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.

Well, the American people and this Congress have run out of patience. This administration has run out of credibility to ask for more time or another chance, when all we are largely doing is staying the course. Frankly, I find it insulting that this administration thinks this Congress would simply go along with their escalation plan without question.

Why should we support President Bush's escalation—a plan with benchmarks but no real consequences? As I have said time and time again, benchmarks without consequences are simply aspirations. We have seen countless misguided plans from this administration, but the Iraqis have never been held accountable.

We were told by the end of 2006 a provincial election law would be approved. But that benchmark has not been met. We were told that Iraqis would approve a law for de-Baathification. But that benchmark has not been met.

We were told that Iraqis would create a law to help restrain sectarian militias. But that benchmark, too, has not been met.

We were told the Iraqis would establish a law to regulate the oil industry and share revenues, which is one of the critical elements to be able to achieve reconciliation in Iraq, the sharing of the nation's national resources. But that benchmark has not been met.

We were told that, by March, the Iraqi Government was supposed to hold a referendum on constitutional amendments. But that benchmark has not been met.

Time and again, the Iraqi Government has fallen short; and time and again, this administration has looked the other way—basing their plans on the hope that the Iraqis will step up. Continuing this failed policy in Iraq based on the mere hope that things will improve is not good enough. The broken promises must stop.

It also seems to me the President is once again out of touch about our progress on the ground and his escalation plan. The President said last week:

> The direction of the fight is beginning to shift . . . and so far the operation is meeting expectations.

This is very much like ''mission accomplished.'' Yet, last Monday, an attack carried out by a suicide bomber near Baqubah killed 9 soldiers and wounded 20 others. The explosion was one of the deadliest single ground attacks on American forces since the start of the war.

Two weeks ago, five different bombs exploded in Baghdad, killing at least 171 people. These attacks mark the deadliest day in the capital city since the new security plan was implemented 2 months ago.

In fact, almost four coalition soldiers have been killed per day in the past month—the highest rate since January of 2005. As I pointed out before, over 100 soldiers were killed in April, including 9 killed over the weekend, 1 of only 6 times that more than 100 servicemembers were killed in 1 month since the start of the war.

Violence outside of Baghdad is on the rise, with more than twice the number of American troops killed in the past 5 months in Diyala Province than were killed all of last year.

In terms of civilians, over 1,500 Iraqis were killed between February 14 and April 12. That is almost 500 more people than were killed during the previous 2 months.

Frankly, I don't believe the President's escalation plan is working. So I say to the President: The era of blank checks is over and the time of congressional oversight has begun.

The President would largely want us to send him a blank check. We have spent 10 times more than we were told we would spend on this war, and there is no end in sight in terms of lives and national treasure. That is why this Senate and the House sent the President an Iraq spending bill with a responsible timeline for withdrawing our troops from Iraq. I believe the President is making a serious mistake with his plan to veto the bill.

Some on the other side of the aisle like to point out that the President is the Commander in Chief. I remind my friends the Constitution puts the Congress in charge of appropriating funds. The Constitution, in article I, section 8, provides what scholars call the power of the purse, and it says: ''The Congress''—the Congress—''shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States.'' Congress has the power and the right and the obligation to make sure we spend the taxpayers' money wisely.

In a recent editorial, Leon Panetta, a member of the Iraq Study Group, reminded us the President has stated the goal of our involvement is for Iraq to be able to ''govern itself, sustain itself, defend itself.''

In order for us to get to that point, we need to hold Iraqis accountable for meeting the benchmarks they helped set. The emergency supplemental bill that passed the House and the Senate does just that, by including a plan to redeploy U.S. forces in relation to progress made by the Iraqi Government in achieving security and diplomatic benchmarks.

Leon Panetta also said:

> The worst mistake now would be to provide money for the war without sending the Iraqis any message at all about their responsibility for reforms. Both the President and the Congress at the very least must make the Iraqi Government understand that future financial and military support is going to depend on Baghdad's making substantial progress toward the milestones Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki has publicly committed to.

The Iraq supplemental sends a strong message to the Iraqis that it is their responsibility to take control of their own country and that our involvement in Iraq is not indefinite.

Vetoing the supplemental sends the message to the Iraqis that they do not have to take responsibility and that our troops will be in Iraq indefinitely. But staying in Iraq isn't in the national interest or national security of the United States.

