chairman that we will engage in a serious dialog about the various provisions that are included in that direct consumer issue. That will be a real key to finishing up.

I congratulate the Senator from Massachusetts, Mr. KENNEDY, for the outstanding way he and his staff have worked with all the Members on our side of the aisle to clear up. As he said, in some cases, clarifications were needed, and in some cases it was the expansion of wording; in some cases, a reduction in wording. But, at any rate, we got it to where I think both sides understand and agree on many of the issues that are included. I hope we can have other amendments brought to the floor so we can debate them and get them worked out.

Of course, it would be nice if any Senator thinking about offering an amendment would share their idea with us prior to filing it. We might be able to save some time that way and make sure debate flows in an orderly process. We are trying to keep the bill to relevant amendments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I am pleased to continue working with my colleague from Kansas, Senator ROBERTS, and my colleague from Iowa, Senator HARKIN, on the important issue of direct-to-consumer advertising.

We have to strike an important balance between seeing that consumers get accurate information on drug safety and seeing that we do not improperly restrain free speech.

Senator HARKIN has a proposal to add safety information to drug ads. Senator ROBERTS has an idea to allow FDA to impose fines for inaccurate ads. Our bill includes a moratorium—only to be used in rare cases—on DTC ads. The IOM went further and recommended a moratorium on DTC for all new drugs. We rejected that recommendation due to the first amendment concerns but included more limited authority that we believe meets the constitutional test.

Still, some have raised concerns about our current proposal, and we take those concerns seriously. We will continue to work on this important issue with our colleagues and constitutional experts. I think we are making progress through the afternoon and, hopefully, by tomorrow we will have some recommendation.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MCCASKILL). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business and that my remarks be printed at the appropriate place in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

IRAQ SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I come to the floor today to express my deep disappointment and the disappointment of so many people in my State with the President's expected decision to veto the supplemental funding bill delivered to him by the bipartisan majority in Congress. This bill provided our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan with all the equipment and the resources they need to continue the duties they have been so bravely performing for more than 4 years. The amount appropriated by Congress rose well above the amount the President requested to give our soldiers on the battlefield. Let it be clear: Congress has given our soldiers on the battlefield all the funding they need. It is the President who will now be blocking it.

A few weeks ago, I was driving in Minnesota. It was a beautiful spring day outside of Ortonville, MN, and as has happened too many times in my short time as a Senator, I called one of the mothers of the Minnesota soldiers who died in this war. Of the 22,000 troops the President has included in this surge, 3,000 of them are Minnesota Guard and Reserves who were expected to come home in January and February and now have been extended. Now the moms I am calling are the moms of these soldiers who would have been home in January or February.

I asked this mother: How are you doing?

She said: You know, people keep asking me that, and I don't really know what to say. Do you have any ideas about what I should say?

I thought, and I told her: Well, I can tell you what all the other mothers have been saying. They have been saying that they wake up every morning and they try hard to hang together for their family, and then something happens. They see a picture or they remember something, and they are never the same for the rest of the day. They have their good moments, but their lives will never be the same.

I told her that her son stood tall, and that now is the time for people in Washington to stand tall.

After 4 years of extensive American military involvement in Iraq, the President refuses to accept the prudent change of course recommended by the bipartisan Iraq Study Group and supported by a clear majority of the American people. By passing this bill, we in Congress fulfilled our constitutional duties to, first, continue funding for America's Armed Forces in harm's way and, second, to ensure that our Government pursues policies in the best interests of our soldiers and of our Nation.

As we work with the President in the days and weeks and months to come, we must continue to advocate for the necessary changes in our strategy in Iraq. It is with this spirit that we in Congress continue to reach out to the President for a responsible change of course in Iraq.

Last month, I visited Baghdad and Fallujah. I saw firsthand the bravery and commitment of our troops. The very best thing we can do for these young men and women is not only give them the equipment they deserve but to get this policy right. This means sending a clear message to the Iraqi Government that we are not staying there indefinitely. This means, as recommended by the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, that we begin the process of redeploying our troops, with the goal of withdrawing combat forces by next year, while acknowledging that some troops may remain to train the Iraqi police and special forces to provide security for those who remain and to conduct special operations. This means not a surge in troops but a surge in diplomacy and economy and Iraqi responsibility.

When I was over in Baghdad and Fallujah, I saw many things, including the bravery of our troops. I was struck a few weeks later when another delegation of people from Congress went there, and one of the Congressmen returned and said he had been visiting a market there. He said it reminded him of a farmers market in Indiana.

