Mr. President, I also wish to speak for a few minutes

about the mess in Iraq. Last week, Prime Minister Iyad Allawi came to

Washington to join in President Bush's campaign of relentless happy

talk about the war in Iraq. President Bush says:

Meanwhile, back in the real world--the world that American soldiers

confront on the ground in Iraq--the chaos gets worse and worse. Entire

regions and many provincial capitals are under the insurgents' control.

Virtually every day we see car bombings, kidnappings, assassinations,

beheadings.

As we learned last week, the CIA has produced a formal National

Intelligence Estimate that says that, at best, the current level of

violence will continue and, at worst, Iraq will plunge into a civil

war. As Secretary of State Colin Powell acknowledged yesterday, it is

getting worse in Iraq. But amazingly, President Bush insists that this

mess in Iraq has made us safer, and the President and his political

allies have been relentless in using the war on terror for their own

electoral purposes.

Their message to the American people is simple: Be afraid, President

Bush will protect you; his opponent will not.

Vice President Dick Cheney also took this line of attack 2 weeks ago

when he darkly warned with his Darth Vader-type voice that if John

Kerry is elected President, then ``the danger is we'll get hit again,

that we'll be hit in a way that will be devastating.'' That was Vice

President Cheney.

Last Tuesday, the senior Senator from Utah, Mr. Hatch, said that

terrorists ``are going to throw everything they can between now and the

election to try and elect Kerry.''

Last Monday, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage said

terrorists in Iraq ``are trying to influence the election against

President Bush.''

If these gentlemen have such excellent access to the terrorists'

thoughts, they are not doing a good job of turning that knowledge into

effective policy against the terrorists. At key junctures, this

administration has made disastrously wrong choices. Repeatedly, these

decisions have played into the terrorists' hands. Let's look at the

record.

It is a fact that the September 11 attacks happened despite repeated

warnings to Mr. Bush from the CIA that al-Qaida was planning to attack

America. Those warnings included an August 8, 2001, President's daily

briefing which he received while he was vacationing in Crawford, TX.

The report was titled ``Bin Laden Determined to Strike in the U.S.''

That is not a subhead or a sentence in the memo, that is the title of

the memo: ``Bin Laden Determined to Strike in U.S.''

Let's look at the rest of the record.

On President Bush's watch, the U.S. botched the single best

opportunity to capture bin Laden at Torah Borah in Afghanistan. A

political decision was made to allow Afghan warlords to carry the brunt

of that siege, and bin Laden escaped.

It was President Bush who 3 years ago pledged to smoke bin Laden out

of his cave, but has utterly failed to do so. Instead, by successfully

defying President Bush, bin Laden has become a folk hero across the

Muslim world. He has attracted not only thousands of new recruits, but

dozens of imitators, new bin Ladens who are forming their own terrorist

organizations to attack America and Americans.

It was President Bush who diverted our military intelligence

resources and certain military hardware, such as the Predator aircraft,

the unmanned aerial vehicles, took them out of Afghanistan, away from

the hunt for bin Laden and sent them to Iraq.

It was President Bush whose taunt, ``Bring it on,'' did indeed bring

it on--a nationwide insurgency in Iraq, an urban guerrilla war that has

trapped our Armed Forces in a quagmire.

It was President Bush whose unilateral approach on Iraq alienated

many of our oldest allies and turned world opinion against the United

States.

It was President Bush whose invasion and occupation of the second

largest Arab country has outraged much of the Muslim world and has been

a recruiting bonanza for Islamist terrorists.

This is an astonishing record of mistakes, misjudgments, and

mismanagement. It is an astonishing record of George W. Bush again and

again playing into Osama bin Laden's hands. It is like Wile E. Coyote

chasing the Road Runner, only this time it is not funny. It is a

colossal tragedy. It has put our Nation at even greater risk of

terrorist attack.

Ironically, President Bush's father, George Herbert Walker Bush,

warned against the folly of invading and occupying Iraq. Listen to

this. On February 28, 1999, speaking to a group of Desert Storm

veterans at Fort Myer, VA, former President Bush said:

The first President Bush continued:

That is the first President Bush. That is not me. That is an exact

quote from the first President Bush, 1999. I would say to this

President: You do not have to listen to us, just listen to your father.

He would have told you what you are getting into in Iraq.

This is what his father said:

It is disastrous. Of course, we heard the same prophetic warnings

from Brent Scowcroft, James Baker, and other foreign policy experts.

But this President Bush and his partner Dick Cheney and the

neoconservative intellectuals thought they knew better. They reveled in

words such as ``slam dunk'' and ``cakewalk.'' And so now the disaster

that Bush 41 warned against has become a reality under Bush 43.

The Iraq invasion has set back, rather than advanced, the war on

terrorism and al-Qaida. Osama bin Laden remains at large--an imminent

danger to our homeland. Our Armed Forces are bogged down in Iraq, with

casualties rising above 8,000, and they are not able to respond to real

threats to the United States. Our moral authority and credibility on

the world stage are at rock bottom.

The other day I was watching former President Carter at the Carter

Center answer a question. He said he has been, I believe I am not

mistaken, in over 120 countries. He said never in the history of the

United States has our country been at such low esteem and moral

authority in the rest of the world--never in the history of our

country.

Despite President Bush's blustery threats about the so-called axis of

evil, on his watch, North Korea has acquired nuclear weapons and Iran

appears to be proceeding with impunity to develop its own nuclear

weapons. This is an extraordinary record of mistakes, misjudgments,

miscalculations, and missed opportunities.

As a consequence of President Bush's choices over the last 4 years,

America is weaker, America is less secure, America is more vulnerable.

I say to my friend and colleague from Utah, whom I quoted earlier,

look at the record. Look at this record and come to only one

conclusion: The single best recruitment poster for al-Qaida and the

terrorists is our policy in Iraq. Quite frankly, the architect of that

policy, the person who is carrying it out, is President George W. Bush.

No, it is not John Kerry, I say to my friend from Utah. It is not John

Kerry. George W. Bush's reckless, stubborn policy is the single best

recruiter for al-Qaida, and this must end so that our people can truly

be made secure; that we can go after the terrorists; that we can get

out of this quagmire in Iraq; that we can once again become the moral

authority, the shining city on a hill that America has been to the rest

of the world. I am sad to say it will not happen on this President's

watch. That is why a change is in order.

I ask unanimous consent that an article that appeared September 26,

2004, in the Los Angeles Times be printed in its entirety in the

Record.

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

the Record, as follows: