

are preventing us from getting there. If he still will not change course, we will look at the other tools before us.

Senators have discussed a wide series of steps that we could take. I will review all of them. We are also holding hearings to find out what options we can take. This is the first step. If the President doesn't hear us, we will take the next step. And the next step. And the one after that.

I understand that many Americans are frustrated that our troops are in the middle of a civil war. I am frustrated, too. I wish we had been allowed to start this process, these hearings, these debates and votes a long time ago. But we are moving aggressively forward now. Democrats have been in charge now for 5 weeks. And already, finally, we are having more debates, more hearings, more progress, than we have had in the past 3 years. But I can promise you, this is only a beginning.

We can't have these debates if the Republicans are blocking us in an open discussion of the war. The Republicans need to stop denying a real debate in the Senate, so that together we can move our country in a new direction. I believe for us to have an impact, Congress has to speak out in a clear, bipartisan voice. We could vote on hundreds of resolutions that make us feel better, but that would not help us change direction. It is a strong, bipartisan message from Congress to the executive branch and to the country that has the power to make progress.

I am willing to take the time and do this right and to build the support we need so that at the end of the day we can have a real impact. I strongly oppose the surge. I believe escalation is the wrong direction. I will vote to put the Senate on record opposing the surge if the Republicans will end their filibuster. I will continue to fight for new direction in Iraq.

For too long, the voices of our troops and our citizens have been blocked. Today, Senate Republicans are trying to continue that obstruction. I say, no longer. The debate must begin because our country will be better for it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. DODD. Madam President, how much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 15 minutes.

IRAQ

Mr. DODD. Madam President, let me commend my colleague from the State of Washington for her comments and her views. I associate myself with many of the things she expressed in the Senate. I congratulate her for her words, her passion, and her strong feelings about where we stand today on this issue.

Let me also commend the Democratic leader for his efforts to engage in what is probably the single most important debate this Senate could pos-

sibly be engaged in. There are other very important matters at home and around the globe—but everyone would agree, regardless of your views on policy, that the issue of Iraq and where we stand and the effort by the President to increase the number of troops on the ground in Iraq, particularly to place them in the large, highly densely populated urban areas of Iraq, is one of the most serious issues facing our country.

We have had a series of serious and thought-provoking hearings conducted by Chairman BIDEN of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee over the last number of weeks on this issue, with people who represent a variety of ideological perspectives. Yet without fear of contradiction, I believe the overwhelming majority of the witnesses who have appeared before that committee have expressed serious reservations about this escalation, this surge, placing some 21,000 of our young men and women into Baghdad to try and act as a referee in what we all admit today is clearly a civil war.

Having this debate is important. I wish to take, if I can, the few minutes allotted to me to express my concerns about the process, my concerns about the surge, and my concerns about the overall direction of the policy in Iraq. There is not a lot of time to do that, but let me share some thoughts.

First of all, I believe that every Member in this Chamber, regardless of his or her view on the issue before the Senate regarding Iraq, would do everything he or she could to make sure that our brave men and women in uniform, serving in harm's way, would receive everything they could possibly need to defend themselves. That ought not to be a debating point. I know of no one in this Senate who feels otherwise. And the fact that we have to have some discussion about this very point is a reflection, I think, of what has gone wrong in this debate already.

In fact, I point out that over the last 4 years or so, there have been amendments offered by those of us here to provide different additional resources, such as for body armor, because we felt our troops were not getting what they needed. There has been significant discussion here in the wake of testimony offered by our senior military leaders about what has happened to the combat readiness of our troops as a result of our failure to continue to provide the kind of equipment and support they deserved over the years. Certainly what has happened to veterans coming back has also been the subject of debate. But, nonetheless, I believe most Members here, if not all Members here, believe our troops deserve the kind of support they ought to have when they are serving in harm's way.

And so, the debate is not whether you support our troops. The debate is whether the policy direction the President wishes to lead us in is the right one. That is a debate which ought to occur in this Chamber. Frankly, in my view, it ought to be a debate that re-

solves around at least a legislative vehicle that might have some meaning to it, some bite, some teeth, some reality, some accountability.

My leaders know I have strong reservations about a sense-of-the-Senate debate. Now, normally, we have sense-of-the-Senate resolutions when there is a consensus that develops. Normally, sense-of-the-Senate resolutions are offered around matters that are non-controversial and we wish to express ourselves regarding these matters, so we all sign on or virtually everyone signs on.

I would say if, in fact, the goal here was to get 70 or 80 Members of this Chamber—Republicans and Democrats—to sign on to a proposition that said we think the surge and escalation is the wrong thing to be doing, then the vehicle of a sense-of-the-Senate resolution would have value. But I would suggest here we are into the second day of this debate and we cannot even decide what sense-of-the-Senate resolution we want to debate.

So if you are sitting out there watching this Chamber at this moment, in terms of where we ought to be going and what the effect of what we are about to do is, it is rather confusing, to put it mildly, as to where we stand in all of this. We cannot even decide what sense-of-the-Senate resolutions to bring up. If we are going to have a debate around here that is meaningful, why not debate something that is meaningful?

So my concerns are, in many ways, that given this moment in time, before these young men and women are placed in harm's way—because I know full well, after a quarter of a century here, once they are on the ground, once they are in place, the debate changes. The debate changes. So if we are truly concerned about dealing with the surge and escalation, then I believe we ought to be engaging in a debate that has some meaningful outcomes when it comes to the decision of whether we go forward.

I, for one, would like to see a new authorization come to this body to be debated. The resolution on which we are operating today is one that was crafted 5 years ago. It was fundamentally linked to weapons of mass destruction and the conduct of Saddam Hussein. The first argument was, of course, a fiction. There were no weapons of mass destruction. And the second argument is no longer viable. Saddam Hussein is gone.

Today, we are being asked to place men and women in uniform in the middle of a civil war. It seems to me that if the President of the United States wants that to be a policy endorsed by the American people through the actions of this body, then we ought to be voting on a matter that says this is something we agree with and go forward. That would have some meaning to it, it seems to me. If we rejected it, then the President would have a strong answer from the Congress about whether we are about to continue to finance

and support that activity—again, not undercutting the needs of our troops in harm's way but a legitimate debate about a real issue that requires Members to stand up and vote yes or no.

I realize I am in sort of a minority of one or two here who believes the vehicles we are choosing to debate over the next several days, if, in fact, the debate goes on, are ones that in the final analysis are nothing more than really message proposals. If we are highly divided over which one to bring up, what is the message, in effect, if we cannot even decide which vehicles we want to choose to discuss?

Regarding the surge itself and regarding the Warner-Levin or Levin-Warner proposal, I have some problems with the language of that proposal. It essentially abdicates the power of the purse. It calls for selective diplomacy in the region instead of engaging all of Iraq's neighbors. The language opposing the surge is weak to the point of being nonexistent. And there is language that suggests that nothing in this resolution ought to imply a call for redeployment—something I wholeheartedly believe we should be pursuing in a phased manner.

But those are my concerns about it, both in terms of the process and the language under consideration. I realize other Members do not have those problems. I respect that. But those are my concerns.

