Mr. President, I appreciate the words of my colleague

from Illinois. This debate we are trying to have is actually a debate

about a debate. This must be the only place, the only real estate in

the United States of America in which, rather than having a debate

about the war and strategy, we are having a debate about whether we

should debate it. It is pretty unbelievable.

This is called the greatest deliberative body in the world. It is an

unbelievable privilege for me to be here. I came from a very small town

of about 300 people, a high school class of 9. I am here in the

greatest deliberative body in the world. I am enormously proud to be

here. But I came here not to avoid debate but to engage in debate, to

talk about this country and its future.

There is an old saying: When everyone is thinking the same thing, no

one is thinking very much. There is a desire in this Chamber by some

who have spoken that we all be thinking the same thing about these

issues, that we all support President Bush and whatever his strategies

might be and wherever he might take us. This Congress has a

constitutional role to play, and the constitutional role is not to

decide to come to the floor from Monday through Friday to support the

President of the United States, it is to come to the floor of the

Senate to support this country and its interests as best we see those

interests.

Some long while ago, I went to a veterans hospital on a Sunday

morning and I presented medals to a veteran. His name was Edmund Young

Eagle. He was an American Indian. He had fought in the Second World

War, had gone all around the world, had fought in northern Africa,

fought at Normandy, fought across Europe, and came back to live on the

Indian reservation. He never married, never had very much. He loved to

play baseball. But he had kind of a tough life. At the end of Edmund

Young Eagle's life, this man who served his country, at the end of his

life he was dying of lung cancer. He was in the veterans hospital in

Fargo, ND, and his sister called and said her brother Edmund Young

Eagle had proudly served his country and had never received the medals

for his service in the Second World War.

Would you get him his medals, she asked?

I said, Of course I will.

So I achieved getting the medals he earned but never received from

the Pentagon, and I went to the VA hospital on a Sunday morning to

present medals to Edmund Young Eagle, a Native American, one of those

first Americans who served this country and then went home and lived

quietly.

When I went to his room that morning, Edmund Young Eagle was very

sick. I didn't know it at the time, but he would die within a week or

so. We cranked up the hospital bed for Edmund Young Eagle so he was in

a sitting position, and I pinned his World War II medals on his pajama

tops and told him that his country was grateful for his serving our

country in the Second World War.

This man, very sick, looked up at me and said: This is one of the

proudest days of my life.

This man who lived in a Spartan way, never having very much but

served this country with honor, felt great gratitude at the end of his

life for a country recognizing what he had done for us. That is the

life of a soldier, someone who commits himself or herself to answer

their country's call without question. So many have done it.

I will attend a funeral this week of a young man killed in Iraq. I

received a call this morning from a mother, the mother of a soldier who

spent a year in Iraq and returned with very difficult circumstances--

post-traumatic stress, all kinds of difficult emotional problems--who

just this week received the alert notice that his reserve unit will

likely be called up again.

This is about war. It is about commitment. It is about our soldiers.

It is about our country and our future. Some say we should not talk

about that, we should not debate it. If that is the case, this is the

only real estate, this is the only room in America where it is not

being discussed and debated. It is being debated in the homes, in the

restaurants, in the gymnasiums, in the schools, in the office. It ought

to be debated here as well. This has a profound impact on our country

and its future.

Make no mistake about it, our military has won every battle it has

fought. Our military will win the battles they fight. But winning

military battles does not win the war in Iraq. We disapprove of

President Bush's plan to deepen our escalation in Iraq because it is a

military response to a problem that must be resolved through diplomacy

and through negotiation. The civil war and the violence in Iraq is only

going to stop when there is genuine reconciliation between groups in

Iraq.

Let's think through what we have done in Iraq. Through our soldiers'

blood and our Treasury, we sent troops to Iraq. The Iraqi leader,

Saddam Hussein, is dead. Good riddance, I say. We have unearthed mass

graves in Iraq showing that hundreds of thousands of

Iraqis were murdered by a dictator. But Saddam Hussein was executed.

The country of Iraq was able to vote for its own new Constitution. The

country of Iraq voted for its own Government. That is very substantial

progress.

But the next step has not shown much progress. The next step is this:

Do the Iraqi people have the will to provide for their own security?

This is their country, not ours. Iraq belongs to them, not us. The

question is, Do the Iraqi people have the will to provide for their

security? If they do not, this country cannot and will not be able to

do that for any length of time. That is the question. Do they have the

will to take back their country?

Iraqi leaders are going to have to make very difficult decisions,

political decisions in some cases which may undermine their own power

and their own base of support. But it is the only way this is going to

be resolved. The sectarian violence that exists in Iraq today can trace

its roots in some cases back to the year 700 A.D. This violence is not

going to dissipate soon unless there is reconciliation between the

factions. This requires Iraqi troops to fight their ethnic and

religious allies who are part of the insurgency as well as fight their

opponents. It requires Iraqi security, Iraqi police, and Iraqi troops

to provide for the security of the whole country of Iraq.

