

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the 30 minutes begin following the presentation of Senator ROBERTS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ROBERTS. As I indicated, Mr. President, we have not discussed the difficult policy decisions that will confront us if it becomes necessary to withdraw or redeploy, what that mission would be, or even how to withdraw. The reality is what we will do when certain consequences would take place. These are the possible, if not probable, consequences we should be confronting and debating and explaining to the American people and ourselves and in the media, even if some may have a deaf ear.

First. A dramatic increase in sectarian violence quickly escalating to a civil war—and I mean a real civil war—and a humanitarian disaster far more devastating than what is happening now. Shia versus Shia, Shia versus Sunni. What do we do? Thousands of Iraqis have already become refugees and left the country.

Second. Given a civil war and struggle for control, we can expect an incursion of Sunni troops from other Middle East countries—I want to make it very clear about that: other Mideast countries—to prevent an Iranian takeover of Iraq and the very real possibility of an Iraq led by Muqtada al-Sadr, whose street appeal could endanger their own Governments. I am talking about other Mideast countries. When that happens, the war becomes regional. What do we do?

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

Fourth. Iraq will become a safe haven for terrorists. This time it is for real. What do we do?

Fifth. In their eyes, with the defeat of the "Great Satan" only months away, as expected—a clear signal by this body and perhaps inevitable—terrorists around the world are already emboldened, waiting us out and planning more attacks; that is, if you believe what they say.

Read Afghanistan and the Taliban and the spring offensive. Will we soon be in the business of passing non-binding resolutions about Afghanistan?

Sixth. We can expect a perceived, if not real, lack of American resolve in the eyes of adversaries and potential adversaries around the world resulting in additional national security threats.

Read Putin and Belarus and Iran, and his recent remarkable speech at Mu-

nich in Germany at the NATO security conference. Kim Jong Il. We are making some progress with North Korea right now, but he does have a penchant for missile launches on the 4th of July.

Read Hugo Chavez—31 countries in the southern command. He is the new Castro, nationalizing his oil production and directly involved in five different countries. What do we do?

The point is that globally and over the long term this is not a Bush issue or a Democratic or a Republican issue, or even how you feel about Iraq or the war. Even as we argue about whether we debate and vote on one resolution or three or four, I hope, there are terrorist organizations and their second-generation affiliates—guided and inspired—are plotting attacks against the United States and throughout the world. It is obvious we can't sustain the status quo in Iraq, but while we debate on how to proceed, these folks are not giving up.

The irony is that should the President wake up in the morning and say, well, the House has voted for this resolution, they are not for this new mission, and the Senate is about to, and they may or may not do that, so I am going to terminate it, I am going to end it, then we are back to square one, back to a stalemate, back to the status quo. That, to me, doesn't make sense.

Given the fact there were at least five successful attacks that killed Americans—and others that, thank goodness, were not successful—before President Bush came to office and before military action in Iraq—given the fact this threat will face the next President and future world leaders, surely we can figure out it makes no sense to fight each other when the terrorists then and now and in the future do not kill according to party affiliation, nationality, race, age, or gender.

We do not need a Republican approach to national security and the war. We do not need a Democratic approach to national security and the war. We need, however, an American approach to our national security and the war and to our individual freedoms. This is a time to engage in honest dialog, to work together and think through and agree on the strategy that will defeat our enemies and make the American people safe. And yes, bring our troops home but in a way that we don't have to send them back.

So I say to the leadership, with all due respect, let us end this nonbinding business and get these confetti resolutions behind us. We have all had a chance now to discuss the war and we need to vote on I think at least four resolutions, and then come together with a bipartisan commitment—a difficult and perhaps impossible task but, I believe, a task that must be undertaken for the sake of our national security.

Mr. President, I yield back the balance of my time and I thank my colleagues across the aisle for permitting me to finish my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it is my understanding we were speaking in 30-minute segments and that the Senator from Kansas was allowed a little extra time to finish his remarks, which by my reckoning was about an additional 10 minutes. I want to clarify, and if a unanimous consent request is necessary, I will make that request, that the Senator from North Dakota be allowed to speak until 10 after the hour; and then, at 4:30, the next Democratic speaker would be recognized. So I think we would be back on the schedule that was spoken to earlier.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, thank you very much, and if the Senator from North Dakota will yield for a few minutes.

Mr. DORGAN. I yield to Senator DURBIN.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank my colleague for yielding.

IRAQ

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, an historic vote was announced in the House Chamber moments ago. By a vote of 246 to 182, the House of Representatives, in a bipartisan rollcall vote, has approved the resolution relative to the President's call for escalation of the number of troops serving in Iraq. That resolution is fewer than 60 words in length, and I believe it should be read into the RECORD. This is a resolution which we are hoping to bring to the Senate floor tomorrow so that the debate can begin in this Chamber. It reads:

Congress and the American people will continue to support and protect the members of the United States Armed Forces who are serving or who have served bravely and honorably in Iraq; Congress disapproves of the decision of President George W. Bush announced on January 10, 2007, to deploy more than 20,000 additional United States combat troops to Iraq.

It is unembellished, it is straightforward, and it states a position. Those who agree with this resolution, as I do, should be heard. Those who disagree and believe we should escalate the number of troops in this war have a right to be heard as well. That is the nature of this institution. It is the nature of our democracy.

For the Republicans to continue to threaten a filibuster to stop the debate in the Senate so that Members of the Senate cannot come forward and express themselves and vote on this issue is wrong. It is unfair. It is inconsistent with the reason we ran for office. We were asked by the people kind enough to entrust us with this responsibility to face the issues of our times, to address those issues in a responsible manner, to have a civilized debate on the

floor of the Senate, and to take a vote and take a stand. We are expected to do that.

We are not expected to waffle and weave and avoid the obvious. This is the issue of the moment. It is the issue of our time. With over 130,000 American soldiers' lives on the line, it is unacceptable that the minority would stop us from debating this issue. It is unacceptable to our troops and to their families who wait anxiously to know what their fate will be. It is unacceptable to the rest of the Nation, which expects the Senate to be a full partner in congressional debate.

It takes 60 votes to bring a measure to the floor in the Senate. On the Democratic side, with one absence by illness, we have 50. We need the cooperation of the Republicans to even debate the issue. They have made it clear in pronouncements on the floor and in press conferences they are going to stop this debate at any cost. They are prepared to filibuster this measure so we cannot have a debate and a vote on this critical issue. That is wrong. It is inconsistent with the reason we ran for office and the reason this institution exists.

We have to face the obvious. Since the decision was made by the United States of America to give President Bush this authorization of force, we have seen horrible results.

Mr. President, 3,132 of our best and bravest soldiers have given their lives, thousands have been seriously injured, hundreds of billions of dollars of taxpayers' money have been spent in pursuit of this war, with no end in sight. Our soldiers did their job and did it well—deposed a dictator and gave the Iraqis an opportunity for the first time in their history to stand and govern themselves and guide their nation into the future.

Instead, we have seen this situation disintegrate into a civil war, and we have watched our soldiers caught in the crossfire of a battle that started 1,400 years ago among followers of the Islamic faith. That is not what America bargained for. That is why the majority of the American people believe we need to change course, we need a new direction, and we need to bring our troops home. We need to tell the President that the escalation of this war and the escalation of the troops is the wrong policy at this moment in history.

For this Senate to speak, we need to engage in a debate, a debate which leads to a vote. There are choices before us. This choice, which I support, tells the President we disagree with his policy. It joins with the House of Representatives, which made the same decision on a bipartisan basis. We have offered to Senator McCain, a Republican from Arizona, an opportunity to bring his position forward in support of adding more troops in Iraq. That is the fair parameter of a good debate. But sadly the Republican minority has said they will deny us that opportunity.

I hope those who believe it is important for the Senate to engage in this debate will contact their Members of the Senate as quickly as possible and let them know the vote tomorrow at 1:45 in the afternoon here on the Senate floor is a historic vote, a vote of great importance. Every Member should be here. Every Member should vote. Every Member should understand the nature of this institution. The reason we serve is to give voice to the people we represent on the issues of our time. There is no more compelling and timely issue than this war in Iraq.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I appreciate the words of my colleague from Illinois. This debate we are trying to have is actually a debate about a debate. This must be the only place, the only real estate in the United States of America in which, rather than having a debate about the war and strategy, we are having a debate about whether we should debate it. It is pretty unbelievable.

This is called the greatest deliberative body in the world. It is an unbelievable privilege for me to be here. I came from a very small town of about 300 people, a high school class of 9. I am here in the greatest deliberative body in the world. I am enormously proud to be here. But I came here not to avoid debate but to engage in debate, to talk about this country and its future.

There is an old saying: When everyone is thinking the same thing, no one is thinking very much. There is a desire in this Chamber by some who have spoken that we all be thinking the same thing about these issues, that we all support President Bush and whatever his strategies might be and wherever he might take us. This Congress has a constitutional role to play, and the constitutional role is not to decide to come to the floor from Monday through Friday to support the President of the United States, it is to come to the floor of the Senate to support this country and its interests as best we see those interests.

Some long while ago, I went to a veterans hospital on a Sunday morning and I presented medals to a veteran. His name was Edmund Young Eagle. He was an American Indian. He had fought in the Second World War, had gone all around the world, had fought in northern Africa, fought at Normandy, fought across Europe, and came back to live on the Indian reservation. He never married, never had very much. He loved to play baseball. But he had kind of a tough life. At the end of Edmund Young Eagle's life, this man who served his country, at the end of his life he was dying of lung cancer. He was in the veterans hospital in Fargo, ND, and his sister called and said her brother Edmund Young Eagle had proudly served his country and had never received the medals for his service in the Second World War.

Would you get him his medals, she asked?

I said, Of course I will.

So I achieved getting the medals he earned but never received from the Pentagon, and I went to the VA hospital on a Sunday morning to present medals to Edmund Young Eagle, a Native American, one of those first Americans who served this country and then went home and lived quietly.

When I went to his room that morning, Edmund Young Eagle was very sick. I didn't know it at the time, but he would die within a week or so. We cranked up the hospital bed for Edmund Young Eagle so he was in a sitting position, and I pinned his World War II medals on his pajama tops and told him that his country was grateful for his serving our country in the Second World War.

This man, very sick, looked up at me and said: This is one of the proudest days of my life.

This man who lived in a spartan way, never having very much but served this country with honor, felt great gratitude at the end of his life for a country recognizing what he had done for us. That is the life of a soldier, someone who commits himself or herself to answer their country's call without question. So many have done it.

I will attend a funeral this week of a young man killed in Iraq. I received a call this morning from a mother, the mother of a soldier who spent a year in Iraq and returned with very difficult circumstances—post-traumatic stress, all kinds of difficult emotional problems—who just this week received the alert notice that his reserve unit will likely be called up again.

This is about war. It is about commitment. It is about our soldiers. It is about our country and our future. Some say we should not talk about that, we should not debate it. If that is the case, this is the only real estate, this is the only room in America where it is not being discussed and debated. It is being debated in the homes, in the restaurants, in the gymnasiums, in the schools, in the office. It ought to be debated here as well. This has a profound impact on our country and its future.

Make no mistake about it, our military has won every battle it has fought. Our military will win the battles they fight. But winning military battles does not win the war in Iraq. We disapprove of President Bush's plan to deepen our escalation in Iraq because it is a military response to a problem that must be resolved through diplomacy and through negotiation. The civil war and the violence in Iraq is only going to stop when there is genuine reconciliation between groups in Iraq.

Let's think through what we have done in Iraq. Through our soldiers' blood and our Treasury, we sent troops to Iraq. The Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, is dead. Good riddance, I say. We have unearthed mass graves in Iraq showing that hundreds of thousands of

Iraqis were murdered by a dictator. But Saddam Hussein was executed. The country of Iraq was able to vote for its own new Constitution. The country of Iraq voted for its own Government. That is very substantial progress.

But the next step has not shown much progress. The next step is this: Do the Iraqi people have the will to provide for their own security? This is their country, not ours. Iraq belongs to them, not us. The question is, Do the Iraqi people have the will to provide for their security? If they do not, this country cannot and will not be able to do that for any length of time. That is the question. Do they have the will to take back their country?

Iraqi leaders are going to have to make very difficult decisions, political decisions in some cases which may undermine their own power and their own base of support. But it is the only way this is going to be resolved. The sectarian violence that exists in Iraq today can trace its roots in some cases back to the year 700 A.D. This violence is not going to dissipate soon unless there is reconciliation between the factions. This requires Iraqi troops to fight their ethnic and religious allies who are part of the insurgency as well as fight their opponents. It requires Iraqi security, Iraqi police, and Iraqi troops to provide for the security of the whole country of Iraq.

The resolution we want to debate is a resolution which does not say we don't support our troops. Clearly we support our troops. We support our troops with everything we believe is necessary for their safety and security and for them to do their jobs the way we expect them to do their jobs. This Congress, every man and every woman, supports America's troops and prays for their safe return.

This resolution says we support our troops but we do not agree with President Bush in his desire to deepen our involvement in Iraq. Some come to the floor of the Senate and say: Your position on this emboldens the enemy. It is a message to embolden the enemy. It sends the wrong message to our troops.

It is neither of those. It is a message from the Congress of the United States to the President, and that message is we do not support his proposal to deepen our involvement in the war in Iraq.

A blue ribbon commission was put together, of some of the best thinkers, foreign policy and military thinkers in our country, headed by James Baker and Lee Hamilton, very distinguished Americans. That group included former Secretaries of State and military leaders and some outstanding thinkers. They worked for months, many months, to develop a plan. We all understand the alternatives are not good in Iraq. We understand that. If there were an easy way to deal with this, believe me, it would have been dealt with. In many ways, we found a box canyon in Iraq, and it is hard to get out of a box canyon.

The Baker-Hamilton report represented a consensus of some of the

best thinkers in our country, having worked months on this problem. The President chose to ignore that report. The President says he is the decider.

You know, the Constitution says something about that as well. I agree with my colleagues that we can't have 100 or 535 commanders in chief. I understand that. But I also understand that the Constitution has a role for the Congress. Only the Congress can declare war—only the Congress. Yes, the President is Commander in Chief, but only the Congress can declare war. Only the Congress has the power of the purse.

The question is, What do we do about what is now happening in Iraq? No other country that I am aware of, in what the President has called the coalition of the willing, has decided they are going to deepen their involvement or expand their troops to Iraq. No other country. Even Great Britain, the strongest supporter of President Bush's Iraq policy, has refused to increase their troop strength in Iraq. In fact, the British news reports say that Britain intends to have all or most of its troops withdrawn by the end of 2007. None of our allies, old or new, of which I am aware, have decided the proper approach at this point, given the sectarian involvement in Iraq, is to deepen their involvement and increase their troop strength in Iraq.

The President is saying we should surge some additional troops to Iraq. We have done that before. In early 2004, we surged 20,000 additional troops. A similar one happened in the fall of 2005. Most recently, last summer the President announced that thousands of additional troops would be surged into Baghdad. What happened as a result of that was the violence increased, and deaths and injuries to American troops went up. So we have seen some examples of a surge, and the examples have not been very helpful. In fact, it has been counterproductive.

