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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 27, 2007, at 2 p.m.

Senate

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2007

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the Honorable MARIA CANTWELL, a Senator from the State of Washington.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, on this wintry weekend, we pause to thank You for life and health and love. Without Your love, we would falter. Faced with challenges that demand greater-than-human wisdom, we find comfort in the knowledge that You care. Free us from guilt through the power of Your limitless forgiveness.

Today, O Lord, keep our lawmakers faithful in the performance of their duties. Remind them of their total dependence on You. Open their minds to opportunities to do Your work on Earth. Give them wisdom for the crucial decisions that affect our Nation and world. Inspire each Senator to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with You. We pray in Your wonderful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MARIA CANTWELL led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication

to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 17, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable MARIA CANTWELL, a Senator from the State of Washington, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Ms. CANTWELL thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Madam President, this afternoon we will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 574, with the time until 1:45 p.m. equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; further, the Republican leader will control the time between 1:25 and 1:35, and the majority leader will control the time between 1:35 and 1:45 p.m. At 1:45 p.m., the Senate will proceed to the rollcall vote on cloture on the motion to proceed. Senators should be aware there is a possibility of additional rollcall votes this afternoon, and they would occur shortly after the cloture vote if cloture is not invoked.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Madam President, I would also ask that on our side, the allotted time of the Senators be limited to 5 minutes each.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

SCHEDULED TIME IN OPPOSITION

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, all of the time in opposition to the proposal the majority leader is describing has been scheduled, and we will be filling all of that time on this side of the aisle.

I yield the floor.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE CONGRESS ON IRAQ—MOTION TO PROCEED

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 574, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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S2185

Motion to proceed to the consideration of S. 574, a bill to express the sense of Congress on Iraq.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Kentucky is recognized.

Mr. BUNNING. Madam President, I rise today to speak again on the mishandling of the debate over the Iraq war resolutions. This debate has ramifications which will damage the institution of the Senate and lower the morale of our troops.

Here is the truth the American people need to know: Republicans in the Senate have not prevented any debate over the war in Iraq. We are debating the war again today. We have debated the war in the past. And we will continue to debate the war in the future. What we have prevented is the majority leader dictating to the minority exactly which resolutions we will vote on. My friends on the other side of the aisle have misled the American people about this debate.

Our Republican leader, my colleague and close friend from Kentucky, has tried to negotiate for more—I repeat—more debate on additional resolutions expressing a broad range of viewpoints. This is the U.S. Senate. The majority cannot tell the minority we are going to have one vote—take it or leave it.

And let me be clear: I am not running from a vote on any of these resolutions. I don't know one of my Republican colleagues who is afraid to cast a vote on any of the proposed resolutions relating to Iraq. I have said repeatedly and I will say it here again today: Non-binding resolutions that question military strategy are not in the best interests of our Nation. They are not in the best interests of the Senate. They don't have the effect of law. They only affect our soldiers by sending them mixed signals. But if we must go down that path, let's vote. However, the majority leader cannot dictate the terms of the vote. If he could, this would be the House of Representatives. But it is not. This is the U.S. Senate. This is a body with rules that encourage opposing viewpoints, not stifling debate by the majority leader hand-selecting one resolution and forcing the other 99 of us to vote on it.

But here we are. Americans are watching this discussion right now. And it is not just a debate about Senate floor procedures; this is about how we as Senators should conduct debate when we have troops in harm's way. Many Americans oppose our efforts in Iraq. That is their right. I respect their convictions. Yet they are misguided, because I believe the cost of failure in Iraq is too high to leave now. I do not want to have to send American soldiers back to Iraq in a few years to deal with an even tougher situation. I do not want to leave a breeding ground of terror. But I understand there are many Americans who want this war to end, regardless of the consequences of leaving soon. And no doubt there are some in this body and in the House of Representatives who share that same view.

We as a Congress can end this war, but we cannot end it by nonbinding resolutions such as the one that passed the House of Representatives this week that the majority leader now wants us to be forced to vote on in the Senate. We can end this war through the appropriations process by cutting off funds for this war. This is why I am so frustrated by this debate. This is why I am frustrated by many of my friends and colleagues in this great body.

Many want to vote on a nonbinding resolution that opposes our strategy in Iraq to show their constituents they oppose the war, yet not make the tougher decision through the appropriations process. I know many of my colleagues who want to vote on this misguided House resolution will not—I repeat—not vote to cut off the funding for this war. They just want to have it both ways: they want to support a non-binding measure opposing the war but not actually to stop the war by exercising their constitutional right to cut off its funding.

We should not vote to cut off the funding of this war. And that is the basic theme of the Gregg resolution on which the majority leader will not allow us to vote. The majority leader will not allow this vote because he knows it will pass the Senate overwhelmingly. This does not make sense to me or many of my colleagues, and I do not think it makes sense to many Americans who have actually followed this debate closely.

That is why I will vote again today against moving to the misguided House-passed resolution without the commitment that we Republicans be allowed to offer our own resolution of our own choosing. Our resolution, the Gregg resolution, gives support to our troops. Unlike the resolution before us today, it does not send contradictory signals to the troops by telling them that on one hand we oppose their mission but on the other hand we support them as soldiers. That is not the message we need to be sending to our troops at this critical time.

Mr. OBAMA. Madam President, I will vote today to bring up a resolution for debate that would disapprove of the President's policy of escalation in Iraq.

Last November, the American people sent a clear message to their representatives in Washington. With their votes, the American people said they wanted a change in direction with regard to the war in Iraq. Unfortunately, the White House—and its defenders in the Senate—has ignored that will and fought to keep this day from happening for as long as they could.

We may fail to get the required number of votes to debate this very simple resolution. And even if we do get enough votes, I realize that this resolution may not force a single change to this country's policy in Iraq. I realize that it may not bring the Shiites and Sunnis closer to peace, nor will it bring a single soldier home from this war.

But for the first time in the 4 years of this long, hard war, Democrats and

Republicans can join together to express the will of the people who sent us here.

That is why today's vote must be only the beginning, and not the end, of a long-overdue debate on how we plan to exit Iraq and refocus our efforts on the wider war against terror. If more stalemate and inaction follow this resolution, it truly will be a meaningless gesture. It is now the responsibility of every Member of this body to put forth a plan that offers the best path to peace among the Iraqis so that our brave soldiers can finally come home.

Recently, I introduced the Iraq De-Escalation Act of 2007. This plan would not only place a cap on the number of troops in Iraq and stop the escalation, it would more importantly begin a phased redeployment of U.S. forces with the goal of removing of all U.S. combat forces from Iraq by March 31, 2008—consistent with the expectations of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group that the President has so assiduously ignored.

The redeployment of troops to the United States, Afghanistan, and elsewhere in the region would begin no later than May 1 of this year, toward the end of the timeframe I first proposed in a speech more than 2 months ago. In a civil war where no military solution exists, this redeployment remains our best leverage to pressure the Iraqi Government to achieve the political settlement between its warring factions that can slow the bloodshed and promote stability.

My plan allows for a limited number of U.S. troops to remain as basic force protection, to engage in counterterrorism, and to continue the training of Iraqi security forces.

And if the Iraqis are successful in meeting the 13 benchmarks for progress laid out by the Bush administration itself, this plan also allows for the temporary suspension of the redeployment, provided Congress agrees that the benchmarks have actually been met and that the suspension is in the national security interest of the United States.

The U.S. military has performed valiantly and brilliantly in Iraq. Our troops have done all that we have asked them to do and more. But no amount of American soldiers can solve the political differences at the heart of somebody else's civil war, nor settle the grievances in the hearts of the combatants.

It is my firm belief that the responsible course of action for the United States, for Iraq, and for our troops is to oppose this reckless escalation and to pursue a new policy. This policy that I have laid out is consistent with what I have advocated for well over a year, with many of the recommendations of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, and with what the American people demanded in the November election.

When it comes to the war in Iraq, the time for promises and assurances, for waiting and patience, is over. Too

many lives have been lost and too many billions have been spent for us to trust the President on another tried and failed policy opposed by generals and experts, Democrats and Republicans, Americans and many of the Iraqis themselves.

It is time for us to fundamentally change our policy.

It is time to give Iraqis their country back.

And it is time to refocus America's efforts on the challenges we face at home and the wider struggle against terror yet to be won.

Mr. SPECTER. Madam President, this vote on cloture to cut off debate involves a conflict between two important principles: (1) obtain fairness for the Senate Republican minority on having our resolutions and amendments debated and voted upon, and (2) debating and voting on the approval or rejection of the President's plan to add 21,500 troops to the U.S. force in Iraq.

At the outset, it must be emphasized that there is unanimity that no preceptive action be taken by Congress to exercise our "power of the purse" to cut off funds that would in any way endanger our troops.

In response to the majority leader's use of the Senate rule to "fill the tree," which precludes any Republican alternative resolutions, I voted against cloture to cut off debate on the Levin amendment on February 5. The procedure to "fill the tree" is contrary to the basic Senate practice of allowing Senators to offer amendments or alternative resolutions, unlike the House of Representatives, which customarily precludes such latitude.

On February 14, I introduced an amendment to rule XXII to stop the "filling of the tree," citing vociferous objections by Senators REID, DURBIN and DODD to similar Republican action in the 109th Congress when Republicans held a majority.

Although it is very important for the minority to exercise its rights to stop abusive majority practices, it is my judgment that this must yield to the dominant principle of debating and voting on the future of U.S. policy in Iraq. Let's move on. We Republicans can exercise our rights of retaliation in the immediate future on other majority action to reign in such majority abuse.

In my view, it is most important that the Senate speak out on Iraq. If we continue to debate whether there should be a debate while the House of Representatives acts, the Senate will become irrelevant. To paraphrase the Roman adage: "The Senate should not fiddle while Iraq Burns."

The American people have a right to know the Senate's judgment on this most important issue of the day, and our constituents have a right to know and evaluate the judgment of each Senator.

Accordingly, I am voting for cloture to end the debate so we can move ahead.

Mr. DODD. Madam President, this past week the President of the United States warned of the "disastrous consequences" and "chaos" which could occur in Iraq if we fail in that country. Once again the President's statements demonstrate how out of touch he is on this issue.

Iraq already is in a state of chaos. The American people know it and the Iraqi people know it, most painfully. Unfortunately, we already are dealing with the "disastrous consequences" of 4 years of this administration's failed policy in Iraq.

This chaos became inevitable the day the President invaded Iraq without a viable plan for winning the peace. And this chaos has been further compounded by 4 years of consistent failure by this administration.

The President's plan to surge forces into Iraq is no different from previous surges, including Operation Together Forward, which only resulted in more violence. Despite all of our military strength, the United States cannot through force alone instill Iraqis with democratic values or end the sectarian civil war in that country.

We have before us this afternoon a very direct, succinct nonbinding resolution. The language is unequivocal in expressing opposition to the President's surge. I am strongly opposed to the "surge" and will therefore vote in a favor of this straightforward, simple resolution expressing that opposition.

