

to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that there then be a period of morning business for 30 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak therein, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees; that at the close of morning business, the Senate resume consideration of H.R. 1585, the Department of Defense authorization bill, and then proceed to the McCain or designee amendment, as provided for under a previous order.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that at the conclusion or yielding back of the time controlled by Senator SALAZAR, Senator WARNER be recognized for up to 10 minutes, and that at the conclusion of Senator WARNER's remarks, the Senate stand adjourned under the previous order.

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

Mr. REID. Madam President, I appreciate the consideration of my colleagues for letting me squeeze in time to complete the Senate's work for today and to say a few nice things about the great Lady Bird Johnson.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, and the Senator from Colorado, Mr. SALAZAR, in control of the first 60 minutes.

The Senator from Colorado is recognized.

Mr. SALAZAR. Madam President, let me first say I join with the majority leader in sending our condolences to the Johnson family and in remembering the great life Lady Bird Johnson lived and the contributions she made to our Nation.

During this period of morning business we will be speaking in the following order: First, Senator COLLINS, and then I will follow her; following my statement, Senator ALEXANDER; following Senator ALEXANDER's statement, Senator PRYOR; and then following his statement, if he is able to get here from another commitment, we will have Senator NELSON from Florida also speak on this issue.

With that, I yield the floor to my colleague from Maine, Senator COLLINS.

NEW IRAQ STRATEGY

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, let me start by thanking the Senator from Colorado for his courtesy to me this evening as well as my friend from Tennessee.

I rise today to join my distinguished colleagues from both sides of the aisle in discussing a bipartisan way forward on what is the greatest challenge facing our country; that is, the war in Iraq. I commend the two leaders of this effort, Senator SALAZAR and Senator ALEXANDER, for their leadership in crafting a well-grounded strategy based on the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group.

I have repeatedly expressed my strong opposition to the President's strategy of sending tens of thousands of additional troops to Iraq. Despite that opposition and the opposition of many others, the administration pushed forward with its plan, arguing that the surge would give the Iraqi Government the time and space necessary to make the political compromises that are necessary to end the continued sectarian violence. Unfortunately, my initial concerns about the surge strategy have proven to be well-founded.

First, there has been a terrible loss of life among our troops over the past few months. In fact, 331 American soldiers were killed from April to June—the highest 3-month level of the war. One such soldier was SGT Joel House, a brave and patriotic Mainer whose funeral I attended in Lee, ME, just last week. Our troops have sacrificed so much.

Second, the fact is that the Iraqi Government has utterly failed to pursue the political reforms necessary to quell the sectarian violence. Our troops have done their part, but the fact is virtually all the experts agree that a solution to the sectarian violence is found in political reforms, not in military action. When you combine the increased sacrifice of our troops and the unwillingness or inability of the Iraqi leaders to act, it is not surprising that more and more Americans are questioning the President's strategy in Iraq.

It is clear our country needs a new direction in Iraq. We need a new strategy that will redefine our mission and set the stage for a significant but gradual withdrawal of our troops over the next year. We do not have to search far and wide for this new policy. It is right before us. It has already been mapped out in the unanimous recommendations of the bipartisan Baker-Hamilton Iraq Study Group. The Iraq Study Group's recommendations chart the path forward and remain just as viable today as they were when they were first released in December.

The Baker-Hamilton report sets forth three core principles for salvaging a measure of stability for Iraq and the surrounding region.

First, the report says the United States must shift the primary mission of its military forces in Iraq from combat to training, with the goal of removing all combat brigades not necessary for training, force protection, and counterterrorism activities against al-Qaida and other foreign jihadists by

March of 2008. Shifting the mission of our troops to a new and more defined and narrower set of goals will ultimately encourage the Iraqi military to step up to the plate while lowering U.S. casualty rates, relieving our service-members of heavy deployment schedules, and improving the long-term readiness of our military.

Second, the Iraq Study Group Report states that U.S. support for the Iraqi Government should be conditioned on Iraq making progress in meeting specific benchmarks.

In May, Senator WARNER and I authored legislation to require the President to provide two reports to Congress—one which will be released tomorrow and the other on September 15—on whether the Iraqis are meeting 18 benchmarks essential to achieving political reconciliation. Although we have not yet seen the report that is scheduled to be released tomorrow, from everything I have heard, the Iraqi Government is extremely unlikely to have met any of the benchmarks we have laid out. The Warner-Collins proposal also included a provision to condition the release of reconstruction funds to progress made by the Iraqi Government. Surely, if the Iraqis are not passing the political reforms that are necessary, the United States should not continue to provide reconstruction funds. This requirement which is in the law now is also consistent with the Iraq Study Group's recommendations.

Third, the Iraq Study Group says the United States must launch a new diplomatic effort in the region to ensure Iraq's long-term stability, or to help ensure its stability. Iraq cannot be addressed effectively in isolation from other major regional issues and interests. Both the international community and Iraq's immediate neighbors are clearly not doing enough to foster its stability, and it is long past time for that to change. Senator SALAZAR and Senator ALEXANDER have incorporated these recommendations into legislation I have cosponsored and into the amendment we will be offering to the Defense authorization bill. How significant it is that this amendment enjoys widespread, bipartisan support because it is long past time for a new bipartisan approach to the war in Iraq.

Iraqi leaders must reach political agreements in order to achieve reconciliation, and their failure to do so is unfair to our American troops who are making such grave sacrifices. The responsibility for Baghdad's internal security and for halting the sectarian violence must rest primarily with the Government of Iraq and the Iraqi security forces. At the same time, it is important we continue the mission of fighting al-Qaida and the counterterrorism mission. But an open-ended commitment of American forces in Iraq simply does not provide the Iraqi Government with the incentives it needs to adopt the political reforms that give Iraq the best chance of quelling the sectarian violence. Ultimately,

resolving the sectarian violence requires a solution in which the Sunni minority is more fully integrated into the power structures and oil revenues are more equitably distributed among Iraq's citizens.

This war and the way it has been prosecuted has cost our Nation so much over the past 4 years. It has cost us the lives of our men and women in uniform, and it has cost us billions of dollars. While our Nation's Armed Forces have sacrificed gravely, they continue to answer the call of duty. They inspire us, but they have more than done their part. Many of our Nation's soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen have been to Iraq more than once. This, of course, has been so hard on them, and it has also been difficult for the families they leave behind.

We especially need to thank our National Guard members and our reservists. Far too much has been asked of these citizen soldiers, their families, and employers. Whether they are from Maine or Michigan or Minnesota or Mississippi, these citizen soldiers have put their lives on the line and their jobs and families aside to answer the call of duty. But we as a nation are asking too much of them given the failures of the administration's policies in Iraq.

We must chart a new course. Now is the time to demonstrate to these servicemembers and their families and to the American people at large that we in Congress can move past politics, partisan politics on the critical issues facing our country as we seek a new direction in Iraq. We must demonstrate that we can build a bipartisan approach to bringing a responsible conclusion to this war, and that is exactly what the Salazar-Alexander amendment would do. It is based on well-thought-out, careful, balanced, bipartisan, and unanimous recommendations of the Iraq Study Group, and I hope my fellow Senators will join us in supporting this measure.

