

Do you remember when the President's then-Budget Director, Mitch Daniels, told us the war in Iraq would cost no more than \$60 billion? He was wrong. Paul Wolfowitz assured us Iraqi revenue would pay for the war. No, we remember there were a couple in the administration who said the war might cost as much as \$200 billion. They were ridiculed. The President's most recent supplemental request for Iraq was \$200 billion in itself, bigger than the stimulus package we just passed. The President has spent more than a half trillion dollars on his failed policy, and there is literally no end in sight. I think we need to remember this is all borrowed money. The cost of interest on Iraq-related debt is \$23 billion a year for fiscal year 2008 alone. The President's policy is being paid for on a credit card, and we are sticking my grandchildren and yours with the tab.

The cost of a barrel of oil has tripled since the war began, much to the benefit of countries such as Russia, Sudan, and Iran. According to the Joint Economic Committee, if you factor in the cost of the oil, the President's policy in Iraq has already cost the average family \$416,500, and no end in sight.

It needs to stop. We are hemorrhaging money. The waste in this war is beyond disgraceful. We spent \$32 million for a base in Iraq that was never built. We paid a contractor \$72 million to build a barracks for the police academy in Baghdad and instead got a building with giant cracks snaking through newly built walls and human waste dripping from the ceiling. That is from a report. The administration loaded \$9 billion in cash on to pallets and shipped it into Iraq where it promptly disappeared.

I ask you: Imagine what would happen if \$9 billion disappeared from one of our cities. The people responsible would be in prison. But in Iraq, the President shrugs it off.

When the President vetoed the Water Resources Development Act, he said it lacked fiscal discipline. He said it wasn't fiscally responsible. I would ask rhetorically: Not fiscally responsible to maintain our waterways and keep our commerce moving in this, the greatest Nation in the world? This, coming from a President who inherited a budget surplus and turned it into a huge debt, with the largest budget deficits in history as well, and money for Iraq every day, every hour, every minute, no end in sight, billions missing, billions on bases that were never built. It is breathtaking. The President and his supporters shrug it off. They don't even address it. It is unbelievable. The sky is the limit. But when it comes to investing in America or extending the stimulus for seniors and disabled vets, we are told: Sorry, we need to show fiscal discipline. Thank goodness we were able to get that through above the President's objections.

Our own military leaders tell us time and time again there is no military solution. God bless our soldiers. They

have given us a breathing space. Yet the Iraqi Government is just making changes around the edges.

We have trained 440,000 Iraqis militarily. Imagine, 440,000 Iraqis. Why can't they defend themselves? Countries defend themselves. We have given so much in blood, in tears, in sweat, in dollars, in commitment, in trust. After the elections last year, I thought the President would come to the table when the Democrats took over and said we wanted to end the war. We thought he would come to the table. We were wrong. He did not come to the table. He is continuing this war, no end in sight, no plan to get out.

When I asked that question to Condoleezza Rice, I was stunned. She said: I can't answer the question of how long we will be there. I can't answer the question of what it will cost—as if I didn't have a right to ask the question. That is why I am sent here.

I represent, along with Senator FEINSTEIN, 37 million people. We have taken a hit on soldiers killed. We have taken a hit on soldiers burned. We have taken a hit on soldiers permanently disabled. So you better know I am going to ask these questions.

Today, Senator FEINGOLD is saying: Let's get started. Let's start telling the Iraqis, by our actions not just our words, that they have to step up to the plate.

We have to make a choice as a nation.

Is it time for America? It is time for our families, for our soldiers, for our children, for our grandchildren?

Or is it time to continue this open-ended commitment to a war without an end, a war that has no plan of ever ending, a war that is tying our hands in this recession?

I say it is time for a change in America. It is time to vote for the Feingold bill and start bringing our troops home.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at the conclusion of Senator LIEBERMAN's remarks I be recognized for 15 minutes.

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

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I thank the Chair and my friend from Oklahoma.

IRAQ

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise to speak against the measure introduced by Senator FEINGOLD.

