement initiatives employed to expand enforcement capabilities to gain better operational control along the Southwest border. OJS, combined with other initiatives, such as Operation Streamline, Zero Tolerance, Arizona Border

Control Initiative, and the Expedited Removal Program, has resulted in a cumulative, positive impact on current levels of border control.

Good news. A positive impact. What it should do is give us encouragement. If we will just follow through, expand what we are doing, adjust to the changing tactics of those who want to enter illegally, and do it with will and determination and a positive attitude, we can make a difference. We can end this open border, end the illegality that has made the immigration system a mockery of law and an embarrassment to our people.

Operation Jump Start is a proven success. It is a critical component of our strategy. Guardsmen are filling critical law enforcement roles. They are building fencing and infrastructure and interdicting narcotics and conducting surveillance and reconnaissance; and, by the way, a substantial majority of our cocaine and methamphetamines, for that matter, are coming into our country through Mexico. I talk to law enforcement officers in Alabama all the time. They say we used to get a lot out of Miami and south Florida. Now it is all coming across the Mexican border. So we have a law enforcement interest in this also.

There is no reason Operation Jump Start should end this June. At a minimum, it should be extended until all 6,000 Border Patrol agents are on duty. The way we have been going, we authorize it and say we are going to add 6,000 Border Patrol agents, and they don't get added, if you want to know the truth. We have seen that happen time and time again. They said we were going to continue this Operation Jump Start and the National Guard, but we have already reduced our Guard personnel by more than half. That adds credibility problems with the American people. No wonder they are suspicious about what we are doing here. This amendment will provide the needed funding to keep Operation Jump Start at its original capacity, 6,000 Guard personnel, instead of what they have planned now. It makes no sense to the American people to say we found something that is effective, that is beginning to work to reduce the illegality we are facing, but we are stopping the program before the job is done. The border is not yet secure. It is too early to end this program. We need to step it up, and I think we will be in a position to have greater progress than anyone can imagine.

Madam President, to sum up, the good news is we have made some progress, but we have not really begun to get to finishing up. If we get the fencing up and keep our Guard there full-time and get our new Border Patrol agents up and we move to ending the catch-and-release and adopt the Texas plan, where individuals are prosecuted for violating the laws by entering illegally—that has reduced border crossings in that area by 45 percent or more—and if we can do other things

like that, this will work and we can make good progress.

The problem is, I think some are not desirous of us being successful. Everything that tends to work seems to be delayed and slowed down and undermined. If we move forward, we can send a message to the world that our National Guard is there, our troops are there, the Border Patrol has been increased, we are building barriers, and you are not going to get in easily anymore, so you better wait in line and come here lawfully, and the whole country will be better off. This amendment will be a big part of doing that.

I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. STEVENS. 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. STEVENS. What is the pending amendment?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Sessions amendment is the pending amendment.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I ask that amendment be accepted by voice vote.

Mr. STEVENS. We agree.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, without objection, the amendment is agreed to.

The amendment (No. 3192) was agreed to.

Mr. STEVENS. Madam President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. INOUE. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 3131

Mr. INOUE. Madam President, I send to the desk an amendment in behalf of Senator STABENOW and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Hawaii [Mr. INOUE], for Ms. STABENOW, proposes an amendment numbered 3131.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To make available from Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation, Army, \$4,000,000 for the Virtual Systems Integrated Laboratory-Armored Vehicle Components and Systems Simulated In Cost-Effective Virtual Design and Test Environment)

At the end of title VIII, add the following:
SEC. 8107. Of the amount appropriated or otherwise made available by title IV under the heading "RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, TEST, AND EVALUATION, ARMY", up to \$4,000,000 may be available for the Virtual Systems Integrated Laboratory-Armored Vehicle Components and Systems Simulated In Cost-Effective Virtual Design and Test Environment.

Mr. INOUE. I ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate? If not, without objection, the amendment is agreed to.

The amendment (No. 3131) was agreed to.