Now, regarding the surge itself, again this has been stated by others who have examined this proposal in great detail, including our senior military people and senior diplomats. As I said a moment ago, in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, they have spoken eloquently about their concerns that this proposal does nothing but contribute to the chaos that reins in Iraq.

There are some 6 million people who live in the city of Baghdad. To suggest we are going to send 17,000 or 18,000 service men and women into a city of 6 million, where there are at least 23 militias along with insurgents, Baathists, hardened criminals, and possibly some al-Qaida elements, and that we are going to sort this out in a way that is going to move us toward a political settlement in the country is I believe, frankly, beyond dreaming. I do not think it has any viability whatsoever. In fact, I think it contributes to a further escalation of the conflict in the country and delays even further what everyone agrees must occur: some sort of political accommodation between Shias and Sunnis and Kurds—between Shias and Shias, for that matter. The idea that placing our troops as a referee in the middle of this civil conflict is going to get us closer to that result, I think, has been successfully argued against by those whom we respect and admire in these debates.

Secondly, may I say that, in fact, if you are trying to encourage those elements to get together and you are also trying to encourage regional diplo-

macy to play a role here, then it seems to me we ought to be talking about how best we can achieve that. When you have an administration that refuses to even engage in any kind of conversation or negotiations with governments in the region with which we have serious disagreements, then I think we get even further away from the suggestions made by the Baker-Hamilton study group on Iraq that proposed what I thought were very commonsense, sober, and sound recommendations that would allow us to have a greater likelihood of achieving the success we ought to be pursuing. I see little likelihood of that occurring if, in fact, we are talking about a further military escalation of the conflict here. Every single person who has looked at the situation in Iraq has drawn the following conclusion: There is no military solution—no military solution—in Iraq. So continuing to pursue that option, continuing to pursue that particular goal in the face of all the evidence to the contrary, I believe is a major, major mistake for this country.

I think this body—the Senate—ought to be on record expressing its opinion about it and that we ought to go forward in a meaningful, real, accountable way. Unfortunately, that is not likely to happen. In fact, we may end this debate without voting on anything at all regarding Iraq, as we need to move on to other items that the leadership clearly must address in the coming weeks. So we are missing an opportunity, other than to express our views, which most people have done. I know of no Member in this Chamber who has not spoken out publicly about whether they think the surge is the right direction to go in, what alternatives they would offer in terms of how we might begin to talk about redeployment, and the need for the Iraqis to assume responsibility for their own country.

The American people have also publicly spoken out. They voted for a change of course in Iraq last November and according to recent polls, a majority of Americans oppose a surge. Now I do not believe polling data ought to be the way you conduct foreign policy, but the fact is that the American public is exhausted and fed up, to put it mildly, with our Iraq policy. And let's consider the following data out of Iraq: Over 80 percent of the people in that country believe that our continued presence in that country contributes to the chaos they are facing, and over 60 percent of Iraqis believe it is appropriate to attack American service men and women. Over 60 percent of the people in Iraq believe that.

How do you justify supporting an escalation, a surge in our military presence, when the very people whom we are told we are trying to help in this case believe that, one, we contribute to the chaos, and only a slightly smaller number believe it is appropriate to attack our service men and women? For the life of me, I do not understand how

an American President could possibly support a policy that takes us further down that road.

Now we are not just talking about only two options here of escalating or leaving. There are policies that come in far between these two. For example, there have been suggestions about redeployment, with our service men and women filling other roles like training the Iraqi military, which was suggested by Baker-Hamilton. I think we should do this. We could engage in counterterrorism activities. Border security; we could play a very meaningful role in that as well. So there are those of us here who believe we ought to be redeploying, bring down those numbers, but none of us whom I know of have suggested we ought to be just packing our bags over the next 6 months and leaving Iraq. We are talking about other roles we can perform, as the 300,000 Iraqi soldiers and police take over the responsibility of their country.

Madam President, I am telling you as I stand before you today, if we continue to provide the kind of level of support militarily we are engaging in, there is less and less likelihood that the Iraqis are going to assume the responsibility, both politically and militarily, to take over leadership of their country.

For those reasons, I urge that we find a means and a vehicle, sooner rather than later, for this body—the Senate, this coequal branch of Government—to say to the administration and to others: We believe in a different direction. We would like a new authorization. We would like debate on a meaningful proposal that would allow us to be accounted for, yes or no, as to whether you want to move forward.

Again, with all due respect to those who crafted this, I have no greater admiration for any two Members than I do for CARL LEVIN and JOHN WARNER, people I have served with here for many years. I respect immensely the effort they have engaged in here to try to build a proposal that would attract a substantial majority of our colleagues to support. If you could do that, then sense-of-the-Senate resolutions have value. But I rest my case on what is occurring at the very moment I stand before you this afternoon. We are divided here. We have some four or five different resolutions. All of them are sense-of-the-Senate resolutions. None of them have any meaning in law at all. And we cannot seem to come around a single debate. We ought to be having one about whether we believe our resources and our young men's and women's lives ought to be placed in harm's way. That is the debate which ought to be occurring here. It is not occurring yet. I think that is unfortunate. It is tragic. My hope is we will find a means to address that in short order.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SALAZAR). The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to proceed for such time as I consume.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator was allotted 15 minutes. Does the Senator seek UC for more time?

Mr. KERRY. Well, I ask that, yes.

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

Mr. KERRY. I probably will not use more time, but at least I am protected. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, I listened carefully to the comments of my colleague, the Senator from Connecticut. I appreciate the frustration he expressed about what has gone on in the last hours here and the difficulty of presenting to the country a Senate that appears unable to make up its mind about what resolution we ought to vote on.

The fact is, the last 24 hours in the Senate have not been a profile in courage; they have been a profile in politics. Rather than protect the troops, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have decided to try to do what they can to protect the President. I think they have made an enormous mistake.

The fact is, if we voted on the Warner resolution, those who support the mission, the escalation—but the mission, as the Senator from Arizona said—have a chance to vote no, and those who believe the escalation is a mistake have an opportunity to vote yes. It just does not get any clearer than that.

No matter what happens with all this argument about the process of one resolution versus another resolution, the bottom line is that people who on Sunday shows and in hearings stand up and say they oppose the escalation were, yesterday, unwilling to allow the Senate to vote on that. They were unwilling to have a vote of conscience on the question of the direction of this war.

So rather than protect the troops, those troops who are about to be sent into a mission that, in fact, does not resolve the issue of Iraq—and perhaps even makes it far more dangerous, certainly more dangerous for those troops being asked to perform it—are not protected by the Senate, making its best effort here to try to make a vote that disagrees with the President.

The Senator from Arizona was down here a few minutes ago asking the question of the majority leader: If you do not support the troops' mission, then aren't you, by definition—if you vote as we would like to vote here—not supporting the troops? That is just an extraordinary leap of logic which has no basis whatsoever in real reasoning.

