assures our farmers of permanent bankruptcy protection to keep their farms. In the meantime, we should quickly pass this legislation and end another lapse in this basic bankruptcy protection for our family farmers.

HAWAII AND SHIPPING CONTAINER SECURITY

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President. I rose today to address the continued need to secure our Nation's shipping containers.

The U.S. economy is heavily dependent on the normal flow of commerce and the security of our Nation's ports. Over the past 6 years, commercial cargo entering America's ports has nearly doubled. About 7 million shipping containers arrive in U.S. seaports each year.

The Department of Homeland Security recently proposed new regulations to improve shipping container security by requiring advance information in electronic format for cargo entering and exiting the United States.

In my view, the Department needs to do more. To improve container security we must ensure that shipping container security programs are effective by having the right personnel and the right management strategies in place.

Currently the Customs Service administers two container security programs within the Department of Homeland Security: the container security initiative, known as CSI, and the customs-trade partnership against terrorism, or C–TPAT. By 2004, the Department plans to increase the funding for CSI fourteenfold and for C–TPAT by 50 percent.

A July 2003 General Accounting Office, GAO, review on container security programs raises concerns that the Customs Service has not taken the steps required to ensure the long-term success and accountability of CSI and C–TPAT. According to the GAO report, Customs has reached a critical point in the management of CSI and C–TPAT and must develop plans to address workforce needs to ensure the long-term success of these programs.

As a Senator from a State reliant on shipped products, I understand the importance of container security. My State is uniquely vulnerable to disruptions in the normal flow of commerce. In fact, 98 percent of the goods imported into Hawaii are transported by sea.

Honolulu Harbor received more than 1 million tons of food and farm products and over 2 million tons of manufactured goods per year. In 2002, Honolulu received 1,300 foreign ships and about 300,000 containers. Over 8 million tons of these goods arrive at Honolulu Harbor, which receives one-half of all cargo brought into the State.

This is why I support GAO's recommendation that Customs develop strategic plans that clearly identify the objectives the programs are intended to achieve and to enhance performance measures.

I urge the Department of Homeland Security to implement GAO's recommendation by developing workforce plans and strategies to strengthen container security and to attract, train, and retain workers within CSI and C–TPAT. This is no small challenge. By the end of 2004, Customs expects to hire 120 staff for CSI and increase staffing levels in C–TPAT by fifteenfold. Moreover, it is estimated that 46 percent of the Customs workforce will be eligible to retire by 2008.

Now more than ever, agencies must have the plans and strategies in place to recruit personnel with the skills necessary to protect our country. As the U.S. Commission on National Security/21st Century concluded in 2001:

> . . . [T]he maintenance of American power in the world depends upon the quality of U.S. government personnel, civil and military, at all levels . . . The U.S. faces a broader range of national security challenges today, requiring policy analysts and intelligence personnel with expertise in more countries, regions, and issues.

To meet these national security challenges, workforce and strategic planning for CSI and C–TPAT deserve the full attention of the Department of Homeland Security.

Such attention is critical for a State like Hawaii that is uniquely dependent on shipping of goods. The potential consequences of a terrorist incident using a shipping container are, in the words of Customs Service Commissioner Bonner,'' . . . profound . . . no ships would be allowed to unload at U.S. ports after such an event.''

I look forward to working with the Department to ensure that the foundation is in place for CSI and C–TPAT to secure shipping containers over the longterm.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SPECIALIST MICHAEL DEUEL

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about a young man from my State who selflessly performed as his country asked. While doing so Army SP Michael R. Deuel was killed in Iraq on June 18 while on guard duty at a propane distribution center.

Michael was a good soldier and served proudly in the 325th Infantry Regiment's 82nd Airborne Division. He comes from a family of military tradition that he carried with him. It was the Air Force that brought the Deuel family to Wyoming where both parents served on Wyoming's own F.E. Warren Air Force Base.

It is particularly important that at a time like this, as we address legislation and we prepare to adjourn for the month of August and return to our homes to meet with constituents that we take time to remember soldiers such as Specialist Deuel. These are the brave souls who give everything to secure the peace.

Michael joined the Army so he could learn to parachute. Eventually he wanted to become a smoke jumper and fight forest fires. This too is a particularly dangerous job, and as we see through this year's fire season it is critical to the survival of our towns and rural communities in the West. Michael's decision to be in the army and his goals for life after the Army paint a picture of a young man committed to his country and his fellow Americans.