This map is a map of the city of Baghdad—about 4 million to 6 million people, about 250 square miles. We have people in this city who have grievances that go back 1,300 and 1,400 years. The Shia and the Sunni religious split occurred in the seventh century, and they have clashed frequently since then.

This country is not put together by natural borders. This country was put together by a pen and paper, by a decision 90 years ago of how to draw the borders of this country. This was a diplomatic decision, that this should be the country of Iraq.

Let me describe what is happening now in this city. We have areas that are Shia areas and Sunni areas, and now we have areas that are turning Shia and turning Sunni. In many ways, you will see from this map the dramatic evidence of violence in this capital city of Iraq. It is getting worse, not better.

I mentioned that some of the hatred goes back 1,400 years. But a more recent example, in a story I was reading

about Iraq, a Shiite was recently driven from his home and farm by the Sunnis who killed his brother and nephew, and he was so bitter and angry, he said, "A volcano of revenge has built up inside. I want to rip them up with my teeth." It is this hatred which fuels a civil war and the atrocities that occur nearly every day.

Saturday, February 3, saw the deadliest single suicide bombing since the war began nearly 4 years ago, with 130 people killed and more than 300 wounded. It was the fourth major attack against a densely populated Shia area in less than 3 weeks. On the Thursday before, twin suicide bombers struck a market jammed with people—60 killed, 150 wounded. Again, 60 killed, 150 wounded; spraying body parts so far that police were scouring rooftops late in the night for body parts. A few days before that, 75 people killed in Baghdad's Shia neighborhoods in multiple bombings; 160 wounded. The day before that, 3 car bombs detonated within minutes of each other at the vegetable market. More than 1,000 Iraqis were killed in the last week of January. We are told there were 3,000 killed in the last 3 weeks. Unbelievably, it seems to me, they pick up bodies in the middle of the morning in Baghdad from the night's carnage with holes drilled in their kneecaps, holes drilled in their skulls. These are unbelievable signs of torture. These are acts of unimaginable violence committed against others. No one is safe, nowhere is safe, and this violence pervades nearly every aspect of daily life.

The question I think the President proposes with his suggestion of a surge of an additional 20,000 or 21,000 troops in Baghdad poses is: Will additional troops in Baghdad on street corners, going door to door, embedded with the troops, with the security of the Iraqi Government, stem the violence? The answer is likely no. We have seen this attempted previously and it did not stem the violence; the violence increased.

Let me make another point I think is important. No one has made, I think, the point that this troop escalation, whatever it is, is temporary. The United States troops are leaving Iraq. The question is when, not if. At some point, United States troops will leave Iraq. The question is: Will we leave in a time that gives us the opportunity to turn the country of Iraq back to the Iraqi people and say, this is your job to provide for your security.

Let me talk about the National Intelligence Estimate. The National Intelligence Estimate was done with 16 intelligence agencies. They spent the last 5 months analyzing the situation in Iraq, reviewed by the head of the CIA, the head of the intelligence units at the Pentagon, State Department, Justice Department, and the Director of National Intelligence, our most senior intelligence official. Some of it is top secret, but some was released publicly. Let me read something:

Even if violence is diminished, given the current winner-take-all attitude and sectarian animosities affecting the political scene, Iraqi leaders will be hard-pressed to achieve sustained political reconciliation in this time frame.

Continuing to quote:

Iraq's neighbors are influenced by the events within Iraq, but the involvement of these outside actors is not likely to be a major driver of violence or the prospect for stability because of the self-sustaining character of Iraq's internal sectarian dynamics.

That is a fancy way to describe the civil war.

I might say the last National Intelligence Estimate was done was in 2004 and it detailed 3 possible outcomes for Iraq over the next 18 months, which at the time would put us in the fall or winter of 2006. The worst-case scenario for the previous NIE was a civil war. Well, that is what the 2007 National Intelligence Estimate says has now happened. That is right; what is going on in Iraq now is the worst-case scenario of the previous National Intelligence Estimate.

Let me make a couple of other points, if I might. General Abizaid just over 2 months ago came to the Congress and here is what he said:

I met with every divisional commander, General Casey, the Corps Commander, General Dempsey, and I said, "In your professional opinion, if we were to bring in more American troops now, does it add considerably to our ability to achieve success in Iraq? And they said no."

This is our top military commander testifying to the Senate just over 2 months ago: They said no.

Now, here is why General Abizaid said the commanders did not believe they should have additional troops brought into Iraq:

The reason is because we want the Iraqis to do more. It is easy for the Iraqis to rely upon us to do this work. I believe that more American forces prevent the Iraqis from doing more, from taking more responsibility for their own future. The only way Iraq works in the future is for the Iraqis to take more responsibility for that future. That is what General Abizaid said. He was right then; he is right now. This is the testimony heard by the Senate just over 2 months ago. Interestingly enough, as a side note, just 2 weeks ago—3 weeks ago, John Negroponte, the head of the intelligence in this country at that time said this in open testimony to the Senate:

The greatest terrorist threat to America is al-Qaida and its network around the world.

The greatest terrorist threat to our country is al-Qaida and its network around the world, and he said they operate from a "secure hideaway" in Pakistan. If that is the case, if the greatest terrorist threat to our country is al-Qaida operating from a "secure hideaway" in Pakistan, and that comes from the head of our intelligence service in this country in open testimony to the Senate, if there are 21,000 additional American troops available to surge somewhere, why on Earth would we not choose to move those troops through Afghanistan near to Pakistan to eliminate the leadership of al-Qaida, the greatest terrorist threat to our

country? I do not understand the priorities coming from the administration. There has to be a change. We all understand that. We know Iraq is a different place. The various sects, tribes, religions, in some cases do not speak to each other, and in many cases don't trust each other. In other cases, they hate each other, and in too many cases, they kill each other.

That is what must change. It is why reconciliation is the key. It is why more U.S. troops are not going to make a difference.

Does anyone believe that if we go back 4 years and the President brought a proposition to the floor of the Senate and said: Look, we have a civil war in Iraq. What we ought to do is send more American troops to the middle of that civil war, or at least begin sending American troops to the middle of that civil war because we don't believe after 3 years of training that the Iraqi people are prepared to provide for their security, does anybody believe we would think it a good strategy to send additional troops to the middle of a civil war? I don't believe so.

I understand there are very different opinions here in this Chamber, and I respect them. I wouldn't diminish anyone in this Chamber for holding any views on this subject. I understand their passions. I share their passions. But I don't understand this: I don't understand how it is that this great body has to spend days debating whether we will have a debate. This is, after all, a debate about the motion to proceed. This isn't a debate about Iraq or Iraq strategy; it is about whether we can proceed to a motion on that subject. It is a debate about whether we can debate. If there is any space left in this country in which this debate should take place, it ought to be this space on this floor, this real estate. This is the great deliberative body. I do not for the life of me understand a vote against cloture that says: No, we believe the United States should not debate this issue. This is an issue the American people care a great deal about, and it is long past the time, in my judgment, for us to have this debate.

We are all united, I think, in loving this country. We want what is best for this country. We want to protect the American troops. We want our country to succeed. All of us want all of those things. I don't believe anybody who says we are undermining this or that or anything of that sort. All that is nonsense. This country deserves from this Senate a thoughtful, serious, real debate about what is happening that affects every part of American life, and that is the struggle we are involved in with respect to Iraq. The American people deserve this debate, and I hope that tomorrow when we have a vote on the motion to proceed, we will have the opportunity to proceed from that motion to a debate on the underlying petition that is on the floor of the Senate with respect to the subject of the war in Iraq.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska is recognized.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, how much time was I allocated?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has until 4:30.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, this morning I got up and I went to get on an airplane and the plane was delayed because of mechanical issues. Then I got the word that the leader said we should come vote on questions being discussed, just as I heard now.

I am here to participate in a charade. This is nothing but a charade. It is a nonbinding resolution. We are coming back to vote on Saturday on a nonbinding resolution that the American public doesn't support. As a matter of fact, as I read in *The Hill* newspaper and as I see on the front page, there is the majority leader's photograph and a story about how the majority is trying to embarrass the 21 of us who are up for election in 2008. I think the majority—current majority, former minority—ought to look at that paper. Inside it, after giving the majority leader credit for this charade, is a poll. It is an online poll, and this was a question: Does debate on a nonbinding Iraq resolution help or harm Americans? Harm: 57 percent; help, 43 percent.

Nothing at all will be accomplished tomorrow, even if we got cloture. We would vote on a nonbinding resolution that is an embarrassment to the troops that are wearing our uniforms in Iraq. What we should be doing is voting on cloture on a series of votes which would include Senator GREGG's resolution or amendment that declares our support for our troops.

The reason we face this situation today is the new majority, with one vote—a majority of one vote—went over to the House and negotiated a resolution—a nonbinding, nothing resolution—and brought it over here and said: You are going to vote on this resolution and nothing else. If we do this, we become a lower body of the House. The House, in responding to the Rules Committee, had no chance to offer any amendments to that bill. Over here, the majority leader says: You cannot offer any amendments to this because I am the leader.

Well, it is time we showed this leader the processes of the Senate are here for the purpose of allowing debate. The House represents the population of a whole series of congressional districts. We represent our States. The national viewpoint is settled in the Senate. This is the place where debate is supposed to take place and it should not be limited.

If we voted for cloture on this resolution tomorrow, we would not be allowed to vote on the Gregg amendment. The Gregg amendment:

Expressing the sense of Congress that no funds should be cut off or reduced for American troops in the field which would result in undermining their safety or their ability to complete their assigned missions.

What is wrong with that? Why won't the leader let us vote on that? You

know why? Because it would carry. It would carry. Because Senators on that other side of the aisle know they must support the forces in the field.

Senator GREGG's amendment goes on to say:

Whereas under Article II, section 2, of the Constitution of the United States, the President is the "commander in chief of the Army and Navy of the United States", and in such capacity the President has the command of the Armed Forces, including the authority to deploy troops and direct military campaigns during wartime.

Whereas under Article I, Section 8, of the Constitution of the United States, Congress has the power of the purse specifically as it relates to the Armed Forces, and in such capacity Congress has the responsibility to fully and adequately provide funding for the United States military forces, especially when they are at war and are defending our Nation; and

Whereas the United States military forces are in harm's way and are protecting our country, Congress and the Nation should give them all the support they need in order to maintain their safety and to accomplish their assigned missions, including the equipment, logistics, and funding necessary to ensure their safety and effectiveness, and such support is the responsibility of both the Executive Branch and the Legislative Branch of Government.

Senator GREGG goes on to say this:

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring)—

And they have to concur if we send it back to them—

That it is the sense of Congress that Congress should not take any action that will endanger United States military forces in the field, including elimination or reduction of funds for troops in the field, as such action with respect to funding would undermine their safety or harm their effectiveness in pursuing their assigned missions.

It is nothing but a charade to say an amendment that does nothing should not have a resolution such as this attached to it. That is our purpose. That is our job. It is our constitutional responsibility to support the forces in the field.

I am ashamed the Senate is taking action to prevent the voting on a resolution, once again, establishing the principle. Our duty is to support our forces in the field.

I have a chart to show, but it is difficult for many to understand why we need surge forces. This whole concept we are talking about is safety. Senator GREGG's resolution deals with safety of our forces. This is a chart that shows the Iraqi Army and national police with lead responsibility for counterinsurgency operations in their areas.

In May of 2006 this was their deployment, fairly small. By February of 2007, this is their deployment. We are now in the process of going forward on the new plan to deal with the fact that we have trained a great many of these forces now, but they have not been moved into the areas of real combat, and those are the white spaces on this chart. The whole idea now is to start moving these forces into those areas.

By the way, the hot spots are also on arterial highways in Iraq. This dem-

onstrates where it is. The white areas are occupied by American forces and coalition forces. We want to give them a chance now to move them into those areas. As such, forces will be moving all over this country. In that period of time, these additional surge forces are necessary in order to provide the safety for the people whom they are going to be moving. They are our forces, they are their forces. Secretary Gates has said he does not think they will be there too long. He made a point to make that statement. They will come out as soon as they are no longer needed. Safety is a problem.

To those people who say: Let's get ready to withdraw, if we try to withdraw right now, there would be mass murder in this country. Think of what happened to the Russians and the Soviets when they tried to get out of Afghanistan—and multiply it by factors of 10 to 20. We are spread out all over this place and so are the Iraqis because that was the problem, we were providing for the defense until they were ready to move in and take care of their defense.

This is a chart that shows the current position of forces in Iraqi Freedom. We can see various operations, Japanese and coalition forces, including the British, around the periphery. We are there, in Baghdad, on the major highways. We are in the white spaces on the chart. To get the Iraqi forces in there, we have a new scheme where we will have Iraqi brigades—not divisions but brigades—with an embedded battalion in each brigade move in. Our people will be along with them to make sure their training is carried out and they do the job of defending themselves.

As a practical matter, in order to do that, we need the increased safety of movement in this country. I fully support the plan. It was an Iraqi plan improved on by Secretary Gates, the President, and his staff. Very clearly, the whole program is so they can provide the basic defense for themselves in areas where there is key opposition.

Assume the other side, the side who wants to withdraw, would get approval of the Congress and had some way to mandate the President to withdraw forces. The first thing that would have to be done would be to move the Iraqi forces in there where they can defend themselves and hold back the insurgents currently combatting our forces.

I am not a general, I am not even an armchair general, but I have been around wars for almost all my life now starting out when I was 19. I have seen a great many wars, and I have seen a great many problems with war. Coming back from overseas, I talked to some of my friends and I decided I was going to become an aeronautical engineer to try to find out what caused wars. I hate wars. But I know my duty is to support the military and to support those people carrying out our constitutional mandate to provide for the common defense of this country.

In my opinion, this is the common defense of our country. We have taken on the task of trying to stop a movement that could very well destroy the world. I do believe we should stop these incessant debates on resolutions that mean nothing. Why would we spend all this time and come back on Saturday in order to vote on a nonbinding resolution that would not do a thing? It would not do a thing at all for anyone in that conflict, not one thing. It is nothing but a charade, a charade. It embarrasses me to have to say that. The whole reason for it, pick up *The Hill* newspaper, back to where I started, to provide a challenge to the 21 Members, Republicans, up for election in 2008, 3 on that side of the aisle. The whole idea is to try to see if we cannot force them to come back on Saturday in order to say to our State constituents: They were not here to vote. I am here to vote. I happened to get off the airplane because I was pretty irritated when I read that story. I am still irritated.

I remember Steve Syms in 1986, when everyone was trying to embarrass people up for election, he said: I am going home and I am going to talk to my constituents, and he did not get sucked back into the debates such as this. He was reelected.

What these people do not know is, we are going to stand up and speak up. We are going to call a spade a spade. This is a charade. I have not been home since January. And I got off that plane to come back and complain about this. I have a right to go home once in a while. I live 4,500 miles from here. As a matter of fact, I am stopping off on my way home to see a very sick relative before I get to Alaska on Monday. Leadership is leadership, and I have been in leadership in this Senate. I was not elected leader, but that is another story. As a practical matter, I have seen leaders come and I have seen leaders go. My friend from Nevada has been my friend for a long time. I am saying I am not going to be embarrassed to come out and say this is nothing but a charade. We should not come back tomorrow to vote on a nonbinding resolution to see if we would vote on a resolution that doesn't tell the story that America wants us to tell, and that story is we support our forces in the field, we support what they are doing. We want them to do what we said we would do, move the forces in that are now trained in Iraq. Let them show how they can defend themselves and we then pull out our embedded battalions and we will be in a position to figure out what is the long-term plan now for this new democracy we have helped establish.

What does this nonbinding resolution do to people in the field? What does it do to the Iraqis? What is it selling them? People are telling me now we should find some way to take the money the President has asked for, the supplemental, and to use it for something else—not to use it to support the people in the field.

There is what is called the Food and Forage Act of the United States. I hope the Senate understands that act. I have been involved in defense appropriations now for over 25 years. The President of the United States has the authority to take money from wherever it is to support forces in the field. We will never abandon our people in the field. We will support them in every way possible. That is why the current majority does not want to vote on the resolution of Senator GREGG. They do not want to be put in a position of saying no to Senator GREGG because if they vote, if they support that resolution, they are continuing the concepts that have been embodied in my life and in the Senate's life as long as I have known it. That is, we support our forces in the field. We are not going to divert money they need for their support, and we are not going to waste our time on nonbinding resolutions that do not do anything to help anybody.

We have a lot of things we could be working on, immigration, energy, global climate change. What are we doing? We are spending our time coming back on Saturday to debate whether we should vote on a bill that was started in the House of Representatives, with not one amendment, and brought over here, not one amendment, and expresses a point of view that the American public does not approve of.

I hope we can get to a debate one of these days, and people will stay around after they make comments such as I heard before I came in. I guarantee, in my heart and in my mind, I know what it means to be in uniform, what it means to be in a position to feel it is necessary to have support at home.

I spent some time last night talking to Colin Powell, one of the famous generals of this country, and reminded him once when we were talking years ago, he told me about the time when he was sent into Laos as a young captain with about 12 days' rations and how when you get up on the morning of the 12th day and realize a drop mission is coming to give you your rations for the next 12 days, how you realize what it means to rely on people, to understand that people in the United States are behind their military, to know you can eat those rations because the supplies are going to come in when they are supposed to come in. That is support to people in the field.

Another concept I speak of is our people have a doctrine that hardly any armies or military in the world has had—we never abandon our forces in the field. What these people are doing now if you listen to them on this other resolution, they are saying, we are going to take and divert this money and put it somewhere else. Not this Senator. If they need that money over there to carry out the commands of the Commander in Chief, I am going to support it. The Senate should support it. We should stop this business of trying to embarrass people who are up for election and demanding they come back and vote on Saturday.

This recess was announced a month ago. Those who live a long distance from here rely on that. The Senate has to start keeping its commitments to our Members whether they are up for election or not.

This is political posturing at its worse. I will be here to vote tomorrow to represent some of those people who could not get back. I stayed to vote so I could come and say this: Political posturing has no place in the Senate of the United States.

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.

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

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

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, on December 23, 1783, George Washington, having successfully led the Continental Army to victory in the Revolutionary War, appeared before the Continental Congress and resigned his commission as commander of the Armed Forces.

It was a quietly pivotal action in the history of our young country, an event so important in shaping the Nation that it is one of only eight moments in our history deemed worthy enough of gracing the walls of the Capitol rotunda.

A painting of Washington's historic act hangs not far from this Chamber alongside more well known moments in American history such as the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the Battle of Bunker Hill.

The precedent that Washington set on that December day was as revolutionary as it was clear: In the United States of America, the power to make and execute war will be held not by the military but instead by peacefully elected leaders sitting in a legislative body.

Washington understood that the will of the people—the will of the American people—shall be the guiding hand of government, even on questions of war and peace.

I wonder how President Washington would feel, I wonder what he would say to each of us today. First, I think he would be very proud of what has happened this afternoon in the House of Representatives, where they came together, after lengthy debate, to state their opinions about the most pressing issue of war, the war in Iraq. I am very proud that we saw the House of Representatives vote 246 to 182 to say, first, that they support the troops and, secondly, that they do not support the escalation of the war in Iraq.

Regardless of how each person voted today in the House, they took that vote. They were willing to stand up and be counted and give their opinion. I believe the majority of the American people—and their will, their belief—was represented in this vote today of 246 to 182.

What has happened in the Senate? Well, first of all, I commend our majority leader, Senator HARRY REID, for his perseverance, for his continuing effort to reach across the aisle with the minority leader to find a way to do the same thing the House has done. He has put forward numerous proposals, and, as late as yesterday, very simply and in a straightforward way, offered us the opportunity to vote on a resolution opposing the escalation and one that supports the President's escalation. What could be more fair? What could be simpler? Yet we continue to see the minority block the efforts to bring us to a vote.

For over 2 weeks now, I have watched the Republican leadership engage in legislative games and political posturing to avoid taking a vote on the most pressing issue of our time, the war in Iraq. They say they support it, but they will not vote on a resolution, up or down, whether or not to support the President's escalation. I believe it is because they do not like what they know the outcome will be if we are able to have that vote. They have turned their backs on their responsibility to the people who elected them and to our troops because they may lose a vote.

Four years ago, 23 of us stood on the floor of the Senate and lost a vote. It was a vote to go to war. It was a vote to give the President the authority to go to war in Iraq. It was a tough vote. We knew we were not going to win that vote, but we all—those for and against—made a determination and voted because we are elected officials, charged with overseeing the U.S. Armed Forces, and we had a responsibility to voice our opinions for the record on the question of war.

I have stood on the floor of the Senate time and time again to voice my opposition to this President's proposals of escalation—more of the same, calling it a different strategy, and yet doing the same thing over and over again. Sending more Americans into combat without a strategy for success will not improve the situation on the ground in Iraq. And it will not bring our men and women in uniform home any sooner.

Only the Iraqis can secure Iraq. Only the Iraqis can secure Iraq. We have heard that from generals and military experts and the Iraq Study Group and learned colleagues on both sides of the aisle. The American troops cannot be seen as a substitute for Iraqi resolve. Why would we go further down the path that has led us to this point? Why would we repeat our previous mistakes and call it a new strategy?

Unlike the President, all of us and our counterparts in the House will go home over recess and on weekends and face our constituents, our neighbors. We see them and talk to them at church, in the line at the bank, at our kids' schools, in the grocery store, and at countless events and meetings as we travel throughout our States.

And we are here because they elected us to be their voice.

This is not Washington, DC's, war. We may set policy here, we may make speeches here, and we may take votes here, this is America's war.

The men and women putting their lives on the line in Iraq every day are from our smallest neighborhoods and our biggest cities, from farm communities and factory towns, from places many of us have never heard of and few of us will ever go. Flint, Howell, West Branch, Hemlock, La Salle, Port Huron, Ypsilanti, Muskegon, Ann Arbor, Byron, Flushing, Bay City, Canton, Paw Paw, Lake Orion, Saginaw, Sand Creek—these are only some of the dozens of communities in my home State of Michigan that have given up a son or a daughter to this war.

We sit in this historic Capitol and argue over whether we should dignify this war with a simple vote, while these and other communities across the country bury their loved ones, while high schools hold vigils for alumni laid to rest too young, while churches comfort parishioners who have lost sons and daughters and husbands and wives and fathers and mothers.

We are the voice of these communities, of these towns and cities and counties. We were elected with their sacred trust to come here, to Washington, and to speak out for them, to make our mark for them on the issues that face this country. There can be nothing more important than the issue of war.

By continuing to stonewall a vote on this resolution, the Republican minority has stripped all of America of their voice in this debate. They have said to the people who elected us that this issue—the issue of an escalation of war—is not important enough for their elected representatives to consider.

Too often in the white noise of politics we lose sight of the responsibility we bear. We get bogged down in the politics of partisanship and lose sight of why we were elected. We owe it to the American people to take this vote. This is the most serious issue of our time. There is nothing more important or more pressing than our Nation being at war. It is the responsibility of the Congress to engage in shaping policy concerning the war on behalf of the American people.

Let me take a few moments to remind everyone what is really at stake. While some posture and jockey for legislative position, lives are on the line this moment and every moment the war goes forward. It doesn't matter if you support or oppose the war. Anyone involved in slowing a vote on this resolution should be ashamed. Our military has not failed us at any turn in this endeavor. But we are failing them as a body by failing to lead. What is at stake?

On January 21, the Grand Rapids Press published the following account on the war in Iraq:

The first roadside bomb four months ago knocked a front tire off Kyle Earl's Humvee, rang his head like a bell and made his ears bleed.

The second bomb a couple of weeks later blew out the front tires and took out the transmission but, again, spared Earl serious injury.

The third one, on Oct. 17, was his last.

With the headlights out for security and wearing night-vision goggles, the 20-year-old Marine lance corporal from Cedar Springs was driving the lead Humvee returning from a night patrol in Iraq's Al Anbar province near the border with Syria. He and a Marine manning the Humvee's machine gun saw it at the same time: a hump in the road ahead, a sure sign of a buried improvised explosive device (IED).

Earl instantly made the calculation: If he swerved, the trailing Humvee carrying the company commander would hit the IED, so "I drove right into it, knowing it was probably going to kill me," he said.

He ran over the hump, igniting three 155-mm artillery shells and five propane tanks. The flash, amplified by the night-vision goggles, was brighter than anything he'd ever seen. A fireball shot through the cab, and shrapnel pierced his right leg, arm and face. The shock wave felt like someone had placed him inside a plastic bag and sucked out all the air.

Still, he remained conscious, as the Humvee rolled off the road and came to a stop. Blood streamed from his eyes, ears and nose. He reached for his 9 mm handgun, but noticed something about the size of his palm on it. He picked it up and examined it, unaware it was a chunk of his flesh, ripped from his right forearm.

He smelled something burning and realized he and the Humvee were on fire. He rolled out onto the ground as his fellow Marines kicked him to extinguish the flames.

We are here because of that lance corporal. He and his comrades, the men and women serving, deserve our best—our best judgment, our best decisions, our best funding, our best strategy for them.

On November 16, 2006, the Detroit Free Press gave us this insight into life on the ground in Iraq:

"A few days ago, from out of a crowd of kids, one of them threw a grenade and it went off under the vehicle, and my executive officer's door was peppered," said Lance Cpl. Michael Rossi, a 28-year-old student majoring in urban planning at Wayne State University who lives in Detroit. "A crowd of kids, and one of them threw a grenade." "Out here," he said, "nobody is safe."

On January 5, the editorial page of the Flint Journal paid its respects to one of Flint's fallen sons:

It's touching and laudable that the father of Marine Cpl Christopher Eskelson would want the family of a fellow Marine to understand the full heroics these men displayed in Iraq combat that claimed both their lives.

They are among more than a dozen local military men whom the Iraq war has claimed, with each succeeding loss being no less painful to an area that has supplied an ample measure of these patriots.

Of course, the grief is much greater for the families who knew the men in so many other wonderful ways. Those memories undoubtedly will be recalled during services for Miller and Eskelson Saturday and Sunday, respectively.

All of us have stories of the men and women who have served heroically and lost their lives, men and women who have come home and need our assistance now as veterans while in our hospitals and will forever carry a remem-

brance of this war through lost limbs and other health conditions. They deserve a vote on whether we believe this strategy for them and their colleagues is the right strategy. They deserve this. They expect us to stand up and speak out and work as hard as we can to get it right.

Too often on the floor of this Chamber and too often in politics, we use words such as "bravery" and "toughness" and resolve." We describe votes as "tough." We describe speeches as "brave." The men and women serving in combat know the real meaning of these words. They go about their dangerous duty with the pride of professionals. They live and work under the shadow of violence, never knowing what might be facing them around the next corner, and they do it with stoic resolve that reflects their character and their training. They do not have the luxury of picking and choosing when and where to fight. They go where their country sends them and stand shoulder to shoulder with their brothers and sisters in arms and face whatever is thrown at them. What we consider heroic, they consider doing their job.

Their sacrifices deserve and demand leadership, our leadership, collectively. We owe to it them and to every person we were elected to represent to vote on this resolution, to take a stand about how this war will proceed. It is our job. It is time to stop stalling and face our responsibility, a responsibility that pales in comparison to that which is taken every day by our troops in Iraq. I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 10 minutes.

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

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, I would like to state my support of the vote we will take tomorrow. Last week, I expressed my support for the bipartisan Levin-Warner resolution which was denied a vote by the full Senate due to procedural motions. Ten days later, we find ourselves in a similar situation.

Our colleagues in the House have spent the last 4 days debating the current course of action in Iraq, and they have completed a vote on final passage today. At the same time, the Senate has continued to engage in partisan bickering and political gamesmanship. The House found a way, it found a bill, and it took a vote. We have a bill, and we need to debate it.

At bottom, this debate is not about whether one is a Republican or Democrat; it is about the legislative branch exerting its proper constitutional oversight by deliberating on the most vital and challenging issue of our day. I would urge my colleagues to think about the vote that took place in 2002 authorizing the use of force in Iraq and about what happened afterward. This was not a party-line vote. I was not a

Member of this body, and I do personally believe it was an erroneous vote, at least in its outcome, but at the same time, most importantly, we should look at the lack of respect shown by the administration after the vote. This lack of respect was a clear signal that the true issues dividing us in this Government are more related to the relations between the executive and legislative branches than between our respective parties.

The administration has failed the country again and again in the conduct of this war. At the same time, it repeatedly claims that it holds the power, regardless of the input of the Congress, to continue to push our military people to the limits of their endurance, while avoiding the diplomatic options crucial to resolving the situation in Iraq which inevitably evolved from our invasion and occupation.

I have heard discussion today about the consequences of withdrawal. No one on this side is advocating a precipitous withdrawal, but the consequences that are being described—increased terrorism, the empowerment of Iran, the loss of prestige of the United States around the world, and economic distress in our country—are, quite frankly, the exact conditions many of us were warning about if we invaded in the first place. The question is not how we withdraw or should we withdraw. Some day, we are going to withdraw. Inevitably, we are going to withdraw. The question is the conditions we leave behind when we do so.

I have long advocated that an integral part of our strategy in Iraq must include engagement with all of Iraq's neighbors, including Iran and Syria. As Iraq's neighbors, they are stakeholders in both the future of Iraq and the need for stability in the region. As we seek to decrease our presence in Iraq and increase our ability to fight terrorism and address strategic challenges elsewhere in the world, we must bring those two countries to the table. An overwhelming majority of those who recently testified before hearings at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee agree with that assessment.

I have heard today the name of General Petraeus invoked several times as evidence of this body's support for the administration's current policy. I voted for General Petraeus. A vote for General Petraeus is not a vote for this administration's policy or its strategy or its, quite frankly, lack of strategy. That vote was to support the qualifications of an individual to command troops in Iraq. That was a military vote, not a political vote. If the strategy were to change, as I hope it will, I have full confidence that General Petraeus is capable of overseeing that policy as well. We must see evidence of a new diplomatic effort from this administration before we, as a Congress, not as Democrats and Republicans, ratify the expanded use of our military.

On that note, it should be emphasized that despite comments today about the

fact that the Baker-Hamilton group supported a temporary military surge in its report, it did so only in consonance with a robust regional diplomatic surge which was supposed to begin more than 2 months ago.

Many Republicans seem to be implying that we must support all of this administration's actions or, by inference, we don't support the troops. The issue is not whether we support the troops; it is whether we agree on the political issues to which they are being put. This effort demands clear direction from the top. It depends on the extent to which this Government is capable of forging a regional consensus regarding Iraq's future. This administration has refused to do so. It is not in the interest of our troops to continue sending them in harm's way without a clear strategy that will bring closure to this endeavor.

I believe very strongly that our political representatives should be careful in claiming to speak politically for our troops. Our military is a mirror of our society, and so are its political views. We have heard a lot of anecdotal evidence today—TV clips, newspaper interviews with individuals. But anecdotal evidence notwithstanding, poll after poll shows that our troops are just as concerned about this policy as is the public at large.

I have one poll from a year ago, a Zogby poll, that says that 72 percent of the people then stationed in Iraq believed the war should have ended by the end of 2006. This includes 7 out of 10 of our Regular Army soldiers and a vast majority—nearly 60 percent—of our marines. These are people who have done their job. They know what their military job is, but they have the same questions about the political policies as do the rest of Americans.

I ask unanimous consent to print the Zogby poll in the RECORD.

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

[February 28, 2006]

U.S. TROOPS IN IRAQ: 72 PERCENT SAY END
WAR IN 2006

Le Moyne College/Zogby Poll shows just one in five troops want to heed Bush call to stay "as long as they are needed." While 58 percent say mission is clear, 42 percent say U.S. role is hazy. Plurality believes Iraqi insurgents are mostly homegrown. Almost 90 percent think war is retaliation for Saddam's role in 9/11, most don't blame Iraqi public for insurgent attacks. Majority of troops oppose use of harsh prisoner interrogation, and Plurality of troops pleased with their armor and equipment.

An overwhelming majority of 72 percent of American troops serving in Iraq think the U.S. should exit the country within the next year, and more than one in four say the troops should leave immediately, a new Le Moyne College/Zogby International survey shows.

The poll, conducted in conjunction with Le Moyne College's Center for Peace and Global Studies, showed that 29 percent of the respondents, serving in various branches of the armed forces, said the U.S. should leave Iraq "immediately," while another 22 percent

said they should leave in the next six months. Another 21 percent said troops should be out between six and 12 months, while 23 percent said they should stay "as long as they are needed."

Different branches had quite different sentiments on the question, the poll shows. While 89 percent of reserves and 82 percent of those in the National Guard said the U.S. should leave Iraq within a year, 58 percent of Marines think so. Seven in ten of those in the regular Army thought the U.S. should leave Iraq in the next year. Moreover, about three-quarters of those in National Guard and Reserve units favor withdrawal within six months, just 15 percent of Marines felt that way. About half of those in the regular Army favored withdrawal from Iraq in the next six months.

The troops have drawn different conclusions about fellow citizens back home. Asked why they think some Americans favor rapid U.S. troop withdrawal from Iraq, 37 percent of troops serving there said those Americans are unpatriotic, while 20 percent believe people back home don't believe a continued occupation will work. Another 16 percent said they believe those favoring a quick withdrawal do so because they oppose the use of the military in a pre-emptive war, while 15 percent said they do not believe those Americans understand the need for the U.S. troops in Iraq.

The wide-ranging poll also shows that 58 percent of those serving in country say the U.S. mission in Iraq is clear in their minds, while 42 percent said it is either somewhat or very unclear to them, that they have no understanding of it at all, or are unsure. While 85 percent said the U.S. mission is mainly "to retaliate for Saddam's role in the 9-11 attacks," 77 percent said they also believe the main or a major reason for the war was "to stop Saddam from protecting al Qaeda in Iraq."

"Ninety-three percent said that removing weapons of mass destruction is not a reason for U.S. troops being there," said Pollster John Zogby, President and CEO of Zogby International. "Instead, that initial rationale went by the wayside and, in the minds of 68 percent of the troops, the real mission became to remove Saddam Hussein." Just 24 percent said that "establishing a democracy that can be a model for the Arab World" was the main or a major reason for the war. Only small percentages see the mission there as securing oil supplies (11 percent) or to provide long-term bases for US troops in the region (6 percent).

The continuing insurgent attacks have not turned U.S. troops against the Iraqi population, the survey shows. More than 80 percent said they did not hold a negative view of Iraqis because of those attacks. About two in five see the insurgency as being comprised of discontented Sunnis with very few non-Iraqi helpers. "There appears to be confusion on this," Zogby said. But, he noted, less than a third think that if non-Iraqi terrorists could be prevented from crossing the border into Iraq, the insurgency would end. A majority of troops (53 percent) said the U.S. should double both the number of troops and bombing missions in order to control the insurgency.

The survey shows that most U.S. military personnel in-country have a clear sense of right and wrong when it comes to using banned weapons against the enemy, and in interrogation of prisoners. Four in five said they oppose the use of such internationally banned weapons as napalm and white phosphorous. And, even as more photos of prisoner abuse in Iraq surface around the world, 55 percent said it is not appropriate or standard military conduct to use harsh and

threatening methods against insurgent prisoners in order to gain information of military value.

Three quarters of the troops had served multiple tours and had a longer exposure to the conflict: 26 percent were on their first tour of duty, 45 percent were on their second tour, and 29 percent were in Iraq for a third time or more.

A majority of the troops serving in Iraq said they were satisfied with the war provisions from Washington. Just 30 percent of troops said they think the Department of Defense has failed to provide adequate troop protections, such as body armor, munitions, and armor plating for vehicles like Hum Vees. Only 35 percent said basic civil infrastructure in Iraq, including roads, electricity, water service, and health care, has not improved over the past year. Three of every four were male respondents, with 63 percent under the age of 30.

The survey included 944 military respondents interviewed at several undisclosed locations throughout Iraq. The names of the specific locations and specific personnel who conducted the survey are being withheld for security purposes. Surveys were conducted face-to-face using random sampling techniques. The margin of error for the survey, conducted Jan. 18 through Feb. 14, 2006, is \pm 3.3 percentage points.

Mr. WEBB. Another poll, of December 29, 2006, by the Military Times, the most credible military newspaper in America, indicates that barely one-third of our service members approve of the way the President is handling the war. In fact, only 41 percent of our military now believes the United States should have gone to war in Iraq in the first place.

I ask unanimous consent that this poll be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Military Times Poll, Dec. 29, 2006]

DOWN ON THE WAR

(By Robert Hoderne)

The American military—once a staunch supporter of President Bush and the Iraq war—has grown increasingly pessimistic about chances for victory.

For the first time, more troops disapprove of the president's handling of the war than approve of it. Barely one-third of service members approve of the way the president is handling the war, according to the 2006 Military Times Poll.

When the military was feeling most optimistic about the war—in 2004—83 percent of poll respondents thought success in Iraq was likely. This year, that number has shrunk to 50 percent.

Only 35 percent of the military members polled this year said they approve of the way President Bush is handling the war, while 42 percent said they disapproved. The president's approval rating among the military is only slightly higher than for the population as a whole. In 2004, when his popularity peaked, 63 percent of the military approved of Bush's handling of the war. While approval of the president's war leadership has slumped, his overall approval remains high among the military.

Just as telling, in this year's poll only 41 percent of the military said the U.S. should have gone to war in Iraq in the first place, down from 65 percent in 2003. That closely reflects the beliefs of the general population today—45 percent agreed in a recent USA Today/Gallup poll.

Professor David Segal, director of the Center for Research on Military Organization at

the University of Maryland, was not surprised by the changing attitude within the military.

"They're seeing more casualties and fatalities and less progress," Segal said.

He added, "Part of what we're seeing is a recognition that the intelligence that led to the war was wrong."

Whatever war plan the president comes up with later this month, it likely will have the replacement of American troops with Iraqis as its ultimate goal. The military is not optimistic that will happen soon. Only about one in five service members said that large numbers of American troops can be replaced within the next two years. More than one-third think it will take more than five years. And more than half think the U.S. will have to stay in Iraq more than five years to achieve its goals.

Almost half of those responding think we need more troops in Iraq than we have there now. A surprising 13 percent said we should have no troops there. As for Afghanistan force levels, 39 percent think we need more troops there. But while they want more troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, nearly three-quarters of the respondents think today's military is stretched too thin to be effective.

The mail survey, conducted Nov. 13 through Dec. 22, is the fourth annual gauge of active-duty military subscribers to the Military Times newspapers. The results should not be read as representative of the military as a whole; the survey's respondents are on average older, more experienced, more likely to be officers and more career-oriented than the overall military population.

Among the respondents, 66 percent have deployed at least once to Iraq or Afghanistan. In the overall active-duty force, according to the Department of Defense, that number is 72 percent.

The poll has come to be viewed by some as a barometer of the professional career military. It is the only independent poll done on an annual basis. The margin of error on this year's poll is plus or minus 3 percentage points.

While approval of Bush's handling of the war has plunged, approval for his overall performance as president remains high at 52 percent. While that is down from his high of 71 percent in 2004, it is still far above the approval ratings of the general population, where that number has fallen into the 30s.

While Bush fared well overall, his political party didn't. In the three previous polls, nearly 60 percent of the respondents identified themselves as Republicans, which is about double the population as a whole. But in this year's poll, only 46 percent of the military respondents said they were Republicans. However, there was not a big gain in those identifying themselves as Democrats—a figure that consistently hovers around 16 percent. The big gain came among people who said they were independents.

Similarly, when asked to describe their political views on a scale from very conservative to very liberal, there was a slight shift from the conservative end of the spectrum to the middle or moderate range. Liberals within the military are still a rare breed, with less than 10 percent of respondents describing themselves that way.

SEEING MEDIA BIAS

Segal was not surprised that the military support for the war and the president's handling of it had slumped. He said he believes that military opinion often mirrors that of the civilian population, even though it might lag in time. He added, "[The military] will always be more pro-military and pro-war than the civilians. That's why they are in this line of work."

The poll asked, "How do you think each of these groups view the military?" Respond-

ents overwhelmingly said civilians have a favorable impression of the military (86 percent). They even thought politicians look favorably on the military (57 percent). But they are convinced the media hate them—only 39 percent of military respondents said they think the media have a favorable view of the troops.

The poll also asked if the senior military leadership, President Bush, civilian military leadership and Congress have their best interests at heart.

Almost two-thirds (63 percent) of those surveyed said the senior military leadership has the best interests of the troops at heart. And though they don't think much of the way he's handling the war, 48 percent said the same about President Bush. But they take a dim view of civilian military leadership—only 32 percent said they think it has their best interests at heart. And only 23 percent think Congress is looking out for them.

Despite concerns early in the war about equipment shortages, 58 percent said they believe they are supplied with the best possible weapons and equipment.

While President Bush always portrays the war in Iraq as part of the larger war on terrorism, many in the military are not convinced. The respondents were split evenly—47 percent both ways—on whether the Iraq war is part of the war on terrorism. The rest had no opinion.

On many questions in the poll, some respondents said they didn't have an opinion or declined to answer. That number was typically in the 10 percent range.

But on questions about the president and on war strategy, that number reached 20 percent and higher. Segal said he was surprised the percentage refusing to offer an opinion wasn't larger.

"There is a strong strain in military culture not to criticize the commander in chief," he said.

One contentious area of military life in the past year has been the role religion should play. Some troops have complained that they feel pressure to attend religious services. Others have complained that chaplains and superior officers have tried to convert them. Half of the poll respondents said that at least once a month, they attend official military gatherings, other than meals and chapel services, that began with a prayer. But 80 percent said they feel free to practice and express their religion within the military.

Mr. WEBB. I believe very strongly that we should leave our military people out of these political debates. I am not using these figures to advance the Democratic Party's point. I believe it is inappropriate for the other party to use our military people in a way that might insulate them from criticism over the woeful failures of this administration's policy. The American people's confidence in this administration is at rock bottom. Many rightly believe they were misled on the reasons for going to war.

The administration's credibility has suffered—rightly so—also with respect to its intentions for dealing with Iran. I do not believe one can speak of our responsibility on these immediate issues without stating clearly our concerns about the entire region, and especially the administration's position regarding its constitutional authority to use military force outside of Iraq.

The administration's view of its Presidential authority to conduct unilateral military action against other

countries, and particularly with Iran, was documented in President Bush's signing statement accompanying the original authorization for the use of force against Iraq in October 2002. I urge my colleagues to examine this language. In part, it states:

My signing this resolution does not constitute any change in the long-standing positions of the executive branch on either the President's constitutional authority to use force to deter, prevent, or respond to aggression or other threats to U.S. interests.

In other words, if one were to read that carefully, this administration is stating that it has the authority to use force to respond to threats to our interests. What is an "interest"?

I have raised this language with the Secretary of State, as well as with the Deputy Secretary. My question was whether this administration believes that it possesses the authority to conduct unilateral military activity against Iran in the absence of a direct threat and without the approval of the Congress. I have not received a clear answer from either of them on that point. That is troubling.

This administration and its supporters must understand the realities that are causing us, as a Congress, to finally say enough is enough. After 5 years of misguided policy, ineffective leadership, and diminished U.S. stature around the world, the Congress must show the way to reclaiming the moral high ground and exert its proper oversight role more forcefully.

For these reasons, I support the pending Iraq resolution before us, and I will vote for cloture. I urge my fellow Senators to do the same.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SALAZAR). The Senator from Alabama is recognized.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I was a Member of the Senate when we voted to authorize the use of force against Iraq. It was not just a rapid, quickly done deal, we talked about it for months. We talked about primarily the 16 or 17 resolutions that Saddam Hussein had failed to comply with that he agreed to with the United States and the United Nations; that he was setting about systematically to break out of the box of the embargo placed on him because he failed to comply with those resolutions.

We were flying, if you remember, aircraft over Iraq on a regular basis, and they were shooting missiles at us, trying to bring down our aircraft. We were dropping bombs on them on a weekly basis. This was the context of the debate that we entered into.

At the end, a great deal of emphasis was placed on the question of weapons of mass destruction by the President and others. But for most of us, I think it was a strategic American decision based on the fundamental questions: Were we going to give up? Were we going to let the embargo elapse? And would Saddam Hussein be able to continue to say—actually say with conviction

and some honesty—that he had won the 1991 Gulf War? He said he won the war. He never complied with the agreements that he entered into and, as a result, we entered this conflict.