The Senator from Arizona himself has criticized the policies of this administration time and again—in fact, not enough. But time and again, he has said Mr. Rumsfeld was wrong or he did not have confidence in him or this and that. Was that a criticism of the troops? Was that not supporting the troops? I am absolutely confident the answer is no. I know, and we all know, the Senator from Arizona supports the

troops, but he has been able to draw a distinction between criticizing the policy and support for the troops. I will tell you, the best way you support the troops, you support the troops by getting the policy right.

Right now, all over the Hill here in Washington, there are veterans of the Iraq war who are going around and talking to Congressmen and Senators and the public, advocating that this mission in Iraq ought to change, that we ought to begin a process of terminating our involvement there. They have a very different view of their own service than that which is expressed by some on the other side of the aisle. The fact is, there is a growing sentiment among many of those being asked to do this very difficult job that the missions they are being sent on don't, in fact, always make sense.

I remember—and I know the Senator from Arizona remembers—what it is like to be a troop in a war. I remember being on a river in Vietnam when the Secretary of Defense was flying over us on one of his visits to take a look at what was going on. Every single one of us said to each other: Boy, wouldn't it be great if he came down here and talked to us and found out what we really think is going on. We would have loved the policy to change. The fact is that more and more of the veterans I have talked to who are returning from Iraq and some, regrettably, as Senator DODD and I noticed a few days ago, whom we met over there who have not returned alive, are against what is happening and believe there is a better way to manage this war.

What we are trying to do is have a vote, albeit on a nonbinding resolution, a vote that expresses the view of the Senate with respect to this war. We have a moral obligation to make that statement in the Senate. It is our duty to have that vote. The soldiers in Iraq are performing their duty. Why aren't the Senators in the Senate performing theirs? Is it their duty to obstruct? Is it their duty to protect the President, to prevent a vote? Even though they go out publicly and talk about their opposition to the war, their opposition to the escalation, their belief that the direction is wrong, we are not supposed to vote in the Senate on the question of whether you support the troops or don't support the troops by sending an additional 21,000 troops over there. Now is the time for the Senate to register its opposition to the escalation.

If you pursue the logic of the other side of the aisle when they say: Well, we can't have a vote here, we shouldn't express anything, we shouldn't try to change anything, then we are complicit in the very process with which we disagree. If lives are lost subsequent to our unwillingness to stand up and vote, do we bear any responsibility for the loss of those lives? Do you go home and say to yourself at night, to your wife or your children: Do you know I did everything possible to try to stop what is happening? When you make the next

phone call to a mother or father or wife in your State and express your sorrow for their loss in the next days ahead, will you also be able to say, with a clear conscience, that you did your best to try to prevent that loss, to set this war on its proper course? I don't think so. I don't think anybody, with a clear conscience, can say that.

I hate the fact that we are reduced to having a vote on something that isn't at this moment going to change the direction. But every step is incremental; every step is a building block. Every step helps to build the change of opinion we need to achieve in this country, where people will understand the way you best define patriotism and the way you best defend the interests of our troops on the ground in Iraq. Surely, we haven't reached a point in the Senate where you can't even have a debate on the most important life-and-death issue facing people in this country. What are we supposed to do? Pack up and go home and let the President continue to make a mistake? Are we supposed to be somehow satisfied that the President has earned the right and the new Secretary of Defense? Who knows yet; the decision is out. But the record of the last 5 years, 6 years is one of mistake after mistake after mistake after mistake after mistake, one after the other, from the planning to the numbers of troops, to what you do afterwards, to how you preserve the peace, to what kind of politics we are going to pursue.

So we are doing what we can, within our limited power, with 60-vote restrictions, to register our disapproval to sending an additional number of troops, which has been told to the American people is 21,000 but which, in fact, is over 40,000 when you finish with the support troops who are necessary. These troops deserve a policy that is worthy of their sacrifice. No Senator that I know of is not committed to success. We would like to be successful. But what is the definition of success now?

We have heard month after month from Ambassador Khalilzad. General Casey, over 7 months ago, said this is the last 6 months for Iraq. They have a fundamental 6-month period within which they have to get their act together, and if they don't, serious problems.

That time came and passed. What happened? We hear another promise of the next few months. We have had months and even years now of these promises about how this is a moment of turning the corner. This is the critical moment for Iraq. This is the moment of the difference. Everybody has known for the whole last year or more that you have to resolve the oil revenues issue. As I stand on the floor tonight, the oil revenues issue is not resolved. They say they are making progress, they are getting closer, but it isn't resolved.

The fundamental question of federalism, the role between the Shia and

the Sunni and a strong Baghdad and a strong central government is unresolved. That is a fundamental part of the struggle. Our troops, with their technology, with their great weapons, with their unbelievable willingness to sacrifice and their courage, they can't resolve that issue. Iraqi politicians have to resolve that issue. Right now, as we are debating or not debating this issue, Iraqi politicians are still jockeying for power at the expense of our young men and women. I object to that. I get angry that we have to have a private fundraising effort to put together a rehab for our soldiers—thank God for the people who did it—in order to take care of those who are going to be wounded. And our people are talking about patriotism and supporting the troops? We have lost all contact with what is reasonable or what is real in this effort.

It is unacceptable that any young American ought to be giving their life or going through the sacrifice for Iraqi politicians who refuse to compromise, for a legislature that refuses to even meet. Less than 50 percent of them can be convened, a Parliament that doesn't meet, that is the democracy we are supposedly fighting for—Shia and Sunni politicians who are jockeying amongst each other, creating their own militias, each of them playing for a future with a U.S. security blanket lying over it, preventing the full explosion of the kind of sectarian violence that would flow, if all were left to their own devices. That is the one thing our presence is doing. There is a stopgap. It does prevent absolute chaos, but it is creating a slow, cancerous, insidious kind of chaos that is building on itself.

A couple of days ago, the largest number of civilians were killed by a bomb, by one single suicide bomb. It gets worse by the day because the fundamental issues of difference between people who have always lived there and will live there after we are gone are not resolved.

If you stand back from this and look at it and ask, as any reasonable American would ask: What do you do to resolve this, what do you do to make a difference in Iraq, I don't think any American is going to come to the conclusion that a soldier with a gun is going to make that difference. General Casey has told us he doesn't believe it will make the difference. General Abizaid said he didn't think it would make a difference. The President has even said there is no military solution. So if there is indeed no military solution, my question to this administration is: Where is the robust diplomacy and the robust political jawboning, arm twisting that is necessary to get a solution? Where is it? It is invisible to the average American.

If we don't get serious about that diplomacy, if we don't have a summit that some of us have been calling for for 3 years, and that is ultimately the only way to resolve these differences, then our soldiers are being sacrificed

and being asked to sacrifice each day without a reasonable policy that is guiding this war.

What are we left to do? Are we left to say that our colleagues can stop a vote? We are going to walk away, and we are not going to try to do what we can to change this or to stop it? I don't think so. That is not the Senate that I came to serve in or I think most of our colleagues came to serve in. This is a silly sort of process that is going back and forth.

