Regrettably, the President declared that he would veto this bill even before Congress completed action on it. He has been talking about this for several weeks. As conditions on the ground continue to deteriorate, that position has become increasingly isolated. In the face of this continued deterioration, this Congress stands firm with the American people. We are resolved to do what we can to see if the President will change course. We ask the President to listen to Congress, to the American people, and to his own military experts.

The President requested $91.5 billion for continued military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. We provided every penny of that request and much more for the military. We provided, in addition, funds for emergencies here at home such as rebuilding the gulf coast, recovering from agricultural disasters, repairing gaps in homeland security, and keeping the children healthy and insulated. Most importantly, we provided a way forward to end the war in Iraq responsibly.

The way forward is consistent with what our military leaders are telling us, including General Petraeus, who repeated again last week on several occasions that this war can only be won politically, not militarily. The plan, and the conference report that will be sent to the President tomorrow, immediately transitions the U.S. mission away from policing the civil war, begins a phased redeployment of our combat troops no later than October 1, 2007, with the goal of removing all forces by April 1, 2008, imposes tangible, measurable, and achievable benchmarks on the Iraqi Government, launches the kind of diplomatic, economic, and political offensive the President's strategy lacks, and rebuilds our overburdened military.

Today we renew our call to President Bush. This is still time to listen. There is still time to come to grips with the facts on the streets of Baghdad and throughout Iraq. There is still time to sign this bill and change course in Iraq. In the 4 days since we passed the conference report, new facts have come to light that make our call for a new direction even more urgent.

This past weekend the United States death toll in Iraq for April now is at 104, with all reported deaths not yet known the deadliest month of the year and the deadliest of the entire war. That bears repeating. Despite the President's claims of progress, this has been one of the deadliest months of this 4-going-on-5-year war.

Also this weekend the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction released his quarterly report that paints a dispiriting picture of our $20 billion rebuilding efforts. It was all over the news; today all over America. The report found that rebuilding efforts are falling far short of their targets. As a result, after more than 4 years of these efforts, Iraq is "plagued by power outages, inadequate oil production, and shortages of clean water and health care."

The report also tells us that despite spending more than three-quarters of our allocated funds to increase electricity production, Iraq's power grid now produces far less electricity than before the invasion, with Baghdad averaging 6.5 hours of electricity per day, down from almost 24 hours before the war. The report tells us that despite spending nearly $2 billion American dollars, our efforts to provide Iraqis with clean drinking water are failing miserably short. This report tells us oil production, a critical component of any future stable Iraq economy, is still way off target.

President Bush continues to ask for our patience and continues to boast of progress, but this report gives us no reason to believe conditions for the Iraqi people are improving any more than they are for our troops. This morning the Washington Post reported that Iraq's Prime Minister al-Malaki is behind the removal and disruption of the duty of some of the Iraqi Army and police force's top law enforcement officials. Why? The paper's reason for the dismissal is they are doing a good job of combating violent Shiite militias. This has "angered U.S. and Iraqi leaders who say the Shiite-led government is sabotaging the military to achieve sectarian goals."

It is yet another reason for us to seriously question whether the Iraqi Government has the ability or even desire to make the political compromises so essential to ending the conflict.

Finally, this weekend, of all places, the New York Times yesterday published an editorial. This is one of many from around the country. They wrote: It is time to bring our troops home from Iraq. This statement is a shift in this newspaper's editorial position. Until now, we have supported the military mission in Iraq, though at times we have been harshly critical of President Bush in his role as commander in chief. Now, it is our opinion that major U.S. military operations should cease... It seems as though every day new facts emerge that give us greater insight into the astonishing disaster unfolding in Iraq. Just 4 days since the Senate passed the supplemental conference report, the four grim new facts I mentioned have emerged, and this is only the latest and not all of the latest.

