Mr. President, today is an important yet a sad day for

our Nation because it represents the 85th day that our fighting men and

women in uniform have been waiting for emergency aid from the Congress.

Yet they have been left waiting because of political gamesmanship and

political theater in Washington, DC. The latest is reported in the

Congressional Quarterly today, an article I have here in my hand--

actually the date is April 30, 2007, 10:45 p.m., entitled:

The report

is that Congresswoman Pelosi wanted time to personally read the

emergency supplemental bill and to sign it before sending it to

Pennsylvania Avenue. I would have thought that Congresswoman Pelosi and

Members of Congress would have read legislation before they voted on

it, not afterwards.

Also, in today's edition of The Hill, there is a story that says:

I don't think this is Congress's finest hour, and I think it is an

embarrassment that when our troops are waiting on an emergency spending

bill to provide them essential equipment, we are staging signing

ceremonies and going through political kabuki theater just to

demonstrate on the part of some their disagreement on the present

strategy in Baghdad and in Iraq. I think it is inappropriate and

irresponsible.

I know one of our colleagues here has talked about, for example, the

MRAP vehicles, the so-called Mine Resistant Ambush Prevented V-shaped

hull vehicles that are awaiting $3.1 billion in spending in this

appropriations bill to get those to the Marines and Army in Iraq,

something that has proven, in the hands of the Marines, to be very

resistant to the improvised explosive devices. They save lives. That is

one example, one concrete example of funding for equipment that is

being held up because Congress continues to dither and play political

games now 85 days after the President has requested this funding for

our troops. The bill that will--after this so-called signing ceremony

and after this reading of the bill after it has passed rather than

before it was passed exercise--be sent to the President and he will

veto it is simply unacceptable. Why? For two reasons.

First of all, because it imposes arbitrary timelines on our generals

in Iraq, including GEN David Petraeus, who was confirmed unanimously by

the Senate, who was here last week to explain the progress that is

being made in places such as Al Anbar Province, west of Iraq, which has

been controlled by al-Qaida for some time now, and we are finally

starting to see some real, concrete improvements being made there. We

are seeing the local sheiks offering troops to supplement Iraqi police

officers and the Iraqi Army to fight al-Qaida--the same organization

that killed 3,000 Americans on September 11--right in Iraq. That is

good news.

We are beginning to see some real security measures going forward. So

why we would have Congress tie the hands of General Petraeus and these

successful efforts in Al Anbar Province, west of Baghdad, controlled by

al-Qaida, and why Congress would want to tie the hands of our military

leaders at a time when we are seeing some real improvement there is,

frankly, beyond me. Why would we simply give up when we are beginning

to see some light at the end of the tunnel?

Then, of course, there is the second matter of providing porkbarrel

spending in order to secure the votes of some Members of the House for

this bill that they would not support on the merits. It is completely

demeaning to our troops and the nobility of their sacrifice, not to

mention the sacrifice of the military families who wait anxiously

hoping their loved one will return from the fight only to be told that

Congress is causing unnecessary delays in this spending--85 days now--

putting arbitrary timelines on the troops, making it harder for them to

succeed, denying them the equipment necessary for their very safety,

while Congress engages in more porkbarrel spending in order to secure a

political consensus for this ill-considered piece of legislation.

The bill, on its way to the President after this kabuki theater,

substitutes congressional mandates for the considered judgments of our

military leaders. This bill assumes and forces the failure of a new

strategy, which is only halfway implemented. The new Baghdad security

plan to back up Iraqi forces in Baghdad to implement the clear hold-

and-build strategy that GEN David Petraeus is the architect of as part

of our counterinsurgency measures is only halfway deployed. Only half

of the troops that are a part of this so-called surge are on the

ground. While we are seeing some progress, we are also seeing some

increased violence and, unfortunately, deaths as a result of meeting

the enemy in places where previously they were safe and secure because

we could not even go into places such as Sadar City, which was

controlled by Moqtada al-Sadr, the radical Shiite cleric who has since

left to go to Tehran. He has left the country because he is afraid of

the American and Iraqi military forces joining together. He has

instructed the Shiite militias, one of the major causes of death squads

and violence and ethnic cleansing in Iraq, to lay down their arms. What

is there not to like about that kind of progress? Yet Congress,

thousands of miles away in the safety and comfort of the Senate Chamber

and our offices, is undermining the good efforts that are going forward

in Iraq.