If you are opposed to the escalation, you ought to have a right to vote on it. If you are for it, you will have the right to vote for it. Go register your vote and then go out to the country. The troops over there are tougher than anybody in this room. They understand what their mission is. And what we do, ultimately, barring the effort to either cut off the funds or force the President to do something with 60 votes that we don't yet have, is not going to change their dedication or their courage or their commitment to the specific mission. Because that is the kind of troops we have.

But while we are talking about the kind of troops we have, let me ask a question: Our troops, most of them, go through basic training. They go through a specialized school. They train with their brigade unit company for a while. Then they are sent over. Most of our troops are ready to go to battle, and some of them do, new recruits, within 7 months, 9 months. We are now at the 3-year mark, 4-year mark on training of 300,000 troops in Iraq. What I hear from the experts is the problem with them is not training. The problem is motivation. How much training do you think the terrorists get? How much training do you think the guys get who have those machine-guns and go out? Where is their training camp? Where are their barracks? Where is their 9-week basic training or 12 weeks? Most of those people are out there in a matter of days and hours because they are motivated.

Right now in the streets of the West Bank and the streets of Lebanon and in the streets of Iraq, the guys we are struggling against are getting up earlier, staying up later, and they have more motivation. And the guys we are supporting and putting forth money and guns and all the technology and all the training in the world are not motivated. Many of them don't show up. So unless we deal with this issue of motivation, of people who are willing to die for their country and people who are willing to go out and put their lives on the line and a group of politicians who are willing to make the decisions necessary to resolve this, this is going to go on and on and on, and it is not going to end well.

Everybody knows what the public assessment is on the latest NIE. People are learning privately what it is. The fact is, these are difficult times over there. This is not getting better. It is getting worse. Twenty-one thousand

troops are not going to change that. An escalation is not going to change that. More troops on the ground raises the stakes. More troops on the ground provides more targets. More troops on the ground raises the stakes in a way that says, because we heard it from the administration: Boy, this is kind of our last-ditch stand. And if we don't make this work, we don't know what is going to happen. What a wonderful message to send to the other side.

We are being accused of sending bad messages. If you raise the stakes like that but create a mission and actually can't necessarily achieve it, you are preordaining the potential of even worse consequences because you will make the negotiation even harder. You will make it harder for the surrounding countries to say: This is sensible, we ought to get involved now. And you will make it harder for the people there to make the compromises necessary because they know that down the road is this confrontation with reality with an administration that has already said: We don't have a plan beyond this.

What a predicament. That just defies common sense. So we have made matters worse. We will raise the stakes, but we don't have a way to deal with it. A wing and a prayer. This is a "Hail Mary" pass by this administration, with no guarantee. I think our troops deserve some guarantees of an outcome.

The best guarantee I can think of is to redeploy them in a way that puts more emphasis on what the Iraqis need to do. It doesn't mean leaving Iraq completely. There are plenty of over-the-horizon strategies, such as in the desert deployments, a capacity to be there for emergency assistance, to tamp down chaos and go after al-Qaida, an ability to remain in a truly supportive training role without having our troops on the front line of a civil war. But those are not the ones they are putting on the table, and that is not what we hear them talk about.

We hear these two dramatic things: We have to go down this road where we have telegraphed our move and raise the stakes, and saying they are talking about complete withdrawal. No, they are not. Most are talking about how to achieve success in a responsible way which honors the sacrifice of our troops and meets the important national security needs of the United States of America.

The only way I know of to do that is to get to the diplomatic table; bring our neighbors into a new dynamic where they begin to have credibility; get Syria and others through the Arab League, the U.N., Perm 5, and begin a process of legitimate diplomacy, such as we have read about in the history books of our Nation for years. The great diplomats of our country are aghast at what we are doing now. Listen to any number of them privately, some who served in the administration of George Herbert Walker Bush, the 41st President—Secretaries of State,

such as Jim Baker. Jim Baker is a model in how to build a true coalition. It took him 15 trips to Syria before. On the 15th trip, he finally got President Assad to agree to support what we were engaged in. I am not sure the current Secretary of State has made 15 trips in the last 5 years. I cannot tell you the exact number, but I don't think it is 15 in the years she has been in office, let alone the prior Secretary of State.

Mr. President, we have to get serious about what we are going to do. The fact is, there are over 3,000 young Americans who have now died. I think four were reported in the newspapers yesterday. There will be more tomorrow and the next day. The fact that we are losing young Americans is not a reason to say we should leave. But it is a reason to say we should get the policy right. It is a reason to say we owe them a strategy that supports the sacrifice they are making. We ought to be able to do better than what we are doing now, Mr. President.

So this is really pretty simple. The Iraqi Study Group put forward some 79 recommendations. They have all been cast aside. This was a moment where the President could have brought Democrats to the table, all of us. We could have sat down and come together around, OK, let's put all these recommendations together. These will work, and we are willing to support these. Let's go out jointly and see if we can leverage the full power of the Senate and the Congress and the country behind the kind of strategy we need in the Middle East in order to protect these real interests, which range from Israel, to containing Iran, dealing with the protection of the gulf states, to Lebanon, the fledgling democracy, and obviously to stability in Iraq. We all understand that, not to mention oil and the economy and the other interests that we have. Those are real.

But I respectfully submit that the current policy we are on is recklessly putting those very interests at greater risk. And the measurement of that statement is in the fact that Iran is actually more powerful today as a consequence of what we are doing. Iran loves the fact that we are bogged down in Iraq because it makes it far more difficult for us to play a legitimate card in order to deal with their nuclear ambitions. There is nobody in the world who doubts that. Lebanon is more in jeopardy today, with Hezbollah and Nasrallah in greater positions of threat to the Government and the Prime Minister. Hamas has been in an ascendancy in the last months, and we have been unable to move forward with a legitimate entity with which to be able to ultimately make peace. All these things are worse off today than a year ago, than 2 years ago, and worse off than 6 years ago.

If they are worse off, how do you stand there and say this is a good policy, that we ought to keep doing what we are doing, digging a deeper hole, and making it worse? I was over in the

Middle East a month ago. I met with leaders of the region. I can tell you that while, yes, they say they don't want a precipitous departure and a crazy consequence of chaos as a result, they also do want the United States to play a sensible, constructive, and legitimate role in resolving the fundamental issues of the region.

So I think a lot of us have had enough of hearing these phony debates about who supports the troops. We all support the troops. This is the best trained military that many of us have ever seen. They are doing an amazing job under difficult circumstances. Again and again, I say that they deserve the support of a Congress that gets this policy right and that fights for them while they are over there and guarantees that when they come home, they don't have to fight for themselves to have the promises that were made to them kept. That is what this is about.

I think we can have a very simple vote. If you are for the escalation and you think it is the right policy, vote no against the resolution. If you are against the policy of escalation and you think it is the wrong policy and you want to be counted, then you ought to vote aye for the resolution. That is a vote we can have tonight, tomorrow, or any time. Most people here know where they stand, but they are unwilling to show the American people and unwilling to hold this President accountable. Shame on us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida is recognized.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Missouri for being so understanding. I will make my comments quite brief.

