

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

the issue we face in this debate that we have been talking about here on the floor of the Senate.

Before I express my views, I would stress I regret that we are at a stalemate in this body allegedly debating the issue of vital national security, and I think most in the Senate wish we could do just that and do it with comity, cooperation and, yes, in bipartisan fashion. The American people, who are concerned and frustrated and angry about the war, would certainly appreciate that, but that is not the case.

This issue is wrapped around a partisan and political axe procedure. My friends across the aisle insist that we debate and vote on one of the three nonbinding resolutions regarding the war in Iraq, and only that resolution. They wanted to debate and vote on the Warner resolution and call it a day. The Warner resolution supports the troops but not the mission. Let me repeat that: It supports the troops but not the mission. That is a most unique position, to say the least, and that is about as far as my colleagues across the aisle wish to wade in the waters of withdrawal at this particular time.

I also mention it might be helpful if we could consider the Feingold resolution. Senator FEINGOLD's resolution actually does something and should be considered in the Senate, as well. Others wish to debate and vote upon the McCain resolution and the Gregg resolution, but we are being denied that opportunity.

Now, to those in the press—of which I see none—those covering this debate within the media, how on Earth can you describe this situation by writing headlines in 15-second news sound bites, stating Republicans had voted to stifle debate on the war? Yes, let's debate and vote on the Warner resolution. That is entirely proper and right. But let's also debate and vote on resolutions offered by Senators MCCAIN and GREGG and, perhaps, FEINGOLD. By the way, I intend to vote for McCain and Gregg if I get the chance. I do not share the resolution in regard to Senator FEINGOLD, but I defend his honor to introduce it and to debate it.

We are not stifling or shutting down debate. They are. Hello up there. Is there any way you can discern that? I can help you. I majored in journalism. I used to be a newspaper editor. This is like playing baseball with one strike and you are out. What happened to my other two strikes? Well, sorry, back to the dugout. We are going to go to the continuing resolution. We run this ball game.

In any case, in my remarks last Friday at Fort Leavenworth, I said to General Petreaus and the crowd that was assembled in his honor:

Throughout our history as a Nation there have been numerous times when a Commander in Chief badly needed a Commanding General with keen intellect and raw courage. However, I do not think that it is a slight exaggeration to suggest the last time one was this badly needed was 144 years ago, the year 1853, when President Lincoln covered General Grant.

There are other historical allegories of tremendous consequence. General Washington selected Nathaniel Green at a crucial time in our Revolutionary War. Mr. Green was a blacksmith's assistant. There was no understanding of rank at this time. And he reputedly stuttered badly. He must have led by example.

As most military historians know, Grant was discharged from the Army for drinking. He went back home to Illinois. He failed in farming. And he failed in running a mercantile store. Four months into the war, he joined the Illinois Volunteer Regiment, was reinstalled as an officer. Lincoln chose Grant over many, many others.

As an aside, Sherman was a good friend of Grant and was discharged for "insanity." When he came back to the Army, he made a famous remark about his friend: "He was with me when I was insane and I was with him when he was drunk."

Then, of course, there was Ike. Selected by General Marshall and agreed to by Franklin Roosevelt, he was picked due to his particular talent of getting people, some with tremendous egos, to come together in common cause. Eisenhower was picked over 30 to 40 senior officers.

Then, just as now, our Nation stands at a critical crossroads. Now, just as then, the freedom of many thousands of people is at stake. Also at stake is the safety and security of the United States of America.

Now, remember, these remarks came at a dinner for General Petreaus at the U.S. Army Command and Staff College at Fort Leavenworth in Kansas. So I said to the general: General Petreaus, you and I have not been personally acquainted over a long period of years. Yet in our relatively short span of time I have come to know you well. I have had many stimulating and enjoyable conversations with you over a wide range of issues—Lawrence of Arabia, the British experience in Iraq—so I know full well you are exactly the right man for the job at the right time.

Our brave young men and women in uniform deserve nothing but the very best leadership, and they are getting it with General Petreaus.

I told him: You have captured America's imagination and enter this job with an enormous reservoir of goodwill.

However, it is a paradox of enormous irony that the Senate confirmed General Petreaus without a dissenting vote—not one—a vote of confidence unique given today's controversy, turmoil, and times.

Yet, at the same time, the same Senators who give you their vote of confidence are now in the business of proposing what I call "confetti resolutions," supporting you and the troops but not the mission you are about to undertake. That, to me, is unprecedented for the Senate and, to me, it is astounding. These resolutions are nonbinding. They have no legislative impact. They are the so-called sense-of-the-Senate resolutions—meaningless except for the message you wish to send to the Executive and the folks back home or for whatever purpose you might have a sense-of-the-Senate resolution. With all due respect, we have crossed the Rubicon with regard to sending mixed messages to our allies,

our troops, the American people, the media, and, yes, our adversaries. Don't forget our adversaries.

Words have consequences. Rest assured, unlike some of my colleagues, our adversaries will read every word and try to figure out and analyze each sentence of these resolutions. And I suspect they will scratch their heads and try to discern the sense and the reading of a resolution that states support for the troops and our new commander with new rules of engagement with a limited timeframe for achieving and reporting benchmarks of progress but that opposes the mission. That mixed message should cause quite a bit of head scratching among the estimated 31 terrorist organizations we have planning various attacks around the world.

However, my real concern is that the Senate is not considering or even talking about the probable consequences of these actions, let alone our responsibilities should they happen. I make it clear, I don't question the intent, purpose, or patriotism of any Senator, regardless of the resolution, but I do question judgment and the law of unintended effects. Bluntly put, with all of this debate with regard to nonbinding resolutions, we appear like lemmings, splashing in a sea of public concern, frustration, and anger over the war in Iraq. I understand that.

In this regard, I should stress, I do not know of anybody in this Senate or the House of Representatives or anyone in America who does not want our troops home at the earliest possible date, and stability in Iraq, if possible. That is not the issue.

When all of this confetti settles—and it is settling, apparently, because we are going to a continuing resolution and we will not have a vote on any of the resolutions—the end result of all this frenzy will be: General, you and the troops have our solid support, but we don't support your mission. However, press on, and good luck.

What kind of message is that? This is not a profile in courage. This is not the Senate's finest hour. If we are going to debate and vote on nonbinding resolutions, let's at least consider resolutions that will send a clear message or that can be of useful purpose. In that regard, we should consider the McCain resolution that lists benchmarks of progress, that General Petreaus has told me would be useful in his discussions with Prime Minister Maliki, certainly the Gregg resolution that supports funding for our troops in harm's way. But that is the killer in this debate because my colleagues across the aisle do not want to vote on the Gregg resolution. Now we are not going to vote on any resolution. The only thing we voted on was cloture.

As a matter of fact, I think we should vote on a resolution, as I said before, proposed by Senator FEINGOLD, a resolution that certainly does something. I do not agree with his resolution, but he is at least forthright and has the courage and sends a clear message.

As the former chairman of the Intelligence Committee in the Senate, let me stress what has not happened in the Congress or the media and has received very little public discussion regarding this challenge that we face in Iraq. No one is talking about the consequences of what will happen if we simply withdraw. And we may just do that because I do not believe this war can or should be sustained if we do not see progress in the next 6 months.

I would also like to point out that most of the time deadlines for withdrawal that have been proposed or are in the nonbinding resolutions mirror exactly the same time period that General Petraeus told the Committee on Armed Services he would follow in reporting whether this new effort is making measurable progress along the lines of the benchmarks within the McCain resolution. The obvious question is, Who can make a better judgment? Who can better make that judgment, General Petraeus, in theater, or Senators conducting theater?

We have not discussed the difficult policy decisions that will confront us if it becomes necessary to withdraw or even how to withdraw. The reality is, what will we do when certain consequences take place? These are the possible, if not probable, consequences we should be confronting, debating, and explaining to the American people and the media, even if some have a deaf ear. First, a dramatic increase in sectarian violence quickly escalating to a civil war, not the civil war that people say exists today but a real civil war and a humanitarian disaster far more devastating than what is happening now; Shia versus Shia, Sunni versus Sunni, Shia versus Sunni. What do we do?

Second, given a civil war and a struggle for control, we can expect an incursion of Sunni troops from other Middle Eastern countries to prevent an Iranian takeover of Iraq and the very real possibility of an Iraq led by Muqtada al-Sadr whose street appeal will endanger their own governments. When that happens, the war becomes regional. What do we do?

Third, we can expect an Iraq dominated by Iran, thus completing a Shia crescent with Iran and Iraq and Syria and Lebanon—and Lebanon is going through its own problems, to say the least. Today, countries such as Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt are talking about building their own nuclear programs, given Iran's nuclear ambitions and their progress. Iran just refused inspectors from the IAEA. With the possibility of Shia Muslims and Sunni Muslims each working to achieve nuclear capability and weapons, what does Israel do? What do we do?

Fourth, Iraq will become a safe haven for terrorists. This time, it is for real. No, not the 2002 NIE, National Intelligence Estimate, that we all agree was an egregious error. What do we do?

Fifth, in their eyes, with defeat of the "Great Satan" only months away—

a clear signal by this body and perhaps inevitable—terrorists around the world are already emboldened, waiting us out and planning more attacks. That is, of course, if you believe what they say. So what do we do?

Sixth, we can expect a perceived, if not real, lack of American resolve in the eyes of adversaries and potential adversaries around the world, resulting in additional national security threats. Read Putin and Belarus; Kim Jong II, with his penchant for missile launches on the Fourth of July; read Hugo Chavez—the Southern Hemisphere's new Castro—nationalizing his oil production and directly involved in five different countries. What about American resolve? What do we do?

I realize in today's climate the obvious answer to "What do we do?" is simply to blame President Bush. But the point is that globally and over the long term, this is not a Bush issue or a Democratic or Republican issue or even how you feel about Iraq or the views of the so-called international community.

Even as we argue about whether we debate and vote on one resolution or three—or apparently just have a vote on cloture and say that is the end of it—terrorist organizations and their second-generation affiliates—guided and inspired—are plotting attacks against the United States and throughout the world, even as I speak. It is obvious we cannot really sustain the status quo in Iraq. But while we debate how to proceed, they are not giving up.

Now, given the fact there were at least five successful attacks killing Americans—and others that, thank God, were not successful—before President Bush came to office and before military action in Iraq and given the fact that this threat will face the next President—yes, the next President—and future world leaders, surely, surely we can figure out it makes no sense to fight each other when the terrorists, then and now and in the future, do not kill according to party affiliation, nationality, race, age, or gender. If you were on one of those planes the terrorists were planning to send—nine of them—over the Atlantic to American cities, and they went down and exploded in an American city or simply went down in the ocean, it would not make any difference if you were Democratic, Republican, liberal, conservative, or anything—you would be dead. It would not make any difference.

We do not need a Republican approach to national security and the war. We do not need a Democratic approach to national security and the war. We need an American approach to our national security and the war and our individual freedoms.

This is a time to engage in honest dialog to work together and think through and agree on strategy that will defeat our enemies and make the American people safe—look at those consequences of our actions that we have not even discussed on what may happen—and, yes, bring our troops

home but in a way that we do not have to send them back.

My colleagues, I started my remarks by saying the majority of these comments came from a speech I gave at the dinner honoring GEN David Petraeus and his wife Holly at our Leavenworth Command and Staff College in Kansas last Friday prior to David Petraeus leaving for Iraq this Monday. I closed those remarks by saying I was confident that under his leadership, this new mission with new rules of engagement, our chances of success were greater because failure is not in David Petraeus. It never has and it never will be. So America's destiny and God's blessings are riding on the shoulders of GEN David Petraeus. And I closed by saying I was proud to offer him my full support and to call him a friend.

So I say to the leadership, with all due respect, and to all of my colleagues, let us end this business of nonbinding resolutions and get these confetti resolutions behind us. Vote on all four. Vote on all three. But let's not have the headlines that Republicans are trying to shut down debate on Iraq. That is just not the case. We should vote in regard to the Warner resolution, the McCain resolution, the Gregg resolution, and as far as I am concerned the Feingold resolution, if we must. We have all had a chance now to discuss the war. We need to vote on the three resolutions—maybe four—and come together with bipartisan commitment—a difficult and perhaps impossible task but a task that must be undertaken for the sake of our national security.

Mr. President, how much time do I have remaining?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator has 10 minutes 23 seconds.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I yield the 10 minutes 23 seconds to my colleague and my friend, Senator THUNE.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from South Dakota is recognized.

Mr. THUNE. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Kansas for yielding and commend him on an incredibly eloquent and insightful explanation of the events of the day, why what we are doing in Iraq is so important. He is someone who has 10 years of experience on the Armed Services Committee. Has served as chairman of the Intelligence Committee. He has a great depth of knowledge when it comes to national security matters, foreign policy, and particularly with respect to the current debate about the Middle East. So I thank him for his great comments.

I just want to point out that with respect to this debate, I had watched, as everyone else did, I think, yesterday what unfolded on the floor. I believe what happened in the last 24 hours has demonstrated what a charade this whole Iraqi resolution process has been.

This is serious business. This is the most serious business we will deal with in the Senate. Young Americans are fighting and dying in Iraq. I would say, having been to Iraq on three different occasions—most recently about 6 weeks ago—things in Baghdad are not going well. There are other parts of Iraq where we have made much better progress, even in some parts of western Iraq where we have gotten some buy-in from some of the local sheiks who have decided to participate in the democratic process and support the effort to provide security in that region of Iraq. But the fact is, things in Baghdad are not good.

What that has prompted is a change in strategy. We have undertaken a new strategy. That strategy, of course, is something where the Democrats in the Senate—less Senator LIEBERMAN—and a handful of Republicans have decided to put together a resolution to oppose. That resolution, in my view, is an absolutely wrong way to approach what we are trying to accomplish in Iraq today, but it is obviously their prerogative to be able to do that. I think they ought to get a vote on it. I will not vote with them. I disagree, as I said, intensely with that resolution and its message. I know many of my colleagues on the other side intend that message to be different than it is perceived by our troops and by our enemies, but I think what we have to contend with here when we send a message like that is, how is that perceived by those audiences that are going to be impacted by it and, namely, our troops, the young men and women who wear the uniform, and, of course, obviously, the enemy they are trying to fight? It is the absolute wrong message to send at the very time our troops are embarking on a new mission.

This may be our last shot at success in Iraq. We have a new commander, GEN David Petraeus, whom my colleague from Kansas just mentioned. We have new rules of engagement on the ground in Baghdad, and we have new conditions for the Iraqis to meet. They have to take on the militias. There are military benchmarks they have to meet. There are economic benchmarks. They have to figure out a way to divide the oil revenues. They have agreed to invest \$10 billion in infrastructure. There are political benchmarks they have to meet, holding provincial elections.

There have been resolutions offered on the floor that address those benchmarks but at the same time express support for this mission. Everyone agrees on the consequences of failure. As, again, my colleague from Kansas so very eloquently pointed out, it would be a humanitarian disaster in Iraq—possible genocide, possible full-blown civil war at a minimum regional instability, Shiite versus Shiite, Sunni versus Shiite; an increase in Iranian power on the Arabian peninsula. I do not know if this new strategy is going to work, but I do know this: We owe it

to those who have sacrificed so much to achieve success in that mission already to make sure we give this strategy an opportunity to work.

I mentioned yesterday that I attended a couple of National Guard welcoming-home ceremonies over the weekend in my home State of South Dakota, one of which was Charlie Battery, a unit which was deployed to Iraq for over a year and a unit which was hit incredibly hard. They were in a very dangerous area in Baghdad going about the mission of trying to train the Iraqi security police in that area. Because of some IEDs, we lost four of those young men. And their families—as I visit with them—cannot help but show the pain they are experiencing and yet the incredible sense of loyalty and duty they feel to their country and to the missions and what we are trying to accomplish in Iraq. Two others of those were soldiers, one seriously injured, another also injured, both recovering from those injuries. But the point, very simply, is there is a cost to what we are trying to accomplish in Iraq. Many of our troops have already borne that cost. The point, very simply, is their sacrifice should not be in vain.

The troops we are sending now into this region are going whether we like it or not and irrespective of what the Senate does. The Senate will be sending them a vote of no confidence if we adopt a resolution saying: We support you, but we do not believe you can achieve victory, we do not believe you can accomplish your mission there in Iraq, we do not believe you can win.

On the substance, that resolution is a bad idea, but, more importantly, it seems to me it was designed more as a political statement. That came into full view yesterday when the Republican leader gave the Democratic leader exactly what they had wanted, which was a debate here on the floor of the Senate on two resolutions. We insisted on more resolutions. As my colleague from Kansas said, we wanted to have a debate on the Warner resolution, on the McCain resolution, on the Gregg resolution, even on the Feingold resolution. As I said, we could all decide how we are going to vote, but we would enter into that debate. And there ought to be, if there is going to be a debate in the Senate, a full debate. But, frankly, the Democrats objected to even debating two resolutions, the Warner resolution and the alternative Gregg resolution, because that would have forced them to vote on funding, a vote they did not want to have.

The American people deserve a full debate, not a one-sided debate, not a debate in which one side dictates the terms. This ought to be a debate about the full range of options that are available, the full views of the Members of this body who represent their constituencies across this country.

I heard one of my colleagues say last week, I think it was, on the Democratic side—they wanted a full-

throated debate. Well, we saw what a hoax that was yesterday. The agenda was exposed, and the charade about a full-throated debate came to a crashing halt.

The American people and the Members of this body deserve a debate. This is the most important issue of our time. As I said earlier, young Americans are fighting and dying in Iraq. But if we are going to debate this issue in the Senate, let's make this debate about substance, not about political statements. Let's make sure all the views in this body are heard.

We tried to do that yesterday by essentially agreeing to what the Democratic leadership had asked for; that is, two resolutions, the Warner resolution, which I happen to disagree with and would vote against, and an alternative resolution that would address the issue of funding. The Democrats objected to that. I hope that if this issue reemerges on the floor of the Senate that it not be a one-sided debate, it be a full debate, so the American people and those families who have sacrificed so much for this cause get the debate they deserve and an opportunity to have their views heard on the floor of the Senate.

Mr. President, I thank you and yield back the remainder of my time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Jersey is recognized.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, the question that should be before the Senate is: Do you support the President's escalation of the war? Don't confuse it. Don't obfuscate it. Let's have a clean vote. The only charade that is being played is by those who do not want to have a clean vote on this most fundamental question.

As a Senator, John F. Kennedy wrote a Pulitzer Prize-winning book titled "Profiles in Courage." His book told the stories of eight Senators from both sides of the aisle who took a stand based on principle and risked their careers to do so. Today, almost 50 years later, I believe we, too, must take a stand based on principle. Today, I believe all of us who walk on the same floor where Senator John Kennedy once stood should heed his words when he said:

The true democracy, living and growing and inspiring . . . will not condemn those whose devotion to principles leads them to unpopular courses, but will reward courage, respect honor, and ultimately recognize right.

Today is an opportunity for every Member of the Senate to be a profile in courage. Frankly, I am disappointed in my Senate colleagues who voted against debating Senator WARNER's resolution on Iraq. With their vote, all they have done is delay honest debate on a failed foreign policy that has been misguided since the beginning. I don't believe this Senate should turn its back on the American people and cast their lot with the President in his escalation of the war in Iraq. I believe those who support the President's ill-

advised plan should be willing to stand behind that principle and go on record, rather than hide behind parliamentary maneuvers to avoid a vote.

Our colleagues should not be running interference for the President on the floor of the Senate. In fact, I never supported the administration's war—a war of choice, not of necessity; a war based on fiction, not on fact; a war fought without enough troops from the very beginning and designed with no plan to win the peace. I didn't vote for the war, and I certainly would not vote for an escalation of the war.

I was in the minority when I voted against the war in 2002. I was in the minority, again, when I voted last year to transition and bring our troops home over a period of time. But the majority of the American people sent a clear message this last November. They said the President's plan for the Iraq war has failed. The American people elected the Senate and this Congress to change the course in Iraq. It is about time we started listening because it is clear the President has not. He didn't listen to his generals. He didn't listen to the Iraq Study Group. He didn't listen to anyone who disagreed with him. And he certainly has not listened to the American people. That is the only explanation for an Iraq plan that is simply more of the same.

As one of the witnesses before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee said:

When you're in a hole, stop digging.

The President's escalation plan will not work. Look at the news over the past few days as the first wave of the new escalation troops has arrived. At least 130 people were killed and over 300 wounded on Sunday, in the deadliest single bomb blast since the U.S. invasion almost 4 years ago. The U.S. military tells us that the four U.S. helicopters that have crashed in the past 2 weeks were actually shot down, with a fifth one down today. And Iraqi insurgents are using new tactics to shoot down our helicopters. The Brookings Institute says the number of daily attacks by insurgents and militias has gone from approximately 32 in November of 2003 to 185 in November of 2006, with Iraqi civilian deaths going from 1,250 to 4,000 in that same period.

Michael O'Hanlon, an expert from Brookings, said that Iraq has become "one of the 3 or 4 most violent places on earth." And this escalation and violence has happened while U.S. troops were there and in spite of previous U.S. troop surges. You only have to look to the past to see that the President's escalation plan will not work. In fact, this escalation plan is based on false assumptions and failed ideas.

To quote one of the witnesses who testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee recently:

This plan is just stay-the-course plus 20,000 troops.

The escalation plan will not work because it depends on Prime Minister

Maliki to do the right thing. The Associated Press reported today that the "long-awaited security drive" is underway. "The implementation of the prime minister's plan has already begun," said a military spokesman. Yet even the architect of the escalation plan for the administration, General Keane, told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that he doesn't know if we can count on the Prime Minister, and he admits that Prime Minister Maliki is an unknown quantity.

I don't know and certainly don't believe that we should put the lives of the sons and daughters of America on the line based on the hope—the hope—that Maliki will do the right thing. The escalation plan will not work because it depends upon Iraqis, we are told by the administration, to take the lead. The administration keeps saying that is an Iraqi plan, with the Iraqis taking the lead. But the truth is, everyone doubts that the Iraqi troops will actually show up.

Many of the troops Prime Minister Maliki promised will be Kurds. Yet an NPR story quotes General Dennis Chapman, who is commander of a team of American military advisers in Iraqi Kurdistan, saying that there have already been desertions from Kurdish troops and that out of the battalion of 1,600 Kurdish soldiers going to Baghdad, he only expects a few hundred to report for duty.

Over and over again, we heard from experts testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that there simply aren't enough Iraqi troops who are loyal to Iraq as a nation and to Maliki as Prime Minister.

A recent New York Times article painted a frightening picture of what a joint American-Iraqi patrol looks like. The article highlights the lack of troop strength and training of Iraqi forces and the confusion that comes with having underprepared Iraqi troops take the lead. To quote from the article:

... As the sun rose, many of the Iraqi Army units who were supposed to do the actual searches of the buildings did not arrive on time, forcing the Americans to start the job on their own. When the Iraqi units finally did show up, it was with the air of a class outing, cheering and laughing as the Americans blew locks off doors with shotguns...

Many of the Iraqi units who showed up late never seemed to take the task seriously, searching haphazardly, rifling through personal CD collections in the apartments.

In the article, a lieutenant colonel of the Third Stryker Brigade Combat Team talked about the difficulty of conducting such operations. He said:

This was an Iraqi-led effort and with that come challenges and risks. It can be organized chaos.

The escalation plan will not work because similar escalation plans have already failed in Iraq, when the enemy simply waited us out. We tried a troop escalation and it didn't work, when we sent 12,000 troops to Baghdad last summer and death and violence on the

streets of Baghdad actually increased. The escalation plan will not work because it has benchmarks but no consequences. And benchmarks without consequences are just aspirations. The plan doesn't hold the Iraqis accountable. We have seen countless plans from this administration with benchmarks after benchmarks that are never met.

The Iraq Study Group said, in recommendation 21, that if the Iraqi Government doesn't make progress toward milestones, "the United States should reduce its political, military, or economic support for the Iraqi government."

Yet when I asked Secretary Rice what would happen if the Iraqis failed to meet the much-heralded benchmarks, she didn't list any consequences. Instead she told me:

I don't think you go to Plan B. You work with Plan A.

Plan A hasn't been working. I will say it again: Benchmarks without consequences are just aspirations. And they are aspirations that have failed time and time again. The escalation plan, as a consequence, will break the back of our National Guard and Reserves.

Let me be clear: The President's escalation plan cannot be implemented without using the National Guard and Reserves far beyond what they already have been used. There simply aren't enough troops. We have already seen the tours of National Guard troops extended. A week ago, I was informed that the New Jersey Army National Guard troops currently stationed in Iraq will see their tours extended by 125 days as result of President Bush's policy. I fully expect to see more extended deployments in the future.

The escalation is going to hurt our security at home by keeping those National Guard and Reserve troops away in Iraq. Those who return home leave their equipment in Iraq, resulting in severe equipment shortages for our National Guard at home. In fact, Larry Korb, an expert from the Center for American Progress, says the units returned home so depleted that the Marines have been referring to this phase as "the postdeployment death spiral." That is why it is time to transition our mission and set a timeframe to get our troops out of Iraq.

Staying in Iraq isn't in the national interest or national security interest of the United States. Our troops are caught in the middle of a civil war they can't solve. Increasing troops will only put more of them directly into a sectarian Iraqi fight. Keeping our troops there or adding more troops is trying to solve a political problem with a military solution.

In one briefing, General Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said: We need to get the Iraqis to love their children more than they hate their neighbors.

That is a powerful truism. The problem is, you don't get Iraqis to love

their children more than they hate their neighbors through military might. That is about reconciliation. It is about confidence building. It is about power sharing. It is about revenue sharing. It is about a host of other things, things that cannot be accomplished through military might.

Staying would only continue to empower and embolden Iran, a country that has turned out to be the biggest winner in our war with Iraq. Dr. Paul Pillar pointed out recently:

Among the neighbors, the largest winner has been Iran. The war has not only toppled the dictator who initiated an earlier war that killed hundreds of thousands of Iranians; it has also crippled what had been the larger regional counterweight to Iranian influence. Meanwhile, the all-consuming preoccupation that the Iraq war has become for the United States, along with the growing unpopularity of the war among Americans, probably has made Iranian leaders less fearful than they otherwise might have been about forceful U.S. action, including military action, against Iran.

Our presence in Iraq only continues to serve as a battle cry for terrorists around the world. According to last year's National Intelligence Estimate on international terrorism, the war in Iraq has become "a cause celebre" for jihadists" and is "shaping a new generation of terrorist leaders and operatives."

Let me be clear, because of how this war was entered into—weapons of mass destruction that never existed—because of how it was executed, there are now no good options left for us in Iraq. But I do believe the first steps toward stabilizing Iraq is to set a date certain for troops to leave. It is only by setting a date certain for our troops to leave that Iraqis will have to take responsibility for security in their own country and work out their political power struggles. Right now as much as they dislike us being there, we still bear the true burden for trying to stop the violence. The Iraqis have little incentive to work out their turf wars over political power as long as we are in the country. Iraq's political leadership will never make the hard choices, compromises, and negotiations necessary to achieve a government of national unity, as long as they believe we will stay in an endless occupation, in which the lives of Americans will be shed and national treasure will be expended.

It is only by setting a date certain for our troops to leave that Iraq's neighbors will start to take responsibility for ending the chaos inside Iraq. Right now the violence has not reached the tipping point to get Iraq's neighbors involved. Ultimately, it is not in their national security interest to have the conflict spill across their borders and to have Iraq disintegrate. But by setting a date certain to leave, we create a new incentive for Iraq's neighbors to help quell the violence. It is only by setting a date certain for our troops to leave that the international community will take a responsible role in Iraq. Right now the international com-

munity sees this as America's war. Once we make clear we will not be there permanently, they, too, will have an incentive to get involved and help preserve stability in a region much closer to Europe than the United States.

So by setting a date certain for our troops to leave, we actually motivate the Iraqis, Iraq's neighbors, and the international community to take the necessary steps to stabilize Iraq.

But setting a date certain and getting our troops out of Iraq in a safe and orderly way is not enough. I believe we must do more.

What we need now is a surge in diplomacy. That will involve much more than a few trips to the region. We must actively engage with Iraq's neighbors in the international community.

But I cannot close without discussing the cost of this war in Iraq. Some say they want to have a talk about, or votes, not about the escalation but about whether there are resources for the troops. I think we should have a real, honest debate that will come in the budget process about what this war is costing. Let's have a real, honest debate about the administration's lack of honesty in telling the American people what this war costs.

Our expenditures in Iraq will saddle our Nation's finances and our children's future. We spend over \$8 billion a month in Iraq; we spend \$2 billion a week in Iraq; we spend \$280 million every day in Iraq; we spend \$11.5 million an hour in Iraq.

The Congress has already appropriated \$379 billion for Iraq, and President Bush is now asking for an additional \$179 billion. Yet the Secretary of Defense announced to the Budget Committee, on which I serve, that he is not going to come before the committee to justify this spending. To me, that is simply outrageous.

The Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction released a new report saying the Bush administration cannot account for critical defense materiel, including over \$36 million in weapons. Hearings in the other body revealed that the administration cannot account for over \$8 billion that was sent in cash bundles of \$400,000 into a war region, without any controls. They cannot account for over \$8 billion. Now the administration wants the Congress to hand over another blank check.

Let me put our Iraq spending into perspective.

For what we spend in less than 2 months for operations in Iraq, we could fully fund No Child Left Behind next year, ensuring that every school district in the United States has the funds promised to them to meet the goals of the law.

For what we spend in less than 2 months in Iraq, we could make up the shortfall in the SCHIP program to help cover children who would otherwise be uninsured.

For what we spend in 4 days in Iraq, we could substantially improve secu-

rity at our Nation's ports with an additional billion dollars, including increased scanning of cargo containers.

For what we spend in 2½ months in Iraq, we could pay the \$21 billion cost of implementing all of the remaining 9/11 Commission recommendations to secure our homeland.

Yet we need to look beyond the economic costs of this war at its true cost: 3,099 American lives, to date. That is invaluable. It is priceless. More will die in the days ahead if we do not change the course in Iraq. We now have more than 23,000 sons and daughters of America who are wounded in ways that will affect their lives forever. We have a real obligation to all of those who are wounded and their families, and to the survivors of those who suffered the ultimate sacrifice. Yet we look at a budget that does not meet that responsibility.

Today, we should be debating the President's escalation plan, particularly since we recently learned from the CBO that the escalation proposed by President Bush would easily cost more than triple what the administration has told us.

Let me be clear for those who may have not heard about the Congressional Budget Office report. That report says the President's escalation plan of 21,000 troops actually only includes combat troops and not all of the other troops necessary for force operations. The Congressional Budget Office estimates this could mean an additional 28,000 support personnel, and that the cost could go as high as \$29 billion. Now, to deviate from that would be to deviate from every standard operating procedure the Defense Department has had to support the men and women in the theater; it would be to deviate from every historical perspective. Yet that is not what they included in the budget sent to the Congress.

I am also deeply concerned that the administration has left open the possibility of yet another emergency supplemental to fund this war in fiscal year 2008. All that means is we are putting it upon the next generation of Americans, which is how most of the costs of this war have taken place—we are putting it on the backs of the next generation of Americans and not even being responsible for paying for it. We do all of this while we have the greatest tax cuts for some of the wealthiest people in the Nation, and at a time when the Nation is at war. That has never been seen before in the Nation's history.

The administration has never been honest with the American people about the cost of the war. It is time for that to end. This Senate must demand an honest accounting before we hand this administration any more money or, even more importantly, any more troops.

In the end, it is in honor of those men and women who have given the greatest sacrifice in the line of duty that we must change the course in Iraq. It is in honor of their courage we

must ensure their comrades are not sent off to carry out a failing plan designed by their civilian leadership.

I ask each of my colleagues: Are you willing to look a young soldier in the eye and tell them you are sending them off to Iraq based upon a failed policy and a recycled plan and based upon the hope that Prime Minister Maliki will get it right? How many more American lives will we lose before we realize this plan will not work? And if it were your son or daughter, how long would you be willing to wait? How long would you be willing to listen to the counsel of patience, of delay, of only one more chance, of stay the course?

I know I certainly am not willing to wait any longer.

I believe there is a difference between deference to the Commander in Chief and blind loyalty. I cannot support blind loyalty that sends more of America's sons and daughters to die for a war of choice, to die for a continuing failed policy. In my mind, that is irresponsible and I believe the very essence of the constitutional framework this country was founded on requires us to act. That is what the majority leader wants to do. It is time for some real profiles in courage. I urge my colleagues to allow us to have an up-or-down vote on the President's escalation, and to support the Warner-Levin resolution. I hope, beyond that, at a later time, to support future binding actions to stop the failed policy in Iraq.

I started today by reminding all of us of the words of John F. Kennedy and the profiles in courage he detailed in this Senate. He said:

In whatever arena of life one may meet the challenge of courage, whatever may be the sacrifices he faces if he follows his conscience—the loss of his friends, his fortune, his contentment, even the esteem of his fellow man—each man [and I add each woman] must decide for himself the course he will follow. The stories of past courage can define that ingredient—they can teach, they can offer hope, they can provide inspiration. But they cannot supply courage itself. For this, each man must look into his own soul.

I ask each Member of the Senate to look into your own soul and your own conscience, allow us to move to the Warner-Levin resolution, allow us to have a vote against the escalation of troops in Iraq. The Nation is waiting and they are watching, and there is accountability to be had.

With that, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SANDERS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF GENERAL GEORGE W. CASEY, JR., TO BE CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES ARMY

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of General George W. Casey, Jr., to be Chief of Staff, United States Army.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I support GEN George Casey's confirmation to be the next Chief of Staff of the United States Army. His nomination was approved by the Armed Services Committee by a vote of 19 to 6.

Through a long and distinguished career, he has held positions of increasing responsibility, culminating in that of Commanding General of multinational forces in Iraq, in which capacity he served for over 2½ years.

Prior to that command, he was Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, which was preceded by an assignment as Director of the Joint Staff, and before that as Director of Strategy, Plans, and Policy, J-5, on the Joint Staff.

General Casey is an infantryman, having commanded at all levels up to and including division command. As an assistant division commander, he served in Bosnia, and earlier in his career he served in Cairo as a U.N. military observer with the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization. He also served a tour of duty as a congressional liaison officer.

General Casey knows Iraq and the challenges the Army faces there. He also knows the Pentagon and the challenges he will face there. General Casey has the knowledge to perform his primary responsibilities as Chief of Staff, which is the training and equipping of soldiers and caring for them and their families.

There is some opposition to General Casey's nomination because he is identified with the administration's failed Iraq strategy, and I agree that strategy has not been successful. As a matter of fact, I have argued as forcefully as I know how that strategy has not been successful and that we need to change course in Iraq.

It is appropriate to hold military leaders responsible for their own failures, but the principal failures that have led to the chaos in Iraq were decisions of the civilian leaders. General Casey had to deal with the consequences of a myriad of flawed policies, including having insufficient forces at the outset of the operation, failing to properly plan for postwar stability operations, disbanding the Iraqi Army, then trying to build a new army, initially using civilian contractors, and an overly extensive

debaathification program, to name but a few.

All of these critical mistakes, which fueled the insurgency and civil disorder, are attributed to the civilian leadership in the White House, in the Department of Defense, and in the Coalition Provisional Authority. Compounding those mistakes was the effect of detainee abuse at Abu Ghraib attributed, in part, to ambiguities in what was considered permissible in the interrogation of prisoners fostered by that very same civilian leadership in the administration, the White House, and the Pentagon, where the advice of uniformed military lawyers was overruled. Those critical mistakes were made in the year before General Casey took command and had severe adverse consequences which he inherited.

General Casey's focus in Iraq was on training and equipping Iraqi security forces to bring them as quickly as possible to a level where they could relieve American forces from the burden of providing the security that Iraqis should be providing for themselves. He was not alone in seeing this was a priority. It was also the focus of his boss, the Central Command commander, General Abizaid, and his subordinates, the Corps commander, Lieutenant General Chiarelli, and the commanders of that training effort, Generals Petraeus and later Dempsey. General Casey put it this way:

The longer we in the United States forces continue to bear the main burden of Iraq's security, it lengthens the time that the Government of Iraq has to take the hard decisions about reconciliation and dealing with the militias. And the other thing is that they can continue to blame us for all of Iraq's problems, which are at base their problems.

Those are wise words. General Casey recognized there is no military solution to the situation in Iraq, that only a political solution enabled by Iraqi politicians making the essential political compromises can save the Iraqis from themselves. General Casey is not alone. There actually seems to be an agreement among most observers that an Iraqi political settlement is a key to ending the violence in Iraq. The difference of opinion exists on whether Iraqi politicians need breathing space, as President Bush has said, to reach required political compromises or whether, as many of us believe, Iraqi politicians need to be pressured to make those compromises and that the addition of 21,000 more troops doesn't make a political compromise more likely, it just gets us in deeper into a civil conflict.

It has been said that General Casey was too optimistic about the possibility of troops being reduced, having predicted in the spring and summer of 2006 and then subsequently predicting that reduction toward the end of 2006 and into 2007 was possible. He did make those predictions, and I think he was clearly overly optimistic. He has made a number of mistakes, but the key fundamental flaws were the mistakes

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.