Mr. President, I think Senator Specter, has given a good

overview of where the Congress finds itself, where it wants to go, and

how to get there. What I wish to do is give my view for people back

home and my colleagues about how what we do now, for the moment, could

affect the overall war on terror, and throw out this proposition: Do we

believe the outcome in Iraq affects the overall war on terror? Is Iraq

a central battlefront in the global struggle? I believe the answer is

clearly yes. You could debate whether going into Iraq was the right

thing. Clearly that is a debate that will be resolved by historians. We

are there now. What are the consequences of a failed state in Iraq and

how likely is that to occur, based on what we do for the moment?

I would argue very strongly a failed state in Iraq is a tremendous

defeat in the overall war on terror on several fronts. No. 1, it means

moderate forces in Iraq were overwhelmed by the extremists. There are

basically three groups in Iraq trying to kill this infant democracy.

There is a Shia extremist group that has as its goal a theocracy for

Iraq where the Shias will dominate the Iraqi landscape and they will

have an Iranian style theocracy. It may be different in many ways, but

it will be a religious state.

The Sunni extremists are trying to seize power and kill this infant

democracy and rule by the gun, not by the rule of law. They were in

power during the Saddam era and they want to get back in power. These

two groups have different views of what to do with a future Iraq, but

they both come together believing a democracy hurts their agenda.

Then there is the rest of Iraq, the Sunnis, the Shia, and the Kurds,

which I think are the overwhelming majority--and they are struggling to

create a new democracy out of the ashes of a dictatorship. I want to

associate myself with some understanding of the struggle they are going

through because our country went through this very same struggle. It is

hard to create a democracy, but the benefits are enormous if we can

pull this off.

The third group is the most dangerous of all. They are in Iraq to

kill this infant democracy, not for political power within the border

of Iraq as their goal but to create a movement that will sweep the

Mideast. This is the al-Qaida organization within Iraq and associated

Islamic extremist organizations that have a more regional view of what

to do. All three groups, the Shia extremists, the Sunni extremists, and

the foreign fighters, namely al-Qaida, are threatened by democracy in

different ways.

Shaikh Mohammed has just admitted in open session in a military

tribunal that he was in fact the mastermind of 9/11. He went on ad

nauseam about all the activity he had been involved in for over a

decade. The point of his testimony was he believes he is at war with

us. We need to understand we are at war with him. I think for years

they were fighting us and we did not quite understand they had declared

war upon us. But we all agree now that al-Qaida is a force that needs

to be dealt with militarily and that there is a global struggle in

which they are involved, and that Shaikh Mohammed is a warrior, an

illegal warrior but nonetheless a warrior. He doesn't have a criminal

agenda, he has a political agenda and religious agenda, and he

considers himself a warrior.

What I hope we can do in Iraq is defeat extremism on all fronts; that

we could, in fact, defeat al-Qaida in Iraq, which would be a blow to

their overall regional world agenda.

What to do? Senator Specter made a good point. Where do we go?

Congress is trying to find its footing. Congress doesn't want to cut

off funding. There are different reasons people don't want to cut off

funding. The polls clearly show that cutting off funding is not

popular, by the American people. There are Members in the body who do

want to cut off funding. I respect their point of view because they

have concluded Iraq is not part of the war on terror in a traditional

sense; that our involvement in Iraq is doing more damage in the war

than it is helping.

I just disagree. I think a loss in Iraq is a huge event in the war on

terror. And they will come and cast a vote. They will vote against

Senator Gregg's resolution saying the Congress should cut off funding.

I respect them, but I think they are wrong.

Now as to Senator Reid. His motion is that we are going to try to

send a message to the Maliki Government and other political leaders in

Iraq by telling them: At a date certain, we are going to start leaving

if certain things are not done. I understand the point, that they are

trying to get the moderate forces, the Democratic forces in Iraq, to do

better and come together quicker.

My concern is pretty simple. I think Senator Specter expressed it

very well: The audience of this resolution is not a single audience,

that the world will be listening and watching what the Senate does.

If the Senate did pass a resolution setting a specific date--March of

next year--where we will begin to redeploy if certain things are not

done in Iraq, then I am convinced that in the Mideast it will be taken

as a sign of weakness, not strength.

It will be not a message sent to the moderates alone, it will be a

message sent to the enemies of democracy. We would be, no matter how

well intentioned, laying out a roadmap as to how to drive the United

States out of Iraq. The resolution would have two purposes, one well

intended: to get the Iraqi Government to do more to expedite the

political decision making that is required to lead to a successful

outcome.

The other consequence would be, we would be telling our enemies in

great detail: Here is what you have to do to make sure we leave at a

date certain and that every benchmark we set as to a date becomes a

benchmark for the enemy. If you can achieve this benchmark, the United

States will leave. To me, if we ever do that, then we have made a huge

mistake.

