

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.

made, the wrong judgments of the civilian leadership of this country, not the uniformed military leaders of this country.

Was he too optimistic? Yes. Is he still too optimistic? I believe he is. When asked about whether he agreed with what the President finally said the other day, that we are on a road to slow failure—the President finally stepping up to acknowledging the reality in Iraq—General Casey said he believed we are still on a road to slow success. That is how optimistic he is.

I am not going to hold that against him. I think he is wrong in that excessive optimism, but we expect our military leaders to be enthusiastic and positive about the missions they are assigned—the missions that they are assigned—by their civilian leaders. We expect them to be confident and to inspire their soldiers with the importance of those missions, to keep their morale high, and General Casey did that.

He has also increased and decreased troops—both—depending on the missions assigned to him by the civilian leaders.

As he testified, he requested additional troops on six occasions for specific missions, such as to provide security for the elections or otherwise deal with spikes of violence. However, mindful of the stress on soldiers and their families and on the deteriorating readiness of the nondeployed units in the Army and the Marine Corps, he also sought opportunities for reductions—both directions.

One of the real questions I had to face in addressing this nomination was whether General Casey changed his tune when it came to this surge of additional troops that is being requested or being sent by the President. I pressed him on this issue at his nomination hearing before the Armed Services Committee.

I want to read the exchange between General Casey and myself at his hearing within the last week.

I asked General Casey the following:

We asked General Abizaid back in November when he appeared before this committee whether he needed more troops or whether he supported more troops going to Iraq. And this is just last November. And this is what he said. He said that he met with every divisional commander, General Casey, the Corps commander, General Dempsey. “We all talked together. And I said, in your professional opinion, if you were to bring in more American troops now, does it add considerably to our ability to achieve success in Iraq? And they all said no. And the reason is because we want Iraqis to do more. It’s easy for the Iraqis to rely upon us to do this work. I believe—

This is General Abizaid speaking—that more American forces prevent the Iraqis from doing more, from taking more responsibility for their own future.”

I continued in my questioning of General Casey:

Now, General Abizaid said that he spoke to you and that his opinion reflected your opinion and all the other commanders. Was that true when he said it?

General Casey:

I’m not exactly sure when in November it was, but it was.

Senator LEVIN:

So you’ve changed your view since November?

General Casey:

As I described in my opening testimony, Senator, in mid November was when the re-evaluation of the plan was taking place. So I suspect John and I talked before that. And that does reflect my general view on additional U.S. forces in Iraq.

Senator LEVIN:

It reflects a general view, but then there was some kind of a reevaluation which took place in mid November.

General Casey:

That’s right, Senator. We’re constantly re-evaluating how we’re doing and what we need.

Senator LEVIN:

But that position that General Abizaid stated was your position when you spoke to him in early November presumably still remains your general view.

General Casey:

That’s correct.

Senator LEVIN:

Well, if that’s your general view, what is the change? Why are you modifying your general view for this surge?

General Casey:

What has changed, Senator, are several things: One, the development of a plan, a new plan that was conceived by the Iraqis and worked in concert with us; so there is a plan that laid out requirement for those forces. So just to say do you need more forces is one thing; to say do you need more forces to execute this plan is quite another. And we do need an additional two brigades to implement that plan.

I think he is giving us a straightforward answer to that question. His general view is, and was before the new plan was adopted, that we did not need more forces in Iraq; that it took the Iraqis off the hook. There was a new plan which was adopted by the administration, by the Commander in Chief, by the civilian leadership of this country. That plan requires that we not just clear neighborhoods but that we then remain in neighborhoods in Baghdad.

Do I think that is a wise plan? I do not. I am going to vote against the surge. I think it gets us in deeper militarily. This is a military officer who has been given a new plan and has been asked what are the requirements for that new plan which has been adopted by the civilian leaders of this country. And when given a new plan by the Commander in Chief, he very properly said that is going to require some additional troops.

Again, we are going to debate the plan, the wisdom of it, I hope one of these days. We are going to debate the wisdom of whether this surge makes sense. But given a new plan, given that decision, what General Casey is saying is that his general view about the lack of the wisdom of increasing the military presence in Iraq has to be modified when there is a new requirement, a new plan which requires us to be

present in the neighborhoods of Baghdad.

Once again, although I disagree with the plan, I view that as a satisfactory explanation for why he now supports the additional troops. Not to the same extent that the President has proposed or decided upon, but to the extent of two brigades. He said the additional brigades will give additional flexibility. He doesn’t have any problem with that, but he testified that was not what his recommendation was.

So his emphasis on building up Iraqi security forces to relieve Americans of the tasks that Iraqis should be doing for themselves is a critical part of any strategy in Iraq that has a chance of success, and it is key to the ultimate U.S. military disengagement. The real key to a stable and secure Iraq and a viable Iraq is a political solution that can only be reached by the leaders in Iraq, the politicians. And what American political leaders need to do, in my judgment, is to pressure those politicians to make that happen.

That was never General Casey’s responsibility. General Casey never had the responsibility of doing what is critically essential politically, which is to put pressure on the Iraqi politicians to reach a political settlement. He is a military man. He is a military man who, by his own acknowledgment, has made a number of mistakes. Indeed, he listed a number of mistakes for us that he has made and that he takes responsibility for. But the fundamental mistakes which have led to the chaos in Iraq, which did not allow us to help to create in Iraq a stable and viable country, which is the goal of all of us, those fundamental mistakes were the mistakes made by the civilian leaders of this country. To hold him accountable or responsible, and to vote against him because of the major mistakes which led to this chaos through not the uniformed leaders’ mistakes but through our civilian leaders’ mistakes, it seems to me, is inappropriate and unfair, and I will vote for his confirmation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I rise to express opposition to the nomination of General George Casey to be the next Chief of Staff of the Army.

I admire General Casey’s patriotism and his long service to our country. I have concluded, based on his role as commander of the multinational forces in Iraq, that I cannot support his nomination.

Let me first make clear that General Casey has had a long and distinguished career in the U.S. Army and is deserving of the utmost respect and gratitude for the contributions he has made to this Nation’s defense over his long career. At his nomination hearing on February 1, I stated my appreciation to him and his family for their extraordinary service and personal sacrifice, as well as the support they have provided to the men and women in uniform and their families. I emphasized

then, and I reiterate today, I do not in any way question General Casey's honor, patriotism or service to America, nor do I question his sincere desire to continue serving the Army.

At this critical moment in our history, however, with the obvious—obvious—lack of success in achieving our goals in Iraq, this nomination should bear unusual weight in our deliberations. All of the Armed Services, and particularly our ground forces, are undergoing difficult changes to adjust to the global war on terror. The next Chief of Staff of the Army will be faced with enormous challenges in matters relating to recruiting, training, and retention of soldiers, the continuing organizing of the Army, and requirements for the procurement of weapon systems. The next Chief of Staff must be able to evaluate ongoing strategy and be able to react with sound advice when unforeseen challenges are encountered. Perhaps most importantly, the next Chief of Staff must be unconstrained in evaluating the past while giving advice for the future.

I have questioned in the past, and question today, a number of the decisions and judgments that General Casey has made over the past 2½ years. During that time, conditions in Iraq have grown remarkably and progressively worse, and the situation now can best be described as dire and deteriorating. I regret that our window of opportunity to reverse momentum may be closing.

The bombing at the Golden Mosque in Samarra last February sparked sectarian violence throughout Iraq and in Baghdad, in particular. Yet in the face of this dramatic change in the Iraqi security environment, our military strategy—and I emphasize military strategy—remained essentially unchanged. Instead of conducting a traditional insurgency campaign, our troops focused on training and equipping Iraqis, hoping, in vain, that they could do the job. After repeated elections and political events demonstrated that the democratic process would not, on its own, bring down the level of violence, our troops did not begin focusing on protecting the population. Instead, the coalition and Iraqi forces launched Operation Together Forward in June 2006. This operation, aimed at securing Baghdad, failed. Yet the coalition launched Operation Together Forward II in August in a very similar fashion. The result, predictably, was a similar failure.

I am not going to go over the many times I complained about a failed strategy. A number of times I asked our leaders, both civilian and military, why they were continuing to pursue this failed strategy. I continued to give speeches denouncing this strategy and predicted we would end up in the dire circumstances we are in today. It is all a matter of responsibility—a matter of responsibility.

General Casey, more than any other individual, has been the architect of

U.S. military strategy in Iraq over the last 2 years. During this time, I fear he consistently presented unrealistically rosy, optimistic assessments of the situation in Iraq. For example, in December 2004, General Casey stated at a Pentagon press conference:

My view of winning is that we are broadly on track to accomplishing our objectives, with Iraqi security forces that are capable of maintaining domestic order and denying Iraq as a safe haven for terrorists. And I believe we are on track to get there by December of 2005.

I repeat that:

I believe we are on track to get there by December of 2005.

Almost a year later, in September of 2005, General Casey repeated:

We have a strategy and a plan for success in Iraq, and we are broadly on track in achieving our goals.

Last October of 2006, he stated, before the Armed Services Committee, I believe:

The idea that the country is aflame in sectarian violence is just not right. General Casey said: I do not subscribe to the civil war idea.

Mr. President, we have hearings to try to get an honest, unvarnished opinion of how our Armed Forces are doing, what their needs are, what their missions are, and of course because we are in a war, what is happening in Iraq. We are not on the ground there. We visit frequently, but we rely to a large degree, obviously, on the judgment and the recommendations and the evaluations of our military leaders. This is the opening statement of GEN George W. Casey before the Armed Services Committee on 23 June of 2005:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman . . .

Remember, this is 23 June 2005.

. . . In the past year, the Iraqis, supported by the coalition, have established an interim government, neutralized the Shia insurgency, eliminated terrorist and insurgent safe havens across Iraq, mobilized their security forces to confront the insurgency . . .

How could he possibly give that kind of assessment? Senator LEVIN says, well, we should have put pressure on the Iraqis. Well, maybe we should have put pressure on the Iraqis, but it was pretty obvious to even the most uninitiated that the Iraqis weren't performing. They weren't performing.

In his nomination hearing last Thursday, I asked General Casey about these and other statements he has made, both publicly and privately, that seem entirely at odds with the situation as most observers find it. I noted, for example, that in recent days, the Secretary of Defense, General Pace, and Admiral Fallon, the new head of Central Command, have all stated that the United States is not winning in Iraq and that we have had a failed strategy. These were clear-cut, realistic statements. But General Casey disagreed, saying I do not agree that we have a failed policy. I do not believe that the current policy has failed.

He may be the only person in America who believes that. This is a judge-

ment issue, not an honor issue. Of course, the civilian leadership is responsible. I believe that the former Secretary of Defense will go down in history with Robert Strange McNamara. But military leaders are also responsible. That is why we give them positions of responsibility because we place in their trust our most precious asset: American blood.

During his own nomination hearing on January 23, Lieutenant General Petraeus stated that five additional brigades were required to implement the President's new military strategy and that he could not accomplish his mission if he didn't have these additional troops. I, for one, worry that five brigades may still be insufficient to accomplish all we are asking our troops to do in Iraq and would prefer that we are on the side of too many troops rather than too few, as has been the case in the past.

General Casey, however, confounding the experts, said in his hearing:

We do need an additional two brigades to implement that plan.

Not five, not more than five, but just two.

General Casey said the additional three brigades the Department will send "merely gives General Petraeus great flexibility."

Remember, we are putting this person, who still doesn't believe we need five brigades, in the position to be the one who is implementing the policy. Given this and other judgments, I don't see in this nominee an accurate assessment of the situation in Iraq or what is required to avoid catastrophe there.

My colleague from Michigan says, well, it is all the civilian commanders' fault. I will put plenty of blame on the civilian commanders and I have for many years, but somehow to absolve the military commander on the ground there, conducting the operations, of any responsibility flies in the face of everything I ever learned in my lifetime of involvement with the military.

Recently, I noticed in the paper there was a submarine with four sailors who were washed overboard. I believe they were later rescued. The commander of the submarine was relieved. I still remember in my earliest youth, when the captain was asleep in the cabin and the USS *Missouri* ran aground in the mudflats someplace south of here, he was relieved that day of his command.

We put people in positions of responsibility and hold them responsible and we try to reward them as much as we can when they succeed, with the approval of a grateful nation. But we also hold them responsible for failure.

My friend from Michigan and I have a very different view of the responsibilities of commanders in the field, which is why, during World War II and other wars, we have relieved commanders in the field because they were not accomplishing the mission and, if they didn't like the mission, they didn't speak up to get the mission changed, and if they embraced a failed mission, then they were held even more responsible.

I would go on. I want to emphasize, again, what General Casey said in the hearings the other day. Senator LEVIN said:

... even he came to the point, after all these years, of not having what everybody wanted, which is success in Iraq. He finally described that mistakes were made. And then he said, "Yes, one could define that, doing what we're doing, as maybe a slow failure."

In other words, Senator LEVIN was asking General Casey if what has happened in Iraq was a "slow failure," as stated by the President of the United States. General Casey:

I didn't—I actually don't see it as slow failure. I actually see it as slow progress.

In the last 4 weeks I believe we have had five helicopters shot down. Casualties have spiked to a very high level. I saw in one of the newspapers this morning that over the past 3-month period they have been perhaps as high or the highest of any time in the war. And we are in a situation of slow progress?

Judgment. Judgment. Judgment. We expect people who are placed in positions of responsibility to exercise good judgment.

There is a lot I could say in response to the statement of my friend from Michigan concerning no responsibility whatsoever for the failures in the hands of the commander on the ground in Iraq. I mean, on its face it is a rather unusual interpretation of the responsibility we give to our commanders on the ground. Of course the ultimate responsibility rests with civilian leadership. Of course it does. That is how our democracy is shaped. But we don't absolve anybody in the chain of command, civilian or military, for the responsibility for failure and it is widely believed by everyone, perhaps with the exception of General Casey, that the policy in Iraq is a failure and that is why we are trying a new strategy in hopes that we prevail in very difficult conditions. There is an old saw about those who ignore the lessons of history are doomed to repeat them. During the Vietnam war there was failure. General Westmoreland, then head of forces in Vietnam, was brought back and made Chief of Staff of the Army even though our policy and strategy in Vietnam had failed. Ask anyone who was a young officer in those days in the United States Army or Marine Corps. It was a blow to their morale because they were held responsible for their performance on the field of battle. We are holding our men and women, both officer and enlisted, responsible for their behavior on the field of battle, as to whether they succeed or fail. But now, in this particular instance, a failed commander is now, again, unfortunately, being promoted to a greater position of responsibility. We are, again, repeating the lessons of history because we ignore them.

I intend to vote against the nomination of General Casey and I hope my colleagues will as well. I say that with all due respect to the honorable service

of him and his family to this Nation. It has nothing to do with honorable service. It has everything to do with judgment and positions of responsibility. Just as Abraham Lincoln held generals responsible for performance on the battlefield, so today we should hold commanders responsible for performance on the battlefield.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, a couple of quick comments on my good friend's statement. First, no one suggests that the commanders be absolved from any responsibility. In fact, when we asked General Casey what mistakes had been made, he listed a number of mistakes in his own answers, including:

We underestimated the ability of al-Qaida, the Sunni insurgents, to provoke sectarian conflict and failed to preempt the attack against the Golden Mosque in Samarra; we thought that as more security forces were trained and equipped we would be able to gradually shift ever increasing security responsibilities to them and thus reduce our forces proportionately. This is occurring slower than we originally projected. We were slow to anticipate the extent of the radical Shia death squads.

He has acknowledged mistakes have been made. But the fundamental mistakes which have been made which caused us to be in the situation we are in were not George Casey's. Every commander makes mistakes. There is no commander I know of who would say he or she did not make mistakes. No one is absolving General Casey of the mistakes, which he is the first to acknowledge. The question is whether he is going to be held accountable—not for his mistakes but for the fundamental mistakes which were made by the civilian leadership of this Nation. That is the question.

When my friend says General Casey must be the only one in America who doesn't think this policy is a failure, let me give you a couple of other Americans who seem to think the same way. Let's start with the President of the United States, last October, when he said: "We are absolutely winning in Iraq."

That is the Commander in Chief. "We are absolutely winning in Iraq."

How about another person, the Vice President of the United States, within the last year? "The insurgency is in its last throes."

To say that General Casey is the only person in America who has made statements that are overly optimistic, to put it mildly, in terms of what is going on in Iraq, when he is trying to carry out the policies of the administration, keep the morale of his troops, and now, after November the President now says we are on a road to slow failure, after the American public told the President of the United States that we are on a road to slow failure, now what we are saying is: OK, the President acknowledges we are on a road to slow failure unless we adopt his policy of a surge. What General Casey is saying, hon-

estly, when I pressed him—he doesn't frame it that way. He believes we are on a slow progress road. Are we going to say he is not qualified to be Chief of Staff of the United States Army, when he has been Vice Chief, he has been a Commander, he has been a three star general—because he believes it is slow progress instead of slow failure, when we have a Commander in Chief who just a few months ago said we are absolutely winning in Iraq, absolutely winning?

And George Casey, now it is all piled on him. He is the only one in America who seems to think we are winning in Iraq. Well, he doesn't think we are winning in Iraq; he thinks we are slowly making progress in Iraq, to use his words. Do I agree with him? No. I think this policy has been a failure right from the beginning. Going in was a mistake. It was a mistake that was based on arrogance, it was based on a misunderstanding of history, it was based on a misreading of what the threat was, it was based on a lot of mistakes. Disbanding the Iraqi Army? Look what it has led to. Not having a plan for the aftermath? Look what it has led to. These are the fundamentals. These are the transcendent mistakes which have created the chaos in Iraq, and George Casey inherits that.

He makes his own mistakes at a totally different level, degree, than these fundamental mistakes. Suddenly we say he is not qualified to be a chief of staff of the Army because he was a commander who inherited that mess and made his own mistakes of a much lower degree, obviously. Much too optimistic. He is a commander of troops, trying to keep morale up. So he is optimistic. I believe he is overly optimistic, history has proven he is overly optimistic. But to say we are trying to absolve him of mistakes when he acknowledges his own mistakes as any good commander will, learning from mistakes—he listed his mistakes; it is his list—no one is absolving him. We are simply saying he should not be carrying the load of the mistakes the civilian leadership of this country has made, which has helped to create such chaos in Iraq.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I repeat, in case Senator LEVIN didn't hear me, I have criticized the policies and, placed responsibilities on the President, the Vice President and the former Secretary of Defense for the last 3 years over a failed policy in Iraq. The difference Senator LEVIN and I seem to have is I also hold responsible the commanders in the field for giving accurate information, for providing recommendations that will help to win a conflict rather than subscribing and continuing to this day, to this very day to support a policy everyone acknowledges has failed.