Those are not the enduring memories of my trip to Iraq. My most enduring memory is standing on the tarmac in the Baghdad Airport with nine firefighters from the Duluth National Guard, who called me over to stand with them while they saluted as six caskets draped in the American flag were loaded onto a plane. As every casket was loaded on, they saluted. They were standing tall for their fallen soldiers that day. Now is our time for Congress to stand tall. Our troops have done everything they have been asked to do. They have deposed an evil dictator, and they gave the Iraqi people the opportunity to vote and establish a new government. It is now the Iraqi Government's responsibility to govern.

But stability and progress in Iraq depend on the political reforms Iraqi leaders have promised many times yet failed to deliver. After 4 years, despite many promises, Iraq has yet to approve a provincial election law. After 4 years, despite many promises, Iraq has yet to approve a law to share oil revenues. After 4 years, despite many promises, Iraq has yet to approve a debaathification law to promote reconciliation. After 4 years, despite many promises, Iraq has yet to approve a law reining in the militia. Our men and women in uniform cannot deliver these kinds of reforms to Iraq. This is up to the Iraqis themselves.

As the bipartisan Iraq Study Group recommended, Iraqi leaders must pay a price if they continue to fail to make good on key reforms they have promised the Iraqi people. After 4 years, what have we gotten? Benchmarks

without progress, promises without results, claims of accountability without any consequences. Why should we expect the Iraqi leaders to do any better when they know the President continues to accept their excuses for inaction and fails to impose any penalties for their lack of progress.

That is why the bipartisan Iraq Study Group made clear that ''if the Iraqi government does not make substantial progress toward the achievement of milestones on national reconciliation, security, and governance, the United States should reduce its political, military, or economic support for the Iraqi government.'' That report was issued 5 months ago. Meanwhile, the President has simply stayed the course he has continued to pursue for the past 4 years and, not surprisingly, little progress has been achieved in Iraq. The Iraqi Government will understand and finally take responsibility only when it is crystal clear to them that our combat presence is not indefinite and that American combat troops are going to leave. That is the responsible change of course we in Congress are seeking. The American people are looking to their leaders in Washington at both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue to work together to get this policy right.

Two weeks ago, I went to the White House and met with the President, along with three other Senators, including two Republicans. I appreciated the time he took to honestly discuss our points of agreement and disagreement on the war. I told him that now is the time to forge cooperation with our Democrats in Congress. But the President has chosen instead to veto this bill.

As we move forward on the funding of this war, we in Congress will do nothing that threatens the safety of American soldiers in the field. But we must continue to fulfill our constitutional duty to exercise oversight of American policies in Iraq. A critical part of this oversight must be demanding accountability for the way in which funds are spent on the reconstruction projects in Iraq.

For the past 4 years, the administration has demanded—and received—a blank check to spend in Iraq. Now we are seeing the consequences of this lack of planning, management, and responsibility.

On Monday, the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction released a report that details widespread failures in the most basic reconstruction projects. The report finds that, in many cases, Iraq's infrastructure and utility systems are worse off than they were before the war.

On closer inspection, it turns out that even projects which were declared ''success stories'' were considerably less than that. In fact, seven out of eight of these projects which were called success stories were not operating properly due to plumbing and electrical failures, improper maintenance, possible looting, and the fact that expensive equipment was available but never used.

Prior to the 2003 invasion, Iraq's power system produced 4,500 megawatts a day. Today, the same system produces 3,832 megawatts a day. In Baghdad, the city enjoys an average of 6.5 hours of electricity a day. A year ago, Baghdad received 8 hours of electricity a day. Before the war, the city received an average of 16 to 24 hours a day.

Congress has provided $4.2 billion for reconstruction of Iraq's power system, and the result has been a more than 50 percent decrease in the length of time the citizens of Baghdad have access to electricity on any given day.

Congress has provided nearly $2 billion to provide clean drinking water and repair sewer systems. But according to the World Health Organization, 70 percent of Iraqis lack access to clean drinking water.

The Defense Department has estimated that the unemployment rate in Iraq is anywhere between 13.6 percent to 60 percent. In a recent survey, only 16 percent of Iraqis said their current incomes met their basic needs.

So after 4 years, we are facing a security situation that continues to deteriorate, an economic situation that continues to stagnate, and a reconstruction effort that cannot provide even the most basic services.

My colleagues and I have been asking the difficult questions and demanding answers from this administration. The supplemental bill demonstrates that Congress is reclaiming its rightful role in setting Iraq policy and, more broadly, in our system of government. The President's veto only strengthens our resolve.

Madam President, I also wish to speak briefly in support of a few other provisions in this bill that I believe respond to critical challenges our Nation faces and that the administration has deemed unnecessary.