It has been only a year since GEN David Petraeus arrived in Baghdad and took command of American forces in Iraq. But in these brief 12 months, he and the American and coalition troops

under his command have brought about a tectonic shift in Iraq that has altered the course of the war there and, with it, the future of at least two great nations—Iraq and the United States of America—and the lives of hundreds of millions of people in those two nations and so many others threatened by violent jihadist terrorists in the Middle East and beyond.

When the surge first began a year ago, many doubted that the violence then raging in Iraq could be brought under control. Even as American troops began implementing this bold new counterinsurgency strategy, some opponents of the war inside and outside of Congress declared that the war in Iraq was already "lost," that the surge had already been "tried and failed," and that it mattered more, frankly, that we get out of Iraq than that we succeed in Iraq.

They could not have been more wrong. Thanks to the surge, the bravery and skill of American and Iraqi troops and the will of the Iraqi people to be free from terrorists, conditions on the ground in Iraq have been totally transformed from those of a year ago.

A year ago, al-Qaida in Iraq was entrenched, in control of, exercising murderous control in Anbar Province and Baghdad. Now those evil forces of Islamist extremism are facing their single greatest and most humiliating defeat since 2001.

This is not just my opinion. It is a matter of fact. In Baghdad, a fact: sectarian killings are down 95 percent in the last year; suicide bombings are down nearly 70 percent; IED attacks have been cut nearly in half.

In the face of those extraordinary improvements in Iraq—and many more I will speak of in a moment in the social and political and economic life of that great country—however, antiwar forces here in America have reacted not with sighs of relief and gratitude but, instead, by doing everything in their power to downplay or diminish our hard-won gains in Iraq.

Rather than admit the possibility that they had been wrong about the surge and about the capability of reestablishing security in Iraq, they, instead, reached for another rationale for retreat. What they argued was the lack of political progress in Iraq and, therefore, that the surge had failed.

But this argument has also now been defeated by facts on the ground in Iraq.

In the first place, the Iraqi people have taken over their local and provincial governments in a grassroots up democratic revolution. At the national level, a response is occurring. It took too long, but it is now significant. Benchmark legislation has surged forward in the Iraqi Parliament. The budget law, passed; the debaathification law, passed; the provincial powers and election law, passed; the amnesty law, passed.

Thanks to the surge, the Sunni Arabs, who once constituted the core of the insurgency, have now risen, because we stood by them, to join with us

and go ahead on their own to fight against al-Qaida and put al-Qaida—the same al-Qaida that attacked us on 9-11-01—on the run.

Thanks to the surge, the Shiites, who had turned in desperation to militias and death squads for protection from al-Qaida and Iranian-backed extremists, are now rejecting those militias, death squads, and extremists. They want a better, more peaceful life for themselves and their families. And the American-led surge has put that within their reach.

Last week, Moqtada al-Sadr announced he is extending his unilateral cease-fire. He did not do this as a favor to the United States of America or the Maliki Government in Baghdad. He did it because in Iraq today, thanks to the surge, and all that has been part of it, the rules of the game have changed. Violence and extremism are no longer the clear path to power in Iraq. In fact, they are becoming the path to political oblivion in Iraq. The people of Iraq want peace and stability and hope.

What then has been the reaction of antiwar groups here at home to these enormous achievements in Iraq? Are they now ready to admit they were wrong about the surge? Even if they were opposed to the war in Iraq in the first place, are they now ready to acknowledge that we are there, we are succeeding, and it would be wrong and hurtful to the United States for Congress to force a retreat now that would, in Churchill's terms, "snatch defeat from the jaws of victory"?

To judge by the resolution now before us, the answer to that question is no. On the contrary, even as the facts on the ground have changed so much for the better, the resolution before us offers the same familiar prescription for retreat and surrender—ordered by Congress, not by our military leaders in the field or here at home—and it orders that, no matter what the consequences for the freedom of the Iraqi people, the future of the Islamic world, and the future national security of the United States of America.

Some claim the war in Iraq is a distraction from the "real" war on terror. Al-Qaida disagrees. And so do I. Al-Qaida's leadership has repeatedly made clear they consider Iraq to be the central front of their campaign against us and most of the rest of the civilized world. According to our intelligence agencies, al-Qaida in Iraq remains al-Qaida's most visible and capable affiliate worldwide and the only one known to have expressed a desire to attack the American homeland—us here at home.

