

year, General Hayden, the Director of the CIA, responded to a question regarding what would happen if we pulled out now from Iraq. Director Hayden responded, Three very quick areas:

No. 1, more Iraqis die from the disorder inside Iraq. No. 2, Iraq becomes a safe haven, perhaps more dangerous than the one Al Qaeda had in Afghanistan. And finally, No. 3, the conflict in Iraq bleeds over into the neighborhood and threatens serious regional instability.

He went on to state that this directly and immediately threatens the United States homeland because it:

provides Al Qaeda that which they are attempting to seek in several locations right now, be it Somalia, the tribal area of Pakistan or Anbar province—a safe haven to rival that which they had in Afghanistan.

During his confirmation hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee, GEN David Petraeus supported President Bush's plan to increase troop levels in Baghdad and Anbar province. In response to questioning before that committee, General Petraeus made it clear he believes that the reinforcement of soldiers into Baghdad and Anbar in Iraq will bolster the Iraqis' ability to stabilize their government and defeat the insurgency, instead of allowing them to continue to buck that responsibility, as some have asserted.

Many in Congress have stated publicly that this is the last chance the United States has to get it right in Iraq. If that is the case, I feel there is no general better qualified to be in charge of our ground forces and get things turned around on the ground than General Petraeus. I recognize that the American people have grown weary over the last months since the violence has escalated in Iraq, but I remain optimistic that the Iraqi government, with the aid of our soldiers, can turn things around.

I had the pleasure of meeting General Petraeus during one of my two trips to Iraq and was very impressed by his knowledge of the situation and his expertise in counterinsurgency. I have no doubt that General Petraeus is the right man to lead our forces in Iraq and I believe that he will overcome the new challenges he now faces. Let us not send the right man and then tell him it is the wrong job.

In closing, while I share the concerns of many of my colleagues regarding the situation in Iraq, I will support the President's plan to provide the reinforcements necessary to provide stability in Baghdad and Anbar province. I am hopeful that this plan will give the Iraqi government the best chance to stand on their own two feet and make the positive strides necessary to take control of the security situation and function as a stable government. It is this Senator's personal opinion that resolutions condemning the President's new way forward send the wrong message to our soldiers, the Iraqi people, and especially our enemies.

I certainly appreciate and support the role of Congress to provide over-

sight with respect to U.S. military engagements. However, I do not believe we should cripple the Commander in Chief's ability to work with our military leadership to defeat our enemies, and passing a resolution condemning the President's new plan for Iraq would do precisely that. Instead, I support resolutions that call for the support of the American people and Congress to give the President's plan a chance to work. Mistakes have been made, unquestionably, and the violence in Baghdad and Anbar province has grown to a level that few predicted, but I am not yet ready to throw in the towel on this President's new plan and our soldiers' ability to assist in stabilizing Iraq before they even get a chance to try.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

PROCEDURAL TACTICS

Mr. SPECTER. Madam President, thank you for the recognition. I have sought recognition to discuss the procedural situation which confronts the Senate at the present time and to discuss a proposed rule change which would deal with this kind of a problem.

We have pending a motion to proceed on S. 470, which proposes a disagreement with the President's plan to send 21,500 additional troops to Iraq. Under the Senate rules, a motion to proceed is debatable, and when we deal with an issue of the magnitude of what is happening in Iraq today and the President's proposal to send additional troops, it is obviously a matter of great moment. The eyes and ears of the country are focused on the Senate. The eyes and ears of the world are focused on the Senate.

So far, what is happening is largely misunderstood, but the starting point is that a motion to proceed is debatable. But before debate even began, the majority leader filed a motion for cloture, which means to cut off debate. Now, a cloture motion would be in order, but why before the debate has even started? The cloture motion is designed to cut off debate after debate has gone on too long. But what lies behind the current procedural status is an effort by the majority leader to do what is called filling the tree, which is a largely misunderstood concept, not understood at all by the public generally and even not understood fully by many Members of this body. But the Senate is unique from the House, and the Senate has been billed as the world's greatest deliberative body, because Senators have the right to offer amendments.

In the House of Representatives they established what is called a rule, and they preclude Members from offering amendments unless it satisfies the Rules Committee. In the Senate, generally a Senator doesn't have to satisfy anybody except his or her own conscience in offering an amendment. But if the majority leader, who has the

right of recognition—and that, of course, is not understood either—but if the majority leader is on the floor and seeks recognition, he gets it ahead of everybody else. And if the majority leader offers what is called a first-degree amendment to the bill, which is substantively identical to the bill but only a technical change, and then again seeks recognition and gets it and offers a second-degree amendment to the bill, which is substantively the same but only a technical change, then no other Senator may offer any additional amendment. That is a practice which has been engaged in consistently by both parties for decades, undercutting the basic approach of the Senate, which enables Senators to offer amendments and get votes.

The Congressional Research Service has tabulated the statistics going back to the 99th Congress in 1985 and 1986 when Senator Dole used this procedure on five occasions. In the 100th Congress, Senator BYRD, then the majority leader, used this procedure on three occasions. In the 103d Congress, the next majority leader, Senator Mitchell, used this procedure on nine occasions. When Senator Dole became leader again in the 104th Congress, he used this procedure on five occasions. In the 106th Congress, Senator LOTT, then the majority leader, used it nine times. In the 107th Congress, Senator Daschle, then the majority leader, used it once. He was only majority leader for about 18 months. In the 108th Congress, Senator Frist used it three times, and in the 109th Congress five times.

Now, my suggestion is that the parties ought to declare a truce on this procedural war of filling the tree which undercuts the basic thrust of Senate procedure to allow Senators to offer amendments. But the majority leaders continue to use it, which they have a right to under the current rules, which is why I am suggesting a change in the rules. But it will take a little time to change the rules. We can't do it immediately for the Iraq debate. But it would be my hope that there would be a public understanding of what we are doing, because the most effective process in our governmental operations is public understanding and public pressure. We call it a political question. We call it public understanding to have transparency or an understanding of what we do, and then the public can say yea or nay with what is happening, and that is a tremendous force to lead Senators and Members of the House of Representatives to take action, to call it the right thing, or to take action consistent with sound public policy.

Now, what is happening today is that charges are being leveled on all sides. There has been a lot of finger-pointing with most of the Democrats saying the Republicans are obstructing a vote—a debate and a vote on the Iraqi resolutions. And Republicans are saying: Well, we are insisting on our right to debate the motion to proceed. We don't think you should file cloture before the

debate even starts, to cut off debate before you have debate, but the reason we are doing it is so this procedural device may not be used on what is called in common parlance to “fill the tree.” But if you ask virtually anybody what is filling the tree, they are going to think about an orchard; they are not going to think about Senate procedure. But it is called filling the tree. I have described it succinctly and briefly to outline exactly what the procedure is to stop Senators from offering amendments.

There is a clue here that Senator WARNER—who is the principal proponent of the Warner resolution, the Warner-Levin resolution, which picks up the substance of the bill which is currently pending, S. 470—Senator WARNER votes against cloture, and he is the principal proponent of disagreeing with the President’s plan. Well, that ought to tell us something: that Senator WARNER is not trying to stifle debate on a vote on his own initiative, on his own resolution. Senator HAGEL also—who has been characterized as the most outspoken critic of President Bush’s plan to have a surge—voted against cloture. That ought to tell us something: that Senator HAGEL is not trying to defeat debate on a vote on what he seeks to accomplish.

So it would be my hope there would be a truce. Let me say candidly that I think there is very little chance there is going to be a truce in the Senate on using this procedural rule. It has been used on both sides. It has been used by Democrats and Republicans when it suits the partisan advantage of one party or another, and suiting the partisan party advantage of one party or another is not consistent with sound public policy and the public interest.

Right now this debate is being waged in the newspapers, it is being waged on the talk shows, it is being waged on the Sunday shows, even some of it is being waged on the floor of the Senate, but by and large not understood.

I spoke on the subject on Monday, outlining the rules morass, and largely misunderstood, even by senior members of my own staff not understood. You have the Democrats—and I think we ought to rise above the partisanship, Democrats and Republicans—saying they have the high ground and they intend to keep it. Well, I think they are winning the public relations battle. Let’s be candid about it. Democrats are winning the public relations battle. Most people think what is going on, because we are opposing ending debate, Republicans are opposing ending debate, is that we do not want to have the debate and we do not want to have the vote.

