This is a great cause. We ought to be rallying behind it. This is everything for which America has stood for several hundred years. Everything we believe in, we are promoting in Iraq. The Iraqis will be better off. The world will be better off when we finish this job.

Failure is not an option. Waffling around here just because the going is a little tougher than some had expected—and others had anticipated—is not what is called for at this particular time. Going home early is surely the way to reinvigorate al-Qaida and to make it possible for some other kind of thuggish regime to come to power there in Iraq.

Given the magnitude of the threat the proliferation of Islamic radicals and terrorism pose, not only to us but to the entire world, I am a little mystified that this seems to have become so controversial. As Senator LOTT was pointing out just a few moments ago, we have very short memories. Just 2 years ago, 3,000 of our people were killed in New York and in Washington. That is what this is all about: Taking the war to the terrorists where they are rather than here on the streets of the United States.

So, yes, we will have our debate. It will be vigorous. But at the end of the day, I am confident that the Senate, on a bipartisan basis, is going to do what is right for the Iraqis, for the United States, and for the world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I heard and appreciate Senators LOTT, SESSIONS, and MCCONNELL speaking this morning about the importance of what we are doing in Iraq. We are preparing in the Senate to take up a supplemental appropriations bill at the request of the President to try to make sure we do two things:

First and foremost, to give support to our troops in the field. I visited them in the middle of August. I have seen how they live, and I have seen what they are doing. They deserve to have the troop support which allows them to do the job—the equipment, the living conditions, and troop protection. Everything we can do to allow them to do their jobs more effectively we are going to do. That is what the major part of this supplemental appropriations will do. We are going to support our troops in the field.

The second thing the President is asking for is money to rebuild Iraq. We will not be able to rebuild Iraq if we continue to have the ongoing terrorist attacks that tear down everything we have built. So we want to go in there with a full plan to get the electricity grid going, to get the water supply going, and to try to start building the economy by rebuilding the oil infrastructure.

We are going to support the President in his request. I have no doubt about it. We must win this war, and we must win the peace. We must stabilize Iraq if we are going to keep the terrorists out of our country and stop them where they are.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

REBUILDING IRAQ

Mr. DASCHLE. Thank you, Mr. President. I will use my leader time this morning so as not to take away from the allocated time in morning business for the Democratic caucus.

I wanted to come to the floor this morning to respond perhaps in part to the comments made by our distinguished colleagues.

I will start by emphasizing that there are many areas for which there is absolutely no disagreement. I don't think you will find any disagreement in the Senate today that it was a good thing that Saddam Hussein was removed from power. We acknowledge that it was a good thing. Saddam Hussein posed serious threat to the region, to his country, and to the United States. His absence is a positive development.

There is also broad recognition that we owe a deep debt of gratitude to our troops and to the military overall for the extraordinary challenge they face and the success with which they face it.

Let us also recognize that there is little disagreement that it is important to Iraq and this country that we allow for the reconstruction of Iraq. I think many of us are very concerned. This is where some of the disagreement and differences may begin to arise about the extraordinary lack of planning that went into the reconstruction effort. Some have suggested that we planned for months—maybe years—for the military effort, and it shows. It was a great success.

I have been told—and I will not say that this is confirmed, but I have been told—that we planned for less than a month on efforts to reconstruct Iraq. That also shows, if that is true. I think it is a fact that reconstruction has certainly not met with the same success and with the same degree of support within our own country that the military effort itself has.

That is where we come to our point of disagreement. I regret that the President lost the opportunity that he had yesterday in making his presentation to the United Nations. He lost an opportunity to make the case for broader involvement in the world community. He didn't ask for more troops. For whatever reason, he didn't ask for more resources. He failed to build the broad coalition that will be required if ever we are successful in the future reconstruction of Iraq. There is no disagreement whatsoever that it is in our interest to find ways to engage the world community more effectively and to make a better effort at public relations required to do it successfully in Iraq.

