

I commend my leader, Senator REID, for holding firm on this issue. There ought to be an up-or-down vote on this escalation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

#### UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, my good friend, the majority leader, and I have been in a discussion over the last few days, going back to last week, over how to go forward on the Iraq debate. As I have indicated to him both privately and publicly, we on this side of the aisle were certainly looking forward to having an Iraq debate this week and are prepared to do so and are ready to go forward.

I think we all agree at this moment that there is no more important issue facing the Nation than the mission and the fate of the American service men and women in Iraq. This means, of course, that the men and women of this body have no higher duty than to express ourselves openly and honestly on this issue, to take a stand on where we stand. The only truly meaningful tool the Framers gave us to do this was our ability to fund or not fund a war. That is it. This is what Republicans are insisting upon—that the Members of this body express themselves on the question of whether to fund or not to fund the war in Iraq.

I had indicated to my good friend, the majority leader, that I would be propounding another unanimous-consent request at this point, and I will do that now.

I ask unanimous consent that, at a time determined by the majority leader, after consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate proceed en bloc to the following concurrent resolutions under the following agreement: S. Con. Res. 7, the Warner resolution, which is to be discharged from the Foreign Relations Committee; McCain-Lieberman-Graham, regarding benchmarks; Gregg, relating to funding.

I further ask unanimous consent that there be a total of 10 hours of debate equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; provided further that no amendments be in order to any of these measures; further, that at the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to three consecutive votes on the adoption of the concurrent resolutions in the following order, with no further action or intervening action or debate: McCain-Lieberman-Graham, on benchmarks; Gregg, on funding and supporting our troops; S. Con. Res. 7, the Warner resolution.

Finally, I ask unanimous consent that any resolution that does not receive 60 votes in the affirmative, the vote on adoption be vitiated and the concurrent resolution be returned to its previous status.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. Madam President, reserving the right to object, this is basically

the same thing that has been asked before. The issue before the American people is whether the President of the United States, on his own, should be able to send 48,000 American soldiers to Iraq, costing approximately \$30 billion extra.

The Republicans can run, as I said yesterday, but they cannot hide. That is the issue before the American people. We all support the troops, and we have fought very hard, in spite of our misgivings about this war, to make sure they have everything they have needed.

It is interesting that there is a lot of talk about the Gregg amendment. But if you look at the Gregg amendment and at page 2—the last paragraph on page 2 of his amendment—and you look in the Warner amendment on page 3, paragraph 4, it is identical language. Warner has encapsulated within his amendment what Gregg wanted, which is the so-called “resolve clause.”

This is all a game to divert attention from the fact that we have before us now an issue that the American people want us to address: whether there should be a surge, an escalation, an augmentation of the already disastrous war taking place in Iraq, causing 3,100 American deaths, approximately; 24,000 wounded American soldiers, a third of whom are hurt very badly; 2,000 are missing multiple limbs—brain injuries, blindness, paralysis. That is what 8,000 American soldiers now are going through—men and women.

So I ask my friend to amend his request in the following manner:

I ask unanimous consent that the Foreign Relations Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Con. Res. 7, by Senator WARNER, and S. Res. 70, by Senator MCCAIN, and the Senate proceed to their consideration en bloc; that there be 6 hours for debate equally divided between the two leaders or their designees on both resolutions, to be debated concurrently; that no amendments or motions be in order to either resolution; that at the conclusion or yielding back of the time, the Senate vote on Senator MCCAIN’s resolution, followed by a vote on Senator WARNER’s resolution; that if either resolution fails to garner 60 votes, the vote be vitiated and the resolution be returned to its prior status; that immediately following the votes on the resolutions I have just mentioned, the Senate turn to the consideration of H.J. Res. 20, the infamous continuing resolution, funding the Government after February 15 for the rest of the fiscal year; that there be 4 hours for debate on the joint resolution; that no amendments or motions be in order in relation to it; that at the conclusion or yielding back of the time, the Senate vote on final passage of the joint resolution; that if the joint resolution fails to get 60 votes, the vote be vitiated and the joint resolution be returned to the calendar.

I announce that if we are able to do that—dispose of these three items I

have mentioned—this week, or whenever we finish them, then we would begin the Presidents Day recess at the conclusion of this week. One of the things we found is that because of the accelerated work schedule, people are having a lot of work to do at home. So that is why we would do this.

Madam President, there would be no amendments to the CR from either side. I mention that because, in getting to the point where we are, there has been total consultation by the majority and minority, each subcommittee, and the majority and ranking members. The chair and ranking members work very closely. One of the people heavily involved in this, for example, is Senator DOMENICI, my long-term partner on the Energy and Water Subcommittee on Appropriations. He fought for more, and he got more. That happened with many Republicans who spoke out, and most of them did.

I further say that if there were ever a bipartisan measure, it is the continuing resolution. But we have to finish before February 15.

So I ask my friend, the Republican leader, to accept my alteration to his unanimous consent request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the request?

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, reserving the right to object, and I will object, let me remind our colleagues that 4 years ago last month, we were at exactly the same situation. My party came back to the majority. The Democratic majority of the previous Congress had not passed 11 out of the 13 appropriations bills. And what did the new Republican majority do? We took up an omnibus collection of appropriations bills. We had over 100 amendments offered. We gave everybody in the Senate an opportunity to offer amendments, and we disposed of all of those appropriations bills over a couple-week period.

What my good friend, the majority leader, is suggesting is that we take up a continuing resolution of 11 appropriations bills, with no amendments whatsoever, and he offers as an enticement an extra week off. This is completely unacceptable to the minority. First, he is saying that we cannot get adequate consideration to our Iraq proposals. Second, he is saying we cannot have any amendments to an over \$400 billion continuing appropriation. Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I will continue reserving the right to object to my friend’s unanimous consent request. Prior to making a decision on that, I want to read to everybody here from page 3, paragraph 4, of the Warner resolution:

The Congress should not take any action that will endanger United States military forces in the field, including the elimination or reduction of funds for troops in the field, as such an action with respect to funding would undermine their safety or harm their

effectiveness in pursuing their assigned missions.

