Mr. President, in this work period, we will, once again,

because of the supplemental, turn to the raging civil war in Iraq.

To say that the Bush-Cheney spin machine lacks credibility is an

understatement as it relates to the war in Iraq.

Last week, the President marked the beginning of the sixth year of

this war by delivering more of the same disconnected rhetoric. But at

the same time he was giving this talk of progress, the facts on the

ground betrayed this happy-talk. As Republican Senator Chuck Hagel

said, the President's words--compared with the real facts on the

ground--are like ``Alice in Wonderland.'' That is what Senator Hagel

said. The situation on the ground in Iraq is fluid and rapidly

changing.

Mr. President, I was stunned this morning when I got up and listened

to the radio. Sadr has said: OK, lay down your arms on a couple

conditions--release all the prisoners, don't do any more arrests, and

leave us alone.

Mr. President, within a couple of months after this war started, the

commanders on the ground in Iraq came and told us that this man was a

criminal and he would be in jail within a matter of a couple weeks.

Now, whether that is true or not, that is up for others to decide, but

that is what we were told. And here is this man now, 5 years later, who

in effect is telling the elected leader of Iraq what to do and what not

to do.

It is clear that the Iraqi civil war persists. Within the past few

days, nearly 1,000 Iraqis have been killed in Basra alone. This war is

a war of Shiite versus Shiite, al-Maliki versus al-Sadr, Iraqi versus

Iraqi, Sunni versus Shia, Shia versus Sunni. Who is in the middle of

all of this? The American troops.

The President's spokesperson said: This is it. We are now in a

situation where the Iraqis are going to take care of their own. But, of

course, the police, when confronted, turned over their arms to al-Sadr

and walked away. They gave them their guns--I assume their badges--and

walked away. The American troops were called in; air power and ground

troops were called in. The Iraqis could not handle the situation.

As one Iraq teacher said in the New York Times this weekend, in the

closing paragraphs of a very long article:

That is what he said:

When the Vice President of the United States goes to Iraq, it is

secret. No one knows he is going there. It is not on his schedule. He

is under very high security. When the President of Iran goes to Iraq,

he announces 2 weeks in advance he is coming--not in the dead of the

night, 2 weeks in advance.

I support our troops. Whenever I say something like that, I think of

the Presiding Officer and others in this Chamber who know what it means

to support our troops, as someone who has carried weapons in support of

his country and as someone who has been injured as a result of wearing

the uniform of this country. So I say this with a lot of humility, but

I, along with everyone in this Senate, support our troops. Every one of

us is honored by their sacrifice and grateful beyond expression for

their outstanding work.

When it comes to judging the Iraq war, only one question matters: Are

we safer? The answer is undeniably no, and no amount of spin from the

White House can change that.

Because of Iraq, our military is stretched thin and its ability to

address new threats is compromised. Many of our troops are now on their

third, fourth, and some are on their fifth tours of duty in Iraq.

Are we safer with bin Laden free and al-Qaida strengthening? Of

course not.

Because of Iraq, our National Guard--the brave men and women charged

with protecting us from disastrous threats here at home--don't have the

manpower or the equipment to do their job effectively at home. Are we

safer with a weakened National Guard to protect us at home? Of course

not.

Because of Iraq and the Bush administration's shoot first, talk later

style of cowboy diplomacy, our moral authority in the world is

shattered, and to talk about this being cowboy diplomacy is an insult

to cowboys. Our former allies are unwilling to stand by our side. Our

ability to solve conflicts through diplomacy are diminished.

Are we safer as a weakened moral force in the world? Of course not.

The American people know this by overwhelming numbers. They continue to

oppose this war, and with good reason: We are objectively less safe

because of Iraq.

The cost of the war to our country has been enormous, not only in the

loss of lives--now more than 4,000--but also tens of thousands wounded,

a third of them gravely. We are now spending $5,000 every second in

Iraq--every second--$12 billion a month. No weekends off. No holidays

off. We are spending $5,000 a second of borrowed taxpayers' money. The

President told us the war would cost no more than $60 billion. Nobel

Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz said it is going to cost us $3

trillion.

In Iraq, we--the American taxpayers--are building hospitals, roads,

bridges, dams, water systems, sewer systems, barracks for the Iraqis,

when we should be helping millions of Americans avoid losing their

homes to foreclosure. We are policing the streets in Baghdad when we

should be investing in health care and a better education system. We

are protecting oilfields in Basra when we should be funding renewable

energy production to help stem the tide of global warming.

When all is finally said and done, experts say the war is going to

cost as much as $3 trillion or more, as I have said. Where does this

come from? It is all borrowed for future generations to pay back. The

legacy of our generation could be to leave our children and

grandchildren with a safer, cleaner, and more prosperous country.

Instead, the war in Iraq will ensure that we leave future generations

with trillions of dollars in debt.

Instead of making our country safer, we are greasing the pocketbooks

of corrupt Iraqi politicians and buying their temporary cooperation.

Let's not forget this: Iraq is a rich country. It is not a poor

country--far from it. Its oil resources make it one of the world's

wealthiest countries. With the price of oil skyrocketing as it has,

think of the money that is going into their coffers. Record-high oil

prices have supplied Iraq with literally more money than they know what

to do with, but we keep spending $5,000 a second in Iraq. As we borrow

and spend billions of dollars to provide the security that the Iraqi

Government has failed to create for themselves, Iraq is bringing in

billions of oil money faster than they can open bank accounts to store

it all.

If a parent gives a teenager the choice of either getting a job or

receiving an allowance for doing nothing, the teenager will often

choose to do nothing. As long as we guarantee to the Iraqi Government

that our troops and our money will support them, they will never have

an incentive to do the job themselves. The security welfare state we

have created will go on and on forever.

I yield the floor.