The White House and many of my friends on the other side of the aisle have argued that this bill should not contain funding for anything other than the current war. If we were sacrificing funding for our troops in order to meet domestic priorities, I would agree. But having given our troops all they need and continuing to ignore crises at home would be irresponsible.

Veterans funding is one of the key parts of this bill. This bill adds an increase in veterans funding that was long overdue. In the last 2 years in my State, veterans would come up to me—particularly from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars—and they would tell me about how they had difficulty getting treatment. They clearly had mental health issues. I didn't know if there was truth to this. I wasn't sure, because of the state of their minds, whether this was true. Then I got here, and I started looking at the numbers.

In 2005, the Department of Defense estimated that about 24,000 soldiers coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan would need health care. The actual number is four times that amount. Last year, they were 87,000 soldiers short in their estimate of how many soldiers would need help coming back from this war. Now I know why those people were wandering around asking for help. It is because they weren't getting the help they deserve.

Another critical problem that has been ignored by this administration—and one that is particularly important to the people of my State—has been the tremendous damage recent national disasters have been inflicting on our farmers and ranchers. The supplemental spending bill was a combination of a 2-year effort to secure disaster assistance for America's farmers. Minnesota farmers have been hit with heavy losses for 2 consecutive years—storms and flooding in 2005 and, again, drought in 2006. All told, they lost more than $700 million in crop and livestock losses.

The supplemental funding would have provided $3.5 billion to compensate farmers for a portion of their crop and livestock losses over the past 2 years. Our farmers have waited too long for this disaster relief. I am deeply disappointed that the President has turned his back on the urgent need for their assistance.

The bill we sent to the President of the United States provided the resources and support our soldiers need on the battlefield and after they return home. A few months ago, I attended a funeral of one of the brave men who was killed in the line of duty. The priest stood up, and he said to the thousand people in the cathedral: You know, this was a good kid. He was 6 feet 2 inches tall, but he was still our child.

When we send our kids to war and they are 6 feet tall, they are still our kids and they are standing tall. We need to stand tall.

The traumatic brain injury victims I have seen at the veterans hospital in Minnesota, even in their wheelchairs, are standing tall.

Those moms whom I talked to on the phone, as they struggle every day just to get out of bed to deal with the loss of their kids who were killed in this war, are standing tall.

Now it is time for the President of the United States to stand tall.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts is recognized.

Mr. KERRY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

IRAQ

Mr. KERRY. Madam President, 4 years ago today, as we know, the President stood on an aircraft carrier underneath a banner that read ''Mission Accomplished.'' He declared that the major combat operations in Iraq were over. When he spoke those words, 140

American troops had been killed in Iraq. Since then, over 3,200 more American troops have given their lives. Just today, we learned that April was the deadliest month this year, with 104 Americans dead.

With every passing day, it becomes more obvious that the President really should have said: My fellow Americans, major combat operations in Iraq are just beginning. On that day, he should have had a plan to match the rhetoric with reality. But we are where we are, as the saying goes, and it is even more tragically clear to all but a few that if we want to accomplish our mission in Iraq—and we all do—if we want an Iraq that has any chance of stability and some sense of democracy, any sense of it, we have to change course.

In the past 4 years, we have lost at least 3,342 of our best young men and women, and nearly 25,000 others have been wounded and many wounded severely. We have spent nearly $400 billion, and the cost is rising at a rate of over $2 billion per week. There is no end in sight.

ADM William Fallon, the top U.S. commander in the Middle East, recently said:

We are losing ground every day.

And even General Petraeus, the top commander in Iraq, now says that we can expect the situation to get worse before it gets better.

We were treated to a spectacle a week and a half ago with news reports, a front-page story, I think, in the Washington Post, that Stephen Hadley, the President's security adviser, was casting about to find a general to be the sort of supreme organizer, if you will, of the war in Afghanistan and the war in Iraq.

What struck me about that story is here is our Nation at war, here is a series of four-star generals whose lives are committed to Nation, to service, to duty, and to military, who under normal circumstances would be honored to be asked to become the point person to organize our Nation's efforts in two wars in a front that is of serious consequence to this Nation. Yet all four retired four-star generals said no. One was even quoted publicly as saying they don't know what the hell they are doing, or they don't know what direction they are going in.

That is a pretty remarkable statement for a career military person to make about the current effort. But we also know the history of what has brought us here with retired generals—a whole host of them—who publicly rebelled postservice against the leadership of Secretary Rumsfeld, who is now gone.