Madam President, I object.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, it is clear now to the minority that five proposals on our side were too many, three proposals were too many, and two proposals were too many, but the majority leader offered us one last week. He said: I will take one and you take one. So I am going to modify my request of a few moments ago which, as the leader indicated, was exactly the same as my request of late last week. I am going to modify my request.

As I have said repeatedly, the Members on this side of the aisle are ready and willing to proceed with this debate. At the outset, I indicated we were prepared to enter into, as I said a moment ago, an agreement for debate and votes on various resolutions. We had hoped for a number—and it was pretty challenging, frankly, to pare down the number on our side. As I indicated, we started with five. That was rejected from the other side. We pared our proposals down to two. That meant three proposals in total—the Warner proposal and two additional ones—to be debated for a reasonable amount of time and then three votes—the unanimous consent request I just propounded.

I think what we just offered was a reasonable approach and would allow the Senate to have those votes this week. Evidently, as I indicated, three proposals are too many. So, therefore, in order to allow us to move forward with this important debate, I am prepared to have votes on just two resolutions.

Therefore, I ask unanimous consent that at a time determined by the majority leader, after consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate proceed en bloc to two concurrent resolutions under the following agreement: S. Con. Res. 7, the Warner resolution, which is to be discharged from the Foreign Relations Committee; and Senator GREGG's amendment related to the funding and supporting our troops.

I further ask unanimous consent that there be a total of 10 hours of debate equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; provided further that no amendments be in order to any of the measures; further, that at the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to two consecutive votes on the adoption of the concurrent resolutions in the following order, with no further action or intervening debate: the Gregg resolution supporting the troops and S. Con. Res. 7, sponsored by Senator WARNER.

Finally, I ask unanimous consent that any resolution that does not receive 60 votes in the affirmative, the vote on adoption be vitiated and the concurrent resolution be returned to its previous status.

Mr. REID. Reserving the right to object, we have gone from this morning and trying to copy one of the trick plays from the Super Bowl to now

going to the science bill, and I guess it is modern math. We don't accept that, Madam President. What we demand for the American people is an up-or-down vote on the escalation of the war in Iraq. McCain has been filed. Let's vote on it. Let's vote on Warner. That is our proposal. We haven't wavered from that. We will not waiver from that. That is what the American people demand and ultimately they will get. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. McCASKILL). Objection is heard.

The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, as my good friend on the other side of the aisle frequently reminded us last year, the Senate is not the House. It is not possible in this body for the majority to dictate to the minority the contents of this debate. What we are asking for, by any standard, is reasonable: One alternative—just one—to the proposal on which my good friend, the majority leader, is seeking to get a vote. We don't object to having this debate. We are ready and willing to have this debate, anxious to have this debate, but we insist on fundamental fairness.

The Gregg amendment is about the troops. How can we have a debate on Iraq and have no debate about the troops? Do we support them or don't we? That is what the Gregg amendment is about, and Senate Republicans insist that we consider those who are being sent to Iraq, over and above the current troops deployed there, in our debate, which is entirely about the additional troops going to Iraq.

I assume the whole genesis of this debate this week is the question of additional troops going to Baghdad under the direction of General Petraeus to try to quiet the capital city and allow this fledgling democracy to begin to take hold. And the Gregg amendment—Senator GREGG is right here on the floor of the Senate and is fully capable of explaining what the Gregg amendment is about. I ask the Senator from New Hampshire, what is the essence of the Gregg amendment which we seek to have voted on in the context of this Iraq war?

Mr. GREGG. Madam President, I will attempt to read it. I first have to find my glasses. My wife told me I had to use my glasses.

The resolution which I proposed and which I understand the Republican leader has suggested be the Republican alternative or the alternative presented—in fact, it will have Democratic support, I suspect, enough so that maybe the majority leader doesn't want it voted on because it might have so much Democratic support.

In any event, it is a proposal that simply states that it is the sense of the Congress that Congress should not take any action that will endanger U.S. military forces in the field, including the elimination or reduction of funds for troops in the field, as such action with respect to funding would undermine their safety or harm their effec-

tiveness in pursuing their assigned missions.

I don't think it requires a great deal of explanation. It is simply a statement of commitment to our troops which seems reasonable. It is hard for me to understand how we can send troops on a mission, walking the streets of Baghdad—American troops, American men and women—and not say to those men and women: Listen, we are going to support you with the financing, with the logistics, with the equipment you need to be as safe as you possibly can be in this very dangerous mission you are undertaking for our Nation.

That is all it says. I can't understand why the other side isn't willing to allow a vote on that resolution. If they want to vote on the Warner amendment, it doesn't make any sense.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, reclaiming my time, the other side just proposed an agreement that mandates 60 votes on two resolutions. Those are their words on paper. We agree to those terms, but at least we are suggesting that we be allowed to pick the proposal on our side, as Senator GREGG has just outlined what the proposal on our side would be.

The majority leader apparently seeks to dictate to us what the proposal on our side would be. That is simply unheard of in the Senate, that he is telling us that on the continuing resolution, we will get no amendments at all, and on the Iraq resolution, he will pick for us what our proposal is to be. I think that doesn't pass the fairness test.

I see the Senator from New Hampshire on the Senate floor. I wonder if he has any further observations he would like to make.

Mr. GREGG. Madam President, I would simply like to inquire of the Republican leader, have you ever in your experience seen a time when—either the Republican leadership or the Democratic leadership—the majority party says to the minority party: We will set forth the amendments on which we are going to vote, and we will also set forth and write the amendment on which you are going to vote?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I say to my friend from New Hampshire, I have been here now—it is hard to believe—a couple of decades, and I cannot recall a time in which one side has dictated to the other side what their proposal will be in a legislative debate.

Mr. GREGG. I understand, I ask the Republican leader further, especially since it seems ironic in the context of putting forward a commitment to say to the men and women who are fighting for us: We shall give you the support you need when you are sent on a mission; they are not choosing to go on this mission; they are members of the military who, under their responsibility as members of the military, are being sent on a mission; is it not reasonable that we should say to them: We

will give you the logistical support, financial support, the equipment you need in order to fulfill that mission correctly?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I say to my friend from New Hampshire, I can't think of anything more relevant to an Iraq debate about the appropriateness of this new mission, which General Petraeus will lead, than the amendment which Senator GREGG has authored and which we request be our proposal as this debate goes forward.