The entire success of the President's plan of escalation is predicated on the fact that the Iraqi Army is, in fact, reliable. Therefore, in every one of our hearings in our committees—be it the Armed Services Committee, be it the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, be it the Senate Intelligence Committee—I have asked that question of the various witnesses, most of whom are representatives of the administration or representatives of our U.S. military. Up to this moment, not one of the administration witnesses can tell us that the Iraqi Army is, in fact, reliable in a plan that is essential that they are, which is to clear the area, hold the area, and then rebuild the infrastructure. In the clear phase, it is not only the Iraqi Army and the U.S. military—by the way, not in a single unified command but in dual commands of which the Iraqi Army will be the most force in personnel—and I have heard that 60/40 is the ratio; maybe it is more than that—60 percent Iraqi Army and 40 percent U.S. Therefore, it is essential that the Iraqi Army is reliable.

Yet every witness has not been able to tell us that, including up to today's witness, the Secretary of Defense, Secretary Gates, who I think is doing an excellent job. But when I laid this out

to him in front of our committee—in this case, the Senate Armed Services Committee—today, his answer was, as of this morning, that we have to wait and see.

Well, I am just a little country lawyer, but doesn't it seem logical that if the President's whole plan is predicated on the reliability of the Iraqi Army, and at this moment we still have to wait and see on the reliability of the Iraqi Army, then is that reason for us to escalate our troops in Baghdad out of 21,000, with some 17,500 going into Baghdad, on a plan that we do not know is going to work?

It is on that basis that this Senator from Florida opposes this troop increase. I have said on this floor several times that the Marine generals in the west of Iraq, in Anbar Province, convinced me that an escalation of troops there would help them, since that is all Sunni, and since the main enemy there is al-Qaida. But that is western Iraq; that is not Baghdad where the sectarian violence is.

Mr. President, I will just conclude my remarks by saying that I think it is our only hope of stabilizing Iraq, that it depends on three successful initiatives: No. 1, an aggressive diplomatic effort led by the U.S. with Iraq and its neighbors to quickly find a political settlement between Iraq's warring factions; two, Iraqis taking responsibility for providing for their own security; three, a massive and effective international reconstruction program.

With regard to the first of these initiatives, an intense diplomatic effort aimed at helping Iraq with a political settlement has been discussed many times by most of our Senators. This Senator believes it must include sufficient autonomy for Iraq's various regions and communities but a stake for all in the central government; an oil revenue sharing law; a reversal of deBaathification—partial reversal—and a revised constitutional amendment process.

The lack of a major diplomatic effort to build an international coalition to support a political settlement is truly baffling. Iraq is in a full-blown crisis.

So we need at least one, if not several, high-level special envoys empowered by the President and endorsed by congressional leadership. Working together, they need to be on the ground every day, throughout the Middle East, in Europe and Asia, and at the United Nations.

The goal should be—within a month—to assemble an international conference at which all of Iraq's neighbors and other key nations would endorse the framework of a political settlement.

It became painfully evident to me during my last trip to Iraq that Prime Minister al-Maliki either lacks the will or the nerve to take on the Shiite militias on whose backing he depends for power. For example, his rushed execution of Saddam Hussein—certainly justified, but horribly carried out—spoke

volumes about his insensitivity to the concerns of the Sunnis.

Initiative No. 2: As for Iraqis taking responsibility for their own security, this will only take place if U.S. troops begin to pull back from the primary combat role they now play and shift to an advisory capacity.

Where are those words ringing familiar, Mr. President? From the Iraq study commission, Jim Baker and Lee Hamilton's commission. They offered this recommendation.

Rather than increasing our forces in Iraq, as the President has proposed, we should be transitioning the troops to training and advising Iraqi troops, training and advising antiterrorism missions and border security.

Finally, the third initiative: The massive reconstruction effort requires a reconstruction czar, a person of the highest integrity who will cut through the redtape, demand our agencies produce the results working together and deliver construction assistance quickly and directly to Iraqi communities.

Concurrently, this official should convene a donors conference to elicit pledges of assistance from our international partners and to hold them accountable for delivering this aid quickly.

In short and in summary, the cost of failure in Iraq will be catastrophic in growing threats to us and to our allies and in more American and Iraqi lives lost if we do not awaken to the reality that diplomacy, not a military solution, is what is needed to end the sectarian violence in Iraq.

I wish to paraphrase what the President of the United States, when I was a student in college, President Kennedy, said in 1961: We must always be ready and willing to bear arms to defend our freedoms, but as long as we know what comprises our vital interest or our long-range goals, we have nothing to fear from diplomacy.

I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I spoke briefly this morning about the need to have votes on the Republican resolutions—the Republican Gregg resolution and the bipartisan Lieberman-McCain resolution. It is very important we give the opportunity for this body to go on record saying, No. 1, they do support and will not cut off funding for our troops in Iraq. That needs to be said in the Gregg resolution.

It is unusual and very unfortunate that at this time, when we are actually at war, we are considering resolutions which would say: Well, we don't support sending more troops over. We are actually sending troops over, and there are some who want to say: Well, we don't support the mission; good luck, guys and gals; you are going over, but we don't support what you are doing.

We owe them more than that. We owe them what used to be the baseline in our discussions. Unfortunately, in time

of war, we can debate and we should debate. However, the Levin-Warner resolution, the only resolution at this point the majority would let us vote on, sends a wrong message to the insurgents, militia, and, obviously, to our troops.

This is a very serious and difficult situation in Iraq, no question about it. We got the national intelligence estimate, and it says these are tough times. But—and I agree with my colleague from Florida—we cannot afford to fail.

During General Petraeus's testimony before the Armed Services Committee last week, he chillingly described the typical Iraqi terrorist as "determined, adaptable, barbaric" and that "he will try to wait us out."

And now we are considering a resolution signaling to this enemy that this body doesn't think the terrorists will have to wait too long. By capping the troop strength, this resolution limits the very leaders this body confirmed as fit to lead and determine strategies and levels of troops.

The proponents of the resolution to limit troop strength must now believe that sitting here 8,000 miles away, this body is more equipped than our military leaders to say what our force structure should be in Iraq. That is unacceptable; it is totally unacceptable.

The question has been raised: Will this plan work? There are lots of challenges. It is a challenging situation. The intelligence community, in its National Intelligence Estimate, says there are many difficult factors; it is a complex situation. But they said this is the best we can hope to do. This is our best effort to make sure something comes out that provides a stable Iraq, one that will not be a haven for terrorist groups such as al-Qaida to operate.

The intelligence community was also very forthright, both in the NIE that we received last week and in testimony several weeks earlier in an open hearing of the Intelligence Committee. They said if we cut and run, Iraq would descend into chaos, giving the terrorist groups, such as al-Qaida and probably the Shia terrorist groups, the chance to operate freely in that country. It would lead to slaughter of more and more Iraqis—innocent Iraqis—and it would likely involve the entire region.

It is clear that cutting and running should not be an option. There may be some people who would vote to cut off funding. We ought to let them have a chance at least to say we want to end it now, not we want to tinker with the military strategy so perhaps we can gain some political points at home.

