by emergency appropriations. (Iraq funding is apparently still an emergency five years after the war began.) These costs, by our calculations, are now running at $12 billion a month—$16 billion if you include Afghanistan. By the time you add in the costs hidden in the defense budget, the money we'll have to spend to help future veterans, and money to refurbish a military whose equipment and materiel have been greatly depleted, the total tab to the federal government will almost surely exceed $1.5 trillion.

But the costs to our society and economy are far greater. When a young soldier is killed in Iraq or Afghanistan, his or her family will receive a U.S. government check for just $500,000 (combining life insurance with a ''death gratuity'')—far less than the typical amount paid by insurance companies for the death of a young person in a car accident. The stark ''budgetary cost'' of $500,000 is clearly only a fraction of the total cost society pays for the loss of life—and no one can ever really compensate the families. Moreover, disability pay seldom provides adequate compensation for wounded troops or their families. Indeed, in one out of five cases of seriously injured soldiers, someone in their family has to give up a job to take care of them.

But beyond this is the cost to the already sputtering U.S. economy. All told, the bill for the Iraq war is likely to top $3 trillion. And that's a conservative estimate.

President Bush tried to sell the American people on the idea that we could have a war with little or no economic sacrifice. Even after the United States went to war, Bush and Congress cut taxes, especially on the rich—even though the United States already had a massive deficit. So the war had to be funded by more borrowing. By the end of the Bush administration, the cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, plus the cumulative interest on the increased borrowing used to fund them, will have added about $1 trillion to the national debt.

The long-term burden of paying for the conflicts will curtail the country's ability to tackle other urgent problems, no matter who wins the presidency in November. Our vast and growing indebtedness inevitably makes it harder to afford new health-care plans, make large-scale repairs to crumbling roads and bridges, or build better-equipped schools. Already, the escalating cost of the wars has crowded out spending on virtually all other discretionary federal programs, including the National Institutes of Health, the Food and Drug Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, and federal aid to states and cities, all of which have been scaled back significantly since the invasion of Iraq.

To make matters worse, the U.S. economy is facing a recession. But our ability to implement a truly effective economic-stimulus package is crimped by expenditures of close to $200 billion on the two wars this year alone and by a skyrocketing national debt.

The United States is a rich and strong country, but even rich and strong countries squander trillions of dollars at their peril. Think what a difference $3 trillion could make for so many of the United States'—or the world's—problems. We could have had a Marshall Plan to help desperately poor countries, winning the hearts and maybe the minds of Muslim nations now gripped by anti-Americanism. In a world with millions of illiterate children, we could have achieved literacy for all—for less than the price of a month's combat in Iraq. We worry about China's growing influence in Africa, but the upfront cost of a month of fighting in Iraq would pay for more than doubling our annual current aid spending on Africa.

Closer to home, we could have funded countless schools to give children locked in the underclass a shot at decent lives. Or we could have tackled the massive problem of Social Security, which Bush began his second term hoping to address; for far, far less than the cost of the war, we could have ensured the solvency of Social Security for the next half a century or more.

Economists used to think that wars were good for the economy, a notion born out of memories of how the massive spending of World War II helped bring the United States and the world out of the Great Depression. But we now know far better ways to stimulate an economy—ways that quickly improve citizens' well-being and lay the foundations for future growth. But money spent paying Nepalese workers in Iraq (or even Iraqi ones) doesn't stimulate the U.S. economy the way that money spent at home would—and it certainly doesn't provide the basis for long-term growth the way investments in research, education or infrastructure would.

Another worry: This war has been particularly hard on the economy because it led to a spike in oil prices. Before the 2003 invasion, oil cost less than $25 a barrel, and futures markets expected it to remain around there. (Yes, China and India were growing by leaps and bounds, but cheap supplies from the Middle East were expected to meet their demands.) The war changed that equation, and oil prices recently topped $100 per barrel.

While Washington has been spending well beyond its means, others have been saving—including the oil-rich countries that, like the oil companies, have been among the few winners of this war. No wonder, then, that China, Singapore and many Persian Gulf emirates have become lenders of last resort for troubled Wall Street banks, plowing in billions of dollars to shore up Citigroup, Merrill Lynch and other firms that burned their fingers on subprime mortgages. How long will it be before the huge sovereign wealth funds controlled by these countries begin buying up large shares of other U.S. assets?

The Bush team, then, is not merely handing over the war to the next administration; it is also bequeathing deep economic problems that have been seriously exacerbated by reckless war financing. We face an economic downturn that's likely to be the worst in more than a quarter-century.

