Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Oklahoma. I

appreciate the opportunity to talk about this very important subject.

Some have said we don't want to debate the war in Iraq, but we have

been doing that and I am happy to debate it.

We are at war. One of the jobs of this body is to support our troops

when we are at war. As such, we should be taking up the supplemental

war funding bill that will directly support and aid our service men and

women and support the efforts underway in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I regret the Democratic leadership has chosen to delay acting on

funds our troops in the field need and must have by the 1st of May.

Here we go, talking about resolutions. We are taking up nonbinding

resolutions. The key one is nonsensical; it would serve only to

undermine the morale of our service men and women and boost the morale

of our enemies. S.J. Res. 9 has a clear message, if not to Americans

reading the news, certainly to our enemy: America has been defeated.

America does not have the will to win. Or we cannot defeat American

troops on the streets of Iraq, but we can defeat America in the halls

of Congress. That is what they will be saying.

Out of the 17 different resolutions the majority has worked with and

introduced, they have decided to debate S.J. Res. 9--one in a litany of

defeatist, micromanaging resolutions that have been offered by the

other side.

Like so many of the others, it calls for a retreat and it ensures

defeat. Such a retreat, in its wake, would create a bastion of

instability, violence, regional conflict, and a launching point for

future attacks on our allies and this Nation such as that witnessed

after 9/11. The intelligence community, in public testimony before our

committee in January, publicly stated that the very real three-pronged

threat of turning Iraq over to the chaos is a serious challenge we all

should consider.

Fortunately, those of us who believe the generals ought to run the

war have the Constitution on our side, which specifies that the

President--not those of us in the 535 Members of Congress--is Commander

in Chief. The proponents of S.J. Res. 9 to set deadlines must now

believe they are more equipped, better informed, and have better

judgment than the leaders and military commanders they recently and

unanimously confirmed.

Is the American public to believe that the legislators in these

beautiful halls, 8,000 miles away from the front, are better equipped

to develop strategies than General Petraeus, whom this body confirmed

unanimously to lead U.S. forces?

I think the Founding Fathers were right at the time and they are

right now. We do not fight wars in the Halls of Congress. We cannot win

this war by resolutions we pass, but we can lose the war in the Halls

of Congress. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle continue to

cite public opinion polls about Iraq as well as a reason why we should

pull out. What may be perceived to be popular in the short run,

regrettably, will in the long run compound into an even bigger problem

that will end up costing us and our allies far more blood and treasure.

Further, when it comes to national security, we ought to be governing

on principles, not on public opinion polls.

The American people want victory, not defeat. They are demanding

progress, which the new security plan was designed to produce.

Incidentally, this new plan fits almost exactly with the

recommendations of the Baker-Hamilton committee, which so many people

on both sides of the aisle said would be the ultimate solution. Well,

General Petraeus and the administration are carrying out the details of

the Baker-Hamilton plan, and now we are changing our mind. Why? Well,

some, I fear, may be inspired by a loathing of President Bush. But even

to those of you who do, I appeal to you to recognize the President is

not the enemy. The enemy is ruthlessly chopping the heads off innocent

civilians in front of cameras, blowing up schoolchildren, blowing up

places of worship. One Army officer recently e-mailed me and said:

This would not be George Bush's defeat or victory. It will be an

American defeat or victory, and the sooner we understand that, the

sooner perhaps we can be united.

Robert Kagan, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for

International Peace and transatlantic fellow at the German Marshall

Fund, recently wrote a piece in the Washington Post describing the sad

state of current political affairs. It was entitled ``Grand Illusion.''

In the piece he asserted:

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 that ``they've launched attacks on Sunni insurgent

strongholds and begun reining in Moqtada al-Sadr's militia.''

This is appropriate advice. He says:

Despite many people's dissatisfaction with the war, I don't think a

majority of Americans want us to withdraw, to retreat and admit defeat.

Throughout the debate, we have also heard references and comparisons

made to Vietnam, that this is a quagmire, that the war is unjust,

poorly managed, it threatens our individual liberties, it is

unwinnable, and the only option is to pull out. All of the very same

things were said during the campaign against President Lincoln in 1864,

with well over one-quarter of a million dead Americans; after the Union

suffered 7,000 casualties in 30 short minutes at Cold Harbor; and until

Sherman won in Atlanta.

If you look at our history, anybody getting 24-hour television news

during the battles Americans fought against the British in 1776, you

would have had to say we were in worse shape than we are now.

When you look at the conditions our troops were in before D-Day and

all the things that went wrong, 24-hour news coverage would have

convinced an overwhelming majority of the American people to forget it,

pull the plug, let the Nazis have it. But if somebody used Vietnam as a

model--and it should be used completely--I think it reminds people of

the image associated with Vietnam that too many ignore.

I suspect this is a historical photo that many of our murderous

enemies dream would be superimposed over the rooftops of Baghdad. These

are the people left behind. We left behind people. Some 2.5 million

were murdered after we pulled out of Vietnam.