Madam President, again, my thanks to the chief sponsors of this amendment for accommodating my schedule.

I yield the floor.

Mr. SALAZAR. Madam President, let me first of all say thank you to Senator COLLINS for her work and for her seeking a solution to Iraq and joining with the other cosponsors of this legislation. As is so often the case, SUSAN COLLINS is part of a group of people in the Senate who try to find a solution to the problems our Nation faces. So I appreciate her comments, and I appreciate her being a cosponsor of this legislation as well.

I rise tonight in this period of morning business to speak in support of amendment No. 2063, which is the amendment to implement the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group. I wish to say first of all that this is probably the most bipartisan amendment we have seen to deal with Iraq. I thank Senator ALEXANDER for his help and his leadership in terms of

getting this legislation drafted. It is legislation we have been working on for a long period of time with members of the Baker-Hamilton Commission, with Secretary Baker and Lee Hamilton, and we will refer to them later on.

I wish to say a particular thanks to my colleagues who have joined with us in this effort, including Senator PRYOR of Arkansas, Senator CASEY, Senator LINCOLN, Senator NELSON of Florida, Senator LANDRIEU, and Senator MCCASKILL, all of whom on this side of the aisle have shown great leadership in trying to find a new way forward in Iraq.

I also thank my Republican colleagues, including Senator LAMAR ALEXANDER, who has worked tirelessly on this effort for the last several months, as well as Senator BENNETT, Senator GREGG, Senator COLLINS, Senator SUNUNU, and Senator DOMENICI for being a part of this effort, wherein 13 Members of the Senate have come together and have said that if we deal with what is the most difficult national issue we face today—and that is the war in Iraq and foreign policy in the Middle East—and how it is that we move forward to try to put together the Humpty Dumpty that has been created in that part of the world, we are going to have to do it in a bipartisan way. It is going to require Democrats and Republicans understanding that we need a new way forward in Iraq.

Despite all of the debate and rhetoric we have heard on the floor of the Senate and around the country on the issue of Iraq, the truth is that there was only one group that has taken a substantive, in-depth, coherent look at the problem in Iraq and throughout the Middle East and has created a roadmap on how to salvage stability in Iraq and try to do our best to create peace in the Middle East. That is the Iraq Study Group, chaired by Lee Hamilton and Jim Baker, along with distinguished Americans who served on that Commission for the last year. Their report came out in December, not long ago. It was the only comprehensive way forward that has been laid out in a bipartisan way since we began this effort in Iraq now many years ago.

Madam President, before I speak more about my amendment, I want to say thank you to Senator LEVIN and Senator WARNER, and others on the Armed Services Committee, who worked so hard in bringing the Defense authorization bill to the floor. I admire Senator LEVIN and the members of the committee and the thoughtful leadership they bring to us on national security issues. I have been proud to support Senator LEVIN in his call for a change in the policy in Iraq. He recognized long ago that we need to chart a new course in our Iraq war policy. Now is the time. This is the place. This is the week, and next week, when we will hopefully craft that policy. I share Senator LEVIN's goal, which is peace and stability in the Middle East and

the safe return home of our troops who are now in harm's way.

As we debate this issue, I hope we will keep in mind the sacrifices our soldiers and airmen and sailors and marines are making on the ground today in Iraq. We must be ever mindful that on these fundamental issues of war and peace there ought to be an American way forward. That American way forward should not be a Democratic, a Republican, or an Independent way forward; it ought to be an American way forward because we have over 150,000 of our men and women in uniform in harm's way tonight as we debate this issue on the Senate floor.

It is a personal issue. When we think about what has happened to the men and women who have died in this war in Iraq, we should all think about the weight we have on our shoulders because it is a significant weight, but it pales in comparison to the weight and the sacrifice we ask our men and women in uniform to bear every day in the fields of Iraq and Afghanistan. So it is to them, who are serving, that we owe the best policy we can develop in the Senate.

In Iraq, 3,601 Americans have been killed since the beginning of the war. All of us who have gone to Walter Reed and other hospitals and visited with the brave men and women who have come home without arms and legs, those who have suffered from brain injuries and other kinds of injuries that will stay with them for the rest of their lives—there are almost 27,000 of them who have suffered those kinds of wounds in Iraq. From my State of Colorado, we have 51 people who have been killed in Iraq since the beginning of the war. We have another 443 who have been wounded. Just from Fort Carson alone, which is the home of many of our soldiers who served in Iraq, we have had 215 casualties from Fort Carson in El Paso County.

It is to these men and women that we have a solemn obligation to make sure we develop the kind of policy they deserve to have as they fight on behalf of a mission for the United States of America. They deserve a policy that changes their role in Iraq from combat to a much more limited role, focused on training and on equipping the Iraqi forces. They deserve a policy that includes a major and new diplomatic offensive led by the United States but aimed at gathering all of Iraq's neighbors around the table. They deserve a policy that underscores the need for a comprehensive diplomatic approach, which is critical to creating the conditions necessary for a troop withdrawal so that we can bring our troops home safely and back to their families. They deserve a policy that conditions U.S. political, economic, and military support on Iraq's progress in meeting specific benchmarks. The Government of Iraq simply must take on a greater responsibility for the fate of their country. It is foremost their responsibility.

These are the broad principles which I believe should guide us as we consider

the various amendments to the bill. I hope we can come together across party lines—Democrats and Republicans—to support a change in strategy in Iraq.

I have been pleased to join with colleagues from both sides of the aisle in crafting an amendment that I believe will result in that constructive change. Our amendment is simple. It implements the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group. I believe the work of that group is a model for how we can come together in good faith. The Iraq Study Group was comprised of our finest and most experienced public servants in America, equally drawn from both political parties. They worked together for months to reach consensus on a comprehensive set of recommendations as required by the U.S. Congress in legislation that funded and created the Iraq Study Group. I appeal to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to take a fresh look at the group's report and consider how we can use it as part of the solution in creating a successful policy in Iraq.

We will have much more to say about our amendment at a later point in the debate. But as we consider Iraq's policy, I hope we can agree that we must change course. I hope we can agree that the brave men and women serving in Iraq deserve our best effort to reach common ground. I hope we can agree on a path forward that will create a better future for Iraq, for the Middle East, and a better and more peaceful future for the United States of America.

Madam President, to recap, our bipartisan amendment, which now has 13 cosponsors, would essentially do three things.

First, it would require a mission change for our country in Iraq. This would be our national policy and our national law if our proposed legislation becomes law and is signed by the President. That change, as set forth in the Iraq Study Group Report and in our legislation, would remove our troops from a combat mission over to a training mission and a mission that is specifically defined to chase al-Qaida. That more limited mission is an appropriate one for us here, and that limited mission is one that I believe has the bipartisan support of most Members of the Senate.

