

Do you remember when the President's then-Budget Director, Mitch Daniels, told us the war in Iraq would cost no more than \$60 billion? He was wrong. Paul Wolfowitz assured us Iraqi revenue would pay for the war. No, we remember there were a couple in the administration who said the war might cost as much as \$200 billion. They were ridiculed. The President's most recent supplemental request for Iraq was \$200 billion in itself, bigger than the stimulus package we just passed. The President has spent more than a half trillion dollars on his failed policy, and there is literally no end in sight. I think we need to remember this is all borrowed money. The cost of interest on Iraq-related debt is \$23 billion a year for fiscal year 2008 alone. The President's policy is being paid for on a credit card, and we are sticking my grandchildren and yours with the tab.

The cost of a barrel of oil has tripled since the war began, much to the benefit of countries such as Russia, Sudan, and Iran. According to the Joint Economic Committee, if you factor in the cost of the oil, the President's policy in Iraq has already cost the average family \$416,500, and no end in sight.

It needs to stop. We are hemorrhaging money. The waste in this war is beyond disgraceful. We spent \$32 million for a base in Iraq that was never built. We paid a contractor \$72 million to build a barracks for the police academy in Baghdad and instead got a building with giant cracks snaking through newly built walls and human waste dripping from the ceiling. That is from a report. The administration loaded \$9 billion in cash on to pallets and shipped it into Iraq where it promptly disappeared.

I ask you: Imagine what would happen if \$9 billion disappeared from one of our cities. The people responsible would be in prison. But in Iraq, the President shrugs it off.

When the President vetoed the Water Resources Development Act, he said it lacked fiscal discipline. He said it wasn't fiscally responsible. I would ask rhetorically: Not fiscally responsible to maintain our waterways and keep our commerce moving in this, the greatest Nation in the world? This, coming from a President who inherited a budget surplus and turned it into a huge debt, with the largest budget deficits in history as well, and money for Iraq every day, every hour, every minute, no end in sight, billions missing, billions on bases that were never built. It is breathtaking. The President and his supporters shrug it off. They don't even address it. It is unbelievable. The sky is the limit. But when it comes to investing in America or extending the stimulus for seniors and disabled vets, we are told: Sorry, we need to show fiscal discipline. Thank goodness we were able to get that through above the President's objections.

Our own military leaders tell us time and time again there is no military solution. God bless our soldiers. They

have given us a breathing space. Yet the Iraqi Government is just making changes around the edges.

We have trained 440,000 Iraqis militarily. Imagine, 440,000 Iraqis. Why can't they defend themselves? Countries defend themselves. We have given so much in blood, in tears, in sweat, in dollars, in commitment, in trust. After the elections last year, I thought the President would come to the table when the Democrats took over and said we wanted to end the war. We thought he would come to the table. We were wrong. He did not come to the table. He is continuing this war, no end in sight, no plan to get out.

When I asked that question to Condoleezza Rice, I was stunned. She said: I can't answer the question of how long we will be there. I can't answer the question of what it will cost—as if I didn't have a right to ask the question. That is why I am sent here.

I represent, along with Senator FEINSTEIN, 37 million people. We have taken a hit on soldiers killed. We have taken a hit on soldiers burned. We have taken a hit on soldiers permanently disabled. So you better know I am going to ask these questions.

Today, Senator FEINGOLD is saying: Let's get started. Let's start telling the Iraqis, by our actions not just our words, that they have to step up to the plate.

We have to make a choice as a nation.

Is it time for America? It is time for our families, for our soldiers, for our children, for our grandchildren?

Or is it time to continue this open-ended commitment to a war without an end, a war that has no plan of ever ending, a war that is tying our hands in this recession?

I say it is time for a change in America. It is time to vote for the Feingold bill and start bringing our troops home.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at the conclusion of Senator LIEBERMAN's remarks I be recognized for 15 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I thank the Chair and my friend from Oklahoma.

IRAQ

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise to speak against the measure introduced by Senator FEINGOLD.

It has been only a year since GEN David Petraeus arrived in Baghdad and took command of American forces in Iraq. But in these brief 12 months, he and the American and coalition troops

under his command have brought about a tectonic shift in Iraq that has altered the course of the war there and, with it, the future of at least two great nations—Iraq and the United States of America—and the lives of hundreds of millions of people in those two nations and so many others threatened by violent jihadist terrorists in the Middle East and beyond.

When the surge first began a year ago, many doubted that the violence then raging in Iraq could be brought under control. Even as American troops began implementing this bold new counterinsurgency strategy, some opponents of the war inside and outside of Congress declared that the war in Iraq was already "lost," that the surge had already been "tried and failed," and that it mattered more, frankly, that we get out of Iraq than that we succeed in Iraq.

They could not have been more wrong. Thanks to the surge, the bravery and skill of American and Iraqi troops and the will of the Iraqi people to be free from terrorists, conditions on the ground in Iraq have been totally transformed from those of a year ago.

A year ago, al-Qaida in Iraq was entrenched, in control of, exercising murderous control in Anbar Province and Baghdad. Now those evil forces of Islamist extremism are facing their single greatest and most humiliating defeat since 2001.

This is not just my opinion. It is a matter of fact. In Baghdad, a fact: sectarian killings are down 95 percent in the last year; suicide bombings are down nearly 70 percent; IED attacks have been cut nearly in half.

In the face of those extraordinary improvements in Iraq—and many more I will speak of in a moment in the social and political and economic life of that great country—however, antiwar forces here in America have reacted not with sighs of relief and gratitude but, instead, by doing everything in their power to downplay or diminish our hard-won gains in Iraq.

Rather than admit the possibility that they had been wrong about the surge and about the capability of reestablishing security in Iraq, they, instead, reached for another rationale for retreat. What they argued was the lack of political progress in Iraq and, therefore, that the surge had failed.

But this argument has also now been defeated by facts on the ground in Iraq.

In the first place, the Iraqi people have taken over their local and provincial governments in a grassroots up democratic revolution. At the national level, a response is occurring. It took too long, but it is now significant. Benchmark legislation has surged forward in the Iraqi Parliament. The budget law, passed; the debaathification law, passed; the provincial powers and election law, passed; the amnesty law, passed.

Thanks to the surge, the Sunni Arabs, who once constituted the core of the insurgency, have now risen, because we stood by them, to join with us