That is not factually correct. Senator WARNER, who is proposing it, and Senator HAGEL, who is one of the sharpest critics of the President’s plan, and other Senators who are critics of the President’s plan, have voted against cutting off debate because it is a big issue which ought to be debated,

and because what is going on behind the scenes, under the surface, is an effort to have agreement on how many votes there will be to have a fair airing of the subject matter, and to have an opportunity for Senators to vote on a variety of resolutions or amendments. Ordinarily, we come to agreement on those matters. Right now we are up against the continuing resolution, which is about to expire.

I would suggest we have plenty of time to do it all if we start to work a little earlier. We are on morning business until 2 o’clock, which means we can express ourselves and it is not wasted time, but it is not the most productive time. We don’t come to work until late on Monday. We don’t work on Friday. Most Americans work a 5-day week. Some Americans work 6 and 7 days. So we have time. And we could work in the evenings, too, when we are facing a time limit, or we could have a continuing resolution which was extended, so that debate could be put off. But now it is in doubt what is going to happen. It is controlled by the majority, and by the majority leader, and that is the right of the majority and the right of the majority leader.

There have been pronouncements that we are not going to come back to this debate and that it is politically advantageous for the Democrats to blame the Republicans for blocking debate on the vote, and that will be the public posture. But it is my hope there will yet be a recognition of what is going on. I would be glad to debate anybody who cares to discuss the issue as to whether my representations are accurate or inaccurate; that the majority leader has the right exercised by majority leaders of both parties for at least the last two decades to preclude amendments being offered and to preclude any consideration by what Republicans have to say on this issue.

We have a Member of the opposite party on the Senate floor. I would be glad to debate that subject with him now.

Before the week is up, I will offer a resolution to change the Senate rules to preclude this procedure in the future, but in the public interest, there ought to be a truce declared on it that won’t be used by either side to the disadvantage of the other. The real party being disadvantaged is the party of the American people. That is where the impact is.

In conclusion—the two most popular words of any presentation—I hope we can explain, as a starting point, discussions we have in the Senate and follow up with explanations in the media, which really carries the message to the American people. Some people are watching on C-SPAN. I have a family very interested in the speeches I make from time to time—two sisters and a brother-in-law. I talked to them Monday night, and they had no idea what I was saying. My staff does not understand what I am saying.

The essence is, the rules being exercised by the majority, by the Demo-

crats today, will preclude Republican amendments if they fill the tree by the procedure I have described. I do not want to stop debate. Senator WARNER, who is the principal proponent of the amendment to debate and vote, Senator HAGEL, an outspoken critic of the President—doesn’t that say something?

I hope we can bring sufficient public clarity to the issue that the majority leader and the Democrats will rethink their position. As long as the Republicans are being blamed for not having debate and a vote, we are not going to have debate and a vote. If the public understands both parties are at fault, equal blame on both sides, then there may be some movement and some accommodation.

It does not take long for the American people to see the morass and procedural shenanigans going on and say: We don’t care whether you are a Democrat or Republican, the American people are sick and tired of the bickering that goes on in this Chamber and in the House of Representatives. They expressed themselves in the last election. If we cannot do a better job in explaining ourselves and finding a way to work through and address the substantive problems, the enormous problems facing this country—and the No. 1 today is Iraq—we may all find ourselves seeking new employment.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey is recognized.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Madam President, we just heard a debate about debates. It strikes me that this word war we are conducting here doesn’t get to the fact that we are losing people every day in Iraq—27 Americans died in a weekend—and our friends on the other side want to discuss the rules and the process instead of being able to agree that there was a nonbinding resolution being proposed about whether you want to see this surge—a la escalation—of the war in Iraq. Our friends were so conscience-stricken that they wanted to resort to more words and amendments. Why couldn’t we have just passed or discussed that nonbinding resolution, let it go, and let the debate then continue? Bring on the debates. But, no, this is the press relations battle which was just discussed by our colleague.

That is not what we are looking for. We are looking to save lives, American lives, but we can’t get to the subject because there is a question about what the rules ought to be. The rules ought to be the decency of our consciences—let us make decisions that will save lives and ease the pain on American families.

This was an unfortunate dynamic we saw this week: Republican colleagues determined to block the opportunity for the Senate to vote on the President’s war escalation policy for Iraq. Just when the American people want this Congress to stop the President’s misguided plan, our colleagues on the other side are hard at work to shut

down that opportunity. What they are afraid of is that we will confirm our support for the troops who are there now, and any insinuation that isn't the truth is a foul lie. We are just as anxious to support the troops. We are more anxious, in many ways, because we called for equipment to be available to protect our troops. We called for vehicles to be properly armored. We called for the body armor to be developed. But we didn't hear any complaints about the misdeeds of the contractors who weren't doing what they were supposed to be doing. They were not even monitored. We are going to talk about that.

Our friends in the minority can delay this debate, and I hope the American public understands what is going on—delay the debates, don't let us come to the conclusion, don't let the President see that a majority of this Senate does not want this escalation to take place. They will delay this debate and vote for now, but it is going to happen eventually. It will happen because the American people are understandably frustrated with the President's conduct and mishandling of this war.

Our children are taught a lesson in school: If you do things wrong and you don't pass your courses, don't change your ways, don't listen to advice, you get an F on your report card. In the view of many of the American people—most of the American people—President Bush has gotten an F on his report card on the handling of the situation in Iraq. But he and the Vice President refuse to be held accountable, and his allies in the Senate are blocking us from holding him accountable. It is not a good lesson for our Nation's young people. They see that if they don't do their work, they fail the course, and the President has not done his work, and he ought not to get a positive grade for his job thus far.

The American people don't want Congress to grant unlimited power to the President and his incompetent crew. Our troops have done a magnificent job, but it is the President and failed leadership at the Pentagon that have let them down.

Who can forget Secretary Rumsfeld's quote:

You go to war with the Army you have, not the Army you might want or wish to have at a later time.

Frankly, it is a slur, in my view, against the troops we have, those courageous people over there fighting right now or at that time. It is a terrible message to send to our soldiers.

Who can forget when the insurgency first started and our troops were getting attacked with roadside bombs, when President Bush said "bring 'em on"? I wore our Nation's uniform in World War II, in Europe, and I can say none of us wanted our Commander in Chief taunting the enemy, inviting them to come on out and fight and maybe kill us. No. To be in harm's way and have your commander make such a statement from the safety and security of the White House is appalling.

Now the President wants a so-called surge. Does he want to surge our way to more problems? Does he want to surge our national debt by spending billions more every week in Iraq? Anybody who understands English knows that the real definition of "surge" as used here means "enlarge" or "escalate."

From this war, we have more than 700 Americans who have lost limbs, more than 29,000 suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, and over 3,000 have perished in Iraq, 74 of whom have ties to my home State of New Jersey. Yet President Bush dismisses the incredible cost of this war in lives, injuries, and resources essential for the health and well-being of our people at home, domestic programs.

After all the previous failures and incompetence by this administration, why should the American people allow the President to do whatever he chooses in this war, this war which has destroyed thousands of families' lives? Look at the President's record on Iraq: false intelligence on weapons of mass destruction; no posted invasion plan because the administration was convinced that we would be greeted with sweets and flowers in a Utopian celebration. The President's team decided to fire the entire Iraqi Army, dismissing 500,000 trained troops who might have been helpful to us in fighting this insurgency. Then the Bush administration helped create further sectarian division by simply banning members from serving in the new Iraqi Government. The administration has allied itself with an Iraqi Prime Minister who supports a militia leader named Sadr who controlled a terrorist militia which disagrees with the formation of a stable government.

We all saw the waste, fraud, and abuse of taxpayer funds by contractors such as Halliburton. The Iraqi reconstruction inspector general said that nearly \$3 billion in U.S. taxpayer dollars for Iraqi reconstruction has been lost—lost, vanished, \$3 billion. That is not sloppy, that is incompetence. So it is understandable that a giant majority of the American people are against this escalation. The other side of the aisle obviously does not want to vote consistent with the American people's wishes or their prayers. Taxpayers are footing a massive bill for these mistakes.

The administration gave Halliburton a no-bid contract thought to be worth \$50 million—well, it surged to \$2.5 billion—to operate Iraq's oil infrastructure. And what has that contract yielded in oil? Less oil 4 years after the invasion than Iraq was producing before the war. Halliburton was forced to pay back \$50 million after a fine was levied against them by the Department of Defense. That is why the American people say no surge for Halliburton.

I was a member of the Department of Homeland Security committee in the previous Congress. I wrote five letters to the chairman asking we have hear-

ings, oversight hearings, on the Halliburton behavior in the war. I was told that it would be duplicable, and we couldn't get a review of Halliburton's behavior.

When the Republicans were in the majority, they said a vote against the President's policy was cut-and-run, but now the American people are asking the question, What is the alternative? Stay and die?