I have heard it said that some of the people who are supporting the Levin-Warner resolution think we should be following the guidelines of the Iraq Study Group. I had the opportunity on Sunday to ask Jim Baker is this military plan the military plan you have supported? He said: Yes, it is.

Others have said we need a new strategy, and I agree. I agree we shouldn't

have gone forward with deBaathification and disbanding the Iraqi Army. That mistake is behind us. But we need a new strategy that can lead us to victory in Iraq.

It seems to me the place where we want to be is getting the Iraqi Government, al-Maliki and his Sunni and Kurdish counterparts in the Government, to take responsibility and say we are going to establish stability, we are going to end the insurgency. To do that, they have said: We need the support of American troops, not to be on the frontlines—and I agree with those who said we want to move the Iraqis out front when they are stopping the Shia and Sunni violence; that is where they should be. We still have a role, and we can play a very important role in helping to take out the al-Qaida leadership and the other organized international radical Islamist terrorists, whether they be Shia or Sunni, and we can do that. That is part of what the troop surge will do. But we need to have them take over, and we need to train them.

The intelligence community said the police are not ready to take over now. We have found that when we embed American troops, provide American troops in smaller numbers but with Iraqis, they function better. We can help show them how to win, and that is a plan I think we ought to pursue because what is the cost if we lose? Iraq is the center point in the war on terror. And unfortunately, we have no better source than Osama bin Laden, who says:

I now address my speech to the whole of the Islamic Nation: Listen and understand. The issue is big and the misfortune is momentous. The most important and serious issue today for the whole world is this Third World War, which the Crusader-Zionist coalition began against the Islamic Nation. It is raging in the land of the two rivers. The world's millstone and pillar is in Baghdad, the capital of the caliphate.

That is what he calls Baghdad, "the capital of the caliphate." There are similar transmissions by Ayman al-Zawahiri, who said: "We must have Iraq as our caliphate." So we have to wait. We have to make sure we stabilize the area.

It seems to me this is absolutely the best plan than fiddling around and adopting a resolution that says, no, we don't need 21,000 more troops. Some of the same people who said earlier this year and last year that we need more troops now are saying no, no, 21,000 more troops is not necessary. Whom are we going to believe, someone standing on the floor of the Senate or the commanding general who has responsibility for making sure that our troops accomplish their mission and they are safe? If he says we need those troops, I wish to vote for a resolution that says we need those troops. I wish to vote for a resolution that says we shouldn't cut off funding; we need to support our troops when they are in the field.

What is at stake in this resolution deserves a commitment that goes far

beyond what the political pundits and political operatives pontificate in Washington. I don't say all the people supporting this resolution have a desire to undercut our troops, to send the wrong message to our allies in the region or to encourage al-Qaida and Jaysh al-Mahdi. But, unfortunately, that is what this resolution can do.

I had the honor today of talking with the head of the intelligence agency of one of our allies in the region. I said: What message would it send to your country if we adopt a resolution saying the President can't send over more troops? He said: That would be very bad because we want to see peace and stability survive in Iraq. It is vitally important to the entire region, and we are prepared to help the coalition make sure stability is achieved. We want to make sure Iran doesn't take over that country, that chaos doesn't ensue, and we—and he was speaking for several of the countries in the region—we want to provide aid to help rebuild the economy so there will be a stable economy because a stable economy is one of the best ways to convince people they don't need to get 25 bucks from setting out an improvised explosive device along the roadside.

So we would be sending a bad message to our allies, and we would be sending a message of great hope to the people of al-Qaida.

That is not what we ought to be doing, Mr. President. What is at stake deserves a commitment that goes far beyond the political pundits. Those who call for an end to the war don't want to talk about the fact that the war in Iraq will not end but, in fact, will only grow more dangerous if we leave with that country in chaos.

So as we debate these resolutions, Congress's role in the Iraq policy is clear: Either Congress needs to exercise its constitutional powers of the purse and cut funding for the operations of the troops, which is madness, or get behind them. We shouldn't confirm General Petraeus and then say: Oh, but we don't support your plan. So if we are not using our power of the purse to cut off funds and force a hasty withdrawal, what are we doing? Are we telling 21,000 brave men and women who will be going to Iraq that we are uncomfortable with the dangerous mission you are about to undertake but not offering any alternative? I am sure our troops would find that encouraging.

Simply put, this may be a situation where there are good politics, but these good politics equal bad policy. Politics are trumping good policy.

A headline in today's Roll Call reads: "Democrats to Launch PR Blitz on Iraq Vote."

... Senate Democrats are launching a national public relations campaign aimed at tying GOP moderates and incumbents facing difficult 2008 re-election races to Bush in the public's mind, Democratic leadership aides said Monday.

Is that what this is all about? Is that the politics? I think that is a very sad message.

What is at stake is so much bigger than politics, bigger than the 2008 election, and it is a real disservice to our troops to see our national security become a political election gamble.

I previously entered into the RECORD an article about 12 days ago by Robert Kagan, senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and transatlantic fellow at the German Marshall Fund. He wrote a piece saying it is a grand delusion if we think we can walk away from Iraq and not solve it. He went on to say:

Democratic and Republican Members of Congress are looking for a different kind of political solution: the solution to their problems in presidential primaries and elections almost 2 years off.

This is coming, as he indicates in his article, just as American soldiers are finally beginning the hard job of establishing a measure of peace, security, and order in critical sections of Baghdad.

He goes on to say:

They have launched attacks on Sunni insurgent strongholds and begun reining in Moqtada al-Sadr's militia.

And, finally, he concludes, and it is fitting advice for this body:

Politicians in both parties should realize that success in this mission is in their interest, as well as the Nation's. Here's a wild idea: Forget the political posturing, be responsible, and provide the moral and material support our forces need and expect.

Mr. President, I hope we will vote on resolutions that do that.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas is recognized.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, you have just heard an extraordinary speech, and I want to put it in perspective, if I may.

There was a Foreign Relations Committee meeting several weeks ago at which one of the Senators insinuated that the Secretary of State didn't understand this war because she didn't have enough of a personal interest. Well, we thought that was an unfair question because this is a woman who is spending 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, trying to do the right thing for our country, and that was considered a personal thing that was out of line.

We have just now heard a U.S. Senator make a speech that was a wonderful, principled speech on the merits of what he is going to support in this war effort, the resolution that will come before us, and he never mentioned that he had a personal interest. So I want to mention it. I want to mention Sam Bond.

Sam Bond is a Princeton graduate. He is the light of Senator KIT BOND's life. He is his only child, his only son. Sam Bond has been a star from the day he was born, and we have all heard about it. Sam Bond graduated from Princeton University, and he didn't get a job on Wall Street to then sign up to go to business school. No, Sam Bond signed up for the Marine Corps.

Sam Bond has spent 1 year in Iraq already, in Fallujah, and he is going back in 1 month. Sam Bond is going back to Iraq in 1 month, and we just heard the Senator from Missouri not even mention his only son because he is talking about what is right for our country. He believes that Sam Bond's future depends on our doing the right thing in Iraq. So I applaud Senator BOND, and I applaud Sam Bond.

