

is better. We did find Scud missiles buried in the sand between Damascus and Baghdad in Iraq, we found traces of sarin gas, we found mobile biological laboratories dismantled, and we found mass graves where hundreds of thousands of Iraqis had been killed. The evidence was there.

Second, in terms of the Government and establishing elections, the Iraqi people in 18 months held three elections, wrote a constitution, and established a government. Goal 2 accomplished.

Goal 3, to adequately train the Iraqi Army so it could defend the people of Iraq and that fledgling government. I think it is very instructive to recognize what has happened in recent days and in past months. Yesterday, the British left Basra, and as they left Basra and their post, who replaced them? Not the American military but the Iraqi military, a clear and distinct sign that the Iraqi military is gaining the ability to defend this fledgling country on their own.

Second, what happened 3 weeks ago. We finally captured and killed the bomber who set off the mosque bombing that set off the sectarian violence about a year and a half ago. Who captured him? Mr. President, 1,000 Iraqi troops with close air support by America, but the ground action was the Iraqis. On the "clear and hold and secure" of the surge, we have Americans and Iraqi soldiers embedded, side by side, holding those parts of Baghdad that we have secured, holding them so reconstruction can take place.

We are making positive steps, and we are on the cusp of the third goal being accomplished. We are not there yet, but we are on the cusp of it.

Where are we? We need to listen to what General Petraeus comes back and recommends, and Ambassador Crocker. I will not prejudge what the report will say because I have not seen it yet, but I think we all know there is enough evidence that we are coming close that it is very important we pay attention to the months ahead, which will be the most critical in our engagement in Iraq.

To that end, I want to share a little bit of the advice of a good friend to me, Lucy Harris, in Ellijay, GA. Lucy and I and her husband Rick and her late son Noah's fiancée—he was killed in Iraq—sat with a reporter and photographer from the Washington Post, and they recorded our conversation that particular day for an article they wrote recently. But I want to share with the Members the Senate some of the advice Lucy gave to me. She lost her only son. Her only son was a cheerleader at the University of Georgia on 9/11/2001 who, upon that tragic day, walked up to the military ROTC on campus as a junior and said: I want to join and get a commission.

They said: You can't because you don't have enough time. You have to have 2 years.

He said: I will make up the time.

Finally, the Army reluctantly agreed, and sure enough, in 18 months Noah Harris got his commission in ROTC and became a second lieutenant in the U.S. military. He volunteered because he wanted to confront the evil and terror he saw on that particular day.

He was known as the Beanie Baby soldier in Iraq. He led a platoon in Iraq, and he carried, in one big pocket on his right leg, bullets, and in another big pocket on his left leg he carried Beanie Babies, and he shared them with the Iraqi kids as he would go through securing and patrolling areas of Baghdad. His unit started carrying Beanie Babies and other good things for the Iraqi kids. While defending freedom and hopefully securing that country, he was also winning the minds of those children.

Tragically, he was lost in the explosion of an IED in Iraq. I attended his funeral and saw the outpouring of love from a thousand people in his community. So when Lucy sat down last week in Ellijay, GA, her advice to me was important and her advice to me was what appears on their car's license plate: IDWIC, those letters, because her son, Noah, who e-mailed back and forth with me before his tragic passing, always said: IDWIC—I do what I can. That was his motto. That is why he went to Iraq, to do what he could for freedom and democracy, for peace and to end terror.

That is what his mom Lucy and Rick do today—they do what they can. In their comments to the reporter, when asked what they think about all the debate going on in Washington about Iraq, Lucy said: I think the debate is healthy. I watch it. I think it is important. I think we should all do what we can, but we need to make sure that my son Noah did not die in vain.