In November, the American people spoke with the most effective means they have; that is, the ballot box. They said no. They said they want a change. They voted for a voice against the President. Now the Republican minority is blocking Congress from speaking.

The President and the minority in the Senate cannot continue to ignore the will of the American people. We already saw the President ignore his own chosen Iraqi Study Group. First he appoints them; then he challenges them or ignores them. He ignored the advice of GEN John Abizaid, who thinks this escalation is a bad idea. He ignored former Secretary of State Colin Powell, who said more troops are not the answer.

When do we say enough is enough? Well, I think that time is past due.

Outside my office, to remind us all—I am very sensitive to veterans matters, to our military, not just because I served but because they are there to protect us. And they do a splendid job, even when they are asked to do more than the numbers they should have are not in place, and the equipment has not been quite what it ought to be, delays in producing that. We display a memorial outside my office showing the "Faces of the Fallen," which says: "Let Us Never Forget." There are almost 3,000 faces outside the door to my office. We have them on easels. It was our construction. The name, age, rank, battalion affiliation, and the cause of death of each of these Nation's fallen servicemembers is inscribed with their photo on the memorial. If you look, you see the ages and how young they were and what they must have meant to the families they left behind.

Friends and visitors search these photos daily for knowledge of people they might know and miss. As they search, as they review these pictures, some write notes in a book of reflections that we have out there. A woman from Englewood, NJ, wrote:

How do we measure their sacrifice? We are so fortunate to have these brave men and women.

A woman from Minnesota says:

This display brings tears to my eyes, to see how many lives have been lost. Please stop more boards from being added and bring those who would find themselves memorialized here home safely.

A Californian simply wrote:

Bring them home!

These are what the American people want, and we ignore them at our own peril. We prevent a vote on this momentous issue at our own peril as well.

I close, saying to my colleagues on the other side, please stop the insinuations that we on this side of the aisle do not want to support our troops. Nothing could be further from the truth. Many of us, myself included, have been there to meet with our troops and see what they need and see what they want and listen to their tales of the days they spend in harm's way. We want to support them. We salute them. They honor their obligation to their country, even though we, in many cases, disagree with the mission.

And when we fool ourselves into believing that all we have to do is to put more people in harm's way and we will get a stabilized government there, we find, in many instances, the recruits they have in the army there are just not capably trained, don't have the will, in many instances, to take up the fight. And we want to put more of our people in there?

I think what ought to be done—as many others here do—is to start to whittle down our presence, leave enough of a resource there to help train those people, maybe instill some courage in their view of what their responsibilities are, get enough people in the flow—the Iraqi people—and plan to get them home as soon as we practically can.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MENENDEZ). The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I wish to share some thoughts about the situation we find ourselves in. I do feel some obligation to comment on the nature of the debate we are having, although I do not want to descend into partisanship.

I would say that Senator SPECTER, I believe, is absolutely correct when he says the Republican Members of this body are not afraid to vote. They are prepared to vote on the Warner resolution. They are prepared to vote on the McCain resolution. They will vote on the Judd Gregg resolution. But the problem is the Democratic leadership only wants one vote, and that is a vote on their resolution. So we have had a vote. Less than 50 voted to go forward. So I do not see how we are at a point where it can be suggested the members of this side are afraid to have a vote.

Why are they afraid to have two more votes, I would ask? I am not afraid to vote. I know how I would vote on those amendments. I am going to vote against the amendment that disapproves of the policies we are sending our troops to execute. And I am going to vote for the other amendments of McCRAIN and GREGG—if I had the chance. That is a minimum. There may be others. Senator SPECTER indicated he would like to vote on something else.

But in truth, as I have said before, I am not happy about this whole resolution process. We are not in the business of resolutions here. We are in the business of funding or not funding the poli-

cies of the United States of America. We have committed to funding the policy that is now being executed. We have confirmed the general who will execute that policy. Therefore, that is what we are about. That is the action we have taken.

But, in general, let me say this one more thing because it touched my heart. Less than 30 minutes ago, right out here, I met an Alabamian whose son is at Fort Benning, a first lieutenant in the U.S. Army, an infantry officer. He thanked me for not going along with this negative resolution idea, and said: Senator, these soldiers are “watching what you do like a hawk.”

Don't think what we do is just a gambit to embarrass the President. We face many difficult decisions, pressures. We wrestle with competing interests and emotions in this Senate. We have high hopes and dreams for America. We do not all agree, and we should not. Ours is, at its best, a democracy where robust and intelligent debate informs our decisions. It makes us better. And we should respect one another even while we disagree. But this is a big deal. Lives are at stake. But this is what democracy is about. I want to be sure that when I say I believe someone is making a mistake, I am not attacking their character.

In the end, if a democracy cannot reach a decision on important issues, act decisively and execute those decisions, it will be weak and it will fall prey to the cruel, the despotic, and the strong. In order to avoid indecisiveness and weakness, there are some important common principles we must share. They are built, I believe, on love of country and a sincere belief in and admiration for this great Republic we serve. That is the unifying principle.

An extended, dangerous, and costly war in Iraq is not what we had hoped would occur when over three-fourths of the Members of this body—and I was here—voted to authorize the use of force against Saddam Hussein. Certainly, I had hoped and have always favored bringing troop levels down as soon as we can. The difficulties we face have caused, understandably, much unease and frustration in our country. Things have not been going well. That is a true fact. The circumstances are grave, and our efforts in Iraq could fail, as General Casey and his replacement, General Petraeus, have made clear, although, in truth, these professionals have also made it clear they believe we can and will succeed if we carry out the new policy that is now being projected in Iraq.

A congress of a nation, constructed like ours, that aspires to be a great nation and a great congress must consider how it should respond to such difficult circumstances in this winter of our discontent. How, now, should we think about the tough challenges we face?

First, I believe the results of a failure and a precipitous withdrawal from Iraq are grave and ominous. No one disputes

that. Chaos and ethnic cleansing, death to those who put their lives on the line for freedom and democracy would likely result, and more. Bad things would occur. We have had testimony on that.

So to even those few now here in this Senate who voted against the use of force, and to our newer Members of the Senate who are on record as being opposed to the policy, I say let's get together. Let's see how we can deal with the problems we now face so our Nation and its policies can be successful.

Few decisions are totally right or totally wrong. Sometimes things go better than expected. Sometimes they do not go as well. The test of a healthy and strong nation is how it handles adversity.

To those who oppose our efforts in Iraq, I would say that it would be a defensible position, I have to say, if you feel that strongly about it, to vote to cut off funds that would in effect force an immediate withdrawal. But, in truth, even when Senators truly believe our efforts in Iraq were a mistake, a mature patriotic assessment of the short and long-term consequences of such a withdrawal must be considered.

Immediate withdrawal is not a good option. It is not a good option. That is obviously why so many of our Democratic colleagues who are not happy with this war have not proposed such a step.

The one thing that is not acceptable is to take action—to take any action or concrete steps—to further the President's policy and then to vote for a resolution that makes it less likely to succeed. This is especially true when this Congress has committed our military personnel to this task, placing them in harm's way to execute the mission this Republic has given them.

Our military personnel have placed their very lives, their every waking moment, on the line to achieve the mission that is assigned to them. They are doing that every day. I have been there five times. We have a moral responsibility to them that must not be lightly broken.

That commitment also goes to those many allies who have supported us, our friends in the region, and the good and decent Iraqis who voted for and stood up for democracy and freedom.

If this is a true concept—and I believe it is—then I urge, with respect and with deep sincerity, that my colleagues do not give their support to any resolution that is likely to make our praiseworthy goal of a free and stable Iraq more difficult to achieve.

A resolution that is not binding but adversely impacts our efforts, with all due respect, is a vote that cannot be justified. Other than perceived personal political benefits, or “making a statement,” what benefit does such a vote provide our Nation's efforts? It has no impact. Negative resolutions, therefore, can only place our soldiers, whom we sent to execute this policy, at greater risk. It can only place them at

greater risk and make their task harder. Those in harm's way deserve our total support, and the policies we have asked them to execute should also have our total support, until such time as we withdraw it.

I urge my colleagues to think this through. Let's pull back from this precipice—not just from this vote but from votes in Congress that may come in the future. Let's reassert our time-honored tradition that “politics stops at the water's edge,” that politics must never place soldiers at unnecessary risk. Let us not go down the road of passing resolutions whose only purpose is to emote, to express doubt about our Nation's decided policy during a time of great challenge and risk.

A Senate of a great nation doesn't use a toothless resolution to vent. What good does such a thing do? Surely, we all understand, as did our Founders, that there can only be one policy, one Commander in Chief, and one Congress. The Congress can cut off funds and stop it, if they are so strongly committed to do so. But we are not doing that.