There is a front-page story in the Sioux Falls Argus Leader this morning about an Iraqi businessman from Sioux Falls who, months ago, left Sioux Falls to work in his hometown in Iraq as they began to rebuild. He became very involved in the creation of a new government. He was an ardent opponent to Saddam Hussein. He commented this morning that he comes back with grave regret about what he has seen. He said that, unfortunately, more and more Iraqis are losing their confidence and trust in the reconstruction effort; that more and more we are losing the public relations battle.

While we all want to find a way to ensure that we are successful, it would be wrong for us to bury our heads in the sand, to plow forward, to salute the flag, and say: Look, everything is just great. All we need is more money.

We can't do that. We have to make an honest assessment of our circumstances, acknowledge that there is work to be done, and be honest with ourselves and the world community on how we accomplish all that we have set out to do. To do it successfully requires candor first and honesty second. Unfortunately, we have not seen enough of that today.

We are being told that we are going to rush through this request for resources, $87 billion—a couple of days of hearings, a quick markup, a couple of days of floor debate and, bang, it is done. I have to say that isn't going to happen. We have to be deliberative.

As the Senator from Kentucky suggested, we have to consider alternatives, offer amendments, have a good debate, and make sure this $87 billion was committed appropriately.

I say that the President missed his chance to speak candidly yesterday. I would have hoped that he could have laid out a plan, and that he could have been very specific with regard to how we more effectively put this coalition together. We hear so much discussion about the involvement of other communities. We are told that we would expect the world community to produce about $55 billion in resources to match the $87 billion requested by the President by the United States. Yet, again, yesterday Ambassador Bremer had to acknowledge that out of that $55 billion expectation, the world community has only provided $1.5 billion.

I would have hoped the President could have been more specific with regard to our plan for troops. What will they be doing? How long will they be there? To what extent will we have to keep them there, and for how long?

Over the course of the next couple of weeks, it would be my hope that the President could come to the Congress with very specific requests with regard to that $87 billion and with regard to the resources he says he needs. I hope he could lay out with some specificity what his plan is for the reconstruction of Iraq. We were told by Ambassador Bremer yesterday that the $20 billion

over and above the $65 billion request for our troops is the last, final installment. There will be no more additional requests for Iraq from here on out.

I wish I could believe that. I wish I knew they had that level of confidence that not one dollar more would be requested.

I wish I could better understand their opposition to a proposal made by the distinguished Senator from North Dakota, Mr. DORGAN, and others who have suggested we collateralize the oil revenues in Iraq for the next 20 years. We are told that could be upwards of $160 billion. Collateralized through an IMF loan may not necessitate the need for $20 billion or $30 billion on the part of the United States. They may have the second most formidable oil supply in the world. Why we would not collateralize and find ways with which to utilize the resources available to them is something the administration needs to more thoroughly explain.

Mr. REID. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. DASCHLE. I am happy to yield.

Mr. REID. Is it true that the request of the President, if granted, will cause the United States sometime next summer to increase the debt ceiling of this country?

Mr. DASCHLE. Unfortunately, I have to acknowledge to the Senator from Nevada, that is what we are now being told. I was going to address that in a moment, but the Senator is absolutely right. We have been forced to address the debt ceiling this year for the second time. We will be called upon within this Congress now to address it the third time. We are told by CBO that we could see in excess of $6,000 billion of debt by the end of this decade. Some have suggested that if all of the tax cuts that are now scheduled to be implemented go into effect, that number would reach $10,000 billion by the end of this decade.

The CBO, in a very rare moment, in my view—we do not often hear them editorializing on things of this matter; they usually give us the fact and leave it at that—used the word ''unsustainable.'' That $10,000 billion, even $6,000 billion, of debt is unsustainable.