The resolution we want to debate is a resolution which does not say

we don't support our troops. Clearly we support our troops. We support

our troops with everything we believe is necessary for their safety and

security and for them to do their jobs the way we expect them to do

their jobs. This Congress, every man and every woman, supports

America's troops and prays for their safe return.

This resolution says we support our troops but we do not agree with

President Bush in his desire to deepen our involvement in Iraq. Some

come to the floor of the Senate and say: Your position on this

emboldens the enemy. It is a message to embolden the enemy. It sends

the wrong message to our troops.

It is neither of those. It is a message from the Congress of the

United States to the President, and that message is we do not support

his proposal to deepen our involvement in the war in Iraq.

A blue ribbon commission was put together, of some of the best

thinkers, foreign policy and military thinkers in our country, headed

by James Baker and Lee Hamilton, very distinguished Americans. That

group included former Secretaries of State and military leaders and

some outstanding thinkers. They worked for months, many months, to

develop a plan. We all understand the alternatives are not good in

Iraq. We understand that. If there were an easy way to deal with this,

believe me, it would have been dealt with. In many ways, we found a box

canyon in Iraq, and it is hard to get out of a box canyon.

The Baker-Hamilton report represented a consensus of some of the best

thinkers in our country, having worked months on this problem. The

President chose to ignore that report. The President says he is the

decider.

You know, the Constitution says something about that as well. I agree

with my colleagues that we can't have 100 or 535 commanders in chief. I

understand that. But I also understand that the Constitution has a role

for the Congress. Only the Congress can declare war--only the Congress.

Yes, the President is Commander in Chief, but only the Congress can

declare war. Only the Congress has the power of the purse.

The question is, What do we do about what is now happening in Iraq?

No other country that I am aware of, in what the President has called

the coalition of the willing, has decided they are going to deepen

their involvement or expand their troops to Iraq. No other country.

Even Great Britain, the strongest supporter of President Bush's Iraq

policy, has refused to increase their troop strength in Iraq. In fact,

the British news reports say that Britain intends to have all or most

of its troops withdrawn by the end of 2007. None of our allies, old or

new, of which I am aware, have decided the proper approach at this

point, given the sectarian involvement in Iraq, is to deepen their

involvement and increase their troop strength in Iraq.

The President is saying we should surge some additional troops to

Iraq. We have done that before. In early 2004, we surged 20,000

additional troops. A similar one happened in the fall of 2005. Most

recently, last summer the President announced that thousands of

additional troops would be surged into Baghdad. What happened as a

result of that was the violence increased, and deaths and injuries to

American troops went up. So we have seen some examples of a surge, and

the examples have not been very helpful. In fact, it has been

counterproductive.

This map is a map of the city of Baghdad--about 4 million to 6

million people, about 250 square miles. We have people in this city who

have grievances that go back 1,300 and 1,400 years. The Shia and the

Sunni religious split occurred in the seventh century, and they have

clashed frequently since then.

This country is not put together by natural borders. This country was

put together by a pen and paper, by a decision 90 years ago of how to

draw the borders of this country. This was a diplomatic decision, that

this should be the country of Iraq.

Let me describe what is happening now in this city. We have areas

that are Shia areas and Sunni areas, and now we have areas that are

turning Shia and turning Sunni. In many ways, you will see from this

map the dramatic evidence of violence in this capital city of Iraq. It

is getting worse, not better.

I mentioned that some of the hatred goes back 1,400 years. But a more

recent example, in a story I was reading about Iraq, a Shiite was

recently driven from his home and farm by the Sunnis who killed his

brother and nephew, and he was so bitter and angry, he said, ``A

volcano of revenge has built up inside. I want to rip them up with my

teeth.'' It is this hatred which fuels a civil war and the atrocities

that occur nearly every day.

Saturday, February 3, saw the deadliest single suicide bombing since

the war began nearly 4 years ago, with 130 people killed and more than

300 wounded. It was the fourth major attack against a densely populated

Shia area in less than 3 weeks. On the Thursday before, twin suicide

bombers struck a market jammed with people--60 killed, 150

wounded. Again, 60 killed, 150 wounded; spraying body parts so far that

police were scouring rooftops late in the night for body parts. A few

days before that, 75 people killed in Baghdad's Shia neighborhoods in

multiple bombings; 160 wounded. The day before that, 3 car bombs

detonated within minutes of each other at the vegetable market. More

than 1,000 Iraqis were killed in the last week of January. We are told

there were 3,000 killed in the last 3 weeks. Unbelievably, it seems to

me, they pick up bodies in the middle of the morning in Baghdad from

the night's carnage with holes drilled in their kneecaps, holes drilled

in their skulls. These are unbelievable signs of torture. These are

acts of unimaginable violence committed against others. No one is safe,

nowhere is safe, and this violence pervades nearly every aspect of

daily life.