It is a rather remarkable statement about the lack of planning, about the lack of candor, about the scapegoating that has gone on, about the unwillingness of people's careers to be judged not by their ability to tell the truth but, rather, their willingness to tell the civilian leaders what they want to hear.

As we know from our own intelligence agencies, the war in Iraq has increased the threat of terrorism by creating a breeding ground for terrorists that didn't exist before the invasion and by serving as a rallying point for extremists around the world. In fact, the State Department's annual terrorism report released yesterday shows that terrorist attacks worldwide were up 25 percent last year after increasing nearly fourfold the year before that.

How does the leadership come to the country and suggest that this war is accomplishing our larger goals? How does it help the war on terror to be creating more terrorists? How can you tell the American people we have made you safer, when the number of terrorist incidents have gone up and the number of terrorists who want to kill Americans is larger today than it was on 9/11?

Any businessperson, any tourist, anybody of any curiosity who has traveled abroad and who has asked a few simple questions or read the newspapers and listened to the news knows that our Nation, which we love passionately, is now less followed, less listened to, and less feared—less listened to by our friends and less feared by our enemies. The fact is, we are less safe as a result. We are less unified at home, less respected abroad, and we are less strong as a result.

Obviously, there is no way we can make up for what has happened in the last few years, certainly not in terms of the lives lost and the pain and suffering endured by those wounded and by families who have suffered those losses, but the fact is, we can find a responsible strategy to try to deal with not just Iraq but the whole Middle East and, indeed, releverage America's position in the world.

The President today, tonight, is going to veto crucial funding for the troops passed by both Houses of Congress, legislation that gives our soldiers all they need to complete the mission and receive the care they deserve once they get home. The President is going to veto it, but that is not all he is going to do. Then he is going to try to pin the blame on those who have pushed for a new direction. He is going to try to pin the blame for his failures, for his lack of planning, for his lack of leadership on those who are providing the only way to try to resolve what is happening in Iraq.

Instead of pressuring Iraqi politicians, this administration is practicing the politics of division at home, a brand of American sectarianism that undermines our national unity, a unity required to make decisions in time of war.

Last week, Vice President CHENEY accused Senator HARRY REID of putting politics ahead of our national security. I suppose we have grown used to this Vice President, who has pioneered the politics of fear, who oversaw the politicization of the intelligence used to mislead the country into war, who claimed that we would be greeted like liberators, who told us the insurgency was in its last throws, who continues to insist that everything is on track and growing fine, I think we have grown used to this Vice President not being candid with the American people.

Clearly, he didn't hesitate to impugn the integrity of the Senate's majority leader who is standing for an appropriate new direction with respect to our policy in Iraq.

Certainly, we can disagree about those tactics or strategies without impugning the motives and challenging the integrity of those who speak those different possibilities.

If the President insists on continuing down the wrong path, it seems to me Congress has no choice but to be as resolute in demanding the right path forward for our troops, for our country, and for the Iraqis themselves. I believe we have to continue to fight for the legislation that gives us the best chance of bringing our troops home with some measure of success in the region.

Four years after ''mission accomplished,'' it is time for us to acknowledge the implications of what General Petraeus and every other military commander, the Secretary of State and even the President have told us. All of them have said there is no military solution to the violence in Iraq. I don't know how many times I have heard that on Sunday shows, I hear it out here in the corridors with individual Senators talking to the press. Everybody mouths the words: ''There is no military solution.'' But if there is no military solution and we are all agreed on that, then what is the military doing? Why is the military and an escalation in the number of troops so critical if there is no military solution?

The administration, even after telling you there is no military solution, then gives you a rationale for a military solution, which is: We have to put additional troops in to have the security, in order to have the compromises. But the fact is, the security which, first of all, is proving illusive and probably impossible to secure with the troops alone, cannot be secured without the political compromises. This is a classic chicken-and-egg situation: Which comes first? You are not going to get the security until the stakeholders in this civil struggle feel confident enough that what they are struggling about can be resolved to their safety and future security. That is sort of a fundamental issue. You are not going to change the on-the-ground security situation and stop people from bombing and militias from killing unless those fundamental stakes are properly addressed and defined.

It is long since time that we started to measure progress on the ground in Iraq by the one metric that will ultimately determine our success or our failure, and that metric is this: Are the Iraqis making the tough political compromises necessary to keep their country together?

It has been nearly a year since the Maliki Government took power. At that time, General Casey and Ambassador Khalilzad said that the Maliki Government had 6 months to make the political compromises necessary to win the public confidence.