I know there are some who hear these arguments, watch what is happening, and say: Oh, no. The sponsors of this legislation certainly understand exactly how much political and military progress we are making against al-Qaida and Iranian-backed extremists in Iraq and how much is riding on the line there for America and most of the rest of the civilized world faced by this

threat of violent jihadist terrorism. But this argument goes that the sponsors of this kind of resolution feel compelled to offer it to show antiwar groups in the United States that they have not forgotten them.

I refuse to believe that. I refuse to believe—I do not believe it—that my colleagues would so trifle with the honor of American soldiers who have served and are serving in Iraq—too many of whom have given their lives in that service—or they would play such a political game with our national security. I respect my colleagues too much to take this legislation as anything other than what it says. It orders a retreat within 120 days.

It actually imposes so-called caveats on American forces after that 120 days, which are exactly the kind of caveats, limitations, on what they can do that we are now arguing with our European allies to stop in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, some of our NATO allies are there, but they can only do certain things. They cannot enter into battle, et cetera. They cannot go out into the field with the Afghani National Army. We are saying you cannot fight a war that way.

Listen to what one section of this matter before us offered by the Senator from Wisconsin says. Our troops, after the 120 days, can provide training to members of the Iraqi Security Forces "provided that such training does not involve members of the United States Armed Forces taking part in combat operations or being embedded with Iraqi forces."

That is a caveat, a limitation, exactly what we are arguing with our European allies to stop doing in Afghanistan.

The fact is, the legislation, this measure now before this Chamber, flies in the face of the recommendations of our proud and tested commanders on the ground in Iraq. If enacted, it would unravel all the hard-won gains our troops have made in the past year. It would hand victory to the suicide bombers and fanatics who are now on the run. It would betray the millions of Iraqis who are standing with us today because they desire a better, freer life for themselves and their children. And it would endanger the lives of and hopes of hundreds of millions more who live in the Middle East and throughout the Islamic world who yearn for a life of peace and justice, not a life of extremism, death, and primitivism that al-Qaida offers them.

I wish to close, if I may, with a word directed to my colleagues on this side of the aisle, the Democratic Members of this Senate. I have thought a lot about this war, and I cannot help but wonder, in a moment such as this, what some of the political heroes of my youth, who were Democrats, would think if they were here and could see and listen to this debate and read this resolution.

I think of President Kennedy, who declared:

We shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty.

In my opinion, that is exactly what we are doing in Iraq today.

I ask my colleagues: Do these words have meaning, have significance or are these just words?

I think of President Harry Truman, who proclaimed, at the outset of the Cold War:

It must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.

Are these too just words? Isn't that exactly what is happening in Iraq today? The people of Iraq, liberated from the terrible dictatorship of Saddam Hussein, hoping to secure a better future for themselves, now, with our assistance and encouragement, "are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities"—read here: al-Qaida—"or by outside pressures"—read here: Iran. Are these just words? I hope not. I do not believe they are.

There was a time when these were not just words, but they were the convictions that lay at the heart of the Democratic Party's foreign and national security policy.

The legislation now before this Chamber, if implemented, would not, in my opinion, only betray our friends in the Middle East, it would not only betray America's own vital national interests against our deadliest enemies, al-Qaida and Iran, it would also betray the best ideals of the Democratic Party that I joined decades ago.

They were strong and liberal ideals, and I use those words intentionally. Presidents Roosevelt, Truman, and Kennedy, great Democratic Senators such as Hubert Humphrey and "Scoop" Jackson, believed that the party stood for being liberal at home and liberal abroad. What did that mean? Liberal in the classic sense of the term "freedom," which is what America is all about: the self-evident truth that we are all endowed by our Creator with the rights to life and liberty.

So I wish to appeal particularly today to my Democratic colleagues in the Senate to reject this resolution, and in that sense to return to what I believe are the strongest, proudest, most purposed moments of the history of the Democratic Party in recent decades on matters of foreign and national security policy.