I want to talk about the resolution that we are going to vote on at some point. First, I think Senator BOND is correct; that we ought to have the right to vote on at least two resolutions, not just one that is unamendable. This is, as we have been reminded time and time and time again, the most important issue raging in our country and maybe the world today. So I think having two resolutions, or one amendable resolution, is a legitimate request because there are legitimate differences of opinion. There are legitimate debatable issues that I think the Senate is capable of putting forth for our country, representing the division in our country on this important issue.

Some people say we should never have gone into Iraq. In hindsight, it is an easy thing to say. Let's remember what we were looking at as Senators, and let's look at what the President was looking at as the Commander in Chief of this Nation, whose responsibility it is to protect the people of this country. The buck stopped on the President's desk.

I don't agree with everything the President has done. Not one person on the Senate floor agrees with everything the President has done. But I will tell you this: no one—no one—can ever say this President isn't committed to one thing, paramount in all of his responsibilities, and that is to protect the people of the United States. He is doing what he thinks is best to protect our children and freedom for our way of life.

When he went into Iraq, many people questioned whether it was the appropriate thing to do. I did myself. But the President had just been through 9/11, where we saw airplanes used as weapons of mass destruction that killed thousands of Americans and people working in New York City. So he said, to look at it from his view: I can't afford to take a chance that a weapon of mass destruction would hit America again, only this time it would be a chemical or a biological weapon.

I believe that is what the President was thinking. He knew that Saddam Hussein had chemical weapons, had used them on his own people and had kicked the weapons inspectors out in 1998. He had kicked the weapons inspectors out. Why would he have done that, was the thinking, if he didn't have something to hide?

Then there were the intelligence reports. There were the intelligence reports that we saw and there were the intelligence reports that the President

received which were at a much higher level than even we were able to get. All of that pointed to Saddam Hussein having weapons of mass destruction and the capability to deliver them. So it is a legitimate debate to ask why are we there, but it is not the debate we ought to be having today.

The debate we ought to be having today is what should we do to have success in Iraq because success in Iraq and Afghanistan is a part of the war on terror.

After 9/11, we didn't treat what happened as a criminal act. In 1993, after the first World Trade Center bombing, that is what America did. We treated it as a criminal act. America didn't know this was the beginning of a war on terror. Then there was Khobar Towers, attacked in Saudi Arabia, and 19 American soldiers killed. We treated it as a criminal act. There was the bombing of our embassies, and then there was the USS *Cole*. We treated those as criminal acts. But America woke up on 9/11/2001 and realized, finally, 10 years after the war had started, that America and our way of life was under attack. This was not a crime, it was the continuation of a war.

So we are there now. We are not succeeding. Success would be a stabilized Iraq, an Iraq where people can go to the market in security and buy food or necessities and visit and have coffee on the street. That is what success in Iraq will be. Success in Iraq will be when they have self-governance. Success in Iraq will be when there are not security forces that kill people of a different sect. Success in Iraq will be when they are a stable neighbor in the Middle East and terrorists will not be able to get a foothold.

We are not succeeding yet. How can we do better? We should be debating how we can do better to succeed. If victory is not the end result, we will have failed our children and grandchildren. So I ask, what could possibly be the purpose of passing a resolution in what has been considered the world's most deliberative body that would send General Petraeus to take charge of Baghdad and a new strategy and say, General Petraeus, we have faith in you but not the mission? That is not the right resolution to pass in this Senate.

I hope we can debate that resolution, and I hope we can debate against those who would send a signal to our troops that we don't have faith in the possibility of success in their mission. I want to debate a resolution that would say we are not going to send any more troops, and even if we need troop protection we are not going to send those troops because Congress is going to take the place of the Commander in Chief and the generals on the ground.

I want to debate a resolution that would cut off funding for our troops in the field. I would like to debate what would happen to our troops who are there now if a signal were sent that we were not going to give them the support they needed to do the job they have right now.

I very much hope that we will be able to take up the Levin-Warner resolution, and I hope we will be able to take up an alternative which will not have amendments because those are not in order. But we must have the ability to exercise a voice that would go in a different direction, that would set benchmarks for what the Iraqi Government must do if they want America to stay and help them become strong and stable and free.

I want to be able to debate also the McCain-Lieberman resolution because I think there will be a clear choice. And I hope that we have the opportunity to bring that out to the American people because there are consequences of setting a timetable and trying to have some kind of graceful exit strategy that basically says this is too tough for America, we just can't take it and, therefore, we are going to walk away.

How about keeping our commitments, so that our allies and our enemies will know, when they are partners with America or enemies of America, we will stick through thick and thin, arm in arm with our allies and be formidable against our enemies? How about having a strategy that says we have not succeeded in the way this has gone, so here is a different approach? We expect the Iraqis to stand up now. We are going to help you, but you must lead. You must meet certain benchmarks if you are going to keep us helping you help yourselves.

We want the Iraqi people to succeed because we don't want terrorists to takeover Iraq, get the oil revenue and come and deliver their weapons of mass destruction to America. That is what we are talking about. That is what is at stake in this war. How we execute our responsibilities as Senators who have the leadership mantle is going to determine how successful our troops can be.

I hope we can have that debate. I hope we can have the debate on the Levin-Warner resolution. I hope we can have a debate on the Gregg resolution. I hope we can have a debate on the McCain-Lieberman-Lindsey Graham resolution because I think it would be the right thing for the American people. But don't try to put one resolution on the floor with no amendments and call that an opportunity to have a voice. No one could keep a straight face and say that is a fair process.

There are 100 Members of the Senate. I do not question one Member's patriotism. I do not question the motives of one Member. Everyone has a view that we believe is the right way for our country. We ought to be able to support resolutions that put forward those views. This is too important to have a struggle over process keep us from having the ability to come together and try to reason and pass one good resolution or two that would allow us to have a voice in this debate. The world is going to listen to what we say. I hope we don't send the wrong signal to our

allies or to our enemies that America cannot stand it when it gets tough. America is the beacon of freedom to the world. If we do not stand and fight for freedom, who will? America must never step back from that mantle and that responsibility. Freedom will die everywhere if we don't fight and keep it for America and our allies.

Let's have that debate. Let's have that debate on whatever differing resolutions come forward. I am not afraid to debate the Levin-Warner resolution, and I am certainly proud to support the Gregg and the McCain-Lieberman resolutions. I wish to talk more about it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MENENDEZ). The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am dismayed at where we now stand. Last fall, the people of the United States sent a message to the President of the United States that the current course of his war in Iraq is deeply misguided and that bold, new solutions are called for. The President failed to listen. Yesterday, the Senate, this historic institution, was prevented from speaking.

What we say in this historic Chamber about our course in Iraq, and even more what I hope we will do in this Chamber to correct that course, are among the most urgent concerns of the community of nations. It matters to millions of Americans who have already raised their voices in concern at a strategy lacking in foresight and cratered with flaws. It matters to millions more souls throughout the world whose lives, whose hopes, whose futures depend on American leadership and authority.