So here we have the commanding general of our forces and our trusted Ambassador to Iraq both saying they have 6 months to make the compromises. But guess what. The 6 months went by and nothing happened—nothing happened in Iraq to make those compromises happened, and nothing happened afterwards because the compromises didn't happen. That sends a message that there is no consequence to delay, there is no consequence to procrastination.

After that, the Iraqi Government agreed to a set of benchmarks because people were growing frustrated and those benchmarks, guess what, were pegged to specific dates for making progress toward national reconciliation.

In January, the President announced the troop escalation, and he told the American people the following:

America will hold the Iraqi Government to the benchmarks it has announced. Now is the time to act. The Prime Minister understands this.

But, once again, no real consequences, no real leverage, no real diplomacy. The result is, those benchmarks proved meaningless. You can take a look at the benchmarks the Iraqis agreed to. What did they agree to do at that point in time?

October 2006, over 6 months ago, that was the deadline for Iraqis to approve a new oil law and a provincial election law. As of today, the oil law has yet to even be introduced in Parliament, and that is an improvement over the provincial election law which hasn't even been drafted yet.

November 2006 was the deadline for new debaathification law to help bring Sunnis into the Government. A draft proposal was recently denounced by Ayatollah Sistani and a national commission to oversee the process, and guess what. It is nowhere near completion. In fact, 5 months after the deadline, the Shiite leader of the SCIRI Party recently described the Baathists as ''the first enemy of the Iraqi people.'' So much for debaathification and reconciliation.

December 2006 was the deadline for the Iraqis to approve legislation to address the militias. To date, absolutely no progress has been made on this crucial legislation, and the militias continue to wreak havoc.

January 2007 was the deadline for Iraqis to complete a constitutional review process. There was supposed to be a referendum on constitutional amendments by March. Guess what. The constitutional committee hasn't even drafted the proposed amendments, and the Iraqis remain far apart on key issues such as federalism and the fate of the divided city of Kirkut.

We are no closer to a political solution today than we were when the Maliki Government took power 1 year ago, but there were more than 940 additional American troops who gave their lives in that process to wait for the Iraqis to procrastinate.

Did the President actually hold the Iraqi Government to those benchmarks as promised? No. I hope the President tonight, when he addresses us after the veto, will address the benchmarks and where we are with respect to the failure of the Government to make the choices they said they had to make while our soldiers continue to die.

The administration still refuses to get genuinely tough with Iraqi politicians. They keep moving the goalposts, deflect the criticism of a failed strategy which they refuse to abandon. Instead, we get more vague assertions that our presence is not open-ended and outright rejection of any proposal that would leverage that threat.

The administration, it seems to me, has reached a point where it has to stop pretending the lack of political will in America is the problem. It is not the lack of political will in America that is the problem, it is the lack of political will in Iraq that is the problem.

It is impossible to make any other judgment when you look at that entire series of benchmarks. I remember Secretary Rice coming before the Foreign Relations Committee, I believe, several months ago now, and I asked her the question about the oil law. She said: Oh, yes, the oil law is almost done, just about done; wrapped up, we are about to proceed forward, we are confident it is going to be done in a few days. Here we are, several months later, and there is no oil law. It is not even before the Parliament yet.

The administration needs to accept the basic reality that the Congress has acknowledged: Iraqi politicians, if they are capable, if they are capable of making these decisions, have shown they will not do it without a reason to do it, without a rationale that feels some heat. A deadline is the only thing they have responded to so far. It took a deadline to be able to get them to do a constitution. It took a deadline to have each of their elections.

Incidentally, they protested against each of the deadlines. Each time they said: Don't do this to us; we can't meet it; we can't make it; it is too much. But each time, because we set the deadline and kept pushing, they did meet it.

American security is not a security blanket for Iraqis who want to procrastinate while American soldiers die. The longer the President continues to give them the sense that he is not going to change, he is not going to move on them, the more they are secure in the sense that they can just continue to jockey and play their political game at the expense of American dollars and American interests and American lives. Without real deadlines to force them, there is no way to actually determine that we can make the progress we need to make. Since January, when the President decided to disregard key elements of the Iraq Study Group and announced the escalation, over 340 American troops have died, and there is still no fundamental progress.

The legislation we have sent to the President would change this dynamic. It would force the Iraqis to either stand up for Iraq and meet the political benchmarks they have agreed to or decide they can't do it and have their fight.

It calls for a flexible timetable for the redeployment in 2008, and I underscore ''flexible.'' Every time we try to do something, we get into this totally phony, polarized debate where the President and his henchmen go out and talk about reckless abandonment and surrender and defeatism when, in fact, what we are proposing gives the President all the discretion in the world—to leave troops there to finish the training of Iraqis, which is the fundamental reason we are there; to leave troops there to chase al-Qaida, to prosecute the war on terror, which is in our interests, and to leave troops to protect American forces and protect American facilities. After 6 years of the war, what other fundamental mission should there be for American forces?

