Mr. President, the underlying bill,

supplemental appropriations, is a must-pass piece of legislation.

Attached to it is the language that has caused some controversy because

it is an attempt at defining what the policy of the U.S. Government is

with regard to the beginning of a redeployment from Iraq.

This Senator from Florida will vote for the funding bill with this

legislation attached because America needs a new direction in Iraq. For

4 years, what we have been doing has not been working. It has not been

working because--and I am not talking about all the mistakes of why we

went into Iraq under misinformation and lack of intelligence and, in

some cases, I think massaged intelligence. I am not talking about that.

I am talking about that we did not have a sufficient understanding of

the history of Islam and the history of that part of the world to

understand how much enmity there is between the different sects of

Islam and how, ever since 680 A.D.--the Battle of Karbala right in what

is, today, Iraq--the Sunnis and the Shiites have been at each other's

throats, and we are seeing that played out in gruesome detail right

now.

Our men and women in uniform and not in uniform--because we have a

lot of people over there defending the interests of the United States

who are not in uniform: CIA, DEA, FBI, the State Department; you can go

on and on--our men and women are right in the middle of that crossfire,

particularly in Baghdad.

Now, when you talk about Iraq, you are talking about multiple

differences in the country.

The northern part of the country is predominantly Kurd. They, for all

intents and purposes, have an autonomous government. They even had that

while Saddam Hussein was in power because the northern part of Iraq was

protected by American air cover. They can basically provide for their

own protection and their own governance.

The central part of Iraq is predominantly Sunni. It was from the

Sunnis that the Baathist Party, the party of Saddam Hussein, dominated

the rest of the country.

The south of Iraq is predominately Shiite. This is a Shiite

kindredship which we now find--with the disintegration of Iraq--the

kinship, the commonality of interests between the Shiites in Iraq and

the Shiites in Iran. The big difference between the two is in Iran,

they are Persians; in Iraq, they are Arabs.

Now, it took, for years, the hand of a brutal dictator who was

gruesome beyond any measure to keep all those factions together because

he was so brutal in his tactics. We are certainly glad Saddam Hussein

is gone. Nobody like that who would just murder people at will deserves

to be in power. You can understand it was a dictator who kept that

power and kept that country, with all of its centrifugal forces,

together. We as occupiers, as an occupying military force, thought we

could keep it together, but we didn't understand the centrifugal forces

of Iraq. Instead of being hailed as liberators, as there definitely was

a lot of personal thanks toward the generosity of America for deposing

the hated dictator, yet you see what started to kick in was the natural

centrifugal forces. Will a democracy work in a country such as that? It

would be nice if it would, but

I think now, after 4 years, we are seeing it is going to be very

difficult.

That is why in a political settlement, at the end of the day there is

probably going to be some separation of those sects with autonomy and,

hopefully, with a national government that can provide for the common

defense and the distribution of the oil revenues according to

population. But how do you get there? We thought as an occupying force

we could keep the country under control until those seeds of a

representative government could start to sprout. But that was one of

the mistakes the United States made, because the Secretary of Defense

would not listen to the top general, General Shinseki, when he answered

the question in our Senate Armed Services Committee: How many and for

how long are the American forces in occupation? He said: Several

hundred thousand for several years. So with too little forces, you see

the results. The question is: What do we do now?

That brings us to the present moment. People criticize what we are

doing here and say: You don't have a plan. We most certainly do have a

plan. The plan was laid out in a bipartisan commission, unanimously;

five very prominent, erudite Republicans and the same, five Democrats,

led by the former Secretary of State and the former chairman of the

House International Relations Committee, unanimously, and they laid out

a plan. They said to start a redeployment, and in the process of that

redeployment, still have the American Army present so you are

protecting the forces, those who are there, protecting the

infrastructure. I would interpret that also to mean helping to control

the borders of Iraq. Then they said, No. 2, train and equip the Iraqi

Army. The Iraq Study Group even gave specifics of how you could embed

advisers and then have a method for protecting the advisers embedded in

the Iraqi forces. They said also to continue to go after al-Qaida. It

is al-Qaida we are seeing, particularly in the western part of Iraq,

that is getting insurrection among the predominant ethnic group there,

the Sunnis, and they are causing mayhem all over. That is a mission we

should continue.

It also said: Go aggressively after an international and diplomatic

initiative, bringing all the countries in the region that would then

enforce a political settlement that could be brought about. This is, in

essence, what is a part of this bill. I suspect we are going to be able

to pass the bill because the funding for the military is absolutely

necessary, so it is going to be hard for people to vote ``no'' on this.

We already had the real test vote that was a two-vote margin yesterday

that kept basically the language in the bill I have just outlined. So I

think we are going down the right road. This isn't a mandate. This sets

as a goal over a year from now a redeployment of those troops with

those three main statements of purpose to continue, and it says we

ought to have a comprehensive strategy, a comprehensive diplomatic,

political, and economic strategy that includes sustained engagement

with Iraq's neighbors and the international community. That is exactly

what the Iraq Study Group brought to us unanimously.

This Senator from Florida wanted to state very clearly that is why I

think the Senate ought to support this funding bill, not only for the

purposes of the funding, but also for the statement of what should be

the policy of the United States Government with regard to Iraq.

I yield the floor.