Surely our colleagues on the other side of the aisle can vote on a simple resolution stating whether they support the President's surge.

This is a vote on whether you support the President's Iraq war policy, without caveat or qualifier. And if this Chamber is ever allowed to get to a vote on this measure, a majority of this body will vote aye and therefore be publicly on record against the President's proposed policy to put even more of our soldiers in harm's way in Iraq's civil war.

If Congress had wanted to express its opinion on this important issue, this vote should have been among the first steps taken back in January, immediately after the President announced his intention to escalate our military involvement in Iraq.

Nearly 5 weeks have passed since that announcement. In those 5 weeks we have heard from experts across the political spectrum explain why the surge won't work and explain that there is no military solution to the conflict in Iraq.

Yesterday, the House of Representatives sent a message to the President and to the American people with their vote on this resolution opposing the surge. And yet the President has unwaveringly declared that he will stay the course. It's full speed ahead in the words of Vice-President CHENEY.

We all know that and up-or-down vote on this resolution is not enough. Yes, I oppose the President's proposed surge. But I oppose much more than

that—I oppose the President's overall strategy in Iraq.

So let's be realistic and understand that our pronouncing ourselves on the measure before us today will do nothing to force the President to change course in Iraq.

It will do nothing to get our troops out of harms way.

It will do nothing to improve the lives of Iraqi civilians.

American combat brigades are being asked to carry out a mission that is unachievable; namely, to bring an end to Iraq's civil war through military force.

Only a political solution can salvage Iraq.

Regrettably, we are in the fourth year of this conflict, and for some reason, this administration is still failing our troops. The President's proposed surge tactic will send thousands of American G.I.s into a battle with inadequate protection and training and on a mission which they will be unable to achieve.

Last month, Senator KENNEDY and I sent a letter to Defense Secretary Gates demanding that he address reported shortfalls among two combat brigades being deployed as part of the President's proposed surge without the most up-to-date armored vehicles, vehicles that have been designed to withstand explosions and provide significantly better protection for our troops.

Just this week, media accounts of a classified Defense Department inspector general's report cited significant problems in outfitting our forces with a variety of vehicle armor to protect troops from IEDS.

How much more of this can we allow to stand? How many more of these reports should we tolerate until we say enough is enough?

The only way to reverse course in Iraq is to demonstrate to the President that it's no longer business as usual—that this Congress will not continue to support funding for the President's failed strategy, which is needlessly harming our troops and weakening our national security.

It is essential that we find a better use for the funds being allocated for the President's surge. We need to redirect U.S. funds to immediately begin to redeploy combat forces within and out of Iraq, to focus on counterterrorism and training of Iraqis, to put pressure on all of Iraq's leaders—not just the Maliki government—to seek and reach necessary and painful political compromises, and to ensure the security and political rights of all Iraqis.

We must also acknowledge how broken our own military is as a result of the Iraq war and redirect a portion of the funds proposed for Iraq to restore our own military's readiness.

It is time that this Congress moves beyond debating non-binding resolutions about the surge. It is time for the Congress to debate how much longer and under what circumstances we are prepared to support funding for a continued U.S. presence in Iraq.

That is the debate the American people want to hear, that is the debate our courageous and dedicated troops deserve.

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, yesterday, an overwhelming, bipartisan majority in the other body—reflecting the clear will of the American people—voted to oppose President Bush's decision to escalate the U.S. troop presence in Iraq. That vote was preceded by 4 full days of debate on the resolution. But here in the Senate, the Republican minority refuses to allow us even to bring a resolution to the floor for debate.

My office has been flooded with phone calls and e-mails from Iowans. The overwhelming majority of them are upset with the President's escalation plan. But they are also upset that the Senate is being obstructed. They simply cannot believe that Republican Senators are blocking debate on the No. 1 issue before our Nation, the No. 1 concern on the minds of the American people.

In a nutshell, callers are saying that Republican Senators have a right to support President Bush's war in Iraq. Republican Senators have a right to embrace his escalation of that war. But they do not have a right to block legitimate debate in the Senate on whether that escalation is wise or appropriate. They do not have a right to silence the voices of tens of millions of Americans—an overwhelming majority—who have had enough of the quagmire in Iraq.

People in Iowa—and, I suspect, across the country—are saying that the election last November was a referendum on President Bush's war. Voters spoke loudly and clearly: They want our troops out of the civil war in Iraq.

The American people thought that their elected leaders in Washington heard this message. But they realize, now, that the Republicans simply don't care about the results of the election. They are determined to escalate the war. They are determined to prevent consideration of any resolution expressing disapproval of that escalation.

As a coequal branch of Government, Congress has a duty to debate this escalation. Out of respect for all our soldiers and Marines in Iraq—to keep faith with them—we as Senators have a duty to ask: Does their Commander-in-Chief have a credible plan in Iraq that is worthy of their sacrifice? Is the President's plan to escalate in Iraq in the best interest of the United States? Will the additional troops be sent into combat with proper equipment?

Unfortunately, the answer to those questions—after nearly 4 years of incompetence, bungling, and disastrously bad judgment by this administration—is a resounding “no.”

Frankly, the President's plan to escalate is not just deeply disappointing, it is deeply disturbing. I am disturbed because Mr. Bush refuses to learn, and he refuses to listen. The Joint Chiefs of Staff unanimously opposed this esca-

lation, as did our generals on the ground in Iraq. The Iraq Study Group warned that there cannot be a military solution to the sectarian chaos in Iraq, and said we should begin to bring our troops home. Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki is on record as opposing an increase in American troops. Most importantly, the American people said loudly and clearly on November 7 that they want our soldiers out of the civil war in Iraq.

But Mr. Bush refuses to listen to reason. Instead, he seems to listen only to his gut—the same gut that got us into this misguided, misbegotten war in the first place.

The President asserts that this latest escalation in Iraq is “a new way forward.” But what he has proposed is not new, and it is not a way forward. It is the same old “stay the course” policy—and it will drag us deeper into the Iraqi quagmire.

The President has previously ordered three troop surges in Iraq, in 2004, 2005, and 2006. Just last June, he unveiled “Operation Forward Together” to surge troops in Baghdad and secure the capital city. This operation was supposed to be led primarily by Iraqis, with U.S. troops in support. But the Iraqi forces never showed up.

Again and again, we have set goals for the Iraqi leaders. But there have been no deadlines, no accountability, no consequences. And, predictably, we have seen no positive results. The Iraqi leaders have reneged on their promises to rein in the militias. They have refused to compromise. And they have pursued their sectarian agendas with a vengeance.

So let's not kid ourselves. The President's latest Iraq plan is just a repackaging of his old, failed Iraq plans.

I am especially concerned about the impact of this escalation on our troops and their families, and on the U.S. military overall. Army brigades are supposed to be in combat for 1 year, and then have 2 years back home to retrain and reequip. But they have only been allowed an average of 1 year to regroup. And some brigades are now on their third deployment in Iraq.

One reason why the Joint Chiefs opposed this latest escalation is because of the deep strain on our combat forces. In December, the Army chief of staff bluntly warned Congress that the current pace of combat deployment threatens to quote-unquote “break” the Army. Meanwhile, we lack resources to meet any other contingency, such as a challenge from Iran or a flare-up on the Korean Peninsula.

Some supporters of the President's escalation claim that by debating the President's conduct of the war in Iraq and the merits of his escalation plan, we are somehow not supporting the troops.

I strongly disagree. I have complete confidence in our men and women in uniform in Iraq. They have brilliantly completed the tasks they were sent to Iraq to accomplish, and they did so de-

spite a series of disastrous decisions by their civilian leaders in Washington.

But as a veteran myself, I am angry at the way these brave men and women have been misused and mistreated.

The President rushed them into combat without proper equipment, and in insufficient numbers. He has insisted on “staying the course” with a failed policy for nearly 4 miserable years. He has sent many troops back to Iraq for a third and even fourth rotation, with insufficient time to retrain and regroup. Now he insists on sending another 21,500 troops into the middle of a sectarian civil war in Baghdad and elsewhere without properly armored Humvees and other essential equipment.

Yet despite all of these acts of mismanagement and misfeasance—directly jeopardizing the lives and welfare of our soldiers and Marines—the President's supporters have the gall to say that anyone who opposes this latest escalation somehow “doesn't support the troops.”

This would be laughable if it weren't so tragic and deadly. The Senate has a duty to debate the proposed troop escalation. We have a duty to speak up when we believe the President's policy is wrong, and is likely to waste lives. We also have a duty to speak up for the overwhelming majority of Americans, who oppose this latest escalation, and who consider the entire war to be a tragic mistake.

At this point, the single best way to support the troops is to tell President Bush: Four years of bungling, bad judgment, and bullheadedness are enough. We have complete and total confidence in our troops. But we have no confidence in your leadership.

During debate in the other body this week, Republicans repeatedly charged that criticism of the President's escalation serves to “embolden the enemy.” And what exactly are these people saying? That Senators are supposed to stand silent like potted plants as this administration sinks us even deeper into the Iraqi quagmire?

Our enemies have indeed been emboldened. They were emboldened when this administration allowed Bin Laden to escape capture at Tora Bora. They were emboldened when this administration took its eye off the terrorists in Afghanistan, and diverted our military and intelligence assets to a reckless invasion of Iraq. They were emboldened when President Bush taunted the insurgents in Iraq to “bring it on,” and they successfully did just that. They were emboldened when the President pledged to get Bin Laden “dead or alive,” and failed to do so. They were emboldened when the greatest army in the world was allowed to get bogged down in a civil war in Iraq and on January 10, when another 21,500 troops were ordered to deploy to Ground Zero in that civil war.

Let's be clear: Our enemies have been emboldened by Mr. Bush's repeated, catastrophic mistakes, not by anyone's criticism of those mistakes.

The only true way forward in Iraq is to set a timetable for redeployment of U.S. forces. Only this will give the Iraqi leaders the incentive to resolve their differences and take responsibility for their own future.

As GEN George Casey, our commander in Iraq, told the Senate Armed Services Committee: "Increased coalition presence feeds the notion of occupation, contributes to the dependency of Iraqi security forces on the coalition, [and] extends the amount of time that it will take for Iraqi security forces to become self-reliant."

Mr. Bush has it exactly backward. He has said that as the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down. The truth is that the Iraqis will only stand up when it is clear that the U.S. troops are leaving.

By redeploying our troops to strategic locations elsewhere in the Middle East, we will be able to refocus our efforts to destroy the terrorists who attacked us on September 11, 2001, and who continue to threaten us. Redeployment would free up U.S. forces to combat the resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Other troops would be available to help respond to terrorist threats not just in Iraq, but also in Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, and elsewhere.

The proposed troop escalation in Iraq is not a way forward; it is a way deeper into a tragic quagmire. This is not in our national interest. It is not in the interest of the long-suffering Iraqi people. And it is certainly not in the interest of our troops, who will be in the crossfire of a vicious civil war.