Our troops are caught in the middle of a civil war they cannot solve. Keeping more troops there will only put them directly in the middle of an Iraqi fight. Keeping our troops there is trying to solve a political problem with a military solution. Staying in Iraq actually keeps the Iraqis from taking responsibility for their actions.

Frankly, what we hear from the other side doesn't make sense. They talk about victory, but what is the definition of ''victory''? Is that the victory we have heard is around the corner? They talk about benchmarks for the Iraqis, but they set no consequences.

Four years after the President declared ''mission accomplished,'' 4 years and over 3,000 Americans lives later, 4 years and over $450 billion later, 4 years with no new plan for Iraq, just more of the same, 4 years after the President declared ''mission accomplished,'' I ask: How many more lives must we lose and how much more money must we spend?

I close by asking: When will this administration finally understand that ''mission accomplished'' was a myth of their own imagination, born of delusion and denial, yet another terrible mistake in a series of tragic errors? When will we finally hear the words ''major combat in Iraq has ended'' and know they are true?

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WHITEHOUSE). The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, 4 years ago today, as Senator MENENDEZ said, the President landed on an aircraft carrier, amid a flurry of pomp and circumstance, and declared, ''Mission accomplished.''

Since that day, much has happened. Since that day, 3,000 brave American soldiers and marines have died in Iraq. This war has gone on, since that day, longer than World War II. Since that day, the United Nations has estimated that 35,000 Iraqi civilians have been killed. Since that day, U.S. taxpayers have spent $450 billion on the war in Iraq.

To get an understanding of what $450 billion is, if we spent $500 every second of every minute of every hour of every day, it would take 29 years to spend the $450 billion we have spent in Iraq.

Now, 4 years later, our troops in Iraq are stuck in the middle of a civil war. Too many of our brave soldiers do not have the body armor they need, in spite of the imploring of so many of us to the administration to do what they need to do to protect our soldiers. Now thousands of Guard men and women face early and extended redeployment.

Four years later, the will of the people resonates in townhalls and in

churches, in back yards and in living rooms across this country. Their message is clear: Mr. President, redeploy our troops out of Iraq.

Up to now, however, the President has refused to hear the calls of millions of Americans. He has refused to listen to voters last fall who demanded a different course in Iraq. He has refused to listen to the Iraq Study Group, which recommended the redeployment of our troops out of Iraq. He has refused to listen to his own generals who have implored him, in many cases, to disengage from this civil war. He has refused to listen to Congress.

The supplemental on its way to the White House echoes what many of us in Congress and military families across this great country have been saying: We need a new direction for Iraq.

We take a backseat to no one in supporting the brave men and women fighting in Iraq. That is why so many of us have pushed this administration, pushed the civilian leadership in the Pentagon and in the White House to equip our soldiers with proper body armor.

We take a backseat to no one in supporting the families of our soldiers overseas. That is why so many of us in this Chamber have pushed to help these support groups that have formed all over the country for soldiers and helping them reintegrate back into their jobs, back with their families and their society when they return home from Iraq.

But more of the same is not a plan for our troops and will not end the war in Iraq. This war has made our country and our world less safe. Congress will continue to fight for our Nation's military by working to see that they have the resources and the support they need and the leadership they deserve.

This legislation fully funds and supports our troops, while establishing conditions that will bring our troops home. It provides desperately needed funding to the Veterans' Administration, something this administration and previous Republican Congresses have woefully underfunded. It provides desperately needed funding to the Veterans' Administration to help care for the hundreds of thousands of new veterans created by this war.

If the President will not take responsibility for his failures in his conduct of this war, then Congress will. If the President will not lead our troops home, then Congress will. We owe it to our soldiers, to our sailors, to our airmen, airwomen, and to our marines, and we owe it to their families.

Instead of threatening a veto, the President should listen to the military leaders, listen to the American people, and work with Congress to change the course in Iraq.

Vetoing this legislation would deny funding our military and our veterans desperately need: $99 billion in emergency Department of Defense spending, more than the President's budget; $3 billion for Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles; $4.8 billion in military construction for BRAC, the Base Closing Commission; and the VA, which has been underfunded by $2 billion in the President's budget, under this bill would get $1.7 billion immediately, more than the President's VA proposal, and will do better in the next budget. It includes $100 million for VA mental health services.