As operations continue in Iraq and the noose tightens around the last remnants of the regime, I offer America's thanks to Michael Deuel and to his family. It takes a special person to answer the call to public service. It is challenging and dangerous. America remains strong and steadfast because of the courage that they have shown in the face of danger.

Thank you for your service and sacrifice. May God bless SP Michael Deuel of the 82nd Airborne Division and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to speak in support of Karen Tandy's nomination to be Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration. I am pleased that the Senate confirmed her nomination last night.

I had an opportunity to meet with Ms. Tandy a few weeks ago in my office and I was quite impressed by her. With more than a quarter century of experience in drug enforcement, I believe that she is not only well qualified to be the DEA Administrator, but that she will also bring a passion for drug policy to the job.

Both in her work as a prosecutor and in leadership positions at the Justice Department, Ms. Tandy's focus has been on drug trafficking, money laundering and asset forfeiture. She has served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in Virginia and Washington State, Chief of Litigation in the Asset Forfeiture Office and Deputy Chief of the Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs Section at Main Justice. For the past 4 years she has served as Associate Deputy Attorney General and the Director of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) program. During that time she has focused the OCDETF program and provided tremendous leadership.

Her nomination has the endorsement of a number of well-respected organizations including the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Troopers Association, the Association of Former Narcotics Agents, the National Narcotics Officers' Association Coalition, the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, the County Executives of America, and the International Union of Police Associations.

Ms. Tandy comes to the DEA at a time when both Federal and State resources for drug investigations are shrinking. I believe that she will have a difficult time fighting for scarce resources and keeping the drug issue on the national agenda.

After September 11, the FBI transferred 567 agents from counterdrug investigation to counter-terrorism investigations and the DEA was left to fill in the gap without adequate funding. The President's 2004 budget only provides funding for an additional 233 Special Agents. By shutting down popular programs such as the Mobile and Regional Enforcement Teams, DEA has been able to shuffle around 362 agents, making them look like new agents when they are not.

The magnitude of the gap left by the FBI is quite troubling. According to a recent GAO report, the number of FBI Agents working on drug cases has decreased by more than 62 percent, from 891 to 335, since September 2001. And the number of new FBI drug cases has plummeted from 1,825 in fiscal year 2000 to only 310 in the first half of fiscal year 2003.

It is clear that the DEA will need more resources if it is expected to fill the sizeable void left by the FBI. That is why I joined with twelve other Senators to write to the appropriators urging that they provide more money for the DEA to be able to do its job. I hope that at the end of the day the Congress will be able to give them more money than the President requested.

Another issue which relates closely to the work of the DEA, is the Illicit Drug Anti-Proliferation Act, legislation which I authored that became law as part of the PROTECT Act in April. The bill provides Federal prosecutors the tools needed to combat the manufacture, distribution or use of any controlled substance at any venue whose purpose is to engage in illegal narcotics activity. Rather than create a new law, it merely amends a well-established statute to make clear that anyone who knowingly and intentionally uses their property—or allows another person to use their property—for the purpose of distributing or manufacturing or using illegal drugs can be held accountable, regardless of whether the drug use is ongoing or occurs at a single event.

I introduced this legislation after holding a series of hearings regarding the dangers of Ecstasy and the rampant drug promotion associated with some raves. For the past few years Federal prosecutors have been using the so-called ''crack house statute''—a law which makes it illegal for someone to knowingly and intentionally hold an event for the purpose of drug use, distribution or manufacturing—to prosecute rogue rave promoters who profit off of putting kids at risk. My bill simply amended that existing law in two ways. First, it made the ''crack house statute'' apply not just to ongoing drug distribution operations, but to ''single-event'' activities, including an event where the promoter has as his primary purpose the sale of Ecstasy or other illegal drugs. And second, it made the law apply to outdoor as well as indoor activity.

Although this legislation grew out of the problems identified at raves, the criminal and civil penalties in the bill would also apply to people who promoted any type of event for the purpose of illegal drug manufacturing, sale, or use. This said, it is important to recognize that this legislation is not designed in any way, shape or form to hamper the activities of legitimate event promoters. If rave promoters and sponsors operate such events as they are so often advertised—as places for peopled to come dance in a safe, drug-free environment—then they have nothing to fear from this law. In no way is this bill aimed at stifling any type of music or expression—it is only trying to deter illicit drug use and protect kids.