How have we slid into such a muddle? The answer is that politics seems to have taken over everything around here; it infects our very being, even during war. It is a dangerous trend. We are used to “splitting the difference” here. Compromise is the nature of the game, we are told, and indeed it is. You favor a \$100 million program, perhaps, and I oppose it; and maybe we end up compromising on \$50 million. The thing may have worked at \$50 million, or it might have been a failure at \$50 million. Who knows? But we compromise. But that is about money. This is about war, about the life and death of people, as fine as you can find in this country, who volunteered to serve us.

Some may say it is not certain that negative resolutions will weaken the resolve of our friends and hurt the morale of our soldiers and embolden our enemies. Logic, however, says it will. Maybe you disagree. But how can it be otherwise? Logic says it will. General Petraeus said it well a few days ago. Negative resolutions will likely have negative consequences on our policy and place at greater risk the lives and health of our soldiers. What other purpose is there for this resolution, other than to somehow ratchet up the effort to force an abandonment of the policy we have funded and we are now executing.

Indeed, the whole world will think such a resolution that expresses only “feelings” represents a weakening of American will, even while the actual policy we are funding is to increase our strength and commitment to the Iraq effort. Think about it. As their foundations, these negative resolutions can only be described as totally contradictory to our policy that we are at this moment executing. New troops are moving there right now. Some have already arrived in Iraq. Have you not heard that?

For those unhappy and worried, I say let's get busy, all of us, and do a better job. Let's find out more about this difficult struggle that we are engaged in, find out more about Iraq, find out more about what our troops need, what their challenges are and what can and cannot be done. Let's meet with General Pace and General Casey and Secretary Gates; let's read the periodic reports that General Petraeus will be sending and spend more time keeping up with the situation on the ground in Iraq, rather than on polling numbers in our States. If we then reach a point of no return, when our honest and best judgment is that success is not possible, then we can join with those few who are prepared to cast votes to force an end to our deployment in Iraq. That is what we are supposed to do.

Certainly, at this point, none can honestly say that we know what the outcome will be. I wish I could give full assurance of success, but I cannot. We do know this is a very difficult time. Al-Qaida is still active, despite heavy losses and an inability—we may thank the Lord—to attack us again on our homeland, so far. The Iraqi Government has not been strong and decisive, and violence, especially in Baghdad, has steadily increased. The al-Qaida attack on the Samarra Mosque last February, designed to create sectarian violence in the country, succeeded in sparking a spate of sectarian killing and reprisals that continue today.

Still, General Abizaid and General Casey, our former commander, and General Petraeus, our new commander, know the true situation there better than we do. General Abizaid has been there four years, I believe, and General Casey, 30 months. They have lived it. They have studied it. They sincerely believe and have publicly stated, under oath, that this surge of American troops, with a surge of Iraqi troops and the new tactics to be employed, can lead to the goals that we seek—a stable, peaceful, and prosperous Iraq. It can be successful. We should not be overly negative. Indeed, I asked this question of General Petraeus. A few days ago in his testimony, he said he would not take this job if he didn't believe he would succeed. General Petraeus commanded the 101st Airborne Division when they went into northern Iraq, in Mosul. He did a fabulous job. They jokingly called him the “mayor of Mosul.” We toured the area the projects he had worked to establish. He understands the need of walking the streets and talking with the Iraqi people and encouraging them to take over their country. He came home, and then they asked him to go back and train the Iraqi security forces and he agreed to do so. He left his family again and went back and spent a year in Iraq. I am sure he knows every top general by name in the Iraqi Army, or virtually all of them. He spent another year there doing that. Then he came back and he spent a year drafting and writing the Department of Defense

counterinsurgency manual. It is 100 or more pages, a big document; it is a very important, complex, carefully worked out document that tells how to confront and defeat an insurgency operation. That is the plan we have asked him to go back with now. I believe we need to give General Petraeus a chance.

We have lost over 3,000 lives in our Iraq effort. The losses, in my view, are less than expected during the initial assault on Baghdad in Iraq and far more than I expected in the aftermath. Much of this, I am sure, was the result of errors we made. Much arises from the inherent difficulties of the tasks that were underestimated. Of that, there can be no doubt. But no Government agency even comes close to our military in being brutally honest and doing after-action reports and self-evaluations. That is going on now and will continue for years. They are a magnificent force. I can only believe that if we truly support them, as a great Senate and a great Congress should when they are executing the policies we have directed them to execute, they will be successful. I further believe it is premature for us to withdraw. We owe it to those State Department officials, other Government agencies, NGOs, patriotic Iraqi civilians who voted for a new and better Iraq, to the Iraqi security forces who have taken more casualties than we have, to those international allies who have stood with us in Iraq and, most of all, to our military personnel who have given their heroic best to accomplish our Nation's just and decent goals in Iraq, to give this new policy and General Petraeus a chance. I think they can and will do it. But I do not doubt the difficulties and I do not doubt there is uncertainty.

If, heaven forbid, our efforts do not prevail, it will be appropriate to completely rethink our commitment to Iraq. So why do we want to pass a resolution? Senator REID says he wants to provide Senators a chance to show their disapproval of the President's policy. With respect, Senator REID has—I know it is unwitting and unintentional—crossed the line there. It is clear that this resolution, which has no binding effect and is only a political document, is not necessary, does not help, and I totally oppose it. It is wrong, in my view.

While our soldiers are courageously placing their lives on the line for us, and while there is no serious suggestion that we should cut off the funds for the surge the Commander in Chief has ordered and which the Baker-Hamilton group suggested might be necessary, a toothless resolution is the wrong thing to do. I am certainly glad it did not garner many votes.

So can we, for a while at least, stand united in our good and worthy efforts to help the people of Iraq achieve a decent, peaceful and stable Government? Can't we do that? The challenge remains great. The costs are high. I say

let's follow through, united, on this new strategy under our new general. I believe we can be successful. If the Iraqis fail to respond and if the new strategy is not effective, we will know soon enough. And an honest, professional, and realistic evaluation of what to do next will fall into our hands. We should complete that task effectively, giving our best effort and judgment to it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Montana be recognized next for up to 15 minutes, to be followed by myself for up to 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. INHOFE. Reserving the right to object, I further ask unanimous consent that after the completion of the remarks of the Senator from Nevada, and after one other Democrat, I be recognized for up to 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana is recognized.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I rise today on behalf of the thousands of Montanans who have lost faith in the way this administration is conducting the war in Iraq.

Our troops have given more than most of us can imagine. This administration has asked much of them. They should be commended for their performance in a war that has been mismanaged from the get-go.

In 1972, deep into the Vietnam war, the great Senator, the great statesman, Senator Mike Mansfield, whose seat I am now honored to hold, spoke of a great nation. When times demand it, it is wise for us to take a step back and look at those who served before us.

Standing not far from where I stand today, Senator Mansfield said:

Mr. President, it does no great nation any harm to admit that a mistake has been made. And sometimes when nations and men will do so, they will be the bigger and the better for it.

Many years later, Mansfield would say that when he was gone, he wanted to be forgotten. We have not forgotten Mike Mansfield, and we must not forget his measured approach to diplomacy, his steady hand, and the lesson that admitting a mistake is the first step in correcting it.

It is time we debate the facts of this situation so this country's leaders can make the right decisions.

I have said for more than a year that this war is being conducted without a plan for success and there is no end in sight. For too long, this body has refused to ask the tough questions, to debate the merits of this war, and has not held the President accountable for the deteriorating situation in Iraq.

Disturbingly, recent reports confirm that our invasion of Iraq has created

more terrorists than it has eliminated. Yet the terrorist who plotted the most deadly attack on U.S. soil—Osama bin Laden—remains at large and ignored by the administration.

In addition to the more than 3,000 killed since the war began, 17 of whom are from Montana, there have been more than 23,000 wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan. Many will come home missing one or more limbs. Others will return home to battle posttraumatic stress disorder.

Last week, I joined several of my colleagues, along with two Iraqi war veterans, and called on the administration to get serious about funding for veterans health care. I renew that call today for permanent mandatory full funding of VA health care. There is no reason veterans should be forced to come to us every year hat in hand and beg for funding. It should be permanent, and it should be fully funded. Right now, it is neither.

Our country's veterans do not seek, nor do they expect, recognition from their Commander in Chief, nor the American people. But we owe them not only the recognition but also the promise that we will care for them and their families when they return.

Following the gulf war, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, GEN Colin Powell, outlined his plan for efficient and decisive military action, now referred to as the Powell doctrine.

The Powell doctrine clearly outlines what U.S. military action should look like:

Military action should be used only as a last resort and only if there is a clear risk to the national security by the intended target.