It seems to me the real debate is one that should center around the failures of this administration to face that reality and the few choices we have now to try to achieve success. The most important choice that has to be made to achieve success is to engage in full-throated diplomacy, not dissimilar to the kind of meeting that will be held in Sharm el-Sheikh this week. We hope Secretary Rice will take advantage of that and that the countries of the region will come together around a new security arrangement and a new understanding of what has to happen.

The timetable for the redeployment in the legislation sent to the President is not arbitrary, and it is not precipitous. It is consistent with the Iraq Study Group's recommendations and with the timeframe for transferring control of Iraq to the Iraqis that was set forth by General Casey. It also has the schedule agreed upon by the Iraqi Government itself. There is nothing arbitrary in a schedule to which your own commanding general and the Iraqi Government have agreed.

Even the President has said, under his new strategy, responsibility for security would be transferred to Iraqis before the end of this year. So they are willing to set a date. The administration can set a date for the transfer of the security, but it is unwilling to set a date for the beginning of the drawdown of some troops so you guarantee that date for the transfer of security is actually meaningful. The President has said it. Our generals have said it. The Iraq Study Group has said it. Now it is

time for the President to embrace legislation that makes those words reality.

Instead of accepting the change that is necessary, we keep hearing we need more of the same; we have to give the surge time to work; the Iraqis need just a little more breathing space to start making political progress.

General Petraeus has said, however, that he won't be able to make any progress assessment on the ground until September. Guess what. We hear that Iraq's Parliament, which has only been able to muster a quorum to even consider legislation about once every week or two—the Iraqi Parliament plans to take a 2-month vacation this summer, a vacation in the middle of a civil war. You sort of wonder what Abraham Lincoln would think of that. Iraq is descending further into chaos as thousands of Iraqis die each month. If the Iraqis go on vacation without making the key political compromises, it will absolutely guarantee that there is not going to be any meaningful political progress until next fall. I do not believe that America should be sending our troops to die for somebody else's vacation.

How many more American soldiers are going to give their lives without any hope of achieving a real political solution? 300? 400? 500? How many more doors are going to be knocked on and phone calls made? How many more visits to Arlington and other cemeteries across America, while the Iraqis procrastinate and refuse to settle their differences?

How can any of us in the Chamber look in the eyes of the parents of any young American killed and tell them: Your son or daughter died so the Iraqis can take the summer off?

With every passing day it becomes clearer this Iraqi Government is not going to get the job done. It is not truly a unity government, it is a figleaf for politicians who are pursuing sectarian interests instead of protecting the nation they are charged with saving. Now it is starting to crumble under the weight of its own ineffectiveness and corruption.

Last week some prominent Iraqi legislators came out and said publicly that they have lost confidence in the Maliki government. That is not surprising since we recently learned that Prime Minister Maliki was responsible for a politically motivated purge of Iraqi military leaders who had the gumption to actually act against the Mahdi militia.

Yesterday the largest block of Sunni Arabs in the Parliament threatened to withdraw its Ministers from the Shiite-dominated Cabinet in frustration over the Government's failure to deal with Sunni concerns. As one Sunni legislator said:

> The problem is not just with sectarian practices but with the Government's ineffectiveness.

This Government we are supporting is spiraling downward into greater and greater ineffectiveness. In the process, Iraq is spiraling deeper and deeper into its sectarian divide.

It is not just the Iraqis. Last week we learned that several prominent Sunni countries are balking at complete debt relief for Iraq because of the lack of progress in political reconciliation. This past weekend the Saudis refused to allow Prime Minister Maliki to visit their country because he has not delivered on his promise to seek real reconciliation with Iraqi Sunnis. How can we expect progress and political reconciliation if the Iraqis have lost confidence in the Maliki government? How can we expect diplomatic progress when Iraq's neighbors have lost confidence in Iraqi leadership? This is a very serious issue.

The administration has finally done what they should have done years ago: engaged, this week, in the kind of diplomacy that is desperately needed. On the eve of the summit, we learned that some of the major players have no confidence in the political process. So if we really want to bring about the political and diplomatic solution that is the only solution, the time has come now for new leadership in Iraq.

When I was in Iraq in December, Prime Minister Maliki told me he was working on forming a new coalition that would isolate extremists unwilling to compromise and empower moderates who were. Since then we have heard from time to time that these negotiations continue behind the scenes. But nothing has happened. It is time to get out from behind the scenes. It is time to have a government that can put the pieces back together.

