Mr. President, I rise to speak on the subject of the

emergency war supplemental and the adverse impact this political

theater is having on our efforts in Iraq.

For me, this political gamesmanship calls to mind a book written some

50 years ago about some very brave men in our Nation's history--not

brave in the sense of today's marines and soldiers, who are doing the

grunt work in Afghanistan and Iraq to ensure that the free world can

sleep in peace at night. No, the men in this book were brave for a very

different reason.

The book I am referring to is the 1956 classic, ``Profiles in

Courage,'' written by a young U.S. Senator from Massachusetts, John F.

Kennedy, who later became our 35th President. The book is an account of

men of principle, integrity, and bravery in American politics.

Then-Senator Kennedy profiled eight exceptional U.S. Senators from

throughout the Senate's history whom he considered to be models of

virtue and courage under pressure. These men defied the public opinion of the

day in order to do what was right for the country even though they

suffered severe criticism and losses in popularity because of these

actions.

The Senators profiled included: Thomas Benton from Missouri, for

staying in the Democratic Party despite his opposition to extending

slavery into the territories; Sam Houston from Texas, for opposing

Texas' secession from the Union--for refusing to support this

secession, Houston was later deposed as Governor--and Edmund Ross from

Kansas, for voting for acquittal in the Andrew Johnson impeachment

trial. As a result of Ross' vote, Johnson's presidency was saved and

the stature of the office was preserved.

In this definitive book on political courage, each of the eight

Senators profiled is today considered a ``hero'' for having done the

right thing, not the popular thing.

They are heroes today for having filtered out the political noise of

the chattering classes of their day.

They are heroes for having done what was in the best interest of the

United States and not in their own political best interest.

They are heroes for doing what was necessary instead of simply doing

what was easy.

Today, each of us faces our own ``Profiles in Courage'' moment. A

clash of visions regarding America's future has brought us to this

point.

One vision has America defeating al-Qaida and the forces of Islamic

fascism.

The other vision has America surrendering in Iraq and allowing

jihadist forces to determine Iraq's future, making America and the rest

of the world less safe.

These competing visions must be reconciled by each individual

Senator.

But let's understand exactly what the majority party is attempting to

accomplish by hijacking this legislation. I could speak at length about

the ample amounts of unrelated pork that have somehow found their way

into this emergency supplemental. Those embarrassments continue to be

addressed by my colleagues.

What I would like to do is spend a few minutes specifically

discussing the misguided efforts of the other side to revise, or more

accurately restrict, this Nation's policy in Iraq.

Democrats are once again attempting to constrain this Nation's

Commander in Chief in the execution of his constitutional duties; this

time by inserting language in the emergency supplemental that would

limit the use of force in Iraq to certain congressionally preapproved

ends.

It would also provide a date certain for the surrender of U.S. forces

in Iraq. This language within the emergency supplemental

unconstitutionally micromanages the conduct of the war from the floor

of the U.S. Senate. It does so by providing that Congress, and not the

Commander in Chief, would determine just how our military is to be

used. It inserts 535 ``commanders in chief'' into the decisionmaking

process when it comes to the execution of military operations in Iraq.

This is not what our Founding Fathers intended.

This legislation, as it is currently written, directs the President

to begin the surrender of our forces no later than October 1 of this

year, and calls for all U.S. combat forces to be back in the United

States 180 days after that.

As a matter of policy, even the bipartisan Baker-Hamilton Commission

specifically considered and rejected setting a timetable for our

withdrawal from Iraq.

But this current debate we are engaged in regarding the emergency

supplemental affects more than politicians on Capitol Hill. It goes far

beyond the political posturing taking place on Sunday talk shows. It is

more than a mere power struggle between the Commander in Chief and a

new majority in Congress asserting itself.

No, this debate directly affects the health and well being of our men

and women in uniform; men and women that this Congress authorized the

President to send to Iraq.

This is unconscionable.

Recently, the Readiness and Management Support Subcommittee of the

Senate Armed Services Committee held a hearing on overseas basing

issues. Witnesses represented the Department of Defense and the

Departments of the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

As the ranking member, I asked these witnesses about the impact that

delaying enactment of the emergency supplemental would have on

Department of Defense operations, particularly those associated with

Iraq and Afghanistan.

I learned from them that the Army has already started to feel the

financial squeeze of our failure to pass the emergency supplemental and

has begun to limit certain functions.