It is absolutely outrageous that this Congress—the House and Senate—and this President send our men and women off to war, not equipping them with the right body armor, not giving them the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles we know how to build in this country, and then when they return home, not giving tens of thousands of soldiers and marines the health care they deserve.

In addition to what we do to restore that spending and take care of our veterans when they return home, this emergency legislation has over $1 billion for Katrina relief, $13 million for mine safety because of the increase in deaths in mines in places such as Pennsylvania and West Virginia, $625 million for the pandemic flu response, something we absolutely need to be prepared for, and $400 million for energy assistance for the low-income elderly.

Please, Mr. President, before you decide to veto this bill, read this legislation. Don't turn your back on millions of Americans, don't turn your back on your military advisers and the military experts, don't turn your back on our soldiers. Sign this legislation.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the issue of Iraq, to call on the President to sign the supplemental appropriations bill, the emergency bill that we will be sending him, and also to pay tribute to 43 young Americans who have been killed in Iraq from my State since January 30, 2007. This brings to 720 the number of soldiers who were either from California or based in California who have been killed while serving our country in Iraq. This represents 22 percent of all U.S. deaths in Iraq.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD their names, their ages, the circumstances of their death.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

SGT Alejandro Carrillo, 22, died January 30, while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar Province, Iraq. Sergeant Carrillo was assigned to Combat Logistics Battalion 7, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Twentynine Palms, CA. He was from Los Angeles, CA.

CPL Richard O. Quill III, 22, died February 1, from a nonhostile cause in Al Anbar Province, Iraq. Corporal Quill was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, CA.

CWO Keith Yoakum, 41, died on February 2, in Taji, Iraq, when his helicopter crashed. Chief Warrant Officer Four Yoakum was assigned to A Company, 1st Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, TX. He was from Hemet, CA.

SGM Joseph J. Ellis, 40, died February 7, while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar Province, Iraq. Sergeant Major Ellis was assigned to Battalion Landing Team 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, Special Operations Capable, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, CA.

SGT James R. Tijerina, 26, died February 7, when the helicopter he was flying in crashed while supporting combat operations in Al Anbar Province, Iraq. Sergeant Tijerina was assigned to Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 364, Marine Aircraft Group 39, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, CA.

SGT Travis D. Pfister, 27, died February 7, when the helicopter he was flying in crashed while supporting combat operations in Al Anbar Province, Iraq. Sergeant Pfister was assigned to Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 364, Marine Aircraft Group 39, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, CA.

CPT Jennifer J. Harris, 28, died February 7, when the helicopter she was flying in crashed while supporting combat operations in Al Anbar Province, Iraq. She was assigned to Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 364, Marine Aircraft Group 39, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, CA.

1LT Jared M. Landaker, 25, died February 7, when the helicopter he was flying in crashed while supporting combat operations in Al Anbar Province, Iraq. First Lieutenant Landaker was assigned to Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 364, Marine Aircraft Group 39, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, CA. He was from Big Bear City, CA.

SGT Robert B. Thrasher, 23, died on February 11, in Baghdad, Iraq, when his dismounted patrol received small arms fire. Sergeant Thrasher was assigned to D Company, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Bliss, TX. He was from Folsom, CA.

PVT Clarence T. Spencer, 24, died February 4, in Balad, Iraq, of wounds suffered when his unit came in contact with the enemy using small arms fire in Baqubah, Iraq. Private Spencer was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, TX. He was from San Diego, CA.

SP Dennis L. Sellen, Jr., 20, died on February 11, in Umm Qasr, Iraq, of noncombat related injuries. Specialist Sellen was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 185th Infantry Regiment, Army National Guard, Fresno, CA. He was from Newhall, CA.

SP Ronnie G. Madore Jr., 34, died February 14, in Baqubah, Iraq, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle. Specialist Madore was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, TX. He was from San Diego, CA.

SGT Carl L. Seigart, 32, died February 14, in Baqubah, Iraq, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle. Sergeant Seigart was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, TX. He was from San Luis Obispo, CA.

LCpl Brian A. Escalante, 25, died February 17, while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar Province, Iraq. Lance Corporal Escalante was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Twentynine Palms, CA.