The American people have said, if we are going to be mired in unsustainable debt, somebody better start asking questions about whether this $87 billion or the $22 billion for reconstruction, or whatever other additional expenditures, will not so seriously undermine the investments in our own country—education, health, and social security—it could be one of the most damaging things to our own security, ironically, that we could be considering.

Mr. REID. Will the Senator again yield?

Mr. DASCHLE. I am happy to yield to the Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. I ask, through the Presiding Officer to the distinguished Democratic leader, this question. It is true, is it not, in the first gulf war there were 200,000 troops supplied by other countries? It is also true, is it not, that 90 percent of the cost of the war was borne by other countries? It is also true in this war that 90 percent of the costs or more are being borne by the United States, 90 percent of the casualties, 90 percent of the troops on the ground is the United States.

There is a tremendous difference between the first gulf war and the second gulf war; is that true?

Mr. DASCHLE. Unfortunately, the Senator in his question makes a very important point. We talked about international involvement. I call it more cosmetic than real. As he has noted, there has been minimal involvement in a broad coalition of countries that oftentimes are considered Third World, countries that economically, militarily, do not have the weight and the breadth and depth of power and potential that countries that are traditional allies of the United States have always had.

For whatever reason, we cannot involve Europe, we have not involved Russia, we have not involved China, we have not involved India, we have not involved countries in a meaningful, substantive, and consequential way. As a result, as the Senator has noted, the lion's share—over 90 percent of the responsibility financially, militarily, organizationally—has fallen upon the United States.

I talked to a young woman in Brookings, SD, on Saturday. She told me she is leaving for Iraq within the month, that she was going to be gone anywhere from 8 to 13 months. She has a family, a job, and she is prepared to do that as a member of the National Guard. She has the right to be very proud of the extraordinary contribution our members of the Guard have made, but they and we have a right to ask, Where is the help from others? Where are the Europeans? Where are the Chinese? Where are the Russians? Where are the Japanese? Why is it that we are asking that young woman to provide 90 percent of the sacrifice?

Where is the sacrifice even in this country among some? Those at the top, the top 1 percent, who will be getting an average of $283,000 in a tax break this year, where is the sacrifice? Should they not be required to help share the burden of paying for the war, if nothing else?

Every single dollar we will be considering next week, every single dollar, will be borrowed. We were told yesterday in the New York Times that every dollar we borrow costs $3.60 to pay back—not over 10 years but over 6 years. So one could say that this is not an $87 billion cost to the Treasury; it is more like $300 billion because that is what it will take to pay back over a 6-year period of time alone.

That is why I say it is very important we ask these questions; that the President come forth with greater clarity and far more substance with regard to his specific plans on how this money is going to be used and with far more transparency.

Some generals recently noted that we have no appreciation, no real understanding of where this money is going now. We spend $1 billion a week and no one can tell us on what with any clarity. We know some goes to troops; we know some goes for reconstruction. We do not know how fast it is being spent down or where the money is going with regard to payment for other countries for their involvement, nor do we know what kind of profiteering is going on.

There was a report in the New York Daily News yesterday that Halliburton could generate more than $7 billion in one contract right now—that is billion, with a B, $7 billion. Should there be more competitive bidding and transparency with regard to the contracts? Of course there should.

We will continue to persist with our questions. We will offer amendments. We look forward to the debate.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask to be recognized in morning business.

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

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I thank the Democratic leader for his statement. It raises some critical issues.

I listened as my colleagues on the Republican side came to the floor this morning when they had the opportunity to talk about the situation in Iraq. The premise of many of their statements is undeniable, and that is the fact we cannot walk away from Iraq. As expensive as it may be, as dangerous as it may be, as many lives as it may claim, the fact is, once the decision was made to invade Iraq and topple the government, we have a responsibility there. For us to leave now and let Iraq descend into chaos to become a training ground for more terrorism in the region and against the United States is totally unacceptable.