Secondly, this legislation also conditions, for the first time, the efforts of the United States of America and Iraq on the progress that is made by the Iraqi Government in terms of meeting the benchmarks identified in our legislation. It conditions, for the first time, the Iraqi Government stepping up to the plate and doing what they should be doing, which is providing the functional government that brings about security for their own people. It ought not to be the responsibility of the U.S. Government to be in the middle of policing a civil war in Iraq.

Third, the legislation sets forth a comprehensive, diplomatic approach to

deal with the issues not only in Iraq but also in the region. The fact is, as those of us who have been in that region over the last several years know, there are places in that region—countries that have been sitting on their hands and have not been helping bring about stability in Iraq. We also know Iran and Syria and other countries have been playing a negative role in terms of achieving the goal of stability in Iraq. At the end of the day, it will take an international effort and a regional peace plan to bring about the stability we all want not only for Iraq but for the Middle East.

In conclusion, I will say this about the Iraq Study Group and their recommendations. Some Members of the Senate have characterized this amendment as not doing much. Some Members of the Senate will probably come to the floor at some point in the debate and say this legislation is too prescriptive; it tells the President too much what to do. Well, we will handle those particular criticisms.

The one I wish to deal with briefly is this sense that we have gotten from some Members of the Senate that the Iraq Study Group recommendations happened a long time ago and they are no longer relevant today. I know of no one who spent as much time studying these issues of Iraq and the challenges we face there than former Congressman Lee Hamilton, the Chairman of the Commission. This is what Lee Hamilton had to say with respect to this legislation:

The recommendations of the Iraq Study Group are as timely and urgent today as they were in December.

Madam President, I hope that my colleagues open their hearts and their minds to the direction set forth in the Iraq Study Group Report and that they join the bipartisan effort with the Presiding Officer and the Senator from Tennessee and other colleagues who are cosponsors of this amendment to this legislation.

I know my colleague from Tennessee, Senator ALEXANDER, is on the floor. I yield to him.

(Mr. SALAZAR assumed the Chair.)

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I thank the Presiding Officer, Mr. SALAZAR, the Senator from Colorado, for his impressive leadership in helping our Senate and our Congress and our President and our country find a consensus about where we go from here in Iraq. That is, as he said, truly our most urgent and difficult issue. It is on the minds of every single Senator every day. It is the first thing on my mind. It deserves to be. Adding up the lives, the dollars—\$10 billion a month, 3,600 lives, and many wounded—it is a difficult situation.

Mr. President, the occupant of the chair has said this himself. It struck me that we should spend less time in what we think of as the world's greatest deliberative body lecturing Baghdad about coming up with a political consensus and more time working to-

gether ourselves to come up with a political consensus about what to do in Iraq. After all, they are an infant democracy and we are the oldest democracy; we ought to be able to do more than make speeches and have partisan votes. Of course, we respect each other's positions, but at some point, there is consensus about where we go from here.

We owe it to our troops fighting there, when they look at Washington, not to see us shouting at one another but saying, yes, we can agree on why you are there, where we are going to be in a while, what our goals are, and say to the rest of the Middle East that we know what we are doing in Iraq, give them a chance to flourish and say we in the U.S. have free debate, but we are capable of coming to a conclusion, especially on our most urgent issue. That is why this report is so important.

When I saw this report in December, what attracted me about it was, first, the members of this group—Larry Eagleburger, Secretary of State for Bush 1; Vernon Jordan, National Urban League, a close friend of President Clinton's; Ed Meese, President Reagan's Attorney General; Justice Sandra Day O'Connor; Leon Panetta, President Clinton's Chief of Staff; William Perry, Secretary of Defense for Clinton; Chuck Robb, former U.S. Senator; Alan Simpson, the former Republican whip; and, at one point, Roberts Gates, who is now the Secretary of Defense in this administration. They unanimously agreed, after 9 months, about what to do in Iraq. In 9 months, they unanimously agreed.

I thought that perhaps President Bush, in January, in the State of the Union Address, would invite them to sit in the gallery, as Presidents often do, and point to them and say: There they are, nine of our most distinguished Americans who have been working for 9 months trying to understand where to go on our most difficult issue.

They say there is no magic formula. They say it is grave and deteriorating. They say the consequences of the cost, but they have a recommendation and it is a sensible recommendation, and the President might have said it is not my recommendation, it is theirs, but I accept their recommendation and I invite you to do the same.

I think the President would have received a good deal of bipartisan support in this body had he done that. The President and our country need that. A President's job is to see an urgent need, to develop a strategy to meet it, and to persuade at least half the people he is right. Even if President Bush is right about the current strategy, he hasn't persuaded a broad enough number of Americans that he is right or a broad enough number in this body that he is right in order to sustain his policy in Iraq.

A part of Presidential leadership is recognizing that adjustments have to be made to take into account the views

of others and then, having done that, to go forward. That is Presidential leadership. It is not Presidential weakness. It is what I wish President Bush had done in January, and I said so then, and I said so in March on the floor of the Senate. I have learned sometimes you have to say things two or three times around here before anybody hears.

Senator SALAZAR heard it. We talked about it and the outgrowth is this legislation that Senator SALAZAR worked so well on to develop, and so expertly, which Secretary Baker and Congressman Hamilton have told me accurately represents the recommendations of the Baker-Hamilton group.

Exactly what does Baker-Hamilton do? One, it establishes a long-term presence for the United States in Iraq but a limited one. Two, it says as soon as security conditions on the ground permit—and it estimates that would be a year—we would move our combat forces out of the combat business and into the support, training, and equipment business in Iraq. And third, it steps up regional and diplomatic efforts to cause others in the region to help Iraq succeed.

That is it. Those three things. There are 79 recommendations in this book. I am not sure all of us would agree with all of them. But that is not the point. There is a new direction for the United States in Iraq in this book, and if we were to adopt it and the President were to agree with it, what our legislation says is the President should formulate a comprehensive plan to implement the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group. That in plain English to me means the President would take all these recommendations, call together his advisers, come up with a plan, and do his best to implement it.

Would he be able to implement every provision? I doubt it. Would he say this was recommended in December and I didn't get the law until September, so I am going to adjust some timetables? I would expect so. Would he have some improvements to make and some suggestions to make? I would guess he would. But he would come up with a comprehensive plan, and then he would proceed with it. Then, of course, we would have our constitutional duty to review it. We don't have to approve it under our recommendation, we just review it and we appropriate money and we have other things we could do. But what we could say to our troops, the world, and the country is that we have found a common way forward in Iraq. We know what we are doing, and we are doing it together. And that is the job of our Government.

The Senator from Colorado dealt with a couple of objections that have been made. Let me deal with three or four very quickly. We will have other time to do that. I see the Senator from Arkansas is here. I am looking forward to what he has to say.

One objection that was made was this may be dated. It was December. One

Senator said this was a snapshot taken some time ago and times have changed. I don't see this as a snapshot. I see the war in Iraq as more like a movie. You go into it after 15 minutes or you go into it 30 minutes after it started and it is the same movie. You see the same characters. It is the same story. A few adjustments might have to be made, but it is the same story. And as Lee Hamilton said, the recommendations are as relevant today as they were in December. And I would say that February would have been a better time than March to adopt the recommendations. April would have been better than March. Today is better than last month, and last month would be better than today. The sooner they are adopted, the better.