To that end, as I approach the votes we will take—I don't know on what, but I know it will be about Iraq—in the months and weeks ahead following the Petraeus report, I will do what I can to give us a chance to finish the job, win the victory the President outlined at the outset 5 years ago on our entering Iraq, and honor and pay tribute to the sacrifice of the 3,700 or more Americans who have given their lives in the effort of the overall war on terror and in particular the securing of Iraq and the opportunity for a fledgling democracy to take hold in the Middle East.

These are difficult times but not nearly as difficult for us as for the men and women who voluntarily go because they believe in our cause. I stand here today in the Senate hoping that all of us will not prejudge what Ambassador Crocker will say, or General Petraeus, nor should we declare defeat when we have victory within reach, nor should we declare victory if it is not there. But we should move forward in order to honor the sacrifice of the men and women who fight for our country voluntarily every day.

For me, I am going to do what I can. I am going to take Lucy Harris and

Rick Harris and Ashley's advice. I am going to honor the life of Noah by listening closely to the report, by recognizing why we went in the first place, and see to it we give ourselves a chance to declare the victory that has been so bravely fought for by the men and women of the U.S. military.

I hope we will all have open minds and open hearts and give thanks for the sacrifices taking place and recognize again why we went in the first place and recognize again how close we are to achieving our goals.

I yield the remainder of my time and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WHITEHOUSE). The Senator from South Carolina is recognized.

#### IRAQ

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I wish to take this opportunity to talk a little bit about what I think is a very important debate, and that is about Iraq war policy. Next week, I believe, General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker will be coming to the Congress to brief us about the situation as they see it. I think most of us in the Senate are very anxious to hear what our Ambassador has to say and our leading general in Iraq. There are GAO reports about benchmarks. The idea that we are trying to evaluate performance and progress in Iraq is a good thing. Some of the benchmarks have not been met, apparently, some have. It depends upon how you measure. The one thing I would caution my colleagues to not forget is that the biggest benchmark is whether our presence in Iraq should be maintained in terms of our national security interests or should we leave. If we do leave, how does that affect our long-term security interests?

I think the biggest issue facing each Senator is how they view the war in Iraq. This is a legitimate debate. There are two different ways of looking at the engagement in Iraq. Some Senators believe our military presence in Iraq at such levels is propping up the Iraqi Government; they are relying too much upon us, they are putting off the hard decisions because we are doing the fighting and they can kind of take their time, and that we should put more pressure on the Iraqi Government by beginning to withdraw troops.

There is another view that any presence in Iraq is creating more terrorism than it is preventing, that our presence in Iraq is creating instability and problems for the Mideast as a whole, and that we should basically get our eye back on the ball, Afghanistan, al-Qaida operations in other areas.

Those are a couple of views. I hope I fairly summarized it. I do not want to put words in people's mouths. But I think there are a couple of ways of looking at Iraq.

There is another way. It is my way—it does not mean it is right, it is just the way I have come out on this—that Iraq, to me, is part of a global struggle, not just an isolated event.

Whether we should have gone into Iraq is sort of a moot question. The question for the country is: What happens in Iraq in terms of our national security interests? Does it really matter? I would argue that the enemy we are facing in Iraq is threefold. There is sectarian violence within the country. There is Sunni-Shia violence, or people within the Shia community using violence to try to get the upper hand politically.

There are people, Sunni insurgents, who do not want to have a democracy. They do not want to have a representative government. They are trying to achieve power by the use of violence. So there is definitely some sectarian conflict between Sunni and Shias. That is very real.

But there is also an element in Iraq called al-Qaida. Their goal is not to dominate the Shia population in Iraq. Their goal is much broader. It is to make sure that representative government does not take hold in the Mideast in a way that would allow religious tolerance. Their goal is to make sure no representative government would spring up where a woman would have a say about her children.

You know, we are all over the world militarily. You can see what is going on in Germany today. But al-Qaida chose to come to Iraq, I believe not because of what we are doing there or the fact that we are there, but because of what the Iraqi people may try to do. I do believe al-Qaida's international leadership has gone to Iraq to organize extremist forces within that country, religious extremists, because they fear more than anything else another Muslim nation, Islamic nation, Arab nation, being able to come together and live through representative democracy. That is why they are there.