The fact is, for good or for ill, we are in a situation where we are faced with this responsibility. It is a substantial responsibility. As we look to the reasoning that led us into Iraq, there have been a lot of revelations over the last 3 or 4 weeks. You may recall initially the administration said: We believe that Iraq is in a position where it can build nuclear weapons that could threaten the world; these nuclear weapons could be used for terrorist purposes. In fact, the President of the United States in the State of the Union Address spoke of this fissile material coming into Iraq from Niger, an African nation.

Further investigation leads us to conclude that perhaps we were wrong. The President has conceded his statement in the State of the Union Address was wrong. There was no evidence of fissile material coming from Africa into Iraq.

Frankly, today, 5 months after the end of military operations, there has been no evidence uncovered to suggest there were nuclear weapons in Iraq when the administration told us. That was one of the reasons we had to go to war.

Of course, the other reason that was raised—with some frequency—was weapons of mass destruction, chemical and biological weapons that could threaten the region and the world. In fact, at one point in time someone in the administration said—I believe it was the President—that within 45 minutes the Iraqis could launch an attack on the United States with chemical and biological weapons.

Well, we know where we are today. Five months after the military hostilities have ended, those overt hostilities, we have found no evidence of weapons of mass destruction. None. Our troops went in, in full gear, prepared to confront chemical and biological warfare, and it never happened. The administration has said that is really irrelevant; the important consideration is the fact that many years ago Iraq had chemical and biological capability.

I have to remind them, that is not what they told us before we invaded Iraq: It was a real threat, an imminent danger, and one that had to be preempted, that we had to move on, even before the Iraqis showed any hostilities directly toward the United States.

Today we are emptyhanded. Today we can find no evidence of weapons of mass destruction. Perhaps something will be found.

I always qualify my remarks thinking, How could we have missed it? How could we have said that we identified 550 sites of weapons of mass destruction before the invasion of Iraq and today, after thousands of inspectors on behalf of the United States have combed through Iraq, after the end of the military operations, we find nothing. I still think we are going to find something, but as the days go on and weeks go on and months go on and nothing turns up, it becomes more and more apparent that the weapons of mass destruction threat in Iraq was grossly exaggerated—exaggerated far beyond reality. And it was one of the real bases for our invasion of Iraq.

The third one was a miscalculation by some people in the administration to associate Saddam Hussein with 9/11 and to suggest that Saddam Hussein and Iraq had something to do with it.

Well, there is no evidence of that. Despite the fact that loose rhetoric by members of the administration led some to conclude there was a linkage, that somehow Saddam Hussein was supporting the al-Qaida terrorists who attacked the United States, despite that loose rhetoric, there is no evidence of it.

Last week or the week before, the President came out and publicly said that. He said his Vice President was wrong on ''Meet the Press.'' They could find no linkage between al-Qaida and Saddam Hussein.

So those three elements that led us to invade Iraq have all virtually disappeared.

The one that remains, the one that the Democratic leader alluded to, I do not quarrel with. Saddam Hussein was a terrible man, a terrible leader, and a terrible threat to the people in his region. The fact that he is gone is good for Iraq and good for the world. That is a positive thing.

But all of the other justification that led to such a substantial vote for use of force in Iraq, all of that justification has evaporated right before us. That is the reality. It appears that the facts have changed pretty dramatically from what the administration told us we would find in Iraq.

But when I listen to my Republican colleagues on the floor, their arguments about the invasion of Iraq have not changed.

This much we do know. Our military did an outstanding job. Let me add, parenthetically, that during the course of the Presidential campaign, then-Governor Bush, now President Bush, alluded to the fact that our military was so weak and so hollow and so unprepared because of deficiencies of the Clinton administration that they did not do a good job in the Department of Defense, they did not prepare our military.

Well, look what happened when that Clinton-prepared, Clinton-equipped, Clinton-financed military went to war in Iraq. They did a spectacular job. The bravest, most skilled men and women in uniform in the world, with the best technology, rolled over Iraq in 3 weeks—an amazing military victory, a tribute to their skill and their planning.