In sum, a year ago, the Bush administration acknowledged its mistakes in Iraq and changed course there. It is now time for opponents of the war and the surge to do the same. It is time for them to admit that the surge has worked and that America's security and freedom are on the line in Iraq today, that we are winning there, and it would be a disastrous mistake to impose the policies ordered by this resolution, this amendment, which would deprive our brave American men and women in uniform and the brave soldiers of other countries, including Iraq,

of the victory that they are winning now for the people of Iraq, the people of America, and the cause of freedom, which is America's cause.

I implore my colleagues, vote against this resolution.

I thank the Chair and I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, let me, first of all, commend our colleague who just spoke. Senator LIEBERMAN is very knowledgeable. It has been such an honor for me, in the years I have been in the Senate, to be serving on both the Armed Services Committee with him as well as the Environment and Public Works Committee.

I very much am opposed to Senator FEINGOLD's bills. But I wonder, in this short session, in the short time we have left—we have such things to debate: the budget, housing, energy, consumer product safety, education, farm programs—and I have to ask: Why are we wasting valuable time on these bills? And why at this time do we need another report?

The National Security Strategy was written in 2006, and another will be required 150 days after the new administration comes in. The National Military Strategy review has been completed, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs is conducting his own additional review. The Quadrennial Defense Review will be out later this year. And the National Defense Strategy is also mandated by law. We currently have the strategy in place to win the global war on terror.

The study prescribed by S. 2634 ties the hands of our military by telling them to outline a strategy that does not let them utilize the full extent of their resources.

Furthermore, the substance of Senator FEINGOLD's bills has been debated and defeated. On December 18, 2007, we voted against an amendment of the same nature as S. 2633 from the very same Senator, Senator FEINGOLD. It was a troop withdrawal amendment, it was No. 3875, and it was defeated 71 to 24. We have already done this. Senator MCCAIN said it best when he said that a majority had, by December 18, engaged in no less than 40 legislative attempts to achieve the misguided outcome of precipitous withdrawal. This makes Nos. 41 and 42. All of these 40-odd, time-wasting attempts have been defeated. Why? Because we are doing the right thing in Iraq.

We did away with the oppressive regime of Saddam Hussein, where mass graves, torture, and rape were normal and everyday occurrences. We did away with terrorist training camps in Samarra, Ramadi, Sargat, Salmon Pak—and incidentally, Salmon Pak, in that training camp, they had a fuselage of an old 707 there, teaching people how to hijack airplanes. I guess we will never know whether the perpetrators of 9/11 were trained there. But nonetheless, there were four training camps

there. They are gone now. They are closed.

We helped the Iraqi people create a free and Democratic country, where representation and the rule of law are replacing coercion and terror. The Iraqi Parliament has passed legislation that has reformed the de-Ba'athification, enacted pension reform that allowed former Ba'athists to collect their pensions. They enacted a law defining the provincial and central government roles and responsibilities. They passed the 2008 budget—faster than we are doing it, actually—and enacted an amnesty law that could lead to the release of thousands of detainees, removing a stumbling block standing in the way of reconciliation.

We have done the right thing, and we are winning.

It is interesting. A lot of the people who were the defeatists come back now—Katie Couric is an example—who says we are actually winning. Less than half the al-Qaida leaders who were in Baghdad when the surge began are still in the city. They have either fled or were killed and captured.

In addition to the list Senator LIEBERMAN talked about and in terms of the successes, there has been a 75-percent reduction in religious and ethnic killings in the capital, they have doubled the seizure of insurgents' weapons caches, there has been a rise in the number of al-Qaida killed and captured, they have knocked out six media cells, making it harder for al-Qaida to spread their propaganda, and Anbar incidents of attacks are down from 40 a day to less than 10 a day. There has been economic growth, markets are open, and the streets are crowded.

We have been over there and we have seen it. You didn't used to be able to do that. The Iraqi Army is performing well.

The Iraqi citizens formed a grassroots movement called Concerned Citizens Leagues. This is interesting because this is allowing citizens, as we have in Washington, DC, and in Tulsa, OK—we have groups that go out there to protect ourselves, and that is what these people are doing. They are unarmed. They are going out now with paint cans and drawing circles around undetonated IEDs and unexploded ordnance.

COL Tom James, one of the commanders of the 3rd I.D. in Iraq, said last Friday, February 22:

The current security situation is stable and I am optimistic about the future. Sunni extremists are severely disrupted. They no longer find sanctuary and support from the population.