If they can defeat this effort at moderation, destabilize this government and drive us out, I think our worst days lie ahead. No matter how we wish to view Iraq, there is no doubt in my mind what that enemy would say, al-Qaida international would say: They beat America in the Land of the Two Rivers. Bin Ladin has called on all of those who believe as he does: Go to Iraq, join the fight, because now is the time to win a battle in the third world war and America must be defeated, not the Iraqi Shia population but America.

Now the Iranian involvement in Iraq. I have been on an 11-day tour over there as a Reserve lawyer. That was a wonderful experience, a very small contribution on my part. I learned how hard people work and how smart they

are. I am awed by our military. I think every Senator shares that view. But one of the things I have learned from working on rule-of-law programs is how deeply involved the Iranian Quds force and other organizations are in funding militia groups.

The question for us all is why should Iran be involved in trying to fund groups dedicated to killing Americans? The Lieberman amendment that passed without objection in the authorization debate in July was a damning indictment of the Iranian involvement in Iraq. The question must be asked and answered: Why? Why does Iran want to destabilize this government? Why are they supporting extremist groups, mostly in the Shia community but not exclusively, designed to kill Americans? Why are they providing aid and comfort to those groups who wish to destroy our forces?

I argue they view Iraq as a threat, just as al-Qaida does, if the Iraqi Government is able to stabilize itself. The Sunni and Shia Arabs coming together, along with their Kurdish colleagues, to form a representative government that will allow the people to elect their leaders is the biggest threat to Iranian theocracy. They are involved in Iraq from their own self-interest, not the interests of the Iranian people, but the self-interest of the radical leadership within Iran. They understand clearly if Iraq is able to stabilize itself and create a moderate form of government, representative in nature, their nightmare just begins. That is why they are trying to drive us out.

The President of Iran, a questionable character at best, said, I think, last week, they stand ready to fill the vacuum created when we leave. I argue that we need not leave a vacuum that Iran can fill.

There are three enemies: al-Qaida, sectarian violence, and the Iranian elements trying to destabilize the Iraqi Government. One of the biggest problems we have had since the fall of Baghdad is we didn't have enough troops to provide security. After about five or six visits, it was clear to me that the situation was deteriorating in Iraq. Before the surge, I came back more depressed after each visit. The level of violence grew and the secure environment deteriorated.

Now we have a new strategy. We have put more combat power in place. It has made a real difference on the security front. Anbar Province, the western part of Iraq where the Sunnis dominated 6 months ago, was declared lost. It was an al-Qaida safe haven. We have heard the story time and time again. The news of Anbar is not so much that we beat al-Qaida militarily, not so much that the Sunni Arabs turned on al-Qaida, joined the fight with us against al-Qaida. That is understandable given the way that al-Qaida treated the population in Anbar. What is the most exciting and encouraging is that in 2007 over 12,000 people have joined the local police force in Anbar. The sons of

Anbar were called upon by the sheiks to take up arms by joining the police. This new police presence, once it is trained and equipped, will allow Anbar Province to be held by Iraqis.

More encouraging than that, not only are people in Anbar beginning to join institutions that would allow al-Qaida to be defeated in a permanent fashion, they are beginning to reach out to Baghdad, and there is a movement going on between the Maliki government and leadership in Anbar to try to find a relationship where Baghdad is seen by the people of Anbar as a place you can do business. There is a lot of money being spent now by the central government on rule-of-law projects in Anbar. There is an old palace of one of the sons of Saddam that is going to be converted into a legal center where you can have terrorism courts, basic civil trials. You will have housing for judges that will be secure so they won't be assassinated. You will have a police training center there. There is a lot going on in terms of a relationship between Baghdad and Anbar that could lead to reconciliation.

