

Americans in uniform in the field. In that sense, as I have said, it is unprecedented in congressional history, in American history.

This resolution is about shouting into the wind. It is about ignoring the realities of what is happening on the ground in Baghdad. It proposes nothing. It contains no plan for victory or retreat. It is a strategy of "no," while our soldiers are saying "yes, sir," to their commanding officers as they go forward into battle. And that is why I will vote against the resolution by voting against cloture.

I understand the frustration, the anger, and the exhaustion that so many Americans, so many Members of this Congress feel about Iraq, the desire to throw up one's hands and simply say "enough." And I am painfully aware of the enormous toll of this war in human life and of the mistakes that have been made in the war's conduct. But let us now not make another mistake. In the midst of a fluid and uncertain situation in Iraq, we should not be so bound up in our own arguments and disagreements, so committed to the positions we have staked out that the political battle over here takes precedence over the real battle over there.

Whatever the passions of the moment, the point of reference for our decisionmaking should be military movements on the battlefields of Iraq, not political maneuverings in the Halls of Congress.

Even as our troops have begun to take Baghdad back step by step, there are many in this Congress who have, nevertheless, already reached a conclusion about the futility of America's cause there and declared their intention to put an end to this mission, not with one direct attempt to cut off funds but step by political step.

No matter what the rhetoric of this resolution, that is the reality of this moment. This nonbinding measure before us is a first step toward a constitutional crisis that we can and must avoid. Let me explain what I mean by "a constitutional crisis." Let us be clear about the likely consequences if we go down this path beyond this nonbinding resolution.

Congress has been given constitutional responsibilities, but the micro-management of wars is not one of them. The appropriation of funds for war is. I appreciate that each of us has our own ideas about the best way forward in Iraq. I respect those who take a different position than I. I understand many feel strongly that the President's strategy is the wrong one, but the Constitution, which has served us now for more than two great centuries of our history, creates not 535 Commanders in Chief but 1, the President of the United States, who is authorized to lead the day-to-day conduct of war.

Whatever our preponderance of this war or its conduct, it is in no one's interest to stumble into a debilitating confrontation between our two great

branches of Government over war powers. The potential for a constitutional crisis here and now is real, with congressional interventions, Presidential vetoes, and Supreme Court decisions.

If there was ever a moment for non-partisan cooperation to agree on a process that will respect both our personal opinions about this war and our Nation's interests over the long term, this is it.

We need to step back from the brink and reason together, as Scripture urges us to do, about how we will proceed to express our disagreements about this war. We must recognize that while the decisions we are making today and we are about to make seem irretrievably bound up in the immediacy of this moment, and the particular people now holding positions of power in our Government, these decisions will set constitutional precedents that will go far beyond the moment and these people.

President Bush has less than 2 years left in office, and a Democrat may well succeed him. If we do not act thoughtfully in the weeks and months ahead, we will establish precedents that future Congresses, future Presidents, and future generations of Americans will regret.

Right now, as the battle for Baghdad begins, this institution is obviously deeply divided. However, we should not allow our divisions to lead us to a constitutional crisis in which no one wins and our national security is greatly damaged.

We are engaged, as all my colleagues know, in a larger war against a totalitarian enemy, Islamist extremism, and terrorism that seeks to vanquish all the democratic values that is our national purpose to protect and defend.

Whatever our differences in this Chamber about this war, let us never forget those great values of freedom and democracy that unite us and for which our troops have given, and today give, the last full measure of their devotion.

Yes, we should vigorously debate and deliberate. That is not only our right, it is our responsibility. But at this difficult junction, at this moment when a real battle, a critical battle is being waged in Baghdad, as we face a brutal enemy who attacked us on 9/11 and wants to do it again, let us not shout at one another but let us reach out to one another to find that measure of unity that can look beyond today's disagreements and secure the Nation's future and the future of all who will follow us as Americans.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I am so honored to be on the floor with Senator JOE LIEBERMAN today and to listen to his remarks, frankly, to stand in the shadow of his leadership on this issue because he has been that, a bipartisan leader, recognizing, as he so appropriately has spoken, the leadership role

that a Congress should take at this time in our Nation's history. And he has said it well. It is not one of micro-management. It is not one of 535 generals all thinking we can act and think strategically about the engagement currently underway in Baghdad.