We are winning because we are supporting our war fighters with a fundamental advantage, allowing them to command and control their forces—not doing it from here. Senator FEINGOLD's amendment serves to tie the hands of our commanders on the ground.

S. 2633 legislates defeat. There is no other way to put it. The amendment

legislates defeat. Secretary Gates said: If we were to withdraw, leaving Iraq in chaos, al-Qaida most certainly would use Anbar Province . . . as another base from which to plan operations not only inside Iraq, but first of all in the neighborhood and then potentially against the United States.

I must remind Senator FEINGOLD and the cosponsors of this amendment that al-Qaida is not the only threat to America and to our ideals. Ahmadinejad said on August 28—this is very interesting. He said:

Soon we will see a huge power vacuum in the region.

A power vacuum.

He said this expecting our defeatism—he is talking about these resolutions—he said:

Of course, we are prepared to fill the gap.

Now here is Iran, a country which recently declared a doubling of its uranium enrichment program and has been testing ballistic missiles, talking about filling this gap, the void that would be created.

A lack of a secure and stable Iraq means instability in the Middle East and a clear avenue for terror and oppression to spread, and already has spread, into Africa.

I have had occasion to be in what we refer to as the CENTCOM and now AFRICOM and EUCOM some 27 times since 9/11. A lot of that time is down in areas such as Djibouti and in the heart of Africa, where we have our forces down there, because with this squeeze taking place in the Middle East, there is a lot of the terrorist traffic going into Africa. As for S. 2634, as the one before it, it is a thinly veiled attempt to end the war in Iraq by legislating defeat.

The bill proposes to micromanage military strategy by forcing the administration to narrowly define the future movement and employment of military personnel. It attempts to define the type of missions the military can conduct and places constraints on the length of time the military can deploy. It falsely presumes our professional warriors would be better served by limiting their deployments rather than supporting their victory over the enemy.

By the way, all these people who now talk to me about the long deployments—and I agree the deployments are too long—I wonder where they were in the 1990s when we cut down the size of our military, when we brought the number of divisions down from 18 to 10. I can remember being on the floor saying this day was going to come and that some day we were going to say: Why did we cut back so far?

Again, COL Tom James, speaking about our recent successes, said:

It all goes back to this window of security being opened, and being able to exploit that window of opportunity through governance and economics and building the capacity of the Iraqi security forces. This has all been enabled because of the surge.

Proposing specific deployment and dwell times would limit the flexibility

of our commanders to conduct operations in the field and infringe on the President's authority as Commander in Chief.

So this is the same flexibility that allowed the Commander in Chief to surge forces and turn the tide in Iraq. I am one of those who personally observed the changes that took place in Iraq with the surge. It was about a year ago right now. I recall a report where our intelligence was actually attending all the weekly Friday mosque meetings, and at that time, my recollection is 85 percent of those messages given by the imams and the clerics were anti-American messages. That stopped in April, and they realized things are working there. There is so much talk about the political leaders, I kind of look at the religious leaders as part of the reason for the successes we have had.

So I think we have already voted on these. They have been voted down, and we don't need to waste any more time on it. I think common sense—when we sit on the Senate Armed Services Committee, as we did this morning, and we looked at the brilliant generals who were testifying before us, such as General Casey, these people spend a lifetime knowing what is going on and how to negotiate wars. We are winning. Things are good right now. I have often thought—I was honored in 1991 to be on the first freedom flight back to Kuwait. At that time, the Iraqis didn't know the war was over. They were still burning the fields. I remember going into one of the houses that actually was the Ambassador to the United States from Kuwait, a family of nobility, going into their home. They wanted to see what it looked like. Saddam Hussein had used it for one of his headquarters, and the little daughter going up to her bedroom to see what it looked like, they had used her bedroom for a torture chamber. The unimaginable things that were going on over there: Looking into the mass graves. I would think that those individuals on the other side, if nothing more—if that were all there were to it—would say we have to finish. It is our humanitarian responsibility.

We are experiencing a victory, the surge is working, and I hope we will be able to dispose of, in a very quick way, these two bills authored by Senator FEINGOLD.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:40 p.m., recessed until 2:25 p.m., and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. CARPER).