I know that there will always be certain people who will bring drugs into musical or other events and use them without the knowledge or permission of the promoter or club owner. This is not the type of activity that my bill addresses. The purpose of my legislation is not to prosecute legitimate law-abiding managers of stadiums, arenas, performing arts centers, licensed beverage facilities and other venues because of incidental drug use at their events. In fact, when crafting this legislation, I took steps to ensure that it did not capture such cases. My bill would help in the prosecution of rogue promoters who intentionally hold the event for the purpose of illegal drug use or distribution. That is quite a high bar.

I am committed to making sure that this law is enforced properly and have been in close contact with officials from the Drug Enforcement Administration to make sure that the law is properly construed. That is why I was concerned by press reports about a DEA Agent in Billings, Montana who misinterpreted the Illicit Drug Anti-Proliferation Act when he approached the manager of the local Eagles Lodge to warn her that she may be violating the new law if the Lodge allowed the National Organization to Reform Marijuana Laws (NORML) to have a fundraiser at their facility.

I was troubled to hear this because, according to press reports, the Eagles Lodge had no knowledge that there might be drug activity at their location before the DEA approached them. And following the DEA Agent's misguided advice based on an inaccurate understanding of the law, the Lodge decided to cancel the NORML event, leading to an outcry from various groups that the new law has stifled free speech.

As I mentioned, the law only applies to those who ''knowingly and intentionally'' hold an event ''for the purpose of'' drug manufacturing, sale and use. Based upon my understanding of the facts around the NORML fundraising incident, the Eagles Lodge did not come anywhere close to violating that high legal standard.

I had my staff meet with the DEA chief counsel's office to discuss the Eagles Lodge incident and DEA's interpretation of the law. The DEA assured my office that they shared my understanding of the law and that this interpretation of the statute was conveyed to all DEA field offices shortly after the bill was signed into law.

In a June 19, 2003, letter to me from DEA Acting Administrator William B. Simpkins, the DEA acknowledged that the Special Agent ''misinterpreted'' DEA's initial legal guidance on the law and ''incorrectly'' suggested to the Eagles Lodge that the law might apply to the NORML fundraiser. DEA conceded that ''[r]egrettably, the DEA Special Agent's incorrect interpretation of the statute contributed to the decision of the Eagles Lodge to cancel the event.'' In response to this misguided interpretation of the law, the DEA issued on June 17, 2003, supplemental guidance in a memo to all DEA field agents making clear that:

> property owners not personally involved in illicit drug activity would not be violating the Act unless they knowingly and intentionally permitted on their property an event primarily for the purpose of drug use. Legitimate property owners and event promoters would not be violating the Act simply based upon or just because of illegal patron behavior.

I have expressed clearly to Ms. Tandy my expectation that the law will be applied narrowly and responsibly. Ms. Tandy has confirmed that under her direction the DEA will implement the law as it was intended, targeting only those events whose promoters knowingly and intentionally allow the manufacture, sale or use of illegal drugs. In the DEA's June 19, 2003 letter to me, it noted that its initial May 15, 2003 guidance:

> informed [DEA] personnel that [the law's] requirements of 'knowledge' and 'intent' were not changed by the [new] Act. Accordingly, legitimate event promoters, such as bona fide managers of stadiums, arenas, performing arts centers, and licensed beverage facilities should not be concerned that they will be prosecuted simply based upon or just because of illegal patron activity.

Obviously, DEA's May 15th guidance was not sufficient to prevent the unfortunate Eagles Lodge incident but it reveals the Agency's understanding and intent not to target and prosecute the sorts of legitimate businesses cited above. As this is a new law, Ms. Tandy agrees that DEA must and will redouble its efforts in training its agents on the proper legal interpretation.

Finally, let me conclude by making two final responses to some critics of my law who have claimed; one, that it stretches the law beyond its original intention, and two, that it creates a legal standard that will permit innocent businessmen, concert promoters, even homeowners to be prosecuted for the drug use of those who come to their property. Both charges are wrong, as I will now explain.

First, my law amended section 856 of Title 21, U.S. Code. Section 856 became law in 1986. While section 856 has become known popularly as the ''crack house statute,'' it has always been

available to prosecute any venue—not just crack houses—where the owner knowingly and intentionally made the property available for the purpose of illegal drug activity. This fact has long been recognized by the Federal courts. As the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals—the most liberal Federal appellate court in the Nation—said: ''There is no reason to believe that [section 856] was intended to apply only to storage facilities and crack houses.'' [*United States* v. *Tamez*, 941 F.2d 770, 773 (9th Cir. 1991).] Or, in the words of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals: ''it is highly unlikely that anyone would openly maintain a place for the purpose of manufacturing and distributing cocaine without some sort of 'legitimate' cover—as a residence, a nightclub, a retail business, or a storage barn.'' [*United States* v. *Roberts*, 913 F.2d 211, (5th Cir. 1990).]

