

other committees. But because they have not done it, we have a responsibility to do them, and will.

We have done 10 oversight hearings with respect to contracting in Iraq. I am convinced the stories we have heard at these hearings undermine our American soldiers, undermine our troops, and cheat our taxpayers. I don't, for the life of me, understand why there is not aggressive activity in this Chamber and at the Pentagon to root out the waste, fraud, and abuse we have seen. It is almost as if there is a sleepwalk going on through these issues.

I have held hearings, and we have described all of the issues. Yesterday, a woman who worked for Halliburton went to Halliburton and said: What is happening is Halliburton is billing, in some cases, five times the amount they should be billing to the Federal Government for certain activities in Iraq.

For complaining to her superiors about the taxpayers being cheated by this contractor, she was put under guard by four civilians working for Halliburton, kept overnight, put on an airplane, fired, and shipped out of Iraq. That is what she got for being a whistleblower to talk about how the taxpayers were being cheated.

I am going to speak more about those issues this week with respect to all the hearings I have held. It is not for the purpose of injuring anybody. It is for the purpose of protecting our troops and our taxpayers.

Briefly, I want to describe something I am going to send over to the inspector general of the Defense Department today. This is a letter that was given to us yesterday at the hearing. It is a letter from Halliburton—Kellogg, Brown and Root, a subsidiary of Halliburton. It is from Mr. Standard, a civilian contract employee who was a truckdriver in Iraq who was wounded.

By the way, Halliburton hires these contract civilian employees through their subsidiary in the Cayman Islands. Why do they have a subsidiary in the Cayman Islands? That is a tax haven country. They get American contracts from our Government and run them through the Cayman Islands so they don't have to pay taxes.

This is from Mr. Standard, a truckdriver wounded in Iraq driving a convey as a civilian contract employee for Halliburton. Here is what Halliburton has written to this truckdriver:

I hope this finds you well and enjoying a swift recovery. Per our conversation today, I included the medical records release form. This form authorizes me to share your medical records with the Pentagon Review Board for the purpose of awarding you the Secretary's Defense of Freedom Medal.

Halliburton is saying to the truckdriver: We would like you to sign a release so that we, Halliburton, can send information on your medical situation to the Defense Department and get you a Defense medal for the Defense of Freedom.

Here is what they said to this wounded truckdriver, an employee of their

subsidiary Kellogg Brown and Root: Authorization and release reform, use and disclosure of protected information. It is a lengthy form. The truckdriver who signed this said: I am going to allow you to turn my medical records over to the Defense Department. And then under section 9, it says:

Release: I agree that in consideration for the application for a Defense of Freedom Medal on my behalf that on behalf of myself, my hires, executors, administrators, assigns, and successors, I hereby release, acquit and discharge and do hereby release, acquit and discharge KBR, all KBR employees, the military, and any of their representatives, collectively and individually, with respect to any claims and any and all causes of action of any kind or character, known or unknown, that I may have against any of them.

What they have said to the employee in a deceitful way, in my judgment, is: We would like you to sign a medical release form so we can apply for a Defense Medal of Freedom for you. First, there is no such thing as being able to apply for a Defense Medal of Freedom. You are either entitled to it or you are not.

In any event, they are saying to the truckdriver, buried in No. 9, in exchange for that, you should assign away all your rights against this company or any actions of the company or any employee of the company.

This is unbelievably deceptive. Here is a company, Halliburton, saying to a truckdriver that was wounded, an employee of theirs—by the way, the testimony yesterday by other truckdrivers who were wounded in action is that Halliburton knew they sent a convey right into hostile action on a road that was marked red and black, which meant no travel by a civilian convey. They deliberately sent them onto that road anyway. Seven people were killed in that circumstance.

Aside from all of that—and that is important in itself—this company has written to its former employee, a wounded truckdriver, saying: We would like to send your medical records to the Pentagon, and we would like to get for you this Defense of Freedom Medal. So would you please sign this—not pointing out to him that he is signing away all of his rights to take action against that company or anybody in that company.