The initial invasion went far better than most of us believed possible, than many predicted—those who supported the war and those who did not. The aftermath has been much more troubling and difficult. I have been one of those who shared General Abizaid's view of let's keep the number of our troops as low as we can, let's push as hard as we can to train and bring on the Iraqi forces, and let's let their government be responsible for its own activities as soon as possible. But I have to be honest, it has been more difficult than most of us would have thought. We now have many soldiers there in dangerous circumstances. So I am concerned about that. I respect anybody who is concerned about that.

I am not here to say I know you are wrong, that I know this is the only way and the only right policy, and I guarantee you it will be successful. I want to say that in the beginning. We have some difficult choices to make, and I respect people who don't agree.

I am not able, however, to justify a resolution that appears to be designed to embarrass the President, appears to be contradictory to our Nation's policy, that would indicate to our adversaries and enemies that we are divided. I cannot see that as a positive step for us. I am inclined to agree with the view of General Petraeus. He finished at the top of his class at West Point. He was No. 1 in his class at the Command and General Staff College. He got his Ph.D. at Princeton. He was in Mosul, right after the initial invasion, commanding the 101st Airborne Division. He was a Ranger, a soldier, a fabulous leader. I saw him in operation when some of the Alabama National Guard members had felt they were not being fully utilized right after they got to Mosul. I told General Petraeus, and he said:

Let's go over and meet them.

He told them:

You are part of our effort. I will be bringing you right away the Screaming Eagle patch and you are going to put it on and be one of ours. There won't be any difference in the Guard and Reserve.

That was such an example of leadership, I thought. Later, he showed how they captured Uday and Qusay under his command. He showed how they formed the government. He had a Sunni, Shia, Christian, and a Kurd on the city council. He formed a court system. He was a fabulous leader and everybody recognized that. He finished his tour and came back.

We realized that we needed to spend more effort and be more effective in training the Iraqi Army. So we sent him over there. We asked him to go back. He went back to specifically be in charge of training the Iraqi security forces. During that time, he got to know virtually every major Iraqi military leader. He knows them personally

and he worked with them and with most of the Iraqi leadership. He said he didn't know Prime Minister Maliki, but he knows most of them.

After some 15 months at that, well over 2 years in Iraq, he came back home and he was placed in charge of writing the doctrine for the U.S. Department of Defense on how to confront and defeat an insurgency operation, the so-called Counterinsurgency Manual. It is a real serious document. A lot of people don't know this, but there are ways—proven ways—to confront and defeat insurgency operations. In fact, one military historian recently pointed out that very few insurgency operations ultimately become successful. They can cause great distress for substantial periods of time, but they usually fail. There is a fairly significant number—70, 80, 90 percent—that fail, according to this report. So this manual that he painstakingly put together had incredible subtleties in it about how to handle various situations because every situation is different. What might be true in the Kurdish north may not be true in Bosra, the Shia south, or in the Sunni west. Every part of the Sunni and Shia and Kurdish areas are different themselves. Their tribes and their heritage and their religious sects are different. You have to handle them all differently.

President Bush asked General Petraeus to help formulate a plan to be successful in Iraq. He committed to him five additional brigades, over 20,000 soldiers. That is a bitter pill to me. I was very pleased—and I spoke out when some were critical—and in favor of General Casey over a year ago saying he hoped to be able to bring troops home. He brought some home. He asked for more at different times. What happened? Well, violence began to pick up substantially in Baghdad. The Sunni and al-Qaida terrorists saw the country beginning to come together, and they decided to make a devilish decision, and that decision was to deliberately provoke a sectarian conflict. They began to attack the Shia in the marketplaces and they attacked their holy mosque at Samarra. They blew up that mosque and killed people. It began to work. Shia militias began to grow and strengthen and develop, feeling they were not being protected by the government. They began to kill Sunnis, and people would find bodies that had been killed execution style. It was a very grim thing to happen. It still is going on to a substantial degree.

But I believe that this can be reversed. I cannot guarantee that, but I believe it can be reversed with the leadership of the United States, with increased effort on behalf of the Iraqi military and the country of Iraq, that they can begin to reverse this trend. I will just cite that recently General Conway testified at a hearing. He commanded the Marines in the western part of Fallujah and during some of the toughest fighting. Now commandant of

the Marine Corps, he testified a few days ago. I told him about the visit Senators LEVIN, WARNER, PRYOR, and I made to Iraq last fall. The briefing that we had gotten by the Marines in the Ramadi area really concerned me. Some of the information they gave—and the Presiding Officer and I traveled over there, and I know he cares about these issues. That briefing was one of the more troubling things I had heard in visiting there five times, as I have. He pointed out how, in just a matter of weeks, that made a dramatic change; that 12 out of 16 tribal leaders in that area have gotten fed up with al-Qaida and their murdering ways, their parasitic ways, and their domination. And they have made agreements with the U.S. military. We are helping them create their own law enforcement entities, hiring their young people, and they are resisting al-Qaida. There has been a dramatic change in the toughest area, the Sunni area, the area where most of al-Qaida has been. So that is good.

I say to my colleagues that can happen in Baghdad. Don't think that because things have been very difficult in the last year they cannot begin to get better. General Petraeus has stepped up. We are going to increase our forces. The Iraqis are going to increase their forces. I think the Iraqis know this may be their last chance to save this country as a decent and progressive country that treats people fairly and equally. I think they are beginning to wake up to that fact—I hope so. They are moving substantial numbers of troops in there. They are not as good as the American troops in many ways. They have a lot of difficulties. We know that. But they have taken more casualties than we have, and they continue to sign up. We have an opportunity, I believe, to make a difference.

If this effort does not succeed and we do not begin to notice that more progress has been made, that the Iraqis do not meet certain benchmarks we have called on them to make, then we do need to review our policy. I have to say it. What we will do then, I am not sure. But we need to be smart about it. We don't need to be aberrational or spasmodic in how we face those challenges.

What happened on the floor of the Senate is not something that I think has brought credit to this body. After approving General Petraeus to go to Iraq 94 to 0, after making clear we intend to fund the policy the President, as Commander in Chief, is executing, our soldiers are executing, and soldiers have been sent over there as part of this surge—some have already gotten there as part of this surge—it became a goal of the majority leader, Senator REID, and the Democratic leadership, apparently, to vote on a resolution that disapproved it, that criticized the President, I guess to make happy some of the people out there who oppose this war so deeply, some with great passion and legitimate concerns and some with fevered brow who believe we are over

there trying to steal Iraqi oil. But that crowd is out there. They want a resolution that is critical of the President and this policy.

Our leader, the Republican leader, said: You can have that vote, that will be all right, let's have that vote, but Senator MCCAIN has a different view. Senator MCCAIN's view is we need to set some benchmarks for the Iraqis and we need to support the President. Senator GREGG said it is most important when troops are in harm's way, when they are placing their lives at risk for us, that we tell them we are going to support them financially. Oh, no, we can't vote on those amendments. We are only going to vote on the one we want.

This resolution, by the way, should have come, by historical tradition and rules of the Senate, out of the Armed Services Committee, but it didn't come out of the Armed Services Committee. Why didn't it come out of the Armed Services Committee, of which I am a member? Because it doesn't have the votes. It wouldn't have passed out of the Armed Services Committee. So what Senator REID did is, he filed it as a bill instead of a resolution. He filed it and, under rule XIV, brought it to the floor and determined that no other amendments could be accepted or even voted on, only his view should be voted on. And they carefully calculated, I am sure, to make sure they had over 50 votes, so they would be able to pass one resolution that was deemed an attack on the President and a rejection of the policy we are now funding and is being executed by our soldiers who are far more worthy, in my view, of maturity and respect than a Congress that gets itself tied up in this kind of mess.

I think most of us on this side—even some Republicans and some Democrats who supported the resolution—have refused to vote for cloture to bring it up for a vote because they think Senator MCCAIN's and Senator GREGG's resolutions deserve a vote too. Senator MCCAIN said: I would just be satisfied if you vote on Gregg if you don't vote on mine.

I would like to vote on both of them, and I am not afraid to vote on the Democratic resolution. I would vote on all three of them. I am not afraid to talk about this war or to talk about the resolutions. But somehow the media has adopted the Democrat's talking points and suggests Republicans don't want to debate and vote on the issue. That is not true. How many times do we have to say that? I don't think what I said is inaccurate. If it is, I would like to be corrected on the fundamental debate in which we find ourselves.

But what I wish to say to my colleagues is we are, at this very moment, in reality, financially supporting the policy with which they disagree. Advice and suggestions from business, athletics, church, and families needs to be welcome, but naysaying after a decision is reached is nearly always de-

structive, in my opinion. People have to pull together once a decision is reached. We only have one Commander in Chief. We have the absolute power to shut off every dime going to Iraq and bring our troops home immediately. That is the constitutional power this Congress has. But while we are executing this effort in Iraq, we only have one Commander in Chief. And for the life of me, I can see no advantage to our Nation, to our foreign policy or to our soldiers in a resolution that disagrees with the President's plan, a plan to which we have our soldiers committing their lives this very moment.

Congress should either support it or stop it. But, of course, we all know the awesome responsibility that voting for a precipitous withdrawal out of Iraq would entail because stopping the funding for Iraq is real, just like funding Iraq is real, just like voting for General Petraeus is real. It is not positioning, it is not an expression of concern or an effort to distance oneself from a war that over three-fourths of us in this Senate voted for but has now become very difficult.

The President studied the Baker-Hamilton report, he met with his commanders in Iraq and in the United States, and he met with retired officers, elder statesmen. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Peter Pace, started a bottom-up review of our Iraq policy in August. I called him about that time to raise some questions and urge that he do that. He said: Senator, I have started that already. After all of this evaluation and receipt of ideas for improvement, both public and private, our President, the one given the power to decide such issues in our system, made his call. He changed his policy. Perhaps he should have done it earlier. I think this kind of review would have been more appropriate earlier.

The President has gone through a deliberative process, though, and made his decision, and I have decided the right response for me, as a Member of this Senate trying to serve the national interest, is to support that policy, at least for the immediate future, and to support those who will execute it—our military personnel.

Others may disagree. An official expression of disagreement, though, about a policy we authorized and we are now funding and our soldiers are executing does not meet, I believe, high standards of responsibility to which a great Senate should adhere. Please remember also that what we do is not contained just in these Halls. I am not persuaded there can be any effect, other than a pernicious one, on those allies and other nations that are assisting us in our efforts. Nor do I see how the threat of an imminent withdrawal could cause the Iraqi Government and the leaders of the various sects and groups to be more willing to reach an accord than would be achieved if we continue assistance in restoring

order, particularly in the nation's capital. I don't know. I don't think so myself. If it was so, I would be persuaded. If that would be the result of a rapid withdrawal, that they would all get together and reach an accord, then I would support it because I don't think we need to be an occupying force in Iraq. But this is not what our generals tell us. It is not what we have heard from the intelligence community.

Some people said: I talked to a retired general; that is what he said. Maybe that is what he said. Maybe that retired general is right. The people we are hearing about are not saying this is any kind of panacea, to pull out, and there is going to be harmony and compromise reached all at once.

In fact, many are saying the violence in Baghdad is so significant that if we allow it to continue to grow, it makes it harder for the warring factions to get together and reach an accord.

Still, despite the difficulties, our experts in public and private conversations believe there is hope for stability with this new policy in Iraq, this new surge. They give that evaluation with full and realistic evaluations of all the challenges we face. The new Iraqi permanent Government has only been formed for 8 months, maybe 9 months now. That Government has only been up for 8 or 9 months. The forces of violence, oppression, and extremism have attacked it full force. They are determined to bring it down. But it still stands, and it has made new commitments to taking the necessary steps toward security and progress.

This is a test for them, no doubt. Maybe they will fail. Maybe they would not meet the commitments they have made. But perhaps not. Perhaps this fragile Government and the Iraqi Army working in new and better ways with General Petraeus and our forces together can be successful, as our experts tell us is possible and realistic.

I, thus, have concluded this Congress should fund this new strategy, not adopt a resolution that has any tendency whatsoever to lessen the chance of that strategy being successful.

Finally, I do not see how a congressional resolution that disagrees with, or one that rejects the President's new policy will have any other effect than to reduce the morale of our soldiers.

Right out here a couple of days ago, I talked with a group from Hartsville, AL. The man pulled me aside and said his son was an infantry officer at Fort Benning. He said: Senator, I want you to know one thing. When you make your decisions, don't think they don't know what is going on. He said: "They are watching you like a hawk."

We have a responsibility to them. Yes, we have a responsibility to say pull out if we have to pull out, if that is the thing to do—and I don't think it is yet; I think we have a chance for success. If that is our decision, so be it. But when we send them over there, they should be supported. They should have no doubt that we are going to be with them.

We are waging a war against violent extremists who bomb markets, who beat head people who disagree with them, who murder, who kill, who destroy teachers because they teach young girls how to read and write. So this is a complex effort. It is an important effort that to date has protected our homeland from further attack.

We didn't choose this duty. It has fallen to us. By working together, I believe we can achieve more in Iraq than many people think.

And I will say this, while we are being very serious about the challenges we face. I have had personal meetings with Secretary Gates, the new Secretary of Defense, and an extended meeting with GEN Peter Pace, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and I had a good long conversation with General Petraeus, the new commander in Iraq, and Admiral Fallon, who is going to be the Central Command, commander. I have asked them, and each one of them stated to me that they fully understand their responsibility to give us their best military advice, and if at any time this conflict in Iraq becomes untenable, if at any time they conclude that putting more soldiers into harm's way will not be successful and will not achieve the aims which we are seeking there, they will tell us.

I asked Peter Pace that in an open hearing, and he said: "Yes, sir, Senator, I understand that." Secretary Gates cut in and said: "Senator, I fully understand that, and I feel like that is my number one responsibility." I asked General Petraeus that, and he said the same. And I asked him if he believed he could be successful. Remember, this is the man who spent over 2 years in Iraq. He is the best of the best. He has written a manual on how to confront and defeat an insurgency. His answer to whether he can be successful, in sum, was: "Senator, I do, and I wouldn't be going over there if I didn't think I could be."

I know people are worried about this conflict. I am worried about it. I talked to a widow yesterday, whose fabulous husband was killed in Iraq, and I don't take it lightly at all. But we are a nation that has been attacked and we have a responsibility to defend our just national interest, and our just national interest would be greatly served by a prosperous, free, democratic Iraq, where terrorists do not find haven and which is not subverted by hostile forces. We have a national interest in that, as well as a humanitarian interest.

I think we need to give General Petraeus a chance. I think we may find that progress in Baghdad can occur, even when it is dark, as it did in Al Anbar Province a few months ago. I was feeling pretty discouraged about what was happening there, but great progress has been made in the last few weeks there. It is time for us to stick together.

I don't think this resolution is good. If we are going to vote on it, we ought

to vote on the Gregg resolution and we ought to vote on the McCain resolution. Because only together will that convey to the world, our allies, and our soldiers the real feelings and insights of this Congress. As I have said from the beginning, I don't favor any resolution. We have done what we have to do. We sent General Petraeus and we sent money to execute the policy. I don't know why we have to have a resolution at all.