A second point. One Senator said this doesn't have many teeth in it. I used to work in the White House for a wise man named Bryce Harlow 40 years ago. I was an impatient young man. I said: Mr. Harlow, we need to do more of this or more of that. I forget the issue.

He said: Lamar, in the White House, just a little tilt here makes a great big difference out there.

That was a very wise statement. If the President of the United States and the Congress of this country were to agree this month on a new course in Iraq that defined a limited long-term role, shifted the mission from combat to training, support, and equipment over a period of months, subject to unexpected developments on the ground, and stepped up our diplomatic and political efforts, that is a major shift in strategy.

Next, I have heard from the other side that it has too many teeth, too prescriptive on the President. That is not the way I read it. Sometimes that comes from this side. The White House has some worries about that as well. But that is not the way I read our amendment. It is the sense of the Congress that the President and the Congress should agree that the way forward in Iraq is to implement this and the President should formulate a comprehensive plan to do so.

I assume the way the President does that is he gets the law in September, and he sits down with his advisers. I suppose the first person he would sit down with is General Petraeus whose advice we are all looking forward to. He would ask his advice about the surge, ask the Joint Chiefs what they think, ask a lot of people, and then within a few weeks, send us his plan. That is what we ask him to do.

It is not so prescriptive either about the changes in troops on the ground because it says in another section, section 1552, that while we intend to move our troops out of the combat business into support, equipping, and training business—and the goal is within about a year to do that—that it is subject to unexpected developments on the ground.

Here is what the report itself actually said:

By the first quarter of 2008, subject to unexpected developments in the security situation on the ground, all combat brigades not necessary for force protection could be out of Iraq. At that time, U.S. combat forces in Iraq could be deployed only in units embedded with Iraqi forces, in rapid-reaction and special operations teams, and in training, equipping, advising, force protection, and search and rescue. Intelligence and support efforts would continue. Even after the United States has moved all combat brigades out of Iraq, we would maintain a considerable military presence in the region, with our still significant force in Iraq and with our powerful air, ground, and naval deployments in Kuwait, Bahrain, and Qatar.

In other words, when we move out of the combat business into these other areas, we still have troops there, we still are able to go after al-Qaida, we still can protect the troops who are there, and we are sending a message to the rest of the Middle East: Stay out, give Iraq a chance to flourish.

The other thing I have heard, and I say this in conclusion—I thank you, Mr. President, for your time—is that all people hear in the debate in the Senate is discord. I hear another message. It is not as loud as the discord, it is not as loud as the partisan votes, but I hear a lot of consensus. It may surprise some people to hear me say that. I hear a lot of consensus and the seeds of that consensus are in the Iraq Study Group report.

For example, the administration has already begun to act on some of the recommendations in the Iraq Study Group report by increasing the number of troops embedded in Iraqi forces, using milestones to chart progress, by meeting with Iraq's neighbors, including Iran and Syria. The President's National Security Adviser has pointed to the Iraq Study Group report as valuable. The President himself has spoken well of it.

Across the aisle on the Democratic side, where there is a great desire by many Members for a fixed timetable, which is not a part of the Iraq Study Group, the Democratic proposals still have been guided by this document. For example, working on milestones for improvement in Iraq, limiting the role of the United States to one of training and equipping and counterterrorism operations and stating as a goal the drawdown of combat forces by a year from now. That is all part of over there. I hear more consensus than I do discord.

I guess my message to my colleagues is much the same as the Senator from Colorado said. We have a responsibility to vote and state our convictions, but we also have a job to do, and our job to do is to look for a way to come to some consensus about where we are going from here in Iraq and agree on it so when our troops look back, they know we support them, we really support them because we know what they are doing. And when the Middle East looks it up, they know to stay out. And when the rest of the world looks at this great deliberative body, they know occasionally on the foremost issue facing our

time, we can come to a conclusion, we can join hands with the President, even though we may debate with him and say, OK, Mr. President, let's have a new strategy, one on which we agree, we together, and that we need to do.

We have an opportunity that is very rare, and it is impressive to have seven Democratic Senators and six Republican Senators on this subject at this time supporting a comprehensive recommendation. One of our former colleagues, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, wrote a book about Boss Plunkitt of Tammany Hall. Since I said some respectful advice to my colleagues about what I thought our job was, I say to the President respectfully: Mr. President, one of Boss Plunkitt's favorite maxims was: When you seize your opportunities, you take them. This is an opportunity for the President to develop bipartisan support for a way forward in Iraq that has a long-term presence there, but limited, with a different mission for our combat troops and enhanced political and regional support.

I respectfully suggest that January would have been the best time to seize this opportunity, but today is a much better time than September.

I thank the Chair and I congratulate him for his leadership.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I want to be on the record as thanking you for your leadership on this legislation. You shared it with me more than a couple of months ago now. I know you worked on it for a number of months before that. The Senate and the American people owe Senator KEN SALAZAR of Colorado a real debt of gratitude for drafting this legislation and pushing it to the point it has gotten to today.

I open by reading the first two paragraphs of the executive summary of the Iraq Study Group. This was written 6 months ago. It says:

The situation in Iraq is grave and deteriorating. There is no path that can guarantee success, but the prospects can be improved.

In this report, we make a number of recommendations for actions to be taken in Iraq, the United States, and the region. Our most important recommendations call for new and enhanced diplomatic and political efforts in Iraq and the region, and a change in the primary mission of U.S. forces in Iraq that will enable the United States to begin to move its combat forces out of Iraq responsibly. We believe that these two recommendations are equally important and reinforce one another. If they are effectively implemented, and if the Iraqi government moves forward with national reconciliation, Iraqis will have an opportunity for a better future, terrorism will be dealt a blow, stability will be enhanced in an important part of the world, and America's credibility, interests, and values will be protected.

That was true when it was written 6 months ago, and it is still very relevant today.

Today, I want to talk about amendment No. 2063 and encourage my colleagues to consider voting for it and

even cosponsoring it. One of the things Senator SALAZAR did when he drafted this amendment is he worked very hard to try to honor the integrity of the findings and the recommendations of the Baker-Hamilton group, and he has done that. You can look at each paragraph of amendment No. 2063 and see that it reflects the essence of what the Iraq Study Group was trying to communicate to us.

In fact, we have had a couple of colleagues come to us in the last several days and say: Well, if you will just change this paragraph or this sentence or this one word, or if we can just work a little bit on this text, then I might be a cosponsor. Well, the problem there is, if we change that, then we would be trying to change what the Iraq Study Group recommended, and we are not going to do that. The purpose of this amendment is to take this bipartisan commission's work and put it into legislation.

Some people ask: Who made up this group? What is so magic about the Iraq Study Group? Well, let me tell you, it has two former Secretaries of State, it has the former chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, it has a former Supreme Court Associate Justice, it has a former White House Chief of Staff, it has a former Secretary of Defense, and two former United States Senators. This is a group that comes together with a lot of intelligence, with a lot of experience, and with a lot of knowledge about the region and international affairs and history.