I have the standards of the Defense Medal of Freedom right here. Let me show the date. It is in 2001:

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld announced today the creation of the Defense of Freedom Medal to honor civilian employees of the Department of Defense injured or killed in the line of duty. It will be the civilian equivalent of the military's Purple Heart. The first recipients to be honored will be the Defense Department civilians injured or killed recently as a result of the terrorist attack on the Pentagon. At the discretion of the Secretary of Defense, the medal may be awarded to nondefense employees, such as contractors, based on their involvement in Department of Defense activities.

This is unbelievably deceptive, and I believe deceitful, to try to persuade a

former employee of this company to sign a release form saying it is a release of medical records when, in fact, it is a release of much more.

I am going to ask the inspector general to investigate exactly what this contractor has done.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority controls 15 minutes. The Senator from New Hampshire is recognized.

ACTIONS OF THIS CONGRESS

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I want to talk today a little bit about the progress we are making relative to securing our borders in the United States as a result of efforts made by this Congress and the administration. Before I do, I want to comment briefly on the presentation of the Senator from Illinois relative to the actions of this Congress and its passage of legislation or its investigative activity.

It is truly disingenuous when the assistant leader of the Democratic side comes to the floor and says we have done nothing as a Congress when almost every major piece of legislation that has been brought to the floor of this Senate has been filibustered by the other side of the aisle. Bill after bill after bill has been stymied, stopped and, in fact—it is no secret—there is an open understanding around here that the purpose of the Democratic leadership has been to make it virtually impossible to pass legislation in the Senate in order that the Senate appear to be an ineffective body—their feeling being that if they can obstruct enough things, they can make an argument that Congress isn't functioning and they should be put in charge.

It is an ironic position, of course, and has been on a number of times characterized as being similar to the situation when a man who shot both his parents, when brought before the court, asked for mercy because he declared himself an orphan. The fact is that the Democratic leadership of this body has decided to actively obstruct and try to stop almost any legislation of any significance that has come to the floor and, as a result, many things have been stopped because, as we all know, this is a body which functions essentially on a 60-vote majority, not a 51-vote majority. So, therefore, even though the Republican Party has 55 votes, we cannot pass something if there is united opposition. It has happened again and again.

I do find it a bit disingenuous to make this argument—it is their right to make it—but I think an honest reflection of what is actually happening around here makes the argument rather superficial and inadequate in its essence and its purpose.

SECURING OUR BORDERS

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I wish to talk about the progress we have made relative to securing our borders because this is one of those situations where the facts on the ground have not yet caught up with the public perception, which is understandable. That happens a lot in all sorts of areas where things are moving in the right direction, which were broken but are being repaired; there is still a perception that things are fundamentally broken. We are moving in the right direction relative to the borders.

Since 2005, we have made rather significant strides toward putting in place the infrastructure and the people necessary to secure the borders. I have the good fortune to chair the Subcommittee on Homeland Security. It may well be the only major appropriations bill that gets out of this Congress before we adjourn in October. That bill and the precursors to it, including the appropriations bills which we passed over the last 2 years and the supplementals that have gone with those bills, have allowed us to significantly expand our commitment to homeland security.

This has been an aggressive step taken by the Republican Congress and the administration. Back in 2005 we took a look at the problem when I assumed the leadership of this subcommittee, and we basically reoriented this whole funding stream within the Homeland Security Department, relative to the issue of weapons of mass destruction and border security. We concluded that those were the two major threats on which we as a committee should focus. So we took significant amounts of funds at that time and moved them into those accounts. Initially, back in 2005, the administration wasn't too excited about that, but after they took a hard look at what we were doing, they felt it was a good idea and they decided to join us in our efforts.

Now, since 2005, that effort has accelerated and has gained strength and has actually made significant gains. By the time this next bill passes, which I hope will pass before we leave at the end of September, it is expected we will have put in place almost 4,000 new border agents, which is a 40-percent increase in border agents—people physically on the ground; we will have put in place almost 10,000 new detention beds so that when we catch people, we don't have to release them. That was really an inappropriate policy that was being followed, which was when somebody was caught coming across the border, they were simply either taken back across the border if they were Mexicans, or they were released and told to come back and appear for a court date if they were not Mexican. And what we found was that nobody came back for those court dates. So with the 10,000 additional beds we put in place, that policy of catch and release will be curtailed.