While no one believes success is assured, we know, in the words of

General Petraeus:

The only thing that would make it hopeless is if Congress continues

to undermine General Petraeus and our troops who are in harm's way. It

boggles my mind that we have that sort of mindset in Washington, DC

because of some rabid, antiwar, left-leaning groups that insist we

ought to simply tuck our tail and run. They haven't come up with an

adequate explanation as to what they think would happen if we were to

leave precipitously, as some of them suggest.

I happen to believe that notwithstanding the fact that Darfur, where

400,000 people at last count have died as a result of terrible violence

there, would pale compared to the ethnic cleansing and the violence

that would follow if America were to betray our Iraqi allies and would

leave precipitously. It would also create a regional conflict where

Sunni majority nations would come in and try to stave off the Shiites

from Iran for helping them and trying to prevent them from killing the

Sunni minority there.

The Democratic leadership has not helped the situation in Iraq with

their recent pronouncements either. Democratic leadership in recent

floor statements has suggested that if the President vetoes this bill,

then he will be the one endangering the troops. They further stated

they hope the President would realize that with his pen in hand he can

honor soldiers, honor his country, and bring an end to this war.

To that I say baloney. That is sheer fantasy that by cutting and

running, by neglecting our allies in Iraq, by neglecting the

improvements we have been able to make, by recruiting tribal sheiks to

help us in fighting al-Qaida,

that somehow, by giving up on that, we are going to bring an end to the

violence and the death in Iraq. To the contrary, we would create a

failed state where al-Qaida, the very same people who hit this country

on September 11, 2001, could reorganize, train, and recruit, and export

future terrorist attacks to the United States.

I am chilled by comments made a few months ago when I attended a

ceremony where the Deputy Secretary of Defense spoke.

He asked rhetorically:

Then he answered his own question. He said:

His point is if they had the kind of biological, chemical, or nuclear

weapons they are seeking, they would have killed thousands--perhaps

hundreds of thousands more innocent Americans. And they will do that at

will if they are provided that sort of weaponry.

So it is sheer naivete on the part of those who say all we need to do

is leave and somehow these people will go away. They will not go away

and they will visit us here again with deadly results.

With General Petraeus back from Iraq for the first time last week

since he assumed command of U.S. forces, and the emergency

supplemental, I hope, reaching the President later today, it is

appropriate to reflect on the majority leader's statement, where he

said we have Two weeks ago, the Senate Armed Services Committee heard testimony

from GEN Barry McCaffrey, a proven combat commander from the first gulf

war, and a recognized expert on the tactical, operational, and

strategic situation in Iraq. I will quote for a moment from his

statement. He said:

He goes on to say:

I submit our colleagues who have said General Petraeus said there is

no military solution in Iraq are not listening to what he is saying,

because what he has said is that improving our security situation is

necessary but not sufficient. It is not a question of whether we are

going to do the security part or the political reconciliation part. One

must precede the other. It makes common sense that it is hard to sit

down and work out your differences around a conference table in a

political debate, or an attempt at reconciliation, if people are

driving automobile-borne improvised explosive devices or people are

walking into the Parliament in a suicide vest. So security must precede

the political reconciliation that we all recognize is so absolutely

important. That is what General Petraeus is saying. That is what we

have to accomplish.

We have some hopeful signs in Iraq now, for the first time in a long

time, as a result of this new strategy that is only about half way

implemented. But if we are going to succeed, it won't be because our

commanders have had their hands tied by arbitrary deadlines in

Washington, DC. It won't be because of the political theater going on

here 85 days after the President had requested the emergency spending

included in this bill for necessary equipment for our troops.

The leadership should sign this legislation and get it to the

President so he can veto it and we can get down to the serious business

of providing for our troops.

I yield the floor.