It is our job, I would hope, to stand united in behalf of the men and women we send there in uniform to accomplish what we so hope and wish they will be able to accomplish, and that is the stability of Iraq, the allowing of the Iraqi people to once again lead their country and to take from it the kind of radical Islamic fascism that is well underway and dominating the region.

Let me make a few comments this afternoon that clearly coincide with what Senator LIEBERMAN has spoken to. This is not, nor should it ever become, a partisan issue. I think his presence on the floor this afternoon speaks volumes to that. This is not a partisan issue. This is a phenomenally important national and international issue for our country to be engaged in that, frankly, few countries can engage in the way we have and with the kind of energy and strength we have brought to it.

The majority leader has put us in a very precarious situation, one that is clearly divisive. Frankly, I can say things as a Republican that maybe my colleague cannot say.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, parliamentary inquiry: At the hour of 1:30, is there an order for another Senator to be recognized?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. That is correct.

Mr. WARNER. And who is that Senator?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. That would be the Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Can my colleague finish up in 1 minute? I want to try to accommodate my colleague.

Mr. CRAIG. I will be relatively brief. I was instructed to be here at 1:15, but I think we have had a runover of time; is that not correct?

Mr. WARNER. I was not here.

Mr. CRAIG. Can we inquire of the Chair?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority has 30 seconds remaining, and then time reverts to the majority. The majority has granted the Senator from Virginia the time.

Mr. CRAIG. His time is?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Virginia has 30 minutes, until 2 p.m.

Mr. CRAIG. May I ask the Senator how much time he planned to consume?

Mr. WARNER. Well, I have to jump a plane, but how much time does my colleague wish?

Mr. CRAIG. I will take no more than 5 minutes.

Mr. WARNER. If my colleague can make it 3 minutes, then I think my

colleague from Missouri is anxious to catch his plane also.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, if I could impose and ask for 2 minutes, so that Senator CRAIG and myself will consume a total of 5 minutes on this side.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Hearing no objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I am so honored to be on the floor with Senator JOE LIEBERMAN today and listen to his remarks, and frankly, to stand in the shadow of his leadership on this issue. Because he has been that, a bipartisan leader recognizing, as he so appropriately has spoke, the leadership role that a Congress should take at this time in our Nation's history. And he has said it well, it is not one of micro-management, it is not 1 of 535 generals all thinking we can act strategically and tactically about the engagement currently underway in Baghdad and elsewhere across Iraq.

It is our job, I would hope, to stand united in behalf of the men and women we send there in uniform to accomplish what we so hope and wish they will be able to accomplish and that is the stability of Iraq and the greater Middle East and allowing the Iraqi people to lead their country and remove from it the kind of radical Islamic fascism that is well underway and dominating the region.

Let me make a few comments this afternoon that clearly coincide with what Senator LIEBERMAN spoke to. This is not, nor should it ever become, a partisan issue and I think Senator LIEBERMAN's presence on the floor this afternoon speaks volumes to just that, that this is not a partisan issue. This is a phenomenally important national and international issue for our country to be engaged in. Frankly, few countries can engage in this struggle in that way we have, and with the kind of energy and strength that we have brought to it.

The majority leader has put us in a very precarious situation, one that is clearly divisive. Frankly, I can say things as a Republican that maybe my colleague cannot say. I believe that the majority leader is playing politics on the issue of calling up a nonbinding resolution, while blocking the minority from calling up a different resolution. My good friend Senator GREGG has introduced a bill, a bill that I have cosponsored, that would express our full support for our soldiers in harms way and give them a much needed guarantee that they will continue to receive the funding they need to continue to function in their critical mission. As I said, the majority leader refuses to allow us a vote on this bill, and I think that is plain wrong.

Let me make it very clear, it is not the Republicans stalling or shutting down debate on the issue of Iraq. In fact, it is just the opposite. I have spoken twice in the last 2 weeks about this issue because I believe it is very critical, both to my constituency in

Idaho, but also to our great Nation and the world. The majority claims that they want full and fair debate on this issue, yet they refuse to allow us to bring our own voice to this issue, and our own resolutions. How can we have a full and fair debate and vote on the floor of the Senate if we are being held hostage by the majority leader?