They have had to curtail the training of Army Guard and Reserve units

within the United States, thus reducing their readiness levels.

They have had to reprioritize predeployment training and eliminate

anything that is not Iraq specific. No longer will units deploy to Iraq

capable of handling the full spectrum of possible military scenarios.

The Army has begun reducing quality of life initiatives, including

the routine upgrade of barracks and other facilities.

They have stopped the repair and maintenance of hundreds of tanks,

Bradleys, and other vehicles necessary for deployment training.

The impact only gets worse with time.

If the emergency supplemental funding is not received by May 15--less

than a month from now--the Army will undertake further actions.

These include:

reducing the pace of equipment overhaul work at Army depots, which

will worsen the equipment availability problems facing stateside units;

curtailing training rotations for brigade combat teams scheduled for

deployment to Iraq. This will also slow the arrival of more brigades

which are needed to expand the Army's rotational pool and reduce stress

on existing units.

This smaller rotational pool will result in the further extension of

those currently deployed until their replacements are judged to be

ready for deployment.

The Army would be forced to implement a civilian hiring freeze.

They would have to prohibit the execution of new contracts and

service orders.

They would have to hold or cancel repair parts orders in the

nondeployed Army, directly impacting the units' ability to deploy with

mission capable equipment and fully trained soldiers.

I shudder to think of what additional steps the military will need to

take if Democrats remain as stubborn and irresponsible regarding the

emergency supplemental as they have proven to be up to this point.

Before we consider voting on any emergency supplemental legislation

which includes the offending surrender language, we need to seriously

ask ourselves: in 20, or 50, or even 100 years, will those generations

that follow us look upon us as the heroes of our time for having done

the courageous thing?

Will we be admired for having chosen to do what was in the best

interest of the Nation, in the best interest of the world, regardless

of the political costs?

Or will this body be viewed with disdain for having cast our vote to

set certain a date for our surrender to the forces of al-Qaida?

Will we be viewed as inhumane for condemning some 25 million Iraqis

to a living hell on earth?

It is my opinion that this misguided effort by my Democratic

colleagues is a surrender strategy for Iraq; a surrender that will take

us at least a year to complete, but a surrender strategy nonetheless.

I join today with the President in refusing to surrender to the likes

of al-Qaida.

Calling this surrender a ``withdrawal,'' or a ``redeployment,'' is

like putting lipstick on a pig. No matter what you call it, it is still

a pig. And no matter what you call this surrender, it is still a

``surrender''.

Now, there might have been a time in our history when we could have

hidden behind our own borders and not had to worry about what was

happening in the Middle East or any place else across the ocean. Those

days haven't existed for some time.

Remember the consequences of our abandonment of Afghanistan in the

1980s. We supported the Mujahedin against the Soviets until the Soviets

surrendered, or ``withdrew'' as my Democratic friends would call it, in

1989. Then we left the Afghans to fend for themselves. In short order,

they had a civil war. The Taliban rose to power and provided a safe

haven for al-Qaida. Osama bin Laden established training camps where he

trained some 20,000 terrorists in the late 1990s; graduates of those

camps came here and killed 3,000 of our fellow citizens on 9/11.

Perhaps, at the end of the Cold War, it was difficult to imagine the

impact of the U.S. leaving Afghanistan. The same cannot be said about

leaving Iraq. We have to prevail in Iraq, and we can if we don't choose

to surrender.

In closing, I have a question for those on the other side.

If my Democratic colleagues believe our current struggle against

Islamic jihadists in Iraq is such a mistake; if you honestly believe

that you were lied to or misled into initially supporting this war and

that there is no useful purpose for continuing; if you believe that the

lives of those in uniform who have made the ultimate sacrifice were

truly wasted; if you believe that al-Qaida and the threat of Islamic

fascism confronting America is merely something invented by a small

band of neoconservatives, or; if Islamic fascism is simply an

ideological movement that can be appeased and reasoned with; then why

are you seeking to continue funding our fight in Iraq for even another

day?

If you believe that Iraq is simply a mistake gone bad, then you

should at least have the courage of your convictions and act

accordingly. Vote to end the funding now.

Don't string along those putting their lives on the line for you to

make some sort of weak political statement.

This may well be our ``Profiles in Courage'' moment. I implore you to

do the right thing, not the currently popular thing. Support our men

and women in uniform, and do it now.