Senator Specter mentioned some of the mistakes. I think General

Shinseki was right, we never had enough troops to provide security. We

planned for the best, never assumed for the worst. On the economic

projections, in terms of the cost of the war, the military

understanding of what would happen after the fall of Baghdad, we missed

it by a mile. We are paying a heavy price for making those mistakes.

But the biggest mistake is yet to come. If we pass the Reid

resolution, it would trump every mistake President Bush's team has made

by a factor of many because it would be, in fact, destroying the last

best chance we have to salvage democracy in Iraq.

General Petraeus is our best hope. Reinforcements are needed in Iraq:

politically, economically, and militarily. Any resolution passed by the

Senate declaring this operation lost before it is implemented cuts

General Petraeus's legs out from under him. It would be the biggest

mistake Congress could make--I would say maybe in American history--to

a commander in the field. Eighty-one to zero, we sent the general off

to fight in a war anew, and now we are about to send a message to the

people he is fighting that on a date certain you win if you do the

following things.

This resolution empowers our enemies. It gives them a roadmap of how

to drive us out of the Mideast. It weakens the ability of General

Petraeus to form coalitions to give the Iraqi politicians what they

need to do the things they need to do.

If you want to empower a moderate, which is key to victory in the

Mideast in the war on terrorism, the last thing you need to do, in my

opinion, is make a public statement that our commitment ends at a

certain date if you do

not do certain things, because you are telling the enemy exactly what

they have to do to win out over the moderates and the United States. It

would be a huge mistake of monumental proportions. I hope this body

will not allow that to happen.

What happens if we have a failed state in Iraq? Who is the biggest

winner if Iraq breaks apart and democracy fails? Iran wins. In the

south, the Shia south, a very oil-rich area, that most likely will

become a puppet state of Iran. I cannot say for sure it will, but it is

the most likely outcome. Let's start, for a change, planning for the

worst.

I wish people who were introducing these resolutions would understand

the consequences of a failed state and ask themselves: Does this

resolution help create a democracy? Does it empower the enemy? Does it

help create a failed State? What are the consequences?

Former Senator Edwards is saying we should draw 50,000 troops down

today. They asked him the question: What would that mean for regional

stability? I don't know. I am not sure.

Well, I can tell you what it means. It would tell the extremists we

are leaving, you are winning. Every moderate in the Mideast would start

hedging their bets because what kind of political solution are you

going to come up with if you believe the American political and

economic aid to your young democracy will vanish? You start hedging

your bets.

The stronger we are, the bolder they become. The weaker we are, the

bolder the enemy becomes. The stronger America, in a rational way,

stands by moderate forces, the more likely they are to make the hard

decisions to bring the country together. The weaker we seem, the weaker

we portray ourselves, the stronger the enemy of democracy.

That is what I believe this is all about. You cannot kill the

terrorists in numbers enough to win the war from an American

perspective. This war will never be won by the American military

killing terrorists. They are doing a wonderful job, our military. This

war will be won when extremism is suppressed within the Mideast by the

people who live in the Mideast.

So we have to take sides. This war is a war of religion and origin.

The origin of this war is not Palestine-Israel, it is bin Laden, Shaikh

Mohammed, and others who have a view of religion that has no place on

the planet for the State of Israel or moderate Muslims, Christians,

Jews. They have said publicly their goal is to drive us out of the

Mideast, topple all moderate governments that do business with the West

and essentially destroy Israel. I believe them.

Iraq is a test of us and our will versus their will. I do hope we

understand the vote we are about to take will shape the fortunes in

Iraq in the coming months one way or the other. The decision we take in

Iraq will shape our national security interests for decades, will

change the Mideast for the better or for the worse, and will have

monumental consequences on the war on terrorism.

This is not about the political moment. This is about the decades to

follow. Leaving Iraq, from a national security perspective, is not the

question for the country. We all want to leave sooner rather than later

for the good of our own troops, and eventually the stability of the

world, to allow the Iraqis to take over their own destiny.

The question for this country is what do we leave behind? I am

convinced if we leave behind a failed State, where moderates are

overwhelmed by extremists, the problems in Iraq spill out to the

Mideast, and the war does not end when you leave Iraq, it just begins.

You need to look at Shaikh Mohammed and what he said a few days ago,

and what they are saying now, al-Qaida. Understand that they believe

the outcome in Iraq is part of the war on terror. I believe it. These

resolutions, in my opinion, do not understand that.

As to General Petraeus, I have a lot of confidence in this new plan.

It is not more of the same. It is trying to go at the problems in Iraq

new and differently. There are early signs of success. There is a long

way to go, But please understand the General and those who are under

his command are affected by our actions in Washington. The world is

watching. Please do not send a message to the wrong people, no matter

how well intended.

I yield the floor.