Mr. President, time is running out to fund the troops.

There are many of us who believe the policy in Iraq is a failed policy.

The numbers we are given every week are stark and frightening: Over

3,370 American soldiers have now lost their lives in the war in Iraq.

Another five were killed yesterday. Over the weekend, three American

soldiers were kidnapped. There is a manhunt underway to try to find

them and rescue them as quickly as possible. And to all those involved,

they have our prayers and our wishes for Godspeed.

But we understand the reality of this war, a war where almost 30,000

Americans have been killed or disabled, a war where many soldiers have

returned home with injuries that they will have to cope with for a

lifetime. This war has cost us over $500 billion, $500 billion that

could have been spent in America for many issues important to us--

improving our schools and education, making certain every American has

basic health insurance, making sure our children all across America

have the kind of health care and attention they need at an early age to

be healthy through the rest of their life, money that could have been

spent at the National Institutes of Health looking for new cures for

diseases and illnesses from which we suffer in America. There are so

many programs in which we could have invested that money.

Instead, we have invested that money in a war with no end, a war that

is now in its fifth year. The war in Iraq has lasted longer than the

Korean war, has lasted longer than World War II. It is the most

expensive war in the history of the United States, save World War II,

which was, in fact, a world war where the United States made a total

national commitment. But we now find that second in rank in terms of

cost is this war in Iraq.

There are many of us who understand that Americans across the board

may have supported the initial invasion but had second thoughts. I was

one of 23 who voted against this war at the outset in October 2002.

There were colleagues on both sides of the aisle who in good faith

thought the President should have the authority to deal with Saddam

Hussein. They were misled, as the American people were misled by

intelligence estimates that were just wrong, intelligence estimates

that said Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction and threatened

the United States, fear of nuclear holocaust, fear of mushroom-shaped

clouds. All of these images were paraded before the American people a

short time after we had gone through the tragedy of 9/11. It is

understandable the American people were concerned and fearful, and they

supported the idea of invading Iraq in the hopes of keeping America

safe.

We learned that in so many ways the information given to the American

people before the invasion of Iraq was wrong. There were no weapons of

mass destruction, there were no nuclear weapons, there was no

connection between Saddam Hussein and the events of 9/11 that were

sponsored by al-Qaida. But the invasion took place.

Many of us felt that once our soldiers were in the field, it was time

to close ranks behind them, stop the debate. They volunteered, they are

serving our country, they didn't write this policy. They are risking

their lives right now, and we should stand behind them. So many of us,

even those who opposed this war and voted against it from the outset,

voted year after year for the emergency appropriations President Bush

sent to Congress, money for our troops in the field. Now we are in the

fifth year, and there is no end in sight.

We have been told by our military leaders that even the best military

in the world in the United States cannot save Iraq. Only the Iraqis can

save Iraq. It has to be the Iraqi people through their Government who

decide to move forward toward stability. We cannot police a civil war.

We cannot contain the violence in Iraq even with 20,000, 30,000, 40,000

more American soldiers. That is a reality and one we should face.

Regardless, the President concluded a few months ago that he would

escalate this war and send even more American soldiers into harm's way.

I think that was a mistake. I think the President was moving in the

wrong direction. As I said, I don't believe our military, though it be

the best in the world, can really contain the violence of the civil war

in Iraq. I certainly don't believe our military, as good as it is, can

give spine to Iraqis leaders who can't seem to reach conclusions and

decisions on timetables about their future.

So the war continues. The President asked for more money, $80

billion, $90 billion at a time to continue this war in Iraq. Many of us

believe we should do two things: fund the troops, make sure they have

all that they need, but change the policy, start bringing American

soldiers home. Tell the Iraqis once and for all that we will not be

there indefinitely. We are not going to stay until you work up the

political courage to make decisions to govern your country. We are

going to start coming home. As we come home, these Iraqi soldiers whom

we have spent millions of dollars to train and equip need to stand up

and defend their country. The Iraqi Parliamentarians and leaders of

their Government need to stand up and make the hard political

decisions.

That is the reality of Iraq today. It is a reality we are reminded of

every morning with the newscasts that tell us of the suffering and

death which takes place in that country.

I wish to say a word, too, about the Iraqi people. I was reminded

over the weekend when I was home in Illinois--and a good reminder it

was--that when we speak about the loss of life in Iraq, don't forget

the innocent Iraqis who have lost their lives as well. We don't even

know what that number is today. We know that close to 3,500 American

soldiers have lost their lives, and we know the coalition forces who

have lost their lives. We don't know how many innocent Iraqis have lost

their lives as victims in the civil war or even of our invasion.