The conflict in Iraq cannot be solved militarily. It can only be solved through political compromise and reconciliation in Baghdad, and through aggressive diplomatic engagement with Iraq's neighbors and across the Middle East.

It's time for a truly new course in Iraq. And, to that end, I urge my colleagues to vote for cloture, and to allow the Senate to debate this important resolution.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the time in opposition be allocated as follows: Senator HUTCHISON, 5 minutes; Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM, 10 minutes; Senator STEVENS, 10 minutes; Senator CRAIG, 3 minutes; and Senator GREGG, 5 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Michigan is recognized.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the next three speakers in support of cloture be Senator BEN NELSON, then Senator WARNER, and then myself.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Madam President, this has been called a very

unusual occasion for us to come to the floor on a Saturday to vote on a resolution or to vote on any matter, but this is a very special occasion today because we need to vote up or down on this resolution.

I want to make it clear that while it is unusual, I believe it is, in fact, necessary. But I want to make it clear also that I support and prefer the Warner-Nelson-Collins resolution, which sets forth benchmarks and conditions for staying and requirements for the Iraqi Government and the Iraqi Prime Minister to meet in connection with that. But this resolution, while it may be more simplistic, still expresses support for the troops, a very strong statement of support for the troops and what they do, funding for the troops, and continuing to support their needs. It also states an opposition to the surge plan.

The Warner-Nelson-Collins resolution, which I prefer, makes it very clear that the opposition to the surge plan is sending our troops into Baghdad to put them in harm's way between the Sunnis and the Shias and the sectarian violence that has been described as being far worse than a civil war. We do not believe that is the appropriate plan. We have asked in that resolution that the President reconsider, consider all alternatives and other plans that might not put our troops into harm's way in the middle of a civil disobedience and a civil conflagration, as we have seen it. I thank Senators WARNER and COLLINS for their support and the cosponsors of this other resolution that I have referred to.

Today, it is pretty clear there has been much debate about the debate. My friend from Kentucky indicated he is frustrated. We are all frustrated. We are frustrated because it is time to end the charade and move forward to the consideration of the resolution so the Senate can be on record with Senators voting for or against the surge plan.

The American people can see what is happening. They know some want to prevent a vote at all costs. There have been Members complaining about the vote cast a little over a week ago, cast against moving forward. Then they said in the Senate, it is time to have a vote after having voted against having a vote.

It is time to move beyond the debate about the debate and move toward the consideration of this resolution. It is time for the Senators to be on record with the question: Are you for deploying thousands of troops to the crossroads of civil war in Iraq or do you oppose that plan?

This is the second opportunity the Senate has had to allow an up-or-down vote on a resolution on the Iraq surge. Let the Senate debate and vote on this resolution. We owe it to the American people. We owe it to the American people because of the importance of this resolution making clear that we do not support, or that we do support, putting our troops in harm's way in the middle

of a civil war or a war that is simply between Shias and Sunnis, Shias and Shias, and other civil groups within the community. We do not have to understand the 1,400 years of this battle to know it is inappropriate to put our troops into the middle where it is impossible to identify the enemy. We put our troops into a situation where they are going to go door to door, hopefully with some support from the Iraqi troops, hopefully with some support from Prime Minister Maliki, hopefully with some support from the Iraqi Government.

In any event, the surge which the President said is going forward will put our troops in that condition and that situation. I, for one, do not believe that is an appropriate use of our troops. I believe today is the opportunity for the Senate to be able to say no, by saying yes to moving forward on this resolution.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I make a unanimous-consent request that on the Democratic side, after Senator LEVIN speaks, the next Senator to speak will be Senator FEINSTEIN.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GREGG. Madam President, I reserve the right to object. I ask unanimous consent after Senator GRAHAM speaks on our side that I be recognized in the proper order.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Madam President, I believe I am recognized for 10 minutes, is that correct?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is correct.

Mr. GRAHAM. Madam President, this is billed as an unusual Saturday session where the Senate is working on Saturday. I argue we are not working, we are having a political, theatrical debate that does more harm than good. There are a lot of people working on Saturday; not us. We are trying to jockey for political positioning among ourselves and for 2008. Yet there are people working in Baghdad and Iraq, trying to secure our future against the most violent extremists on the face of the Earth.

To my good friend Senator NELSON, if you think we are in the middle of a civil war, cut off funding. If you believe half of what you are saying in these resolutions, then have the courage of your convictions to stop this war by cutting off funding. But, no, no one wants to do that because they do not know how that will play out at home. Everybody is trying to hedge their bets a little bit, bashing this new effort to secure victory, wanting to be seen in history, I guess, or for the next election, that this was not my idea, this was Bush's fault. Bush is not going to

Iraq; 21,500 brave young men and women are going to Iraq behind a general who believes he can win.

This is a low point in my time in the Senate.

Senator REID said a few weeks ago, Republicans can't run and hide from this debate. Well, I am here. I am not running and hiding from any idea any Senator has. I am not running and hiding from Senator WARNER's resolution. I look forward to voting against it and talking about how ill-conceived it is. All I am asking for is a chance for the Senate to play its role in our democracy and not become the House. All I am asking of my fellow colleagues who are certain they are right and want to send a message to our President is they give the courtesy to the others, such as myself, who believe they are dead wrong. And let's have a vote that reflects where the Senate is and not become the House.

What is the Senate? In the Senate you have to get 60 votes to move an idea forward. Do you want to abandon that because of the political moment? I don't. Do you want to abandon your colleagues who have a different view of what we should do? I don't. I have been there on an emotional issue called immigration. There was an effort to shut down debate. I, along with Senator JOHN MCCAIN and several other Senators who were very much for a comprehensive immigration reform, told critics within our caucus, we will not leave you behind.

I am extremely disappointed in our colleagues who want to shut off debate, not understanding whether people such as myself and Senator GREGG will be left behind. I am not afraid of your ideas. I respect the differences we have. I am extremely disappointed you will throw us over. That is not what the Senate is about. The Senate is about a debate on a full range of ideas that shows a difference from the House.

Here is the crux of the matter: The reason we are here on a Saturday playing stupid political games while people are over in Iraq trying to win this war is because our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are afraid to take a vote on cutting off funding. I believe what happened in the House in a non-binding fashion is the worst possible situation for this Congress, but it is a precursor to a movement toward bleeding this war dry in terms of funds and cutting off funding. If I am wrong, then let's have a vote on cutting off funding.

The reason we are not going to have a vote on the Judd Gregg resolution, which is a legitimate position, is because 70-plus Senators will vote for it. The overwhelming majority of this Senate understands that cutting off funding at this crucial time in the war on terror in Iraq is ill-advised, but they don't want to be on the record. The reason they don't want to be on the record is because the radical left will eat Democrat 2008 hopefuls' lunch. They will create a fight on that side of monumental proportions between the

radical left and the bloggers of the left who want to get out yesterday. That is why we are having a truncated debate.

If Members do believe we are in the middle of a civil war, take the floor and get people out of the middle of the civil war.

This is the politics of abandonment. This is abandoning the role the Senate has played for generations, to make our country stronger, not weaker. This is abandoning colleagues with contrary ideas who are going to be cut off. Unfortunately, these nonbinding resolutions abandon those who are going to the fight voluntarily.

This is a very sad Saturday for the Senate, on the heels of a disaster in the House where a majority, a bare majority of the House, wants to send a political message at a time of war that does not keep one person from being shot at.

I don't know where this thing is going to go. I don't know how it is going to end, but I can promise this: As long as I am in the Senate, I am going to take this Senate and make sure the Senate acts like the Senate. I came to the Senate for a reason. I want to be part of great debates. The way this process will be structured is Members will get cut out. JUDD GREGG will get cut out because of the politics of the moment. The 60-vote rule will have meaning in this debate as long as I am here. I hope my colleagues will understand whatever differences we have, no matter how sincere they are, please don't throw us over.

At this moment in time, I will read another resolution of sorts. This is from General Petraeus. He is addressing the coalition forces:

To the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Civilians of Multi-National Force—Iraq:

We serve in Iraq at a critical time. The war here will soon enter its fifth year. A decisive moment approaches. Shoulder-to-shoulder with our Iraqi comrades, we will conduct a pivotal campaign to improve security for the Iraqi people. The stakes could not be higher.

Our task is crucial. Security is essential for Iraq to build its future. Only with security can the Iraqi government come to grips with the tough issues it confronts and develop the capacity to serve its citizens. The hopes of the Iraqi people and the coalition countries are with us.

The enemies of Iraq will shrink at no act, however barbaric. They will do all they can to shake the confidence of the people and to convince the world that this effort is doomed. We must not underestimate them.

Together with our Iraqi partners, we must defeat those who oppose the new Iraq. We cannot allow mass murderers to hold the initiative. We must strike them relentlessly. We and our Iraqi partners must set the terms of the struggle, not our enemies. And together we must prevail.

The way ahead will not be easy. There will be difficult times in the months to come. But hard is not hopeless, and we must remain steadfast in our effort to help improve security for the Iraqi people. I am confident that each of you will fight with skill and courage, and that you will remain loyal to your comrades-in-arms and to the values our nations hold so dear.

In the end, Iraqis will decide the outcome of this struggle. Our task is to help them gain the time they need to save their coun-

try. To do that, many of us will live and fight alongside them. Together, we will face down the terrorists, insurgents, and criminals who slaughter the innocent. Success will require discipline, fortitude, and initiative—qualities that you have in abundance.

Do we have those qualities in Congress?

I appreciate your sacrifices and those of your families. Now, more than ever, your commitment to service and your skill can make the difference between victory and defeat in a very tough mission.

It is an honor to soldier again with the members of the Multi-National Force—Iraq. I know that wherever you serve in this undertaking you will give your all. In turn, I pledge my commitment to our mission and every effort to achieve success as we help the Iraqis chart a course to a brighter future.

Godspeed to each of you and to our Iraqi comrades in this crucial endeavor.

I end with this thought: If Members believe this is a lost cause and victory cannot be achieved, that our people are in the middle of a mess, a civil war, and not one person should get injured or killed because we have made huge mistakes that cannot be turned around, then cut off funding. Have a vote on something that matters. This political theater empowers our enemy, disheartens our own troops, is not worthy of the Senate time, and it has never been done in history for a reason. I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that after Senator FEINSTEIN speaks in support of the motion for cloture, the next person in support of that motion be Senator SCHUMER of New York for 5 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, I have been privileged to be a Member of the Senate now in my 29th year. Never have I stood in the Senate and in any way impugned the integrity of any Senator to speak as she or he believes from their own heart about what is right. I have never tried to challenge the patriotism of any Senator as they express their views.

I say to my colleagues, I entered this debate simply because I feel the Senate of the United States of America, an institute revered throughout the world, should have the right to go forward and debate this critical issue before America today, before the whole world.

Over a week ago, I voted against cloture to support the rights of all colleagues to be heard. That issue has been back and forth between our two leaders now for some weeks. We have come to the point in time when we must move forward. The only vehicle for those who wish to have this institution move forward and fulfill its goal is to move, today, to vote for cloture. I shall cast that vote, not with a heavy heart but with a heart that I think I am doing right for the integrity of this institution.