I think the Iraq Study Group is the best effort that America has yet put forward on a thoughtful, responsible approach to Iraq. One of the things I like about the Iraq study group's recommendations and their conclusions is it is not just setting an artificial timetable. I am a little bit out of sync with some of my Democratic colleagues on wanting to set a timetable on Iraq. I don't think we ought to have a public timetable in the law. I know many of my Democratic colleagues disagree with me, and a few of my Republican colleagues do as well. But the thing I like about the Iraq Study Group legislation, the Salazar-Alexander amendment, is, it is much more comprehensive than simply a timetable. In fact, it is more comprehensive than just military.

It tries to take a different approach. It really tries to change American policy in Iraq. And it is a multifaceted approach on trying to deal with the issues in Iraq and the region. So what you are looking at with the Iraq Study Group is you are not just looking at a military solution. General Petraeus has said if we just have a military solution we are going to lose. So the Iraq Study Group anticipates that, and it says we need a diplomatic solution, an economic solution, a political solution, and a military solution. I think it is the most comprehensive approach that anyone has put forward yet on Iraq.

Again, this is a bipartisan group that has come together, and this amend-

ment is bipartisan. We have seven Democrats and six Republicans. By this time tomorrow we may have seven and seven, or eight and eight, or some combination thereof. We don't know exactly the number of cosponsors we will end up with, but certainly we hope we will have a solid majority of Senators who will support this amendment when it has a chance to come up.

As Senator SALAZAR said, and Senator ALEXANDER echoed, part of what this bill does is it gets U.S. forces out of the business of combat and into the business of training and equipping others. And, really, what we are trying to do is stabilize Iraq.

One thing I think the Iraq Study Group does over and over, for several pages in its findings, in its report, on several pages, is it talks about diplomacy and regional diplomacy and how important it is to have the neighborhood, so to speak, around Iraq—people inside Iraq and around the region—to have a part in stabilizing Iraq and making the region more stable and stronger.

I have heard a couple of criticisms, such as my colleagues mentioned tonight, and one is that it is too prescriptive, that our legislation is too prescriptive. Another is that it doesn't do anything. And those are kind of polar opposite criticisms. In fact, there is an old saying that when you are settling a lawsuit, if both sides are unhappy, maybe you have a good settlement. So I would say in this situation, at least one way to look at it is both sides are unhappy.

We are trying to thread the needle. We are trying to find a bipartisan solution on Iraq, a bipartisan consensus in this body. In fact, I would say this: With all due respect to my colleagues, and my House colleagues, and the President, the last thing in the world we should ever have a party-line vote on is Iraq. We have 150,000 troops in Iraq. They are getting shot at every day. They are putting their lives on the line for this country and for Iraq every single day. There are people out there trying to kill them, trying to maim them, trying to blow them up—you name it—every day. We should never have a party-line vote on Iraq. We just shouldn't do it. And this amendment right here, this is an effort to try to bring the consensus that we need on Iraq.

Senator ALEXANDER told me a couple of months ago, he said: You know, we talk about needing a political consensus in Baghdad. He said: What we really need is a political consensus in Washington, DC, on Iraq. And I think he is right. The Salazar-Alexander amendment tries to get to that consensus.

I will say this: For the Senators who believe this amendment doesn't do anything, I disagree. I think this is a significant step in a new direction, in a positive direction for Iraq. In fact, you can look at the amendment itself, and it has 13 sections. It is true that 3 of

the 13 are sense-of-Congress sections—3 out of 13. But that means 10 of 13 are binding, 10 of 13 actually change U.S. policy and have requirements that have teeth. I would encourage my colleagues who mistakenly believe this amendment doesn't do anything to actually look at the language of the amendment and they will see it is a very significant improvement over our current policy in Iraq.

Some people say it is too prescriptive. In other words, it binds the President's hands too much. I disagree. When you look at the language that Senator SALAZAR and members of the Iraq Study Group came up with when they drafted this, really what you are talking about is laying out some very specific things but also giving the President quite a bit of flexibility. And I think that is important. He is the Chief Executive. He is the Commander in Chief, and I think Senator SALAZAR and Senator ALEXANDER have found the right balance in drafting this amendment.

The last thing I will say in closing, going back to the Iraq Study Group Report that came out this past December, and back to the executive summary—I started with reading the first two paragraphs of the executive summary, so let me conclude by reading the last two paragraphs of the executive summary in the Iraq Study Group Report:

It is the unanimous view of the Iraq study group that these recommendations offer a new way forward for the United States in Iraq and the region. They are comprehensive and need to be implemented in a coordinated fashion. They should not be separated or carried out in isolation. The dynamics of the region are as important to Iraq as events within Iraq.

The challenges are daunting. There will be difficult days ahead. But by pursuing this new way forward, Iraq, the region, and the United States of America can emerge stronger.

Again, I think those words were true 6 months ago, I think they are relevant today, and I think we need to give the Iraq Study Group recommendations a chance to succeed.

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

Mr. WARNER addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Might I inquire as to the floor? I understand it is available to anyone at this time; no time constraints? I would like to speak for a few minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has been allocated 10 minutes under the previous order.

Mr. WARNER. Fine. I thank the Presiding Officer, and I wish to commend the Presiding Officer for his work, as, indeed, my good friend, Senator ALEXANDER, and this colleague.

I must state, with a sense of total modesty, that my contribution tonight would be just to express some concerns. I have followed the work of your group. Very kindly, the principals on this have invited me to join, but I have thus

far not done so because I can't find yet the answers to some critical issues I have in mind.

First, I say to my colleagues that I had a little to do with starting the group now known as Baker-Hamilton, or the Iraq Study Group. I think I worked with my colleague who did the major part of the work, Congressman FRANK WOLF, and then we engaged a local, highly recognized, and well-qualified group in Washington associated with studies to take on some of the infrastructure. It was a remarkable recruiting of talent, which my colleague recited, and I think they did a very credible and fine job.

It was a major contribution at a time in the fall of 2006 when there was a great deal of concern among many of us about the situation in Iraq. I had returned in that fall from a trip to Iraq and expressed publicly my thoughts that the country was just drifting aimlessly sideways, and that remark, together with remarks of others of a similar nature, sparked the intensity of the administration's undertaking their, I think, very thorough review leading up to the President's remarks when he announced a change in strategy on January 10, 2007.

Now, I have referred to the Iraq Study Group work. I think there were 7, 8, 9 months that they studied, with hearings and so forth. But when they put pen to paper and wrote it, it was a snapshot of the situation that faced this Nation and, indeed, our partners, the coalition forces, in Iraq. They made certain assumptions at that time which led to the strategy they outlined.

Among those assumptions was that we had reason to believe the Iraqi Government, freely elected, in place, was going to become a truly representative unity government of all factions. They committed a certain number of benchmarks, and it was thought at that time that those benchmarks could be met. That, I think is fair to say, was an assumption they had.

Our country, together with our coalition partners, had been in training with the Iraqi forces for some 2 years plus at that time, building up their own internal army, national guard, and police force. So the Iraq Study Group, in my judgment, took a snapshot of the situation in the fall of 2006, put it to paper, and it was in the President's framework of things that were considered when he derived his policy and enunciated it in January.