Force, when used, should be overwhelming and disproportionate to the force used by the enemy.

There must be strong support for the campaign by the general public.

And last, there must be a clear exit strategy from the conflict in which the military is engaged.

One by one, this administration has violated every principle of the Powell doctrine and, as a result, we are lost in Iraq and alone in the world.

Clear risk to national security? Prior to the invasion, the administration claimed that Iraq's nuclear capabilities made it a grave threat to America's national security, allegations that proved to be false.

Overwhelming force? The administration was unprepared for the dangers of urban combat, for improvised explosive devices, and continues to send troops into harm's way without proper armor. It is unconscionable that these soldiers are being sent into battle without all of the tools they need to be safe and successful. It is unacceptable to send them there with no plan for, or definition of, success.

Public support? Perhaps the most significant difference between the first gulf war and the war in Iraq is the lack of support from our allies. Like World War II, the gulf war was successful be-

cause America built a strong coalition and did not force our troops to carry the burden alone.

As support for this war continues to erode, so, too, does our standing in the world. Just a few years ago, nearly the entire world stood at America's side following the attacks on September 11. That good will has long since been squandered.

And finally, an exit strategy? The President has proposed sending 21,500 more troops into Iraq as a strategy for victory. Staying the course by escalating this war only spells disaster.

This country should no longer tolerate, nor can it afford, an open-ended conflict that has claimed more than 3,000 lives, injured more than 23,000, and cost the United States taxpayers \$2 billion every week.

Recently, the President proposed sending 21,500 more troops into downtown Baghdad. But according to the Congressional Budget Office, that actually means almost 50,000 additional troops when you include the 28,000 troops needed to provide critical support to those combat troops. This could cost up to \$27 billion to sustain over the next year. That would be more than three times the largest estimate of troop escalation costs provided by the Bush administration.

The addition of almost 50,000 American troops means more American young men and women without adequate body armor riding in ill-armored humvees into one of the most dangerous combat zones in history. Historical data from this war tells us that sending 21,500 troops into Iraq will mean that between 300 and 500 additional soldiers will die in Iraq than if this escalation were not to occur.

Adding more troops is not a strategy, it is a tactic, and it is not a new one. There have been four such troop escalations in Iraq so far, and to what end? What benefit has been realized by this country, the Iraqi people, or the region?

The long-awaited National Intelligence Estimate, prepared collectively by 16 intelligence agencies for the President, was released last week. It paints a bleak picture of the deteriorating situation in Iraq, and it describes the urgent need for conditions to be reversed measurably to stop the violence and widespread polarization of the Iraqi society.

So I call on the President to heed the grave warnings of the National Intelligence Estimate, to listen to his own Iraq Study Group, the Congress, and the American people.

Last month, my colleague Senator BAUCUS called on the administration to map a new course in Iraq. Senator BAUCUS said we must not escalate the conflict, we must train Iraqi troops to stand up for themselves, we must start bringing our troops home as soon as possible, and we must engage Iraqi's neighbors and the world community. He was right then; he is right today.

The solution for a new course in Iraq will not be solely a military one.

Switching to political and diplomatic solutions involving our allies in the region is not a defeatist strategy, but instead an appropriate course for a war of this complexity and magnitude.

The President needs to set a timeline to give the Iraqi people military control of their country. It should be the Iraqi Army—not Montanans, not Americans—disarming bombs and guarding bridges. The administration needs to reinvest in special forces and human intelligence if we are to win the real war on terror.

Nearly 4 years have passed, more than a half a trillion dollars have been spent, more than 3,000 American soldiers have died since the President announced that major combat operations in Iraq had ended and told us: "Mission Accomplished."

Funding for this war and its success or failure should have been debated long ago. It is time for a real debate on the direction and strategy of this war, starting with the President's proposal for escalation.

The President must also tell the American people what success means and how it should be quantified. If success is free elections in Iraq, then we should have been gone 2 years ago. If success is toppling Saddam Hussein, then we should have been gone 3 years ago. If it is something else, then the administration needs to be honest with the American people and identify a clear and achievable outcome.

I support the Warner-Levin resolution opposing the President's plan to escalate the war in Iraq. But I want to be clear: I view the Warner-Levin resolution as only a first step. We have a duty to debate the escalation on its merits and let both sides be heard.

This week's efforts to delay a vote on Warner-Levin do nothing to make our troops safer. Blocking an up-or-down vote on this resolution does nothing to bring this bloody war any closer to its close.

I have been here not too long—just a month—and I am still learning the ropes, but make no mistake, we should deliberate, we should not rush to judgment or sentence, but that does not mean we should not debate.

For 3 days we have been debating about whether we should debate the President's plan to escalate the war in Iraq. I have been all over Montana in the last couple of years, and everywhere I went people were and continue to be deeply concerned about the war. They didn't all agree, but there was always a lively and passionate debate. Not a single person told me we should debate about whether to have a debate.

Our troops, the American people, and the Iraqi people deserve an open and honest discussion. We need to ask the tough questions, we need to demand the answers, and we need to bring our troops home as safely and as quickly as possible.

I thank the Chair.
I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, this afternoon, I rise to add my voice to the current debate on the President's announced plan to reinforce coalition forces in Iraq by sending additional American soldiers and marines to Baghdad and Al Anbar Province in an effort to bring stability to that volatile part of that country.

For some time now, Senators have been clamoring for President Bush to send additional troops to Iraq. They criticized him for trying to accomplish our goals in Iraq without committing sufficient resources to get the job done.

Look, the President has recognized that a change in strategy is absolutely necessary. Many have previously called for this same strategy. But it appears to this Senator that because it is the President's plan, some Senators are predisposed against it.

A simple review of newspaper and Sunday talk show transcripts reveals some Senators appear to have supported the surge before they were against the surge. Senator KERRY on NBC's "Today" program on June 29, 2005:

We don't have enough troops in Iraq. . . . There aren't enough people on the ground. . . . The way you honor the troops and the way you provide a policy to America is to do everything possible to win.

Senator DURBIN on December 21, 2006:

If we need initially some troops in Baghdad, for example, to quiet the situation, make it more peaceful so that our soldiers start coming home, then I would accept it.

Mr. President, that is exactly what General Petraeus has said, and Secretary Gates before the Armed Services Committee said the same thing. It is an initial surge to try to get Baghdad under control so we can begin bringing our troops home.

Senator DODD on December 18, 2006, said:

I'd be willing to support some additional people if we needed it in order to get the job done.

He further said:

Show me some demonstrable evidence that they are coming together as a people—Shias and Sunnis—sitting down and recognizing that they have an obligation to come together as a people. Then I'd be willing to support some additional people if we needed it in order to get the job done.

Senator LEVIN in January of 2007 said:

A surge would be worth considering. The American people are skeptical about getting in deeper . . . But if it is truly conditional upon the Iraqis actually meeting milestones and if it's part of an overall program of troop reduction that would begin in the next four to six months, it's something that would be worth considering.

Once again, in testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee yesterday, that is exactly what Secretary Gates said, that it is a temporary surge in order to try to bring the troops home.

Senator BIDEN on June 29, 2005, said:

There's not enough force on the ground now to mount a real counterinsurgency.

Senator JACK REED, in a press conference on November 29, 2006, said:

If the military commanders in Iraq said, we need, for X number of months, 20-plus, 25,000 troops, to do this mission, I would have to listen to that proposal. I think I responded to the question before: That if the military commanders in Iraq said, we need, for X number of months, 20-plus, 25,000, troops to do this mission, and with a reasonable certainty of success, I would have to listen to that proposal, certainly.

Well, Mr. President, within the last 2 weeks, there have been additional developments that would seem to add weight to the argument that this temporary reinforcement of our troops currently in Iraq is not only warranted but necessary to the overall national purpose. Those developments are the unanimous confirmation by this Senate of General Petraeus, who is to become the new commander—he is the new commander of the Iraqi multinational force—also, the testimony of the Iraq Study Group cochairman, relative to the President's plan, before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, and the public release of the National Intelligence Estimate report on the prospects for Iraq's stability.

During his confirmation hearing, General Petraeus, also the author of the Army's new counterinsurgency manual, stressed the fact that he could not succeed in providing needed security for the citizens of Baghdad and Al Anbar Province without the additional troops called for in the President's plan.

General Petraeus further testified at his hearing that it was his opinion that any resolution which stated the Senate did not support the strategy to be carried out by our men and women in uniform in Iraq would be harmful to their morale. Are we going to support General Petraeus or not? The one resolution before us, I believe, is not supporting General Petraeus and the troops.