By the way, I said today says are failed—not quotes from a month ago or

6 months ago or a year ago, I say to my friend from Michigan. No one decried those comments, such as “last throes” and “stuff happens” and “dead enders” more than I did at the time. But I hold the entire chain of command responsible down to the commanders in the field.

He says just a few days ago:

I don't see it as slow failure. I actually see it as slow progress.

The unclassified NIE we have read, the National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq says, “We are not making progress.” It says, “We are losing.”

We are going to make the chief of staff of the Army the guy who thinks that “We are making slow progress” as opposed to the National Intelligence Estimate, which is agreed on by our entire intelligence establishment, that we are losing. So, of course, we hold people responsible. Of course we do. Do I hold our former Secretary of Defense responsible? Absolutely. Absolutely. If he were up for another job, I would be standing here on the floor objecting to it.

Do I hold others in the administration responsible? Absolutely. But this is a leader who is up for an increased responsibility and he has failed in his mission, and that is what it is all about. An honorable and decent man who has served his country, but the message throughout the military now is, unfortunately, as it was with General Westmoreland, “Even though you fail, you are going to be promoted.”

To somehow say the commander in the field is in some way not responsible in any way for the “mistakes” I think flies in the face not only of the record but the tradition we have in the United States of America, of placing the commanders in the field in positions of responsibility and making them accountable for their performance and how they carry out those responsibilities.

I am sure the Senator from Michigan and I will continue to disagree for some period of time because we have a philosophical difference, a fundamental difference of opinion. If you want to blame everything on the civilian leadership, who are of course responsible, who of course history will judge very harshly, that is one way of looking at it. If you say that responsibility is shared down to the commanders in the field, as I do, then you probably have a different view.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado is recognized.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I have no objection at all. I am just curious as to about how long. I am not in any way trying to influence the length of time.

Mr. ALLARD. Let me just say I am anticipating somewhere around 12 or 15 minutes.

Mr. LEVIN. I thank my colleague.

Mr. ALLARD. In October 2002, this body saw fit to authorize, by a large majority, the use of force against Iraq. Specifically the resolution authorizes the President: to use the Armed Forces of the United States as he determines to be necessary and appropriate in order to defend the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by Iraq.

I remind my colleagues that we did so because of two important reasons—the same two reasons offered by the President to the American public.

First, Saddam Hussein was in breach of more than a dozen United Nations Security Council resolutions. He refused to cooperate with U.N. weapons inspectors even after a decade of sanctions, and rejected proposal after proposal to verify that he did not have such weapons.

Second, after September 11, it was clear that America could not afford to allow imminent threats to our Nation go unopposed. At the time, Iraq represented a dangerous crossroad between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. In the context of Saddam's hostile intentions, it was a nexus that we could not ignore.

When critics attempt to cover up their support for the use of force against Iraq, they damage U.S. credibility overseas and send mixed messages to our servicemembers. Even more dangerously, they encourage an enemy who believes America will give up when the fighting gets tough.

Of course, there is no doubt that the strategic imperatives in Iraq have changed since 2002. I will readily admit that this fight is one that we fully recognize. But that in no way diminishes the importance of our mission there now. We have a vital national interest to remain in Iraq and help maintain a secure and stable nation.

The terrorists have made it abundantly clear that Iraq is central in their war against the civilized world. They are committed to fighting there and will not stop unless we defeat them. If we have to fight, it is preferable to fight on their own soil.

They have also made it clear that they will not stop with Iraq. They will strike Iraq's neighbors as they did in Jordan and Lebanon. They will strike Europe as they did in the Madrid bombings. And, they will not hesitate to strike America again as they did on September 11.

And yet now, in this body, we are debating another resolution, but one that does not hold any legal weight; a resolution that would tie the hands of our soldiers in the field by limiting their options, lower their morale, and harm their efforts in Iraq. I am convinced that a long-term stable Iraq is in the best interest of our national security, and as I have said many times before, the price of failure in Iraq is too great to walk away now.

We should not forfeit our progress in Iraq to meet arbitrary deadlines whether they are in the short or in the

long term. We should not think about giving up when our men and women in uniform who have achieved so much. Such defeatism encourages the terrorists, undermines our efforts to persuade other nations to join us, and opens the door to attacks here at home. We must stand firm. We must stand strong.

Thus, I support the President's plan to move forward in trying to secure Baghdad.

One of the keys to success in Iraq, I believe, is obtaining a sincere commitment from the Iraqi Prime Minister to get the Iraqi government to play a much stronger role in the destiny of Iraq.

President Bush is confident that we now have that commitment and I think that this will have a major impact on our new efforts to bring stability to Baghdad.

I am supportive of this new strategy because it contains a much stronger commitment from Iraqis, in terms of their share of force strength and their financial share of the costs of the war, and includes new thresholds for the Iraqis to meet. To date, the Iraqis have become too reliant on U.S. troops and U.S. dollars. This plan shows a new commitment from the Iraqis to step up to the plate and fight for their country's future.

I am optimistic that the President's shift in direction was needed, and may have already resulted in two positive results:

No. 1, Iraq's prime minister dropped his protection of an anti-American cleric's Shiite militia after U.S. intelligence convinced him the group was infiltrated by death squads; and

No. 2, recently, U.S. forces arrested the top aide to radical cleric al-Sadr in a raid. I think this signals that the important change in our strategy shows hope for success and that Iraq is ready to come forward with a renewed commitment to solving its problems.

Mr. President, I enter in the RECORD the following newspaper articles describing these accounts.

[From the Washington Post, Jan. 20, 2007]

KEY AIDE TO SADR ARRESTED IN BAGHDAD—IRAQI-LED OPERATION PART OF BROADER PUSH

(By Ernesto Londono)

U.S.-backed Iraqi forces arrested a top aide to anti-American Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr in eastern Baghdad on Friday, amid growing signs of stepped-up efforts to quell Sadr and his supporters.

U.S. military officials said in November that Sadr's Mahdi Army militia represents the greatest threat to Iraq's security. U.S. and Iraqi forces are preparing a renewed effort to pacify Baghdad, including the deployment of additional U.S. troops.

Abdul Hadi al-Daraji, Sadr's media director in Baghdad, was arrested at his house in the neighborhood of Baladiyat, near the Mahdi Army stronghold of Sadr City, shortly after midnight, said Sadr spokesman Abdul Razak al-Nadawi.

The spokesman said a guard was killed during the operation. At least two other aides were taken into custody, according to a statement released by the U.S. military.

The statement did not identify Daraji by name, but said the main suspect was involved in the assassination of numerous

members of Iraq's security forces and is "affiliated with illegal armed group cells targeting Iraqi civilians for sectarian attacks." The military said the arrest was the result of an "Iraqi-led" operation.

Nadawi said "the occupation forces are provoking Sadr . . . by these daily operations or every-other-day operations." The spokesman added that the cleric's followers "are the only ones demanding and putting a timetable for the occupation withdrawal."

Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, who has been pressured by the Bush administration to bring the Mahdi Army and other Shiite militias under control, was not forewarned about the arrest, said Ali Dabbagh, a spokesman for Maliki. Dabbagh said the prime minister was not notified about every impending high-profile arrest.

"No one is untouchable for the security forces," Dabbagh said. "At the same time, no one was interested to go into a fight with the Sadr movement." Sadr, whose supporters hold 30 seats in parliament, is a key supporter of Maliki, who is a Shiite, but the cleric is also widely seen as an instigator of the country's sectarian violence.

Neither Dabbagh nor the U.S. military said whether Daraji had been charged with a crime. "Definitely, if he's not charged, he will be released in a respectful way," Dabbagh said.

Sadr said in an interview with an Italian newspaper published Friday that a crackdown had begun and that 400 of his men had been arrested, according to the Associated Press.

Maliki told reporters this week that 430 Mahdi Army members had been arrested in recent days, but Nadawi said Thursday that the arrests stretched back to August 2004.

In the interview, Sadr said his militiamen would not fight back during the Muslim holy month of Muharram, which started Friday for Sunnis and begins Saturday for Shiites, saying it was against the faith to kill at that time.

"Let them kill us. For a true believer there is no better moment than this to die; Heaven is ensured," he was quoted as saying. "After Muharram, we'll see."

Also on Friday, the U.S. military reported the death of an American soldier killed Thursday by an improvised explosive device.

The soldier, who was not identified pending notification of relatives, was traveling in a convoy conducting an escort mission in a neighborhood in northwest Baghdad when the blast occurred. Three other soldiers were injured.

[From the Los Angeles Times, Jan. 18, 2007]

MALIKI PLEDGES TO TREAT MILITANTS WITH AN IRON FIST

(By Louise Roug)

Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Maliki promised Wednesday to crack down on Shiite Muslim militias and Sunni Arab insurgents, warning that no one—not even political ally Muqtada Sadr—would be above the law.

"We will not allow any politicians to interfere with this Baghdad security plan . . . whether they are Sunnis or Shiites, Arabs or Kurds, militias or parties, insurgents or terrorists," Maliki said in a rare interview.

The prime minister's comments appeared to align his government's security plan with the Bush administration's call to confront Shiite militias. But in other remarks, Maliki underscored his differences with the U.S., suggesting that American miscalculations had worsened the bloodshed in Iraq, and warning that his patience for political negotiation with warring factions was wearing thin.

"When military operations start in Baghdad, all other tracks will stop," Maliki said.

"We gave the political side a great chance, and we have now to use the authority of the state to impose the law and tackle or confront people who break it."

U.S. officials have said that renewed military operations should go hand in hand with efforts at political reconciliation between warring Shiites and Sunnis.

Maliki said if Iraqi security forces were given sufficient training and equipment, they could stabilize the country enough to allow the withdrawal of U.S. troops starting in three to six months—a period in which President Bush's proposed troop buildup would still be underway.

He said if better U.S. training and supplies had come earlier, lives could have been saved.

"I think that within three to six months our need for the American troops will dramatically go down," Maliki said. "That's on the condition that there are real strong efforts to support our military forces."

The U.S.-Iraq security plan involves sending 21,500 more American troops to Iraq and 8,000 to 10,000 Iraqi forces to Baghdad in an effort to quell the civil war between Sunnis and Shiites that on average kills more than 100 people a day.

Maliki said Iraqi security forces this week had detained 400 Shiite militiamen affiliated with Sadr, a radical Shiite cleric whose followers constitute part of Maliki's political base. He offered no further details.

RETURN TO POLITICAL FORM

The interview, which took place in a pavilion inside the heavily fortified Green Zone, was a return to the freewheeling style that characterized Maliki's political manner before he became prime minister last year.

When asked whether the Bush administration needed him now more than he needed the administration, Maliki laughed uproariously, calling it an "evil question."

Throughout, Maliki appeared confident and seemed to relish the chance to respond to statements by Bush and U.S. officials, including allegations that his government had botched the hanging of deposed leader Saddam Hussein and had not done enough to stop the sectarian violence.

Commenting on a recent statement by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, he said, "Rice is expressing her own point of view if she thinks that the [Iraqi] government is on borrowed time," humorously suggesting that it might be the Bush administration that is on borrowed time.

"I understand and realize that inside the American administration there is some kind of a crisis situation, especially after the results of the last election," he said.

Maliki said suggestions by Bush officials that the U.S. did not fully support his government played into the hands of insurgents.

"I believe such statements give a morale boost to the terrorists and push them toward making an extra effort, making them believe they have defeated the American administration," Maliki said. "But I can tell you, they haven't defeated the Iraqi government."

CONCERN ALL AROUND

The widening split between the U.S. and Iraqi governments comes at an inopportune time.

Maliki has promised to carry out a security plan to halt the civil war, but his government has been riddled with sectarian fighting and corruption.

The Bush administration is under fire in the U.S. over the Iraq security plan. The strategy to send more American troops is being resisted by many Democrats, who control the House and the Senate.

In Washington on Wednesday, a group of senators introduced a nonbinding resolution opposing the troop buildup.

In the Middle East, there is great concern that Iraq's civil war could spill over into neighboring countries.

When Rice visited Kuwait this week, officials told her that the U.S. needed to start talks with Syria and Iran in order to ease the violence in Iraq. But the White House has resisted the suggestion, also put forward by the bipartisan Iraq Study Group.

U.S. rhetoric directed at Iran has become more aggressive even as Iraq is working to strengthen its ties with its eastern neighbor and largest trade partner.

When American forces detained five Iraqis in northern Iraq last week, some Iraqi officials were angered by what they saw as U.S. interference in their foreign affairs.

In the interview, Maliki asserted his government's independence from U.S. interests in the region. But he underscored that the U.S. and Iraqi governments shared basic goals for his country: stability and prosperity.

"The success that can be achieved in Iraq will be a success for President Bush and the United States, and vice versa," Maliki said. "A failure here would be a failure for President Bush and the United States."

He took issue with Bush's contentions during a PBS interview Tuesday that Maliki's government "has still got some maturation to do," and that it had botched Hussein's execution by allowing Shiite guards to taunt the former leader and videotape his hanging.

Maliki said that Hussein and his codefendants were given a fair trial, and that it was his government's constitutional prerogative to carry out the death penalty. He said Hussein was shown greater respect than the former president gave to his rivals.

Maliki appeared to bristle at Bush's criticism, but he acknowledged that "mistakes had happened." He said he had personally given orders to his deputies to treat Hussein with respect before and after he was hanged.

He said the pressure Bush was feeling might have prompted the critical remarks.

"Maybe this has led to President Bush saying that he's sorry, or he's not happy, about the way the execution happened."

Significant developments like these are exactly the type of results the President is working toward. Iraqi officials must do more to defend their country and President Bush is making that clear. In turn, we must remain steadfast in our resolve to show the Iraqis that we will honor this renewed commitment by allowing the plan to proceed without trying to weaken it before it has a chance to work.

Our new Commander in Iraq, General David H. Petraeus, has testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee that he would not be able to get his job done without an increase in troops.

Think about that Mr. President. Just two weeks ago, the Senate unanimously approved General Petraeus to head our efforts in Iraq, but some in this body would now restrict his efforts by scuttling the new strategy before the General has been given opportunity to perform.

Why would we support him and recognize his stellar career with a unanimous nomination vote, but say we would rather not give him the troops to get the job done we have sent him over there for?

General Petraeus also testified that the adoption of a Congressional resolution of disapproval of our efforts in

Iraq would not have a beneficial effect on our troops. I've felt all along that the field commanders should be given the opportunity to try the new plan of action.

Mr. President, I enter in the RECORD the following media report regarding General Petraeus' Senate confirmation hearing.

[From the New York Times, Jan. 24, 2007]
GENERAL SAYS NEW STRATEGY IN IRAQ CAN WORK OVER TIME

(By Michael R. Gordon)

Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus, President Bush's new choice as the top commander in Iraq, told senators on Tuesday that the new military strategy to secure Baghdad can work, and that he had asked that the additional troops the administration promised be deployed as quickly as possible.

In his first public comments about Mr. Bush's plan to send some 21,500 troops, the general described the situation in Iraq as "dire" but not hopeless. He asserted that the "persistent presence" of American and Iraqi forces in strife-ridden Baghdad neighborhoods was a necessary step, but also cautioned that the mission would not succeed if the Iraqi government did not carry out its program of political reconciliation.

"The way ahead will be neither quick nor easy, and undoubtedly there will be tough days," he told the Senate Armed Services Committee. "We face a determined, adaptable, barbaric enemy. He will try to wait us out. In fact any such endeavor is a test of wills, and there are no guarantees."

But much of the hearing focused not on details of the strategy about to unfold in Iraq, but rather on the political debate within the Senate over resolutions that would signal disapproval of the new strategy.

When Senator JOHN McCAIN, Republican of Arizona, who has long favored sending more troops to Iraq, asked if approval of a Senate resolution assailing Mr. Bush's new strategy could hurt the morale of American troops, the general replied, "It would not be a beneficial effect, sir."

Asked by Senator JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN of Connecticut, who also backs the plan, if a resolution would also "give the enemy some encouragement" by suggesting that the American people are divided, General Petraeus replied, "That's correct, sir."

That answer sparked admonishments by critics of Mr. Bush's strategy, who insisted that the point of the Senate resolutions is to put pressure on the government of Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki of Iraq to follow through on its political program and take more responsibility for its own security.

"We know this policy is going forward," said Senator HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON, Democrat of New York. "We know the troops are moving. We know that we're not likely to stop this escalation. But we are going to do everything we can to send a message to our government and the Iraqi government that they had better change, because the enemy we are confronting is adaptable."

Senator JOHN W. WARNER, the Virginia Republican who is promoting a resolution opposing Mr. Bush's troop reinforcement plan, cautioned General Petraeus to be sure that "this colloquy has not entrapped you into some responses that you might later regret."

By the end of the hearing, General Petraeus sought to extricate himself from the political tussle by insisting that as a military man he did not want to take a position on the Senate debate. "There are a number of resolutions out there," he said.

"Learning that minefields are best avoided and gone around rather than walked through

on some occasions, I'd like to leave that one there."

Senator Carl Levin of Michigan, the Democratic chairman of the panel, said later that he was satisfied that the general had not intended to involve himself in the debate. The exchanges at the hearing did not appear to have any ill effect on the prospects for the confirmation of General Petraeus, and Mr. McCain said he hoped the commander would "catch the next flight" to Iraq after winning Senate confirmation.

When their questions focused on the military plan, senators elicited several new details. General Petraeus said Lt. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, the day-to-day commander of American troops in Iraq, advised that in order to carry out the new strategy, five additional brigades were needed in Baghdad and two additional battalions were needed in Anbar Province in western Iraq.

Under the current deployment schedule, it will be May before all five of the brigades are in Iraq, but General Petraeus hinted that he would like them sooner, saying that he had asked the Pentagon to dispatch them "as rapidly as possible."

General Petraeus acknowledged that the guidelines in the military's counterinsurgency manual implied that 120,000 troops would be needed to secure Baghdad. But he reasoned that the roughly 32,000 American troops that would be deployed in the capital under the plan would be enough, because the total number of American and Iraqi security personnel would be about 85,000, while the use of civilian contractors to guard government buildings would reduce troop requirements.