It is very true the political progress we had hoped for at the national level has not yet transpired. But what has astounded me is the amount of local reconciliation going on. Better security has led to better choices. People now feel more secure. They are telling us where al-Qaida operatives are hiding. They are giving us more information than we have ever received before about how al-Qaida operates, and other extremist groups. People are getting more confident to speak out. More than anything else, they are just war weary.

The one thing I have learned on this trip that was more abundant than any other is that Iraqis at the local level, in provinces all over the country, are very war weary. They are trying to bring the country together, their local communities together. They are tired of the killing and the dying.

So as we listen to what Ambassador Crocker has to say, and General Petraeus, we should be mindful of the challenges. To me, the successes are obvious, but the challenges are equally obvious. I never said, for the last 3½ years before the surge, that things were going great in Iraq because, to me, they weren't. Things were getting worse. It was obvious they were. But I do see a turnaround. I think the surge has accomplished some things militarily that have led to better choices, and there is an effort to reconcile the country from the bottom up. It is very real.

The big pressure being applied to Baghdad is not what Senator GRAHAM says or what any other Senator from the United States may say about the Maliki government. The pressure I see on the ground is coming from the people themselves. The people are war weary. They would like their representatives in Baghdad to come together and create a stability that they haven't known for 4 years.

I am hopeful there will be political breakthroughs. Sunday a week ago the five major players in Iraq recommitted themselves to a plan to come back together, reform the government, and reconcile the Iraqi people, passing major legislation. Debaathification, the ability of Sunnis to hold jobs in the government, is a big piece of legislation that would transform Iraq. Local elections, allowing local people to pick their governors and representatives rather than Baghdad politicians making those appointments, if there were local elections, the Sunnis would participate in large numbers. In 2005, they boycotted the election. Now they are ready to engage in politics.

I predict that based on the success of the surge militarily, the efforts of local reconciliation are real, that they are going to move up to the national level, and soon, very soon, we will have some breakthroughs in Baghdad in terms of political benchmarks that will transform the country. That is my hope, my desire. The way we can achieve that is to pour it on, continue the surge, let it run its course. It has been in place now, I think, since April. Let's keep pouring it on militarily, politically, and economically. We have the enemy on the mat. Let's don't let them up. Morale is sky high. Now is the time for America to exercise good judgment, long-term thinking, and reinforce Iraq instead of withdrawal.

The message to withdraw, no matter how well intended, will not push Iraqi politicians to do anything faster. It will encourage an insurgency that is not being diminished.

Those are the issues that face the Senate as we await news from Iraq. Let's concentrate on the long term. The year 2008 will be here before we know it, but the decisions we make about Iraq will have consequences long after the election of 2008.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TESTER). The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Am I recognized for 20 minutes under morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Yes.

#### NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, let me talk for a moment about the issue of what is our national security. This morning, as I was getting ready for work, I saw another television advertisement put together by people who have accumulated some money and put ads on television. The advertisement is one that says: We have to stay in Iraq. We can't surrender in Iraq. We have to finish the job in Iraq. It says they attacked us on 9/11. The whole implication of the ad is, we are in Iraq because we are fighting the people who attacked us on 9/11. It is the same dishonesty we have heard for a long time.

Let me describe again our national security interests and who attacked us on 9/11. We know who did because they

bragged about it. They boasted about attacking America. It was Osama bin Laden, al-Zawahiri, and others, the leadership of al-Qaida. And where are they? Are they in Iraq? No, they are in Pakistan, we believe, somewhere between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Let me describe the connection of all of this and our national security interests.

This morning in the newspaper we see that in Copenhagen, Denmark, the police have arrested some terrorists engaged in a terrorist plot with links to al-Qaida. They say these terrorists had traveled to Pakistan for training, and the case against them involves links to militants in Pakistan. Separately, last night a German Federal prosecutor had three suspects picked up and arrested late Tuesday. The suspects were members of a terrorist organization, presumably with connections to al-Qaida. There is evidence the men had trained in camps in Pakistan.