Until recently, many marveled at the way the United States could spend hundreds of billions of dollars on oil and blow through hundreds of billions more in Iraq with what seemed to be strikingly little short-run impact on the economy. But there's no great mystery here. The economy's weaknesses were concealed by the Federal Reserve, which pumped in liquidity, and by regulators that looked away as loans were handed out well beyond borrowers' ability to repay them. Meanwhile, banks and credit-rating agencies pretended that financial alchemy could convert bad mortgages into AAA assets, and the Fed looked the other way as the U.S. household-savings rate plummeted to zero.

It's a bleak picture. The total loss from this economic downturn—measured by the disparity between the economy's actual output and its potential output—is likely to be the greatest since the Great Depression. That total, itself well in excess of $1 trillion, is not included in our estimated $3 trillion cost of the war.

Others will have to work out the geopolitics, but the economics here are clear. Ending the war, or at least moving rapidly to wind it down, would yield major economic dividends.

As we head toward November, opinion polls say that voters' main worry is now the economy, not the war. But there's no way to disentangle the two. The United States will be paying the price of Iraq for decades to come. The price tag will be all the greater because we tried to ignore the laws of economics—and the cost will grow the longer we remain.

DEATHS OF WOMEN IN GUATEMALA

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I wish to speak about the tragic deaths of women and girls in Guatemala and to note the passage of a resolution I introduced that is aimed at enhancing efforts by the Governments of Guatemala and the United States to address this serious issue. The resolution, S. Res. 178, which passed the Senate last night, is cosponsored by Senators Boxer, Casey, Dodd, Durbin, Feingold, Feinstein, Lautenberg, Leahy, Lincoln, Menendez, Sanders, Smith, and Snowe.

Mr. President, since 2001 more than 2,000 women and girls have been murdered in Guatemala. Although the overall murder rate in the country is extremely troubling, the murder rate with regard to women has increased at an alarming rate it almost doubled from 2001 to 2006. While these killings may be due to a variety of factors, what clearly unifies these cases is the fact that very few of the perpetrators have been brought to justice. It is my understanding that, as of 2006, there were only 20 convictions for these killings.

The general lack of respect for the rule of law, inadequate legal protections for women, ongoing violence in the country, corruption, insufficient resources, substandard investigations, and the lack of independent and effective judicial and prosecutorial systems, all contribute to the inability of the Government of Guatemala to hold those responsible for these killings accountable for their crimes. The result is a sense of impunity for crimes against women in the country.

The Government of Guatemala has taken some steps to address these killings. Guatemala has created special police and prosecutorial units to investigate these murders and repealed the so-called ''Rape Law'' which had absolved perpetrators of criminal responsibility for rape upon the perpetrator's marriage with the victim. The Government also entered into an agreement with the United Nations to establish the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala, CICIG, which has a mandate to investigate and prosecute illegal security groups operating with impunity. And Guatemala established the National Institute for Forensic Sciences to improve investigatory and evidence gathering efforts.

The resolution the Senate passed last night is aimed at raising awareness of this issue and encouraging the Governments of Guatemala and the United States to work together to stop these killings. Among other things, the resolution: condemns these murders and expresses the sympathy of the Senate to the families of women and girls murdered in Guatemala; encourages the Government of Guatemala to act with due diligence in investigating and prosecuting those responsible for these crimes; urges the Government of Guatemala to strengthen domestic violence laws and to provide adequate resources necessary to improve the integrity of the prosecutorial and judicial systems; urges the President and the Secretary of State to incorporate this issue into the bilateral agenda between the Governments of Guatemala and the United States; and encourages the Secretary of State to provide assistance in training and equipping special police units to investigate these crimes, implementing judicial reforms and rule of law programs, establishing a missing persons system, creating an effective witness protection program, and supporting efforts to enhance forensic capabilities.

Mr. President, I believe it is very important to give this issue the attention it deserves. Last year, the House of Representatives passed a similar measure, which was introduced by Congresswoman SOLIS. With passage of this resolution, I am very pleased that the Senate has spoken regarding the need to stop these senseless killings.

JOINT RESOLUTION DISAPPROVING THE FCC MEDIA OWNERSHIP RULE

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, on March 5, 2008, I introduced a joint resolution of disapproval stating that the December 18, 2007, vote by the Federal Communications Commission to loosen the ban on cross-ownership of newspapers and broadcast stations shall have no force or effect. I am joined by Senators SNOWE, KERRY, COLLINS, DODD, STEVENS, OBAMA, HARKIN, CLINTON, CANTWELL, BIDEN, REED, FEINSTEIN, SANDERS, TESTER, LEAHY, FEINGOLD, and BOXER. We seek with this resolution of disapproval to reverse the Federal Communications Commission's, FCC, fast march to ease media ownership rules.

The FCC has taken a series of destructive actions in the past two decades that I believe have undermined the public interest. On December 18, 2007, they took yet another step in the wrong direction. They gave a further green light to media concentration.