If the troops are sent according to the current schedule, General Petraeus said the United States would know by late summer if the plan to clear contested neighborhoods of insurgents and militias, hold them with American and Iraqi security forces and win public support through reconstruction was working.

He said he would raise the issue of suspending troop reinforcements with his military superiors if the Iraqi government appeared to have not lived up to its commitments. But he suggested that withholding assistance from specific Iraqi institutions that fall short would have a greater influence. The general also said that a decision to withdraw American troops within six months would lead to more sectarian attacks and increased "ethnic cleansing."

General Petraeus acknowledged that he had concerns about the absence of a unified command structure. Under the new plan, the Iraqi Army and police units will be under direct Iraqi command. The American Army units that work with them will be under a parallel American command. To ensure proper coordination, American officers are trying to establish joint command posts.

Senator Levin said his committee had repeatedly asked the administration to make available a list of the security and political "benchmarks" the Iraqi had agreed to meet. He warned that the committee would use its subpoena power or hold up military nominations if benchmarks were not provided.

By insisting on that the benchmarks be provided, Mr. Levin seemed to be trying to position himself to argue that the "surge" of "reinforcements" be suspended if the Iraqis fell short of meeting commitments.

There is no doubt that we face extremely difficult challenges in Iraq and we have not made enough progress. The citizens of Iraq must be willing to fight for their own freedom. The President recognizes this and his new plan is the result of increased commitments from the Iraqi Prime Minister.

Again, the cost of failure in Iraq is too great as far as our future long-term national security. It's in America's security interests to have an Iraq that can sustain, govern and defend itself. Too much is at stake to simply abandon Iraq at this point; the price of failure is too great.

I wish we could move forward and have legitimate votes on when we should leave or if we should reduce funding for the effort. But unfortunately we won't proceed to those votes due to a decision of the Democratic leadership.

Let me remind the American people, it is the majority leadership which determines the schedule here in the Senate. It is the Democratic leadership that does not want to have a real debate on Iraq. I would welcome an open and fair debate over our future involvement in Iraq and the Middle East.

Personally, I cannot and will not support a proposal that would at this time condemn the new strategy our Commander in Chief has advocated for—a strategy that requires our full support in order for it to succeed. I would rather have an opportunity to vote on Senator GREGG's amendment in support of what our troops are trying to accomplish rather than a resolution that does nothing but diminish morale, sow confusion and discord without achieving anything but short term political pandering. If we are going to debate, let's have a real debate.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to comment on the nomination of George Casey to be Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army. I have had the occasion, as so many others have had, to visit Iraq on numerous occasions to talk to General Casey. I knew of him before his appointment to Iraq. I think you have to first begin assessing his tenure in Iraq by understanding the situation as he arrived. He arrived after the CPA—the Coalition Provisional Authority—under Mr. Bremer had made systematic and fundamental mistakes with respect to the occupation. He arrived, in fact, after our national command authority entered a country and attempted an occupation without a plan. That, I think, can be attributed to many people but not to George Casey. Without this plan, they were improvising constantly, both on the military side and on the civilian side.

The chief master of improvisation was Ambassador Jerry Bremer. He and his colleagues decided to disband the Iraqi Army without any alternative approach to retaining individuals, paying

them, or directing them into useful services. He also embarked on a very elaborate debaathification program.

In this time it became increasingly more obvious that our forces, because of the misguided and poor decisions by the President and the Secretary of Defense, were engaging in an occupation without sufficient resources. This became most obvious in Abu Ghraib, an incident that shocked the conscience of the world, shocked America particularly. Again, this all preceded George Casey.

When he arrived on the ground he had a situation of chaos, both administratively and also a situation in which the leadership of this Nation—not the officers but the civilian leadership—had grossly miscalculated in terms of successfully stabilizing this country.

Over the intervening months, General Casey established some degree of administrative routine, some degree of planning. He, along with colleagues such as General Petraeus, started an Iraqi training program. Once again, to understand what he saw when he came in, I can recall, as can many of my colleagues, going up and being briefed by Secretary Rumsfeld and others about the 200,000 Iraqi security forces. In fact, they usually pulled out a big pie chart which each week was designed to show the slice of American forces as growing smaller and smaller. That was a total fiction. These people could not be found. When they were found, they were not trained. Again, that is what George Casey inherited.

If people are trying to lay blame and accountability on someone, George Casey is somewhere in the middle or the end of the line. It begins at the top, with the President of the United States whose policies were flawed, with implementation that was incompetent. A large part of the burden should be shared by Secretary Rumsfeld whose personality, whose temperament added further to the chaos that we saw in Iraq. I think we could also include Secretary Wolfowitz and other civilians—Doug Feith, Steve Cambone all of them misguided and impervious to the reality of the ground in Iraq.

Yet just a few weeks ago, as Secretary Rumsfeld left, he was lauded by the President of the United States and the Vice President as the greatest Secretary of Defense we have ever had. That is really accountability.

This nomination is difficult in some respects because in that chaotic and difficult and challenging assignment, General Casey would be the first to admit that his performance was not without flaws. That is one of the appealing aspects of General Casey. He has a certain candor and honesty that he has generated throughout his entire career.

Today, we are debating his nomination. I will support that nomination. I will support it not because he succeeded in every endeavor but because he gave his last ounce of effort and energy to a very difficult and challenging

role. He made progress, but that progress today is hampered—but hampered not by his role, certainly, alone—but by strategic decisions that were made by the President, by the Secretary of Defense, and by many others.

Interestingly enough, too, this nomination is not strictly the result of the President's work, but it is also that of Bob Gates who, I think, is an individual of competence and character who has already created a new tone and a good tone in the Department of Defense. Secretary Gates thought long and hard about this, and in some respects to suggest that Casey is the wrong person for this job is to question the judgment of Bob Gates. At this point, I am not quite ready to do that.

I will support General Casey's nomination. He has an important role to play in the Army, an Army that because of this administration has been severely strained. All of the non-deployed units in the United States are not combat ready. There is a huge personnel turmoil caused by extended deployments overseas. The ability of the Army to modernize is sincerely compromised by operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. He has to face all these problems.

There is something else he has to face, too—and, again, it goes right back to the top. It is the selective realism of this President and his Cabinet and his civilian leadership. I was amazed to look at the budget released yesterday, the budget that General Casey will have to operate with, to find out that this administration is estimating the cost of operations in Iraq—not in this fiscal year but the following one, starting October 1, 2008—at a mere \$50 billion. Yes, I say a mere \$50 billion because this year we will spend about \$240 billion; yet next year it will remarkably be brought to \$50 billion, although General Pace told me in my questioning that they operate with the assumption at the Pentagon they will spend at least \$84 billion.

Where is this \$200 billion, or \$34 billion, disappearing? It is disappearing into the fiction that this administration is trying to project, not just about Iraq but the deficit reduction, their tax cut plans—all of these things. And General Casey will have to work with that budget.

And there are those in the Senate demanding we vote not to cut off funds for troops. We are not going to cut off funds. But I tell you what. If the President's budget is to be believed, come October 1 of 2008 there will be a huge reduction in funds for those troops in Iraq—but, then again, do we believe the President on this or many other issues?

I will vote for General Casey. I think he should be criticized for shortcomings that he admits readily, but he should not be condemned because he was carrying out a strategy and a policy that was seriously flawed when he arrived on the ground in Iraq. He has done his best to do the job he was given.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. DEMINT. I ask unanimous consent I be allowed to speak 10 minutes in morning business.

Mr. LEVIN. Reserving the right to object, of course, I will not—did I understand the Senator to say 10 minutes? We don't have any shortage of time, so I am not trying to restrict the Senator in any way. I just want to plan.

Mr. DEMINT. Ten minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. McCASKILL). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DEMINT. Madam President, I take a few minutes today, despite my hoarse voice, to discuss the fiscal year 2007 spending resolution that we will be debating next week.

The operations of the Federal Government are currently being funded by a temporary spending measure that expires on February 15, and the proposed resolution will fund the Government for the rest of the year.

It is important we understand how we got to this point. Last year, we did not debate and pass all of our annual spending bills before the November elections. When we came back after the election for the lame-duck session, a few Members worked successfully to stop Congress from passing a last-minute, foot-tall omnibus spending bill—like this one—that would have been filled with thousands of wasteful earmarks. As a result, we passed an earmark-free stopgap spending measure that, if continued, would have saved the American taxpayer some \$17 billion.

There were several media reports last year that said Republicans were trying to push this debate into the future so Democrats would have to clean up this mess. That may have been true for some, but it was never true for me. My goal has always been to stop wasteful earmarks. I am happy to work with Members in either party to get that done. That is why I offered to work with the Democratic leader to pass a clean resolution this year that would not contain any new earmarks and that would keep spending at last year's levels.

While the Democratic leader did not work with me on this measure, I am pleased to say that it does not contain any new earmarks. Let me say that again so that there won't be any confusion. There are no new earmarks in this spending resolution. I applaud the Democrats for continuing the progress we started last year.

As my colleagues can see, this resolution is only 137 pages. That can be compared to where we were headed before we were able to stop the earmarks. It is a major improvement over the last omnibus spending bill we passed that has over 1,600 pages.

Let me make another point clear if I could. This resolution does not stop the administration from enacting the hundreds and even thousands of earmarks

that are not written into this bill. As my colleagues know, over 95 percent of all earmarks never show up in our bills but are buried in hidden committee reports that do not carry the force of law. This resolution says—the one we are considering next week—that the earmarks contained in fiscal year 2006, in the committee reports in 2006, shall have no legal effect. That is a good thing, but those earmarks had no legal effect anyway. The administration was not bound by them last year and is not bound by them now.

Also, this resolution is completely silent with respect to the earmarks in fiscal year 2007 in those committee reports. I am not sure why these reports were left out of this measure, but it appears to be a glaring mistake.

The supporters of this resolution say it is earmark-free. While that is technically true, earmarks can still sneak in the back door. I praise Democrats when they call for a moratorium on earmarks, but this resolution does not actually achieve that goal. That is why I am sending a letter to the President today asking him to do his part by prohibiting anyone in his administration from giving preference to any earmark request that is not legally binding. We need to put a stop to committee report earmarks. We need to end the practice where a Member calls up a Federal agency and threatens its funding if it does not fund that Member's pet project.

Our Federal agencies need to be free to use American tax dollars in ways that meet true national priorities rather than serving one special interest or another. The President has the power to stop secret earmarks. He said in his State of the Union that he wants to stop them. I hope he will do so.

This spending resolution has several other flaws. For example, it uses budget gimmicks to hide its true cost. The proponents say it does not exceed the budget, but that is less than honest. First, it cuts spending on national defense programs with the expectation that funds will be added as emergency spending later this year. This is not the time to cut defense and security spending while adding social programs. It is not honest to hide spending this way. Second, the resolution also pays for new spending by cutting funding in budget accounts that are already empty. These are phony offsets, and they should not be used.

This resolution not only pretends to reduce spending in places where it does not, it also fails to reduce spending where it should. First, the resolution leaves out thousands of congressional earmarks worth billions of dollars. Rather than passing those savings along to American taxpayers, it spends them on other programs. Second, this resolution fails to eliminate a number of programs which were proposed for termination by the President and agreed to last year by the House and the Senate Committee on Appropriations. These programs should be terminated, but this resolution fails to do so.

There are a number of problems with this resolution. I hope we can fully debate this measure and offer amendments to make it stronger.

I understand the Democratic leader does not intend to allow amendments, which is very unfortunate since we have plenty of time to consider and debate them. The current stopgap spending measure lasts for another week, and the House can easily take up our final bill and pass it in a matter of hours. I am glad there are no new earmarks written into the text of this resolution, and I thank my colleagues for that, but if we are not allowed to fix other problems in this resolution, I will not be able to support it.

As I am sure many of my colleagues remember, I came to the floor a few weeks ago and had a spirited and important debate with the Democratic leader on how the Senate will disclose earmarks. We worked through that issue and came to a bipartisan agreement that resulted in earmark disclosure rules that were unanimously approved. It was a clear example of how this body can and should work together. I believe we can do that again on this resolution. I hope the Democratic leader will reconsider his position and work with us to allow a limited number of amendments.

Madam President, I yield the floor and the remainder of my time.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BROWNBACK. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for 15 minutes.

Mr. LEVIN. No objection.

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

The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Madam President, I wish to address the body and my colleagues about Iraq, the complex situation that exists there today, the resolution we were not able to address on the floor this week. My hope is we will be able to address this resolution in the very near future.

Iraq is one of the most important and, certainly, complex subjects we will ever debate on this floor. For example, there are some Members of this body who want to reduce this to an either/or decision: surge into Iraq or withdraw from it. But the issue cannot be discussed in such oversimplified terms, I do not believe. Our decisions, whatever they end up being, carry consequences far beyond the number of troops who are deployed within Iraq's borders. Those who favor a withdrawal or a phased withdrawal from Iraq must wholly appreciate those consequences.

We have heard that withdrawal from Iraq would leave a safe haven for ter-

rorists. That is almost certainly assured. We have heard that withdrawal would destabilize the region. That is certainly true as well. But a withdrawal is even worse than that. A cut-and-run strategy would set the stage for a regionwide conflict between gulf states, Arab countries, and Iran and its sphere of influence, and not just a regional war but a bigger one. Such a war would have enormous implications for the war on terrorism and stability around the world. We cannot withdraw from the Middle East and leave behind the kind of chaos in which al-Qaeda thrives. If Arabs feel compelled to counter an Iranian threat, the governments are likely to become more radical, not more moderate. We recognized in the aftermath of September 11 that winning the war on terror requires the emergence of moderate governments across the Middle East. Withdrawing from Iraq would amount to pushing the governments of the region toward the arms of Islamist radicals and undermine the core of our counterterrorism strategy since 9/11. This is not the way to go.

We must acknowledge that we cannot afford to lose in Iraq because such a loss would reverse the gains we have made in the war on terror and extend the war on terror for years to come. On the other hand, I am not convinced that a troop surge into Iraq will usher in the sort of peace we need to take the place of the consequences I have just discussed.

I have no doubt our forces are capable of winning any and every individual battle in which they engage. I have been with the troops. I have been with the troops within the past month. They are strong. They are determined. They are courageous. And they are doing a fabulous job. I believe strongly they are capable of defeating the al-Qaeda insurgency in Iraq and, as they have demonstrated recently, they are quite capable of defeating Iranian agents seeking to foment violence and instability inside of Iraq. What they cannot do, what our troops cannot do, is achieve a political solution between Iraq's sectarian groups. That is a political problem which requires a political solution. As I found out during my recent travels to Iraq, the sectarian violence is the overwhelming cause of Iraq's difficulties. Additional troops on the streets simply will not make Sunni and Shia trust each other.

I say this with great respect to General Petraeus, who is a friend, whom we have confirmed to be the commander of the multinational forces in Iraq. I met with General Petraeus several times during his tenure when he was commander at Fort Leavenworth in my home State of Kansas. He is a bright, articulate, and outstanding officer. I believe he is well qualified to take on this extraordinarily difficult assignment. I voted to confirm him because he is the right man for such a difficult position, and I wish him Godspeed.

I understand there are different constitutional roles that must be played in the debate over our strategy in Iraq. The President has the responsibility as Commander in Chief to direct the Armed Forces. As part of that responsibility, he sent us a commander he believes will serve well under his overall direction, and I could not agree more.

The Senate has the right, if it chooses, to express its opinion of the President's actions. And we do so. It is entirely possible for the Senate to express its disapproval of the President's strategy without taking steps to undermine the commander or the troops. I have indicated that I do not support the President's surge plan, but I did not attempt to undermine the Commander in Chief or our soldiers in the field by voting against General Petraeus, who is very well qualified for command, nor will I attempt or support efforts to undermine our troops by withdrawing their funding. This is the essence of disagreeing at home while being united overseas.

A Senate debate over strategy is consistent with our constitutional roles to voice opinion and oversee the executive branch. Denying promotions of qualified leaders or cutting funding to the troops in the field would not only be inappropriate but irresponsible.

Let me now turn to those things which I endorse wholeheartedly.

First, I support our troops. They are brave, as I have stated, dedicated, and talented. They deserve not only our admiration and gratitude but our very best efforts to help them achieve their mission. And I support that mission. Our troops are vital to prevent the kind of regional instability I spoke of earlier. They are crucial to denying radical Islamic extremists a safe haven from which they can launch further attacks. They are essential to providing the training necessary for the Iraqi security forces to take charge of their own country's security.

As I have said, we cannot afford to lose this fight. Iraq is the key front in the war on terrorism. We must remain in Iraq as long as it takes to ensure that Iraq can fend off external threats in a tough neighborhood as well as take full responsibility for its own internal security and prevent the establishment of terrorist safe havens within its territory. But I fully understand we cannot sustain this kind of long-term commitment in Iraq that will likely be necessary unless we have bipartisan support here at home. We must be united here if we are to achieve victory over there.

This principle was at the foundation of the efforts of the Baker-Hamilton commission, which sought to bring people together on a way forward that could have broad support. I supported the commission's report as something we could rally around together. I do not agree with every part of that report. Some recommendations, such as those linking the Arab-Israeli conflict with the problems in Iraq, just do not

seem to make sense to me. Neither a peace accord between Israel and Palestinians nor new arrangements in the Golan Heights will convince Iran or al-Qaida to get out of Iraq or end the sectarian violence. But I supported the overall report because it could have been something we could use to build bipartisan support for a new strategy in Iraq.

If we cannot rally around that report, perhaps we can rally around a Senate resolution that can gain strong bipartisan support, uniting us here to win over there. Many of us have been working toward this goal. Many of us support a resolution or resolutions that provide responsible opposition to the surge. We do not want to see funds withdrawn from our troops, nor do we believe in withdrawing from Iraq. I hope the party now in the majority in this Chamber will articulate exactly what it can support.

There has been a lot of discussion in the last several days about funding for our troops. I am concerned that already there are plans to use the supplemental and the regular appropriations process to restrict funding for operations in Iraq. Our troops face the threat of real casualties daily. They ought not be casualties of our debates on Iraq.

I have indicated my support for the Warner resolution because it responsibly articulates an opposition to the surge while guaranteeing our troops in the field have the support they deserve from this body and from the American public. This is a responsible approach. I hope that whatever resolution reaches the floor includes a promise of support for our troops. I will not support proposals that do not include such provisions. We need this debate, and we need to vote on this.