Mr. INOUE. Madam President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. STEVENS. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

STRYKER BRIGADE COMBAT TEAMS

Mr. SMITH. Madam President, I rise to enter into a colloquy with my good friend, the Senior Senator from Hawaii, chairman of the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, Mr. INOUE, ranking member of the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, Senator STEVENS, and my colleague from Oregon, Senator WYDEN, regarding the need for additional Stryker Brigade Combat Teams in our Army National Guard.

Mr. INOUE. I would be happy to discuss this important issue with the Senators from Oregon.

Mr. SMITH. Sir, we have all watched with pride the bravery of our men and women in uniform as they defend freedom around the world. We are particularly proud of the members of the National Guard, who fight side-by-side with active duty forces. These guards men and women deserve the same protection and equipment as the active force with which they stand shoulder to shoulder. In combat operations, the Stryker vehicle has performed exceptionally and proven itself to be a superior fighting vehicle that protects the precious lives of our servicemembers. I would like to express my strong support for our guards men and women and ask that the Army ensure that funding for additional Stryker vehicles with the intent of forming a second Stryker Bridge Combat Team for the National Guard figures prominently in immediate planning.

Mr. WYDEN. I would like to join my colleague from Oregon in recognizing the Guard soldiers who leave their community to fight for their country. And I agree that they deserve the best equipment available, including the Stryker vehicles. I think it is also important to point out that in the hands of the Guard the Stryker vehicles would also be used during domestic disaster situations as well as combat overseas. Our citizen soldiers deserve the same equipment as the active duty Army, and I too hope that the Army will see the wisdom of establishing a Stryker Brigade Combat Team for the National Guard.

Mr. INOUE. I thank the Senators from Oregon for unwavering support of our men and women in the Army National Guard. We all recognize and are deeply grateful for the service that the National Guard has provided in domestic disasters and international conflict. It is well-documented that the Stryker brigades have indeed performed exceptionally in Iraq. The House has added over \$1 billion for Strykers. Your and

your colleagues' views on Strykers for the Guard are noted and will be taken into consideration as we enter into conference.

Mr. STEVENS. I wish to echo my colleague's support for the men and women in the National Guard. I am extremely grateful for their service and dedication to our country. I reiterate my colleague's sentiment that we will take into consideration our colleague's views on a Stryker Brigade for the National Guard.

IMPROVED ENGINEERING DESIGN PROCESS

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I rise to express my support for a program sponsored by the U.S. Navy, which will significantly streamline the process for planning and executing repair and modernization of our submarine fleet at our naval shipyards. The Improved Engineering Design Process uses advanced 3-D digital scanning techniques to accurately capture the "as is" layout of specific ship spaces that will be impacted in the repair process. These digital 3-D images can then be easily shared to allow collaboration among our public shipyards to facilitate greater efficiency in planning and executing repairs and modernization. Because of the high operating tempo of our fleet, it is essential that we find ways to accomplish these repairs faster and return our submarines to operational readiness more quickly. I understand that implementation of this process in our public shipyards has the potential to produce annual savings of \$30 million. I ask the distinguished ranking member of the Appropriations Committee if he would agree such a program should be further developed and implemented as quickly as possible?

Mr. STEVENS. The project described by the Senator from Maine appears to have great merit. Savings of this magnitude are especially important at a time when our resources are stretched very thinly.

Ms. COLLINS. The distinguished ranking member makes a very important point regarding the need for pursuing initiatives of this kind so that our scarce dollars can go further. I understand that the Navy believes strongly in the merits of this program and has considered this program for inclusion in future budget requests. I encourage the Navy to not only include it in its budget request, but to also identify existing funds that may be applied to keeping this program moving forward. In addition, I ask the committee ranking member to join me in encouraging the Navy to continue supporting this critical program and, if possible, to identify potential fiscal year 2008 funds that could be made available as we finalize those budget deliberations. I thank the Senator for his interest in and support for this important initiative.

Mr. STEVENS. I thank the Senator from Maine for bringing this important program to my attention.