I, together with, I think, the colleagues on the Senate floor tonight, said to the President, after his announcement on January 10, that I was concerned that more of the Iraq Study Group concept was not infused into his new strategy. I remember specifically addressing the issue of the sectarian violence, now described by some as a civil war of some stage, and injecting the American GI, who really had no background in the complicated culture of the Muslim religion and the Muslim people, into that situation.

And I am not in any way denigrating that religion or that culture. Indeed, it is one of the oldest and, I think, most respected on Earth today. But, nevertheless, there are among the Muslim religion a few who really are dead set on changing the world—we know all about that—and now they are wreaking utter havoc, primarily in Iraq, and to an extent now in Afghanistan.

But that snapshot and those assumptions have not been borne out. We do not have any real evidence before us today, or real basis for much hope as to what this Iraqi Government might achieve in the foreseeable future. The President specifically said on January 10, the Armed Forces of Iraq will take the lead. We will be largely in a supporting role. We will embed forces, we will train, we will supply, but they are taking more of the lead. In fact, they have to a limited extent but not to the extent that I believe are the hopes and expectations that were raised in the President's January 10 framework of remarks. Certainly the Government has not performed as we had hoped and expected. The Armed Forces are making a contribution today but not to the degree that was anticipated in the fall of 2006.

I could go on and recite other concerns I have about this report, namely, can anyone point to where the Department of Defense sat down and studied the strategy in this report and has reached conclusions as to whether it would work better than the current strategy? Would it bring about a greater strength of government? Would it bring about a greater will, simple will among the Iraqi forces, to take on more and more responsibility?

I think, before we recommend to this body and, indeed, if it were to pass and become legislation, to the President, that he consider implementing a major portion, as this amendment describes, of the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group, someone better bring forth a careful military analysis of what might occur given the situation today—not the situation in the fall of 2006—of what would happen if we made a shift in strategy from the one now employed to this.

That is essential, if we are asking Senators to support that. Show us some analytical study of this strategy and how it would bring about greater results than the current strategy being employed.

There is great credibility attached to this report, primarily because of the extraordinary membership—their experience, their achievements in the private and public sector. Do we know for a fact that all members of that committee are endorsing the concept that now the Senate should lift their report as written and prepared some 8 months ago? Are there not some among that group who might question today whether the assumptions that they had that led to their report are still there to support now a shift of strategy? I don't know. I don't see that evidence. I

wish to see something from the members, each one, because I think it would be difficult if we shifted to this Iraq Study Group and one or more of the members of that group got up in the public and said: What we said then is simply not going to work today.

I think that is important because you are trading on the credibility of men and women of clear conscience, extraordinary backgrounds, who did, I think, a very fine job as best they could based on facts which have largely changed, or facts or assumptions that have not materialized.

We talk about a bipartisan resolution. I think the colleagues tonight joined me some weeks ago in putting together a consensus of a bipartisan nature, to go forward and to guide this Nation. It was, somewhat to my surprise, taken almost verbatim by the appropriators and included in the recent appropriations bill—I say recent, it was 6 or 8 weeks ago—and is now the law.

Part of that report that I wrote together with colleagues here said we ought to have an independent analysis of the Iraqi security forces as they exist today and what they might represent 2, 3, 4, 5 months into the future. I must say—I say it with a sense of humility—I persuaded a former commandant of the Marine Corps, Jim Jones, a man who has enormous credibility on both sides of the Congress, House and Senate, to head that group. I have met with him. He brought in distinguished retired military officers. Tonight, as we are here debating, they are in Iraq, preparing a report for this Congress and for the President as to their best judgment as to the military proficiency, the capability and will to fight of the Iraqi forces today and what is the likelihood that will improve in the months to come, because so much of all of our strategy, be it the surge strategy or any strategy, is dependent on that. As the President has said most eloquently: When they stand up, we will stand down.

I believed we needed an independent study, not to criticize the Department of Defense which for months has provided report after report of their analysis, but we ought to get a second opinion. That is now being prepared and will be brought forth, I think, in large part and made public prior to the President making his September 15 analysis.

That report we put together, which was adopted by the appropriators, the bill we had here, required the President to report to the Congress on or before July 15. I believed it was very important for colleagues to have a current analysis by the President, drawing upon the CENTCOM Commander, Admiral Fallon, drawing upon General Petraeus and other elements of the administration, to provide the Congress with a set of facts so, on the assumption we leave here early in August on a recess, we have a current analysis provided by the executive branch.

That report will be forthcoming. I think it is imminent. I happen to know the dates—I think we do—but I am not at liberty to divulge them tonight.

That report will also analyze the benchmarks, which benchmarks we recited in that bill which was voted on by this Chamber, or adopted by over 50 votes. We had to have a 60-vote margin. We couldn't make the 60 but we made it over 50. They will talk about each of the benchmarks and whether the Iraqi Government has made them and, if they have not, what the administration has done to try to encourage the Government to meet those benchmarks.

At this point in time there is a lot of conscientious work going on directed at the September timeframe when reports by General Jones and his group will come forth, the President will make another report, I am hopeful that the intelligence components of our Government will have an upgraded National Intelligence Estimate—so much is to be learned, when all this information is brought to the attention of the American public and to the Congress in the first weeks of September.

It is my urging that colleagues at this time in the debate on this bill, the annual authorization bill, try not to preempt and prejudge how this information will be formulated and given to the American public early in September.

I will close with a bit of a personal story. In 1951, 1952, I was privileged to serve in the United States Marine Corps. I was with a squadron of fighter bombers in old, cold Korea during that winter. I was a ground officer, a staff officer. I don't claim any fame whatsoever. I was doing my duty. But I watched those aviators as they would take off every day. I had occasion, because of my duties, to go up to visit the infantry and watch them.

At the same time, in the fall of 1951–1952, there was sort of a conference going on, largely in Panmunjon and elsewhere, to try to bring about peace and resolve that conflict. I remember these individuals who had to go out in harm's way each day, many of them, and said: I am wondering if I am going to be the last soldier, marine, or airman to take the last bullet because next time we may wake up and they have resolved this problem.

It dawned on them, but they went on and performed their duties. I say there is some parallel to this situation. Were the Senate to adopt this piece of work—about which I say to my colleagues, you have worked hard on, your hearts are in it—it would send a signal that what the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines are doing today, carrying out the orders of the Commander in Chief, it would put in question that strategy. Their minds would go through that same thought: Well, if they are going to change it, why don't we change it right away? Because I don't want to be the last soldier to take the last bullet, if we are going to change this strategy and this strategy

is not achieving the goals that were laid down.

It has the possibility of bringing about a great concern of those young people, so valiantly fighting and giving life and limb to carry out the orders of the President.