Mr. GREGG. Madam President, if the Senator will yield just for one further point, would it not be truly unusual in a democratic forum, which is supposed to be the most deliberative body in the world, to not allow the minority to bring forward a resolution—which is probably going to get more than a majority vote should it ever be voted on—which is not contestable as to its purpose—its purpose being well meaning; it is certainly not a purpose that is anything other than to express a sense of support for those who are defending us—would it not be a new form of democracy, maybe closer to the Cuban model, to not allow an amendment presented by the minority as their option but, rather, have the majority write the minority's amendment which would then be voted on? That way the majority gets to write both amendments, I guess is my bottom line.

You have one-party rule, sort of a Cuban model of democracy.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I thank my friend from New Hampshire for his observations about not only the process but the merits of his proposal.

Let me conclude by reiterating once again that I think the Senator from New Hampshire and I and others, including those who have been speaking on the Senate floor on this side this morning, welcome the debate about Iraq policy. We had anticipated having the debate this week. It is not too late to have the debate this week.

We are now down to two proposals, just two proposals. It took a lot of time on our side to get down to one for us and, of course, the majority has a preference of its own. This debate could be wrapped up in relatively short order, and then we could move on with the continuing resolution, where I hope it might be possible for the minority to have at least some amendments.

Madam President, with that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Madam President, the Presiding Officer is a new Member of this body, but she should have seen when the Republicans were in the majority. We didn't have amendments. They filled every tree. I will also say, it speaks volumes here today—volumes. There is not a single person on the other side of the aisle who has come to the floor and supported the troop surge of President Bush—not a single person. I wonder if President Bush is aware

that not a single Republican Senator has come to the floor and said: I support President Bush sending 48,000 more troops to Iraq. That speaks volumes.

I will also say this, Madam President: Senator BOXER, a couple rows back, just a few minutes ago, talked about one short snapshot of one day from the Los Angeles Times: Scores of people being murdered and killed and mutilated; a little girl leaving school with blood-drenched steps over which she was walking. One could see the red in the photograph, and Senator BOXER was one, two, three rows back. We could all see that.

Not a single person has come to the floor to support the surge, but that is what is dictating what we vote on today. It is not the majority leader. We, for the American people, need to have this debate.

Also, I certainly care a lot about the Senator from New Hampshire—and he knows that is true—but I have to smile. What has he done the first few weeks of this legislative session? He has brought to the Senate floor during the debate on ethics, lobbying reform, and earmark reform the line-item veto, and then he brought it forth again on minimum wage. And now to stop a debate on the escalation of the war in Iraq, he now comes up with this other diversionary tactic. He is a wonderful man, a gentleman, but, Madam President, do you know what he kind of reminds me of this first few weeks of this legislative session? Somebody who comes into a basketball game, not to score points, just to kind of rough people up, just to kind of get the game going in a different direction.

The game we have going today has nothing to do with supporting the troops. We support the troops. Every speech that a Democrat has given in the last 4 years has talked about how much we support the troops. In fact, we were the first to raise the issue. We were the first to raise the issue about a lack of body armor. We raised that first. We support the troops. We have done that not only with our mouths but with the way we voted.

The debate in the Senate should be on the resolution submitted by the Senator from Arizona, which they have obviously dropped—the resolution from the Senator from Arizona and Senator LIEBERMAN from Connecticut. They threw that out in an effort to go for this diversion.

So why don't we see how the minority feels about voting on the President's surge of \$30 billion and 48,000 troops? That is what this debate is about.

Mr. GREGG. Madam President, will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. REID. Sure.

Mr. GREGG. First, I appreciate the Senator's generous comments. I take them as a compliment. I have been active legislatively. That is, obviously, our job.

I ask the Senator: He heard me read the language of my resolution earlier, and I will read it again, if he wishes.

Mr. REID. If I can interrupt, and I do that apologetically, I read it before the Senator from New Hampshire arrived in the Chamber because it is in the Warner resolution.

Mr. GREGG. Good. If the Senator is of such a mind, I ask if this were a free-standing resolution brought to the floor, would the Senator vote for my resolution?

Mr. REID. I don't think I have to make that judgment now because the judgment, I say to my friend from New Hampshire, is not some diversionary matter. The issue before this body and the issue before the American people—that is why we are getting hundreds of phone calls in my office and other Senate offices around the country. The issue is does the Senate support the President's surge? That is the question.

I have to say the Senator from Arizona at least was willing to put his name on it and move forward. We haven't heard a lot of speeches in favor of his resolution. Where are they?

Mr. GREGG. Madam President, if the Senator will yield further, I guess I find it difficult to argue that it is a diversion when the resolution that I am proposing simply says that we will support the troops who are being asked to carry out the mission they have been assigned. This is not a diversion. This is a responsibility, I would think, of every Member of the Senate to take a position on whether they support giving the troops who have been assigned the task, the equipment, the financial support, and the logistical support they need to protect themselves and carry out that mission.

I think to call that a diversion does not do justice to our troops in the field, so I am concerned about that. It does seem to me for the Senator from Nevada to take that position is inconsistent with the basic philosophy of Congress, which is that the first responsibility in a matter of warfighting is to support the troops.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I have been asked to yield to my friend from Washington, and I am glad to do that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I asked the majority leader to yield for a question. I have been on the Senate floor and listened to the exchange between the majority leader and the Republican leader and, quite frankly, I was astonished and I want to understand if the majority leader heard the same thing I did.

The Republican leader came back to you and offered to remove from consideration the McCain amendment, which is the pro-escalation amendment, essentially offering a vote on just the Warner and Gregg amendment. Leaving aside what this says about the lack of support of the proposal on their side, are we hearing from the other side that

they do not even want a vote on whether they support the President's escalation?

