Mr. President, there has been a great deal of debate in

recent weeks about whether to fund the needs of our soldiers overseas.

The time to act has come.

We are nearing the end of the first quarter of the fiscal year, and

despite steady progress in Iraq, Congress still has not passed a

funding bill for our soldiers. Members of this body have been aware of

the consequences of delaying funding for a long time.

In a November 8 letter, Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England

explained that failure to fund military operations will

The specific consequences, in Secretary England's

words,

In case there is

any confusion about what this means to the military, Secretary England

is quite clear:

He also acknowledged that this delay in funding doesn't only harm our

military but also sets back the training and equipping of Iraqi and

Afghan security forces, whose expeditious development is critical to

lasting peace in those nations.

This delay in funding shows a lack of support for our troops in

harm's way, disregard for the measurable progress they have achieved in

recent months, and indifference to the future of Iraq and Afghanistan.

That is not the kind of leadership the American people expect of

Congress.

It is time to heed the clear warnings from the Department of Defense,

come together in support of the progress our soldiers are making, and

provide them with the necessary resources so that they can continue

their important work on behalf of the American people.

A December 8 article in the Washington Post by LT Pete Hegseth and

GEN John Batista, a prominent critic of the Administration's policy in

Iraq, encouraged Americans

and commit to defeating our enemies. That means supporting

the progress our soldiers are achieving and providing them the funds

necessary to complete their mission and, thus, make Americans safer.

I ask unanimous consent to have the attached article printed in the

Record.