The question I think the President proposes with his suggestion of a

surge of an additional 20,000 or 21,000 troops in Baghdad poses is:

Will additional troops in Baghdad on street corners, going door to

door, embedded with the troops, with the security of the Iraqi

Government, stem the violence? The answer is likely no. We have seen

this attempted previously and it did not stem the violence; the

violence increased.

Let me make another point I think is important. No one has made, I

think, the point that this troop escalation, whatever it is, is

temporary. The United States troops are leaving Iraq. The question is

when, not if. At some point, United States troops will leave Iraq. The

question is: Will we leave in a time that gives us the opportunity to

turn the country of Iraq back to the Iraqi people and say, this is your

job to provide for your security.

Let me talk about the National Intelligence Estimate. The National

Intelligence Estimate was done with 16 intelligence agencies. They

spent the last 5 months analyzing the situation in Iraq, reviewed by

the head of the CIA, the head of the intelligence units at the

Pentagon, State Department, Justice Department, and the Director of

National Intelligence, our most senior intelligence official. Some of

it is top secret, but some was released publicly. Let me read

something:

Continuing to quote:

That is a fancy way to describe the civil war.

I might say the last National Intelligence Estimate was done was in

2004 and it detailed 3 possible outcomes for Iraq over the next 18

months, which at the time would put us in the fall or winter of 2006.

The worst-case scenario for the previous NIE was a civil war. Well,

that is what the 2007 National Intelligence Estimate says has now

happened. That is right; what is going on in Iraq now is the worst-case

scenario of the previous National Intelligence Estimate.

Let me make a couple of other points, if I might. General Abizaid

just over 2 months ago came to the Congress and here is what he said:

This is our top military commander testifying to the Senate just over

2 months ago: They said no.

Now, here is why General Abizaid said the commanders did not believe

they should have additional troops brought into Iraq:

The greatest terrorist threat to our country is al-Qaida and its

network around the world, and he said they operate from a ``secure

hideaway'' in Pakistan. If that is the case, if the greatest terrorist

threat to our country is al-Qaida operating from a ``secure hideaway''

in Pakistan, and that comes from the head of our intelligence service

in this country in open testimony to the Senate, if there are 21,000

additional American troops available to surge somewhere, why on Earth

would we not choose to move those troops through Afghanistan near to

Pakistan to eliminate the leadership of al-Qaida, the greatest

terrorist threat to our country? I do not understand the priorities

coming from the administration. There has to be a change. We all

understand that. We know Iraq is a different place. The various sects,

tribes, religions, in some cases do not speak to each other, and in

many cases don't trust each other. In other cases, they hate each

other, and in too many cases, they kill each other.

That is what must change. It is why reconciliation is the key. It is

why more U.S. troops are not going to make a difference.

Does anyone believe that if we go back 4 years and the President

brought a proposition to the floor of the Senate and said: Look, we

have a civil war in Iraq. What we ought to do is send more American

troops to the middle of that civil war, or at least begin sending

American troops to the middle of that civil war because we don't

believe after 3 years of training that the Iraqi people are prepared to

provide for their security, does anybody believe we would think it a

good strategy to send additional troops to the middle of a civil war? I

don't believe so.

I understand there are very different opinions here in this Chamber,

and I respect them. I wouldn't diminish anyone in this Chamber for

holding any views on this subject. I understand their passions. I share

their passions. But I don't understand this: I don't understand how it

is that this great body has to spend days debating whether we will have

a debate. This is, after all, a debate about the motion to proceed.

This isn't a debate about Iraq or Iraq strategy; it is about whether we

can proceed to a motion on that subject. It is a debate about whether

we can debate. If there is any space left in this country in which this

debate should take place, it ought to be this space on this floor, this

real estate. This is the great deliberative body. I do not for the life

of me understand a vote against cloture that says: No, we believe the

United States should not debate this issue. This is an issue the

American people care a great deal about, and it is long past the time,

in my judgment, for us to have this debate.

We are all united, I think, in loving this country. We want what is

best for this country. We want to protect the American troops. We want

our country to succeed. All of us want all of those things. I don't

believe anybody who says we are undermining this or that or anything of

that sort. All that is nonsense. This country deserves from this Senate

a thoughtful, serious, real debate about what is happening that affects

every part of American life, and that is the struggle we are involved

in with respect to Iraq. The American people deserve this debate, and I

hope that tomorrow when we have a vote on the motion to proceed, we

will have the opportunity to proceed from that motion to a debate on

the underlying petition that is on the floor of the Senate with respect

to the subject of the war in Iraq.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.