I have joined with my good friend Senator BEN NELSON, Senator COLLINS,

and the other cosponsors, Senator HAGEL, Senator SNOWE, Senator COLEMAN, Senator VOINOVICH, and Senator SMITH, all of whom, once again, signed onto this amendment, referred to as the Warner-Nelson-Collins amendment.

We do so because we only wish to express a measure of disagreement on one basic point—an important one—with our President. The United States Congress is an independent branch of our Government. We are, as we often say, a coequal branch of our Government. We have the right to respectfully disagree. And we do so in our language. We support the President on the diplomatic aspects of his plan. We support the President on the economic aspects of his plan announced on the 10th of January.

We only disagree with one portion of it: Madam President, do you need 21,500 additional men and women of the Armed Forces in this conflict—indeed, it is more than that, as was testified before the Armed Services Committee the other day—to go into the streets and the alleys of Baghdad and to face an enemy which is largely today fighting a sectarian war?

This country gave an enormous sacrifice of life and limb to give Iraq its sovereignty. It is the duty of the Iraqi Armed Forces to take on the sectarian fighting. The American GI does not know the language, does not know the historic background of over 1,400 years of dispute between the Sunni and Shia. And we have trained over 300,000 Iraqi forces. Why not give those forces the responsibility to take on this fight?

Our resolution in no way has anything to do with the cutoff of funds. Senators stand up and castigate our resolution and claim it will cutoff funding. It will not cutoff funding to our troops. It supports the President. It supports the present level of all the troops throughout Iraq. It simply says: Mr. President, are there not alternatives other than using the American GI to put down this sectarian violence?

Madam President, I do hope, as we pursue this, we respect one another and our rights in this institution because I feel ever so strongly that our resolution supports the President economically, supports the President diplomatically, states that the President is correct, and clearly states that we cannot let this battle be lost and let the Iraqi Government collapse. We do not wish to see the people of Iraq denied the sovereignty that our blood, sweat, and toil have given them. We stand by the President on that. We simply say: Mr. President, this particular battle in Baghdad is best fought by the Iraqis. I regret to say that a New York Times article—and I asked this in open testimony before the Armed Services Committee a day or so ago to the Chief of Staff of the Army and to the Commandant of the Marine Corps—the accuracy of this report, that in the most recent battle there were 2,500 Americans and 200 Iraqi security forces. That is contrary to what

the President said. He said the Iraqis will take the point in this battle. The President also said the Iraqis will bear the burden in this battle, and we would be there in support. This is not support. We are fighting that battle.

Again, this morning, I watched a report, presented by a U.S. general from Iraq, who stated that progress is being made in the battle in Iraq. Time and time again—he referred to the American forces making progress. He referred only to the United States forces fighting that battle, with no reference to the Iraqi forces. That is my point. That is why I steadfastly take this floor and respectfully disagree with the President. I will vote for the Gregg amendment. As a matter of fact, the Gregg amendment is in the Warner amendment.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator has used 5 minutes.

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Madam President, I believe I am to be recognized for 5 minutes, but I have an additional 5 minutes which Senator STEVENS has yielded to me.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GREGG. Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, first, my respect for the Senator from Virginia is immense. I have always admired what he does, and I wish we were voting on his resolution. I think it should be up for debate and up for a vote. He is a significant force in this institution for many things which are right. I may have some disagreements with him over time, but I certainly have never questioned anything. I hope no one would. No one should question anybody on anything around here on what our purposes are. Our purposes are the same: to make our country a better and safer place and to make sure we assure a good future for our children.

Let me set the table as to where we are in this debate, however, because one of the essences of this institution has always been it has been a forum where if you have a different idea or a different thought on an issue of substance, you usually get to air it, and you most often get to vote on it. That, of course, is what our Founding Fathers structured this institution for.

Ironically, it was George Washington—not ironically but appropriately—it was George Washington who immediately ascertained the significance of the Senate's role when he said the Senate is the saucer into which the hot coffee is poured. It is the spot where ideas of the day get an airing to make sure they survive the light of day.

Over time, we have developed an institutional understanding in the Senate that unless 60 percent—a majority

of the Senate—agrees on an issue of major importance, that issue does not move forward. And equally importantly, we have developed an attitude in the Senate that if there is more than one legitimate view on an issue of significance—and this is, obviously, an issue of dramatic significance—there will be different views brought to the floor in the form of amendments or resolutions, and they will be debated and they will be voted on.

So what I suggested was an amendment which was not, I felt, all that controversial. In fact, I thought it was in the mainstream of American thought and certainly, hopefully, in the mainstream of the Senate positions. The resolution which I suggested—and I will read it again—simply states:

It is the sense of Congress that Congress should not take any action that will endanger United States military forces in the field, including the 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.

This should not be controversial. This should be a statement which we as a Congress are willing to make, that when we send a soldier onto the streets of Baghdad or anywhere else where that soldier may incur or be in the way of harm, that soldier will have the support of the American people and the Congress—with the financing, with the equipment, with the logistics they need to do their job well. And it should be a definitive, uncontroversial, uncontroverted statement.

Yet in offering this resolution, the Democratic leadership has said they will not entertain it. They will not allow us to vote on it. In fact, they have taken this whole process to a whole new level of trying to manage the activities of the floor of the Senate in a way that the Senate has never been managed in its historical past or should be managed in the context of what the purposes of the Senate are.

The Democratic leader has essentially said we will vote on his amendment—his amendment—and his amendment alone. And, by the way, his amendment has changed three times now. There have been major, substantive changes to his amendment three times. And each time he has said or the leadership on the Democratic side of the aisle has said: That is the amendment we are going to vote on, that is the one that is locked in stone. It shall not be changed. You shall vote on it as a Senate. You shall not be allowed to amend it. You shall not be allowed to put up resolutions that in any other way address the issue.

Well, the first proposal they came out with was not good enough to get enough votes to get to 40 probably, so they changed it. Then they said: This amendment shall be the amendment you will vote on. This amendment shall not be changed. This amendment shall not be amended on the floor of the Senate. There shall not be an amendment

that I have proposed or that the Republican membership wants to propose to go up and be debated and voted on also. Then that amendment, it turned out, was not good enough. That happened to be the Warner amendment.

Then the House passed an amendment, and they decided to take the House amendment and say: Now this amendment shall be the amendment which is frozen in stone and which cannot be contravened, cannot be amended, and it shall not have any other amendment offered by the minority, by the Republican side of the aisle that the Republican side of the aisle wishes to propose.

There was one caveat to that, the Senate Democratic leader said: I will be willing to choose an amendment for the Republican side of the aisle to propose. I, as Democratic leader, shall choose the Republican amendment that is brought to the floor to be debated.

Well, obviously that, on the face of it, does not pass the test of fairness or even the test of how the Senate should run, even under a confined system as this is. The actual way we should proceed in this manner, in this situation, is that there should be at least four amendments on the floor because there are four major ideas floating around here.

There is the idea that came over from the House. There is Senator WARNER's proposal. There is Senator MCCAIN's proposal. Then there is my proposal. Every one of these is substantive, thoughtful, I believe. Maybe I am assuming too much for mine. But for everybody else's, there are substantive, thoughtful ideas that should be debated on the floor of the Senate, and they should each be allowed a vote.

But the Democratic leadership has said no, there shall be no vote on anything other than their new proposal—which is now the House proposal, their third machination of what they are going to do—and another proposal which they will choose from the Republican side of the aisle.

Well, that clearly fails on all levels. Substantively it fails the rules of the Senate as they have traditionally been used. And as a matter of fairness, it fails the issue of being fair to people who have a legitimate viewpoint. More importantly, it fails the American people and the troops who are in the field because it does not allow us as a Senate to effectively debate and vote on proposals which would address the various issues raised by the situation in Iraq.

So we on our side are saying we shall assert our rights. There are, after all, at least 40 Members of the Republican Party—and I suspect quite a few more—who believe that we, as Members of the Republican party, as Members of the minority, have a right to offer an amendment of our choosing, and that it should be voted on, especially since we are debating nonbinding amendments.

Equally important, I think it is probably appropriate to analyze: Why

would the Democratic leadership not want to vote on the resolution I just outlined? Why would they not want to do something such as that? Why would they not want a vote on a resolution which states unequivocally that when we send our soldiers—our men and women—into harm's way, we are going to give them the support they need to do the mission they are assigned to do and to remain safe?

I suspect it is because that amendment which I have propounded, that proposal, that resolution would actually get significantly more than a supermajority in this body, significantly more than any other of the three items that have been discussed—the McCain proposal, the Warner proposal, or the House proposal—and that they would perceive that as an embarrassment on their side, which I believe shows this is not about the substance of the issue of how you address the war in Iraq, this is about the politics of how the amendment brought to the floor is perceived in the New York Times, the Washington Post, and the other panoply of national press groups that are basically trying to claim a victory over not our efforts in Iraq but over the President.

The fact that they would not allow us to bring forward an amendment which they know will receive a supermajority and more votes than their amendment—and which is so forthright in its statement of what it does, and which is so appropriate to the issue of what we are doing in Iraq, which is that we should be supporting our troops who have been sent into harm's way—is a reflection of the politicalness of this process, not the substance of the process. It is regrettable.

We will continue to insist that this amendment, which is reasonable, be voted on. We should not allow the frustration—and I recognize there is a tremendous amount of frustration about the war in Iraq. I have a lot of frustration about the war in Iraq. Everybody does around here. You could not but have that about what is happening there. But we should not allow that frustration to be taken out on our troops in the field. There will be endless claims that the House language that has come over to us—

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator has used 10 minutes.

Mr. GREGG. I ask unanimous consent for an additional minute.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, would this come out of the opposition's time?

Mr. GREGG. Yes.

Mr. CRAIG. We have several on our side. I yield 1 more minute to the Senator from New Hampshire.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator may resume.

Mr. GREGG. The House language is totally inconsistent on the issue of whether it supports the troops. It says on the one hand that it does, and it says on the other hand that it doesn't

support their mission. You can't do both of those things together.

I will submit for the RECORD an editorial from the Wall Street Journal which reflects that fact. I appreciate the courtesy from the Senator from Idaho in granting me another minute. It truly is San Francisco sophistry, the language in the House resolution. In my opinion, it cannot be claimed to be consistent. The only consistent statement of support for the troops is the language of my amendment. That is why I believe it should be voted on.

I ask unanimous consent to print the editorial to which I referred in the RECORD.

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

[From the Wall Street Journal, Feb. 15, 2007]

AWAITING THE DISHONOR ROLL

Congress has rarely been distinguished by its moral courage. But even grading on a curve, we can only describe this week's House debate on a vote of no-confidence in the mission in Iraq as one of the most shameful moments in the institution's history.

On present course, the Members will vote on Friday to approve a resolution that does nothing to remove American troops from harm's way in Iraq but that will do substantial damage to their morale and that of their Iraqi allies while emboldening the enemy. The only real question is how many Republicans will also participate in this disgrace in the mistaken belief that their votes will put some distance between themselves and the war most of them voted to authorize in 2002.