Last week, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations held a hearing on America's interests in Iraq, at which the witnesses were the Iraq Study Group cochairman, former Secretary of State James Baker, and former Congressman Lee Hamilton. Secretary Baker referenced the Iraq Study Group's report in articulating that group's position on additional troops to Iraq. He stated:

We could support a short-term redeployment or surge of American combat forces to stabilize Baghdad or to speed up the training and equipping mission if the U.S. Commander in Iraq determines such steps would be effective. The only two conditions are short-term and commander in Iraq determines it would be effective. Both of those conditions have been met.

Mr. Hamilton made it clear his belief that the President's plan ought to be given a chance. He said:

We did not, in the Iraq Study Group report, come to the conclusion that it was hopeless and, therefore, we should just pull out immediately.

The much anticipated and just released National Intelligence Estimate report entitled "Prospects for Iraq's

Stability: A Challenging Road Ahead" was quite candid in its assessment that if coalition forces are withdrawn within the next 12 to 18 months, we will see significant increase in the scale and scope of sectarian conflict in Iraq.

Mr. President, we need to accept the fact that we are engaged in a struggle of biblical proportions. In true American fashion, though, we are doing the right thing. We are attempting to free a people from a life of tyranny and violence. We are also in a struggle against the forces of evil who are bent on our destruction. Do we pack up and leave, even though every voice of reason tells us that Iraq would implode into a terrorist state used by al-Qaida as a launching pad against the infidels, reminiscent of Afghanistan under the Taliban? And those infidels, they think, are us.

As Senator McCAIN has reminded us time and again, Iraq is not Vietnam. When we left South Vietnam, the Viet Cong did not pursue us back to our shores. Al-Qaida is not the Viet Cong. Al-Qaida has sworn to destroy us and is committed to bringing their brand of terror to America.

President Bush never said the struggle for freedom in Iraq would be easy. But since the President is the one who said that, maybe it doesn't ring quite as true to some. Maybe by quoting another who spoke passionately about similar struggles for freedom, the point could be made more clearly. Back in 1857, Frederick Douglass spoke about the struggle he knew for freedom. He said:

The whole history of the progress of human liberty shows that all concessions yet made to her august claims have been born of earnest struggle. If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters.

We are introducing freedom to a country and a region that has no history of such freedoms. We cannot expect to spread freedom and democracy to this region simply by wishing it so.

We currently have soldiers and marines in harm's way. We have a plan before us that will aid their mission. That mission is to achieve success and leave behind a stable and democratic Iraq. Yet there are those among us who want to cut and run. There are some among us who simply want to cut and walk. And then there are others who want to have it both ways. They want to express their opposition to the idea of sending additional troops to Iraq without having to do anything that might actually translate their opposition to a reality on the ground.

I belong to another group of thinkers. I belong to a group who believes General Petraeus's plan deserves a chance. I believe the temporary surge in the number of soldiers and marines in Baghdad and Al Anbar is our best chance at getting this right. None of us knows for sure whether it will work.

There are always uncertainties in war. Let us all pray, for all our sakes, that this new way works.

Last week, I stood here and spoke about what I thought needed to be done in Iraq. I acknowledged that mistakes have been made in this war and that I did not believe we should be playing politics while our soldiers and marines are deployed and fighting against an enemy bent on destroying our country and our way of life. I called on my fellow Senators then to set party differences aside and focus on winning this war. I am here again this afternoon making that same plea.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I notice there are no other Members here, so I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized for up to 15 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it so ordered.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, the Senator from Nevada expressed my feelings in a much more articulate way than I ever could, and one of the last things he said is: Mistakes have been made in this war. I would suggest mistakes have been made in every war. Winston Churchill once said:

Never, never, never believe any war will be smooth and easy. Always remember, however sure you are that you could easily win, that there would not be a war if the other man did not think he also had a chance to win.

This statement was made many years ago, but it is relevant today. Today, we face an enemy who is determined, adaptive, and willing to go to any means of terror and violence to win. He cannot be negotiated with, and he will not be satisfied until the entire world is brought under his dreadful ideology.

We have seen this kind before. We saw it with Stalin, with Pol Pot, and with Hitler, but never before has an enemy metastasized this way. There is no centralized headquarters we can bomb, no one leader we can eliminate. We will continue to strike terrorism where it appears and track down its leaders but know this will not end the conflict. Victory will come the way it always has. We will destroy the enemy's belief he can win.

Any resolution against the President's plan does two things: It tells the enemy, No. 1, that they have been successful; and, No. 2, it gives them patience to wait us out. They are a very patient people. We have already done ourselves damage by bringing the issue to the public eye. Do you believe they do not watch our news; that they are not scouring our media for any hope or any chink in our resolve? Don't be so naive. Their very survival depends on it. This is the only way they can hope to win. If we cannot destroy their will, we will destroy them.

This sounds brutal and not very reconciling, but I intend it that way. There is a clear choice and no other option. If we do not fight them in Iraq,

we will be fighting them in Philadelphia, in Pittsburgh, in Kansas City, in Los Angeles, and in Seattle. We will be playing defensive until, once again, just as occurred after 9/11, our resolve hardens and we summon up the courage to destroy the enemy. And we must because the alternative is what happened to Rome: Factions of internal strife kept the great power tied up for so long that it lost its strength, its will, and its resolve. The period following was known as the Dark Ages, and this is indeed what al-Qaida seeks.

Our country represents the light of freedom and democracy. Yet I fear we have begun a terrible introspective and downward cycle. Our resolve lasts for a few months, maybe a year, but all it takes is enough time and then we break. Our enemy knows this. We can look to our mission in Somalia in 1993, at our reaction to the bombings in Lebanon at the Khobar Towers and in Vietnam. I am not saying we necessarily should have stayed in Vietnam, but I am saying we must recognize that while this introspection guarantees our freedom, it is also our greatest weakness.

There have been no major terrorist attacks on U.S. soil since 9/11. There have been attempts, and we know we have thwarted over 10 operations. However, we also know these were relatively underdeveloped and small in scale. I wish to ask a dark question: Why has al-Qaida not struck again? Because they cannot? We have stepped up our security, but they have shown their destructive creativity in the past. Because they are focused on Iraq and Afghanistan? Perhaps. But I would suggest another option. What if they have chosen not to. What if they have realized the strategy of restraint, pricking us just enough to launch ourselves at them, and then they fade back. We expend ourselves attacking new enemies, building countries, and undermining each other. Politics and personal reputations create an impetus of their own.

We should debate. That is exactly what the Senate body is intended to do. But do not undermine. The new commander in Iraq, General Petraeus, has stated that a resolution of disapproval would hurt his efforts. This is the new guy. Let us keep in mind that we voted unanimously to confirm General Petraeus to take over that very difficult job. When asked by Senator LIEBERMAN about the effect a resolution of disapproval would have on our troops and our enemies, General Petraeus stated that:

This is a test of will at the end of the day. A commander in such an endeavor would obviously like the enemy to feel there is no hope.

That is what General Petraeus said. He went on to say he does need more troops and he believes the new plan can work.

I recognize there have been mistakes made in Iraq, as we have talked about. The President has also recognized this.

Everyone has recognized this, and the President has taken full responsibility for it. Yet we still find ourselves in a difficult situation, with hard decisions to be made about the best way ahead. These decisions affect many lives, both our soldiers in harm's way and the American people they are pledged to protect. I think we all agree it would be disastrous to leave Iraq precipitously. If we do, we know we can expect increased levels of violence, the spread of extremist ideology, and Iraq itself collapsing into anarchy.

A personal friend of mine, who actually was a commander at Fort Sill in Oklahoma, General Maples, stated that:

Continued Coalition presence is the primary counter to a breakdown in central authority. Such a breakdown would have grave consequences for the people of Iraq, stability in the region, and the U.S. strategic interest.

John Negroponte and the CIA Director, General Hayden agree with that, as does General Petraeus. So it is not too late to avoid this. I don't think it is time to start cutting our losses and just hope it goes away. We have heard the President ask for our support.

Let me share, on a personal note, that I have had the occasion to be in Iraq more than any other Member of either the House or the Senate, some 12 times now, and the first thing I do is talk to the troops. The troops come up to me, and the first question they ask is: Why is it the media doesn't like us? Why is it they are constantly undermining our efforts here? Why is it the American people don't understand or appreciate what we are doing? I say, yes, the American people do, but a lot of the politicians don't act that way.

I have been very much concerned about this, and I believe any resolution, and we are talking about five or six resolutions now, any resolution that is a resolution of retreat would be a resolution of surrender.