The President wonders why the American people have lost patience. It is because the news out of Iraq grows worse by the day. When we send the supplemental conference report to President Bush tomorrow, we ask that he take time to reflect on the facts of that veto. We ask him to listen to the American people. From Maine to California, from Minnesota to Florida, we ask him to listen to the American people, including the experts. We ask that he finally summon the courage to admit he made mistakes and take the steps we propose to heal the grave wounds caused by this war. This bill gives him a path forward. We ask him to follow it.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. President, my good friend the majority leader has neglected to mention the front-page story in the New York Times yesterday about the extraordinary success our troops are having in Anbar Province, the center of much of the al-Qaeda activity in Iraq, with Sunni sheikhs, tribal leaders coming together to support, not just verbally but in terms of supplying military personnel, fighters to take on al-Qaida in Anbar Province. It is a piece of good news in admittedly a cloudy picture in Iraq. It is also the case, I am confident, that a majority of Democrats in both the House and Senate believe that funds should be supplied for the troops. That certainly has been the view of the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, Carl Levin. Hopefully, we will find a way forward after the bill that regrettably has the surrender date in it tomorrow is sent down to the President and vetoed. Beginning Wednesday, we will be discussing how to go forward. The majority leader and I have had some preliminary discussion about that. Hopefully, we can resolve this matter in the very near future to provide the funding for the troops so General Petraeus's mission, for which we confirmed him 61 to nothing, will have the resources to be completed later this year.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business until 4:15, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Arizona.

IRAQ

Mr. KYL, Mr. President, speaking on the same matters addressed by both the majority and minority leader, I remind our colleagues that last week this body passed by a very narrow margin what amounts to a strategy for defeat in Iraq, but not a strategy. It is not a surprise. After all, the majority leader had announced to the world that the war was lost. This, of course, was news
to people in Iraq, our soldiers in the field included.

For example, SGT George Turkovich was quoted in the Las Vegas Review-Journal, saying:

We’re not losing this war. Unfortunately, politicians have no role in this war affecting our rules of engagement. This is a guerrilla war that we’re fighting, and they’re going to tie our hands. So it does make it a lot harder for us to fight the enemy, but we’re not losing this war.

This is from a 24-year-old a half a world away.

I suspect the announcement that we had lost the war was also a surprise to General Petraeus. Remember, we confirmed theInitializing function has failed: The result was not valid. It might be due to an internal error. Please try again. If this continues, please contact us.

One thing that has been lost, I would add, in the race to enact this strategy for defeat is the consequences for this premature—this setting a deadline for...
surrender. Remember, this is the first time ever in the middle of a war we would set a date and say: At this time we will be out of there. The message it sends to the enemy is—well, it is unthinkably serious. But think about the message it sends to the world. Would what we criticized Saddam Hussein for when he was in power? It would not end with an American withdrawal in Iraq, either. As General Anthony Zinni said:

This is no Vietnam or Somalia or those places where you can walk away. If we just pull out, we will find ourselves back in short order.

Failing in Iraq would set back the entire region. The Brookings Institution—no big supporter of the President, I would add—argues, in their study, that:

Iraq appears to have many of the conditions most conducive to spillover because there is a high degree of foreign interest in Iraq. Ethnic, tribal, and religious troops within Iraq are equally prevalent in neighboring areas and they share many of the same grievances. Iraq has a history of violence with its neighbors, which has fostered desires for vengeance and fomented constant clashes. Iraq uses resources that its neighbors covet—oil being the most obvious, but important religious shrines also figure in the mix. There is a high degree of commerce and communication between Iraq and its neighbors, and its borders are porous. All of this suggests that spillover from an Iraq civil war would tend toward the more dangerous end of the spillover spectrum. If we just pull out, we will find ourselves back in short order.

We know Iran and Syria are fostering instability in Iraq. Al-Qaida and Hezbollah are both active there as well. Chaos in Iraq could draw in Saudi Arabia, and Saudi officials have threatened "massive intervention to stop Iraqi-backed Shiite militias from butchering Iraqi Sunnis." "Kurdish success could well cause Turkish intervention in the region.

Failing in Iraq would be a dramatic setback in the war on terror. Iraq must not be divorced from its context—the struggle between the forces of modernization and extremism in the Muslim world.

Al-Qaida has been in Iraq since before the United States invaded and has dedicated itself to fomenting sectarian violence there. Much of the violence between Shia and Sunni is a result of prodding by al-Qaida, starting primarily with the blowing up of the Golden Mosque in Samarra.

Osama bin Laden himself referred to Iraq—I am quoting him—as the "capital of the Caliphate," arguing that "The most dangerous issue today for the world is this Third World War ... [that] is raging in [Iraq]." Those are not my words. That is what Osama bin Laden said.