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. CASEY. 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. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise today to voice my strong support for the motion to invoke cloture to proceed to S. 574 so the Senate can undertake a full, vigorous, and honest debate on the future course of American policy for the war in Iraq.

As we speak about and debate the war, let us never forget our troops in battle, those troops in battle on the streets in Baghdad, in Anbar Province, or other areas of Iraq. We also remember, as we debate this issue, their families and their sacrifice. Finally, today, and in all the days we debate this critically important issue to our country, we honor the sacrifice of those soldiers and marines who gave, as President Lincoln said at Gettysburg, "the last full measure of devotion to their country." We pray for them today and always, and we pray for ourselves that we may be worthy of their valor.

At this time in the Senate we are confronted with two simple questions: First, does the Senate agree with President Bush's plan to escalate our military involvement in Iraq by deploying some 21,000 more troops? Second, will the Senate vote tomorrow to allow debate to go forward?

Just those two questions confront us today and tomorrow. There will be further debate about our policy in Iraq in the weeks and months ahead, but for the next few days it is those two questions.

As I have stated before, I oppose this escalation, but I also support debating it. The grave question of war must always be—always be—the subject of vigorous debate, especially in the Senate. As a Senator from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, a State that has lost 150 young men and women in combat, I have a solemn obligation to speak out about the escalation.

Many of these brave Americans from Pennsylvania come from small towns such as Rockport and Connellsville and Beaver Falls, and from cities such as Bethlehem and Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. I have an obligation to speak out against those policies that only increase the likelihood that even more of

Pennsylvania's sons and daughters will die or be grievously wounded on behalf of a flawed strategy.

I had hoped, like many in this Chamber, we could have moved forward with the debate on Iraq 2 weeks ago. The American people don't understand why the Senate isn't debating this war when all of America expects us to do so. Perhaps a rare Saturday vote will help this body realize the importance as this debate moves forward.

We owe it to the troops, their families, and to those who have loved and lost someone dear to them in this war to debate our Iraq policy and to clearly express our opposition to the President's escalation. The American people have clearly voiced their strong support and their desire for their elected representatives to address this issue. The elections last November turned in large part on the failure of the previous Congress to engage in adequate oversight of the administration and ask the tough questions when it came to the execution of the war. Debating is essential to good oversight.

We know that recent polls conducted across America reveal Americans consider the war as one of the two most important problems facing our Nation. An overwhelming 63 percent of respondents in a recent national poll expressed concern that the Senate had been unsuccessful to date in attempts to hold a debate on the war in Iraq. We have an obligation to act, and that begins with a full debate.

S. 574 is short but eloquent. It respects and honors our troops who are serving or who have served with distinction in Iraq, and it communicates our disapproval of the President's escalation of the war. It mandates—mandates—additional reporting requirements so there is transparency with regard to military, political, and diplomatic operations in Iraq. This resolution deserves our support because it sends the right message to the President to change course in Iraq.

In the first 5 weeks of this new Congress, as a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, I have listened carefully to more than 25 witnesses over the course of a dozen hearings, some 50 hours of testimony from generals and other military experts, diplomats and foreign policy experts, the cochairmen of the Iraq Study Group, and so many others. I have asked tough questions, and I have listened to statements and questions from my colleagues, some of whom have had decades of experience in foreign affairs and the oversight of military operations. After all these hearings, I am even more certain that this escalation is the wrong strategy.

The National Intelligence Estimate—we know it by the acronym NIE—released in January on Iraq's prospects for near-term stability paints a dire picture. The unclassified version describes a growing sectarian-based polarization, ineffective security forces with questionable loyalties, and an all-but-certain rise in communal violence

in the coming months. The National Intelligence Estimate clarifies that Iraq's violence today is primarily driven by "the self-sustaining character of Iraq's internal sectarian dynamics."

Reading the key judgments of the NIE, I can only conclude that political reconciliation between the respective leaders of Iraq's varied populations is the best way and probably the only way to reduce the violence and to begin to create a stable state that is not a threat to its neighbors. Escalating military conflict by inserting additional U.S. troops in Iraq is not the answer.

As Chairman BIDEN remarked during the Foreign Relations Committee's deliberations on a related resolution, this effort is not inspired by a desire to embarrass or isolate President Bush. Rather, it is an attempt to demonstrate to the President that his approach is flawed and will not result in the outcome he seeks. The President is still searching for a military solution when, in fact, it is time for a political solution led by the Iraqis themselves. Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki himself declared last November, "The crisis is political, and the ones who can stop the cycle of aggravation and bloodletting of innocents are the politicians."

What we need is not just a political strategy; we need sustained and vigorous diplomatic engagement that I would argue has been lacking. The President and his senior officials have failed to make the case that the so-called new way forward in Iraq is, in fact, new or promises significant changes needed to achieve real victory. Instead, the President's escalation strategy risks repeating mistakes already made. It inserts more American troops into the crossfire of growing sectarian conflict, and it ignores the urgent need to reorient the mission of U.S. forces in Iraq toward those objectives which offer our best chance to leave behind a secure and stable Iraq.

In spite of all the rhetoric from the White House in recent weeks, I believe, and many in this Senate believe, that the President's policy is more or less more of the same: Stay the course. The United States today has approximately 137,000 troops in Iraq, growing by the day and by the week. Sending an additional 21,000 troops will not fundamentally change the current dynamic in Iraq.

The reality is that more American troops is not the answer in Iraq. General Abizaid, the outgoing U.S. Central Command commander, testified in November that the unanimous opinion of his top subordinates was that more American troops would only perpetuate the dependence of Iraqi troops and would not offer a positive solution. No matter how many troops we send, they cannot provide lasting security on the streets of Baghdad or other Iraqi cities. Only fully equipped, trained, and dedicated Iraqi military and police forces—those who do not pick and choose sides

among sectarian groups—only they can provide the type of permanent security that will enable the Iraqi political and civilian life to emerge and the nation to embark on a path to reconciliation.

We heard from former Congressman Lee Hamilton during our Foreign Relations Committee hearings. He noted in his testimony before that committee that the money, time, and attention we are devoting to escalating the level of U.S. forces in Iraq must not detract from what should be a primary mission for the United States: training Iraqi security forces to enhance their capability to take the lead and allow U.S. forces to redeploy out of that country.

Congressman Hamilton and so many others have placed the primacy on the question of training. Instead, by adopting the President's strategy, I fear we are sending an additional 21,000 troops without a more focused mission and lacking a solid plan to accomplish it.

I fear we are still investing too much trust in the Maliki government, a regime that has failed to demonstrate it is acting on behalf of all Iraqis and may be focused only on one sectarian group. I fear American forces will continue to serve as a bull's-eye target for those resentful of a prolonged U.S. occupation in Iraq. In short, I fear, and many in this Senate fear, we are sending more American men and women into Iraq without a new blueprint for victory and without the essential political, diplomatic, and international groundwork required to succeed.

The President has based his troop escalation on the hope—the risky hope, I would argue—that this time the Maliki regime will carry through on its commitments and deliver the required Iraqi forces to help U.S. forces secure neighborhoods throughout Baghdad and, more important, then remain to allow reconstruction to proceed and normal life to return. Yet the record is not encouraging. In Operation Together Forward, Prime Minister Maliki had pledged six battalions, but only two were sent. Some of those Iraqi units suffered subsequent serious attrition rates. Many of those forces have been infiltrated by the very sectarian militias they are now being asked to disarm.

We are already seeing troubling signs in the initial stages of this latest escalation. The New York Times, January 22, the Washington Post, USA Today, and so many other news articles which I will not repeat here today have talked about the problems with Iraqi security forces showing up late or not showing up at all, not serious about their mission, not trained, not focused, and frankly not helping enough in terms of helping American forces. Americans are dying because of that incompetence. The fact remains that it is very difficult to rely on Iraqi forces when you have to ask them to deploy outside of their normal areas of operation and their ethnic strongholds.

I also retain real doubts when the President insists that this time, this

time it will be different, that Mr. Maliki now means it when he says Iraqi forces will truly crack down on all troublemakers, whether they are Shia or Sunni. The Government of Iraq has promised repeatedly to assume a greater share of security responsibilities, disband militias, consider constitutional amendments, and enact laws to reconcile sectarian differences and improve the quality of essential services for the Iraqi people. Yet, despite those promises, little has been achieved by the Iraqis.

Moreover, I am skeptical of this escalation of U.S. troops because we have seen it before. We have seen it before, tried over and over again. Operation Together Forward in 2006 represented a similar escalation; 12,000 additional U.S. troops were introduced into the city of Baghdad, only to see U.S. and Iraqi casualties spike considerably without a sustained reduction in sectarian violence. We have seen similar efforts to “flood the zone” with additional U.S. troops in places such as Fallujah and Ramadi, only resulting in temporary gains. If more troops have not worked in the recent past, why should we have any reason to believe it will work this time?

I am concerned, as are so many others, about the dual-chain-of-command concept that is being introduced as part of this escalation. Recently, Prime Minister al-Maliki's commander in the region and the capital itself has been trying to carry out part of this strategy. At the same time, there will be a separate or parallel U.S. command headed by MG Joseph Fil, Jr. Both commanders will have ultimate control over their own national troops, but this “partnered” command could create serious complications if there are disputes between U.S. and Iraqi military forces over specific operations. A unified chain of command is one of the hallmark principles that have long governed deployment of U.S. forces abroad.

Finally, I oppose this escalation strategy because I fear it will only exacerbate the longstanding strains on our Nation's military overall. Seven years ago, President Bush declared that his predecessor was leaving office with a military in decline. He alleged that the previous administration had not adequately funded our Armed Forces while simultaneously deploying those forces in excessive engagements around the world. It is one of the most tragic ironies that this President is himself now stretching our military to a genuine breaking point, as he pursues a misguided strategy in Iraq.

The Washington Post recently published an important article documenting the impacts of this proposed troop escalation. According to the Post, the Army and Marine Corps already lack thousands of necessary vehicles, armor kits, and other equipment needed to supply the extra forces. Diverting 21,000 troops from other essential missions around the world will

only further deteriorate the readiness of our overall ground forces, making it more difficult to respond quickly and decisively in the event of other military contingencies, and raise the likelihood of greater U.S. casualties.

Our Nation's military is facing a genuine crisis. The war in Iraq has exacted a heavy toll—in casualties, first and foremost, but also in terms of combat equipment that undergirds our fighting men and women. Our National Guard and Reserve troops in particular are paying a heavy price. Army data shows that the Army National Guard units today only have, on average, 40 percent of their required equipment—40 percent. National Guard combat brigades are being involuntarily mobilized, and reservists are being sent back to the command theater on a repeated basis.

Representative JOHN MURTHA, a decorated marine from my home State of Pennsylvania, painted a distressing picture of our military's readiness—or I should say lack thereof—during recent testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. As he noted:

At the beginning of the Iraq war, 80 percent of all Army units and almost 100 percent of active combat units were rated at the highest state of readiness. Today, virtually all of our active duty combat units at home and all of our guard units are at the lowest state of readiness, primarily due to equipment shortages resulting from repeated and extended deployments in Iraq.

Chairman MURTHA then went on to cite recent House testimony from a senior Pentagon official that our country was threatened because we lacked readiness at home.

I welcome, as so many do, the President's intention to expand our military—permanently elevating the Army and Marine Corps' Active-Duty ranks over the next 5 years. But that is only a long-term solution. Our current forces are badly overextended, and an escalation in strategy in Iraq will only worsen that condition. Our Nation faces growing challenges around the world. We must ensure that our military forces receive adequate training, are fully equipped, and retain the necessary flexibility to quickly respond to contingencies wherever they may arise. Pouring more troops into Iraq does not make those requirements any easier to meet.

Just listen to the bipartisan Iraq Study Group on this matter:

America's military capacity is stretched thin; we do not have the troops or equipment to make a substantial sustained increase in our troops presence.

The Iraq Study Group goes on to say:

Increased deployments to Iraq would also necessarily hamper our ability to provide adequate resources for our efforts in Afghanistan or respond to crises around the world.

So says the Iraq Study Group.

For all these reasons, I am proud to stand here today in support of a bipartisan effort to send the President a message that the troop escalation in Iraq is the wrong choice for our Nation. Instead, our Iraq strategy should em-

phasize a new direction, encouraging Iraqi leaders to make political compromises that will foster reconciliation and strengthen the unity of the Government, laying the groundwork for an improved security situation, and redeploying our military forces in Iraq so they can focus on maintaining that nation's territorial integrity. We also must deny al-Qaida and other terrorists a safe haven, conduct counterterrorism operations, promote regional stability, and, most important, train and equip Iraqi forces to take the lead in security and combat operations. The President's escalation strategy of throwing more U.S. troops into Iraq's burgeoning civil war undercuts and detracts from each of these objectives: A campaign of escalation is incompatible with securing a new and better direction in Iraq. For those who argue that supporting this resolution only offers criticism but does not offer specific alternatives, I urge you to listen to what I and others have said in these days and what we will say in the next couple of days especially.

We have heard from the opponents about what this all means. I will not go into their opinions today. But I will say this: Every Member of this Chamber in both parties honors our troops, no matter which way we stand on escalation. We honor their sacrifices—the sacrifices they and their families make on a daily basis. But we must examine—we have an obligation to examine our national policies which we are asked to carry out and to be supportive of or in opposition to. If we disagree with the broad strategic direction in which the President is taking our Nation, it is our duty to speak out. To remain silent or passive in the face of an approach we believe is misguided and not in the national interests is an abdication of the responsibilities of our offices.

Our military forces and their loved ones have paid a heavy price for this mission in Iraq. As I have noted before, at least 150 Pennsylvanians have given their lives, with hundreds more suffering from serious and lifelong injuries. PFC Ross A. McGinnis of Knox, PA, was one of those killed in action. He was 19 years old. He died of injuries on December 4, 2006, after a grenade was thrown into his vehicle in Baghdad. Private McGinnis has been nominated by his commanders for the Medal of Honor. He was manning the gunner's hatch when a grenade was thrown into his humvee. He could have jumped out to save himself, but he threw himself on the grenade to save the lives of his crew members. We must always remember this debate we must have must not have a focus on abstract policy matters. This has real implications for our men and women in the Armed Forces. We cannot forget the lessons and the life of Private McGinnis or any of the more than 3,000 Americans who have died during this conflict. Our troops are deserving of our support and the support of all the American people.

Mr. President, I conclude with this: A troop increase will only endanger more young Americans in Iraq without any clear hope of success. For that reason, I support honest and open debate on the merits of the President's plan and an opportunity for the Senate to declare its views. I will vote to allow this important debate to proceed, and I will vote in favor of S. 574.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio is recognized.

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, I must say I am disappointed the Democratic leadership continues to preclude the Senate from debating and amending the insufficient resolution sent over from the House of Representatives. This denies the Senate from robustly debating other alternatives, including the bipartisan Warner resolution.