So let's understand, whether this is a surprise to any of us. Here is what we learned in February of this year. Senior leaders of al-Qaida operating from Pakistan over the past year have set up a band of training camps in the tribal region near the Afghan border, according to American intelligence and counterterrorism officials. There was mounting evidence that Osama bin Laden, and his deputy, al-Zawahiri, had been steadily building an operations hub in the mountainous Pakistani tribal area of northern Waziristan. That is from the New York Times, quoting top intelligence sources.

In June: Al-Qaida regroups in new sanctuary on Pakistan border. While the U.S. presses its war against an insurgency linked to al-Qaida in Iraq, Osama bin Laden's group is recruiting, regrouping, and rebuilding in a sanctuary along the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, according to senior U.S. military and intelligence officials. The threat from the radical Islamic enclave in Waziristan is more dangerous than from Iraq, which President Bush and his aides call the "central front" of the war on terrorism, according to some current and former U.S. officials and experts.

The National Intelligence Estimate from July of this year says: Al-Qaida is and will remain the most serious terrorist threat to our homeland. We assess the group has protected or regenerated key elements of its homeland attack capability, including a safe haven in Pakistan's federally administered tribal areas.

Is it a surprise that we pick up the newspaper this morning and see terrorists picked up in Germany, threatening to launch attacks against the largest U.S. base in Europe, and that we read that they trained in Pakistan, likely at an al-Qaida reconstituted training camp? Is that a surprise to us?

We are engaged in a war in Iraq. The television commercial this morning, my colleague this morning, and others,

continue to say that is the central fight of the war against terrorism. It is not. It is a civil war. There is widespread sectarian violence. Yes, there are some terrorists there. Yes, al-Qaida is there. But that is not the central part of what al-Qaida has been about.

Al-Qaida did not have a presence in Iraq prior to 9/11. The television commercial this morning says they attacked us on 9/11. Implying that this is why we are in Iraq fighting that war ignores a whole body of truth, the body of truth I have just described. Those who attacked us and boasted of killing innocent Americans on 9/11 are now in a secure hideaway or a safe haven somewhere in Pakistan, not in Iraq.

I ask this question of the President and the Congress: Why should there be any square inch on the face of this planet that is safe or secure for the leaders of the organization that boasted about attacking America? Why should there be any place on this Earth that is safe or secure for those who the intelligence estimate now tells us are plotting new attacks against our country? Why are they safe and secure? Because this country is engaging door to door in Baghdad in the middle of a civil war. That is a fact.

We have people say: You can't surrender. If you try to redeploy, you are surrendering. I say this: What we ought to do is redeploy and understand that our policy is to fight the terrorists first. When we talk about redeploying, we are not talking about not being able to fight terrorists, even in Iraq, to the extent they exist there. We are talking about leaving enough troops for training of Iraqi forces, about fighting terrorists who exist in Iraq, and about force protection. But you redeploy the troops to fight the terrorists first. Why on Earth should we be debating in the Senate, and the President be in Australia today talking to his counterpart in that country about continuing the fight in Iraq, when Osama bin Laden, al-Zawahiri, and others are planning additional attacks against this country? While, at the same time, bin Laden and his henchmen are "safe" and "secure" in or near Pakistan? That is unbelievable.

We need to change tactics. We need a change in course. When we pick up the paper this morning and read about terrorists being picked up in Germany, plotting attacks against the largest American military base in Europe, and they are trained in Pakistan, likely at an al-Qaida training camp, we are experiencing the fruits of bad policy and dishonest representation about where the fight exists. The central fight against terrorism, it seems to me, is to eliminate the leadership of al-Qaida, the very leadership who boasted about killing innocent Americans on 9/11 and the very leadership who our National Intelligence Estimate now tells us are planning additional attacks against our homeland.

We need a change in course. If we stand here and debate this question