The suggestion by some that my law expanded section 856 to entities other than traditional crack houses is simply untrue. Rather, in the 17 years section 856 has been on the books, it has been used by the Justice Department to prosecute seemingly ''legitimate businesses'' used as a front for drug activity. Specifically, section 856 has been used against motels, bars, restaurants, used car dealerships, apartments, private clubs, and taverns. [See *United States* v. *Chen*, 913 F.2d 183 (5th Cir. 1990); *United States* v. *Bilis*, 170 F.3d 88 (1st Cir. 1999); *United States* v. *Meschack*, 225 F.3d 556 (5th Cir. 2000); *United States* v. *Tamez*, 941 F.2d 770 (9th Cir. 1991); *United States* v. *Roberts*, 913 F.2d 211 (5th Cir. 1990); *United States* v. *Cooper*, 966 F.2d 936 (5th Cir. 1992); *Huerd* v. *United States*, 1993 U.S. App. LEXIS 2949 (Feb. 10, 1993, 9th Cir.).] The bottom line is that if a defendant hides behind the front of a legitimate business, or allows a drug dealer to do so on their property, they should be held accountable. Just as the criminal law punishes the defendant who ''aids and abets''—like the getaway driver in a bank robbery ring—section 856 has always punished those who knowingly and intentionally provide a venue for others to engage in illicit drug activity.

The second point I will make is that my law does not—does not—change the well-established legal standard of section 856 which is required to secure a criminal conviction. Some critics of my law suggest that Congress just created a new, incredibly low legal threshold for prosecution under my law. In fact, it is the exact opposite. For 17 years, section 856 has required a high burden of proof, and my law does not change that standard at all. So let's get our facts straight.

In order to convict a defendant under section 856, the Justice Department needs to prove 2 things beyond a reasonable doubt—the highest legal standard in our justice system. Specifically, the government must prove that the defendant one, ''knowingly and intentionally'' made their property available, and two, ''for the purpose'' of illegal drug distribution, manufacture or use. These are 2 high hurdles the government must first pass before a defendant can be convicted under section 856. Let me briefly discuss both of these legal elements. As will become quite clear, the Federal courts interpreting section 856 have consistently rejected the very broad interpretations of the statute many critics now assert will result from my law.

Federal courts construing the ''knowledge'' and ''intent'' prong of section 856 have consistently held this to be a very high bar. It's not enough for a defendant to simply think, or have reason to believe, that drug use could occur on their property. Actual knowledge of future drug use, coupled with a specific intention that such use occur, is required. One Federal court discussing the knowing and intentional standard put it this way:

> an act is done ''knowingly'' if done voluntarily and intentionally, and not because of mistake or accident or other innocent reason. The purpose of adding the word ''knowingly'' is to insure that no one will be convicted for an act done because of mistake or accident, or other innocent reason. Actual knowledge on the part of the defendant that she was renting, leasing or making available for use the [property] for the purpose of unlawfully storing, distributing, or using a controlled substance is an essential element of the offense charged. . . . An act is done ''intentionally'' if done voluntarily and purposely with the intent to do something the law forbids, that is, with the purpose either to disobey or to disregard the law. . . . It is not sufficient to show that the defendant may have suspected or thought that the [property] [was] were being used for [illicit drug activity]. [*Chen*, 913 F.2d at 187.]

As explained by the Federal courts, then, section 856 means what it says—the law only applies to defendants who have actual knowledge that their property will be used for drug use and who intend that very outcome. As a result, section 856 could never be used—as some critics have irresponsibly suggested—against the promoters of a rock concert whose patrons include some who are suspected of doing drugs during live music performances. In this way, section 856 is very different than other laws proposed which would impose a ''reckless'' standard—holding, for example, a concert promoter liable where they had reason to believe that drug use might occur.