I think we have to pause, reflect on what we say and what we do as we are working on this bill. It seems to me the President is Commander in Chief and has made a decision. He is within, I think, 48 hours going to release this report and speak to the Nation. Practically speaking, this amendment I presume will not be brought up—I know as a fact—prior to his statement. But it seems to me we ought to listen carefully to what he has to say and his resolve as to what strategy we should be following in the ensuing days and weeks to come. I translate that into the minds of these young people fighting this fight and their families here at home, so worried, understandably, about the welfare of their loved ones.

I say to my colleagues, have you looked at the intelligence? I have taken it upon myself to go out to the various entities of the intelligence part of our community and specifically asked them about what they think the consequences would be if there were a change to this strategy. I am not at liberty to give their responses but I urge you to access on your own initiative that information and reflect upon it as you move forward and you endeavor to persuade other colleagues to join you in this endeavor.

Mr. President, I thank you for the opportunity to come tonight to express my views to good friends, friends who worked with me and did work with me on that piece of legislation which eventually became a part of the appropriations bill and is now the law of the land. That is the legislation that requires the President in 48 hours to make a report to the Nation and to the Congress and to lay down what his intentions are for the weeks to come, until he gives his next report on September 15.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PRYOR). The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. SALAZAR. I ask unanimous consent that we have another up to 15 minutes in morning business, equally divided between myself and Senator ALEXANDER.

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

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I want to respond to some of the concerns and comments from my distinguished friend, the great Senator from Virginia. He and I had the opportunity to travel to Iraq and to Afghanistan about a year or so ago. There is no one on this Senate floor that I respect any more than the Senator from Virginia. I consider him to be a colleague and a role model in the working relationship that he and the chairman of the Armed Services today, Senator LEVIN, have. It is, I think, an example of how we ought

to do things on the Senate floor more often. The fact that we have a Department of Defense authorization bill, which is a very good bill, in front of the Senate today is a manifestation and a testament to the great work and the bipartisan spirit of Senator WARNER and Senator LEVIN. It is with great respect I offer these comments on some of the concerns that he raised.

First, with respect to the Iraq Study Group report being simply a snapshot of what was happening in December, I respectfully disagree with that assessment of what they did. It was not as if on December 15 or the day that the Iraq Study Group delivered their recommendations that they said this is a picture of what is happening in Iraq today. What the Iraq Study Group did is they took a look at the history of what had happened in Iraq. They took a look at the regional conflicts and at the dynamics that were driving the conflicts in that region and they reached a number of different conclusions which were as true in December as they are today, and which were as true, frankly, a year before December as they are today.

So it was not a snapshot, it was taking an assessment of the historic conflict in the region, some of which has gone on not for 4 or 5 years but 10 years, 100 years, 1,000 years, in some cases, in terms of the sectarian conflict we see today in Iraq.

It was out of that history that they came up with what they perceived to be the best way forward for the country in terms of how we dealt not only with the issue of Iraq but the very integrated issue of the Middle East conflict with respect to the whole future of not only Iraq but also the neighbors in that region.

So it was not a snapshot, from my point of view. In our dealings with both Congressman Hamilton and Secretary Baker, as we came forward and fashioned this legislation, it was their view that this legislation was, in fact, the best way forward. It was written in consultation with input from Senator ALEXANDER. I reached out to both Congressman Hamilton as well as Secretary Baker. This amendment was written with their best thoughts in mind on how we could faithfully implement the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group.

So I daresay that the characterizations that cochairman of the commission, Hamilton, had to say yesterday about the importance and current relevancy of this recommendation of the Iraq Study Group are still as relevant today as they were in December. In fact, Congressman Hamilton said the Baker-Hamilton Commission recommendations today were, in fact, as relevant as they were in December and that the urgency of the implementation of those recommendations, if I may paraphrase him, was even more urgent today than it was back in December as we continue to drift sideways, spiral downward frankly, in the conditions in Iraq.

I do not argue it was a snapshot. It was a recommendation that came out after an indepth study by some of the best experts in the world, including our military advisers. Secondly, my friend from Virginia also says that circumstances have changed in Iraq, that the Iraqi Government may not be as functional as any of us would want the Iraq Government to be.

Well, the fact of the matter is that no one has sent the clear direction by law to the Iraqi Government that support from America to the Iraqi Government and to the Iraqi people is dependent on them making progress on the ground. This legislation does that specifically, as the Iraq Study Group recommends.

Thirdly, there were lots of military advisers that were involved in providing advice, counsel, and guidance to the Iraq Study Group. It included ADM James Ellis, GEN John Keane, GEN Edward Meyer, GEN Joseph Ralston, LTG Roger Schultz and hundreds of other people who were consulted for their expertise in the formulation of the recommendations that went into the Iraq Study Group.

Finally, I would say that of all the debate we have had on Iraq, the fundamental reality still remains the same. There is only the one group chartered, in part because of the leadership of the Senator from Virginia, that took a comprehensive look at the situation in Iraq and the Middle East and came up with a set of recommendations that were comprehensive in nature.

When you look at the bipartisan composition of that commission, they spoke on what is in the best interests of America based on the best information they were able to acquire from around the world and the best military and foreign policy experts we have. So, in my view, the Iraq Study Group recommendations are still as relevant today as they were in December.

I would urge my colleagues to join us in this bipartisan effort.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I thank the Senator from Virginia for coming back to the floor from another engagement and offering his comments on our proposal. He has made an extraordinary effort to do that at a late hour in the evening. I am grateful to him for that.

I hope he will not mind my saying that I have seen him agonize over this war. We have talked about it privately, going many months back before many Senators did, about how do we reconcile our national interests with the lives of young men and women from Virginia and Tennessee, which we have to think about every day.

He was one of the first to raise questions about our strategy. Because he did and because of his background as Navy Secretary and his service in World War II and in the Korean War and his senior position on Armed Services, everyone paid attention when JOHN WARNER spoke.

We have paid attention to his advice every step of the way. What I would like to say, very briefly, in response to my friend from Virginia, is this: I would hope that over the next few days as we consider this, that he will think a little differently about his own contribution to the shift in direction our country needs.

His first contribution, in addition to his statement, is the Iraq Study Group report. He was a little too modest about it. He had a major role in getting it started. If he had not, we would not have the kind of membership on the Iraq Study Group that we had with Secretary Baker and the leaders of so many different administrations.

Their recommendations need not be put on the bookshelf as a bookend, they need to be used.

Having said that, I can understand how he and the President and others might be concerned that if one were to read our proposal too prescriptively, they would say: Well, how can we pick up 79 recommendations and say, Mr. President, do all of those things.

The way I read our amendment, we do not do that. The way I read our amendment we say very simply that the President and the Congress agree the way forward in Iraq is to implement this comprehensive set of recommendations, and the President himself should formulate a comprehensive plan to do so.

In another part of the amendment, when we get to the part about when the troops come home or when the troops' mission moves from a combat mission to a support and equipping mission, that is all subject to unexpected developments in the security situation on the ground.

So I would say with respect to my colleague from Virginia, that another way—and perhaps I am reading it wrong, but the way I read it, another way to read this is to say: Let's take the wisdom of this group of 10 people, one of them who has ended up as Secretary of Defense in this administration, and say: That gives us a framework. We can adopt that together. And then, Mr. President, you take these recommendations and you draw up a plan.