It seems to me we are hearing a phony debate request on who supports the troops. That is not a debate that we need to have. Everyone in this body supports the troops. I ask the leader if he heard the request from the Republicans the same way I did, that they no longer even want to have a vote on whether they support the President's escalation.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I say to my friend from Washington that we have a record of supporting the troops. We did it in Kosovo, we did it through the entire Balkans, and we did it in Afghanistan. We did it in Afghanistan with very few questions asked, and rightfully so. We have supported every effort made by this President to defeat the war on terror, with rare exception. But the troops in the field? Never, never have we wavered from that.

In fact, I don't know of a speech, although there could be some given, where a Democrat has talked about the war in Iraq and hasn't talked about how much we appreciate the work done by these valiant troops and the sacrifices of their families. That is why we were stunned during the State of the Union Address when the President even mentioned the veterans.

I am happy to have answered the question from the Senator from Washington.

Mr. McCAIN. Madam President, if the Senator will yield for a question.

Mr. REID. I yield.

Mr. McCAIN. I thank the Senate majority leader for yielding for a question, and I appreciate his willingness to engage in a dialogue on this issue.

In reference to the question of the Senator from Washington to the majority leader, I do want our resolution debated. We are trying to move forward. As I think the Senator from Nevada is aware, there was a proposal to have a 60-vote, which is the way the Senate does business, on three resolutions—on the Warner, McCain, and Gregg resolutions—and that was turned down. I only agreed to the latest proposal because I think we need to move the process forward.

I guess what I am asking the Senator from Nevada is, isn't it really true that the way we do business here does require 60 votes? It is just a reality of the way the Senate functions. When there was an attempt a year ago, 2 years ago, actually, with the so-called nuclear option, I was one who fought hard to preserve the right of the majority to have 60 votes in the case of the appointment of judges, and I think we reached a bipartisan agreement on that.

So I still am a bit puzzled why we could not have a vote on my resolution that would require 60 votes in order for it to be adopted, just as it would be for the Warner resolution and as it would be for the Gregg resolution. I don't quite understand why we couldn't do that, as we have done hundreds of

times in the past, as the Senator knows, because we have been in the Senate for many years.

That is my question. Again, I thank the majority leader for allowing me to engage in this discussion with him.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I say to my friend who came to the House at the same time as myself, and then we came to the Senate together—in fact, there is only one person ahead of me in seniority, and that is the Senator from Arizona because the State of Arizona has more people in it than the State of Nevada—no one has ever doubted the courage of the Senator from Arizona. I have read the books. I know about Senator McCAIN. He has not only been heroic on the field of battle but also legislatively, and I respect that.

But I say to my friend, yes, there are 60 votes required on some things in this body. Not everything. The vast majority of legislation that passes here is with a simple majority. I would say to my friend, recognizing that it does take 60 votes, that is why I offered to do the deal: McCain, 60 votes; Warner, 60 votes. That is the proposal I made.

That is pending before the body right now, and that has been turned down five or six times. So I would be willing to do it on a simple majority, if you want to do McCain on a simple majority or the Warner resolution on a simple majority. I would try to get that done. Right now, Madam President, we have the proposal I have made.

I do say that the debate is not whether we support the troops. That is a diversion. We support the troops. The issue before this body is whether the American people deserve to see how their Senator is going to vote; whether their Senator approves the surge, the escalation, the augmentation of 48,000 troops, costing approximately \$30 billion extra. That is what the American people care about, not whether we support the troops. We all support the troops.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, will the Senator from Nevada yield for a question?

Mr. REID. I will be happy to yield.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I want to understand what has happened over on the other side, the Republican side. Is it my understanding they have asked now to drop the McCain-Lieberman amendment?

Mr. REID. I have to be honest with my friend from Illinois, who also came with us at the same time from the House to the Senate, that the answer is, yes. The Lieberman amendment has been given up.

Mr. DURBIN. If I might continue through the Chair to ask the Senator from Nevada a question, on the issue that I think is before America today—whether we should escalate the number of troops into this war in Iraq—we had offered to the Republican side a choice between two Republican amendments: Senator WARNER's amendment, which said the President's policy is wrong, and Senator McCAIN's amendment,

which says the policy is advisable and should be followed. Even given the option of two Republican amendments, the Republican minority, yesterday, voted to deny any opportunity for the Senate to debate two Republican amendments?

Mr. REID. I would say to my friend, yes, that is true. We were willing because the Senator from Arizona had the ability, the courage, and the dignity to put this issue before the American people, even though—and he knows this—the vast majority of American people do not support the escalation in Iraq. But he did it. We were willing to take two Republican resolutions—one supporting the surge, one opposing the surge—and let Senators from every State in the Union raise their hand and tell the American people how they feel about it.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I might ask the Senator from Nevada whether this resolution being offered by Senator GREGG really is focused not on the major issue of escalating the war but somehow is focused on supporting the troops. Even the Warner resolution, a Republican resolution, has the identical language of the Gregg resolution when it comes to that support of the troops; is that not true?

Mr. REID. I say to my friend that the rumor around here is that Senator WARNER put that in there thinking he could get the support of the Senator from New Hampshire, but, obviously, he was wrong.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I might also ask the Senator whether it appears to him now that the Republicans, at this point, don't want to debate either of the Republican amendments and want to change the subject; that they want to move to a Gregg resolution, which deals with, as the Senator has just said repeatedly, support for the troops, which is not an issue?

We all support the troops. It appears to me that we have made no progress in the last 24 hours, and I would ask the Senator from Nevada if he has a different conclusion.

Mr. REID. I say to my friend that the only thing I sense this afternoon—and I have to say it with a smile on my face, and I hope everyone recognizes this—is that every piece of legislation we have brought up, the Senator from New Hampshire has tried to throw a monkey wrench into it. It happened on ethics, it happened on the minimum wage, and now on this Iraq issue.

I guess my dear friend, who has a stellar political record as Governor, Member of the House of Representatives, United States Senator, chairman of the Budget Committee—and I have commented for the record many times about my admiration for him, but I guess he is the designated “see if we can mess up the legislation” guy this year. I would hope in the future to get somebody I don't care so much about because it is hard for me to try to oppose my dear friend from New Hampshire. Maybe when they do this every couple of months they will change.

Mr. McCAIN. Madam President, will the Senator yield for one more question?