The strategy is to avoid controversial procedures that split the Democratic caucus regarding cutting off funding for the troops and capping the deployment of troops in Iraq. We have the same kind of split to a degree in the Republican caucus. The Warner resolution represents a negotiated agreement that reflects a bipartisan approach to the war and deserves to be debated and voted upon.

This is the second piece of legislation this week that Democratic leaders have brought to the Senate floor straight from the House with no amendments for debate allowed, and I think this is setting a dangerous precedent and frustrates the role the Constitution envisions for the Senate.

I will continue to back the minority's right to bring up amendments and participate in real debate, even if I don't agree with those ideas. I tried to support that when we were in the majority. The American people want Congress to play a role in the way this war is being handled. The first step is to demand a better plan, and we owe the people more than 10 lines in the House Resolution. You can't even begin to address a real solution to a complex situation in 10 lines.

I wish to emphasize to my colleagues that there are 15 cosponsors of the Warner resolution, 6 of whom are Republicans and 9 are Democrats. The resolution has the support of the Democratic chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, JOSEPH BIDEN, who has been here for many years—a very wise individual. It has the support of the Democratic chairman of the Armed Services Committee, CARL LEVIN. It also has the support of the No. 2 ranking Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator CHUCK HAGEL. I mention this because I wish to stress that the Warner resolution is believed to be a fair and reasonable resolution that is broadly supported by both Republicans and Democrats. I believe, if given the opportunity, that resolution will attract over 60 votes of the Senate.

That is why tonight I wish to share some of my thoughts about our current

situation in Iraq. I wish to stress that had we received better, more comprehensive prewar intelligence and done our homework about what would be needed after the military offensive, we could have entered Iraq adequately prepared to win the war and secure the peace. We would have been more adequately prepared. Both the administration and Congress should have recognized that by removing Saddam Hussein from office, we would shift the balance of power within the country from Sunni to Shiite and change the contour of the region. Our intelligence errors, our lack of troop preparation, and the bungling of the initial efforts on the ground, specifically disbanding the Army and isolating former Baathists—in spite of advice from people such as GEN Jake Garner and others—is unacceptable. And today, we are paying the price for that, which means all of us have to pay a lot more attention to every decision and plan we endorse from here on out.

I cannot support the proposed troop surge. In spite of meetings at the White House, two with the President, private-session briefings as a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, and a meeting with General Petraeus for over 40 minutes, I am not convinced the additional troops who are proposed is the best means toward success in Baghdad. That is why I have decided to support the Warner resolution.

A military solution is not sufficient to win the peace in Iraq. As I will get into it, Iraq faces political problems, a power struggle, and primal hate between the fighting sects. More troops alone cannot solve these problems. That being said, I continue to have the highest praise for the generals and, more importantly, for their troops who have remained steadfast in their efforts to secure Iraq. I am grateful to those who have served and continue to serve our Nation in a time of need. I am especially indebted to those who made the ultimate sacrifice and whose families have suffered and who will grieve and those whose lives have been changed forever, as well as some 25,000 men and women who have been wounded over there, 13,000 of them not able to go back into the service.

Winning this war, securing peace in Iraq and stability in the region requires a comprehensive approach and the use of different tools, the most important of which is the will of the Iraqis. At this point, I am afraid we have focused disproportionately on the military component of this war, and we have not adequately stressed the non-military arm of our strategy.

Moving forward in Iraq, we must focus on strengthening our nonmilitary or political tactics. That is why now, more than ever before, I am concerned about Iraq's willingness to bring an end to the violence. As the Warner resolution states:

The responsibility for Iraq's internal security in halting sectarian violence must rest primarily with the government of Iraq and Iraq security forces.

I recently met with a young man from Ohio out of Bethesda who had completed three tours of duty in Iraq and who was wounded by an IED. I asked him what he did. He said: My main goal, Senator, every day was to keep my men alive and keep peace in the neighborhood.

We have to ask ourselves: How long can we continue to do this? Even if the surge is successful, how long will we have to stay before the Iraqis can handle the situation themselves? Even when I talked with General Petraeus, he did a good job in Mosul—they secured the neighborhoods—but when the Iraqis came in and they left, they lost it. How many American lives will be lost in what is best described as a civil war between Sunni and Shiite that has 1,400 years of Sunni domination over Shiite at its root? More of our Members of the Senate should read about the history of Iraq and the people who are there.

After many closed-session briefings with the National Security Council, four meetings at the White House, including two with the President, and as I mentioned, 40 minutes with General Petraeus, and after hearing hours of witnesses testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I can feel confident saying it is time for the Iraqi people and their leadership to stand up to the sectarian violence between Sunni and Shiite. They need to recognize that all Iraqis and the future of the Nation of Iraq is threatened by this constant bloodshed, and their future is in their hands, not our hands.

U.S. Central Commander GEN John Abizaid, who the President relied upon to lead the ground campaign in Iraq, testified to Congress on November 15:

I met with every divisional commander, General Casey, the Corps commander and General Dempsey. We all talked together. And I said, "In your professional opinion, if we were to bring in more American troops now, does it add considerably to our ability to achieve success in Iraq?" They all said no. The reason is because we want the Iraqis to do more. It is easy for the Iraqis to rely upon us to do this work. I believe that more American forces prevent the Iraqis from doing more, from taking more responsibility for their own future.

That is General Abizaid. If we don't follow the advice of our generals and other military people I have talked to, we run the risk of helping one side at the expense of another, and the Sunnis could interpret our offensive as part of a larger effort to do the dirty work of the Shiite. And don't you think the Sunnis would not spin it that way.

The reality we face today is that an overwhelming majority of the Muslim population in Iraq, be they Shiite or Sunni, look upon us as infidels and occupiers. They do. And our presence there is exploited every day by our enemies. In fact, one poll claimed 60 percent of the people in Iraq said it is OK to kill Americans. While we cannot even begin to capture what is happening in the hearts and minds of the Iraqis with one poll, it sends a striking

message about what additional troops might face there.

We have to consider the reliable information we have that suggests the surge could ignite an even more aggressive countersurge, in which every martyr—every martyr—in the country is drawn to Baghdad to defeat the infidels, as the Sunnis were drawn to Mecca on Ramadan. We could see a terrible situation there, and I don't want—I wish to make clear I am not analogizing the Sunnis going to Mecca on Ramadan. I am saying it would bring lots of people into Baghdad.

The fact of the matter is we cannot stop the sectarian violence with combat brigades and more forces alone. Implementing martial law in Iraq would be impossible because of the sheer number of Iraqi citizens and our commitments elsewhere around the globe. At this point, we wouldn't begin to have enough forces.

Mr. President, the only way to bring stability to Iraq is by addressing a number of serious political problems that lie at the root of this violence. Before the war, Iraq was united by Saddam's reign of terror, as Slobadan Milosevic kept everybody under his control or, before him, Marshal Tito in Yugoslavia. When he was removed from office, the major power struggle ensued, and it is not surprising. In fact, it should have been expected. In fact, as we later found out, many academics and intelligence officers did predict this. In the aftermath of Saddam's regime, many different sects and local leaders realized a power shift was taking place, and they wanted to come out on top. They knew the greatest source of potential power is in oil. That is why the critical component of the political solution must be to reach a decision on how the oil can be distributed to all sects and communities in Iraq. It is absolutely critical that Prime Minister Maliki moves quickly—tomorrow—to pass the legislation that guarantees that all Iraqis will benefit from oil. If he can do this, it will show the sects how the power in Iraq will be dispersed in the future.

Recently, I met with the Foreign Minister, Deputy Prime Minister of Turkey. The Foreign Minister agreed that the oil situation is the most important issue today and the one that will have profound impact on the long-term stability of Iraq. This must be a component of the overall national reconciliation plan to unite Iraqis and give them confidence in their Government.

A second key political priority must be the reintegration of the Sunni Baathists into society. When we went into Iraq, we cut the Baathists out of the military and security forces. The result of the policy was they had nowhere to go. They were frightened about their futures. They could not feed their families. They were angry. They were resentful. So they went to the streets. Before long, they became part of the problem, joining with mili-

tias and other fighters to resist the Shia government. So a major political priority must be to develop a plan to reintegrate the former Baathists and it needs to happen now. It is essential that the Iraqi Government work toward provincial elections so there is more equal representation of the different sects.

The third vital component of our nonmilitary strategy must be greater regional diplomacy. We must work to encourage Iraq's neighbors to get involved in containing the violence. Specifically, these neighboring countries have the ability to put pressure on the different sects and local leaders to help unite the Iraqi Government. They have the ability to pass debt relief, participate in border control, and help avoid a potential refugee problem. I don't think people realize that there have been over 3.5 million refugees who have come out of Iraq.

In December 2006, the bipartisan Iraq Study Group issued their recommendations for a successful United States strategy in Iraq. A core component of their proposal was that the United States act immediately to undertake a "diplomatic offensive" consisting of "new and enhanced diplomatic and political efforts in Iraq and the region." The recommendation called on the administration to engage the international community, the Arab League, traditional United States allies in the Middle East, and all Iraq's bordering neighbors in order to address regional conflicts and jointly bring stability to Iraq. They advised the administration to work quickly to convene a regional conference—it has not happened—which would complement the Iraq Compact undertaken by the United Nations. We need to embrace the study group's recommendations on this issue and act now to increase diplomatic engagement with the international community.

Without a broad political strategy, our military objectives, no matter what the tactic, will be pursued in vain. These political elements must be the focus of our plan in Iraq. And that said, I agree there is a military component here, as well. I want to be very clear that I do not support a military withdrawal from Iraq nor do I support disengagement from the Middle East.

As we debate this issue, we must consider our broader national security interests in the Middle East. We are only focusing on Iraq. We have to start thinking about the whole greater Middle East area. Despite one's views about the current situation in Iraq, it is in our country's vital security interest to pursue a strategy of diplomacy and military action in the region. To put it simply, the stakes are too high for us to sit on the sidelines. We must remain active players in the Middle East to maintain regional stability, to protect vital energy supplies, and to guarantee peace and security at home.

We have had long-standing economic and military interests in the Middle

East and we were involved in the region long before we decided to challenge Saddam Hussein for his defiance of the U.N. Security Council. But today, with conflicts brewing in Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, between Israel and the Palestinian territories, it is even more critical we remain steadfast in our commitment. Despite what one might believe about the President's strategy in Iraq, we cannot confuse debate over tactics with the nonnegotiable need to remain engaged in the Middle East.

Currently, the greatest threat to the stability in the Middle East is the possibility of failure in Iraq which threatens to destabilize the region and poses a critical national security risk to the United States. A premature withdrawal from Iraq will signify in essence that we are abandoning the region in its entirety. Our departure could greatly damage, if not sever, relationships with key allies, resulting in dire political and social consequences throughout the world.

The long-term security interests of the United States will be best served by a peaceful Iraq that can sustain, govern, and defend itself. That is why we must figure a way forward and why we cannot withdraw from Iraq.

The National Intelligence Estimate which was just released underscores the danger of withdrawal, stating succinctly:

If coalition forces were withdrawn rapidly during the term of this estimate, we judge that this almost certainly would lead to significant increase in the scale and scope of sectarian conflict in Iraq, intensify Sunni resistance to the Iraq government, and have adverse consequences for national reconciliation.

They conclude that the immediate withdrawal of United States troops likely would lead the Iraq security forces to unravel, encourage neighboring countries to engage openly in the conflict, and lead to massive civilian casualties and population displacement. It is also very likely, were the United States to pull out of Iraq prematurely, al-Qaida would use Iraq as a training ground to plan future attacks, and this escalation of violence could ultimately prompt Turkey to launch a military incursion of its own. These are outcomes we cannot afford to risk.

I will refer to a few of the experts whom I have met or who have testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in recent weeks.

Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger testified that "withdrawal is not an option" and continued that:

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. interventions in the Balkans.

Think of that. It might drive sectarian conflict in Iraq to genocidal dimensions beyond levels that impelled United States intervention in the Balkans.

The new Ambassador from Jordan sat next to me at the prayer breakfast, and we started talking about Iraq and the Middle East. He told me that if you do not handle this right, we could see a schism between the Sunni and Shiite that extends from Malaysia to Indonesia.

Another reason I back the Warner resolution is it does not in any way threaten to reduce or jeopardize critical funding for United States troops serving in Iraq. In fact, the resolution states explicitly:

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

A decision to cut funding would be a serious, irreversible mistake.

Last month, this Senate confirmed General Petraeus as the commanding general of the multinational force in Iraq without a dissenting vote. He is carrying out the orders of the President. It is critical that General Petraeus get the resources and equipment he believes are necessary to complete the mission and keep his forces safe in the field. I spoke to General Petraeus and I told him to make sure to ask for what he needs to be successful. He is concerned about receiving the equipment and other nonmilitary resources he will need to be successful, such as contributions of the State Department and other agencies. We cannot send our forces into the field without the necessary equipment. We did this at the beginning of the war. Our soldiers were underequipped. It was despicable. It cannot happen again. We have the resources in this country to ensure that our men and women have everything they need in combat.

We also must provide the funding to reset the equipment when it comes home and to keep the Armed Forces from breaking under the strain of the war. We must ensure that soldiers have the proper training before they leave and we must fund the mobilization centers and other military facilities at home so we can undergo the necessary training.

In my State of Ohio, I met this week with the head of the Ohio National Guard who is now being told he is going to have to train the troops in Ohio because they do not want to send them someplace else because they want them trained fast so they can get them to Iraq and Afghanistan. The fact is, he said:

I don't have the additional funds or equipment to do this.

We have lost 150 Ohioans, 150 in Iraq. In terms of the States, we are probably two or three in the United States in the number of members lost. We lost two because humvees rolled over and they were not trained to drive those humvees. Now they are much heavier than they were before.

The Warner resolution makes it clear that we must guarantee the troops

what they need when they need it. And the Gregg amendment underscores the point further. The best exit strategy for United States troops is a multifaceted and comprehensive strategy focused on creating an Iraq for the Iraqis. We must focus on training the Iraqi security forces so the Iraqis can defend and protect themselves. The Iraqi people must understand they will be given the full responsibility of defending and rebuilding their country. We must remove any ambiguity in the minds of Iraqis about our intention and desire to lead and make it clear we do not want to be there. In fact, they need to understand we want to bring our troops home and we want to help them develop the political and military tools necessary to carry on this mission without us.

Bringing stability to Iraq will require our best minds, our resources, and our bipartisan cooperation. We need a massive improvement in interagency coordination, better communication, better reporting to Congress, and the help of our allies and friends throughout the region.

This is my responsibility as a Member of Congress, to exercise oversight and to contribute to our national security. That is why I support the bipartisan Warner resolution. Again, I am confident that given the opportunity, over 60 Members of this Senate will support it.