This is not going to be a plan that the Senator from Colorado and I drew up. The President is the only one authorized to draw it up. As it affects troops, it is subject to security developments on the ground; there is no fixed deadline of any kind here.

I assume that what the President would do, if he were to receive this as a law, which might be September by the time it got all the way through the conferences, the first person he would sit down with is General Petraeus and say: Tell me again about the surge. How are things on the ground? What is your recommendation?

The second thing he might do is sit down with General Jones and say: Tell me, General, what have you found out about the position of the Iraqi forces?

Then I think he would call in the Joint Chiefs and the intelligence folks and say: I have to develop a plan. Give me your advice about what works and what does not work. Then he would present us the plan within 90 days. But it is not subject to our approval. It is his plan.

Now, we can then do what we can do with our constitutional duties about it. But the one thing I am afraid we will miss if we do not move to adopt the recommendations now of the Iraq Study Group is the bipartisan support that was in that group that the Senator from Virginia helped to create and the bipartisan support that is on this floor for those recommendations. The President doesn't have that now. Without that, he cannot sustain a long-term mission in Iraq of any kind, I am afraid. I think we have to have one of some kind over a long time.

So I think this goes about as far as it can within this group to say to the President: Okay. We can agree with you. But now you draw up the plan according to these structures.

I greatly respect the Senator from Virginia. I will continue to listen to him. I am deeply grateful to him for coming back to the floor tonight. I thank him for his direction in helping to make possible the Iraq Study Group plan, General Jones' study. I know we will have many more discussions. But the one thing I do not want the President to lose is the opportunity to borrow for our long-term strategy the bipartisan support in this document and the bipartisan support on this floor.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I have had the privilege of serving in this body for 29 years. I have never met a finer gentleman than my colleague from Tennessee. I thank you for your gracious reference to this humble Senator.

I simply say that this has been a constructive debate. We have an honest difference of opinion. But I would urge that perhaps you check into some of the analysis that has been performed in certain segments of the Government about the current operations and how the benchmarks, so to speak—or maybe I withdraw those words—the points of strategy that are in the Iraq Study Group will or will not adopt.

I would simply say the obvious to my colleagues, that that report of the Iraq Study Group is still on the President's desk. I do not think he requires the need of the Senate to tell him what is in it. He knows. He looked at it, I have been given that assurance, very carefully before he devised his January 10 strategy.

The concern, the greatest concern I have is sort of sending out a signal we have throughout, that this strategy would be working better than this current strategy. I frankly felt that and expressed that on January 10. But I have to accept the fact that he is the

Commander in Chief. He made the decision. He decided not, at this time, to implement the framework of the Baker-Hamilton report but to go ahead with the surge.

I am hesitant to criticize him now. I criticized pretty heavily, if you look at the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, in January. I urged in several speeches that more of this Iraq Study Group concept be incorporated in the surge strategy. But having done that, I feel obligated now to support the President because he is committed to follow the law of the land as originated in this Chamber in a bill which I sponsored, and I believe my distinguished colleague from Tennessee did vote for. That bill, almost in its entirety, was incorporated into the appropriations bill by the conference of the House and the Senate, and it is the law of the land.

I hope the report that will be forthcoming in 48 hours reflects the seriousness of how the President approached the mandates of the Congress: Report to us on July 15. I have every reason he will do a report no later than September 15. At that time, he will have the benefit of a surge which is now, as envisioned, fully staffed and implemented by our complement of soldiers, together with such other Iraqi complements and perhaps some coalition forces, and we will then have been shown, did the surge work.

I, frankly, think the surge, if allowed to continue in the September timeframe, will have achieved a measure of what they set out to do. But the corollary obligation of the Iraqi Government to accept an improved security situation in Baghdad, created by the sacrifice of soldiers, sailors, and airmen, and marines in the surge, and the Iraqi fighters with them, they will not have taken advantage of what was achieved by that enormous sacrifice. That is my great concern. I hope I am wrong.

But in the time that remains, I am doubtful the concept that greater security in the Baghdad region will translate into greater activity and accomplishments by the Iraqi Government.

While there may be some military success, I don't see the signs now of the success that was anticipated by the Iraqi Government.

I close by saying I thank you for the opportunity. I commend you for your hard work and what you believe in. That is important in this institution, your own personal involvement and will to fight for what you believe. But I do urge you to take a look at what the intelligence community is looking at, determine the current military analysis. I say to my colleague from Colorado, indeed, there were a number of witnesses, professional retired witnesses with military experience that contributed to this. But again, they were looking at a situation and a factual basis that has substantially changed. I say to my colleagues, look at the intelligence, get some military analysis, and then think through care-

fully if the President has this on his desk still, it is there, do we need to pass a bill in the Senate and send a signal that would begin to engender some doubt in what we are doing now as being the best course of action and the risks associated with the men and women trying to carry forward and respond to the orders of the Commander in Chief. That is my fervent plea to you.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands adjourned until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow morning.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 9:12 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, July 12, 2007, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate July 11, 2007:

CHEMICAL SAFETY AND HAZARD INVESTIGATION BOARD

JOHN S. BRESLAND, OF NEW JERSEY, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE CHEMICAL SAFETY AND HAZARD INVESTIGATION BOARD FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS. (REAPPOINTMENT)

JOHN S. BRESLAND, OF NEW JERSEY, TO BE CHAIRPERSON OF THE CHEMICAL SAFETY AND HAZARD INVESTIGATION BOARD FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS, VICE CAROLYN W. MERRITT, TERM EXPIRING.

CHARLES RUSSELL HORNER SHEARER, OF DELAWARE, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE CHEMICAL SAFETY AND HAZARD INVESTIGATION BOARD FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS, VICE CAROLYN W. MERRITT, TERM EXPIRING.

TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

THOMAS C. GILLILAND, OF GEORGIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE TERM EXPIRING MAY 18, 2011, VICE WILLIAM BAXTER, RESIGNED.

WILLIAM H. GRAVES, OF TENNESSEE, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING MAY 18, 2012. (REAPPOINTMENT)

SUSAN RICHARDSON WILLIAMS, OF TENNESSEE, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING MAY 18, 2012. (REAPPOINTMENT)

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

DIANE D. RATH, OF TEXAS, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR FAMILY SUPPORT, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, VICE WADE F. HORN, RESIGNED.

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

DANIEL D. HEATH, OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, TO BE UNITED STATES ALTERNATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND FOR A TERM OF TWO YEARS, VICE MARGRETHE LUNDSAGER, TERM EXPIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

MARK KIMMITT, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (POLITICAL-MILITARY AFFAIRS), VICE JOHN HILLEN, RESIGNED.

ROBIN RENEE SANDERS, OF NEW YORK, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA.

GENE ALLAN CRETZ, OF NEW YORK, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO LIBYA.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

DONALD M. KERR, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE PRINCIPAL DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE, VICE GENERAL MICHAEL V. HAYDEN, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE, RESIGNED.

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. THOMAS G. MILLER, 0000

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED