Mr. President, in 1999, when George Bush was a

candidate for the Presidency and President Clinton was Commander in

Chief, George Bush had this to say about American troops in Bosnia:

Well, the Congress has been asking for an exit strategy year after

year for 4 years now. In fact, President Bush has no exit strategy. So

the United States is bogged down in an impossible situation: ``Shock

and awe,'' followed by ineffective follow-on efforts. Today, in the

fifth year of this war, the United States is enmeshed in what has

become a vicious and terrifying civil war. It cannot be won through the

use of American military force. This war can only be won through

political accommodation between Sunni and Shia, which means only the

Iraqis can settle it, which means only the Iraqi Government can settle

it. To this date, they appear to be unable to do what needs to be done

to stop this conflict.

So without an exit strategy, the war goes on, the killings continue,

and the casualties rise. Nearly 25,000 Americans injured, with tens of

thousands of Iraqis killed and injured, and hundreds of thousands of

people displaced from their homes by this war. Estimates put Iraqi

civilian deaths in the first 3 months of this year at more than 5,500

in the Baghdad area alone.

On Monday, two truck bombs killed nine members of the 82nd Airborne

Division and wounded 20 more. It was the deadliest day of combat in the

division's history since the Vietnam war.

I fear that unless Congress acts and puts forward that exit strategy,

this bloodshed will continue year after year. That is intolerable.

Today, we have before us a measure that offers a solution and a

strategy to fill the void left by the administration. The Iraqi

supplemental spending bill responsibly funds our troops and changes the

course in Iraq.

Most importantly, it sends a message to the Iraqi Government that the

U.S. commitment is not open-ended, that benchmarks will measure the

progress, and that political accommodation is crucial.

Under this legislation, the Iraqi Government would be judged on how

it disarms militias, pursues Sunni-Shia reconciliation initiatives,

establishes fair

oil-sharing laws, reforms debaathification laws, and protects the

rights of minorities. This is as it should be.

This legislation ensures that our troops have sufficient rest and

training and are provided well-maintained equipment. This is as it

should be.

It allows for a redefined mission for American forces limited to

antiterrorism operations, training Iraqi forces, and protecting

American civilians and members of the Armed Forces. This is as it

should be.

It begins the process of bringing our troops home. Into the fifth

year of a war, this, too, is as it should be.

The American people spoke in a clear voice. Today, the United States

Senate will as well.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.