I believe there is a way we can come together across the aisle. I think we can be clear about our priorities. The first priority I think we can agree on is getting the Iraqis to work and agree on a political solution to the sectarian violence occurring between Sunnis and Shias. We must encourage the Iraqis to reach a political equilibrium, eliminating the motivation for sectarian strife. We should make sure Iraq's borders are secure. We should chase the foreign fighters out of Iraq and deny the terrorists safe haven. And we should limit the influence of Iran.

I believe we can sustain this kind of military strategy for the necessary time to come, preserving our interests while we put pressure on Iraq's various groups to reach a political settlement. For this reason, I have indicated support for the resolution, as I stated, put forward by Senator WARNER. I believe it is the most constrictive resolution we will consider. It outlines the importance of winning in Iraq, opposes the surge, offers reasonable political and military goals, and praises the efforts of our men and women in uniform. This resolution moves us toward the kind of consensus needed for success.

Other proposals that fail to recognize the consequences of failure, that advocate a precipitous withdrawal, or that provide less than full support for our men and women in uniform, polarize, move us away from consensus and further from victory.

Madam President, the Senate needs to express itself on the subject of Iraq. I hope we can get to a vote on a resolution that will have strong bipartisan support that achieves the goals I have outlined and sustains our commitments for as long as it takes to win in Iraq. We need to have an open process. We need to be able to vote on various resolutions. This is the most important issue facing our country. We should have a full, open debate and debate about it a long time and vote on several resolutions that people see as key. We need to address this, and we need to do it now. We can win. We must pull together.

Madam President, I thank the Chair and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. COCHRAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak for up to 15 minutes as in morning business.

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

Mr. COCHRAN. Madam President, there has been much debate and discussion about President Bush's plan for a new way forward in Iraq. In fact, there was much discussion between the President and his team of military and civilian advisers prior to his making the decision to change course and outline a new strategy to help bring stability to the country and to hasten the day when our troops could come home.

There is no easy answer and no easy solution to the situation in Iraq and the Middle East. The President's decision was informed by input from many sources, including his national security advisers, civilian and military, members of his Cabinet, his intelligence experts, as well as Members of Congress, foreign leaders, and others with foreign policy experience. In the end, it was the President who decided this new strategy and that this new strategy had the best chance of success.

He acknowledged, and we all know, there is no guarantee of success. But the dangers are too great to not try to create an opportunity to provide an increased level of stability in Iraq. A temporary deployment of additional U.S. troops in Iraq to support the Iraqi security forces will provide a new window of opportunity for Iraqi political and economic initiatives to take hold and reduce sectarian violence.

The President and his military and civilian advisers reviewed last year's

efforts and determined there were not enough troops to secure the cleared neighborhoods. They also determined that unnecessarily burdensome operational restrictions were placed on the military. The President and our military leaders have assured us that these mistakes will not be repeated.

Prime Minister Maliki has assured us that more Iraqi troops will be engaged in the fight and that political restrictions will be removed. In addition, the Prime Minister of Iraq has committed to take responsibility for security for all Iraq provinces by November, to work to pass legislation to share oil revenues equitably among Iraqi citizens, and to spend \$10 billion of Iraqi reserve funds for reconstruction and initiatives that will create jobs. He will also work toward demobilizing militias, holding provincial elections, and reforming debaathification laws, which should help improve the civil structure so the Government can meet the needs of its people and help promote economic growth.

Last week the National Intelligence Estimate, entitled “Prospects for Iraq’s Stability: A Challenging Road Ahead,” was delivered to Congress. I will not speak to the 90-page classified report. But there were some unclassified judgments provided to us that I can mention. Within this National Intelligence Estimate, this information is provided to support these conclusions:

If strengthened Iraqi security forces, more loyal to the government and supported by Coalition forces, are able to reduce levels of violence and establish more effective security for Iraq’s population, Iraqi leaders could have an opportunity to begin the process of political compromise necessary for longer-term stability, political progress, and economic recovery.

Nevertheless, even if violence is diminished, given the current winner-take-all attitude and sectarian animosities infecting the political scene, Iraqi leaders will be hard pressed to achieve sustained political reconciliation in the timeframe of this Estimate.

Coalition capabilities, including force levels, resources, and operations, remain an essential stabilizing element in Iraq. If Coalition forces were withdrawn rapidly during the term of this Estimate, [that is 12 to 18 months] we judge that this almost certainly would lead to a significant increase in the scale and scope of sectarian conflict in Iraq, intensify Sunni resistance to the Iraqi government, and have adverse consequences for national reconciliation.

If such a rapid withdrawal were to take place, we judge that the ISF [Iraqi Security Forces] would be unlikely to survive as a nonsectarian national institution: neighboring countries—invited by Iraqi factions or unilaterally—might intervene openly in the conflict; massive civilian casualties and forced population displacement would be probable; AQI [al-Qaida in Iraq] would attempt to use parts of the country—particularly al-Anbar province—to plan increased attacks in and outside of Iraq; and spiraling violence and political disarray in Iraq, along with Kurdish moves to control Kirkuk and strengthen autonomy, could prompt Turkey to launch a military incursion.

Madam President, these statements remind me of prepared testimony pre-

sented by Dr. Henry Kissinger to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on January 31. He indicated that U.S. forces are indispensable and withdrawal would not only have dire consequences in Iraq but would also have a negative impact on the region. I will quote from Dr. Kissinger’s testimony at that hearing in the Senate:

The disenchantment of the American public with the burdens it has borne largely alone for nearly four years has generated growing demands for some type of unilateral withdrawal, usually expressed as benchmarks to be put to the Baghdad government that, if not fulfilled in specific timeframes, would trigger American disengagement.

But under present conditions, withdrawal is not an option. American forces are indispensable. They are in Iraq not as a favor to its government or as a reward for its conduct. They are there as an expression of the American national interest to prevent the Iranian combination of imperialism and fundamentalist ideology from dominating a region on which the energy supplies of the industrial democracies depend. An abrupt American departure would greatly complicate efforts to stem the terrorist tide far beyond Iraq; fragile governments from Lebanon to the Persian Gulf would be tempted into preemptive concessions. It might drive the sectarian conflict in Iraq to genocidal dimensions beyond levels that impelled U.S. intervention in the Balkans. Graduated withdrawal would not ease these dangers until a different strategy was in place and showed progress. For now, it would be treated within Iraq and in the region as the forerunner of a total withdrawal, and all parties would make their dispositions on that basis.

President Bush’s decision should, therefore, not be debated in terms of the “stay the course” strategy he has repeatedly disavowed in recent days. Rather, it should be seen as the first step toward a new grand strategy relating power to diplomacy for the entire region, ideally on a nonpartisan basis.

The purpose of the new strategy should be to demonstrate that the United States is determined to remain relevant to the outcome in the region; to adjust American military deployments and numbers to emerging realities; and to provide the maneuvering room for a major diplomatic effort to stabilize the Middle East. Of the current security threats in Iraq—the intervention of outside countries, the presence of al-Qaida fighters, an extraordinarily large criminal element, the sectarian conflict—the United States has a national interest in defeating the first two; it must not involve itself in the sectarian conflict for any extended period, much less let itself be used by one side for its sectarian goals.

Madam President, it is clear to me from Dr. Kissinger’s comments that it is truly in our national interest to support the President’s new strategy to help provide a new opportunity for political and economic solutions in Iraq and for more effective diplomatic efforts in the Middle East region. Of course, we know there are no guarantees of success. But according to the National Intelligence Estimate, the perspective of one of our most experienced foreign policy experts, Dr. Kissinger, included maintaining the current course or withdrawal without additional stability in Iraq will be harmful to our national interests and to the entire region.

Over the last few weeks, there have been a number of hearings in which the

situation in Iraq and the President’s new plan have been debated. During the January 30, 2007, hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on his nomination to be Deputy Secretary of State, Ambassador John Negroponte stated:

... I believed, and still believe, that it is possible for Iraq to make a successful transition to democracy. What I would like to say is that my belief that success in Iraq remains possible is based on my experience in dealing with Iraq as U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. and Ambassador to Iraq, and as Director of National Intelligence.

We know there are challenges in Iraq and in the region. And the President has developed a new strategy for dealing with the problem, which I applaud. This includes involving the Government in Iraq and the military forces and the police in Iraq in a more aggressive way. Together they have worked with our military and diplomatic leadership to come up with a new plan that, if it is not undermined by the Congress, has a chance of succeeding.

During the January 23 hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the nomination of General David Petraeus to be Commander of the Multinational Forces-Iraq, General Petraeus said:

I believe this plan can succeed if, in fact, all of those enablers and all the rest of the assistance is, in fact, provided.

He, also, indicated this:

It will not be easy, but if we could get them to where they are shouting instead of shooting, that would be a very substantial improvement.

Madam President, it is obvious to me we need to do what we can to help stabilize this situation and bring our troops home. As a beginning point for this strategy, for it to work, we should show a commitment by our country to success. I support this new initiative, and I think we should give it a chance to work.

This does not mean we should not monitor the situation or that the plan should not be adjusted as new developments occur. But we need to move forward in hopes of stabilizing Iraq, stabilizing the region, and in hopes of bringing our troops home at an early date. The President deserves our support in this effort, and I intend to support him.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 5 minutes as in morning business on Iraq.

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

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, this whole debate regarding what the Senate should do and how to send the right

messages regarding Iraq war policy is important, but the most important message the Senate can send, to me, would be to our troops and to our potential enemies.

Everybody in America understands the war is not going well. Those who don't understand it are in denial because it clearly has not been the success we were hoping for.

The new strategy we are about to embark on, the Petraeus doctrine, for lack of a better word, I do believe has the best chance left for us to succeed, and additional troops in Iraq can make a huge difference. We have been able to clear in the past but never hold. We don't need any more combat power to clear. We have won every battle we have ever been in with the insurgents. But we have been unable to hold the territory. Mr. President, 17,500 more troops in Baghdad would allow us to hold territory for the purpose of political reconciliation.

The ultimate question for the body is how to bring out the best in the Iraqi political leadership. Some say we need to send a strong message that we are going to leave at a date certain, threaten to cut off funding for the Iraqi military, quit providing security to political leaders in Iraq.

My answer is that democracy is hard without being shot at. The reason we don't solve immigration, Social Security, and other emotional problems is because in our own country we get locked down by pretty extreme voices who have political action committees and run 527 ads.

The problem the Iraqi political leadership has to deal with is a violent country, to the point where it is hard to get political compromise. It is tough to go to Baghdad and do an oil-sharing revenue agreement among Sunnis, Kurds, and Shias when 100 of your constituents have been shot in the head and left out in the street that day.

So I believe precondition to political reconciliation is better security and the better security can only be achieved by going into militia strongholds that were previously off limits, by more combat capability on the ground to hold territory cleared, and by putting the Iraqi troops out front with a sufficient support network behind them and American hands to give them the capacity they are lacking today to deal with the insurgency.

The McCain-Graham-Lieberman resolution understands a million troops won't matter if the Iraqi political leadership doesn't reach political consensus on oil, rule of law, and on a million other problems they have. But the benchmarks in our resolution are an acknowledgment that it takes political compromise in Iraq to bring about stability, but we cannot have that political compromise with this level of violence.

The resolution also talks about a failed state in Iraq and the consequences to this country. They are long lasting and far reaching. A failed

state in Iraq is partitioned, where the civil war environment spreads to the region, as a disaster. So if you throw in the towel on Iraq, you don't stop the fight; you guarantee a larger fight.

The debate for the Senate is how many votes should we have to express the differences we have in this body? If the Warner-Levin resolution—I respect both authors, but I just disagree with the message it sends—if Warner-Levin is ever adopted by this body, the headlines throughout this world will be: Senate condemns surge. Baghdad lost.

The resolution disapproves of sending more troops. I believe we need more troops in the short term to bring about political reconciliation. But it is not only me saying it. It is General Petraeus, the commander. I think the message from the resolution considers his efforts lost before they have had a chance to be implemented. It is a lack of resolve in terms of the enemy. The enemy will see this as a lack of resolve on our part, and no good comes from it because it doesn't stop the troops.

Secondly, it says you can continue operations in Anbar, the Sunni area where al-Qaida is operating, but you can't go into Baghdad. Baghdad is a mess. Baghdad is a very violent place where they have sectarian violence occurring. The question is: Do we stop it now or let it grow bigger? There are 6 million people in Baghdad. The nightmare I worry about is an open civil war, where we have a bloodletting that will bring in Sunni Arab nations to come to the aid of their Sunni brothers, Iran will get involved in the south of Iraq, and nothing good will come of that.

The reason we are having this sectarian violence is because al-Qaida struck the mother lode when it bombed the Golden Mosque in Samarra, the third most holy religious site in the Shia religion. That has created sectarian fighting that has gotten out of control.

For decades, Sunnis and Shias married and lived together in Baghdad and other places. The Shia population was terribly oppressed during the Saddam Hussein regime, but the Shia majority had remarkable restraint up until the bombing of the mosque, which was al-Qaida inspired. I don't want to give in to acts of terrorism that bring out the worst in people.

Our goal is not to get the oil from Iraq; it is not to create a puppet state for the United States in Iraq. It is to bring out the best in the Iraqi people, to allow the moderates in the region a chance to conquer and defeat the extremists who have no place for anybody other than only their way of doing business, including us.

We can't kill enough of the terrorists to win, but we surely can empower the moderates so they have a chance of winning.

I am glad we did not take a vote in isolation on Warner-Levin. It would have been 50-something votes, less than 60, and the headlines throughout the

world would read: Surge condemned. Baghdad lost. It would have been embarrassing to the President. This is not about President Bush being embarrassed. It is about the message we send to our troops and our enemies.

The reason the Senate is not the House is because we have a chance for the minority; we have a chance to have a healthy, full debate. We were asking for two votes, not one. If you are going to vote on Warner-Levin, fine, I will come to the floor and take the responsibility for opposing it, vote against it, and argue vehemently that it undercuts our efforts in Iraq. But there was another vote being proposed on the Judd Gregg amendment that simply said we will not cut off funding, we will not cap troops as a statement of this body. It would have gotten 70 votes. And the reason we couldn't have those two votes, in my opinion, is because the Democratic left—and we have them on the right—would have ginned up and gone nuts over the idea that the Democratic caucus would not cut off funding for a war that the Democratic left thought should have ended last week.

I know what it is like. I have been through this on immigration. Once your base gets mad at you, it is not pleasant, but you can't build policies around bloggers.

So I am glad the Senate did not take a single vote that was designed to embarrass a single political element in the country. If we are going to debate Iraq on the floor of the Senate, we should be willing to take more than one vote. Two votes is not too much to ask.

Where we go from here, I don't know. I can't promise success from this new strategy, but I can promise the consequences of failure, and these young men and women who will leave to go off as part of this new strategy, I know every Member of the Senate wishes them well and prays for their safety. But I do hope as they leave, we do not take any action to undercut their efforts because of 2008 politics. The war in Iraq is much bigger than the next election.

I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

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

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

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, during the course of the afternoon, a group of Republican Senators have been meeting, including our final meeting with our distinguished Republican leader, MITCH MCCONNELL, and our assistant Republican leader, Senator LOTT. We now have a letter signed by seven Senators: myself, Senator COLLINS, Senator SMITH, Senator VOINOVICH, Senator SNOWE, Senator HAGEL, and Senator COLEMAN. The letter is addressed

to our two Republican leaders and to the distinguished majority leader, Senator REID, and the assistant majority leader, Senator DURBIN.

I would like to now read the text of the letter to place it into the Record:

Dear Leaders: The war in Iraq is the most pressing issue of our time. It urgently deserves the attention of the full Senate and a full debate on the Senate floor without delay.

We respectfully advise you, our leaders, that we intend to take S. Con. Res. 7 and offer it, where possible, under the Standing Rules of the Senate, to bills coming before the Senate.

On January 10, 2007, the President stated, with respect to his Iraq strategy, “if Members have improvements that can be made, we will make them. If circumstances change, we will adjust.” In a conscientious, respectful way, we offered our resolution consistent with the President’s statement.

We strongly believe the Senate should be allowed to work its will on our resolution as well as on the concepts brought forward by other Senators. Monday’s procedural vote should not be interpreted as any lessening of our resolve to go forward advocating the concepts of S. Con. Res. 7.

We will explore all of our options under the Senate procedures and practices to ensure a full and open debate on the Senate floor. The current stalemate is unacceptable to us and to the people of this country.

Mr. President, for reference purposes, a copy of S. Con. Res. 7 is printed in the RECORD of Monday, February 5, 2007 at page 51556.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, in the debate over whether we should be supporting or withdrawing our support from the President’s plan to surge over 20,000 more troops into Iraq, I am acutely aware of one overriding irony. Those who are seeking to begin the withdrawal from Iraq are committing the same conceptual error that many of the same critics have accused the administration of committing when they made their flawed plans for the invasion of Iraq. They are not thinking about what will happen on the day after we begin our withdrawal.

Let me say that the situation in which we find ourselves today in Iraq is certainly in part due to the administration’s failure to anticipate many variables in the Iraqi theater, in the region, and in Iraqi society. Those who prepared only for the military defeat of Saddam’s forces committed such a profound error that it will be a lesson learned in the history books long after we are gone.

We did not prepare for the vehemence with which certain elements of the displaced Sunni elite would fight to retain their status quo.

We did not anticipate how fractured and weak the oppressed Shia society of

Iraq would be once the dictator was deposed, and we did not appreciate how unprepared the Shia would be to present true leadership.

And we did not anticipate, because we apparently did not plan for this, that a political and leadership vacuum created by the fall of Saddam would invite the influence of Iran, whose interests in Iraq are anything but charitable.

The mistakes that we have read so much about—the failure to secure massive ammunition dumps, the peremptory disbanding of the Iraqi army, the sweeping de-Baathification policies that alienated many Sunnis not directly responsible for the Saddam’s tyranny—all of these mistakes derive from our failure to think about what would happen in Iraq the day after Saddam fell. It was a much more profound mistake than not sending enough troops; we simply did not imagine that we would be facing problems that would require more troops.

Thinking of what was the most fundamental criticisms of our failures to anticipate the terror of September 11, I am reminded of the 9/11 Commission’s conclusion that we did not have the imagination to prepare for that attack.