Last but not least, all of us who represent the people of this country should get down on our knees and ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten the President and us in our decisionmaking because the impact of Iraq will not only affect Iraq, the Middle East, and world peace, but it will impact dramatically the national security of the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, from the gravity of the terms with which the senior Senator from Ohio has spoken, I know the Senator speaks from his heart. This Senator certainly concurs it is of the utmost importance of the interests of the United States that we are successful in Iraq because of the threat to the security interests to our country in that region of the world.

If someone will look at a map, we have the Persian Gulf, and on the eastern portion of the Persian Gulf is the Strait of Hormuz, which is only 19 miles wide, through which most of the super oil tankers of the world have to flow out of the Persian Gulf, or if you are from an Arab country, the Arabian Gulf into the great oceans of the world to an oil-thirsty world. That is clearly one interest.

Another interest is clearly the fact that Iran wants to build a nuclear weapon. What an enormously destabilizing situation that would be to put in a rogue nation's hands that is not unaccustomed to peddling things to

itchy fingers that like to exact mischief on the rest of the world. You put a nuclear weapon in those itchy fingers, and we have a whole new kind of threat to the stability of the civilized world.

But there are other reasons—the reasons of countries that have been in enormous strife, countries that have been very favorable to the United States, as the country of Jordan and all of the internal turmoil they have. I could go on and on, but there are so many reasons why it is very necessary that the United States have success in that part of the world.

But what we are coming down to is a momentous decision tomorrow, at 1:45 p.m., on whether we are going to continue a policy of this administration of stay-the-course or whether we are going to change that course. This Senator believes we should change that course and that the President's decision to put additional troops into Baghdad is not changing the course, it is more of the course. It is putting more American lives into a sectarian violence caldron where the temperature is so high that we see the reports every day of more and more killings.

Now, this violence did not just start. This violence started 1,327 years ago, when, after the death of Mohammed, the prophet, there was a power play, and his grandson was eliminated as one of the natural heirs to the Prophet Mohammed, and the power was controlled within the clerics who had succeeded Mohammed. It was in that grandson's clan that they then started a resistance born out of revenge, and that then started the separation of the Shiites from what are today the Sunnis. And that has happened for 1,327 years. In the midst of that full-scale civil warfare, this Senator does not believe it is in the interest of our country to put in an additional 17,500 American lives. This Senator believes we ought to force the Iraqis to stop killing each other and to start working out their differences.

Now, at the same time, as recommended by the Iraq study commission, it is clearly important that we have a vigorous international diplomatic initiative to engage all the countries in the region to help bear upon Iraq and that sectarian warfare to get them to try to come to their senses, to try to start striking peace instead of warfare, because all of the countries in the region clearly understand that is in their interest. You take a country such as Saudi Arabia. One of the worst things in the world would be if Iraq was just completely enveloped in chaos; the same with Jordan—two of our friends in the region.

It is in the interests of the United States to conduct this diplomatic initiative in a way that it has not been done in the last 4 years: engaging people whom we have refused to engage, listening and learning in the process, instead of always imposing or giving the perception of imposing ourselves on

everybody else, and at the same time letting the forces that are there stabilize instead of putting more American lives at risk.

So we come to a momentous decision that will come tomorrow afternoon: Do we keep the same course or do we start changing the course with new and fresh ideas, with ideas that have clearly been laid out in the Iraq study commission? It is the conclusion of this Senator that we ought to send a very strong message to the White House that the time for changing the stay-the-course policy is now.

TRIBUTE TO DAN SHAPIRO

Mr. President, I want to make note, in the presence of my longtime, very faithful staff member, Dan Shapiro, who has served me so ably for over 6 years as legislative director, that the needs of providing for his little family have called upon him to leave the public sector, where he has been engaged for years, to enter into the private sector. I want to say on behalf of the people of Florida and the people of the Nelson office that we are grateful for his public service.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I rise today to speak on behalf of thousands of Rhode Islanders who have talked with me about the need for a new direction in Iraq and the need to bring our troops home.

I speak on behalf of the veterans' families who traveled here to Washington to speak to me about their memories of war and the need for this one to end.

I speak on behalf of the brave men and women serving in Iraq who have sacrificed so much and whose families anxiously await their return.

I speak on behalf of mothers I met who felt they had to buy body armor for their sons and daughters headed for Iraq because they could not trust this administration to provide what was needed.

The Senate may have been muzzled in recent days, but Rhode Islanders certainly have not been. More than 2,000 of them have reached out to my office in frustration, in anger, and in concern—and in the hope that this new Democratic Senate will listen to them and hear them, as this administration will not.

I want to share some of what they have written me:

I was at Michael Weidemann's funeral.

Mr. President, Michael was a 23-year-old Army sergeant from Newport, killed in an IED blast in Anbar Province last November.

The letter continues:

Please, if nothing else, take care of things, so that we do not have to go through what we went through at that funeral. Michael and my son . . . were in the JROTC together. . . . He is on his second tour of Iraq. Please, don't make yesterday a dress rehearsal for me. I want my son to come home, safely.

From Johnston, Rhode Island:

My son . . . is presently serving in Iraq and on his second tour of duty there. . . . The President's plan ignores the American people who voted for change in November, and who continue to demand we bring our troops home. . . . The people made their voice heard, and if the President isn't going to listen, the Democratic Congress will. The President's policies have failed!

From Portsmouth, Rhode Island:

President Bush has ignored the advice of experience, lied to us all, lacked any plan and seems to be expecting his successor to solve the problems. It is our only hope that you, as a member of Congress, can work toward bringing our troops home soon.

From Kingston:

I am appalled at the loss of life—today it was reported 20 more service people were killed. The Kurds are deserting rather than fight in Baghdad. . . . We are not just losing people, we are losing big money. We have seven grandchildren. What kind of debt are we placing on those future generations?

From Warwick:

We never should have begun this war, let's now have the sense to end it, not prolong it. Please do whatever you can to stop the president's initiative to increase our military presence in Iraq. . . . to spend even more money waging a war that your constituents have indicated they no longer support.

From North Kingstown:

We are looking to you to do whatever is in your power to stop the U.S. escalation of troops in Iraq. I and many in our nation feel this will only make a bad situation worse, widen what is essentially a civil war and lead to further casualties and costs without contributing towards a political solution. . . . We are counting on you and your colleagues on both sides of the aisle to stand up and be counted and forge a bipartisan solution to end this war.

And finally, a woman from Cumberland forwarded me a message she sent to President Bush:

My nephew . . . is in the 82nd Airborne serving our country in Iraq. He is the bravest person I have ever known, along with all the other men and women serving this country. I am proud to be an American! Please, please, on behalf of my family and the families of all U.S. troops—bring them home now!

Mr. President, these voices will not be unfamiliar to anyone in this body. In every State, we have heard similar voices. You have heard them in Colorado, Mr. President. My friend, Senator SANDERS, has heard them in Vermont. People all across America are speaking to all of us, and it is time for us to listen and to show that we have heard and to start to bring our soldiers home.

The President has not heard these voices. He wants to send tens of thousands more troops to Iraq. He calls this a surge. We consider it a grave mistake.

Tomorrow, our vote can stop the parliamentary maneuvers that have stalled us, and this great deliberative body can begin to debate the most pressing question of this day.

Let's talk for a moment about that question. The other side wishes to debate every question, any question—any question but the escalation by this President of our troops in Iraq by over 21,000 men and women. But this ques-

tion we want to debate is not a question selected by Democrats for political reasons. It is possible here to choose self-serving questions and to force a debate on those questions just to make a political point. But we have not done that.

This question, whether to escalate the war in Iraq, is not an invention of the Democratic Party. It is not an invention of the Senate. It is President Bush, who proposed to send tens of thousands more troops into harm's way and to escalate this conflict, who has presented this question. This question is what was presented to us by President George W. Bush, and by him alone, and it is the pressing question of today.

For weeks, we on this side of the aisle have emphasized and reemphasized our strong commitment to having a real debate—a debate to a vote—to telling the American people where we stand and to casting our votes on the precise question the President of the United States has presented to America. But we have been impeded, obstructed, maneuvered away from this critical question.

The other side argues that to dispute this President's judgment is to fail to support the troops—even though that judgment has failed the troops and has failed our country and has left us with few good options.

But that is a false choice, Mr. President. And this hour demands better of this institution.

There are ways to accomplish the change America demands, and that reason and good conscience dictate. For instance, I believe that rather than send a single additional American soldier into the sands and marshes of Iraq, this President can announce clearly and unequivocally that our troops will be redeployed from Iraq and will soon come home.

The most powerful motivating force at our country's disposal today is the prospect of our redeployment out of Iraq. Let me repeat that. The most powerful motivating force at our country's disposal today is the prospect of redeployment out of Iraq. Using this power wisely, deftly, and thoughtfully would accomplish three critical objectives that, as I have said, would make great strides toward security in Iraq and stability in the region.

First, a clear statement of our intent to redeploy our troops from Iraq would eliminate the sense there that we are an Army of occupation. This in turn would quiet the nationalist sentiment of the Iraqi people, now aroused against us. Many Iraqis are now so opposed to our presence they think killing American soldiers is acceptable.

Second, without America's intervening presence, the world community would have to face directly the consequences of the situation in Iraq. The prospect of our departure would compel the world to take a more active role to work together with America to bring peace and stability to the region. We

cannot continue as we are now, in every meaningful way completely alone.

Third, Iraq's neighbors will be obliged to assume greater responsibility for averting the risk of a Sunni-Shiite conflict igniting in Iraq and spreading beyond Iraq's borders. Without us in Iraq as a police force for a civil war, neighboring nations will have an enlivened incentive to avert a wider war.

Finally, the Bush administration's preoccupation with Iraq leaves us weakened in our capability to address other obligations around the world, from the changing situation in North Korea, to the ongoing battle for Afghanistan, to the serious threat posed by Iran's nuclear program.

Mr. President, these are serious matters, and they deserve the serious and sustained attention of the Senate. I hope tomorrow's vote will allow us to bring this question that attention.

Mr. President, I will support that vote tomorrow. I ask other Senators, who hear our fellow Americans' genuine and sincere concern about our national interest, will do the same.

I will support not only the resolution disapproving of the President's escalation plan and supporting our troops, but also other, stronger measures that will follow, and that will continue to put pressure on this administration to finally bring our troops home.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASEY). The Senator from Vermont is recognized.

IRAN

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, before I begin discussing the war in Iraq, I wish to say a few words about another issue that is perhaps even more important and that is the constitutional issues at the very heart of this entire debate.

Let me be very frank: I am not a great fan of the Bush administration. And of the many grave concerns I have about President Bush and his actions, at the top of that list is that the President seems not to understand what the Constitution of the United States is all about. Whether it is the consistent attack on our constitutional rights which his administration has pursued for a number of years or his "signing statements" which attempt to circumvent legislation passed by Congress, the President appears to believe he can do whatever he wants, whenever he wants to. That, in my view, is not what the United States of America is all about, and it is not what our Constitution provides for.

In that regard, I wish to inform my colleagues in the Senate that I have submitted a resolution, similar to one introduced by Congressman DEFAZIO in the House, that makes it very clear the President does not have the constitu-

tional authority to start a war against Iran without the express authority of the Congress. There are many people in my State of Vermont—and there are people all over this country—who are deeply worried that the President may take us into a war in Iran and that he is currently laying the groundwork for that war in exactly the same way he led us into the war in Iraq.

So let me be very clear: If President Bush were to start a war in Iran without receiving the authority to do so from Congress, he would not only be creating, in my view, an international disaster, he would also be creating a major constitutional crisis. I hope very much he does not do that.

President Bush fails to understand the power to declare war under the Constitution is given to the Congress, not the President. My resolution, S. Con. Res. 13, is very simple. It states clearly that it is "the sense of Congress that the President should not initiate military action against Iran without first obtaining authorization from Congress." I hope my colleagues will give strong support to this resolution.

Mr. President, in my State of Vermont and all across this Nation, the American people are increasingly concerned about the war in Iraq. As others have stated more eloquently than I, the American people want real debate in Washington, in the Senate, on this issue that is worrying people all across our Nation. More importantly, not only do they want debate, they want action, and they want action now.

Frankly, I have a hard time understanding why some of my colleagues would try, through parliamentary maneuvers, to prevent a vote on what is at best a very modest proposal. This issue is not complicated in terms of what will be taking place tomorrow on this floor. It seems to me that if you support President Bush's escalation of the war in Iraq—and there are many who do—then vote against the resolution. That is your right. On the other hand, if you don't believe that an escalation of this war is a sensible idea—and I certainly do not—then vote for the Reid resolution. But at the very least, there should be a vote. Let the American people know how we stand.

Let me be clear in giving you my perspective on this war: In my view, President Bush's war in Iraq has been a disaster. It is a war we were misled into and a war many of us believe we never should have gotten into in the first place, a war I voted against as a Member of the House. This is a war the administration was unprepared to fight. The administration has shown little understanding of the enemy or the historical context in which we found ourselves.

Who will ever forget President Bush declaring "mission accomplished" aboard the aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln when, in fact, the mission had barely begun. Who will forget Vice President CHENEY telling us that the

insurgency was "in its last throes" just before some of the bloodiest months of the war. Who will forget those Bush advisors who predicted the war would be a cakewalk, nothing to worry about, and that we would be greeted in Iraq as liberators.

This war in Iraq has come at a very high price in so many ways. This is a war that has cost us terribly in American blood. As of today, we have lost over 3,100 brave American soldiers. In my own small State of Vermont, we have lost 25. Twenty-three thousand more Americans have been wounded, and tens of thousands will be coming home with posttraumatic stress disorder which will impact their lives forever. This is a war which, with the President's proposed increase in funding, will cost us some \$500 billion, with the price tag going up by \$8 billion every month. This cost is going to add to the huge national debt we are leaving to our children and our grandchildren and it is going to make it that much more difficult for us to fund health care, education, environmental protection, affordable housing, childcare, and the pressing needs of the middle class and working families of our country which have been so long neglected. Yes, for more military spending; no, for the needs of ordinary Americans who are struggling so hard to keep their heads above water.

This increased expense for the war will make it that much harder for us to fund the needs of our veterans whose numbers are increasing as a result of this war. This is a war which has caused unimaginable horror for the people of Iraq. People who suffered so long under the brutality of the Saddam Hussein dictatorship are suffering even more today. There are estimates that hundreds of thousands of Iraqis have been killed or wounded and almost 2 million have been forced to flee their own country, some 8 percent of their entire population. While civil war tears neighborhoods apart, children are without schools, people are without electricity, health care, and other basic necessities of life. The doctors and nurses, teachers and administrators who have provided the professional infrastructure for the people of Iraq are now long gone.

This is a war which has lowered our standing in the international community to an all-time low in our lifetimes, with leaders in democratic countries hesitant to work with us because of the lack of respect their citizens have for our President. Long-time friends and allies are simply wondering: What is going on in the United States of America, that great country? This is a war which has stretched both our Active-Duty military to the breaking point as well as our National Guard and Reserve forces.

Morale in the military is low, and this war will have a lasting impact on the future recruitment, retention, and readiness of our Nation's Armed Forces.