No State goes untouched by what we do here today and no man or woman in uniform goes untouched. Twenty Idahoans have given their lives in Iraq, and each of their sacrifices is sacred and honored, not just by their families and friend but by all. Most recently, SPC Ross Clevenger and PVT Raymond Werner of Boise, and SGT James Holtom of Rexberg were killed in Iraq in an IED attack. They, like all those who have fallen to enemy hands, served in a heroic and gallant way for a cause they believed in and a cause that we believe in. That is the cause of freedom.

Senator LIEBERMAN said it well, for us to send one of our top generals and top military minds in GEN David Petraeus to Iraq and say by a unanimous vote that we support him and believe in his abilities, but at the same time we do not support his mission, what are we saying as a Congress? What kind of message are we sending to our men and women in uniform when we speak in that manner? I think it is wrong to send this message and I will vigorously oppose that message.

If the majority leader and his Democratic colleagues believe so strongly that our mission in Iraq is so flawed, then why do we not see them bringing to the floor a bill to cut off funding for our troops on the ground in Iraq? As I mentioned earlier, the answer to that is a political answer, not a substance issue. Many Democrats have already called for cutting off funding and demanding an immediate withdrawal from Iraq, yet we have not seen those bills being taken up on the floor of either chamber. However, there are rumors that Members will choose to use the upcoming Iraq supplemental funding bill to force the President to take the advice of these congressional generals, rather than using the advice of our military experts and commanders to execute our mission and secure Iraq.

The reason I do not support such an immediate withdrawal of our troops, or cutting funding off for our troops in gun fights right now in the streets of Baghdad, is simple. I believe in our mission and I believe that our soldiers are the most capable in the world. The only enemy that can defeat American soldiers on the battlefield is the low morale of the American people. A resolution condemning their actions and their mission in Iraq is just the kind of defeat that could embolden our enemies and harm our soldiers.

As every one of my colleagues knows, the reinforcements we are debating are already in motion. In fact, the President's plan to stabilize Baghdad and Anbar Province are already showing

signs of success. The Iraqi government is closing down their borders with Syria and Iran, a critical decision that will limit the number of foreign fighters and enemy weapons from entering Iraq, weapons that are being used to kill American soldiers.

Lastly, I would say that our presence in Iraq does not just affect Iraq. The greater Middle East and the security of world are at stake. Are we going to turn a blind eye to Iraq and allow it to become a safe haven for terrorists the way that Afghanistan was under the Taliban regime? I certainly will do all that I can as a U.S. Senator to prevent that from happening because it is in our national interests to defeat our enemies abroad before they can strike us again here at home.

RURAL SCHOOL FUNDING

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, let me speak to you briefly regarding another critical issue and that is the Secure Rural Schools and Communities Self-Determination Reauthorization Act.

When we return after our Presidents Day recess, it is vital we re-engage in a critical issue for timber dependent school districts in Idaho and across our country. This bill once referred to as Craig/Wyden, helped many rural school districts move through a difficult time in their history and school children now find themselves in a very difficult situation. As you may know, many rural schools in this country have funding tied directly to timber harvest from our public lands. For several reasons, we haven't harvested timber at our historical rate and our rural schools in those particular counties have suffered.

I am working in a bipartisan way with my colleagues from Montana, Oregon, Washington, California, New Mexico and of course Idaho. We all see the importance of continuing this funding to some extent. I am committed, as is Senator WYDEN, to ensuring the success of the bill that bears our name.

It is my intent, as well as others, to redefine the formula. Our key dates to shape this critical issue are the Energy and Natural Resources hearing scheduled for March 1; as well as the emergency appropriations supplemental debate tentatively scheduled for the middle of March.

The timing is at a critical point. Our timber-dependent county officials and school districts are wrestling with budgets that are tied to this funding. I say today, clearly, failure is not an option.

I yield the floor.

IRANIAN WEAPONS AND IRAQ RESOLUTIONS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Senator BOND.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Virginia, truly a Virginia gentlemen and a good friend and a leader. I am most grateful.