Mr. President, this conference report is the wrong

response to the President's request for the supplemental funding that

is urgently needed by the Department of Defense.

While most of the funds--over $109 billion--are appropriated to wage

the global war on terrorism, to continue operations in Afghanistan, and

to support Iraqi security forces, the conference report also includes

funding for continuing the recovery from Hurricane Katrina and ensuring

that our veterans receive the care they deserve.

I am very disappointed this bill includes language that sets forth a

timetable for the withdrawal of troops from Iraq. We should be

providing the President with a bill he can sign so our military forces

can receive the funding they now need.

I recently brought to the attention of the Senate a letter I received

from the Joint Chiefs of Staff on April 2 describing the urgency of an

appropriations bill and their concerns about further delays of funding.

It has been now over 3 weeks since that letter was received.

It is very clear that delay is occurring, and it is undermining the

ability to manage the responsibilities of the Department of Defense. We

are talking about life-and-death situations and the ability to obtain

equipment, armaments, and the training that is necessary by our Armed

Forces to carry out their mission.

The Joint Chiefs pointed this out in their letter:

In addition, they stated:

I cannot support this effort to dictate the management of this very

serious threat to our Nation's security interests. The opponents of the

President's efforts to win the battle against the terrorists should not

be permitted to hijack this supplemental appropriations bill. The

responsible thing for us to do is to send this conference report to the

President so he can veto it. We can then revise it so it can be enacted

without the offensive language.