For example, a bill introduced in the House would create criminal liability for anyone who ''knowingly promotes any rave, dance, music, or other entertainment event, that takes place under circumstances where the promoter knows or reasonably ought to know that a controlled substance will be used or distributed.'' I disagreed with this approach because it would have replaced the high legal standard of section 856, on the books for 17 years, with a much lower standard where a concert promoter could be prosecuted for the illicit drug activity of patrons for which the promoter had no actual knowledge. When I wrote section 856 17 years ago, I and my colleagues required actual knowledge of illicit drug activity. Actual knowledge is still the standard today.

Let me now briefly discuss the second prong under section 856, the requirement that the defendant make their property available ''for the purpose'' of illicit drug activity. Again, courts have interpreted this prong in a way to ensure that section 856 cannot be used against innocent property owners where some incidental drug use occurs on their premises. One Federal court started its discussion of the purpose prong by noting that '' 'purpose' is a word of common and ordinary, well understood meaning: it is 'that which one sets before him to accomplish; an end, intention, or aim, object, plan, project.' '' [*Chen*, 913 F.2d at 189.] Thus, Federal courts have noted that

> it is strictly incumbent on the government to prove beyond a reasonable doubt not that a defendant knowingly maintained a place where controlled substances were used or distributed, but rather that a defendant knowingly maintained a place for the specific purpose of distributing or using a controlled substance. [Id.]

Accordingly, the courts have interpreted that ''purpose prong'' of section 856 to prevent prosecution of defendants who knowingly allowed drug use on their property. In so doing, the courts have recognized that it's not enough to simply know that illicit drug activity is occurring on one's property; the property owner must be maintaining the property for that specific purpose. This is particularly true when section 856 is used against a ''non-traditional crack house,'' such as a residence or business. In fact, a federal appellate court reversed a section 856 conviction against a defendant who had allowed her son to deal drugs out of his bedroom. There was evidence that his mother, the defendant, assisted him in his drug dealing. While the court sustained her conviction under a count of aiding and abetting, it reversed her conviction under section 856, finding that while she knowingly allowed drug dealing on her property, the primary purpose of her apartment was as a residence, not as a venue for illicit drug activity. As the court observed:

> manufacturing, distributing, or using drugs must be more than a mere collateral purpose of the residence. Thus, 'the ''casual'' drug user does not run afoul of [section 856] because he does not maintain his house for the purpose of using drugs but rather for the purpose of residence, the consumption of drugs therein being merely incidental to that purpose.' We think it is fair to say, at least in the residential context, that the manufacture (or distribution or use) of drugs must be at least one of the primary or principal uses to which the house is put. *United States* v. *Verners*, 53 F.3d 291, 296 (10th Cir. 1995).

This analysis makes clear that section 856 cannot be used—as critics of my law claim—against a concert promoter for the incidental drug use of their patrons or against a homeowner for the incidental drug use of a guest at a backyard barbeque. Just as section

856 ''[does not] criminalize simple consumption of drugs in one's home,'' [*United States* v. *Lancaster*, 968 F.2d 1250, 1253 (D.C. Cir. 1992)], it cannot be used to prosecute innocent event promoters, venue owners, or other property owners for the incidental drug use of the patrons or guests.

Here is the bottom line: Section 856 has been on the books for 17 years and I'm unaware of it ever being used to go after a concert promoter, a venue owner, or a private citizen for the incidental drug use of their patrons or guests. Why? Because, as the Federal court decisions I have briefly reviewed today show, we wrote into law a high burden of proof to make sure that innocent actors don't get prosecuted. If you don't know for example, that the guy renting your arena plans to sell drugs, you are off the hook. If you don't intend for the guy renting your arena to sell drugs, you are off the hook. And if you don't intend that the guy renting your arena do so for the specific purpose of selling drugs, you are off the hook.

So let's get our facts straight here. It is just not helpful for critics of section 856 to run around screaming that the ''sky is falling,'' when it has not fallen for 17 years and has no reason to start now. As stated earlier, innocent actors have nothing to fear from this statute and I intend to monitor the enforcement of the Illicit Drug Anti-Proliferation Act closely to make sure that it is used properly. If someone uses a rave, or any other event, as a pretext to sell ecstasy to kids, they should go to jail, plain and simple. But that sad reality should not prevent responsible event promoters and venue owners around this country from putting on live music shows and other events, just because some of their patrons will inevitably use drugs.

In closing, Asa Hutchinson left some big shoes to fill over at DEA, but I believe that Ms. Tandy is up to the task. And it is wonderful that she will be the first woman to head the DEA. I congratulate her on her confirmation.