Mr. REID. I will be happy to yield.

Mr. McCAIN. Madam President, again, I appreciate the courtesy of the majority leader.

Is it not true that when the Senator says he supports the troops, that there is disapproval of what they are doing and that the Senator does not think their mission is going to succeed? And is it not true that maybe some of the troops may not view that as an expression of support?

I talked to many men and women in the military in recent days, ranking from private to general. Isn't it true that most of them, if you had the opportunity to talk to them, would say: When they do not support my mission, they do not support me?

Therefore, isn't it just a little bit of an intellectual problem to say: Of course, we support the troops; of course, we support the troops; of course, we support the troops, but we are sending you over—and they are going because this is a nonbinding resolution—aren't we saying that we think they are going to fail and this is a vote of no confidence?

The so-called Warner amendment, by the way, is not a Republican amendment, no matter whose name is on it.

Is it not true that when I look one of these soldiers or marines in the eye and say: I really support you, my friend, and I know you are going into harm's way, but I don't think you are going to succeed, in fact, I am against your mission, but I support you, that they do not buy it? They do not buy it, I will say to my friend from Nevada, and don't think that they do.

So I would ask my friend if it isn't true a vote of no confidence is a vote of no confidence to the men and women who are serving in the military. It doesn't sell.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I also have had the opportunity to go to Iraq as many times as my friend from Arizona, and I also speak to the troops and the people at the Pentagon. I have to respectfully suggest to my friend that there are many individuals whom I have spoken to who really like what we have suggested—we, the Democrats—that there be a redeployment of troops.

Does that mean they all pull out of Iraq and leave immediately? Of course, it doesn't. But redeploy the troops. Redeploy the troops. Redeploy them to do what? Counterterrorism, force protection, and training the Iraqis. And my contacts in the military say they think our proposal is pretty good. We were on this proposal before the Iraq Study Group, but they adopted it, and I hope they got it from us, and that is that there should be a regional conference, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and, yes, Iran. This is a regional problem. This war will not be handled and dealt with and taken care of militarily. It can only be done diplomatically.

We are a wonderful fighting force, and we will continue to be, but where we have lost our edge is diplomatically. We have not done well at all in that regard, and the people I have talked to in the military support what we are trying to do: redeployment; they support a regional conference; they support, of course, recognizing that this must be handled politically. There has to be some meaningful reconstruction that goes forward—producing less oil now than before the war, less potable water, and less electricity. These are the things which have to be changed, and the people I talk to in the military think we are headed in the right direction.

They also think we are headed in the right direction when we speak out on the state of deterioration of our military. This war has taken a toll on our equipment—not on our troops alone, on our equipment. It is going to cost \$75 billion to bring the military up to the situation they were in prior to this war. They are grateful we are fighting for them in that regard.

So, Madam President, I respect—and I don't have the military background of my friend from Arizona, but I have contacts in the military, and I think a lot of those people are more willing to talk to me than someone who is running for President and someone who is more noteworthy than I am. He is better known in the military, and they know he can respond to them probably better than I. So they are willing to tell me a lot of things they wouldn't tell someone as significant as JOHN McCAIN.

So, Madam President, I think the Democratic plan we have enunciated is pretty good, much of which we have enunciated for a long time and has been picked up by the Iraq Study Group.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, would the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. REID. Certainly.

Mr. DURBIN. I would like to ask the Senator from Nevada the following question: If I follow the inquiry of the Senator from Arizona, it leads me to this conclusion—and let me add my voice in chorus commanding his service to our country and commanding his courage. I share the admiration, and I mean it sincerely, I say to the Senator from Arizona. But his argument goes something like this: If you are not loyal to the policies of the Commander in Chief, then you are not loyal to the troops. If you are not prepared to say you will stand behind the policy, the military policy of the President, whether you agree with it or not, then you do not respect the troops and don't have confidence in the troops. Nothing is further from the truth.

I ask the Senator from Nevada, does he think it is possible to disagree with the President's policies and still be loyal to the troops? Is it possible to say the President was wrong in not bringing more countries in as allies in this conflict before we invaded and still be

loyal to the troops? Is it possible to say we didn't send enough soldiers when we should have and still be loyal to the troops? Is it possible to say disbanding the Army of Iraq was a bad decision and still be loyal to America's troops? Is it possible to say the situation that is grave and deteriorating in Iraq is evidence of a need for a new direction and still be loyal to the troops?

I just don't buy the premise by the Senator from Arizona that if you question the policy of the President, somehow you are disloyal to the soldiers. They are the ones following orders from the Commander in Chief. We have a special obligation to them—I think a loyalty to them—far and beyond any Chief Executive.

I would ask the Senator from Nevada if he believes you can be loyal to the troops and still disagree with the President?

Mr. REID. I think that is part of being a patriotic Member of this Congress.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia is recognized.

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, I was, unfortunately, engaged in a briefing in S. 407 on the most recent NIE, and I have just come down to join my colleagues on the Senate floor and I caught some portions of the debate. But I would like to say to my colleagues that the Senator from Virginia, together with probably six or eight other Republicans, has been discussing this issue very carefully and thoughtfully and respectfully.

Frankly, we have taken to heart what the President said when he addressed the Nation on January 10. His very words were: "If there are those with ideas, we will consider them." We accept that invitation by our President and have tried in a very respectful way to simply state that we have some serious concern with the level of 21,500 additional troops. Now we learn it could even be larger than that, in testimony, open testimony this morning with the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. It could be 3,000 or 4,000 more. We tried in a very respectful way simply to express our concerns about an increase of that level at a time when polls show most of the Iraqi people don't want us there, much less increase the force. Now, I am not following the polls, but we are asking our troops to go into a very heated, emotional situation in that country. We simply said to the President: Shouldn't we put more emphasis on the utilization of the Iraqi forces? Shouldn't we let them bear the brunt of such additional security as must go into Bagh-dad?

