absolute basis, we see in terms of the gap between the size of the American GDP and the Chinese GDP the gap is actually widening rather than shrinking. Yes, they can have a higher rate of growth, but their higher rate of growth is on a much lower base. Our growth on a higher base is unprecedented in world history.

My message today is we need to hold the media accountable as well as all of the others. We have had two examples I have highlighted this morning where the media has misled us: the first with respect to one of our respected and beloved colleagues, Dr. Frist, where he was smeared and then when he was vindicated, that fact was ignored. The second has to do with telling us where the world is going. For whatever reasons, there are those who are constantly panicked about China and its impact on the United States who need to pay attention to the reality of the numbers.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas is recognized.

IRAQ

Mr. CORNYN. 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: ''President's Veto Dependent on House Speaker's Signature.'' 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:

> Congressional leaders today will put an exclamation point on their political showdown with President Bush on Iraq spending, staging a signing event to send their Iraq supplemental bill to the White House.

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 mission is hard, but it is not hopeless.

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:

Do you know why al-Qaida killed 3,000 people on September 11, 2001, in New York and Washington, DC?

Then he answered his own question. He said:

Because they could not kill 30,000, because they could not kill 3 million.

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 ''lost the war.''

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:

The consequences of failure in Iraq will be a disaster to the American people and our allies if we cannot achieve our objective to create a stable, law-based state at peace with its neighbors. . . . We have 150,000 U.S. troops battling in Iraq and 22,000 fighting bravely in Afghanistan.

These are the finest, most courageous military men and women we have ever fielded in battle. Their commanders—who have almost without exception at company, battalion, and brigade level served multiple combat tours—are the most capable leaders that I have encountered in my many years of watching our Armed Forces with admiration.

He goes on to say:

Our new leadership team in Iraq—our brilliant new commander, General David Petraeus, and the equally experienced Ambassador Ryan Crocker—are launched on a new approach to use political reconciliation, new methods and equipment to strengthen the Iraqi security forces and enhanced U.S. combat protective power to stabilize the situation. We must give them time and space.

That is exactly what we are trying to do, to provide the basic security General Petraeus said is necessary, but not sufficient, to solve the problem.

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.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority's time has expired.

The Senator from New Jersey is recognized.

IRAQ

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, 4 years ago today, President Bush landed on the U.S.S. *Abraham Lincoln* in his flight suit. The banner behind him proudly said, ''Mission accomplished.'' President Bush announced to the world, and to the American people, that ''major combat operations in Iraq have ended. In the battle of Iraq, the United States and our allies have prevailed.''

I can think of almost no greater act of hubris, arrogance, and denial than the declaration of mission accomplished in Iraq 4 years ago. It is truly stunning how false that statement was.

Four years ago today, President Bush declared mission accomplished. Yet, since that time, 3,000 U.S. troops have been killed in Iraq. Over 104 American troops died in April alone, making it the deadliest month since last December.

Four years ago today, President Bush declared mission accomplished. Yet we have now spent over $450 billion on the war in Iraq. This war is costing us almost 10 times what the Bush administration initially said it would.

Four years ago today, President Bush declared mission accomplished. Yet we have now been in Iraq for nearly 50 months, longer than the United States was in World War II.

Four years ago today, President Bush declared mission accomplished. Yet U.S. troop fatalities are up 33 percent since the President's escalation of the war in January.

Four years ago today, President Bush declared mission accomplished. Yet today, Iraqi civilian casualties are estimated to be in the tens or even hundreds of thousands. It is impossible to know how many have been killed in Iraq, but the United Nations estimates that 35,000 civilians have been killed.

Four years ago today, President Bush declared mission accomplished. Yet today oil production in Iraq is still 15 percent lower than it was before the war.

Four years ago today, President Bush declared mission accomplished. Yet Baghdad is only getting 6 hours of electricity a day, significantly less than before the war.

Four years ago today, President Bush declared mission accomplished. Yet the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction just put out a new report detailing how projects the administration declared a ''success'' are actually failing and no longer operating.

Frankly, it reminds me of all the other ways we were misled by this administration. Let us remember what this administration told us about this war. Let us remember the Iraq myths. Remember the unfound weapons of mass destruction; remember the missing mobile weapons labs; remember the yellowcake uranium in Africa; remember Saddam's nonexistent vast stockpiles of chemical weapons; remember when Secretary Rumsfeld told us that ''we know where the weapons of mass destruction are;'' remember the nonexistent link between al-Qaida and Saddam; remember the claims that Iraqi oil and other countries, not the United States taxpayer, would pay for the cost of reconstruction; remember when the administration told us the war would cost only between $50 billion and $60 billion; remember when Paul Wolfowitz said ''it seems outlandish'' to think we would need several hundred thousand troops in Iraq; and remember when President Bush told us on May 1, 2003, that ''major combat operations in Iraq have ended.''

This is the same administration that now comes to this Congress and says: Trust us. This is the same administration that says: Trust us, our new escalation plan will work. This is the same administration that tells this Congress and the American people to be patient, to give their ''new'' plan to escalate the war time to work.

Yet their new plan is more of the same. To quote one of the witnesses who testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee:

This plan is just stay-the-course plus 20,000 troops.

That is what they thought then when the witness testified, but eventually it has been a lot more than 20,000 troops.