Let me underline that word ''planning'' because you have to say that at the end of these open hostilities, May 1—the conquest of Baghdad and the military victory in Iraq—we have to say, from that point forward we have not seen the same skill and we have not seen the same planning. Exactly the opposite has been the case.

It is apparent to us, as we listen every single day to reports, tragic reports about the loss of American life and more American casualties, that little planning took place to anticipate what we would find in Iraq.

Do you remember the scenarios painted by the Bush administration about what would happen after Saddam Hussein was gone—how the Iraqis would cheer us in the street with open arms, putting flowers into our rifle barrels, and all the rest?

Unfortunately, that celebration was short-lived. In a very brief period of time, the Iraqis, who were glad to see Hussein gone—and I am sure that is the overwhelming majority—also asked that we leave. When we did not, more tension was created, and that tension has led to a loss of American lives. More lives have been lost in Iraq since the President declared the end of military operations than occurred during the course of the invasion and war in Iraq. That is a sad reality.

It is clear the Bush administration did not have a plan to deal with Iraq after the war was over. That is so obvious and so evident. Frankly, I think the President's speech of 9 days ago told that whole story. The President came to the American people—and Presidents rarely do this—on a Sunday evening and announced we needed $87 billion in an emergency supplemental appropriations for Iraq.

The American people were stunned, stunned by the size of that number. Now, when you break out that number, you see that some $67 billion is going to go for our troops. I think I can say without fear of contradiction that there will not be a single Senator—Democrat or Republican—voting against that. We are going to give our troops in the field every dollar they need to be successful, to be safe, and to come home. That money will be appropriated by this Senate with very little debate. There will be some questions about how it will be spent, but I believe, when it is all said and done, the $67 billion will come racing through the Senate, as it should. We should never shortchange our sons and daughters and relatives and friends and family who are serving in the military of the United States.

But it is the rest of the appropriation that has raised so many questions and so much concern—$20 billion for the construction and reconstruction of Iraq. Five billion dollars goes for a police force. I am for that. The sooner we can get American soldiers out of the jobs of directing traffic, keeping order and law in place in marketplaces, guarding banks and guarding universities, the sooner we can get American combat soldiers out of that role the better. Iraqi policemen should do that job. But that is $5 billion.

The remainder is $15 billion for the construction and reconstruction of Iraq for a variety of things—the draining of the wetlands in Iraq, the refurbishing and construction of 1,000 new schools in Iraq, the building of new hospitals, railroads, telecommunications, electric supply, water and sewer—a massive infrastructure investment.

Yesterday, the man who is responsible for that, Ambassador Paul Bremer, came to speak to us just a few yards away from this Chamber. He addressed our senatorial luncheon on the Democratic side. I asked him a few direct questions.

First, I asked him: We gave you some $79 billion for the troops and reconstruction just a few months back. How long will that money be there for you to use? When will you run out of the $79 billion we have already appropriated?

Ambassador Bremer said: December the 1st.

Now, that is an important date to remember because you are going to hear from the Republican side of the aisle that we need to pass this supplemental emergency appropriations bill by the end of next week, at the latest by the end of next week. Well, that would be by October 3.

By my calculation, that is 2 months away from when the money is actually

needed. So if we take another week to ask some questions about how this money is being spent, it certainly is not going to be at the expense of either our troops or our efforts in the reconstruction of Iraq today. I think we owe that to the American people.

I then asked Ambassador Bremer: What is the total cost for construction and reconstruction in Iraq?

He said: The World Bank estimate is $60 billion.

We are pledging, with the new $87 billion appropriation, $20 billion of the $60 billion, so that leaves some $40 billion that needs to be found.

I said to him: Where will we find the additional $40 billion?

He said: From donors around the world.

I am very skeptical of that. I think the American people should be. The President found yesterday that his visit to the United Nations did not result in countries around the world standing in line queuing up to send their troops and their treasure to help us in Iraq.

