Mr. President, here we are once again--deja vu--debating

supplemental funding for the President's disastrous misadventure in

Iraq. Now in its fifth year of occupation, the U.S. death toll in Iraq

is over 3,380. What a shame, shame, shame. The death toll of innocent

Iraqis is largely unknown, but it probably numbers in the tens of

thousands.

The United States of America has spent over $378 billion in Iraq. Do

you know how much a billion dollars is? That is $1 for every minute

since Jesus Christ was born. So the United States has spent over $378

billion in Iraq, and we are all familiar with the horrendous tales of

waste and abuse by U.S. contractors in Iraq. The taxpayer--that is you

out there--has been ravaged by the profiteering in Iraq. But even

worse, despite the billions, our brave troops have been shortchanged

with inadequate equipment to protect their lives and shoddy medical

care, if they make it back home, to treat wounds of the body and of the

mind.

Now the President has threatened to veto the House bill, which is

before the Senate, because it sets a date to withdraw, provides funding

until late July and ``could unreasonably burden the President's

exercise of his constitutional authorities, including his authority as

Commander in Chief.''

President Bush has also objected to funding for rebuilding the Gulf

Coast States after Hurricane Katrina, funding to improve health care

for our troops and our veterans, funding for the shortfall in the State

Children's Health Insurance Program, funding for Low-Income Heating

Assistance Program, and more funding for Homeland Security.

Mr. President, this President--our President--has a single-minded

obsession with Iraq, and he appears to see no value in anything except

continuing his chaotic ``mission impossible.'' While tilting at

windmills may have been a harmless procedure for Don Quixote, Mr.

Bush's war is turning the sands of Iraq blood red.

Mr. Bush raises constitutional concerns in his latest veto threat. I

don't know whether to laugh or to cry. I don't no whether to laugh or

to cry. I suppose one could be encouraged that constitutional concerns

exist in the Bush kingdom. After setting aside the Constitution

whenever convenient to justify preemptive attacks, illegal searches,

secret wiretapping, clandestine military tribunals, treaty violations,

kidnapping, torture, and a rejection of habeas corpus, one has to

wonder about the nature of these purported ``constitutional concerns.''

If the Constitution is finally to be read, let us read it in its

entirety, including the articles which give the people's

representatives--that is us--the power over the purse--yes, the power

over the purse; don't ever forget it. That is the real power. It gives

the people's representatives the power over the purse and the power to

declare war.

In its statement of administrative policy, the administration claims

that the House bill before us `` . . . is likely to unleash chaos in

Iraq. . . .'' Mr. President, what do we have now if not chaos in Iraq?

Securing Iraq has unaccountably morphed into securing Baghdad, and even

that goal eludes us. I doubt if building a wall around the green zone

is going to be of much consequence in securing Baghdad, not to mention

the very strange message such a wall conveys concerning our purported

liberation of Iraq.

The President--our President--continues to miss the point. Iraq is at

war with itself. America cannot create a stable democracy in Iraq at

the point of a gun. While our troops succeeded in toppling Saddam

Hussein, it is the President's profound misunderstanding of the

dynamics in Iraq that have led to the failure of his Iraq policies. Why

in the world should we now believe the claims that he makes in his veto

threat?

There must be an end to this occupation of Iraq. Yes, I say

occupation for it is no longer a war in which U.S. troops should be

involved. Our troops won the war they were sent to fight, and they

should not now be asked to serve as targets in a religious conflict

between Sunni and Shiites that has raged for thousands of years. It is

reported that even a majority in the Iraqi Parliament now supports

legislation which demands a scheduled withdrawal and an immediate

freeze on the number of foreign soldiers in Iraq.

In April, Congress set a new course for the war in Iraq. Sadly, the

President--our stubborn, uncompromising President--chose to veto that

bill. As we prepare to go to conference again, the President

continues--our President--to close his eyes and cover his ears to the

reality in Iraq, and the urgent need for a new direction. Whatever

decision is made in conference will not be the last chapter in this sad

story. God willing, this Senator will not close his eyes, nor will he

cover his ears, nor will I stand by in silence. Hear me.

We need to conclude this terrible, awful mistake that we have made in

Iraq. I said in the beginning that we ought not go into Iraq. But we

are there. Anti-Americanism is more robust now than in any period in

our history because of Iraq. Do you hear that? The international

community is skeptical--why should they not be? They are skeptical of

U.S. intentions because of Iraq. Our Constitution has been trampled--

hear that. Our Constitution has been trampled because of Iraq.

Thousands of U.S. troops and Iraqi citizens have lost their lives

because of Iraq. Thousands more are maimed physically or mentally

because of Iraq. Billions of U.S. dollars have been wasted because of

Iraq.

President Bush has lost all credibility. President Bush, our

President, has lost all--all--credibility because of Iraq.

Terrorism is on the rise worldwide because of Iraq. May God grant

this Congress--that is, us--may God grant this Congress the courage to

come together and answer the cries of a majority of the people who sent

us here. Find a way to end this horrible catastrophe, this

unspeakable--unspeakable--ongoing calamity called Iraq. May God help us

in the United States.