Mr. President, I want to follow on the remarks of my

dear friend from Colorado related to the current situation in Iraq. It

appears some movement has been made on the war supplemental.

Unfortunately, it is a flawed piece of legislation, one the crafters of

it well know will be vetoed by the President. It will be vetoed for

good reasons--because it contains completely unacceptable language, as

was just being pointed out.

It is impossible for us to micromanage what is happening in the

field. It is a bad idea for politicians in Washington to tell generals

when and how they can move forces in a battle. It is a bad idea for us

to slow-bleed our military as they face an unrelenting enemy. It is a

bad idea for us to simply not have the wherewithal to stick with the

fight at a time when it is difficult. The President this week again

reiterated his commitment that he would veto a bill that had artificial

timetables for withdrawal and that would empower the enemy. It gives

the enemy hope and an opportunity to wait us out. There is no question

about that. A deadline simply tells the enemy by what date they need to

know that the American commitment is over.

Imagine the confusion for someone in Iraq trying to make a decision

whether to cast their lot which, in fact, may mean the death of himself

or herself, and their family, to support our effort there toward a

democratic country. If they had no anticipation that our commitment was

equal to theirs, they might simply wait it out. So how can we ever turn

the political tide in our favor in Iraq if we don't show the commitment

the people of Iraq must have in order to make a commitment to our

stated goals?

General Petraeus is here. He met with the President yesterday; he

will be meeting with Members of Congress. It is important that we ask

him his assessment of the current situation.

I know there are many who would be ready to suggest that the surge is

not working. In fact, the full surge is not in place because all of the

troops are yet to be deployed for the surge, but some who already said

it wouldn't work are now saying it hasn't worked. I wish to have

General Petraeus's assessment of it. I want to know what the general on

the ground--not a politician in Washington--thinks about the effort of

success we are meeting with our effort at this point in time.

The Iraq Study Group has been mentioned. Congress should drop fixed

deadlines for withdrawals of U.S. forces. As Commander in Chief, the

President needs flexibility on draft deployments. This is from the

cochair of the Iraq Study Group, Democrat Lee Hamilton.

It is important that we recognize the Iraq Study Group not only when

it is convenient but also when it might be inconvenient.

I think it is very important that we not sound the voice of defeat.

Imagine the surprise that must have come to our enemies--and whether we

like it or not, we have enemies--imagine the delight that must have

come when, from the halls of the Congress, from the leader of the

Senate, they were told that they had, in fact, won; that the war was

lost.

This is not the right thing to say at a time when our troops are

engaged in battle. Nine U.S. soldiers lost their lives in the last 24

hours alone. This is a difficult time. It is not a pleasant time. It is

not an easy assignment. So for us to simply tell our troops in the

field they have been defeated when they in fact have not, and for us to

tell our enemies that in fact they have won when in fact they have not,

is not a good idea. I believe it is terribly important that we attempt

somehow in the midst of this rancor and debate that is so classic of

modern day Washington that we find it within ourselves to look beyond

the current moment of politics, beyond the political advantage that

might be gained at any one moment or another, and seek within the

depths of our souls the opportunity for us to begin to work together to

try to find a solution to this very difficult problem.

It is a sure thing that we, in fact, have a problem on our hands,

that Iraq is a difficult situation. There is no question they must

reach a political settlement. There is no question that they must do--

the Iraqis themselves--the hard work of peace. However, as we do that,

we need to also find it within ourselves to find a way of shaping a

political consensus, for us to find a way to begin to talk to one

another, not past one another, about how we resolve the issues in Iraq

in a way that will enhance America's strength. It is not about

defeating a point of view. It is not about defeating President Bush. A

loss in Iraq would be a defeat for the United States of America. So how

do we find a way to empower America to be a stronger country, to be a

united country as we seek to defeat the enemies of our country, which

surely are there, continuing to fight against us, wishing us to be

unsuccessful, and wishing for our country to be defeated? We should

pull together, Republicans and Democrats all, to try to find the common

ground that will bring us to a sensible solution, to a sensible

outcome, so America is not defeated, but the enemies of America are

defeated.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.