They have their own concerns and their own problems and their own financial priorities. In fact, we asked Ambassador Bremer, the total amount pledged by the world to help us in Iraq for reconstruction to this point does not even reach $2 billion, so we have a shortfall of some $38 billion in the planned reconstruction of Iraq. I said to the Ambassador: I assume then that the $20 billion you are asking for now from the American people is just a downpayment. You are going to be back for more?

Oh, no, he said. This is it. This is all we are going to ask for, $20 billion.

I doubt it. I am skeptical of that. What are we going to do if the other countries around the world don't put their money into the reconstruction of Iraq? Are we going to give up on that and walk away? I started this statement by saying that is unacceptable. We can't do that. It is our responsibility. Once the President and this country made a decision to invade, we had a special responsibility, as painful and expensive as it may be, to Iraq. That was the administration's decision. That is where we find ourselves today.

This, incidentally, is the plan of the administration, ''The Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad, Achieving the Vision to Restore Full Sovereignty to the Iraqi People, an Overview.'' I first saw it yesterday. It is dated July 21—2 months ago. We asked Ambassador Bremer: Why is this plan for the future of Iraq just surfacing now?

He said: I thought we had sent that out to every Senator and Congressman.

Well, none of my colleagues with whom I have talked saw it until just within the last day or two.

When you look through this plan, you start asking a lot of questions. Let me go to an early part of the plan, on page 7: ''Resources to Rebuild Iraq.'' Let me quote from the plan:

> It is difficult at this point to quantify the external assistance needed to support Iraq's transition to representative government in a market economy. Eastern European experience suggests that a substantial international commitment will be needed.

It goes on to say:

> Only a coordinated international effort can bring prosperity and stability to the Iraqi people and contribute to a lasting peace in the Middle East.

I don't quarrel with that conclusion, but the facts today say this so-called plan by the Bush administration isn't going to work. If we could only raise some $2 billion from around the world to deal with the reconstruction of Iraq out of a total cost of $60 billion, where is the significant commitment that is needed from countries around the world? It isn't there. Once again, it is going to fall on the shoulders of America's taxpayers. It is going to fall on the shoulders of American families to deal with.

It couldn't come at a worse time, when we are dealing with America's economy today. We have lost more jobs under this President than any President in the last 70 years. More jobs have been lost under President George W. Bush, 3 million more jobs lost, than under any President since Herbert Hoover in the Great Depression.

I feel it in my State, where we have lost about 20 percent, and one out of every five are manufacturing jobs that have gone overseas, to China and other places. Other States around the Nation are experiencing the same.

We are also dealing with a failed effort by the Bush administration to revive the economy and get it moving. They initiated all of these tax cuts which are pushing America beyond the brink of bankruptcy, tax cuts that are driving us into a deficit hole the likes of which we have never seen in the history of the United States, tax cuts that go primarily to the highest income individuals. What have they achieved? They have created record deficits.

Think of this: When this President took office, he was dealing with a record surplus left over from the Clinton administration. Now, in just 3 short years, he has taken that surplus and turned it into a record deficit, aggravated by the cost of sustaining what is inevitable in Iraq.

What does it mean when that deficit comes down to our own budget here at home? It means cutbacks in education and health care. If you followed the Senate debate 2 weeks ago about the appropriation for education, you would have found us day after day, hour after hour, voting down amendments—supported by Democrats, opposed by Republicans—to put more money into education. We offered one amendment that said we want to take the President's promise for No Child Left Behind and make it a reality. Senator ROBERT BYRD offered an amendment that we would take the $6 billion shortfall in the President's promise to school districts around America and we were going to appropriate it. It was voted down by the Republican side of the aisle. Why? They said we couldn't afford $6 billion for American schools.