We learned this morning that the efforts to build up the forces have fallen short. I am not going to pronounce judgment on what happened on just 2 or 3 days' reporting, but clearly the number of Iraqis showing up is far below the estimates or significantly below the estimates we anticipated their participation would be in this operation which, in many respects, is to

be joint. We talked with General Pace this morning about my concern of this concept of joint command and control. He assured us the American forces would have a linear straight line from an American senior officer right down to the sergeants operating the platoons on the front lines. But nevertheless the Iraqis are going to have their chain of command, and I think that puts a challenge to us.

But I don't want to digress from my main point. Our group, in a conscientious and a respectful way, even wrote into the resolution that we in no way contest the right of the President of the United States under the Constitution to take the actions he has taken thus far and will take. But as long as I have been in this Chamber—now in my 29th year—I have always tried to respect another Senator's way of thinking. I don't question his integrity or her integrity or their patriotism or anything else. I do not do that now. I wish to make my points based on what I have put forth in this resolution with about six other Republican colleagues and a number of Democrats.

We simply want to suggest—and we use the word "urge"—we urge you, Mr. President, not "direct you" or "you shall do this," we simply urge that you take into consideration all the options by which you can bring down this level and consider greater utilization of the Iraqi forces.

Then we have the subsidiary question that this program is in three parts—one part military. So much of our focus has been on that. There is a diplomatic part. There is an economic part. In our testimony today with the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman, we stressed the need for all three of those parts to come together at one time to have the effect that the President desires with his new plan. Somehow, we gained the impression today that maybe the political part and perhaps the economic part are not quite as far along as some of the military thinking and planning. Actually, the troops are moving in as we debate this on the Senate floor.

So there were several questions we respectfully raised with the President, urging him to take a look at this, by means of which to lessen—lessen the total number of 21,500 and, indeed, more now—troops.

We also point out the importance of the benchmarks. That is all in there. We carefully lay out that the benchmarks should be clearly and fully understood by both sides and a method put in place by which we can assess the compliance or noncompliance for those benchmarks. The Secretary of Defense today, in his testimony to us, in response to questions from this Senator and others, said: Yes, we will put in a mechanism by which to evaluate the degree to which the Iraqi compliance is taken with respect to benchmarks, the benchmarks that basically have to support the President's plan. In addition, we put in the resolution of the Senator from New Hampshire. I think it is im-

portant that we have an expression in here about the non-cutoff of funds.

So our resolution has been presented to try as best we can to put together right here on the floor of the Senate a bipartisan consensus. I think the American public is entitled to see whether the Senate, an institution that is followed throughout the world, can come together and express in a single document—accompanied by lots of debate but in a single document—a joinder of a number of Republicans and a number of Democrats, so it is truly bipartisan, and therefore the American public will get, I think, the sense of confidence that this body is carrying out its responsibility under the Constitution to speak to this issue and to put onto a piece of paper what we think is the nearest a group of us can gather and express ourselves. And that includes a vote.

I am not going to enter into further debate with the two leaders. I think they are trying to work out and resolve this problem. I support my leader with respect to the cloture, and that raises a question: How can I advocate that I strongly adhere to my resolution and at the same time support my leader? Well, when I first came to this Chamber many years ago, the old-time Senators who taught me so many lessons said: This is what separates the Senate from the House—the ability to have this almost unlimited debate by a single Senator. And it is, throughout the history of this institution, one of its revered tenets and its rules. To take that and deny it, deny Senators the ability to bring up their own resolutions to express their own views, is a curtailment that I believe we should consider long and hard. That is why I cast that vote yesterday.

So I leave it to the two leaders, but I come back again to the need for this great institution to express itself through the votes of hopefully a significant number of Senators, that this is what we believe is the best course of action for our Nation to take as we revise our strategy in Iraq, as we move ahead. And in our resolution, we put in there ever so expressly that we agree with the President; it would be disastrous were we to allow this Government to collapse not knowing what government might or might not take their place, and to allow the Iraqi people to lose the ground they gained through courageous votes several times to put this Government together. It would be bad for Iraq, it would be bad for the region, and it could have ramifications on world peace and our efforts to stem this terrible growth of terrorism worldwide.

I yield the floor.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the time used by the two leaders in the exchange on the floor not be counted against the 90 minutes on each side.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask unanimous consent to proceed for 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington is recognized.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, war is the most serious and the most consequential issue we can debate here in the Senate. American lives, American security, and America's future are all on the line when our country decides questions of war and peace. For years, we have been denied a real opportunity to fully debate this war in Iraq, a war that has now claimed more than 3,000 American lives with no end in sight.

Last November, the voters sent us a message. They want a new direction. What do we hear from the President? More of the same. In fact, his plan is to escalate the war by putting up to 48,000 more Americans in the middle of a deadly civil war. They are two completely different approaches. On one side, we have the American people, the Iraq Study Group, generals who have spoken out, and a bipartisan majority of Congress. On the other side, we have the President and his supporters. In a democracy, we resolve these issues through debate. We in the Senate are ready for that debate. We are ready to move in a new direction, and it starts by putting this Senate on record as opposing the President's plan to escalate the war in Iraq.

I have been looking forward to finally having this debate in the Senate, but apparently some of the Republicans have a very different strategy. They don't want to have a real debate. They don't want to consider the resolutions that have been offered. In fact, I think the discussion we just witnessed right now showed that to us.

Last night, by voting against a motion to proceed to this debate, they said they didn't want to talk about this. Now, I am not here today to question their motives, but I do want to point out the consequences. Every day they block a debate, they send a message that Congress supports escalation. Every day they block a debate, they deny our citizens a voice in a war that has cost us dearly in dollars and in lives. And every day they block a debate, they are blocking the will of the American public.

I am on the Senate floor today because I know this debate is long overdue, and I am not going to let anyone silence me, the troops for whom I speak, or the constituents I represent. Ever since the start of combat operations in March of 2003, I have been very frustrated that we have been denied a chance to hold hearings, a chance to ask critical questions, a chance to demand answers, to hold those in charge accountable, and to give the American people a voice in a war that is costing us terribly. We are going to have that debate whether some in this Senate like it or not.

Four years ago, I came to the Senate to discuss the original resolution to give the President the authority to wage war in Iraq. At that time, I asked a series of questions, including: What is

the mission? What will it require? Who is with us in this fight? What happens after our troops go in? How will it impact the Middle East? How will it affect the broader war on terror? And are we being honest with the American people about the costs of that war?