I think it is ludicrous for any Member to say I support the troops but I don't support their mission. You try to explain that to them. I talked to the troops in Fallujah. In all this discussion about, do we need to be training the Iraqis to be fighting their own war—sure we do. That is what we have been doing. We have been doing that since we arrived on the scene in Iraq, and they are very proud and they are taking the frontal positions right now. The Iraqis are doing a good job. Their training has been good. Their equipment is not good, but it is getting better, it is improving.

I stood there at the last election in Fallujah when our marines were there and I talked, through an interpreter, to the Iraqi security forces, and they said they are very proud. We are going to be in a position—please stay with us until we can hold our own here, and that won't be too long. I know that is true. I know they have come up with the numbers, now, that would be equal to about 10 divisions. I believe this can happen.

This is very serious. Politics has crept into this thing. But any support

of a resolution of surrender not only is undermining our troops and saying to our troops: We don't support you, but also saying to the loved ones of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice that they have died in vain. We can't let that happen.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, we have come to a critical crossroads with respect to our operations in Iraq. After the Iraq Study Group spent months considering the issue of the best policy going forward, suggesting a phased redeployment along with other measures, diplomatic measures that would enhance the security of the United States and protect our soldiers there in Iraq, the President had the opportunity to accept those recommendations. It was a bipartisan panel of eminent Americans—James Baker and Lee Hamilton and so many others. The President specifically rejected them, not just in substance but in tone. In his speech a few weeks ago, he declared that he had learned very little from the Iraq Study Group, that he was not committed to a phased redeployment, he was committed to an escalation of approximately 20,000 troops and a change in tactics in Baghdad.

I think he had the opportunity at that moment to do several things. First, he could have accepted the wisdom of the Iraq Study Group. But, more important, he could have communicated to the American public that his policy was based on the reality in Iraq, that he had learned from a series of mistakes he and his administration had made, and that he could have sustained a way forward in Iraq. He didn't do that, and I think the American people reacted as they should have reacted, with declining confidence in his leadership and, frankly, posing the fundamental question of, How does one sustain any policy when 70 percent of the U.S. population considers it to be erroneous and not in the best interests of this country going forward? I believe the President squandered the last opportunity he had to rally people behind his policy.

Now we are in the midst of a debate, we hope, about that policy. We are being stymied in terms of bringing this to the floor in a clear and clarion vote that tells the American people where we stand as individual Senators with respect to the President's plan for escalation. We are being frustrated in the sense that there is an attempt to present other issues and not the issue of the moment, the issue under debate. There is no debate about our support for American soldiers around the globe and marines and sailors and airmen and airwomen. We support them. We think their mission should be changed to protect them and to advance the interests of our country, but there is no stinting in our support of these valiant young Americans.

The issue which divides this Senate and the issue which captures the feel-

ings and the passions of the American public is whether we will stand in approval or disapproval of the President's proposal to escalate forces in Iraq. I believe that vote should come. That vote should be clear. The vote should stand by itself, not shrouded by other measures that are designed not to address the concerns of American people but simply to give the President additional cover.

What has happened since the last 3-plus years, from the invasion of Iraq—indeed, preceding the invasion of Iraq, in this Senate, under the control of the Republicans, has not done a good job at all of oversight, of investigation, of asking critical questions. Where was the Republican leadership, in the fall of 2002 and early 2003, when they should have been asking a simple question: What if we win the conventional battle? What about the occupation? Where is the plan? Where are the resources? How many Americans will it take to secure a large country with a population of about 26 million people, with a history of sectarian tensions, with a history of a colonial past under the British that has established, some would say artificially, the boundaries of this nation? Those questions were not asked seriously and consistently and, as a result, this administration made huge mistakes when it came to the issue of how to successfully translate a conventional victory against the Iraqi military forces into a successful transition to a stable country. Now we see Iraq enthralled in doubt and violence that seems to be unable to be quenched. Our American forces are in the middle of that.

It is interesting, when we come to this point, to look seriously at the National Intelligence Estimate. One of the grave deficiencies we recognize today—some of us recognized it in October of 2002—is that the intelligence being used to sell this operation was flawed. Now I think we have a much more precise and carefully adjusted view of what is happening in Iraq today.

If you look at the NIE, it presents to us some profound contradictions.

First, and I agree with this assessment, is that the violence today is principally the result of sectarian conflict. The accelerators that raise the tempo of this violence can be found in the insurgent groups, al-Qaida in Iraq, some of these Shia militias, but the underlying battles today are between sectarian groups. The NIE describes this as a winner-take-all approach, as an existential battle between Shias—who feel a sense of insecurity given the history, particularly the last decade, of total oppression by a Sunni minority—and Sunnis, who feel a sense of entitlement that is going to be frustrated by the new, emerging order in Iraq. These existential battles, as the NIE indicates, are in a sense self-sustaining.

But here is where the confusion, the conflict, the contradiction comes

about. Most of the remedies we are all talking about involve reconciliation—political sectarian reconciliation. The issue—and one which will be decided in the next months and weeks in Iraq—is, can any existential conflict ever be reconciled? Has this conflict reached a point where it is truly self-sustaining and our forces in the middle of it are unable to be a moderating force at all?

My view and the view of so many others is that when you look at this situation on the ground and you consider what can be done, the decisive actions must be those of the Iraqi Government. They are political actions; that the presence of our military forces is important but not decisive. Certainly the size of our military forces is probably not as decisive as actions that must be undertaken by the Maliki government reigning in the militias, truly trying to reach out beyond this huge sectarian chasm for reconciliation. These political, economic, and social decisions are not going to be made simply because we have increased our presence in Baghdad by 20 percent or we have changed the tactics.

Another aspect of this debate is the concentration, almost exclusively, on the military aspects of the President's plan. That, frankly, has been one of the great shortcomings and faults of the administration—and of this and previous Congresses, I should say—in terms of our approach in Iraq. Any military commander on the ground will tell you that they are buying time and that time has to be used for economic progress and political progress. The component in the President's plan that I heard stresses an increase of 20,000 soldiers, but where is the progress in terms of not only Iraqi decisionmakers making tough decisions but American advisers—State Department officials, USAID officials, Justice Department officials—going over there to help start the other side, the other part of the process, the economic progress, the social progress, the political mentoring? That has never been the case. As a result, our strategy has failed consistently.

Unless this plan has complementary and reinforcing elements—military, political, and economic—it, too, will fail. I do not see, frankly, the complementary political and economic support necessary to carry off this plan.

What we have is 20,000 troops. If you look at the doctrine—and it is interesting because General Petraeus, the designated commander, is one of the principal authors of this new doctrine—that doctrine today would call for 120,000 troops in Baghdad based upon the size in Baghdad. We are sending an additional 20,000, which means our presence, American presence, is about 30,000 troops. The Iraqis have committed to roughly 55,000 troops, which brings us to a total of 85,000, but that still is roughly 35,000 troops short of the doctrine.

In addition, I don't think anyone considers that the Iraqi forces can

truly muster 55,000 effective troops. We have already seen the reports come in that brigades, Iraqi brigades, are showing up at 50 percent strength, and of those, one has to ask seriously how many are effective fighters. Where are the shortcomings? If it is half a brigade and they are all privates and corporals, that is not an effective fighting force, or if it is half a fighting brigade and they are all majors and lieutenant colonels, that is not an effective fighting force. So we are seeing a situation, even in military terms, where this surge is probably lacking significantly in terms of the size of the force.

In addition, we all understand that there is a divided command. One of the key issues in any military operation is unity of command. There is an Iraqi commander who is selected probably for his political reliability more than his tactical or technical skill. There is also a situation in that our new tactics require significantly more enablers. These enablers are the translators, the civil affairs officers, the combat service support officers to supply these outposts now in each neighborhood. In fact, the Government Accountability Office has done a report indicating that if a 21,000 increment is made, it might turn out to be closer to 50,000 if you truly have all the support troops you need to get the job done.

There are so many shortcomings in just the political and military aspects of this plan. So I believe, again, this is an opportunity, a moment we have to address this plan, this proposal of the President's, in a very serious way and take a stand on it one way or the other. I hope we can do that. I hope we can do that in the intervening days, certainly before the end of this month, or the end of, I hope, this week.

Now, I think there are other aspects that are important to consider when we talk about the situation as we go forward. I will go back to the point I think hindered us consistently throughout our operations in Iraq, and that is despite the extraordinary valor and technical skill of our military forces, they have never been truly complemented by non-Department of Defense personnel, by the State Department officials, by the Agriculture officials. I can recall visiting Fallujah twice in the middle of Anbar Province. Those marines are doing a magnificent job along with many Army units that are there. There is one State Department official in Fallujah who is charged with mentoring, with advice, with reconstruction, with all of these things. That is not adequate, and I don't see any indication in the President's proposal that is going to change.

