

issues—particularly this issue—I thank him. I greatly enjoyed listening to his remarks.

It has been 52 months since military operations began in Iraq. We have now been engaged in the Iraq war longer than we were in World War II. Approximately 3,600 Americans have died and 25,000 have been wounded. More than 4 million Iraqis have fled their homes, and tens of thousands, at a minimum, have been killed. With President Bush's surge well underway, violence in Iraq has exploded to unprecedented levels and American troop fatalities are up 70 percent. In short, from all sides, the situation in Iraq is an unmitigated disaster.

As if that weren't bad enough, our national security continues to suffer as the administration's single-minded focus on Iraq prevents us from adequately confronting threats of extremism and terrorism around the globe. Indeed, violence and instability continue to fester elsewhere at a great cost to our national security.

Last November, when the American people cast their ballots, they expressed their opposition to this war loudly and clearly. As the situation continues to deteriorate, they have raised their voices still louder. I know my colleagues hear their voices, as more and more of them step forward to call for a long overdue change of course.

At the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, those voices continue to fall on deaf ears. Time and again, the President has made it clear that nothing—not the wishes of the American people, not the advice of military foreign policy experts, not the concerns of members of both parties—will discourage him from pursuing a misguided war that has no end in sight.

Congress cannot wait for this President to change course in Iraq because you and I know he has no intention of doing so. He has made it clear that he will continue to pursue massive military engagement despite the wishes of the American people, despite the fact that our military is stretched to the breaking point, and despite the fact that our presence in Iraq has been, according to our own State Department, "used as a rallying cry for radicalization and extremist activity in neighboring countries."

So it is up to us in Congress to listen to the American people, to save American lives, and to ensure our Nation's security by redeploying our troops from Iraq. We have the power and we have the responsibility to act, and to act now. That is why I will support the amendment offered by Senators LEVIN and JACK REED. By passing binding deadlines for both beginning and ending redeployment, the Senate can take a strong step toward bringing our involvement in this war to a close.

I especially applaud Senators HAGEL, SMITH, and SNOWE for putting principle ahead of party by cosponsoring this amendment. I hope their example in-

spires still more Senators to realize that it is not enough to just criticize the war or just call on the President to change course and that we don't need to—in fact, we cannot afford to—wait for more reports and more time before taking decisive action.

The Levin-Reed amendment doesn't go as far as I would like. I am concerned that the exception in the amendment, particularly for "providing logistical support" to Iraqi troops, would give the administration too much wiggle room to "repackage" its military mission instead of redeploying our brave servicemembers. Nonetheless, I am pleased to see so many colleagues—on both sides of the aisle—recognizing, at last, that the President's course in Iraq has failed, that Congress needs to act, and that we can and must safely redeploy our troops.

Other amendments that have been proposed fall short because they don't require the troops to be redeployed. It is not enough to pass something that sounds good but doesn't move us toward ending the war. Weak, feel-good amendments may give people political comfort, but that won't last long. We can fool ourselves, but we can't fool the American people.

Mr. President, it is increasingly clear that the war in Iraq has become the defining aspect of our engagement in this part of the world and that it, coupled with this administration's inconsistent efforts to promote democracy and the rule of law, has unfortunately alienated and angered those whose support and cooperation we need if we are to prevail against al-Qaida and its allies.

Our role in the war in Iraq has generated a level of political turbulence throughout the region and beyond. It has given way to a new variety of al-Qaida-style militants. These militants are gaining prominence in many countries that have traditionally been our allies. The longer we remain in Iraq, the longer these new strains of extremism will threaten the security of the region and, in turn, threaten our Nation. As long as the President's policies continue, Iraq will continue to be what the declassified National Intelligence Estimate calls a "cause celebre" for a new generation of terrorists.

Al-Qaida and its affiliates are not a one-country franchise. Yet this administration continues to pretend otherwise, such as calling Iraq the central front in the war on terror. Al-Qaida's networks have not relinquished their global fight to focus exclusively on Iraq. By deploying our troops from Iraq, we can focus on developing a comprehensive global strategy to combat them around the globe.

As I said, the administration's policies in Iraq are an unmitigated disaster. But there is a way to mitigate that disaster, to lessen the burdens it is imposing on our troops, our national security, our taxpayers, and our country. And that is to redeploy our troops from Iraq.

There is no reason to delay this decision until September. We know now what we will know then, and we know it isn't pretty. We have already read in the Pentagon's first quarterly surge report that violence has increased throughout much of the country in recent months, and we know there is no military solution to Iraq's problems. The only question is how long we are prepared to wait and how many Americans we are willing to have killed before we act.

As my colleagues know, the majority leader and I have introduced legislation that would safely redeploy our troops by setting a date, after which our funding for the war would be ended. That is what Congress did in 1993 with respect to our military mission in Somalia. I continue to believe we must be prepared to take that step again to finally put an end to the war in Iraq.

However, if the Levin-Reed amendment wins the support of a majority of the Senate, I believe that will be an important step forward, and I will likely not insist on a vote on the Feingold-Reid amendment at that time. If our efforts to end the war don't succeed, however, I will offer Feingold-Reid as an amendment to the Department of Defense appropriations bill when it is considered by the Senate. Of course, I hope that will not be necessary, but it will depend on whether enough of my colleagues are prepared to back up their words with action, to listen to the American people, and to say enough is enough.

This war doesn't make sense. It is hurting our country, and it is time to end it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Nebraska). The Senator from Alabama may proceed in morning business.

