Mr. President, earlier today at the United Nations the

President of the United States painted a pretty picture of the

occupation of Iraq. But the President's picture was far from reality.

The reality is the situation facing our soldiers, the very limited

Iraqi security forces, and, importantly, the Iraqi people.

The reality is that today Iraq is in flames. A horrifying wave of

violence has struck yet again, targeting the Iraqi police, Government

leaders, innocent civilians, and our very own troops. The death toll in

Iraq continues to mount. As of today, more than 1,030 American troops

have died in this war, a war that should not have been fought, a war

which was wrong in the beginning, wrong today.

More than 700 Iraqi police have perished in the short time since the

force has existed. The numbers of civilians killed in President Bush's

preemptive war is unknown. They may never be known. But it numbers in

the thousands--the widows and the orphans who have been left alone, the

tears that have been shed.

Who is responsible for this bloodshed in Iraq? Is it a small group of

religious radicals, or the secret agents of Osama bin Laden, or

terrorists who might otherwise sneak out onto the streets of New York

City? No, no, and no. An ever growing pile of press reports indicates

that the insurgency is larger and more broad than the White House will

admit.

On Wednesday, September 15, the Wall Street Journal reported that

That was the Wall Street Journal of Wednesday, September 15.

Meanwhile, the Commander in Chief, President Bush, seems to be in the

dark about the worsening situation in Iraq. Faced with the spread of

violence in Iraq, the President continues to speak of Iraq as a country

of free people. But what liberty, what liberty, is there to be enjoyed

when the police are being killed by the scores, the chances of a

peaceful election have been thrown out the window, and many Iraqis are

too afraid to send their children to school?

One must begin to question whether the President is getting the bad

news about what is happening on the streets of Baghdad and Fallujah or

if he is simply ignoring it. Surely the Commander in Chief has a

responsibility, has the obligation, to change his strategy when it has

been proven a failure. Instead, the White House blindly insists that

the problems of Iraq will sort themselves out if we simply maintain a

resolve to stay the course. Did the American people really want to stay

the course that has resulted in the deaths and the injuries of

thousands of our troops?

Now the President wants to spend another $3.4 billion in

reconstruction funds to again try to bolster the same Iraqi security

forces that have been outgunned and inadequately trained to take on the

insurgents in Iraq. This is even more evidence, is it not, even more

evidence that the administration had no plan, that the administration

has no plan for postwar Iraq, other than to throw more money at the

problem and hope for the best.

As the cost of the war continues to spin out of control, we must

remember that last fall the Bush administration promised that its

request for the biggest foreign aid package in half a century would

bring security and stability to Iraq. The White House got enough

Members of Congress to vote for $18.4 billion to buy that pig in a

poke, and the President got unprecedented flexibility to spend that

reconstruction

money almost as he sees fit. Has that reconstruction money helped to

get our troops out of harm's way? Has it helped to bring our men and

our women home? No. In fact, our troops are under a greater number of

daily attacks now than they were when the President asked for his

massive foreign aid program.

As the President wants to spend more and more money in Iraq, our

troops are getting sucked ever deeper into the bloody quicksand of the

Middle East. Most astonishing yet, the White House has not held anyone

in the administration accountable for the mess that has become Iraq. It

is business as usual in the White House bubble.

The Pentagon botched plans for postwar Iraq as if there ever were

any, and the shame of Abu Ghraib has further turned world opinion

against the United States. But instead of holding someone at the

Department of Defense accountable for those mistakes, the Vice

President said that we have the

The CIA failed to detect Osama bin Laden's plot to attack New York

City and Washington, DC, and then it produced faulty intelligence that

the White House used to take our Nation to war against Iraq.

The White House misled the American people. It is a war we should

never have fought. It was wrong from the beginning; it is wrong today.

Instead of holding someone at the CIA accountable for those mistakes,

the President praised the former CIA Director as

The U.S.-run occupation government in Iraq mistakenly disbanded the

Iraqi Army, bungled the management of $18.4 billion in reconstruction

funds, and turned a blind eye to the rising flames of anti-Americanism

in Iraq.

Instead of demanding accountability for mistakes made by the

Coalition Provisional Authority, rumors abound that its former head,

Ambassador Paul Bremer, could be up for a promotion to Secretary of

State.

How about that? He didn't have time, he said, to come back before the

Appropriations Committee of the Senate--I was there and asked him. No.

He said he didn't have time. I will not have time when the time comes

to vote for him as Secretary of State if such nomination is ever

presented to this body.

For all the mistakes that have been made in President Bush's

unprovoked war on Iraq under the doctrine of preemption, which is

unconstitutional on its face, and therefore it is fundamentally flawed,

not a single administration official has been held accountable for the

mess that Iraq has become. Not a single administration official has

been called to step aside for the mistakes they have made. In fact, the

only senior administration official the White House has seen fit to

fire is the former Secretary of the Treasury, who dared to question the

fiscal responsibility of more massive tax cuts. If this President

cannot hold his advisers accountable for their mistakes, then the

people should hold this President accountable for his poor judgment.

The situation in Iraq has been elevated beyond a crisis. The White

House plan for holding Iraqi elections in January 2005 is shaky and

becoming more so with each new attack on our troops. Instead of

demonstrating the leadership to bring more countries in to assist in

rebuilding Iraq, the President pays lipservice to international help.

The President has only proposed to sink more taxpayer money into the

same failed policies that brought us to this point. We are falling

deeper and deeper and deeper and deeper into debt. The President has

failed to act to counter the surge in violence that is costing the

lives of our men and women in uniform.

How long can this bumbling by the White House go on? How long must

our troops be tied down in Iraq? How long will we struggle without a

plan to end the spreading violence? How long will it take for our

country to turn away from this dead-end policy created by the dead-

brained thinking in this White House?

How long, Mr. President? How long?

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