Mr. President, ``60 Minutes'' on Sunday night had a gripping story

about a youngster, 12-year-old, who, during the bombing of our invasion

of Iraq, lost both his arms. This young boy, whose name is Ali, came to

the attention of people across the world and was given a chance to go

to England, where he goes to school now. He was really inspiring when

he talked about how he was going to make something of his life even

though he lost both his arms. He is just an innocent victim of this war

who lost family and friends in a bombing, a tragic incident we wished

never occurred.

Keep in mind that these innocent Iraqis are part of this calculation

about the future of Iraq as well. If this civil war is to come to an

end, we not only need to start bringing American troops home, we need

for the Iraqi Government to start making decisions to protect their

people and project their future in a positive way.

I sincerely hope that at the end of next week when we present to the

President the money necessary for the troops, we will also make it

clear that we are taking a step forward to correct this failed policy

in Iraq.

I might also add that if we are not successful in changing the policy

with this bill, it is not the end of the debate. We are 4 months into

this new Congress, 4 months since the Democratic majority took control

of the House and Senate. In a little over 4 months, we have seen a

dramatic change in the national debate on the war in Iraq. For the last

4 years, we have been sleepwalking through this policy in this war in

Iraq with few challenges from Capitol Hill. The legislative branch of

our Federal Government did little or nothing to meet its constitutional

responsibility, to challenge the Executive when it came to policy and

execution of that policy.

Now things have changed. Now, with a Democratic majority in the House

and the Senate, the debate is underway, as it should be, a debate on

policy. I think most Americans would agree that over the last 4 months

with this new Congress, we have had a more active and vigorous debate

on Iraq than any time since this war started. That is the way it should

be. The American people believe Iraq is the primary issue on which we

should focus, and we have, and we will continue to focus on Iraq. Even

beyond the supplemental appropriations bill, we will move to a Defense

authorization bill and a Defense appropriations bill, giving ample

opportunity for Members on both sides of the aisle to come up with

alternatives to deal with this failed policy.

In conclusion, there is one key to changing the failed policy in

Iraq. The key to changing the failed policy in Iraq is 11 Republican

Senators. When 11 Republican Senators reach the point that they want

this policy changed, it will happen. We have 49 Democratic Senators who

have voted repeatedly to change that policy. Two Republican Senators--

the Senator from Oregon, Mr. Smith, and the Senator from Nebraska, Mr.

Hagel--have stepped forward and joined us on the Democratic side. We

need nine more. With nine more Republican Senators, the failed policy

in Iraq will change. Why does it take so many? It takes 60 votes in the

Senate to move forward a significant and controversial measure such as

a change of policy in the war in Iraq.

I was heartened to learn last week that some Republican House Members

met with the President. There were press reports afterward that they

told him point blank that they can no longer continue to support his

policies. Change has to take place. The President needed to hear that.

I hope Republican Senators who feel the same way will step forward.

It is not enough for them to say we will come up with 11 different

ideas and vote one at a time for each of them. That isn't the way this

works. We have to put our minds together and try to find compromise and

cooperation so that we can serve the best needs of America--not only

our national security needs but the needs of our troops in the field

and the needs of the Iraqi people. If 11 Republican Senators will join

the 49 Democrats, this policy can change. We will give them that

opportunity tomorrow with two cloture votes and then beyond that some

votes I am sure next week on a conference report when we reach that

stage in the proceedings, and then in subsequent legislation.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in the spirit of

compromise and cooperation to try to find ways that we can end this war

in an honorable way, bring our troops home to the heroes' welcome they

deserve, and say to the Iraqi people: The Americans have given you more

than any nation could ever ask for. We have given you over 3,300

American lives of the best and bravest soldiers in the world. We have

given you 25,000 injured soldiers, some with serious injuries they will

carry for a lifetime. We have spent $500 billion. We have stood behind

your country as you deposed your dictator, put him on trial, and

executed him. We have stood behind your country when you wrote your

Constitution and held your elections. We have been there for more than

4 years. Now it is your turn. Now it is the turn of the Iraqis to step

forward and guide their nation forward.

We need to understand that we won't have a change in policy unless

the President agrees to change--and it is unlikely he will--or this

Congress forces a change. The only way that occurs is when 11

Republican Senators join 49 Democrats to make it happen and make it a

reality.