One of the terrorism experts, Peter Bergen, said this:

[U.S. withdrawal] would fit all too neatly into Obama bin Laden's master narrative about American foreign policy. His theme is that America is a paper tiger that cannot tolerate body bags coming home; to back it up, he cites President Ronald Reagan's 1984 withdrawal of United States troops from Lebanon and President Clinton's decision nearly a decade later to pull troops from Somalia. A unilateral pullout from Iraq would only confirm this analysis of American weakness among his Islamist allies.

Failure in Iraq will encourage further attacks against the United States and provide a base from which to plan and train for attacks.

I must remind my friends, if you are going to push this legislation through, the strategy for defeat, you have a responsibility to tell the American people what the consequences will be and to tell them how you would respond. These are the burdens of being in the majority. These are the burdens of making the difficult decisions we make in this body.

I urge my colleagues to work together to develop a supplemental appropriations bill that President Bush can quickly sign, that will get the job done. This will give us the chance to give the strategy a chance to succeed so that the horrible consequences I have described will not be the result of our actions.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore, The Senator from Tennessee.

AMERICA COMPETES ACT

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, last week, while the media covered Iraq and U.S. attorneys, the Senate spent 3 days debating and passing perhaps the most important piece of legislation of this 2-year session. Almost no one noticed. The America COMPETES Act, which was the name of the legislation, authorized $60 billion over 4 years, to, among other things, double spending on physics research, recruit 10,000 new math and science teachers, and retrain 250,000 more, provide grants to researchers, and invest more in high-risk, high-payoff research.

These were recommendations of a National Academy of Sciences task force that had been asked to tell Congress—to tell us—exactly what we needed to do to help America keep its brainpower advantage so we can keep our jobs from going to China and India.

Last year, the Senate—but not the House—enacted task force recommendations to encourage "insourcing brainpower" by giving legal residency to skilled foreign students and researchers. Both Houses extended the research and development tax credit.

The process for this legislation was as exemplary as its substance. Senators and their staffs worked across party lines for 2 years. Senior committee members, chairmen and ranking members, waived jurisdictional prerogatives. The administration participated in extensive homework sessions with Senators and outside experts. The effort was so bipartisan that when the Senate shifted to the Democratic majority in January, the new majority leader immediately introduced the same bill their predecessors had in the last Congress. Seventy Senators co-sponsored the legislation. Even though no cloture motion was filed, 9 amendments were voted upon, and 32 more amendments were added within 4 days. The final vote was 88 to 8.

Anyone who knows the Senate knows that the final margin masks how difficult passage was. There were concerted efforts to derail the bill by those with different ideas about policy and about spending. Yet this success with competitiveness suggests three lessons for dealing with other issues that are simply too big to be solved by one party alone, such as immigration, to which the majority leader has indicated we will turn in May, such as health insurance, such as energy independence, such as terrorism, and such as Iraq.

These are the three lessons as I see them:

First, most ideas in the Senate fail for lack of the idea. The first step in our success was when Senator Jeff Bingaman and I asked the National Academy of Sciences the following question more than 2 years ago:

What are the top 10 actions, in priority order, that Federal policymakers can take to enhance the science and technology enterprise so that the United States successfully compete, prosper and be secure in the global community of the 21st century?

The Academy’s 21-member task force, headed by former Lockheed Martin chairman and CEO Norm Augustine and including 3 Nobel laureates, gave up their summer, reviewed hundreds of proposals, and presented us with 20 specific recommendations in response to our question. These 20 recommendations, along with the work of the Council on Competitiveness and the President’s ideas, gave us something to work with other than pet projects of various Members of Congress.

The second lesson is that bipartisanship is possible, even on complex issues. From the framing of the question to the introduction of the final legislation by the majority and minority leader, every effort was bipartisan. The Senate Majority leader had me go to see President Bush, he invited Senator Bingaman, a Democrat, to go, as well as me, a Republican. Staffs worked so closely together that no one could say whether it was a Republican bill or a Democratic bill; it was a bipartisan bill.

The third, and finally, the last lesson is that, unfortunately, bipartisan success, even on the biggest, most complex issues, has an excellent chance of remaining a secret. Despite the size of the accomplishments of the 206-page America COMPETES Act, it was barely noticed by the major media. This is not a complaint, merely an observation. More than ever, the media,