But we are silenced as a Senate, silenced because yesterday, on the single most important issue facing America today, on the issue that has cost more than 3,000 young Americans their lives, tens of thousands more their limbs and livelihoods, and countless families their well-being—on the issue where this President has squandered so much of our national Treasury and national good will—the Senate was silent. It was silenced by a parliamentary maneuver.

The people we represent deserve better from us. As you know, I am new to this body, but each time I step through these doors, I bring with me the hopes and expectations of thousands of Rhode Islanders I have heard who know it is time for a new direction in Iraq. Tired of a President who has failed to listen and failed to learn, last November, they joined millions of their countrymen and voted for change.

Whenever I think of these men and women, I am filled with an enormous sense of responsibility. They trusted me to hear their voices and to make sure the Senate hears them too. So I speak today. I share Rhode Island's conviction that it is time for a change of course. Our troops and their families

have made countless sacrifices, and our choices in this Chamber must be worthy of them.

The situation in Iraq is dire, rife with sectarian conflict that can only be resolved by Iraqi political cooperation, not by American military force. A broad consensus has emerged from senior military commanders to the bipartisan Iraq Study Group and throughout the American people that our best course would be to begin to redeploy American troops out of Iraq. Instead, the President has insisted on a costly strategy of escalation that would send more of our soldiers into harm's way. I believe that to be a terrible mistake.

It is my deeply held conviction that in order to create the best environment for real change, the President must announce, clearly and unequivocally, that the United States plans to redeploy our troops from Iraq. That announcement would change the dynamic, enhancing our national security position in Iraq, in the Middle East, and throughout the world in three important ways.

First, a clear statement of American intent to redeploy forces from Iraq would eliminate the Iraqi insurgents' case that we are an army of occupation. It would eliminate it once and forever. The Iraqi population's nationalist sentiment would no longer be engaged against us. The Iraqi people don't want us there, and a majority of them consequently believe it is acceptable to kill American soldiers. That is not an environment in which we can gain likely success.

Second, without a buffering American presence, the world community would understand it must face the consequences of the Iraq situation. Other nations in the region and elsewhere around the world would be motivated to take a more active role to work together to bring peace and stability to the region. Now, for all intents and purposes, we are alone.

In particular, Arab nations, facing the risk of a pan-Arabic, Sunni-Shiite conflict igniting in Iraq, must then assume greater responsibility for averting such an outcome. Under current U.S. policy, these Arab countries have little incentive to help calm the conflict or reduce the violence. Any incentive they have is buffered by America's role as the peacekeeper and offset by the cost, in so many eyes, of even associating with the United States.

Third, Iran presently gains immensely from fomenting violence in Iraq. Keeping America bogged down in a civil war in Iraq undermines critical U.S. policy objectives, including the effort to work effectively with the international community to address the serious threat posed by Iran's nuclear weapons program. The threat of American redeployment changes that calculation for Iran. The advantages Iran currently enjoys from bogging America down in Iraq would diminish or evaporate.

Some argue—we hear it right in this Chamber—that to fail to support this

President's judgment is to fail to support the troops. Never mind the manifest and repeated flaws in that judgment: Misjudgment on weapons of mass destruction; misjudgment on when the mission was completed; misjudgment on the risks, costs, and demands of occupation; misjudgment on the wisdom of de-Baathification; misjudgment that the insurgency was in its last throes; and now misjudgment on whether there is civil war. There has never been a record of error, failure, and falsity similar to it. Now, the unfortunate fact is the President's bad misjudgments and failed diplomacy leave us few good options.

Changing the Iraq dynamic can set the stage for an aggressive international diplomatic effort to restore security in Iraq and combat terrorism worldwide. An intense diplomatic effort, with the parties thus motivated by the prospect of American redeployment, is our best remaining real chance for success. It will also staunch the hemorrhage of two critical American assets: Our international standing and our national Treasury—and most importantly, it will bring our troops home.

Without such a change in the dynamic, we are likely to remain trapped there, seen by many as more provocative than helpful, a great nation ensnared. For the safety of our troops, the stability of the region and the security of our Nation, that must not happen.

The situation in Iraq is grave and deteriorating. It undermines our national security by hurting our troops and their families, by diverting our attention from al-Qaida and other critical threats, and by degrading our military capability for other actions. The Iraq quagmire demands a new strategy that is both bold and realistic. If we lead boldly, sensitively, and firmly on the diplomatic front, if we speak, again, in realities instead of slogans, if we build consensus instead of polarizing nations, we can restore America's prestige, leadership, and good will. The President's escalation does not help achieve these goals, and yesterday the Senate had the opportunity to say so. We did not. We were silenced—silenced by parliamentary maneuver.

The Senate has been called the world's greatest deliberative body. Let us deliberate. The debate over our course in Iraq echoes all over the world, from world capitals to the kitchen tables of middle America—everywhere except this silenced Chamber.

Mr. President, I call on my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to stop the stalling and allow this body to deliberate. Ultimately, the free and unfettered clash of ideas that a real Senate debate represents is exactly what our troops in Iraq are fighting for.

Let us, in this historic Chamber, not undermine their sacrifice with our silence.

For my part, it remains my view that announcing our intent to bring our sol-

diery home will help us start down the long road toward renewed American strength and leadership in the region and in the world. It is a critical journey, and it is long past time to begin.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

SOURCES OF ENERGY IN AMERICA

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, every time a President gives a State of the Union message, there are a lot of people who praise it, there are a lot of people who disagree with it. One of the areas where there was some agreement—but also a lot of disagreement—was on the energy package the President suggested in his State of the Union message. Since I come from a State that is No. 1 in almost all of the alternative energies such as biodiesel, such as wind—we are third in wind energy, we are first in biodiesel, we are first in ethanol production—I would like to set the record straight and encourage people to see that a lot of good has been accomplished over the last several years and that we ought to forget a lot of disagreeing rhetoric and move on and even enhance what we have already done. So I am here to address an issue President Bush mentioned in his State of the Union message and an issue that those particularly on the other side of the aisle have been quick to criticize.

In the President's speech to the Nation, he once again highlighted the need for the United States to reduce our dependence upon foreign oil. This has been something that Presidents have been stating on a very regular basis, both Republican and Democratic, going back to 1973, when President Nixon gave a speech, during the first energy crisis, speaking about energy independence. Of course, President Nixon was saying we can do it by 1980. I don't know why he picked that date, but actually we are much more dependent upon foreign sources now than we were even in 1980 because of the consumption of the United States and the standard of living we have. People want to be free to drive their car wherever they want to drive it as long as they want to. Whether it is a big car or little car, it is freedom in America to do it, so we become more dependent. But also along the lines of alternative energy, we have made tremendous progress.

So President Bush did not do anything that Presidents probably haven't been doing for the last 34 years, in saying we need to move toward energy independence, but what they mean is less dependence upon foreign sources and less dependence upon petroleum. Because I would be misleading my colleagues, I would be misleading my constituents if I said we have the capability—at least I don't know that we have the capability—of being totally independent of foreign sources of energy, but we surely have the capability