Think about that for a second: $20 billion for Iraq reconstruction. Yes, the Bush administration says we must. But $6 billion as promised for American schools? The answer was: No, we can't do it.

As a matter of fact, the $87 billion requested by the President for Iraq is more than the total we will spend next year on education and homeland security in the United States. Think about that for a second.

There is another element, too. We are financing the war in Iraq with deficits. We are borrowing money to pay for that war. We are not cutting spending. We are not raising taxes. We are borrowing the money from the Social Security trust fund. We are endangering Social Security. We are limiting the reserves and resources of Social Security at a time when millions of baby boomers are just years away from showing up for their Social Security checks. It is the height of irresponsibility.

The President's tax cuts have pushed us to this point of bankruptcy and deficits, the deepest deficits in the history of the United States, at the expense of health care, education, and the solvency of the Social Security trust fund. All of those things are part of the Bush package over the last 3 years. Yet this President came to us 9 days ago and said: We need to dig deeper; we need $87 billion more to pay for the war in Iraq.

When you ask the American people what is a good way to pay for the war in Iraq, they say: Why don't you eliminate or at least postpone some of the tax cuts for the wealthiest people in America that the Bush administration has pushed for?

That certainly seems reasonable to me. If someone happens to be making $1 million a year and are receiving $38,000 or more in tax cuts, is it too much to ask that person making $1 million a year to give up that tax cut to deal with our deficit, to pay for our war in Iraq? I don't think it is unreasonable. But, frankly, the administration says that is totally unacceptable. They want even bigger tax cuts, more permanent tax cuts for people in higher income categories. It is the height of irresponsibility.

The American people understand this. Our economy is weak. We have lost a record number of jobs. Our deficit is growing at a pace unrivaled in American history. We find health care and education being cut back, Social Security endangered, and the President wants $87 billion for Iraq, a pricetag without a plan.

This is no plan. What we have been handed by the administration is, frankly, a wish list of ideas that isn't backed up in reality. There is no explanation here of what we will do in Iraq if other countries around the world don't join

us, don't come to our side and our alliance in terms of the future of Iraq. There is no plan whatsoever. Without that plan, there are a lot of questions that need to be asked here in the Senate.

I sincerely hope my Republican colleagues who fashion themselves as fiscal conservatives will come to understand what we are faced with. They have voted for tax cuts which have bankrupted America. We now find ourselves in a position where the bankruptcy hole is getting deeper and deeper. We need to ask the hard questions. Some of them are painful.

We will never scrimp when it comes to paying for the support of our troops, nor should we; we will give them all the money they need. But when it comes to rebuilding Iraq, we need to ask some hard questions.

One question that needs to be asked, front and center, is the question of profiteering in Iraq. It is unconscionable, it is unexplainable, it is indefensible that Halliburton, Vice President CHENEY's former corporation, stands to gain up to $7 billion in no-bid contracts for Iraq where they, in fact, are the single bidder on contracts. When we asked the Department of Defense, Why in the world are you giving Halliburton so much work to the exclusion of all the other companies in America, they said: We would like to tell you, but it is top-secret classified information.

Excuse me. I don't believe that. I think, frankly, having competitive bidding for work to be done in Iraq is only reasonable. It should be a supreme embarrassment to this administration that the company that continues to pay the Vice President, a company which had a close, personal, financial tie to him for so many years, is the company that continues to profiteer in Iraq.

There have to be other companies in America capable of doing this work that should at least be allowed to bid on the contract. But that has not taken place. Unless and until it does, I am afraid a lot of people will be skeptical about this plan to rebuild Iraq.

There is one last point I wish to make. The President basically announced on May 1 that military operations in Iraq were over. Recently, the American people were asked if they believe the war is over. By a margin of 89 to 10, the American people said, no, the war in Iraq is not over. When you wake up every morning, turn on your radio or television, and the lead story is another American soldier being killed, you realize the war is not over. When you reflect on the pricetag of $1 billion a week to sustain the military operation in Iraq, you know the war is not over. When the President asks for $87 billion in a deficit-ridden economy for a plan that doesn't exist to rebuild Iraq, you know, sadly, that the war is not over.