The motion at issue is plainly dishonest, in that exquisitely Congressional way of trying to have it both ways. The resolution purports to "support" the troops even as it disapproves of their mission. It praises their "bravery," while opposing the additional forces that both President Bush and General David Petraeus, the new commanding general in Iraq, say are vital to accomplishing that mission. And it claims to want to "protect" the troops even as its practical impact will be to encourage Iraqi insurgents to believe that every roadside bomb brings them closer to their goal.

As for how "the troops" themselves feel, we refer readers to Richard Engel's recent story on NBC News quoting Specialist Tyler Johnson in Iraq: "People are dying here. You know what I'm saying . . . You may [say] 'oh we support the troops.' So you're not supporting what they do. What they's (sic) here to sweat for, what we bleed for and we die for." Added another soldier: "If they don't think we're doing a good job, everything we've done here is all in vain." In other words, the troops themselves realize that the first part of the resolution is empty posturing, while the second is deeply immoral.

All the more so because if Congress feels so strongly about the troops, it arguably has the power to start removing them from harm's way by voting to cut off the funds they need to operate in Iraq. But that would make Congress responsible for what followed—whether those consequences are Americans killed in retreat, or ethnic cleansing in Baghdad, or the toppling of the elected Maliki government by radical Shiite or military forces. The one result Congress fears above all is being accountable.

We aren't prone to quoting the young John Kerry, but this week's vote reminds us of the

comment the antiwar veteran told another cut-and-run Congress in the early 1970s: "How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?" The difference this time is that Speaker Nancy Pelosi and John Murtha expect men and women to keep dying for something they say is a mistake but also don't have the political courage to help end.

Instead, they'll pass this "non-binding resolution," to be followed soon by attempts at micromanagement that would make the war all but impossible to prosecute—and once again without taking responsibility. Mr. Murtha is already broadcasting his strategy, which the new Politico Web site described yesterday as "a slow-bleed strategy designed to gradually limit the administration's options."

In concert with antiwar groups, the story reported, Mr. Murtha's "goal is crafted to circumvent the biggest political vulnerability of the antiwar movement—the accusation that it is willing to abandon troops in the field." So instead of cutting off funds, Mr. Murtha will "slow-bleed" the troops with "readiness" restrictions or limits on National Guard forces that will make them all but impossible to deploy. These will be attached to appropriations bills that will also purport to "support the troops."

"There's a D-Day coming in here, and it's going to start with the supplemental and finish with the '08 [defense] budget," Congressman Neil Abercrombie (D., Hawaii) told the Web site. He must mean D-Day as in Dunkirk.

All of this is something that House Republicans should keep in mind as they consider whether to follow this retreat. The GOP leadership has been stalwart, even eloquent, this week in opposing the resolution. But some Republicans figure they can use this vote to distance themselves from Mr. Bush and the war while not doing any real harm. They should understand that the Democratic willingness to follow the Murtha "slow-bleed" strategy will depend in part on how many Republicans follow them in this vote. The Democrats are themselves divided on how to proceed, and they want a big GOP vote to give them political cover. However "non-binding," this is a vote that Republican partisans will long remember.

History is likely to remember the roll as well. A newly confirmed commander is about to lead 20,000 American soldiers on a dangerous and difficult mission to secure Baghdad, risking their lives for their country. And the message their elected Representatives will send them off to battle with is a vote declaring their inevitable defeat.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, we have been bogged down in Iraq for nearly 4 years, which is longer than the Korean conflict or our involvement in World War II. The war has cost more than 3,100 American lives, seven times that many wounded, and about \$400 billion. We desperately need to change course. Shifting responsibility to the Iraqi political leaders to reach a political settlement is the only hope of ending the violence. That is why the Iraq Study Group urged less U.S. military involvement as they concluded:

An open-ended commitment of American forces would not provide the Iraqi government the incentive that it needs to take the political actions that give Iraq the best chance of quelling sectarian violence. In the absence of such an incentive, the Iraqi government might continue to delay taking those difficult actions.

But instead of putting pressure on Iraqi leaders to settle their political differences as the only hope of a successful outcome in Iraq, the President would get us in deeper militarily. The Iraqis didn't ask for more U.S. troops to occupy their neighborhoods in Baghdad. Indeed, they suggested we move out of Baghdad. The idea for this so-called surge of American troops in Baghdad was ours. It may be called a surge, but I believe it is a plunge, a plunge into a sectarian caldron, a plunge into the unknown and perhaps the unknowable.

Supporters of the surge argue that a Senate resolution disagreeing with the President's plan "emboldens the enemy," but that is an extraordinarily naive view of the enemy. What emboldens the sectarian fighters is the inability of the Iraqi leaders to make political compromises so essential to finally reining in the Sunni insurgents and the Shia militias. The enemy cares little what Congress says. It is emboldened by what the Iraqi leaders don't do. The enemy isn't emboldened by congressional debate. It is emboldened by the open-ended occupation of a Muslim country by western troops. The enemy is emboldened by the current course which has seen a million Iraqis leave the country and become refugees, with thousands more leaving daily. The enemy is emboldened by years of blunders and bravado, false assumptions, wishful thinking, and ignorance of the history of the land being occupied. The enemy is emboldened by an administration which says it is changing course, which acknowledges that a political settlement by Iraqi leaders is essential to ending the violence but then plunges us more deeply militarily into a sectarian witch's brew.

The only hope of ending the violence and succeeding against the enemies of an Iraqi nation is if the leaders of that nation work out their political differences and unite against forces that would destroy any chance of nationhood. That takes political will. That takes pressure from us. Sending more U.S. troops takes the pressure off. It sends the false message that we can save the Iraqis from themselves. Sending more troops does what our CENTCOM commander, John Abizaid, warned about when he said:

It's easy for the Iraqis to rely upon us to do the work. I believe that more American forces prevent the Iraqis from doing more, from taking more responsibility for their own future.

Does speaking out against the surge undermine our troops? The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, GEN Peter Pace, firmly answered that argument just last week when he said the following:

There's no doubt in my mind that the dialogue here in Washington strengthens our democracy—period . . . From the standpoint of our troops, I believe that they understand how our legislature works and that they understand that there's going to be this kind of debate.

Just last week, Secretary Gates answered the charge that our debate hurts troop morale when he said these words:

I think that our troops do understand that everybody involved in this debate is looking to do the right thing for our country and for our troops, and that everybody is looking for the best way to avoid an outcome that leaves Iraq in chaos. And I think they're sophisticated enough to understand that that's what the debate's really about. I think they understand that that debate's being carried on by patriotic people who care about them and who care about their mission.

We owe our troops everything: equipment, training, adequate rest, support of them and their family. We also owe them our honest assessment.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator has used 5 minutes.

Mr. LEVIN. I wonder if I could be yielded 30 additional seconds.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LEVIN. The majority of the American people believe that a deeper military involvement in Iraq won't make success more likely. I believe a majority of Senators feel the same way. I hope the majority will be allowed to so vote. If we believe plunging into Baghdad neighborhoods with more American troops will not increase chances of success, we are dutybound to say so, and a minority of Senators should not thwart that expression. We owe that to the troops. We owe that to their families, and we owe that to the American people.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAIG. Madam President, under a unanimous consent request, I have asked for 5 minutes. I will use one of those and yield the remaining 4 to the Senator from Texas, Mrs. HUTCHISON.

I ask unanimous consent to print in the RECORD a statement by the American Legion, the largest veterans organization in this country. I will only quote its last paragraph:

The American Legion and the American people find this to be a totally unacceptable approach and we will do everything within our power to ensure that our troops are not used as political pawns by a Congress that lacks the will to win.

I ask unanimous consent that be printed in the RECORD.

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

LEGION: CONGRESS SENT WRONG MESSAGE
TODAY

WASHINGTON, Feb. 16/PRNewswire-USNewswire/—The leader of the nation's largest wartime veterans' organization provided the following statement in response to the House vote disapproving the President's decision to deploy more than 20,000 additional combat troops to the Iraqi theater.

"Congress may consider its vote today on H. Con. Res. 63 to be nonbinding, but veterans of previous wars and those in the field of combat right now consider Congress's action to be a betrayal of trust and the first step toward surrender to the terrorists who caused this war in the first place.

"We must never forget the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, when two U.S. commercial aircraft were used to kill nearly 3,000 innocent people in an unprovoked attack against our nation's sovereignty. We must never forget those brave Americans who downed their plane in Pennsylvania, saving the lives of many in the Capitol. We must never forget the attack on the Pentagon, or on the USS *Cole*, or our embassies, or our Marine barracks in Beirut. The list goes on and on.

"Even the Clinton administration tried to kill Osama bin Laden by lobbing missiles at him. This war didn't just start with the invasion of Iraq. It's been going on for decades. It's been going on in Republican and Democrat administrations and Congresses.

"It isn't about partisan politics. It's about America. It's about all of us, and especially those who are at this moment risking their lives on the field of battle.

"Americans are not the enemy here. The terrorists and all of those governments that support them are the enemy. We must never forget that. And, equally important, we must never forget the primary lesson learned in Vietnam: you cannot separate the war from the warrior.

"Congress can talk all it wants to about how it supports the troops. But its actions set the table. The message they sent today to the frontline is that America is preparing to cut and run. We essentially told our fighting men and women that 'we have taken step one in the plan to cut reinforcements, to cut armaments, and to withdraw any support you need to complete your mission.'

"The Speaker characterized it succinctly when she said, '(t)his legislation will signal a change in direction that will end the fighting and bring our troops home.'

"What she failed to add was '... in defeat, and without completing the mission they were trained to complete and ready to win if only America had not given up before they did.'

"The American Legion and the American people find this to be totally unacceptable and we will do everything within our power to ensure that our troops are not used as political pawns by a Congress that lacks the will to win."

Mr. CRAIG. I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas is recognized.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Madam President, the first reason to vote no on this motion to proceed is that we have no ability to amend or an alternative that would be allowed by the majority to reflect a different point of view. When I hear people on the other side say don't let the minority thwart the efforts of the majority, what the majority is saying is we only want one resolution, our resolution. Whatever happened to amendments? Whatever happened to the ability to have alternative resolutions?

This is the tenth time in this very short period that this Congress has been in session that cloture has been used to stifle minority rights. It is unprecedented in this body. I hope we will go to a time when the Senate will be able to work together in a bipartisan way, agree and disagree civilly, have the ability to exercise minority rights, and then have a majority vote. We don't have to have only one procedure that allows for one view but does not allow for alternatives and amendments. That is not the way the Senate is supposed to operate.

The second reason to vote no on this motion is the resolution itself. The resolution says we support the troops who are there now and the troops who were there in the past but not those who will come in the future. Presumably the majority is saying that we will not support future troops because they don't support the President's plan. But troops who are rotating in to replace troops leaving would also not be supported. Since when do we select which members of the armed services we will support and which ones we will not in the middle of a mission? It is untenable on its face. We should never allow this flawed resolution to go forward without any alternative and without any amendments.