As one Iraqi Minister said yesterday, Mr. Maliki ''said he was going to appoint new Ministers; he needs to do that. . . . What is he waiting for?''

That is a question the U.S. Congress should echo. We simply cannot go on like this, day after day, news cycle after news cycle—more bombs, more murders, more assassinations, more suicide bombings, more killings, more American soldiers dead. We can't go on like this and expect the situation to miraculously get better. Time is not on our side. Time is not on anyone's side in the end because if this does go downward into greater sectarian violence, all of the Iraqis will lose.

If we are serious about a political solution, we need a fresh start. That is why I believe it is time for Prime Minister Maliki to make wholesale changes in his Cabinet. He already has to replace the six Muqtada al-Sadr Ministers, the Sadrist Ministers who recently resigned. He should use that as an opportunity to fire any other Minister who is not committed to political reconciliation and replace them with Ministers who are.

We should make it clear this truly is his last chance. If reshuffling the Cabinet does not produce meaningful political progress within a relatively short period of time, then he should step down and allow a new leader to step forward. Putting Mr. Maliki's personal political future on the line is perhaps one of the few ways left to try to create the leverage necessary to find out if he is capable of moving the reconciliation procession forward. If he proves unwilling or unable, then clearly someone else should be given a chance—if there is someone else.

This is the moment to put that to the test. I recognize that Iraqis must take responsibility for their own future and that any government we impose will lack legitimacy with their fellow Iraqis. But we can use our own influence behind the scenes to encourage the Iraqis to make the leadership changes so clearly needed in order to give their Government a chance to succeed. We certainly have a right to make that request, given the degree to which that Government is dependent on our troops and our money and our presence.

Congress has finally done what this administration has stubbornly refused to do. I am proud of my fellow Members of this body who had the courage to vote for this legislation. I know how divisive it can be. I know how the other side uses it and how people tend to try to personalize and even denigrate people's patriotism and concern for the Nation. The fact is, the Congress has done what needed to be done because this administration has not done it.

People say don't micromanage. Someone has to manage. They have clearly mismanaged every step of this war, and they have been absent from the diplomacy necessary. It is time to have a new strategy, time to hold Iraqi politicians responsible for their country's future, time to get deadly serious about finding a political solution, and finding it now.

Somehow this President still chooses to take a different tack. If President Bush vetoes this bill, which we understand he will, then he is the one standing in the way of a bipartisan strategy on Iraq. The Iraq Study Group was bipartisan. The Iraq Study Group had former Secretary of State Jim Baker, a Republican, a great friend of President Bush's father. It had Secretary of State Larry Eagleburger. It had Al Simpson, former Senator from Wyoming and Republican leader in the Senate. It had Bill Perry, former Secretary of Defense; Chuck Robb; it had Ed Meese, former Attorney General and Chief of Staff to a Republican President. All of these are moderate, thoughtful, respected, trusted voices in foreign policy and in the affairs of our country. They all came together in a consensus. That consensus was summarily rejected by the President, just pushed aside.

The President decided to go his own road, which even the generals and even Prime Minister Maliki did not want to do. I read one Senator's comment that there is no plan B, that there is just plan A, which is the surge. I disagree with that. Plan B is what plan B should

have been all the time, which is to engage in the legitimate kind of intervention on a diplomatic level and to put on the table all of the issues of the region in a way that proves the kind of sincerity and seriousness of purpose that raises the level of credibility of the discussion so people can trust that we, in fact, are going to be moving in a common direction, which is in their interests.

The reason Saudi Arabia is sending such public messages of discontent for the policies of this administration today is because, given what has happened, that is the way they have to play it in order to deal with their own politics of the region and their own politics of the street and their nation. It is our absence from a creative, diplomatic effort, it is our absence from a credible and legitimate diplomatic lift that has left no choice even to our friends than to begin to distance themselves from our country.

With this veto, the President will deny our troops the vehicles they need, for the time being; he will deny them the basic care they deserve, for the time being, because all of us know the Congress will come back and we will fund those things. But the most significant thing he will deny us is the kind of leadership and the kind of consensus the country deserves in order to move forward in our policy in Iraq.

We honor the lives lost in Iraq, not with words but with lives saved. We honor the lives lost in Iraq not with words and with the political partisanship here but with a policy that is right for them and for the region. We honor their sacrifice by creating a situation in the region where we protect America's and the region's interests at the same time and begin to recognize the degree to which our presence in Iraq is playing into the hands of the terrorists, is advancing the very cause we seek to fight, which is diminishing the ability of the United States to be able to leverage, not just the Middle East issues, but a host of other issues in the world.

