Mr. President, first of all, I wish to congratulate our

Democratic leader for his bold and decisive leadership and his

determination to bring our troops home from Iraq in an orderly,

responsible, and safe way. Those who are disparaging him are engaged in

nothing more than a ploy to change the focus of the debate.

Harry Reid is an effective and capable leader. What the American

people and our soldiers in Iraq need is new leadership from the White

House and a new policy in Iraq that requires the Iraqis to take

responsibilities and our troops to begin to come home.

A timeline for the withdrawal of combat troops is the only realistic

way to encourage the Iraqis to take responsibility for their future.

The Bush administration supported deadlines for three Iraqi elections

and for writing of the Constitution as part of its strategy to ensure

that Iraqis would make essential decisions. Yet the administration

remains emphatically opposed to any timeline for the withdrawal of our

military. The administration should follow the logic of its past action

and embrace, rather than reject, a timeline. It should stop defying the

will of the American people who want to bring our troops home to the

heroes' welcome they have earned.

The President is wrong to threaten to veto this legislation, he was

wrong to get us into this war, wrong to conduct it so poorly, wrong to

ignore the views of the American people, and wrong to accuse those of

us who are working to change course as harming our troops. Now he is

wrong to threaten to veto this bill, delaying funds and keeping our

troops in a civil war with no end in sight to our commitment. Instead,

President Bush should be listening to the American people and working

with Congress to bring this tragic war to an end.

Instead of continuing to defy the will of the American people and

Congress by threatening to veto the legislation, he should be putting

the Iraqis on notice. He must make it clear to the Iraqi Government

that it is time for them to take responsibility for their country and

resolve their political differences. The American military will not

police Iraq's civil war indefinitely. It is time to end the loss of

American lives and to begin to bring our soldiers home. For the sake of

our troops, we cannot repeat the mistakes of Vietnam and allow this to

drag on long after the American people know it is a mistake.

We have Presidents who make mistakes. President Johnson was wrong in

escalating in Vietnam. President Nixon was wrong to continue that

escalation, and we saw the loss of 58,000 American lives. Presidents

make mistakes.

This President has made this mistake. The American people were right

in Vietnam and brought that war to an end, and the American people are

right now. No one in the administration can tell the American people in

good faith and in good conscience that we are making progress in Iraq.

Iraq is sliding deeper into civil war, and our military cannot solve

their problems. It is time the President listen to the Iraq Study

Group, the Congress, and the American people and work with us to bring

our troops home.

Mr. President, yesterday the United Nations issued a progress report

on the progress of violence in Iraq. I ask unanimous consent that

sections of that report be printed at the appropriate place in the

Record.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in

the Record, as follows:

Mr. President, I am very pleased that this conference

report includes the minimum wage bill. After 10 long years, we will

finally be able to send a minimum wage increase to the President. It's

long overdue, and it's yet another reason why the President should sign

this important bill.

The minimum wage bill passed the House and Senate by overwhelming

margins in January and February of this year. Under it, minimum wage

workers will get a raise of $2.10 per hour. Those who work full time

will earn an additional $4,400 a year.

That's enough to pay for utilities that might otherwise be shut off,

to put gas in the car so you can get to work, or to pay for after-

school care for a son or daughter who might otherwise be left home

alone.

In many ways, including the minimum wage increase in this bill on

Iraq couldn't be more appropriate. The minimum wage represents the

values our troops are fighting for--basic fairness. It's about what we

stand for as a Nation.

Americans believe that hard work should help you build a better life

for your family. They believe that a job should keep you out of

poverty, not force you to live in poverty.

Our troops are away fighting to provide a better future for the

people of Iraq. We'd like to think that our men and women in uniform

don't have to worry about the economic security of their families here

at home. But many of our fighting forces have husbands or wives back at

home who are struggling to make ends meet.

Ten percent of military spouses earn between $5.15 and $7.25 per

hour. 50,000 military families will benefit from an increase in the

minimum wage to $7.25 per hour. Our troops are overseas putting their

lives on the line for their country, and we should provide fair

opportunities for their spouses who are working hard here at home.

I hope we can provide these families--and all other struggling

families across the country--with the fair wages they deserve as soon

as possible. I hope the President will do the right thing for our

troops and for America's minimum wage workers by signing this important

bill.