RECONSTRUCTION OF IRAQ

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, this week, we have heard from many of the Administration's representatives, including several who testified before the Foreign Relations Committee on Tuesday, that our reconstruction efforts in Iraq are going much better that we read in the press reports, especially in the north and the south of the country. I don't dispute that: I was in Iraq earlier this month, and I saw the really remarkable efforts U.S. troops and our reconstruction authorities are making.

But I want to state clearly: Out in our states, public support is ebbing much more quickly than one reads in the Washington media.

There is growing concern about the steady and growing stream of combat fatalities and, as importantly, a sense that we have no strategy for stopping them.

There is great frustration over the extension of military tours of duty in Iraq, something that is especially disruptive to the National Guardsmen and Reservists who are playing such an important role in Iraq.

Last week, for example, an Air National Guard unit from Charleston, the 130th Airlift Wing, was told that rather than have the entire unit return to West Virginia in Early August, as scheduled, half the unit will need to stay on in the Middle East until the end of the year. And before the members of the 130th could even inform their families directly, their relatives back in West Virginia learned this disappointing news from the local papers.

There is increasing unease about the cost of our financial commitments in Iraq, particularly at a time of growing domestic deficits, and our failure to line up significant international contributions.

Americans are a patient people. Our 50-year commitments to Korea, Japan, and NATO attest to that. But the American people insist on information. Our international engagements have succeeded where past Presidents have laid out what our national mission is, how our vital interests are involved, what we anticipate the cost may be, and what our plans are for an exit strategy or to get other countries to share an equitable portion of the burden.

When we don't have that, public support vanishes. There is a tendency among some in Washington to dismiss this as some sort of ''Somalia syndrome.'' But it is not just a passing phenomenon—it's a fundamental part of who we are as a people.

It reflects that contrary to some of the characterizations out there, Americans are not naturally imperialists, and we are not warmongers. And while we believe other people should enjoy the freedoms we cherish, we are not seeking to remake the world in our image. We support our global commitments when we feel America's vital national interests are at stake, and that this is part of a clear and coherent strategy by our political leadership.

When America went to war in March, it commanded the support of a significant majority of Americans. But the administration must realize: It is in danger of losing that support. One can see it in the polls; I definitely hear it when I return to West Virginia. And the change is most pronounced in many people who supported the war back in the spring. They are losing confidence that the administration has a strategy to get our young men and women out of Iraq, and to ensure their safety up until that point.

And it is leading some people to clutch at optimistic, maybe even unrealistic ''quick fix'' solutions, like suggesting we dump the entire Iraq operation into the lap of the United Nations, when Kofi Annan has basically said the U.N. has no interest in taking up the U.S. role in Iraq.

This worries me deeply. America's willingness to stay the course in Iraq isn't a partisan issue. It is, I believe, a vital national priority. America created the current situation in Iraq, and we must make it succeed. It is a fundamental test of American security and American credibility, and it is being watched closely by our foes and our friends alike.

If America withdraws from Iraq before we are able to reconstitute a solid Iraqi government backed up by strong political institutions, we will leave behind a chaotic situation that will quickly become a textbook for other enemies who wonder how to defeat America when our combat forces are unstoppable.

And if the reconstruction in Iraq does not lead to a stable state, it will become impossible to line up allies for future such operations. Even the handful of countries working with us to make Iraq succeed—the British, and the Spaniards and Italians, and the Poles—wills steer clear of us.

It is not too late to turn this around. But is will require clear, consistent communication from the very top of this administration.

In recent weeks, we have learned, in rather haphazard ways, from various administration officials, that we are facing a guerrilla war in Iraq that is targeting American troops with increasing precision, that the financial cost of our occupation is running at twice the level projected, that troop deployments in Iraq will likely be extended, and that some of the countries we were hoping would help share the burden in Iraq are getting cold feet. And frankly, getting complete information has been like pulling teeth, and only reinforces the growing perceptions that decision are being made in a reactive way. I'm sure there are some people who are telling the President, ''stay away from the bad news''—and that is why it is left to officials like Jerry Bremer or General Abizaid to do the honest talking.

The American people need to hear, from the President, not just what a great job our troops did in the initial combat phase, but also why many of our predictions were wrong; what the administration plans to do about it, including getting more international support; and why it is important that we not let these setbacks deter us. Unless we hear some plain, honest talking from the President about how we are dealing with the post-combat challenges in Iraq, I am convinced there will be dramatic further erosion in support for staying the course in Iraq. And I think that is something none of my colleagues here in the Senate would feel good about.