After exploring those questions back almost 4 years ago, I announced on October 9 of 2002 that I could not support sending our men and women into harm's way on an ill-defined solo mission with so many critical questions unanswered.

Now, here we are today, 4 years later, \$379 billion and more than 3,000 American lives taken. Now the President wants to send more Americans into the middle of a civil war against the wishes of the majority of the public and Congress?

As I look at the President's proposed escalation, I am left with the exact same conclusion I met with 4 years ago. I cannot support sending more of our men and women into harm's way on an ill-defined solo mission with so many critical questions unanswered. Today, President Bush wants to send Americans into battle without a clear mission, without equipment, without an endgame and without explaining the cost.

When he tried it 4 years ago, I stood up and spoke out and I voted no. Again today, President Bush wants to send more Americans into battle without a clear mission, without equipment, without an endgame and without explaining the costs. Once again, I say: Not on my watch. We need a new direction, not more Americans in the middle of a civil war. I will vote for a bipartisan resolution to send a clear message that we oppose the surge. It is the first step in demanding a new direction in Iraq.

No debate on Iraq can begin without first recognizing our men and women in uniform who risk their lives and all too often give up their lives to keep all of us safe. Whenever our country calls, they answer, no matter the cost to them or their families. They are our best. They are our brightest, they are our bravest, and I hope to give them a voice in this debate.

While most Americans today are going about as normal, our troops and their families are quietly making tremendous sacrifices. The burdens of this war have not been shared equally, and we owe so much to those who shoulder those heavy burdens.

I had a chance to visit servicemembers from my home State on the ground in Kuwait and in Baghdad. Every one of them makes us proud. I have sat down with servicemembers and their families at Camp Murray, at McChord Air Force Base, at Fairchild Air Force Base. I have talked with returning servicemembers in every corner of my State. I have worked to help give them the health care and the benefits and the transition and support they deserve.

My home State of Washington has made tremendous sacrifices to help us

fight and win the war on terror. To date, more than 59,000 servicemembers with the Washington State connection have served in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Currently, there are nearly 10,000 people with the Washington State connection who are serving in OEF and OIF. According to the Department of Defense, as of January 20, for OEF and OIF, 702 servicemembers whose home of record is Washington State have been injured. That is 702 injured from my State. In addition, 66 servicemembers whose home of record is my home State of Washington have paid the ultimate sacrifice. The number is even higher when you include those who have a connection to Washington State.

Each one of those brave Americans is someone whose mother or father, sister or brother, daughter or son, their families are never going to be the same. Their communities will never be the same. I offer my prayers for those who have sacrificed for our country. We owe them a debt that can never fully be repaid.

After nearly 4 years of losses and misrepresentations and miscalculations, the American people have said they want a new direction in Iraq. Generals have spoken out calling for a new direction. The bipartisan Iraq Study Group called for a new direction. Yet President Bush has ignored everyone and is now pushing to send even more of our American troops into the middle of a civil war. He is wrong. And a bipartisan resolution is the first step we can take in helping to forge a new direction.

But now what we have is Republicans who are denying the Senate a chance to vote for that new direction. In fact, they are preventing the Senate from even debating the merits of that direction. They may have stopped us from moving forward last night, but they cannot stop this debate forever. The American people would not allow it.

If the Republicans stop their obstruction and start allowing the Senate to debate this misguided surge proposal, there are plenty of questions we have to ask. What would be the impact of a surge? How would it affect our men and women in uniform? Will it put more of them into the crossfire and cause more deaths and injuries? My home State is home to Fort Lewis and two of the Army Stryker Brigades. How is the surge going to affect them? Will some members see their current deployment extended? Will others see their deployment date moved up? Will all of them have the equipment they need when they are there? Those are the first questions we have to ask.

How will the surge affect our ability to care for our returning veterans? We are having trouble meeting their needs today; how will we do the job in an escalated war?

I have heard several Members on the other side demand ideas from Democrats, and my first response is simple:

To discuss ideas, shouldn't we discuss, first, the President's ideas? He is, after all, the Commander in Chief. That is the point of the resolutions, to foster a debate on the President's plan for the future of Iraq. But the Senate Republicans would not allow that. The Republicans' obstruction and the President's decision so far have left us with very few options.

I am looking at every resolution and every proposal. I am looking forward to having hearings and getting the facts and moving forward in a bipartisan way.

Personally, I believe the way forward should include three steps. First of all, we should strategically redeploy our troops. Second, we should work with Iraq's neighbors and other countries in the area to build a regional framework. And third, we need the Iraqis to take ownership of their own country and their own future. We can send troops for decades and never have a peaceful, stable Iraq until the Iraqi people are willing to work together for a purpose that is larger than their own tribe or their own sect or their own self.

We need to refocus our efforts on the war on terror, on fighting al-Qaida, and on addressing the other challenges that threaten our security. I am very concerned by the reports we hear about Afghanistan, that it is sliding backward and becoming more unstable. Those are some of the steps I would take to improve our security. That is the debate we ought to be having.

Before I conclude, let me address two concerns. First, some people have suggested that if you question the President's policies, you are somehow hurting our troops. As the Vice President would say, hogwash. Supporting our troops means giving them a clear mission, making sure they have the equipment and support they need and making sure we have a clear endgame. If any of those critical ingredients are missing, it is our duty to question the policy until we provide our troops with what they need. Sending more Americans into the middle of a civil war without a clear mission, without equipment, without support, without an endgame, is endangering our troops, not supporting them.

I don't shrink from war. I voted for the war in Afghanistan. My father served in World War II and he was injured in combat. I know war is sometimes necessary. But I also know that if we don't answer the critical questions, our troops pay the price. For too long, partisans have claimed to be speaking for our troops but have blocked the discussions that could truly protect them. I say, no more.

Finally, some people say that a non-binding resolution is not enough. And I agree. That is why this is a first step. We can't take the other steps until this Congress goes on record, in a bipartisan voice, telling the President the surge is wrong. Once we have done that, the ball is in the President's court. But today, Senate Republicans

are preventing us from getting there. If he still will not change course, we will look at the other tools before us.

