Mr. President, there is a lot of discussion today, and

has been in the last week or two, and perhaps there will continue to be

discussions about the funding for our troops in Iraq. I think it is

important to say that the Congress has passed legislation that will go

to the President that actually requests more funding than the President

requested for the troops in Iraq. It also establishes a goal of hoping

that perhaps we will be able to extract our troops from Iraq in a year.

There is not a requirement that American troops be pulled out of Iraq.

It establishes a goal. But what I wish to talk about today is the part

of the bill that provides a higher level of funding for the troops than

the President requested.

It is regrettable that in this country we have gone to war in Iraq

and to war in Afghanistan. We have asked very much of our soldiers to

go into harm's way--3,300 plus of them have been killed in Iraq--but we

have not asked for similar circumstances from the American people. We

have not asked for a commitment from the American people. In fact, the

very funding the President has requested, once again, as emergency

funding is not paid for. The President says: Let's have emergency

funding and add it to the debt.

We have not asked the American people to pay for the war. We sent the

soldiers to war with the understanding that when they come back, they

will inherit the debt and pay for this war. That doesn't make sense to

me.

Even more than that, the President says one can contribute to this

country by going shopping, going to the mall. So we send soldiers to

war, and we go to the mall. Where is the national commitment? Where is

it that we have asked the American people to go to war against

terrorism, to go to war in Iraq with the American soldiers?

I remind everyone that what we did in the Second World War--and by

the way, this war has now lasted longer than the Second World War. But

in the Second World War, our country mobilized. There was Rosie the

Riveter. There were three shifts at the manufacturing plants. We had

our capability humming in this country producing everything we needed

for that war. We had rationing. We had factory lights on 24 hours a

day.

We had this country's productive capacity revved up full speed. When

Stalin met with FDR and Churchill in the mid-1940s before the end of

the war, he said: Thank God for America's productive capability,

America's manufacturing capability.

Here is what they did. Manchester, in ``The Glory and the Dream,''

described this. I want us to think about this just for a moment: From

1941 to 1945, We turned out 296,000 warplanes, 102,000 tanks, 2.4

million trucks, 8,700 warships, and 5,400 cargo ships. America went to

war. In the last year of the Second World War, we were producing 4,000

warplanes a month in our factories. Contrast that with what is

happening today.

The reason I ask these questions, the reason I come to the floor to

ask those questions is because of this picture. This is a picture of

something called an MRAP, Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle,

which is much safer than the humvee. This version of the MRAP is what

the Commandant of the Marine Corps said we need in Iraq, 6,700 of them.

There have been 300 IED attacks in Iraq against this version of the

MRAP. Not one death. Let me say that again. There have been 300 attacks

by an IED against this vehicle in Iraq; not one death in those attacks.

We have had 3,342 U.S. troops killed in Iraq, 70 percent of them

caused by IEDs, improvised explosive devices. The Commandant of the

Marine Corps says this vehicle will save three-fourths of the lives

that are being lost. Eighty percent of the casualties from IEDs will be

saved with this safer vehicle.

Why do I raise this question in the context of what we did in the

Second World War? Because we have been producing about 45 of these

vehicles a month. At a time when the Commandant of the Marine Corps

says we need 6,700 in Iraq to safeguard the soldiers going on patrol in

Iraq, with the capability that this vehicle will save three-fourths of

the lives that are now being lost, we are producing 45 a month. They

say they want 6,700 in Iraq, and the President has requested less than

a third of that amount. We wrote money in this appropriations bill,

$1.2 billion, to substantially increase the number of MRAP vehicles

that must be produced and must be sent to Iraq to save lives.

This is from the Commandant of the Marine Corps. Why is it we could

produce 4,000 warplanes a month at the end of the Second World War in

support of our fighting men and women, and we produce 45 MRAPs a month

in this country? Why is it we surge our troops to Iraq but don't surge

our production of the MRAP vehicle, just as one example, that would

provide dramatic increased protection against the lost of life from

IEDs? Why will we not surge this? Why is this less important? I don't

understand this at all. We go to war, but it is just the troops, not

the country?