The third reason we should use every procedural avenue to derail this resolution is, we are undercutting the Commander in Chief and the troops who are on the mission right now. This is a rare departure for the Senate to undercut a mission of our military while troops are in harm's way performing the mission with a nonbinding resolution. The purpose of doing this can only be to undercut the Commander in Chief to the rest of the world because it will not stop the mission itself.

As was said earlier today, there is not a Member of the Senate who doesn't believe this is a risky proposition. It is. We are all worried about it. I have talked to General Petraeus about it, as have many of my colleagues. How, General Petraeus, do you see this working? He is the commander and he is the one who is putting this proposal together to fight a type of war we have never had to fight before, with an enemy that is willing to kill themselves in order to kill Americans and innocent Iraqis.

We have had to adjust; there is no doubt about it. I don't think anybody is saying that we believe we are in a good situation in Iraq. But the idea that we would pass a nonbinding resolution which undercuts our troops who are valiantly performing the mission is something I cannot remember that we have ever done.

I will quote from the Senate Armed Services hearing when Senator LIEBERMAN asked General Petraeus if such a resolution, a nonbinding resolution condemning the strategy, would give the enemy encouragement, some clear expression that the American people were divided. General Petraeus answered: "That is correct, sir."

Yes, the American people are divided. It is a very different matter for the Senate to pass a resolution with no alternative that says we support the troops who are there now and the ones who served in the past but not those who will be coming after the resolution is passed. It is unthinkable.

I hope we will come to our senses. I hope we will be able to talk freely, to debate but not to pass a resolution that says to the world, to our enemies, as well as our allies, we do not have faith in those who would go to perform a

mission going forward, faith in the military who created this plan.

I hope the Senate doesn't pass this. I hope we will have an agreement that will allow alternatives, as we have always done since I have been in the Senate, and many years before me. I hope our leaders will be able to sit down and craft a resolution that opens the process so that everyone will have a voice, not just a few in the majority. Maybe it is 51. Maybe it is 52. Maybe it is 53. But we should have 41 Senators standing up for an alternative resolution that would allow other people to have the ability to vote for the support of our troops, whether they are there now, whether they were there in the past, or whether they will be there in the future. That is the difference between this resolution the majority is trying to get passed without any alternative or any amendment, and what we would put forward, which is to say: We will support all the troops today or tomorrow, and we will win this war, for there is no substitute for victory, if our children are going to live in freedom.

I yield the floor.

(Disturbance in the Visitors' Galleries)

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from California is recognized.

(The remarks of Mrs. FEINSTEIN pertaining to the introduction of S.J. Res. 3 are located in today's RECORD under "Submission of Concurrent and Senate Resolutions.")

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

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, we have seen 4 years of obfuscation on Iraq from the White House and from previous leadership in this Senate. Those days are over this afternoon. Every Senator is going to have to step to the plate and say where he or she stands. The other side has tried to design resolutions where they can duck, they can avoid, and they don't tell their constituencies how they feel. Those days are over.

That is why this cloture vote is a crucial vote, not just for the moment or the week but for the history of America because today's vote is not on other aspects of what is going on in Iraq or Iran but simply this: Are you for or against the escalation? Plain and simple.

There should be a simple vote, not as an end to this debate but as a beginning of this debate. The minority is tying itself into pretzels so there will not be a vote. They are torn between their President's policy and the wishes of their constituents. But vote they must. If they avoid the vote this afternoon, their constituents will know exactly what they are doing.

On the policy, the President's escalation is misguided, to put it kindly. There is no change in strategy. We are policing a civil war in Iraq—something no one talked about 2 years ago, something no one bargained for. Our brave

young men and women, whom we so support, are standing in the crossfire between Shiites and Sunnis. This is not a fight against terrorism; this is a civil war, and there have been, unfortunately, thousands of them throughout history. American troops should not be in the middle of that war.

The President doesn't change the policy; he simply adds more troops to continue this misguided policy. That is why the majority of this Senate, and the overwhelming majority of the American people, are so opposed to this escalation, and we will vote on it this afternoon. But make no mistake about it, this is just the first step. It is just the first step. This is a process. Some of my friends and colleagues wish—and maybe we do, too—that there could be a silver bullet, one resolution that could either end the escalation or even end the war. But there is not. The way our Constitution is structured, this Government, you need two-thirds to overcome a certain Presidential veto, when we do our next resolution with teeth.

So our job here, which this resolution begins, is to ratchet up the pressure on the President, on those who are still on his side in terms of this policy until they change. We will be relentless. There will be resolution after resolution, amendment after amendment, all forcing this body to do what it has not done in the previous 3 years—debate and discuss Iraq. And we believe that as that debate continues and as this process unfolds, just like in the days of Vietnam, the pressure will mount and the President will find he has no strategy. He will have to change his strategy, and the vast majority of our troops will be taken out of harm's way and come home.

So, Madam President, today is the beginning of a historic period, where for the first time in a while Congress debates foreign policy in Iraq and Congress tries to do something about foreign policy in Iraq.

To the brave men and women who are defending us today, whom we so support, thank you for your service, thank you for protecting us. We will continue to live by what the Constitution has asked us to do, which is to debate the issues and come up with what is best for our soldiers, for America, and for the world.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Delaware is recognized.

Mr. BIDEN. Madam President, do I have 5 minutes?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Yes, the Senator has 5 minutes.

Mr. BIDEN. Madam President, today, the Senate has an opportunity—and a responsibility—to begin to end the escalation of the war in Iraq and to start us toward a new strategy for leaving Iraq without leaving chaos behind.

Our responsibility is to debate and vote on the resolution passed by the House of Representatives that says

that Congress disapproves of the President's plan to deploy more than 20,000 additional American combat troops to Iraq.

The question before us today is whether a minority of Senators will even allow the debate to start. That is what we are about to vote on.

To my colleagues who are thinking about trying to block debate, let me say this: Iraq dominates our national life. It is on the minds of tens of millions of Americans. It shapes the lives of hundreds of thousands of our men and woman in uniform and their families.

That the Senate would not even debate, much less vote on, the single most urgent issue of our time, would be a total failure of our responsibility.

We have a duty to debate and vote on the President's plan. We have a duty to debate and vote on our overall strategy in Iraq. We have to demonstrate the courage of our convictions.

Last month, Secretary of State Rice presented the President's plan for Iraq to the Foreign Relations Committee. Its main feature is to send more American troops into Baghdad, in the middle of a sectarian civil war.

The reaction on the committee, from Republicans and Democrats alike, ranged from skepticism to profound skepticism to outright opposition. And that pretty much reflects the reaction across the country.

Every Senator should be given a chance to vote whether he or she approves or disagrees with the President's plan to send more troops into the middle of a civil war.

The debate I hope that we will have is as important as the vote.

I predict the American people will hear very few of our colleagues stand up and support the President's plan to send more troops into the middle of a civil war. Listen to those voices.

Some minimize the significance of a nonbinding resolution. If it is so meaningless, why did the White House and the President's political supporters mobilize so much energy against it? Why is a minority of Senators trying to prevent the Senate from talking about it?

Opposing the surge is only a first step. We need a radical change in course in Iraq.

If the President won't act, Congress must.

But Congress must act responsibly. We must resist the temptation to push for changes that sound good but produce bad results.

The best next step is to revisit the authorization Congress granted the President in 2002 to use force in Iraq.

We gave the President that power to destroy Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and, if necessary, to depose Saddam Hussein.

The WMD were not there. Saddam Hussein is no longer there. The 2002 authorization is no longer relevant to the situation in Iraq.

Legislation I'm working on would repeal that authorization and replace it

with a much narrower mission statement for our troops in Iraq.

Congress should make clear what the mission of our troops is: to responsibly draw down, while continuing to combat terrorists, train Iraqis and respond to emergencies.

We should make equally clear what their mission is not: to stay in Iraq indefinitely and get mired in a savage civil war.

Coupled with the Biden-Gelb plan that offers the possibility of a political settlement in Iraq, I believe this is the most effective way to start bringing our troops home without leaving a mess behind.

But for today, my message is simple: the American people want us to debate Iraq, the most important issue of our day. They expect it. They demand it.

If we try to hide behind procedure and delaying tactics, the American people will hold us accountable.

They get it. The question is: do we?

Madam President, again, today we have the opportunity to do something we have not done on the floor of the U.S. Senate in the last 4 years; that is, to actually debate Iraq. This is the first opportunity we are going to have to do that. I know a number of people say: This is not binding, so why are we doing it? If it doesn't matter, why is there such an effort to keep us from talking about it, an effort to continue to fight us in being able to do this?

Madam President, I say to my colleagues that if we fail to invoke cloture here, we are not permitted to debate this issue, and I don't know what it says to the American people about what we are all about. I don't know whether anybody has noticed, but the American public is seized with this issue. It is the issue. It is the issue everybody is discussing at the kitchen table. It is the issue every man, woman, husband, wife, mother, and father with someone in the National Guard or in the U.S. military is talking about. It is the issue. The Senate is being silenced on it, even being prevented from debating whether we can talk about making a simple statement that: Mr. President, you are wrong; don't escalate this war.

The truth is, our voices, quite frankly, are as important as our votes. The President will find, if we have a full-blown debate on the floor of the Senate, there are precious few people on this floor who think he is handling this war correctly. Instead of escalating the war, we should be drawing down our forces. I predict the American people hear, as I said, very few of our colleagues talking about what a good idea this is, what the President has in mind. So to echo the comments made by my colleague from New York, if, in fact, we are precluded from even debating the issue of whether we oppose the President's escalation of the war, surely you are going to see more coming to the floor.

I have been working with the Senator from Massachusetts and others on a

piece of legislation that would literally rescind the President's authority—the authority we gave him to go to war in the first place—and redefine the mission very narrowly.

Look, there is going to be a lot of discussion, whether we debate today or not, on Iraq. There is going to be a lot of discussion about what to do next. It will range from cutting off funding, to capping troops, to a number of other proposals. The truth is, we are being presented with a false choice up to now. We are either told we have to stay the course and escalate the war or the other choice is to bring our troops home and hope for the best.

The truth is that none of this will matter. We are going to have to bring everybody home if they don't get a political solution in Iraq. There is only one: a federal system. Listen to what their Constitution says. Even the National Intelligence Estimate, the estimate of all of the intelligence agencies, says—and I am paraphrasing it—that the Sunnis have to accept regionalism and the Kurds and Shias have to give the Sunnis a bigger piece of the action in order for them to do that.

I point out to everybody, when civil wars begin in other countries, there are only a few things that stop them: One side wins and there is carnage; two, an occupying force stays there indefinitely; or, three, you end up in a situation where they have a federal state.

The President should get about the business of pursuing not a military solution here but a political solution. He should be calling an international conference, getting all of the parties in a room, as we did in Dayton, convincing our allies and the region that the only outcome that has any possibility of surviving is the federal state, as their Constitution calls for.

I conclude by saying that the American people expect—quite frankly, I think they demand—that we start to intelligently debate this subject rather than doing it by way of talk shows and Sunday appearances on TV. We should be debating on this floor.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. BYRD. Madam President, over 3,000 Americans are dead—dead, dead—and over 23,000 Americans are wounded as a result of the war in Iraq. Our military leaders say that our Armed Forces are stretched almost to the breaking point. We have spent almost \$400 billion, and the number continues to go up, up, up. But the United States Senate is mired incredibly in a debate about the ability even to have a debate about our Nation's future course in Iraq. Surely, no one in this Senate can be so fearful of debate on a nonbinding resolution concerning the President's plan to send some 40,000 additional troops to Iraq that they fail to hear the voices of over 70 percent of the American people out there who now oppose our involvement in this war. But apparently some in the Senate are afraid of such a debate.

Some of my colleagues have indicated that they will vote against the motion to proceed to debate on this straightforward resolution, which expresses disagreement with the President's plan. While our brave fighting men and women put their lives on the line in Iraq, this Senate stands paralyzed—paralyzed, paralyzed, I say. The United States Senate—the greatest deliberative body in the whole world—is probably the only place in this wonderful land of America where this debate is not—is not—taking place.

How can some express unwavering support for the troops if they quake in the face of a debate about their safety? Our troops are stretched thin. They are weary after deployment and redeployment. Post-traumatic stress disorder and mental problems—yes—are rife in the troops. Lost limbs and physical mutilation have scarred many of these young people for life. Scores of families weep—yes, they weep—every night for their lost loved ones. And yet many in this Senate claim to support the troops, while those same many steadfastly refuse to debate an ill-advised escalation—yes, an ill-advised escalation—of this war which almost nobody but nobody supports.

Can one claim support for the troops while acquiescing in a policy that only sinks our forces deeper into a civil war? Can any of us look in the mirror while we stonewall the concerns of the American people and engage in some political fandango to prevent discussion of our engagement in Iraq?

Madam President, if it will help to bring our soldiers home, I will work every Saturday for the rest of this Congress. I will stand here, right here on this floor, of this Senate every day, 24 hours every day if it would mean one less family without a son or a daughter. Hear me.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator has used 5 minutes.

Mr. BYRD. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I may proceed for 2 minutes.

Mr. STEVENS. Reserving the right to object, what happens to the time I am allocated under those circumstances?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The time for the Senator will be reserved. Is there objection?

Mr. BYRD. Nothing, I say to my friend. I would not see anything happen to the Senator's time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BYRD. Madam President, this is the most important issue facing America, the land of the free and the home of the brave, and I stand with my colleagues today to say enough, enough stalling, enough obfuscation. It is time for the people of America—yes, you people out there in the mountains, the valleys, and across the rivers, across the mountain ranges, yes, the great Rockies—you people, it is time for you to know where every Senator stands on this war.

I will cast my vote with pride this afternoon, Madam President, in favor of proceeding to this debate, and I hope that every one of my colleagues joins me.

I yield the floor and thank the Chair. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. STEVENS. Madam President, with great respect for my friend from West Virginia, the reason we are here is because the new majority refuses to debate. They refuse to allow us to take up the amendments that should be considered during this debate.

We have before us now a proposal drafted by the Rules Committee of the House, presented to the House without debate and brought to us without debate, and we are told we are to be limited on the number of amendments that will be considered to this measure.

It is an important subject to be debated, but why Saturday? This is the start of the President's Day recess that was announced 6 weeks ago. In order to try to embarrass the Members of this side—21 of us up for reelection—the leadership decided to have this debate today on a nonbinding resolution, which wouldn't accomplish anything, wouldn't bring any troops home, wouldn't announce our support for the troops, just to see whether we come back to vote.

The real problem is how do we get together in a Senate that has a majority of one? Do we do it on the basis that every time something comes from the House we are to be told no amendments will be in order? We can't debate this question of whether we support the troops? We can't support any other amendment to this resolution? We are to take the matter that came from the House without debate from the Rules Committee? It was not changed all the way through the House.

How many Senators on that side want to be a rubberstamp for the House? That is what you are starting. This is the third bill to come before us with the idea of no minority amendments are going to be considered unless the leadership on that side decides they should be considered.

Again, I tell you, Madam President, this is a defining moment of the Senate. This is a debating society. We should not be limited on the number of amendments that are considered, any more than we are limited on the CR.

When I became chairman of the Appropriations Committee in 2001, there were 11 bills pending that had not been passed by the former majority. We brought them before the Senate in an omnibus bill, and every single bill was considered, one by one.

What did we do this time? We had one resolution which came over from the House, and we passed it without any amendments. That is a formula for the death of the Senate. There are people in this country who think we should have a unicameral legislature.

Mr. BYRD. I don't.

Mr. STEVENS. I share the Senator's opinion because I would like to debate him on some of these subjects but not

on a nonbinding resolution. Let's bring up a resolution that supports the troops.

I directly contradict my good friend from West Virginia. The American people support our troops in the field—

Mr. BYRD. Yes.

Mr. STEVENS. —and do not want us challenging them and trying to find some way to deviate money from their support or deny them the support they deserve. I would love to stand here and talk for hours and hours with my friend about how to support the troops. You don't do it by asking them to disobey the President of the United States. You don't do it by urging the Senate and the House not to support the President of the United States. You do it by trying to get together and working on a bipartisan basis to solve our problems.

None of us like war. I said the other day I hate war. I have been involved in the consideration of too many wars in my life, but clearly those people wearing our uniform in Iraq and Afghanistan need to know we support them 100 percent, and we don't stand here and talk about how we should find ways so they would not get their support, so we force the President of the United States to bring them home.

We will bring them home with the new commander there and the new plan we are going to put into effect, a plan that requires a surge for the safety of the people there, to move in the country to carry out the plan.

I support the President, and I urge the Senate to do the same.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator's time has expired.

Several Senators addressed the Chair.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. BYRD. Madam President, how long may I be recognized for? Two minutes?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Time has expired.

Mr. BYRD. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed for 2 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Reserving the right to object, we all deeply respect Senator BYRD, but we are on a tight timeframe. I don't know how many minutes are left on that side.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Two minutes remain for the previous unanimous consent.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I was to be recognized at 1:25 p.m., and it is now 1:27 p.m.; is that correct?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The order was delayed by intervening orders.

Mr. MCCONNELL. There is some time at least remaining on the other side. I leave it up to my good friend, the majority whip, to sort that out.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I thought we had 3 minutes remaining; is that correct?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. One minute has been consumed. There is 2 minutes remaining.

Mr. DURBIN. Since Senator KENNEDY has asked for 1 minute, I will yield the 1 minute I requested to the Senator from West Virginia so each of the remaining two will speak—Senator KENNEDY for 1 minute and Senator BYRD for 1 minute.

Mr. BYRD. Madam President, I thank our distinguished friend from Illinois. And I thank my longtime friend from Massachusetts, Mr. KENNEDY.

I only rise to say that I have a binding resolution to bring our troops home. I hope to see the day when we may vote on my resolution to bring American troops home—home, home.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. All of us remember the elections. All of us remember President Bush saying: I am going to take my time and find a new direction.

Mr. BYRD. Yes.

Mr. KENNEDY. All of us remember he said: Do not rush me. I want to talk to the generals. I want to talk to political leaders. I want to talk to people all over this country and all over the world to find out a new policy.

Then he comes out with this policy. And what is it? It is a military policy to escalate in Iraq.

Mr. BYRD. Right.

Mr. KENNEDY. That is the issue before the U.S. Senate. Many of us do not believe that this President is right on it. The Baker-Hamilton commission did not agree with that policy. General Abizaid did not agree with that policy before the Armed Services Committee. And the American people don't.

We on this side are interested in protecting American servicemen from the crossfire of a civil war. Some on the other side are more interested in protecting the President from a rebuke for his policy of escalation in Iraq.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator's time has expired.

The Republican leader is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, 5 weeks ago, President Bush stood before the American people and acknowledged—acknowledged—the lack of progress in Iraq. He outlined a new military strategy that was devised after consultation with military commanders, national security leaders, and Members of Congress from both parties. He told us he had committed more than 20,000 additional troops to Iraq to clear and secure the city of Baghdad and to protect its population.

As we meet today, the first of five waves of soldiers are carrying out this plan on the streets and in the alleys of Baghdad; the second is preparing to leave. These reinforcements have already given us reasons for hope. Soon after the President's announcement, U.S. Iraqi forces began to route key elements of the Mahdi army, the militia's leader fled his stronghold, and this week U.S. Iraqi forces have conducted sweeps through once violent

Sunni neighborhoods with little resistance.

It is too early to say whether the surge will achieve its objective, but General Petraeus and President Bush ask us to give the plan a chance to work, to support our troops in the field and those on their way. Until now, we have done that. Today—today—we are being asked to do something entirely different.

The majority party in the Senate wants to vote on a resolution that condemns the President's plan and which disagrees with General Petraeus who said before he left for Iraq that additional troops are an essential part of achieving our goal. They are doing this 3 weeks after voting, without dissent, to send General Petraeus on this mission. And they are doing it in the form of a nonbinding resolution that will have no practical effect on the conduct of the war.

Americans have a right to demand why the Senate has not yet taken a clear stand on what most of us believe to be our last best chance at success. So let us be clear at the outset of this debate about what is going on today and about what Republicans are fighting for today.

Republicans are fighting for the right of the American people to know where we stand. If you support the war, say so. If you don't, say so. But you cannot say you are registering a vote in favor of our troops unless you pledge to support them with the funds they need to carry out their mission. Yet this is precisely—precisely—what the Democratic majority would have us do today.

They demand Republicans cast a vote in favor of a nonsensical proposition that says we disapprove of the President's plan to deploy more troops to Iraq, but we support the members of the Armed Forces who are serving there. A vote in support of the troops that is silent on the question of funds is an attempt to have it both ways. So Republicans are asking for an honest and open debate, and we are being blocked at every turn.

The majority party in the House has a stronger hand in determining what comes up for a vote. So yesterday they forced a vote on the same stay-the-course resolution that Democrats are now trying to put before the Senate. Democrats have been clear about the strategy behind this resolution. They describe it as a slow bleed, a way of tying the hands of the Commander in Chief. The House said yesterday that it supports the troops. Yet its leadership is preparing to deny the reinforcements that those troops will need in the weeks and months ahead.

The Senate was created to block that kind of dealing, and today it stops at the doors of this Chamber. Even opponents of the war denounce the tactics of the Democratic leadership.

In an editorial today, the New York Times, amazingly enough, called yesterday's House vote a "clever maneuver to dress up a reduction in troop

strength as a 'support the troops' measure." Adding, "It takes no courage or creativity," said the New York Times, "for a politician to express continuing support for the troops and opposition to a vastly unpopular and unpromising military escalation."

The Washington Post was rightly appalled in an editorial this morning by the slow-bleed strategy, calling it "a crude hamstringing of the military commanders and their ability to deploy troops." The Post exposed the details of Mr. MURTHA's plan to add language to a war-funding bill that would strangle the President's ability to get reinforcements to soldiers in the field all under the guise of having them better prepared.

"Why," the Post asks, "doesn't Mr. MURTHA strip the money out of the appropriations bill? Something he is clearly free to do." Good question. And the astonishing answer comes from Mr. MURTHA's own lips. "What we are saying," Congressman MURTHA says, "will be very hard to find fault with."

There is no place for this kind of chicanery at a time of war. Even some of the President's most strident opponents know that. They know the only vote that truly matters is a vote on whether to fund the troops. That is the vote House Republicans were denied yesterday. That is the vote Senate Republicans and a growing number of clear-eyed observers on both sides of this issue are demanding today. Let those of us who support the President's plan to win in Iraq say so. Let those who oppose it also say so.

We will not be forced to vote for a resolution that says we support the troops but does not ask us to seal that pledge with a promise to help them carry out their mission in the only way they can, which is by funding their mission.

Madam President, has my time expired?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader has 4 minutes remaining.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, let me additionally say that Senate Republicans have been trying to have this debate now for several weeks. We expected to have it week before last. We insist, however, on having the debate in the Senate in the way debates are always carried out in the Senate, in a fair and evenhanded way.

Our good friends on the other side of the aisle initially supported the Biden proposal, which came out of the Foreign Relations Committee. When that appeared not to have enough support, they adopted the Warner-Levin proposal. When that appeared to be inconvenient, they switched again and now support, I guess, what best can be called the Pelosi-Reid proposal, which they are attempting to get before the Senate today.

All along the way, for the last few weeks, Senate Republicans have been consistent in asking for a fair debate, and a fair debate includes, at the very

least, one alternative supported by a majority of Senate Republicans. The one alternative we settled on was Senator GREGG's proposal to guarantee that we support funding for the troops. This fundamental unfairness and unwillingness to allow the Senate to vote on arguably the most significant issue confronting the troop surge, which is whether it is going to be funded, is the reason this stalemate has occurred.

I am optimistic, and I certainly hope that Senate Republicans will continue to insist on fair treatment in debating what is clearly, unambiguously, the most important issue confronting the country today.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Madam President, we all know it is rare for the Senate to hold a Saturday vote, but the issue before us is too important to wait. There are challenges facing America today, but there is no greater challenge facing America today than finding a new direction in Iraq.

Every Senator in this Chamber has a responsibility and an obligation to say whether they support or oppose the President's plan to escalate the war. Yesterday the House of Representatives acted, 246 to 180, no escalation. Now it is the turn of this body, the Senate, to give advice to the President that he is wrong in sending tens of thousands more American soldiers to a civil war in far away Iraq.

In a few moments, a vote will occur on a straightforward resolution which simply states that we support our troops and oppose escalation of the intractable Iraq war. My colleagues on the other side of this Senate Chamber, colleagues who blocked an Iraq debate last week, have a choice to make. Do they intend to join the American people in opposing more of the same in Iraq or do they intend to continue to give the President a green light to escalate the war? Let the debate proceed. Let the Senate express its views on the issue of our time.

This month, the Iraq war has cost the lives of three American soldiers every day, putting us on pace for the bloodiest February since the war began. It is threatening our Nation's strategic interests and risking our Nation's security. Today, America has lost 3,133 soldiers in the streets and highways of a place called Iraq.

Mr. BYRD. Shame.

Mr. REID. We have seen tens of thousands more wounded. The war has strained our military and depleted our Treasury of almost \$500 billion.

The Iraqis are dying at a rate of 100 a day in a vicious sectarian civil war. Two million Iraqis have left their own country.

By every measure, the administration's failures have put us into a deep hole in Iraq. Yet the President's new old plan—escalation, more of the

same—won't get us out of the hole. It will only dig the hole deeper.

Our generals, the Iraq Study Group, and the Iraqis themselves have told us that escalation will only make Iraq worse, intensify our costs, and require even greater sacrifices from the American troops, many of whom are being sent to Baghdad today without the proper armor and proper equipment and the training they need.

On this issue—escalation, more of the same—the Senate must speak. The Senate, on behalf of the American people, must make it clear to the Commander in Chief that he no longer has a rubberstamp. We must show the American people that the Senate heard their message last November 7, and we, as Senators, are fighting for a new direction for the 134,000 troops already in Iraq and the 48,000 additional troops the President would send.

The Senate owes as much to these soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines. We must proceed with this debate and change the course of a war that has raged going into 5 years now.

I know some would like to cloud the debate. I know some would like to delay the debate. I know some would like to have a different debate. I know some would like to have no debate. Most of the Republican minority wishes to protect President Bush from an embarrassing vote. They are trying to divert attention from the issue at hand. They would like to turn the Senate into a procedural quagmire. They want to hide behind weak and misleading arguments about the Senate's rules or a Senator's right to offer amendments. These arguments are diversions.

Today's vote is about more than procedure. It is an opportunity to send a powerful message: The Senate will no longer sit on the sidelines while our troops police an ugly civil war in a nation far away. The issue before America today is escalation. The issue before the Senate today is escalation. That is why the Senate's responsibility must be to vote on escalation and whether the so-called surge is supported or opposed.

This is the choice: More war or less war. I applaud the courage of a few hardy Republicans who will vote cloture and allow this vote to occur.

As I said, most of the Republican minority wish to protect President Bush from this vote. They intend to vote for what is best for their political party. But as President John Fitzgerald Kennedy said, "Sometimes party loyalty asks too much."

Today in the Senate, Republican party loyalty asks too much. In the Senate this Saturday, this February 17, today is the time for Senators to vote for openness, for transparency, to show their constituents in all 50 States: Do our Senators support or oppose sending 48,000 more United States soldiers and marines into the darkness of Iraq?

During the week we heard speeches about supporting our troops. The best

way to support the troops is to ensure they have a strategy that will let them complete their mission so they can come home. We need a new direction in Iraq. Escalation is not the answer. More of the same is not the answer. The answer is to tell the President: Not more war but less war.

I urge my colleagues to vote cloture and thus vote to change course in this bloody war now raging 7,500 miles from this Senate Chamber and our beloved United States Capitol.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close the debate on the motion to proceed to S. 574, a bill to express the sense of Congress on Iraq.

Ben Nelson, Russell D. Feingold, Ben Cardin, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Byron L. Dorgan, Amy Klobuchar, Daniel K. Akaka, Maria Cantwell, John Kerry, Ken Salazar, Jack Reed, Chuck Schumer, Jeff Bingaman, Barbara Boxer, Dick Durbin, Tom Harkin, Jay Rockefeller, Harry Reid.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived. The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to S. 574, a bill to express the sense of Congress on Iraq, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHN-SON) is necessarily absent.

Mr. LOTT. The following Senators were necessarily absent: the Senator from Utah (Mr. BENNETT), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BOND), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER), the Senator from Nevada (Mr. ENSIGN), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KYL), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), and the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) would have voted "nay."

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Nebraska). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 56, nays 34, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 51 Leg.]

YEAS—56

Akaka	Brown	Clinton
Baucus	Byrd	Coleman
Bayh	Cantwell	Collins
Biden	Cardin	Conrad
Bingaman	Carper	Dodd
Boxer	Casey	Dorgan

Durbin	Levin	Salazar
Feingold	Lincoln	Sanders
Feinstein	McCaskill	Schumer
Hagel	Menendez	Smith
Harkin	Mikulski	Snowe
Inouye	Murray	Specter
Kennedy	Nelson (FL)	Stabenow
Kerry	Nelson (NE)	Tester
Klobuchar	Obama	Warner
Kohl	Pryor	Webb
Landrieu	Reed	Whitehouse
Lautenberg	Reid	Wyden
Leahy	Rockefeller	

NAYS—34

Alexander	Domenici	McConnell
Allard	Enzi	Roberts
Brownback	Graham	Sessions
Bunning	Grassley	Shelby
Burr	Gregg	Stevens
Chambliss	Hutchison	Sununu
Coburn	Inhofe	Thomas
Cornyn	Isakson	Thune
Craig	Lieberman	Vitter
Crapo	Lott	Voinovich
DeMint	Lugar	
Dole	Martinez	

NOT VOTING—10

Bennett	Ensign	McCain
Bond	Hatch	Murkowski
Cochran	Johnson	
Corker	Kyl	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this question, the yeas are 56, the nays are 34. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

Mr. DURBIN. I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. LEAHY. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. I withdraw the motion to proceed to S. 574.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion to proceed is withdrawn.

CONDITIONAL RECESS OR ADJOURNMENT OF BOTH HOUSES OF CONGRESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Republicans did not want to adjourn the other day because they wanted another chance to vote on Iraq. The majority of the Senate just voted on Iraq and the majority of the Senate is against the escalation in Iraq. We have had that other vote they have chosen, so now I ask the Senate to turn to the consideration of H. Con. Res. 67, the adjournment resolution, and that the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the resolution, with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

Ms. SNOWE. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the title.

The legislative clerk read as follows: A resolution (H. Con. Res. 67) providing for a conditional adjournment of the House of Representatives and a conditional recess or adjournment of the Senate.

Ms. SNOWE. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the concurrent resolution.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHN-SON), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG), and the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) are necessarily absent.

Mr. LOTT. The following Senators were necessarily absent: the Senator from Utah (Mr. BENNETT), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BOND), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. BROWNBACK), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER), the Senator from Nevada (Mr. ENSIGN), the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KYL), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. STEVENS), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VOINOVICH).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 47, nays 33, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 52 Leg.]

YEAS—47

Akaka	Feinstein	Obama
Baucus	Harkin	Pryor
Biden	Inouye	Reed
Bingaman	Kerry	Reid
Boxer	Klobuchar	Rockefeller
Brown	Kohl	Salazar
Byrd	Landrieu	Sanders
Cantwell	Leahy	Schumer
Cardin	Levin	Shelby
Carper	Lieberman	Stabenow
Casey	Lincoln	Tester
Clinton	McCaskill	Thomas
Dodd	Menendez	Webb
Dorgan	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murray	Wyden
Feingold	Nelson (NE)	

NAYS—33

Alexander	DeMint	Lugar
Allard	Dole	Martinez
Bayh	Domenici	McConnell
Bunning	Enzi	Roberts
Coburn	Graham	Sessions
Coleman	Grassley	Smith
Collins	Gregg	Snowe
Conrad	Hagel	Sununu
Cornyn	Hutchison	Thune
Craig	Inhofe	Vitter
Crapo	Lott	Warner

NOT VOTING—20

Bennett	Ensign	McCain
Bond	Hatch	Murkowski
Brownback	Isakson	Nelson (FL)
Burr	Johnson	Specter
Chambliss	Kennedy	Stevens
Cochran	Kyl	Voinovich
Corker	Lautenberg	

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 67) was agreed to.

Mr. CARDIN. I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. TESTER. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.