Senators have discussed a wide series of steps that we could take. I will review all of them. We are also holding hearings to find out what options we can take. This is the first step. If the President doesn't hear us, we will take the next step. And the next step. And the one after that.

I understand that many Americans are frustrated that our troops are in the middle of a civil war. I am frustrated, too. I wish we had been allowed to start this process, these hearings, these debates and votes a long time ago. But we are moving aggressively forward now. Democrats have been in charge now for 5 weeks. And already, finally, we are having more debates, more hearings, more progress, than we have had in the past 3 years. But I can promise you, this is only a beginning.

We can't have these debates if the Republicans are blocking us in an open discussion of the war. The Republicans need to stop denying a real debate in the Senate, so that together we can move our country in a new direction. I believe for us to have an impact, Congress has to speak out in a clear, bipartisan voice. We could vote on hundreds of resolutions that make us feel better, but that would not help us change direction. It is a strong, bipartisan message from Congress to the executive branch and to the country that has the power to make progress.

I am willing to take the time and do this right and to build the support we need so that at the end of the day we can have a real impact. I strongly oppose the surge. I believe escalation is the wrong direction. I will vote to put the Senate on record opposing the surge if the Republicans will end their filibuster. I will continue to fight for new direction in Iraq.

For too long, the voices of our troops and our citizens have been blocked. Today, Senate Republicans are trying to continue that obstruction. I say, no longer. The debate must begin because our country will be better for it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. DODD. Madam President, how much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 15 minutes.

#### IRAQ

Mr. DODD. Madam President, let me commend my colleague from the State of Washington for her comments and her views. I associate myself with many of the things she expressed in the Senate. I congratulate her for her words, her passion, and her strong feelings about where we stand today on this issue.

Let me also commend the Democratic leader for his efforts to engage in what is probably the single most important debate this Senate could pos-

sibly be engaged in. There are other very important matters at home and around the globe—but everyone would agree, regardless of your views on policy, that the issue of Iraq and where we stand and the effort by the President to increase the number of troops on the ground in Iraq, particularly to place them in the large, highly densely populated urban areas of Iraq, is one of the most serious issues facing our country.

We have had a series of serious and thought-provoking hearings conducted by Chairman BIDEN of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee over the last number of weeks on this issue, with people who represent a variety of ideological perspectives. Yet without fear of contradiction, I believe the overwhelming majority of the witnesses who have appeared before that committee have expressed serious reservations about this escalation, this surge, placing some 21,000 of our young men and women into Baghdad to try and act as a referee in what we all admit today is clearly a civil war.

Having this debate is important. I wish to take, if I can, the few minutes allotted to me to express my concerns about the process, my concerns about the surge, and my concerns about the overall direction of the policy in Iraq. There is not a lot of time to do that, but let me share some thoughts.

First of all, I believe that every Member in this Chamber, regardless of his or her view on the issue before the Senate regarding Iraq, would do everything he or she could to make sure that our brave men and women in uniform, serving in harm's way, would receive everything they could possibly need to defend themselves. That ought not to be a debating point. I know of no one in this Senate who feels otherwise. And the fact that we have to have some discussion about this very point is a reflection, I think, of what has gone wrong in this debate already.

In fact, I point out that over the last 4 years or so, there have been amendments offered by those of us here to provide different additional resources, such as for body armor, because we felt our troops were not getting what they needed. There has been significant discussion here in the wake of testimony offered by our senior military leaders about what has happened to the combat readiness of our troops as a result of our failure to continue to provide the kind of equipment and support they deserved over the years. Certainly what has happened to veterans coming back has also been the subject of debate. But, nonetheless, I believe most Members here, if not all Members here, believe our troops deserve the kind of support they ought to have when they are serving in harm's way.

And so, the debate is not whether you support our troops. The debate is whether the policy direction the President wishes to lead us in is the right one. That is a debate which ought to occur in this Chamber. Frankly, in my view, it ought to be a debate that re-

solves around at least a legislative vehicle that might have some meaning to it, some bite, some teeth, some reality, some accountability.

My leaders know I have strong reservations about a sense-of-the-Senate debate. Now, normally, we have sense-of-the-Senate resolutions when there is a consensus that develops. Normally, sense-of-the-Senate resolutions are offered around matters that are non-controversial and we wish to express ourselves regarding these matters, so we all sign on or virtually everyone signs on.

I would say if, in fact, the goal here was to get 70 or 80 Members of this Chamber—Republicans and Democrats—to sign on to a proposition that said we think the surge and escalation is the wrong thing to be doing, then the vehicle of a sense-of-the-Senate resolution would have value. But I would suggest here we are into the second day of this debate and we cannot even decide what sense-of-the-Senate resolution we want to debate.

So if you are sitting out there watching this Chamber at this moment, in terms of where we ought to be going and what the effect of what we are about to do is, it is rather confusing, to put it mildly, as to where we stand in all of this. We cannot even decide what sense-of-the-Senate resolutions to bring up. If we are going to have a debate around here that is meaningful, why not debate something that is meaningful?

So my concerns are, in many ways, that given this moment in time, before these young men and women are placed in harm's way—because I know full well, after a quarter of a century here, once they are on the ground, once they are in place, the debate changes. The debate changes. So if we are truly concerned about dealing with the surge and escalation, then I believe we ought to be engaging in a debate that has some meaningful outcomes when it comes to the decision of whether we go forward.

I, for one, would like to see a new authorization come to this body to be debated. The resolution on which we are operating today is one that was crafted 5 years ago. It was fundamentally linked to weapons of mass destruction and the conduct of Saddam Hussein. The first argument was, of course, a fiction. There were no weapons of mass destruction. And the second argument is no longer viable. Saddam Hussein is gone.

Today, we are being asked to place men and women in uniform in the middle of a civil war. It seems to me that if the President of the United States wants that to be a policy endorsed by the American people through the actions of this body, then we ought to be voting on a matter that says this is something we agree with and go forward. That would have some meaning to it, it seems to me. If we rejected it, then the President would have a strong answer from the Congress about whether we are about to continue to finance