In Iraq, where our imagination failed again, a thorough understanding of Iraqi history and society should have helped.

I am not talking about rehashing the history of imperialists, who would argue to justify their creation of the unnatural state of Iraq, or who would argue about the superiority of one sect over the other.

I am not talking about the history as told by anthropologists, who argue about ancient fights and long-simmering disputes.

A thorough study and understanding of Iraq would have required us—and the top policymakers of this administration—to understand the complexity of Iraqi society as it was in 2003. And if we had done so, we would have had the imagination to prepare for the many contingencies that quite naturally developed when we so boldly sought to change the status quo.

We know that we had next to no intelligence on Iraq—and if you have read the latest NIE on Iraq put out last Friday, you will be dismayed, as I am, to read that we have very little more intelligence today.

But how about open source knowledge on which we could have made more careful assessments of what to expect the day after the tyrant toppled?

It was a tragic mistake to underestimate the role of criminality underpinning Saddam’s regime in its last decrepit days, a criminality that was unleashed immediately after we invaded and which has added great complexity to the conflict among the many armed groups in Iraq today.

But we should not have underestimated the reluctance with which the Sunnis would accept their new declassed position in Iraq.

We should not have overestimated the ability of the Shia, with no political experience, to assume political power. Had we properly assumed the difficulties that we would have faced, we should have been prepared for a period of instability, during which the neighbor to the east, Iran, would not sit idle.

I say this because I cannot support the administration today without honestly assessing what happened in the preparation and implementation of this war over 4 years ago.

And now, 4 years later, the Senate has determined to take up an increasingly partisan debate over what to do to prevent losing the Iraq war.

And we are now debating a variety of what I hope will be non-binding resolutions in response to the President’s announcement to surge 21,500 troops into the Iraq conflict.

This is an extremely somber moment in the history of this nation. We find ourselves in the midst of a war that it appears some still do not fully understand. It is a war whose dynamics and politics are completely in flux, and with the consequences of both our actions in the field—as well as in our politics right here—being profound for the Iraqi people, the Middle East region and our national security.

Make no mistake: What we do communicate is America’s political will, and our political will is directly related to the morale of our troops. Those who seek to, for rhetorical purposes only, assert their support of the troops while communicating their opposition to their mission cannot sever this natural connection between political will and morale.

While it is always good for the Senate to debate great matters of war and peace—and, indeed, there are no more important matters—the imbalance between partisan rhetoric and substantive direction on this question has been, to my mind, unsettling. A perilous state of war in Iraq is not improved by the partisan level of debate here.

I have watched the course of this conflict with increasing concern and dismay.

As I said, I have been profoundly disappointed in realizing the errors we have made in implementing this war.

I have been greatly dismayed in the failure of the Iraqi people to resist the descent into sectarian violence, and their failure to demand leadership from their elected leaders.

I have been horrified by the level of barbarism. I have not been surprised, I must say, by the Sunni jihadists, whose barbarism should be well known by now, but by Shia militias, who, operating under a government dominated by the Iraqi Shia for the first time in modern Iraq’s history, seem to operate without restraint or morality by their authorities in their nihilistic persecution of their real and perceived enemies. I can understand the sense of revenge one must feel when one has been

released from decades of oppression; I can understand the anger and despair one feels when one's family is targeted for murder; I can appreciate the rage when one's shrines and mosques are bombed. I will never understand a revenge that takes as its victims other innocents and noncombatants.

The American people have been shocked by this level of brutality as well—but we shouldn't call it mindless, because in the diabolic minds of the Sunni al-Qaida and ex-Baathist perpetrators, it has a reason: to push Iraq into chaos. In the minds of the bloody Shia militia leaders like Moqtada al-Sadr, there is also a rationale: Their militias complete the cyclical logic of barbarism.

In this cycle is perpetuated a nihilistic violence that will so destabilize Iraq that the Sunni jihadists will be able to create a safehaven where they will expand their reach and refocus on their long-term goals. They are succeeding, and if they succeed they will focus on us.

In this cycle is perpetuated a nihilistic violence that will so destabilize Iraq that the Shia will be left so victimized and subject to militia rule that Iran will further assert its influence to undermine this fledgling nation. If post-Saddam Iraq succeeds, its success would provide the Shia world with an alternate model to the corrupt and failing regime in Tehran. If it fails, Tehran will have a field in which to meddle for years.

The Iraqi Shia, so traumatized by years of oppression under Saddam, and traumatized—let us be perfectly honest about this—by America misleading them and neglecting them in their hour of need immediately after the first gulf war—have failed to stand up and present political figures who can assert leadership instead of political impotence.

Iran is not a passive player here, no.

It is not in Iran's interest for the Iraqi Shia to build a strong, independent, Shia Arab state.

It is not in Iran's interest to have the seminaries of Najaf and Karbala returned to their central position in the world of Shia scholarship, possibly eclipsing Qum. To have this occur would lessen the legitimacy Iran desperately needs as ideological cover for Persian supremacy. The Iraqi Shia, Arabs who were the rank-and-file cannon fodder in the 8-year war against Iran, are now left open to Iran's meddling by their own weak government.

The Sunnis, Iraqi and others throughout the region, are quick to tell us we have fallen into a preexisting and ancient conflict between the Arabs and the Persians, and the Iraqi Shia and their seemingly hapless leaders are caught in between. And that is where we find ourselves today.

Now the Senate is to respond to the policy advanced by the President before the Nation on January 10.

We are to express approval or disapproval to the President's initiative

in the middle of a war like this Nation has never faced. At a moment when the situation in Iraq is critical and the outcome is uncertain, some believe our exercise here will provide valuable clarity.

As I have said, it is fitting that the Senate debate this war.

From the day we passed a resolution authorizing the use of force to remove Saddam Hussein the fall of 2002, it has been fitting to debate this war, and we have, through many floor speeches and amendments to authorizing or appropriating legislation. Whether it is fitting that we respond to the President's latest change in military strategy with these resolutions is another matter.

I have paid a great deal of attention to the hearings held before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Senate Armed Services Committee. I thank and commend the chairmen and ranking minority members of both committees for the many opportunities for substantive review they have sought to present to us and to the American public.

Dozens of substantive testimonies have been submitted, and the questioning has been, in many cases, direct and detailed.

As a member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, I have also had the opportunity to listen to the opinions of the leaders of the intelligence community, and I have read the reports coming from Iraq including, most recently, the National Intelligence Estimate released last Friday.

The public needs to be reminded: There are no silver bullets, no glowing assessments, no confident predictions.

Surrounding this debate, there is a level of political taunting amongst ourselves that I find troubling.

From the majority leader, I hear public pronouncements of 21 Republican seats to be defended in 2008—and I find it disturbing that anyone would question that a Senator of any party would hinge his or her voice on such momentous policy problems for the purpose of personal political survival.

Does anyone doubt that the November election in 2008 is a world away from the carnage of Iraq today?

Can anyone predict with certainty what the situation will be in Iraq almost 2 years from now?

I do not like the rhetoric of "cut and run" any more than I like the rhetoric accusing members of my party for "heading for the tall grass."

Lives are in balance and we should not be throwing around glib rhetoric.

In that sense, the exclamation of a member of my party 2 weeks ago that we should all be accountable on these resolutions or go be shoe salesmen has a certain urgency, although I do not condescend to the working man, a good many of whom are fighting in this war as we speak.

Nor do I believe that if I go and buy a pair of shoes from a good shoe salesman today that those shoes will not last longer and give better value than

some of the resolutions being bandied about today, to be forgotten months from now when the war will bring to us either the reality of some progress toward stability, more stalemate in strife or even greater chaos.

One should predict the future with caution and humility. But, I can make one prediction here, particularly to those on the other side of the aisle: Iraq will be a central issue before this Congress, and before the next administration, in 2009.

We cannot make it go away before then. There is no way that a withdrawal begun now will leave a new administration free from the policy problems presented by Iraq.

So we should liberate ourselves right now from seeking partisan advantage, because as much as some may wish to walk away from Iraq, its relevance to our security and standing is not going to diminish. Not for a long time.

I will support the President's plan for this surge, and I will support any resolution that articulates such support, provided I can agree with all of its language. In doing so, I am acutely aware that the situation we are addressing is at least in some part a function of policy failures committed by this administration.

Admitting this, I have to say that I am unaware, through my reading of American military and diplomatic history, of any conflict in the midst of which our leaders saw clearly the end. Rarely have outcomes been perceivable through the shifting tactics and circumstances that war presented in the moment of greatest chaos.

Many times, in hot wars and cold wars, we have reassessed and changed policy.

Retroactive analysis and accountability are important—sometimes it is critical to understand minor and major mistakes in order to correct flawed policy—but the challenge is to seek the policy amongst the realistic options that will best deliver us to our goals for the future, not to sink in self-satisfying denunciations of the past.

I have read each of these resolutions carefully. I oppose the original Biden amendment, because I fundamentally disagree with it.

Its first resolution clause states:

It is not in the national interest of the U.S. to deepen its military involvement in Iraq, particularly by escalating the United States military force presence in Iraq.

I deeply disagree.

Not only does this set up a potential constitutional conflict between the executive and legislature as to who runs foreign policy in a war, its intent is to inhibit the President from trying to improve the situation in Iraq at a perilous time. Further, to maintain the status quo in Iraq, as this clause implies, is to guarantee greater chaos in Iraq.

If the opponents of the President want to force a withdrawal, shouldn't they say so directly?

The second clause of the original Biden resolution stated:

The primary objective of U.S. strategy in Iraq should be to have the Iraqi political leaders make the political compromises necessary to end the violence in Iraq.

When I read this, I have to ask, where have the authors of this language been? That was our strategy, which we tried mightily, from 2004 until last year: to let politics lead the way to security. But the forces of insurgency and chaos overwhelmed the fledgling political process and now we clearly realize we have to implement and achieve security before we can regain political process.

Am I the only one here who finds it ironic that critics of the administration who support this resolution appear to be advocating a policy that has failed?

The next clause reads:

Greater concerted regional and international support would assist the Iraqis in achieving a political and national reconciliation.

This is not a policy option, but a dreamer's delusion. It is true, in the abstract, that international support would be greatly beneficial to the Iraqis. But if you look at the region, this dream of international cooperation is not based on reality. Aspirations should not substitute for harsh reality.

Then the resolution states:

Main elements of the mission of the U.S. forces in Iraq should transition to helping ensure the territorial integrity of Iraq, conduct counterterrorism activities, reduce regional interference in the internal affairs of Iraq, and accelerate training of Iraqi troops.

But, we are conducting counterterrorist activities, and the fight in al-Anbar for which the President has requested a small number of this surge is exactly for that. But this resolution disapproves of that, if you are to re-read the first clause. We are accelerating training, but we have learned that, if you are going to do it right, you can't speed it up beyond a certain point.

To paraphrase my colleague, the vice chairman of the Intelligence Committee, Senator BOND, who has said of rushed intelligence assessments:

If you want it bad, you're going to get it . . . bad.

If we rush the training, as we have seen, we're going to get ineffective results. If our training of the Iraqi security forces is to be effective and successful, we need to take the time to do it right.

I am all for reducing regional interference, but to do so might mean exercising power and influence, and critics of this President have a conniption if you suggest anything other than a diplomatic tea party with Syria or Iran.

And I do not consider it wise to commit to the territorial integrity of Iraq. We should be agnostic about this question, and recent history should keep us humble against knee-jerk commitments to territorial lines drawn by imperial powers. A previous Bush administration fumbled on the wrong side of

history in the last days of the Cold War when it argued against "suicidal nationalism" at a time when the Soviet Union was dissolving. A failure to recognize that Yugoslavia was a false state led the U.S. to delay for years an involvement that could have saved hundreds of thousands of civilian lives.

If a soft partition could be achieved without bloodshed, I would support that in Iraq, although no one has figured out how to do that, yet, and it remains unclear whether Iraqis themselves, particularly urbanized Iraqis, desire this or could survive a bloody partition.

But I repeat: If I could imagine a nonviolent partition implemented by an international organization that would have the support of the Iraqi people, I would rather find the billions to do that than the billions to fight a war. In the case of finding financial resources for soft partition, I would expect we would have a somewhat better response from the international community than we are having now.

The next resolution clause states:

The U.S. should transfer, under an appropriately expedited timeline, responsibility for internal security and halting sectarian violence in Iraq to the Government of Iraq and Iraqi security forces.

But just because we want to shed ourselves of this war does not mean we can immediately stand up Iraqi security forces. We have been trying to do that, and it is taking time. This clause is, in effect, purely aspirational. It makes us feel good, but it doesn't change the reality on the ground.

The final clause states:

The U.S. should engage nations in the Middle East to develop a regional, internationally-sponsored peace and reconciliation process for Iraq.

Mr. President, who are the players in the Middle East who are both: (a) sympathetic to the Iraqi cause, and (b) strong enough to be effective?

No country meets both of these simple conditions.

They aren't there. It is too typical of the critics of this administration to substitute the process of diplomacy for the substance of hard policy choices.

Now, I do not oppose diplomacy. It is a legitimate tool in the tool kit. But diplomacy must always be part of a broader policy. Before I would support this administration's diplomatic initiative toward Iran, I would want to see a comprehensive Iran policy. However late in the day, the administration appears to be forming such a policy, and it appears to include elements of confrontation and competition, as well as a clearly stated solicitation for more constructive relations, as any sound and sophisticated policy should.

If we are to sit down with Iran while Iran is continuing with a program for nuclear development, continues to be the No. 1 state sponsor of terrorism in the world, continues to undermine the stability in Lebanon, and is working against the coalition's forces in Iraq, I would want those Iranian diplomats

that we are sipping tea with to know that we are competing and challenging them on all of those fronts. It would be foolish to talk to Iran simply hoping we could convince the Iranians to see the world our way.

The nations of the region with whom we are close do support the peace and reconciliation in Iraq. And those nations want us to remain in Iraq until the situation is stabilized. Kuwait, Jordan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia—none of those governments want us to leave Iraq the way it is now. But Syria and Iran and al-Qaida, too—they want us to leave, and leave behind chaos they can exploit.

My colleague and good friend, Senator WARNER, has made an effort to write a resolution that smoothed away some of the aspects of the original Biden legislation which I find I cannot support.

In particular, the senior Senator from Virginia recognizes, in the first clause, the President's foreign policy prerogative, while somewhat ambiguously also stating that the resolution's intent is not "to question or contravene" the President's constitutional authority as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States.

I say "ambiguously," because Senator WARNER's first resolution clause is remarkably similar to Senator BIDEN's:

The Senate disagrees with the plan to augment our forces and urges the President to consider all options and alternatives for achieving the strategic goals set forth below.

It seems to me, however, that adding troops to meet the goals the President has set—achieving a zone of security in Baghdad from which the Iraqi political leadership can assert its leadership and implement essential policies—is a major option that the Warner resolution precludes.

Further, Senator WARNER's resolution strongly supports our efforts against Sunni jihadists, including al-Qaida, in Anbar Province, as I do.

Senator WARNER and the cosponsors of his resolution, however, do not want to see us in between the various sects fighting in Baghdad.

I have to ask: If we are to encourage the anti-al-Qaida Sunni elements in Anbar to join us in a fight to eradicate al-Qaida, what credibility do we have to do so if we are standing by while Sunni jihadists target Shia in Baghdad, and Shia militias slaughter Sunnis in response?

Part of how we got here is by not imagining the way the perpetrators of sectarian strife calculate. We can't continue to fail to understand this dynamic, nor to believe that we can ignore it.

I will support the President's surge strategy because I believe there is a reasonable chance—reasonable, not guaranteed—that a strong military presence that has open rules of engagement to attack insurgents, militias and other criminal elements may create a zone of calm and security for Baghdad. This goal is to create the

space for political leaders to make effective decisions on oil resources, federalism, economic development and other critical issues to entice the majority of the Iraqis into believing there is an alternative to civil war.

Such a period of calm, if achieved, is essential not only for the political system to assert itself, but for us to complete the majority of our training of Iraqi security forces.

If we are to succeed, we won't be able to do it alone. The Iraqi Sunnis are going to have to lead in defeating the foreigners who are terrorizing them in their homes in western Iraq and leading the attacks against Shia in Baghdad.

The Sunnis will have to lead in ejecting al-Qaida, as they have begun to do so.

The Sunnis, not the Shia, are going to have to definitively expose and defeat the former Baathists who have not accepted that the Baath era is over.

The Sunni will have to address this challenge, not the Shia.

And the Shia, not the Sunni, are going to have to lead in ending the terror of the Shia militias.

The Shia are going to have to defeat those who claim to advance the Shia cause by revenge, by torture, by barbarism. If the Maliki government fails to muster the political will to do so, we cannot impose it from the outside.

Perhaps the Iraqi government can finally make progress toward building institutions that will sustain a unified Iraq, toward passing legislation that will divide Iraq's enormous natural resources equitably among the three ethnicities, that will open the civil society to Sunnis, instead of punishing them indiscriminately for their dominance during the Baath era.

Perhaps.

But if not, this Nation and this administration should not be irrationally wedded to the notion of a unitary state of Iraq. We need to imagine all options, rather than cling to ideas which may have departed from the realm of reasonable options.

I will support this surge because the option right now of withdrawing leaves three critical questions unanswered:

No. 1: How do we continue the fight against foreign Sunni extremists, including al-Qaida, in the west of Iraq?

No. 2: Are we to leave a fractured Shia substate unstable enough for Iran to exert expansionist influence, thereby strengthening Tehran?

No. 3: Are we prepared as a nation to see a bloodbath ensue, in Baghdad and elsewhere, that may make other American foreign policy failures—Budapest in 1956, Vietnam in 1975, the Shia slaughter after we ejected Saddam from Kuwait in 1991—pale in comparison?

As I said at the beginning of this speech, the critics' attempts to set the stage for withdrawal commits the same strategic blunder they legitimately accuse the Bush administration of making in its implementation of the Iraq

war. They didn't think of the day after Saddam fell. Today the critics are not thinking of the day after we withdraw.

Today, however, we need to recognize that worse than the vanity about easy victory committed in 2003 is the denial of calamitous defeat that would occur if we leave before we make every attempt to stabilize the country.

For this reason, I will support the administration, but I will do so under no casual assumptions or glib assurances.