This is all about, again, trying to take a military solution to what is a complicated military, political, and economic problem. It hasn't worked for 3 years, it is not likely to work, and I think we have to take a stand on that proposal.

One of the other consequences I think that is ensuing from this focus

on a purely military approach is we are losing out in terms of diplomatic leverage in the region. Just this week, the Saudis are meeting with delegates from Hamas and Fatah and the Palestinian Authority because the American leadership has been so lacking. We have to, I think, have a diplomatic policy to complement anything we do within Iraq. We haven't done that and it does not appear to be part of the President's agenda.

We have a situation which is grievous and which I think requires something more than simply more of the same, and that is just about what the President is offering. This is not a brand new diplomatic initiative; this is not a large-scale economic push to complement military action; this is a modest increase of forces, although I think this increase is not justified, together with new tactics in Baghdad. But again, I don't think that is going to be sufficient action. We have to start looking beyond the next several weeks and down the next several months and, indeed, the next several years.

The strategy that I think is inevitable is a phased redeployment of our forces and renewed diplomatic activity. It represents a focus on missions that are more central to the defense of the United States. The first is continue to aggressively go after those international terrorists, the al-Qaida units. We have done that. We continue, as the military indicates, to obtrude them very successfully. In fact, there are similarities of that mission to the recently conducted operations in Somalia where we sent in aircraft with some liaison from local Ethiopian forces on the ground to go out and take out identified terrorists there. That mission should continue in Iraq and frankly in Somalia and many other places where we can identify and find international terrorists.

Second, we have a continuing obligation, I think, to strengthen the Iraqi security forces. Ultimately it is their battle. We have made some progress with the Army, but we have to make more progress. That is a mission we should undertake and continue.

Third, there is the obligation, I think, to maintain the territorial integrity of Iraq, to make sure the locals do not take advantage of what is a tumultuous situation within Iraq. That, too, I think, is a valid mission, and it can be performed much differently than we are proposing to conduct this mission in Baghdad, by redeploying forces within Iraq. In fact, it was interesting yesterday before the Armed Services Committee when Secretary Gates was asked, and I think it was by Senator WARNER: Is this the last chance? If this fails, then all is lost? I think he quite authoritatively and thoughtfully said: No, of course, we have to have contingencies. Of course, there are other approaches we can take. Of course, there are other missions that can be assigned.

One of the dangers and one of the persistent aspects of the President's

rhetoric has been always summoning up the false dichotomy. Recall, back in October 2002, what was the choice the President proposed? Invade Iraq or do nothing and let Saddam and the terrorists win. We recall the rhetoric. It seems hollow now when we think back to it. What was left out of the equation, of course, was what was already being done: international inspectors of the United Nations on the ground in Iraq looking for weapons of mass destruction, supposedly the source of our great conflict with the Iraq regime.

There are other things that could have been done, too, much short of an invasion. There were, in fact, reports of terrorist activities. Zarqawi was in the Kurdish region. What would have prevented the United States from launching a very discrete military operation against Zarqawi in the fall of 2002 in the Kurdish area, an area we were helping to protect by our overflights of aircraft? Nothing, except, I believe, the administration didn't want to give up a good rhetorical device: this supposed terrorist presence in a part of Iraq that Saddam did not control.

Again, here now, it is back to the false choices: Surge 20,000 troops or watch the country collapse as we leave precipitously next week. That is not the choice. The choice is missions that are more effectively aligned with our national security interests: going after terrorists, training Iraqi security forces, protecting the territorial integrity of Iraq, complemented with active diplomatic actions, complemented with, we hope, progress by the Iraqis themselves in political decision-making. That, I think, is the way to go.

We have, again, I think a very difficult situation before us. It requires not only debate, but I think it requires at this moment a decision by the Senate on a very simple proposal: where we stand with respect to the President's proposal for escalation. Now, others have come to the floor and pointed out past statements that have been made with respect to increasing American forces. I have been open to these arguments. Frankly, at this juncture I don't feel persuaded. In the past, when someone had asked me: Would you increase the size of forces in Iraq, certainly in those first few days after the invasion, and after July of 2003 when I visited Iraq and found there were thousands of weapons dumps that were not being protected, I came back here and I think, along with Senator HAGEL, was one of the first to call for an increased size of our Army so we could deploy more forces to Iraq. But that window has closed very dramatically and nothing, frankly, was done by the administration to respond to those concerns.

I have said publicly that if a commander in the field came to me and said: We need additional forces, I would look at that proposal very carefully. In fact, in a press conference I was asked:

So in no way would you be on board with the McCain plan to surge in with, you know,

50,000 strong additional forces on the ground, you would not be in favor of that?

My response:

I think I responded to the question before, that if the military commanders in Iraq said we need for X number of months 20 plus, 25,000 troops to do this mission and within reasonable certainty was assessed, I would have to listen to that proposal, sir.

Well, I have listened to that proposal and I find it wanting. I find it wanting, based on the doctrine of the U.S. Army as it has evolved today. I find it wanting because of the lack of complementary and civilian support for that proposal. I find it wanting because of the lack of any serious indication that the Government of Iraq will make those tough political decisions. So I have considered it as I said I would, but I don't think it is the right way to proceed. Not at all.

Now, I am not alone, and I don't think it would be a shock to anyone to suggest this issue of escalation has prompted criticism from a wide group of individuals. GEN Colin L. Powell, former Secretary of State, said in December:

I am not persuaded that another surge of troops into Baghdad for the purposes of suppressing this sectarian violence, this civil war, will work.

Again, I think General Powell's insights and experience are very critical at this moment.

The Joint Chiefs indicated, at least as reported in the Washington Post in December, using anonymous White House sources, that they were opposed, that White House officials are aggressively promoting the concept over the unanimous disagreement of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. That is in December.

Time Magazine reported that General Abizaid said he opposes more troops because it would discourage Iraqis from taking responsibility for their own security. Here is a general, an officer who has served for decades, the most knowledgeable individual when it comes to Middle East military-political issues within the United States Army, within the Department of Defense, and that is his opinion.

Robert Gates—before he became Secretary of Defense, or before he was confirmed, according to two administration officials asking not to be named—Robert Gates expressed his skepticism about a troop surge in Iraq on his first day on the job—excuse me; he was Secretary of Defense—at a Pentagon meeting overseeing the Air Force, Army, Navy, and Marines.

We are not alone. There have been some perhaps eleventh-hour conversations for this surge, but I think there are a number of individuals with significant experience and insight, unquestioned patriots, who question this proposal.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. President, I see there are other speakers on the floor, so at this time I ask unanimous consent that at 2 p.m.,

the period for morning business be extended for 60 minutes, with the time divided and controlled as follows: 30 minutes each for Senators MENENDEZ and ROBERTS or their designees; that the Senate then proceed to executive session to consider the nomination of GEN George W. Casey, Jr.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas is recognized.

IRAQ

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, last Friday I had the privilege of attending and speaking before a "Farewell Dinner" in honor of LTG David Petraeus at the Command and Staff College of the U.S. Army at Fort Leavenworth, KS.

To say the least, it was quite an evening of tribute in behalf of the general and his wife, who has become admired and beloved serving as the Commanding General of the Army's Intellectual Center. I estimate there were around 250 officers and their wives and many from the Leavenworth community to pay tribute to General and Mrs. Petraeus, to wish them well, and to express pride and confidence in the general's immediate mission. He left for Iraq this past Monday, 2 days ago.

Throughout the evening I had the opportunity to again visit with David Petraeus, his feelings about his new mission, his impressive knowledge with regard to the war in Iraq, the history of the region, and his understanding with regard to the nature of past wars of insurgency and the insurgency we face in Iraq. While at the Command and Staff school, he wrote the Army's new manual on counterterrorism. Let me say as a former marine who helped write a similar manual years ago for the U.S. Marine Corps, I find this man unique in his knowledge and his command ability.

I made a few remarks at the dinner, and being a Senator, why, the remarks turned into a speech with some additional strongly held beliefs that I had penciled out in addition to my prepared remarks in behalf of General and Mrs. Petraeus. I thought twice about saying some very frank and candid views, but as everybody knows, marines don't hold back. So concluding my comments, I was glad I said what I said in that virtually everybody in the room—all 250—told me that I had said what they could not say. Those who wear their officer rank on their shoulders or their enlisted stripes on their sleeves in most cases do not comment on policy decisions or politics no matter how strongly they feel. They follow orders and they serve their country.

I feel somewhat the same trepidation today. However, I believe my remarks to the general, his officer corps, veterans of previous wars, are dead on to