We have added hundreds of miles of new fence, and we will continue to add

new fencing where it is appropriate. We have dramatically increased the Customs and Border Patrol agents so that we are now up to 18,000 Customs officers, I am talking about—not Border Patrol—Customs officers who monitor our ports of entry, in addition to our Border Patrol individuals. We have greatly increased the commitment to the Coast Guard, which is the first line of defense relative to our ports and also plays a major role, of course, along the access points of our coastline for people who are coming into the country illegally. We have added \$7.5 billion to the Coast Guard accounts which are going to give them the new capability they need for the boats and the aircraft, specifically upgrading their aircraft, upgrading their helicopters. All of this is in order to give the Coast Guard the ability to intercept people who may be coming here to do us harm.

We dramatically increased our commitment in the area of nuclear detection. We set up the Nuclear Deterrence Office, which basically is a focused effort on the question of how to deter a nuclear attack and also respond to it should it ever occur—God forbid it should ever happen. That is obviously the intention of some of our enemies. They want to accomplish that. We need to be focused on trying to stop that from happening. We have dramatically expanded the intelligence capability of the Department of Homeland Security Analysis Center by adding over a half a billion dollars for that. These are increases that are making a difference in our capacity as a country to know who is coming into the country, what is coming into the country, and whether the people who are coming into the country represent a threat or whether they are just people who are coming to pursue appropriate lawful activity in the area of commerce or just in the area of visiting us or taking advantage of our educational system.

These are major steps forward. All problems haven't been solved yet, and we all understand that. But if we continue on this path toward significantly upgrading our capabilities in the area of our feet on the ground, our boots on the ground, and technology supporting those boots—and later this week there is going to be the release of the accounting for the security program for the entire border, which will be a major step forward. It will mean we will be able to start construction of major technology improvements along the borders to use our advantages in technology to be able to police our borders. Then, in addition, recognizing that should somebody actually breach our borders with some weapon that might harm us, we will have the capacity to try to mitigate the effects of that through better technology and the research that surrounds that effort.

We have basically made a huge commitment in this area, dramatically increasing our funding, dramatically increasing our personnel, and dramati-

cally increasing our technological capability. It is very likely that within the next year—in fact, it is probable, not likely—the results of this are going to become very clear to the American people. But as with many things—the perception that the border remains an open sieve, which it was and it shouldn't have been, but it was, especially along the southern border; and the perception that we don't have in place the technology to protect ourselves, which we didn't; the perception that we had not adequately upgraded the Coast Guard to do its job, which we hadn't—all remain the perception in the marketplace, and understandably so.

But the facts on the ground are that we are significantly upgrading our capabilities along the borders; that we have significantly upgraded our technological capability and we are continuing to expand that dramatically; that we are significantly improving the capacity of the Coast Guard, and that systems such as US-VISIT, which basically tracks who is coming into the country through a fingerprint process, are up and running and appear to be giving us significant results.

So I think we should talk about the good that is happening and our efforts to do the right thing along the borders, which is secure them and the progress that we are making. We should recognize that although we are not there yet, we are clearly on a path toward accomplishing our goal, which is to make sure that the people who come into this country, first, come in legally and, secondly, when they come in they do us no harm and their purpose is to do us no harm; and thirdly, that the product that is coming into this country is for the purpose of commerce, not for the purpose of harming us.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Vermont is recognized.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, what is the parliamentary situation?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority controls 4 minutes 15 seconds in morning business. The minority's time has expired in morning business.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for up to 12 minutes as in morning business.

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

Mr. LEAHY. I thank the Chair.

HUMANITARIAN CATASTROPHE IN DARFUR

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, it is disheartening to be back on the floor of the Senate again to talk about the looming humanitarian catastrophe in the Darfur region of Sudan. Despite the partial peace agreement signed in May between the Sudanese Government and one rebel faction, the 3-year civil war