Mr. President, along with my Democratic colleagues, I

intend to vote for the Reid resolution, S.J. Res. 9. I have some

concerns with the approach in this resolution--I firmly believe that

the Congress must address the open-ended 2002 authorization to use

force in Iraq, which is not dealt with in this resolution--but I

certainly agree with the Reid resolution's intent. There is a diversity

of views in both parties about our policy in Iraq, but a majority of

the American people are united in the firm belief that a change of

course is long overdue. Fifty-nine percent of Americans believe that

the United States made a mistake in sending troops to Iraq. Sixty

percent favor withdrawing all U.S. troops by the end of next year. The

American people are speaking, and finally their Representatives in the

Congress are listening.

Some of us may disagree about the best way to effect a change of

course in Iraq, but this debate shows one thing--it is time for a new

plan, time for a real discussion, not more empty rhetoric about ``stay

the course'' versus ``cut and run.'' This administration is fond of

referring to the powers of the Commander in Chief, but surely the most

important responsibility of any Commander in Chief is to provide solid

leadership. As President Harry Truman said: ``The buck stops here.''

But we are entering the fifth year of this misbegotten war, and this

President has failed time and time again to articulate a plan, a plan

to give a clear reason for why we are in Iraq or to outline a strategy

for bringing our troops home. Stubbornly denying that Iraq is engaged

in a civil war is not leadership. The White House has abdicated its

leadership on this issue, so it is left to the Congress--that is us--to

speak for the American people.

The hue and cry raised from my colleagues across the aisle and from

the White House is that those who do not support this disastrous war do

not support the troops. Three thousand one hundred and eighty-nine

soldiers have now died in Iraq. Thousands more have been wounded and

maimed and have come home to find outrageous and dehumanizing

treatment. Truly supporting our troops means not putting them into

harm's way without a clear plan for success and unless it is absolutely

necessary. It means not asking our sons and daughters, our best and our

brightest, to make the ultimate sacrifice without being able to

articulate exactly why they are being asked

to do so and exactly what we will accomplish as a result. Supporting

our troops means treating our wounded men and women with dignity. It

means not sending them to recuperate in mold-filled rooms without

supervision and without assistance in a morass of paperwork. It means

not sending back to the front lines those too wounded to fight, as this

administration is doing.

I continue to receive letters and phone calls from service men and

women, troops currently serving in Iraq, thanking me for my stand--yes,

my stand--against this war. The troops are not the ones criticizing our

attempts to bring them home. The troops are the first to say there is

no military solution to the situation in Iraq, only a political

solution. The Iraqis will have to assume leadership of their own

country and start making political compromises to overcome the ethnic

and sectarian divisions that are splitting the country apart. There is

no military solution, none, no military solution for Iraq. A national

reconciliation is the only solution for that war-torn country, and we

do not need another 3,000 young lives lost to learn that.

We were wrong--and I said so at the time--to invade. We were wrong to

think that victory would be quick and easy. We are wrong to stay on in

an occupation which earns us only hatred with no end, no end, no end in

sight. Our young men and our young women now find themselves in the

crossfire of a civil war. Nearly every one--nearly every one--except

our Commander in Chief realizes that there is no military solution. To

continue this ill-advised and demoralizing war only damages our

wonderful country in the eyes of the world and chews up lives, both

American and Iraqi. I have said it before--yes, I will say it again,

yes--democracy cannot be force-fed from the point of a gun.

Let this debate mark the beginning of a way out, out, out of Iraq.

Let this Congress begin to understand why the Framers of this

Constitution gave the power to declare war to the Congress, the

representatives of the people we send to fight and to die for our

country. Let us begin to put some sanity--sanity--in our foreign policy

again.

I yield the floor.