I believe we need to change course, and it is only by changing course that we will honor their sacrifice, respect our interests, and bring our troops home with honor.

Madam President, I yield the floor, and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts is recognized.

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KENNEDY. I want to let our Members know about the substitute that has been included, that is before us now. It essentially clarifies the FDA's authority to place restrictions on drugs with safety problems; applies only to drugs like Thalidomide that could not otherwise be approved. We can understand why it is important that the FDA probably would not have approved Thalidomide, for all of the dangers it has, but it has now approved it to deal with some of the problems of leprosy. We want to make sure it is not going to be out there and be utilized in terms of expectant mothers. So we have worked this out. I thank Senator COBURN for his help on this issue.

We also make sure the FDA takes into account concerns of rural communities in setting safety policies. We have given enhanced authority to the FDA in terms of safety policies. We want to make sure in the implementation of those, particularly in rural areas, they are not going to be so restrictive as to limit the opportunities to get the necessary prescription drugs. I thank Senator HARKIN and Senator MURKOWSKI, who were enormously helpful in working through that issue.

This also adds a Web portal for FDA so consumers will have a single point of access, via the Internet, to drug safety information. I thank Senator GREGG for that. That will be very important for consumers who are concerned about the safety issues. All of those changes and alterations are very helpful and valuable in terms of the legislation itself.

I wish to speak for 3 minutes as in morning business and not under the time on the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, the President is going to be making up his mind on the issue of the supplemental and making a judgment in the next several hours. President Bush stubbornly clings to the false hope that success is just around the corner and that the mission will be accomplished. We have heard it all before. Ending the rule of Saddam Hussein was supposed to lessen violence and bring a new wave of democracy into the Middle East. It has not. Saddam Hussein's capture was supposed to quell the violence. It didn't. Free elections and the drafting of the constitution were supposed to be a breakthrough. They weren't. The surge was supposed to bring stability, essential to political reconciliation and economic reconstruction. It has not and it will not.

Only the Iraqi people can save Iraq and it is time for them to do so. American military force cannot solve the problems of the Iraqi people. It is time for the President to put the Iraqis on notice that our military will begin to withdraw. No one in the administration can honestly tell the American people we are making progress in Iraq. It is time the President listened to the Iraq Study Group, Congress, and the American people, and work with us to bring our troops home.

The President is wrong to veto the Iraq spending bill and reject its needed timeline for the orderly, responsible, and safe withdrawal of our forces from Iraq. He was wrong to lead us into the war, wrong to conduct it so poorly, and wrong to refuse to change course.

We cannot continue business as usual in Iraq. It is time for America to end its participation in the brutal civil war. The message from the American people couldn't be louder or clearer: Instead of defying the will of the American people, President Bush should listen to their plea and begin working with Congress to bring this tragic war to an end.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Madam President, I am going to make even briefer remarks than the Senator from Massachusetts did.

One of the questions I had been asked over the weekend was: Why hasn't the President already vetoed the supplemental appropriations bill? He promised he would veto the bill because it has all this extra spending in it, with directions on the war from people who really are not even involved in administering the war.

Of course, what I found out is the bill has not even been sent to the President yet. He cannot veto a bill until he receives a bill. So to chastise him for not having already vetoed the bill when there is a hold card keeping him from being able to veto the bill I think is unconscionable. Hanging on to that bill and not getting it there so the decisions can be made on it one way or the other just is not right. That is not the way to run the Senate. It is not the way to run the country. And it is not the President's fault if he does not have the bill to make the decision.

There can be a lot of debate on what that decision ought to be made and how to carry them out. I am certain the President will veto the bill; he has been very clear on that. There is a differing philosophy on how a war ought to be run. There are a lot of people throwing in the towel. It is kind of hard to win at anything if your opponent knows the point at which you are going to give up.

That is where we are in this battle, with the complete direction to give up, to throw in the towel, to say what has been done over there has not done any good, won't do any good, and to keep calling it a civil war. It is not a civil war. It is a religious war that is brewing. There is a tremendous difference. It is a religious war that involves the entire Middle East, not just Iraq. And in preparation, for what the other people in the Middle East have heard said on the Senate floor, armies are gearing up in Saudi Arabia and Syria and Israel and Iran, ready to move into the vacuum that would be caused by a U.S. departure.

That will not be the first time there has been a religious war in the world. If we do not step in, it would probably be the first time we had the chance to stop a religious war and did not help.