I will also do so by demanding that the administration be much more forthcoming in its plans for the day after—the day after we complete our surge into Baghdad, the day after we can honestly assess that Baghdad has been pacified, and heaven forbid, the day after we assess that the chaos unleashed and manipulated by the forces of destruction are prohibiting a meaningful and comprehensive success.

I am not conceding defeat, nor preparing for withdrawal.

I am supporting a strategy for success. So far, President Bush—who has a lot to answer for the mistakes that have been made—is offering the only way to try to leave Iraq in better shape than it is now.

He has my support, and I urge my colleagues to join me.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CANTWELL). The Senator from New York is recognized.

Mrs. CLINTON. Madam President, we are all well aware in this Chamber that our country finds itself in a deepening crisis in Iraq, and we find ourselves at a moment of decision in the Senate. Nearly 4 years ago, our President rushed us into war in Iraq, a war now longer than American involvement in World War II, which next month will actually exceed the length of our own Civil War. For 4 years, Members on both sides of the aisle have watched with shock and dismay as our President has made mistake after misjudgment after miscalculation. Even before the invasion ended, the administration rejected the voluminous plans drawn up by the State Department to deal with the chaotic aftermath. The successful examples of the U.S. experience in Bosnia and Kosovo during the 1990s were summarily rejected. State Department and other American officials with experience in nation-building were blackballed in favor of inexperienced ideologues who were selected on the basis of political litmus tests, including answering questions about whether they were for or against Roe v. Wade and whether they had voted for George W. Bush.

Despite the urgent warnings of Army Chief of Staff Rick Shinseki and other senior military commanders, the necessary number of troops to ensure security and stability was not sent at the start of the conflict. Our men and women in uniform were ordered into harm's way without the necessary body armor or armored vehicles, a mortal error I have tried to correct time and

again since I first learned of it. The strategic blunders now fill an entire library shelf of books, and they are certainly too numerous for me to list in the time allotted here.

Through these 4 years, there has also been another abdication of responsibility. That was the failure of this Congress to engage in its Constitutional obligation of oversight and accountability. While our troops have stood valiantly on the frontlines, the Congress has stood on the sidelines. Defending a partisan position trumped U.S. national security interests and the welfare of our troops in the field. Many Members attempted to raise the debate, and we were unable to do so because of the majority's refusal to hold the administration accountable.

In the election last year, the American people decided the status quo was no longer acceptable. So we have a new Congress, and it is past time we in this Chamber do our duty to balance the President and provide a check against his failed policy in Iraq. As there is a majority in our country against the President's failed policy in Iraq, there is a bipartisan majority in this Senate against it, as well. The resolution before the Senate reflects that bipartisan consensus as it also reflects the sentiments of the overwhelming majority of Americans.

But a partisan minority seeking to shield the administration's continuing failure in Iraq seeks to thwart the bipartisan majority and the will of the American people. This is not a debate about abstractions. I have seen the consequences of our involvement in Iraq, as have many of my fellow Senators. Three weeks ago, I visited Iraq to express gratitude to our soldiers, to meet with Iraqi leaders and U.S. commanders and our troops on the ground.

What I saw and what I did not see underscored my concerns. I saw American service men and women performing their duty admirably, but I did not see a strategy that, under the current circumstances, has much chance of success. The collective analysis of our intelligence community in the latest National Intelligence Estimate is that the term "civil war" does not adequately capture the complexity of the conflict in Iraq. The bipartisan Baker-Hamilton Commission said the situation in Iraq is grave and deteriorating. Yet the President's response to the bipartisan commission and the latest National Intelligence Estimate does not match the urgency that is described. The so-called surge is not a new strategy but a tactic that has been tried and failed.

The absence of leadership on the part of the President leaves Congress no choice but to demonstrate the leadership that the American people and the reality on the ground demand. The previous two Congresses abdicated their duty. We must not. Every single day our feet sink deeper into the sands. Every day the crisis worsens. To hide from this debate with our troops in such danger is wrong, plain and simple.

The crisis in Iraq has fostered a crisis of democracy at home. The American people expect a debate. Our troops are owed a debate. Our Constitution commands we debate. But a partisan minority acting at the behest of the administration is standing in the way. This amounts to a gag rule on our democracy, contrary to the national security interests of the United States.

Even though America voted for a new direction in Iraq, even though the majority of Senators opposes escalation in Iraq, we cannot get the Republicans to allow us to take a symbolic vote to condemn the escalation, much less a real vote to stop it. This resolution deserves a debate. It deserves a vote. It deserves passage.

There are those in the Senate who invoke our grave troops, suggesting that a debate on the most important issue facing our country and facing our troops would somehow undermine the mission and weaken our Nation. It is a pernicious, shameful argument and it is dead wrong. Our democracy is stronger than that and the American people and our troops deserve better than that.

Our troops understand we are debating this war. We are debating it not just in this Senate, we are debating it in kitchen table conversations, around water coolers, and standing in line at supermarkets. We are debating this war everywhere Americans gather. Indeed, our troops are debating this war.

The American people understand it is the policy that undermines our national security interests, not a vote disapproving the policy.

This debate and this resolution have merit and purpose and it will, if permitted to go forward, begin the process of changing the policy; otherwise, why would the administration and my colleagues on the other side of the aisle fight so hard to prevent us from having a debate and a vote? Because they understand this will be the first step to restore our strength and renew our leadership around the world, to begin redeploying our troops out of Iraq and start on the long road of undoing the damage brought by the President to America's leadership around the world.

If you believe the escalation is the right strategy, cast your vote for it. If you believe, as the majority in this Chamber believes, that escalation is not the right strategy, then cast your vote against it. But standing on the sidelines is no way to stand up for the troops.

Now, there are many—both in the Chamber and outside—who wish to go further than this resolution and look for ways to bind the actions of the President and to require him to change course. I understand and agree with the frustration that has afflicted many Members in dealing with the President's policy. However, if we can get a bipartisan vote against escalation, it will be the first time the Senate has exercised its constitutional responsibility to be a check and balance on the

President. The first step for the Senate will be a giant leap toward accountability and toward the right end to this war.

There is a big difference between calling for the end of this war and doing the difficult, painstaking work of building the political will within the Congress to take action. We, in the Senate, entrusted by our constituents to cast tough votes, should not have the luxury of standing outside the arena and lobbing criticism from within.

Once we pass this resolution, we should go further. Rather than an escalation of U.S. troops, which will not contribute to fundamentally changing the conditions on the ground, we should put pressure on the Iraqi Government in a way that they will understand there are consequences to their empty promises and their continued inaction.

Last week, the National Intelligence Counsel released the unclassified key judgments of the National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq. That presents the consensus views of the U.S. intelligence community. It underscores the need for a political solution. The NIE states that in the coming 12 to 18 months, the overall security situation will continue to deteriorate at rates comparable to the latter part of 2006. And it goes on further to say that even if violence is diminished, given the current winner-takes-all attitude and sectarian animosities infecting the political scene, Iraqi leaders will be hard-pressed to achieve sustained political reconciliation in the timeframe of the estimate, namely, a year to a year and a half. Even if the intelligence experts argue the escalation results in greater security, their best judgment is that the bloodshed and violence will continue to spiral out of control.

So what should we do? Many believe, and we have been arguing for this and voting for this for more than a year and a half, that we have to chart a new course that emphasizes greater Iraqi responsibility. I still believe that is the path we should be taking. Instead, the President has chosen a very narrow course that relies heavily on American military force.

I will be introducing legislation that I think offers a better alternative. First, my legislation will cap the number of troops in Iraq as of January 1st and will require the administration to seek congressional authorization for any additional troops. The President has finally said, this is not an open-ended commitment in Iraq, but he is providing the Iraqis with an open-ended presence of American troops.

Second, as a means to increase our leverage with the Iraqi Government and to clearly send a message that there are consequences to their inaction, I would impose conditions for continued funding of the Iraqi security forces and the private contractors working for the Iraqis.

My legislation would require certification that the security forces were

free of sectarian and militia influence and were actually assuming greater responsibility for Iraqi security, along with other conditions. We must not let U.S. funds, taxpayer funds, be used to train members of sectarian militias who are responsible for so much of the violence in Iraq. Unfortunately, it appears our funds to Iraqi security forces may be going to the people we are trying to restrain.

A news report last week in an article entitled "Mahdi Army Gains Strength through Unwitting Aid of U.S." reports that:

... the U.S. military drive to train and equip Iraq's security forces has unwittingly strengthened Muslin cleric Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army militia, which has been battling to take over much of the capital city as American forces are trying to secure it.

According to this new report, U.S. Army commanders and enlisted men who are patrolling East Baghdad, said al-Sadr's militias had heavily infiltrated the Iraqi police and Army units that they've trained and armed. Said one soldier:

They'll wave at us during the day and shoot at us during the night.

We need to inform the Iraqi Government, in no uncertain terms, that there are consequences, that we will take funds away from their troops—not from our troops, many of whom still lack armored vehicles and counter-insurgency measure devices and communications equipment. And we will not fund the Iraqis if our troops are going to enter into sectarian battles where some of the participants have received American training and support.

Third, I would hold the administration accountable for their empty promises as well. My bill requires the Bush administration to certify that Iraq has disarmed the militias, has ensured that a law has finally been passed for the equitable sharing of oil revenues; that the Iraqi Government, under American influence and even pressure, has made the constitutional changes necessary to ensure rights for minority communities; that the debaathification process has been reversed to allow teachers, professionals, and others who joined the Baath Party as a means to get a job to serve in the new Iraqi Government.

I would also require the administration to engage in a regional diplomatic initiative, including all of Iraq's neighbors, to address Iraq's future and to understand and convey clearly that the United States expects Iraq's neighbors to be partners in the stability and security of the new Iraqi state.

If these conditions are not met or are not on their way to being met within 6 months, a new congressional authorization requirement would be triggered.

Finally, I would prohibit any spending to increase troop levels unless and until the Secretary of Defense certifies that our American troops will have the proper training and equipment for

whatever mission they are ordered to fulfill.

Yesterday, I read the classified report outlining the findings by the Department of Defense inspector general about the problems that have been faced by our troops getting the equipment they desperately need in combat areas such as Iraq.

The inspector general did not have the full cooperation of the Department of Defense. It is heartbreaking that the inspector general could conclude that the U.S. military still has failed to equip our soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan, especially for the kind of warfare they are confronting, with IEDs and insurgents who are attacking them in asymmetric, unconventional warfare.

This report comes on the heels of an article in the Washington Post last week titled "Equipment for Added Troops Is Lacking: New Iraq Forces Must Make Do, Officials Say." The Washington Post story raised serious questions about the adequacy of the supply of up-armored HMMWVs and trucks.

One of our generals is quoted as saying he does not have the equipment our forces need, and they will have to go into battle with what they have.

On my way back from Iraq and Afghanistan, I stopped at Landstuhl Hospital in Germany to visit with some of our wounded soldiers. I met with one young man who was lying in his bed with injuries he had suffered from one of the shape charges, these new more advanced, more sophisticated command-controlled IEDs, the improvised explosive devices. He told me that the armored, fully equipped HMMWV had saved his life and that of the lives of his buddies who were with him. But he also told me that not everybody he served with had that kind of protection because there were not enough of those armored vehicles to go around.

I do not believe the Congress can shirk its responsibility. It is past time we live up to our constitutional responsibility. If I had been President in October of 2002, I would have never asked for authority to divert our attention from Afghanistan to Iraq, and I certainly would never have started this war. But we are where we are, and this Congress must deliver a strategy to help us end this war in the right way and begin returning our troops home.

So on this most important issue of our time, I call on my colleagues not to hide from this debate but to welcome it, to welcome the opportunity to set forth whatever one's opinions might be because this debate is about more than our policy in Iraq. It is about the role and responsibility of this august institution. Great debates in our past have not only moved public opinion but furthered the progress of our country.

This debate is not merely about whether the President should escalate troops into Iraq, whether he has failed to grasp the complexity of the situation we confront in Iraq, and to take every diplomatic, political, economic,

and military strategy available to him, but it is about our democracy itself.

We should consider this resolution, and I hope we will. Our duty is rooted in the faith entrusted to us by our constituents and enshrined in our Constitution. When we think about the patriotism and bravery, the humor and resolve, the optimism and strength of our soldiers, marines, airmen, and sailors, our Active Duty, our Guard, and Reserve, I think it humbles us all. But it comes out of this great democratic tradition that we are all blessed to be a part of.

I hope we have the opportunity in the next days to do our duty just as the men and women who are serving us have done and are doing theirs.

A week ago, I was privileged to go to San Antonio for the opening of a remarkable center called the Center for the Intrepid. It is a new state-of-the-art facility devoted to the rehabilitation and recovery of our wounded heroes. It was funded by contributions from more than 600,000 Americans. It was not built by our Government. It was built by our citizens.

It is not only going to be a place of great hope and healing for the brave men and women who have given their full measure, but it will also stand as a symbol of our democracy, of our values, of people coming together across our country—a unique partnership that you find nowhere else in the world except here.

As I sat on the stage during the ceremonies for the opening of this new rehabilitation center, I watched the hundreds of young men and women who had been injured march in, and in some cases wheeled in, to take their place in the audience. I believe they are owed this debate. And certainly all those who are currently serving, and the thousands who are on their way to carry out this escalation strategy, deserve it even more.

So I hope we will have a chance to express the will of our constituents, our deeply held opinions, and participate in a debate that is historic and necessary. That is the least we can do.

Mr. COBURN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that an analysis of the consequences of our actions in Iraq entitled "Now What?" by Army Retired LTG Jerry Max Bunyard be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

NOW WHAT?
(By Jerry Max Bunyard)

At church every Sunday, the Fort Belvoir, VA Installation Chaplain uses the question "now what?" to get the congregation to analyze the message he just delivered and find a way to apply it to their lives. I believe as citizens and leaders of this nation we are at a point in the continuing War in Iraq that we must ask the same question; "Now What?"

Today we have been bombarded with facts, figures, commentaries, interpretations, and subjective thoughts concerning the Middle East activities. Depending on the writer, attempts are made to sway you one way or the

other concerning a particular issue. There are many half-truths that are spoken, which tend to lead the reader in a given direction. Our world-wide media has led us astray on many Middle East subjects. They tend to be over zealous to ensure what is being written follows the point they are attempting to make or stays within the bounds of being politically correct or meet their organization's marketing goals for selling air time or copy. They sometimes convince the reader to believe and support a particular political agenda. In many cases these misleading and unbalanced reports cause the reader to be convinced that what is being said is the truth. On the other hand, there are some excellent articles, books and writings that exist on the subject but they have been overlooked or ignored to some degree by both academia and the media because of political correctness coupled with political sensitivity for fear of offending major non-western religion, reigning political and ideological orthodoxies, or a mix of both. So the question is how do we get to the truth of the Middle East conundrum?

For many Americans (as well as other nationalities) they simply rely on what the newspaper, radio or TV is telling them. They do not question or seek other sources on any given event or subject being discussed. They make no attempt to understand the totality of the area of interest they just swing with the "news of the day" from their favorite news media or TV station. Then we have the politicians and their army of supporters who will do and say what they think John Q. Public wants to hear in order to glean their vote. They twist and slant the news to meet their agenda. As we approach the 2008 Presidential election this aspect has become the norm and is simply misleading the American people, causing great harm to our chances of achieving the National objectives throughout the world as well as showing, indirectly, lack of support for the members of our armed forces who are serving in harms way supporting these objectives. This, I consider personal aggrandizement and, unquestionably, it is not in the best interest of the country.

There are others, thank goodness, who do take the time and energy to study the subject pro and con and attempt to be objective and analyze the big picture along with the day to day events as they occur. Likewise, there are some very knowledgeable Middle East analysts who have made it their life's endeavor to understand the intricacies of the situation, various cultures, religion and politics of this volatile region of the world. Many of these people are not in the government. In my opinion, we should be listening to and incorporating their thoughts and experience into any decisions concerning that region of the world. These dedicated, unbiased "subject matter experts" should be consulted regularly for opinions and recommendations.

Based upon this multitude of diverse information one has to sort the wheat from the chaff. This requires some personal knowledge of the Middle East and Iraq war as well as the writer or speaker providing information concerning the area of interest. One must do his homework in order to place the information in "categories" to establish a prioritization of credible information. Once this task is completed then one only uses that information and "files" the rest. Throughout this paper I will use quotes or information from whom I consider credible sources and will footnote where the comments or quotes originated.

The purpose of this paper is to provide my two cents worth on how to answer the question of "Now What" relative to what we should be thinking about and doing concerning the Iraqi situation or, better yet, the

Middle East regional situation. There will not be any effort to address the question of how we got into this situation. We are where we are, so what course of action should we follow from this point forward? To address this one must take a look at the region itself and place into perspective the consequences of the various choices that are now before us.

THE CHALLENGE

I cautioned earlier about politicians and how they use or misuse information. However, there is at least one exception in the political arena, Senator Joseph Lieberman (I-CT) who very clearly summed up the current Iraqi situation and the challenge that faces Iraq, the United States and the free world in general. Based on his long term interest in the region, the wars (both past and current), and the information gleaned from his trip to Iraq in December of 2006, he provided the following comments upon his return:

"Because of the bravery of many Iraqi and coalition military personnel and the recent coming together of moderate political forces in Baghdad, the war is winnable. We and our Iraqi allies must do what is necessary to win it."

The American people are justifiably frustrated by the lack of progress, and the price paid by our heroic troops and their families has been heavy. But what is needed now, especially in Washington and Baghdad, is not despair but decisive action—and soon.

"The most pressing problem we face in Iraq is not an absence of Iraqi political will or American diplomatic initiative, both of which are increasing and improving; it is a lack of basic security. As long as insurgents and death squads terrorize Baghdad, Iraq's nascent democratic institutions cannot be expected to function, much less win the trust of the people. The fear created by gang murders and mass abductions ensures that power will continue to flow to the very thugs and extremists who have the least interest in peace and reconciliation."

Senator Lieberman brought out very salient points—the war is winnable; American people are frustrated by lack of progress; price paid by troops and families has been heavy; what is needed, especially in Washington and Baghdad, is not despair but decisive action—and soon; most pressing problem is the lack of basic security.

To me, that captures the status that continues to exist at present.

So, this sets the stage as to the situation we find ourselves in today. Now what do we do about it and how?