IEDs are responsible for 70 percent of the casualties in Iraq. Yet,

while this country has sent its soldiers to war, it has not mobilized

the country. We do not have third shifts with the lights on 24 hours a

day. We don't have Henry Kaiser producing 1 ship a day, 4,000 warplanes

a month. In fact, this relates to something else I have talked a lot

about on the floor of the Senate. Only two U.S. steel mills are

qualified to produce the special armored steel for the Defense

Department at this point--two. Both have been acquired by foreign

companies in the past year and a half.

Let me say that again: Only two U.S. steel mills are qualified to

produce armored steel for the Defense Department. Both have been

acquired by foreign companies in the past year and a half. Oregon Steel

is now owned by Evraz Group S.A. of Russia. The International Steel

Group was acquired by the Dutch conglomerate Arcelor Mittal.

The Defense Department has requested that the armor steel made by

both firms be categorized with what is called a ``DX'' rating for the

MRAP program. DX stands for the highest national urgency. Under the

1950 Defense Production Act, any item with a DX rating gets top

priority and must be furnished to the U.S. Government in advance of any

other customers. Several other items that are critical to the MRAP

vehicles--ballistic glass, transmissions, and Mack Truck chasses--are

also supposed to receive the DX rating.

I am told Defense officials are in negotiations with both the steel

mills I mentioned, that are foreign owned, to make sure there will be

enough steel available for the various kits they need for the MRAP

vehicle.

The point I want to make is simple: In the Second World War, we had

some unbelievably brave soldiers, men and women who went halfway around

the world to fight because their country asked them to fight for this

country's freedom. But it was more than just soldiers; it was in

virtually every manufacturing plant in this country and with virtually

every citizen, through rationing, through production, through the

capability to produce what the soldiers needed.

Contrast what we did in the Second World War with what we do today.

We decide to send the soldiers to Iraq, but we make only a few of the

MRAP vehicles that would save so many of those lives that are now being

lost to IED explosions. We can't do this. This ought not be acceptable

to anybody in this country. If we are going to war, the country needs

to go to war with the soldiers. When the President sends us an

appropriations request and says, Oh, by the way, the MRAP is a lower

priority, we are not going to fund it, we are not going to ask for what

the Marine Corps Commandant says is necessary in the field, we will ask

for slightly less than a third of that number of vehicles--this

Congress fortunately has said no, Mr. President, that is not what we

are going to accept. We decided to invest in these vehicles as quickly

as we can and move them to Iraq so when soldiers are on patrol and they

are hit with an IED, they have better armor and a better opportunity to

protect their lives.

There will be a lot of discussion in the coming days about who is

right and who is wrong on all the funding issues with respect to Iraq.

I want my colleagues to understand a couple of things. First, we have

actually increased the funding requested by the President. We have

increased the funding for couple of reasons. No. 1, we added funds for

safer vehicles that the President did not request enough of will save

the lives of troops; No. 2, we had to add funds for military and VA

medical care because the President did not request enough money to care

for the injured soldiers coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan. We

increased the funding for both. We have actually increased the funding

for the troops.

I understand there is a disagreement about the language with respect

to Iraq. Ours establishes a ``goal,'' not a requirement, a goal, hoping

we can extract our soldiers from the middle of a civil war in Iraq

within a year. That is a goal. I know the President and others suggest

that somehow fully funding the troops and even adding more where it was

necessary and establishing such a goal is pulling the rug out from

under the troops, but nothing could be further from the truth. What I

think injures our troops is to decide we are going to surge the troops

but we will not surge the equipment necessary to protect them. That is

wrong. This Congress has said it is wrong in the legislation we have

passed.

I hope in the coming days and in the coming conflicts, whether it is

dealing with Iraq or dealing with the terrorist threat around the

world, we will decide in the future never again to send our soldiers in

a manner that allows us not to use the full impact, the full capability

of the American people to produce that which the soldiers need to do

their jobs. That has been the case, regrettably, here.

Early in the Iraq war I received e-mails where people would send me

pictures that illustrated what they were trying to do to protect

themselves. Their humvees were not armored, so soldiers had welded

patches of various kinds of metal to make them stronger. But now we

have a new vehicle that can save a dramatic number of lives. The

President's budget did not request nearly the money for it that should

have been requested. So Congress added to it. I hope this is the first

step to do what we should do with America's capacity to say to the

soldiers: You have not gone to war alone. This country goes to war with

you, with every capability we have to protect you.

I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.