PROVIDING FOR THE SAFE REDEPLOYMENT OF UNITED STATES TROOPS FROM IRAQ—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. REID. 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. MCCONNELL. 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. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, as we take up the issue of Iraq once again, the question that should be foremost in our minds is this: Has the situation improved since the Petraeus plan was put into place? And if so, if the terrorists who have been murdering coalition and Iraqi soldiers and civilians there for years are now seriously wounded and on the run, as we are told they are, then the obvious followup question is this: How do we ensure that the progress not only continues but actually lasts?

Our friends on the other side never seem to let the facts get in the way of their proposals for securing Iraq. When the President announced a new counterinsurgency strategy last year, many of them said it would not work. Even the plan's most vocal critics voted to confirm the general who would carry it out. The junior Senator from Illinois embodied this approach when he predicted: The President's strategy will not work, and then cast a vote confirming General Petraeus for the job. Then, when General Petraeus returned from Iraq to report that the strategy was bearing fruit, some of our friends on the other side covered their ears and questioned his integrity.

The junior Senator from New York embodied this view when she said the general's report required "a willing suspension of disbelief," then voted against a resolution that condemned an ad accusing him of lies. And now, after months of positive reports on improved safety and even important political progress, some of our friends on the other side once again want to cut funding for the troops.

In the words of the first Feingold bill that we might be voting on, they want to "promptly transition the mission." They want to tear up the Petraeus plan and cut off funds for the very troops who are carrying it out.

The second Feingold bill is just as odd. It would require the Bush administration, now in its final months, to set out a new global strategy for fighting terrorism even as our military fights the terrorists neighborhood by neighborhood in Iraq and even as congressional Democrats continue to block a bipartisan surveillance bill that we know would improve our ability to disrupt terrorist plots. The second Feingold bill would also require reducing the pace of deployments and an increase in overall military readiness. This would mean not only full funding for the Defense Department but also directing an even greater share of the Nation's resources to defense—some-

thing the junior Senator from Wisconsin has not been known to champion in the past.

In other words, the second Feingold bill claims to advance an effective antiterrorist program even though the first one attempts to block a counterinsurgency plan that even early critics of the war are now calling a success. It calls for a new strategy against al-Qaida even while Democrats in the House block one of the most effective tools we have in the fight against al-Qaida.

All of which leads me to wonder, what possible deduction of reason has prompted our friends on the other side to believe either of these bills is a good idea? We already know what will happen to the first bill. Last year, we overwhelmingly rejected it—not just once but four times. It never achieved more than 29 votes. And that was before the success of the Petraeus plan.

But given what has happened since then, the proposal to cut funds, to scrap the Petraeus plan, makes even less sense today. Just consider what has taken place in Iraq over the last year.

Since the implementation of the Petraeus plan, violence in Iraq has fallen dramatically. Over the past year, civilian deaths are one-sixth of what they were in November of 2006. High-profile bombings are down by two-thirds since June. The discovery and seizure of guns and other weapons caches has more than doubled nationally and tripled in Anbar. The worst kind of violence is dramatically down. Ethno-sectarian conflict—the fighting has fallen from a peak of about 1,100 incidents in December of 2006 to about 100 such incidents this past November. That is less than 1 year. Locals are energized about fighting back against terrorists, with between 70,000 and 100,000 ordinary citizens stepping forward to help local police root out terrorists. And the terrorists themselves are becoming demoralized, with even those who share their religious beliefs driving them into hiding.

This kind of progress is changing minds. One harsh early critic of the war, Anthony Cordesman, recently visited Iraq, looked at the new data, and came to a different conclusion.

Here is what Anthony Cordesman says now:

No one can spend 10 days visiting the battlefields in Iraq without seeing major progress in every area. If the U.S. provides sustained support to the Iraqi Government, in security, governance, and development, there is now a very real chance that Iraq will emerge as a secure and stable state.

A very real chance that Iraq will emerge as a secure and stable state. These are the words of a man whose judgment our friends on the other side were appealing to just last year in arguing for withdrawal. Last July, the junior Senator from New Jersey, speaking on the Senate floor, cited the opinion of Mr. Cordesman before declaring: Mr. President, it is over; your