IRAQ

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I have great respect for my colleague, Senator FEINGOLD. If I am not mistaken, he opposed the authorization of military force in Iraq and has consistently opposed that policy. I am not supportive of the Levin amendment. I think it would result in a precipitous, irresponsible, and dangerous redeployment of our soldiers, confusing to our allies, placing our soldiers who remain in Iraq at greater risk, and placing the Iraqi soldiers, many of whom, indeed, are standing with us right now to fight al-Qaida in Iraq, making their lives more dangerous. In fact, they are taking more casualties than we are. It is not correct to say they are not performing. We wish they would perform much better. We wish the Government was stronger. But, in fact, we are at this very moment shoulder to shoulder in operation after operation around Iraq.

I will note this. This is not a little, bitty nation we are leaders of. This is the United States of America, a great nation. Two months ago, the Congress

of this great Nation voted to fund the surge in Iraq, and this Senate voted 99 to 0 to confirm General Petraeus to lead that surge. We required an interim report on July 15 on how things are going and a more serious, comprehensive report from General Petraeus himself in September. OK? That is what we did, and that is what we are doing.

For the last, I believe, 3 weeks, the surge has been complete. For only 3 weeks have we had the full complement of troops as part of this surge. Already some things have happened militarily that are good in Iraq.

So before we get the general's report in September, without anything other than our own opinions from reading newspapers and watching TV and sitting in our air-conditioned offices, we are now going to come along and abrogate what this great Nation did 2 months ago because of some political pressure or some spot they saw on the evening news, placing our soldiers at risk, undermining the policies we are asking them to execute at this very moment. Even pushing for that at this time I think is irresponsible.

I wish to be on record as saying I understand the difficulties we are facing in Iraq. I understand the courage our soldiers are displaying. I understand the risks they are subjected to right now, and we want to see the situation improve. All of us do. But we voted for this policy. The surge has just started. We need to give General Petraeus a chance to proceed with it and not flop around irresponsibly and come up with a withdrawal policy that is so rapid that I am not even sure the military can effectively carry it out under the Levin amendment. As a matter of fact, they cannot effectively carry it out.

Mr. President, I guess we are still in morning business. I see my colleague, Senator NELSON from Florida, whom I respect so greatly. He chairs the Strategic Subcommittee of which I am pleased to be the ranking member.

I believe I am to be recognized in a few minutes on a separate amendment, but if Senator NELSON has some comments he would like to make at this time, I will consider yielding to him and see what our schedule is.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 1585, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1585) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2008 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe

military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Nelson (NE) (for Levin) amendment No. 2011, in the nature of a substitute.

Nelson (FL) amendment No. 2013 (to amendment No. 2012), to change the enactment date.

Levin amendment No. 2087 (to amendment No. 2011), to provide for a reduction and transition of U.S. forces in Iraq.

Reed amendment No. 2088 (to amendment No. 2087), to change the enactment date.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, under the unanimous consent agreement that was entered into last night, a Senator designated on the Republican side was to offer an amendment at this time and then I was going to, or someone designated by me was going to offer a second-degree amendment.

I want Senator GRAHAM to say what the intention was on that side—that intention has been changed—and then I will comment on what he has to say.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I had intended to offer amendment No. 2064 to strike certain provisions of the bill regarding detainee procedures, legal procedures affecting detainees. I have been talking with Senator LEVIN and his staff to see if there is some common ground we can find about this CSRT process at Guantanamo Bay—Combatant Status Review Tribunals. There are some ideas that Senator LEVIN has that I am going to associate myself with.

I thought what we would do, I intend to reserve my ability to offer the amendment—and intend to do so unless we can find some common ground—and allow Senator SESSIONS to go forward on the Republican side. I will continue to work with my colleague, Senator LEVIN, to see if we can find some accommodation with regard to the subject matter in question, with the understanding, if we can, that we will do that at the appropriate time. If we cannot, I would like to be able to bring my amendment to strike back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I thank my friend from South Carolina. That is our understanding. We understand what his intent was. We both have been involved in some discussions on this matter. Our staffs are involved in some discussions on this matter.

Senator GRAHAM has indicated his willingness to hold off offering his amendment at this time, with the understanding that he will have an opportunity at a later time to offer that

amendment, and these discussions will continue in the interim.

Mr. GRAHAM. That is correct.

Mr. LEVIN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I understand the Senator from Alabama has an amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

AMENDMENT NO. 2024, AS MODIFIED, TO
AMENDMENT NO. 2011

Mr. SESSIONS. I thank my colleague from Florida, Mr. NELSON, and I thank him for his leadership as chairman of the Strategic Subcommittee on the Armed Services Committee, of which I am the ranking member. I want to assert again that I have been pleased to work with him and value his judgment and insight, and value his insight with regard to amendment No. 2024, which I have filed a modification to, and I now ask that amendment, as modified, be called up at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Alabama [Mr. SESSIONS] proposes amendment numbered 2024, as modified.

The amendment is as follows:

At the end of subtitle B of title XII, add the following:

SEC. 1218. POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES ON PROTECTION OF THE UNITED STATES AND ITS ALLIES AGAINST IRANIAN BALLISTIC MISSILES.

(a) FINDING.—Congress finds that Iran maintains a nuclear program in continued defiance of the international community while developing ballistic missiles of increasing sophistication and range that pose a threat to both the forward-deployed forces of the United States and to its North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies in Europe; and which eventually could pose a threat to the United States homeland.

(b) POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES.—It is the policy of the United States—

(1) to develop and deploy, as soon as technologically possible, in conjunction with its allies and other nations whenever possible, effective defense against the threat from Iran described in subsection (a)(1) that will provide protection for the United States, its friends, and its North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies; and

(2) to proceed in the development of such response in a manner such that any missile defenses fielded by the United States in Europe are integrated with or complementary to missile defense capabilities that might be fielded by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Europe.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senators KYL, DOLE, INHOFE, and THUNE be added as cosponsors.

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