BACKGROUND

Before getting into the current Middle East issues and possible courses of action it is necessary one have a general understanding of the key religious aspects along with a basic knowledge of the Jewish, Arab, and Islamic history.

Religion has once again become a force that no government can safely ignore. The United States and other Western countries experts have failed to recognize the importance of faith as it relates to world affairs. One, if not the most, important aspects to be considered when discussing the Middle East and the growing dominance of the Islam religion concerns the differences of opinion between Islam and the Western World view of separation of Church and State.

Bruce Feiler states "Abraham, the great patriarch of the Hebrew Bible, is also the spiritual forefather of the New Testament and the grand holy architect of the Koran. Abraham is the shared ancestor of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. He is the linchpin of the Arab-Israeli conflict. He is the centerpiece of the battle between the West and Islamic extremists. He is the father—in many cases, the purported biological father—of 12

million Jews, 2 billion Christians, and 1 billion Muslims around the world. He is history's first monotheist."

Thomas Jefferson once remarked that in matters of religion "the maxim of civil government" should be reversed and we should rather say, "Divided we stand, united, we fall." In this remark Jefferson was setting forth with classic terseness an idea that has come to be regarded as essentially American: the separation of Church and State. This idea was not entirely new; it had some precedents in the writings of Spinoza, Locke, and the philosophers of the European Enlightenment. It was in the United States, however, that the principle was first given the force of law and gradually, in the course of two centuries, has become a reality.

Another very important aspect of this overall issue is to address the total Middle East environment. An important consideration is the countries that border Iraq and what impact our actions and those of others may have on these specific countries. Shown next is a map of the Middle East countries. The countries directly adjacent to Iraq are Iran, Jordan, Syria, Turkey, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

George Friedman describes the dilemma that now faces the United States as it relates to the potential influence of Iran on the outcome of the Iraqi war. "The Iraq war has turned into a duel between the United States and Iran. For the United States, the goal has been the creation of a generally pro-American coalition government in Baghdad—representing Iraq's three major ethnic communities. For Iran, the goal has been the creation of either a pro-Iranian government in Baghdad or, alternatively, the division of Iraq into three regions, with Iran dominating the Shiite south."

THE COSTS OF DISENGAGEMENT

The next logical step would be to understand as best as possible, the implications of not continuing our efforts in Iraq and, in so doing, what this would mean to the United States, in the future. One of the best analyses I have found thus far comes from two men outside the government who have significant experience in Middle East studies. Over the years Daniel Bynum and Kenneth Pollack have gained an excellent understanding of that region. In August of 2006 they published an article titled, "What Next," and have followed that up with a 130 page report titled, "Things Fall Apart" that was published in January 2007 by the Brookings Institution's Saban Center for Middle East Policy. This latest report states: "Iraq is rapidly sliding into all-out civil war that is likely to spill over into neighboring countries, resulting in mass deaths and refugees, serious disruption of oil supplies and a dramatic decline in US influence."

In the August 2006 article, Bynum and Pollack state:

"... The consequences of an all-out civil war in Iraq could be dire. Considering the experiences of recent such conflicts, hundreds of thousands of people may die. Refugees and displaced people could number in the millions. And with Iraqi insurgents, militias and organized crime rings wreaking havoc on Iraq's oil infrastructure, a full-scale civil war could send global oil prices soaring even higher."

"However, the greatest threat that the United States would face from civil war in Iraq is from the spillover—the burdens, the instability, the copycat secession attempts and even the follow-on wars that could emerge in neighboring countries. Welcome to the new 'new Middle East'—a region where civil wars could follow one after another, like so many Cold War dominoes."

"And unlike communism, these dominoes may actually fall."

There are other consequences of civil war as explained by Bynum and Pollack. A top-

level summary of their in-depth study reveals: "... civil wars tend to spread across borders . . . and Washington must decide how to deal with the most common and dangerous ways such conflicts spill across national boundaries. Only by understanding the refugee crises, terrorism, radicalization of neighboring populations, copycat secessions and foreign interventions that such wars frequently spark can we begin to plan for how to cope with them in the months and years ahead . . . massive refugee flows are a hallmark of major civil wars . . . refugee camps often become a sanctuary and recruiting grounds for militias, which use them to launch raids on their homelands . . . terrorism finds new homes during civil wars . . . radicalism is contagious as civil wars tend to inflame the passions of neighboring populations . . . the problem worsens whenever ethnic or religious groupings also spill across borders . . . Iraq's neighbors are just as fractured as Iraq itself . . . should Iraq fragment, voices for secession elsewhere will gain strength . . . the first candidate for secession is obviously Kurdistan . . . another critical problem of civil wars is the tendency of neighboring states to get involved, turning the conflicts into regional wars . . . covert foreign intervention is proceeding apace in Iraq, with Iran leading the way . . . Iran has set up an extensive network of safe houses, arms caches, communications channels and proxy fighters, and will be well-positioned to pursue its interests in a full-blown civil war. The Sunni powers of Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Turkey are frightened by Iran's growing influence and presence in Iraq and have been scrambling to catch up . . . Turkey may be the most likely country to overtly intervene in Iraq . . . none of Iraq's neighbors thinks that it can afford to have the country fall into the hands of the other side . . . an Iranian 'victory' would put the nation's forces in the heartland of the Arab world, bordering Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Syria—several of these states poured tens of billions of dollars into Saddam Hussein's military to prevent just such an occurrence in the 1980s . . . similarly, a Sunni Arab victory (backed by the Jordanians, Kuwaitis and Saudis) would put radical Sunni fundamentalists on Iran's doorstep a nightmare scenario for Tehran . . . add in, too, each country's interest in preventing its rivals from capturing Iraq's oil resources . . . if these states are unable to achieve their goals through clandestine intervention, they will have a powerful incentive to launch a conventional invasion."

George Friedman provides his assessment of Iran's concern if Iraq is able to stabilize its government and the country in general. He also indicates what the Iranians are doing to counter the U.S. efforts to accomplish stabilizing Iraq.

"A stable Iraq under U.S. influence represents a direct threat to Iran, while a fragmented or pro-Iranian Iraq does not. Therefore, the Iranians will do whatever they can to undermine U.S. attempts to create a government in Baghdad. Tehran can use its influence to block a government, but it cannot—on its own—create a pro-Iranian one. Therefore, Iran's strategy is to play spoiler and wait for the United States to tire of the unending conflict. Once the Americans leave, the Iranians can pick up the chips on the table. Whether it takes 10 years or 30, the Iranians assume that, in the end, they will win. None of the Arab countries in the region has the power to withstand Iran, and the Turks are unlikely to get into the game."

The National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq, released 2 February 2007, warns that

pulling U.S. troops out of the country too soon would lead to a collapse of the Iraqi military, outside intervention and the creation of safe havens for al Qaeda terrorists. It also states that if coalition forces were withdrawn rapidly . . . we judge that this almost certainly would lead to a significant increase in the scale and scope of sectarian conflict in Iraq, intensify Sunni resistance to the Iraqi government and have adverse consequences for national reconciliation. Additionally, if such a rapid withdrawal were to take place, we judge that the [Iraqi Security Force] would be unlikely to survive as a non-sectarian national institution; neighboring countries . . . might intervene openly in the conflict; massive civilian casualties and forced population displacement would be probable. The report also says that the al Qaeda terrorist group in Iraq would try to "use parts of the country"—particularly al-Anbar province—to plan increased attacks in and outside of Iraq. Additionally, Turkey could launch a military incursion if there were no U.S. or allied troops to block Kurdish attempts to control northern Iraq.

ALTERNATIVE COURSES OF ACTION (C/A) AND SUPPORTING BASE

Many alternatives and options have surfaced over the past several weeks and months. The repercussion of exercising certain alternatives have been looked at in considerable depth with some alarming results that not only impact what goes on in Iraq, but the impact they could have on the entire Middle East.

In my opinion, there are at least four alternatives that have been put on the table in respect to the way ahead in Iraq. These are not new but have been identified by different sources.

Cut and Run—The first C/A being considered was initiated by Congressman Murtha in what has been termed as the "cut and run" scenario. There are other variations of this C/A but, essentially, they all boil down to get the troops out of Iraq as quick as you can—some say immediately others say six months others say by the end of the year (2007). This is easy to say but carries with it tremendous implications and ramifications.

In my opinion, this C/A would simply embolden the terrorists to include Iran, Syria and other countries that are supportive of terrorism. At the same time it would demoralize our friends in the region. Once again it would place America in everyone's minds as a feckless country that does not have the will to see actions through to completion. How many times do we have to learn that lesson? This would be a strategic defeat for American interests with potentially catastrophic consequences both in the Middle East region and elsewhere. Thus, this C/A could lead to Iran expanding their influence throughout the region and utilizing Hamas and Hezbollah in Syria, Lebanon, Palestinian territories and Jordan. What Arab friends the U.S. may have would feel abandoned and it would place their governments in jeopardy. No longer could they look to the U.S. as a reliable ally or guarantor of peace and stability in this critical region. The implications are that the effects of pulling out of Iraq would spread over into the energy resources and transit choke points vital to the global economy. How this would all play out is unknown but these are potential outcomes of pursuing this C/A.

Annexation of Iraq—The second C/A would be the annexation of Iraq by American forces, which means the U.S. would govern with a military governor-general and local commanders, and a long-term commitment made that no matter the cost in resources (people and dollars) the U.S. would defend, assist, and help develop those who put their

trust in us, in every hamlet, village, and neighborhood until they are able to defend themselves. This would entail sealing the borders and providing local security, local civic actions and local government and public services. The oil industry, agriculture and other agencies would be franchised to U.S. companies to redevelop with royalties going to the governor-general to defray the costs of the occupation and security campaign. This C/A could take decades before they are ready to become an independent nation of Iraqis—no longer Kurds, Arabs and other minorities but Iraqis. Complicating this C/A is Islam and the differences that exist within the various interpretations of Islam. In my opinion, this C/A would never be supported by either Americans or Arabs/Iraqis and, therefore, is discarded for further discussion.

Stay the Course—The third is to "stay the course," which falls in the unacceptable category, based on the failure to date, plus the votes from the recent elections and the sentiments of Congress. This C/A is not supported by the Administration, Congress or the Defense Department. Therefore, it is not considered viable and will be discarded for further discussion.

Presidential Proposal—The fourth C/A follows what the President is proposing. That is to provide support to the Iraqi government in order for it to, as quickly as possible, establish a unified democratic federal Iraq that can govern and defend itself and serve as an ally in the War on Terror. As I understand it, these have been the U.S. strategic goals and objectives from the outset.

Stephen Hadley, Presidential security advisor, described the President's proposal as follows:

"The Baker-Hamilton report explained that failure in Iraq could have severe consequences for our national interests in a critical region and for our national security here at home. In my many conversations with members of Congress and foreign policy experts, few have disagreed.

"Most people agree that we must focus on fighting al-Qaeda. The president's strategy steps up this fight—particularly in Anbar province, where al-Qaeda seeks a sanctuary. The administration also agrees that we must accelerate the training of Iraqi security forces. The president's strategy does this—with benchmarks to track progress and bolster the size and effectiveness of those forces. Training and supporting Iraqi troops will remain our military's essential and primary mission.

"But the president's review also concluded that the strategy with the best chance of success must have a plan for securing Baghdad. Without such a plan, the Iraqi government and its security institutions could fracture under the pressure of widespread sectarian violence, ethnic cleansing and mass killings. Chaos would then spread throughout the country—and throughout the region. The al-Qaeda movement would be strengthened by the flight of Sunnis from Baghdad and an accelerated cycle of sectarian bloodletting. Iran would be emboldened and could be expected to provide more lethal aid for extremist groups. The Kurdish north would be isolated, inviting separation and regional interference. Terrorists could gain pockets of sanctuary throughout Iraq from which to threaten our allies in the region and our security here at home.

"The new plan for Baghdad specifically corrects the problems that plagued previous efforts. First, it is an Iraqi-initiated plan for taking control of their capital. Second, there will be adequate forces (Iraqi and American) to hold neighborhoods cleared of terrorists and extremists. Third, there is a new operational concept—one devised not just to pursue terrorists and extremists but to secure

the population. Fourth, new rules of engagement will ensure that Iraqi and U.S. forces can pursue lawbreakers regardless of their community or sect. Fifth, security operations will be followed by economic assistance and reconstruction aid—including billions of dollars in Iraqi funds—offering jobs and the prospect of better lives."

Stephen Hadley continues his explanation of the totality of the President's plan by explaining the key strategic shifts that are major changes from previous approach:

"Reinforcing our military presence is not the strategy—it is a means to an end and part of a package of key strategic shifts that will fundamentally restructure our approach to achieving our objectives in Iraq.

"Building on experience elsewhere in the country, the new strategy doubles the number of provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) in Iraq. These civilian-led units will target development aid where it is needed and help the Iraqi government extend its reach to all corners of the country.

"Because close civilian-military cooperation is key to success, 10 new civilian PRTs will be embedded with U.S. combat brigades.

The new strategy incorporates other essential elements of the Baker-Hamilton report, such as doubling the number of troops embedded with Iraqi forces, using benchmarks to help us and the Iraqis chart progress, and launching a renewed diplomatic effort to increase support for the Iraqi government and advance political reconciliation."

DISCUSSION

Earlier in this paper the Byman-Pollack report identified consequences of an all-out civil war in Iraq. In their "what to do about it" part of their report they had the following to say:

"Much as Americans may want to believe that the United States can just walk away from Iraq should it slide into all-out civil war, the threat of spillover from such a conflict throughout the Middle East means it can't. Instead, Washington will have to devise strategies to deal with refugees, minimize terrorist attacks emanating from Iraq, dampen the anger in neighboring populations caused by the conflict, prevent secession fever and keep Iraq's neighbors from intervening. The odds of success are poor, but, nonetheless, we have to try."

"The United States, along with its Asian and European allies, will have to make a major effort to persuade Iraq's neighbors not to intervene in its civil war. Economic aid should be part of such an effort, but will not suffice. For Jordan and Saudi Arabia, it may require an effort to reinvigorate Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, thereby addressing one of their major concerns—an effort made all the more important and complex in light of the recent conflict between Hezbollah and Israel. For Iran and Syria, it may be a clear (but not cost-free) path toward acceptance back into the international community.

"When it comes to foreign intervention, Iran is the biggest headache of all. Given its immense interests in Iraq, some involvement is inevitable. For Tehran, and probably for Damascus, the United States and its allies probably will have to put down red lines regarding what is absolutely impermissible—such as sending uniformed Iranian military units into Iraq or claiming Iraqi territory. Washington and its allies will also have to lay out what they will do if Iran crosses any of those red lines. Economic sanctions would be one possibility, but they could be effective only if the European Union, China, India and Russia all cooperate. On its own, the United States could employ punitive military operations, either to make Iran pay an unacceptable price for one-time infractions

or to persuade it to halt ongoing violations of one or more red lines.

“A full-scale war in Iraq could result in hundreds of thousands of deaths and millions of refugees streaming across the nation’s borders. The level of killings and displacement from other major civil conflicts—such as those in Bosnia, Congo, Lebanon and Rwanda—suggests the toll in Iraq could surge even higher if conditions there deteriorate further.”

David Dolan, a reputable journalist and author, who has spent the last 27 years living and working in Israel, provides his assessment of what is viewed from the lens of the Israeli military analysts concerning the turmoil that exists today in the Middle East and the prognosis for the coming year.

“Israeli military analysts said the main reason for growing regional instability is stepped up Iranian meddling throughout the Middle East. They noted that the oil-flushed theocratic Muslim regime in Tehran is pumping copious amounts of financial aid and weapons to its Syrian, Lebanese Hizbullah and Palestinian Hamas and Islamic Jihad allies, along with material aid going to Iranian-backed Shiite militias operating next door in violence-torn Iraq. Coming against the ominous backdrop of Iran’s escalating nuclear uranium enrichment program, the mullah’s meddling is succeeding in destabilizing the entire region, adding to growing prospects that major portions of the tense Middle East will erupt into full-scale warfare during 2007.”

The Brookings Institution Saban Center Analysis Number 11, released 29 January 2007, examines the history of some dozen recent civil wars to reveal the general patterns by which such conflicts can “spill over” into neighboring states, causing further civil wars or regional conflicts. Historically, six patterns of spillover have been the most harmful in other cases of all-out civil war: refugees; terrorism; radicalization of neighboring populations; secession that breeds secessionism; economic losses; and neighborly interventions. The purpose of this review was to determine what policy options the United States could employ to try to contain the spillover effects of a full-scale Iraqi civil war. It is recognized that with each passing day, Iraq sinks deeper into the abyss of civil war. President Bush has proposed one last-chance effort to quell the fighting and jumpstart a process of political reconciliation and economic reconstruction. Comments coming from this review state:

“Should this last effort fail, the United States is likely to very quickly have to determine how best to handle an Iraq that will be erupting into Bosnia- or Lebanon-style all-out civil war. The history of such wars is that they are disastrous for all parties, but the United States will have little choice but to try to stave off disaster as best it can.”

These tasks will be difficult and will require the deployment of large ground forces to accomplish them. Ending an all-out civil war requires overwhelming military power to nail down a political settlement. The Byman-Pollack report of 2006 states:

“It took 30,000 British troops to bring the Irish civil war to an end, 45,000 Syrian troops to conclude the Lebanese civil war, 50,000 NATO troops to stop the Bosnian civil war, and 60,000 to do the job in Kosovo. Considering Iraq’s much larger population, it probably would require 450,000 troops to quash an all-out civil war there. Such an effort would require a commitment of enormous military and economic resources, far in excess of what the United States has already put forth [and planned future increases].”

MEANWHILE, BACK IN THE USA

This discussion would be incomplete if we did not discuss the home front and what is

going on here in the United States relative to the Iraq War. The November 2006 elections started a fire storm of various anti-war factions rising to the surface and demanding we pull out of the war immediately or within a short period of time. With the Democrats taking over both sides of the Congress we now have a political confrontation as to who can get his or her resolution to pass both sides of the Congress. Lately, the Congress is awash with resolutions. Senator Obama submitted legislation 30 January, which would remove all combat brigades from Iraq by March 31, 2008. This timetable for completing a withdrawal puts him at odds with other leading rivals for the Democratic nomination. Senator Hillary Clinton supports capping the number of troops at their levels of Jan. 1, 2007. Sen. Christopher J. Dodd (Conn.) has proposed a similar troop cap. But neither has embraced a timetable for a troop removal.