We can do better as a nation. We need to come together as a nation. We need to plan to find a way to bring security to Iraq in a responsible fashion.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator yield back the remainder of his time in morning business?

Mr. DURBIN. Yes, Mr. President.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2004

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of H.R. 2765, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2765) making appropriations for the government of the District of Columbia and other activities chargeable in whole or in part against the revenues of said District for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio is recognized.

AMENDMENT NO. 1783

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I have a substitute amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Ohio [Mr. DEWINE] proposes an amendment numbered 1783.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that further reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

(The amendment is printed in the RECORD under ''Text of Amendments.'')

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, as chairman of the District of Columbia Subcommittee, it is my pleasure to present to the Members of the Senate this morning a bill that has been approved by the Appropriations Committee.

Let me first thank the Senator from Louisiana, Ms. MARY LANDRIEU, my colleague, for her excellent work on this bill. She has worked very hard with me. I thank her for her efforts in drafting this appropriations bill that is before us this morning.

This bill provides $545 million in Federal funds for the District of Columbia, and it also includes the city's own local budget of $5.7 billion. The funds in this bill focus on a number of key priorities for the District of Columbia. I wish to highlight four of those priorities.

First is improving the lives and opportunities for children in foster care.

Second is enhancing educational opportunities for inner-city students.

Third is reducing and preventing crime in the District of Columbia.

Fourth is increasing the security in our Nation's Capital.

Mr. President, I wish to discuss the first priority at some length—improving foster care in the District of Columbia. No one who is familiar with our Nation's Capital needs to be reminded about the sorry state of the foster care system in the District of Columbia. No one who reads the Washington Post, no one who lives in the District of Columbia, no one who listens to the radio needs to be reminded of this. The foster care system in the District of Columbia is a scandal; it is a crime; it is a tragedy. The fact that it exists in our Nation's Capital makes it even worse. We have an obligation as Members of the Senate and this Congress to do something about it.

Senator LANDRIEU and I started well over a year ago to focus on the foster care system. We decided to have a series of hearings, where we would bring in experts from the District and from across the country to look at the foster care system in the District of Columbia. Our goal was to try to find out as much as we could about the foster care system in the District of Columbia, try to find out what was wrong with it, and try to find out what we could do as Members of the Senate, what the Federal Government could do to try to be of assistance.

This bill represents the first attempt by the Federal Government to directly impact this foster care system in a very meaningful way. What we did was listen to the testimony, listen to the foster parents, listen to the experts, and take their suggestions. What you will find in this bill are the ideas that came from these parents, from the experts, from the people who see this system day after day. We have provided some money, which we believe will help with these ideas and begin to change this system. It is the right thing to do.

As Members know, over the years, the District of Columbia has had an abysmal record in protecting the lives and well-being of the children in the District's care. Children in foster care have died, been abused, or they have languished for years in foster care, often bouncing from foster home to foster home without ever finding permanent placement with a loving family.

The statistics are shocking. Children in foster care in the District spend an average of 5 years in foster care before they achieve a permanent placement. I will repeat that. The children in the District of Columbia spend an average of 5 years before they ever find a permanent home. Obviously, that means some children languish in foster care much longer than 5 years. That is wrong, and we must do something about it.

During our subcommittee hearings, we found that the District of Columbia is unable to track its children in foster care. They cannot even keep track of them. We have this very sophisticated—supposedly—computer system, yet inputs are not being made, the tracking is not taking place, and complete data is not even available in the child and family services computer system for over 70 percent of children in foster care today. How can we keep track of these poor kids and determine their well-being when much of their personal information is not ever entered into this automated computer system? This simply must change.

While putting together this bill, Senator LANDRIEU and I learned a lot. We