This is, of course, the final, classic departure, people trying to

get away. Those who didn't were slaughtered.

Our enemies throughout the radical Islamist world are all too

familiar with immediate withdrawal and retreat. We withdrew from

Vietnam, we withdrew from Beirut, and we withdrew from Mogadishu.

These repeated withdrawals signaled to our enemies all over the world

that if they inflict enough damage on our most heroic citizens, the

Marines will never surrender but Washington will.

And make no mistake about it, they are watching. They are watching to

see what we will do in Iraq.

These repeated withdrawals invited the 1993 World Trade Center

attack, the bombings of our embassies in Africa, the USS Cole, the

Khobar Towers, and eventually 9/11. None of these actions occurred

because of our action to liberate Iraq. Five or six of these attacks

occurred before President Bush took office, and George Bush did not

invent the danger from radical Islam.

Further, the notion of separating al-Qaida from the sectarian killers

can only be contemplated from as far away as Washington because al-

Qaida is targeting the mixed neighborhoods and has overtly promised

sectarian violence to undermine the Iraqi Government and to weaken U.S.

Government resolve.

The Democratic resolution before us now is precisely what our enemies

want to hear and, sadly, are expecting to hear.

Here are some quotes from one of the people we ought to be reading

more frequently, Osama bin Laden. Osama bin Laden said:

That is what Osama bin Laden said on October 21, 2001.

In addition to that statement, he said on February 14, 2003:

This is what Osama bin Laden thinks of us. He stated many times that

Americans don't have the stomach for conflict and this Democratic

resolution embodies that very notion.

What Osama bin Laden and the enemies we are fighting against expect

to see is Vietnam. Let's give General Petraeus more confidence. General

Petraeus was confirmed unanimously. He stated that the effort in Iraq

will have to be sustained to achieve its desired effect and that more

troops are vital to advancing security. We confirmed him unanimously.

Give him a chance.

He reported last week that nine Iraqi reinforcement battalions have

entered Baghdad. He pointed to a decrease in sectarian killings, the

discovery of numerous weapons caches, and the capture of al-Qaida

members. Al-Sadr has fled Sadr City, and al-Baghdadi was recently

reported caught.

Associated Press reporter Robert Reid recently reported General

Petraeus walking through the streets of Hit, a Sunni city with a bloody

past. Last month in the article, he reported:

Now that a relative level of security has been established, the

important political and economic development work must begin.

In the past, the United States had claimed similar victories in Hit,

but those gains were lost because of lack of enough troops to sustain

the province.

I ask unanimous consent that this article be printed in the Record.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in

the Record, as follows:

Mr. President, while it is far too premature to declare

that the new strategy has succeeded, it does indicate there is a

possibility. As General Abizaid once testified, despair is not a

policy. It must be given a chance to succeed, and this resolution would

do nothing to achieve victory. The alternative of retreat and defeat

would be disastrous.

What are my colleagues who wish to see us leave Iraq thinking will

happen once we do? The arguments for retreating before relative

security is established because we grow tired of the war, because

mistakes were made or because Americans allegedly want us to leave all

ignore what the consequences will be if we do leave precipitously on a

political withdrawal timetable.

Those who are advocating for retreat and departure from Iraq

absolutely must address this very difficult question. In other words,

what is ``Plan Bravo,'' plan B, for those mandating retreat? Are we to

redeploy forces back home only to have to redeploy them in much larger

numbers 3, 4, 5 years from now, once Baghdad has turned into a base of

operations and safe haven for al-Qaida? Will we endure the transfer of

Islamofascist terrorism and violence occurring in the Middle East back

to the homeland?

Mr. President, I ask for an additional 60 seconds.

Mr. President, are we going to bear witness to a conflict

between Sunnis and Shiites that would spread into a regional war

throughout the Middle East? Will we sit idly by while a regional

conflict ensues that would result in the death of thousands of

civilians? What will happen when the price of oil goes up? Will we see

radical Islam taking over more parts of the world? Will we hand them

Iraq on a silver platter? Will we have to again deploy troops to the

Middle East?

To ignore these considerations and questions simply because they are

not politically palatable is shortsighted at best and dangerous at the

worst. Those who are attempting to end the war don't want to talk about

the fact that the war in Iraq will do anything but end. In fact, it

will only grow more dangerous.

Mr. President, I suggest that Mr. Kagan had it right. In his article,

he also said there ought to be a plan B for the Washington Post and

others who have projected and counted on defeat. What is your plan B if

General Petraeus's works and you predicted so successfully it won't

work?

We need to put the money behind our troops, give General Petraeus the

support for the new plan with money and support that effort underway.

Our 130,000 to 150,000 American troops and their families at home are

depending on us. They have a direct stake in this historic event, and I

believe that fighting is necessary to prevail over evil.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.