Former Senator and Vice Presidential candidate in 2004 and now a Presidential candidate for 2008, John Edwards (D-N.C.), has been outspoken in his opposition to Bush’s new plan and has called for the immediate withdrawal of 40,000 to 50,000 troops. But he, too, has stopped short of setting a firm date by which all would be removed. New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson is the only other prominent Democrat in the field to set a withdrawal timetable, declaring that troops “can and should” be brought home by the end of 2007. The Obama plan, called the Iraq War De-escalation Act of 2007, would begin a troop withdrawal no later than May 1, 2007, but it includes several caveats that could forestall a clean break: It would leave a limited number of troops in place to conduct counterterrorism activities and train Iraqi forces. (The question one must ask in respect to this proposal is how could you leave a small contingent of U.S. forces in a country ripe with civil war?) And the withdrawal could be temporarily suspended if the Iraqi government meets a series of benchmarks laid out by the Bush administration. That list includes a reduction in sectarian violence; the equitable distribution of oil revenue; government reforms; and democratic, Iraqi-driven reconstruction and economic development efforts. Senator Obama’s proposal also would reverse Bush’s troop-increase plan.

On the other side of the aisle the Republicans have their own versions of resolutions. A resolution by Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) and Sen. Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.) demanding tough benchmarks for progress in Iraq was supposed to garner overwhelming Republican support, being a more palatable alternative to language by Sen. John W. Warner (R-Va.) that would state opposition to the troop buildup. Instead, rival measures continue to proliferate. Sen. Judd Gregg (R-N.H.) said he is circulating language that would forbid a cutoff of funding for troops in the field under any circumstance, similar to another proposal by Sen. Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.). Sen. John Cornyn (R-Tex.) is shopping around a measure that would demand that the president’s policies be given a chance to work while calling for the reversal of perceived war-related mistakes, such as the wholesale purging of Baath Party members from the Iraqi government and the failure to ensure equitable oil-revenue sharing among Iraqi groups. “Resolutions are flying like snowflakes around here,” Sen. Specter said. There may be more in the wings of Congress that have yet to surface but, at this writing, these appear to be the ones being discussed.

Meanwhile, the two camps promoting competing resolutions of opposition—one headed by Senators Joseph R. Biden Jr. (D-Del.) and Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.) and the other by Senator Warner (R-Va.) and Senator Levin (D-Mich.)—initially appeared to be closing in on

common language that could win a clear majority within the Senate, but, at this writing it appears that may not happen.

These non-binding resolutions, regardless of which side of the aisle they come from, are not constructive—they change nothing, take responsibility for nothing, and hurt both morale and whatever semblance of national unity the USA might project. They aid and abet the enemy just like the discussions that occurred during the Vietnam War. If we set deadlines or propose certain number of troops be withdrawn by a certain date then this gives the enemy a timetable to work to in respect to holding off until the Americans leave. It certainly doesn’t take a rocket scientist to figure that one out. Rhetoric influences perceptions, and perceptions can drive responses.

Unless Congress can find the intestinal fortitude to assert its true Constitutional authority and actually freeze or even mandate a drawdown in spending on operations in Iraq and use of funds to move troops individually or as units to Iraq, this is just a lot of hypocritical political theater—attempting to look assertive while in fact denying responsibility and showing the lack of commitment and fecklessness of America—once again. J. D. Pendry said, “Our enemies, just as enemies past, know that winning a war with the United States is not about combat assaults, but about wearing down the will of the American people to continue to support the fight. Because they’re winning the war of wills, they wouldn’t dare attack inside the country. Our enemies know that our weak link in fighting a war is our politics, media, and the socialist elites who ally with them in waging war against the American will to sustain a fight.”

General David Petraeus, the new U.S. commander of the forces in Iraq, explained in hearings before Congress, that reinforcing U.S. troops is necessary for this new plan to succeed. Any plan that limits our ability to reinforce our troops in the field is a plan for failure—and could hand Baghdad to terrorists and extremists before legitimate Iraqi forces are ready to take over the fight. General Petraeus made clear his disdain for ideas that are very much in vogue in Washington these days: getting out of Iraq altogether, or the current favorite of the Democratic leadership: passing resolutions critical of the war.

In the Congressional confirmation hearing Sen. John McCain asked what would happen if we were to leave Iraq. Gen. Petraeus pointed to “the very real possibility of involvement of countries from elsewhere in the region, around Iraq, entering Iraq to take sides with one or the other groups.” He added that there “is the possibility, certainly, of an international terrorist organization truly getting a grip on some substantial piece of Iraq.” In response to questions from Sen. McCain and Sen. Joe Lieberman, Gen. Petraeus added that resolutions of disapproval for the war would be unhelpful to American troop morale and would encourage our enemies in Iraq.

During the recent confirmation hearing of Admiral Fallon to be the Central Command Commander Sen. Carl M. Levin (D-Mich.), the committee chairman, proposed to hold the Iraqi leaders accountable to meeting benchmarks, Admiral Fallon said he believed that imposing “edicts” or “deadlines” would be unconstructive. He also suggested a need to lower American expectations for Iraq, indicating that U.S. goals for Iraq following the 2003 invasion were unrealistically ambitious.

Sen. John Cornyn, Texas Republican said, “Congress is sending mixed messages to the troops, to voters and to the world with a “no confidence” vote that carries no force . . . We

can't claim to support the troops and not support their mission," he said in a floor speech 31 January. "If we don't support the mission, we shouldn't be passing nonbinding resolutions. We should be doing everything in our power to stop it . . . we should send them the message that, yes, we believe you can succeed and it's important to our national security that you do."

We also hear from Congress and others about how "we support the troops" but also we hear anti-Iraq war and anti-surge overtones. If Congress and the American public truly support the troops then they must provide the full support. It is incoherent and irresponsible to say one supports the troops but not the war. How can Congress on one hand unanimously approve the appointment of General Petraeus to command the troops in Iraq and execute the war plan and, at the same time, refuse to support the war effort and provide resolutions restricting the necessary troops and wherewithal to accomplish the task they have assigned to him? This simply does not pass the common sense test. It is simply a cop out!

Summarization—America cannot win a counter-insurgency campaign in a Muslim territory as long as it is ruled by Muslims. That is why the effort must be led by the Muslims (Iraq) in order to win their own counter-insurgency campaign. Absolutely, we must assist them and apply more forces but the Iraqi leaders are the ones who have to gain the confidence of the populace as well as subdue and disassemble the militias, particularly that of Al Sadr. If Maliki and his government do not take the lead and insist on the breakup of the militias then we are wasting our time, soldier's lives and billions of dollars to help reconstruct that country. The world is watching to see what course of action Maliki takes and whether we will continue to provide support. If this fails we will have least tried to make it work. I don't know how long we continue this support—probably a year to eighteen months to see if it is going to work and then decide if it is being successful or not. If not, then we execute a strategic withdrawal removing our troops, equipment, and supplies. Concurrently we must have made plans for dealing with the aftermath of our withdrawal—a point which no politicians are talking about right now. This action will embolden Iran and Syria plus others and then the "global" terrorist and economic problems will start to build. The predictions of all-out civil war will prevail and the spillover to adjacent countries will most likely occur. How will the United States address this situation Madam Speaker of the House/ Mr. President of the Senate?

PROBABLE SCENARIO FOLLOWING A COLLAPSE OF IRAQI GOVERNMENT AND US WITHDRAWAL

"Responsible" Middle East experts say that if we withdraw it will be a blood bath to start with and then the "Middle East region" will turn into a haven for terrorists that will be controlled by Iran and Syria—primarily Iran—all under the guise of Islam and in preparation for the return of the 12th Imam. This in turn will cause our quasi Arab friends, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait (and perhaps a few others) to begin making alliances with Iran in fear for their own country and lives therein.

Then, guess what? Terrorism will spread like wild fire and Iran et al will now control the majority of the world oil reserves (which can be used for terrorist activities) and the rest of the world will start experiencing an economic disaster just over the price of oil. One may rest assured that President Chavez in Venezuela will chime right in there with them and raise the price of his oil as well.

The OPEC will be overtaken by Iran et al and the free world will have no choice but to,

most likely, use military force to sort this out—assuming the free world has the will and determination to do so. The free world would have no leverage via the UN to do anything in respect to sanctions against Iran et al as they would just thumb their nose at them. It is a "pay me now or pay me later" situation and it appears at present that Congress and much of the American public are just sticking their heads in the sand and hoping it will all go away. We continue to debate the overwhelming importance of oil. Unfortunately, our efforts to find substitutes will not pay off in a big way for most likely another 15–20 years.

A stronger and more pointed discussion needs to occur in this country relative to the radical/militant Islamists. Our enemy is not only terrorists. Terrorism is a symptom, not the basic cause. Our true enemy is radical or militant Islam and their goals and objectives are to take over the world by jihad and impose on EVERYONE their beliefs, which include living by the law of Shari'a under their interpretation of the Koran. Daniel Pipes said, "The problem at hand is not the religion of Islam but the totalitarian ideology of militant Islam. Islam is one of the world's major religions in terms of duration, extent, and numbers of adherents; as a faith, it has meant very different things over fourteen centuries and several continents. Two common points one can note are that: Islam is, more than any other major religion, deeply political in the sense that it pushes its adherents to hold power; and once Muslims gain power, there is a strong impetus to apply the law of Islam, the Shari'a." There is no separation of Church and State. Under their belief they are one in the same.

Anyone who has any knowledge about the Islamic goals and objectives knows full well that they are not going away and will continue their pursuit to control the entire world and have it under the Islamic law/religion and, in the meantime, kill us infidels along the way. We have been told that Islam is the religion of peace, and that the vast majority of Muslims just want to live in peace. Although this unqualified assertion may be true, it is entirely irrelevant. It is meaningless fluff, meant to make us feel better, and meant to somehow diminish the specter of fanatics rampaging across the globe in the name of Islam. The fact is, in the Middle East, the fanatics rule Islam at this moment in history. The "peaceful majority" is the "silent majority" and it is cowed and extraneous. Peace-loving Muslims have been made irrelevant by their silence. Not a pretty picture at all!!

CONSEQUENCES OF CURRENTLY PROPOSED ACTIONS NEED TO BE REVISITED

The proposed Congressional alternatives of capping the number of troops, cutting off funds for the war, withdrawal within six months or a year or sending our troops to "control the borders and search out terrorists but don't get involved in Baghdad" is irrational thinking. If that is what they think we should be doing then we should withdraw completely now and turn the country over to these radical Islamists, terrorists, thugs and criminals and let them kill each other off and watch Iran come in behind us and take control. Then, watch Congress and the American public howl and complain about how "we lost the war." Sometime later this would come back to haunt us here in the US when we start having our fair share of terrorists attacks and encroachment of radical Islamists on our soil.

SO, NOW WHAT?

I submit that in lieu of the defeatist attitude shown by so many in the Congress and the media, that this is no time to feel desperate. What we need is a sense of mission, a

purposeful dynamism. General Petraeus will be issuing a progress report on Iraq every two weeks. He'll report on what progress we are having on de-Baathification, disarming the Shia militias, on taking the fight to the bad guys in a very methodical way.

To lose this war is to lose our soul, the soul of our country, the soul of America. If we lose in Iraq, it is inevitable that the terrorists and radical Islamists will be here. The war will come to our shores and threaten the freedoms we so dearly cherish. It is not too late to resolve to win instead. We still have an enormously strong hand to play and we must play it.

The alternative of pursuing the President's proposal is the only viable alternative we have at present time. The Brookings Institute recent report states: "If there is anything that should make us recognize the need to stay engaged in Iraq, it is the likely impact that such a war could have on the Persian Gulf region (if not the entire Middle East) and the enormous difficulties we will face in trying to contain that impact. If we cannot prevent such a full-scale civil war, then containment, as awful as it threatens to be, might still prove to be our least bad options."

Mr. AKAKA. Madam President, earlier this week the Senate had an opportunity to begin debate on Iraq and the current plan proposed by President Bush. While I and 48 of my colleagues supported moving forward with this important debate, others in this Chamber elected to prevent discussion on an issue of national importance.

I understand that there are doubts as to what is the proper course of action to pursue in Iraq. We all wish for victory. We all wish for an end to the death and destruction. None of us want to waste additional lives in futile missions, or futile gestures. We all wish for a stable, democratic Iraq—and I would add to that Afghanistan, as this conflict is being waged on more than one front. We all share those common desires and none of us, none of us can predict the future. But what we can do is to apply our wisdom and judgement as to what is the best course of action for the United States to take. That task is our solemn duty.

We cannot perform that duty with all the honesty and clarity that this great body—the United States Senate—is known for if we cannot begin debate. Denying an open discussion of the issues of grave importance to our national security does not serve our Nation well.

We are at a great turning point and the consequences of this policy must be debated. Future generations will be affected by the course of action our Nation takes in the Middle East. No one can say with certainty which path will lead us toward light and which could lead us toward a darker future. But these courses of action demand debate.

Right now our Nation's wealth is being poured into a growing maelstrom in the Middle East—a storm that is engulfing the lives of our most talented soldiers, a storm that is exhausting our national treasure and sinking us deeper into a debt that our grandchildren and great-grandchildren will be paying off. It means our Nation's education, environment, health, and transportation

systems are eroding for a lack of basic resources.

Again, the consequences of this policy must be debated. In Iraq, there is a clear choice: support the President's policy of full steam ahead and continue the current policy of putting American soldiers in harm's way or shift strategy and make it clear that it is time for the Iraqi government to govern and Iraqi troops to protect the Iraqi people.

In any case, whatever policy advocated—whether one supports staying in, getting out now, or getting out later—those choices deserve to be fully and completely debated and voted on in the United States Senate.

I urge my colleagues on the other side to support a full and open debate on the President's Iraq policy.

Madam President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. REID. Madam President, it is my understanding we are now in executive session; is that right?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is correct.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Executive Calendar Nos. 16 through 22, and all nominations on the Secretary's desk; that the nominations be confirmed; the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table; that any statements be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate return to legislative session.

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

The nominations considered and confirmed are as follows:

IN THE NAVY

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Navy to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be admiral

Adm. William J. Fallon, 0000

THE AIR FORCE

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. Thomas W. Travis, 0000

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be brigadier general

Col. David H. Cyr, 0000

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Air Force to the

grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be brigadier general

Col. Douglas J. Robb, 0000

The following named officers for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be major general

Brigadier General Frank J. Casserino, 0000

Brigadier General Stephen P. Gross, 0000

Brigadier General Clay T. McCutchan, 0000

Brigadier General Frank J. Padilla, 0000

Brigadier General Loren S. Perlstein, 0000

Brigadier General Jack W. Ramsaur, II, 0000

Brigadier General Bradley C. Young, 0000

To be brigadier general

Colonel Frank E. Anderson, 0000

Colonel Patrick A. Cord, 0000

Colonel Craig N. Gourley, 0000

Colonel Donald C. Ralph, 0000

Colonel William F. Schauffert, 0000

Colonel Jack K. Sewell, Jr., 0000

Colonel Richard A. Shook, Jr., 0000

Colonel Lance D. Dndhjem, 0000

Colonel John T. Winters, Jr., 0000

IN THE ARMY

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Lt. Gen. James M. Dubik, 0000

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

J. Michael McConnell, of Virginia, to be Director of National Intelligence,

NOMINATIONS PLACED ON THE SECRETARY'S DESK

IN THE AIR FORCE

PN200 AIR FORCE nominations (6) beginning MICHAEL D. JACOBSON, and ending TERRILL L. TOPS, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 18, 2007.

PN201 AIR FORCE nominations (11) beginning STUART C. CALLE, and ending EDWIN O. RODRIGUEZPAGAN, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 18, 2007.

NOMINATION OF JOHN M. McCONNELL TO BE DNI

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, today the Senate has confirmed the nomination of VADM Mike McConnell to be the next Director of National Intelligence. It is hard for me to imagine a better choice than Admiral McConnell.

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence received Admiral McConnell's nomination to replace John Negroponte on January 22, 2007. He completed all the requisite paperwork and the committee held a hearing with Admiral McConnell on February 1. The committee met on February 6, and voted unanimously to report the nomination to the Senate with a favorable recommendation.

I am pleased that the Senate has moved quickly to act on this recommendation. I think this swift consideration of the nomination is recognition of both the importance of this position and of the qualifications of Admiral McConnell.

As my colleagues know, the position of Director of National Intelligence

was created by the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act 2004. That legislation drew on recommendations from the congressional and commission reports on the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the Senate Intelligence Committee report on Iraq prewar intelligence, the Report of the Joint Inquiry by the House and Senate Intelligence Committees into the events of 9/11, and the recommendations of numerous other commissions and reviews going back 50 years.

The creation of the DNI was an important step. We now have, for the first time, an individual whose primary job is to run the intelligence community as a whole. Until the creation of the DNI, the old Director of Central Intelligence wore two hats—as the head of the Intelligence Community and as the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. But this structural change, while important, was only the first step to reforming intelligence. The DNI must make the 16 agencies of the intelligence community work as one toward a common goal. Director Negroponte has started the community down that path. It is going to be up to Admiral McConnell to move us further along.

A quick review of his resume will show even the casual observer that Admiral McConnell is incredibly well qualified for this critical position. He retired from the Navy as Vice Admiral after 29 years of service. Most of his service during this distinguished career was as an intelligence officer.

While on active duty he served as Director of Intelligence on the Joint Staff during the Persian Gulf War. This made him the principal intelligence advisor to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, GEN Colin Powell. He went on to become the Director of the National Security Agency, our Nation's largest intelligence agency.

Upon retiring from the Navy, Admiral McConnell went to work for Booz Allen Hamilton where he has been a senior vice president for intelligence and national security. He also is currently chairman and chief executive officer of the Intelligence and National Security Alliance, an industry group that works with the Government looking for ways to solve some of our complex intelligence problems. He has the requisite Government experience supplemented by a decade in the private sector.

In his appearance before the Intelligence Committee last week I think it is fair to say that he impressed all members of the committee with his knowledge of the issues and the difficulty of the task ahead. But I was particularly encouraged by his answers to questions about the relationship with Congress.

It is no secret that I have not always been happy with the level of access the intelligence committee has had to materials it needs to do its job. On some of the most important and sensitive programs in the Intelligence Community, we have been frustrated in our attempts to do oversight because we have