The FCC voted to allow cross-ownership of newspapers and broadcast stations in the top 20 markets, with loopholes for mergers outside of the top 20 markets. The newspapers would be allowed to buy stations ranked above fifth and above.

The rule change was framed as a modest compromise. But make no mistake, this is a big deal. As much as 44 percent of the population lives in the top 20 markets of the United States. When nearly half of the people in this country are told that in their cities and towns the media will get the thumbs up to consolidate, they will not be happy. And with the loopholes in the rule, the FCC spurs a new wave of media consolidation in both large and small media markets.

The last time the FCC tried to do this, the U.S. Senate voted to block it. On September 16, 2003, the Senate voted 55 to 40 to support a ''resolution of disapproval'' of the FCC's previous decision to further consolidate media. We warned Chairman Martin that if he rushed this vote we would have to use the resolution of disapproval again.

On December 4th the Commerce Committee reported out the bipartisan ''Media Ownership Act of 2007,'' S. 2332 with 25 co-sponsors, requiring the FCC to give more time for public comment and study the issues of localism and diversity. The Chairman overlooked this bill.

On the day before the vote, 27 Senators sent them a letter in opposition to such a rushed vote on the rules. He went ahead anyway.

The FCC rushed towards a December 18th vote with a complete disregard for the process, let alone the substance of their ruling.

They rushed to finish the localism and ownership hearings with as little as 5 business days of notice before the last hearings.

The Chairman put out the proposed rule changes on November 13th in a New York Times op-ed—after the comment period had closed.

He then didn't give the public nearly enough opportunity to comment on the actual rule changes that were voted on. He gave the public just 28 days to comment on the proposed rules. While he likes to speak of giving 120 days and six hearings around the country, this was prior to the announcement of what rules would actually change. And he ignored the public testimony anyway.

This was hardly an open and deliberative process. It is a massive rush and a big mistake.

This rule will undercut localism and diversity of ownership around the country. Studies show that removing the ban on newspaper/broadcast cross-ownership results in a net loss in the amount of local news produced in the market as a whole. In addition, while the FCC suggests that cross-ownership is necessary to save failing newspapers, the publicly traded newspapers earn annual rates of return between 16 and 18 percent.

This Resolution of Disapproval will ensure this rule change has no effect. This is again a bipartisan effort to stop the FCC from destroying the local interests that we have always felt must be a part of broadcasting.

It is time to ensure that we first protect localism and diversity, which the FCC appears to have long forgotten. Only then can we really review the rules of media ownership in a thorough process to see if it is actually in the public interest to reverse any of those rules, or if greater public interest protections are necessary.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HONORING JERRY BUTKIEWICZ

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Jerry Butkiewicz, a labor leader in San Diego who recently retired as secretary-treasurer of the San Diego Imperial Counties Labor Council. He has devoted the past 30 years to improving the quality of life for all people.

In 1975, Jerry Butkiewicz joined the American Postal Workers Union, APWU, in Phoenix, AZ. He became shop steward and within a few years rose to president of the local. Five years later, attracted by the beautiful weather in California, Jerry Butkiewicz and his family moved to Oceanside in San Diego where he continued to work for the U.S. Postal Service. Shortly after his arrival, he was elected president of the APWU in Oceanside. In 1981, the San Diego Imperial Counties Labor Council selected him as their liaison between organized labor and the United Way of San Diego County.

Elected secretary-treasurer in 1996, Jerry Butkiewicz led the Labor Council with compassion, practicality, and a tireless work ethic until January 2008. Over his 12 years as secretary-treasurer, he worked to grow and strengthen the labor movement in San Diego. Through his efforts, the Labor Council has improved the lives of countless San Diegans. Jerry was active in the San Diego Greater Chamber of Commerce, the United Way of San Diego, the San Diego Workforce Partnership, the Environmental Health Coalition, and the State Workforce Investment Board.

Jerry Butkiewicz has worked tirelessly to provide all Californians with a fair wage, affordable health care, and a safe working environment. His service to the working families of San Diego has been an invaluable contribution to all who live in San Diego and California.

I congratulate Jerry Butkiewicz on his retirement, and wish him continued success in his future endeavors.•

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF LAS TRAMPAS

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I take this opportunity to recognize the 50th anniversary of Las Trampas, a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting adults with developmental disabilities located in Contra Costa County.

Founded in 1958 in Lafayette, CA, Las Trampas has grown to include four State-licensed group residential homes throughout Contra Costa County. Through the work of its staff, volunteers, and board of directors, Las Trampas actively assists adults with developmental disabilities to discover their capabilities so that they may live their lives as independently as possible.

Las Trampas is committed to helping each of its clients succeed in all aspects of daily living. It offers programs