Mr. President, today I rise to speak on a question that

continues to weigh rather heavily on my heart. I am reluctant to ask it

since such a question would never have been asked, or even

contemplated, by previous generations of Americans. But it is a

question that now must be asked since it is central to our future: Do

we, as Americans, have the resolve to see our commitments through? It

is a question we must confront in a number of policy arenas that will

directly affect the way we, our children, and our grandchildren will

live in this new century. Do we have the resolve and the courage to

meet our commitments and confront the looming crisis of Social

Security?

Do we have the resolve to balance our Nation's budget? Do we have the

resolve to endow our children with a proper education so they can

master and push the limits of science, thereby providing our Nation the

means to compete in an increasingly competitive world economy?

However, at this point in our Nation's history, the crucial question

concerning our resolve as a nation does not relate to matters of

domestic policy. It relates to our commitments beyond our borders. It

is the central and critical component in determining who will prevail

in the global war on terrorism. Will we, our coalition allies, the

people of Iraq and their elected Government, emerge victorious? Or will

we renounce and abdicate our commitments and responsibilities to the

Iraqi people--leaving them to a fate controlled by terrorists and

leaving our future security as a nation in peril?

Generations ago that, unto itself, would be a stain on the honor of

this country; but these are different times.

Turning our back now will only provide our enemies with a new base of

operations, and unlike Afghanistan, this base contains vast oil wealth.

Imagine al-Qaida with billions of dollars to do with as Osama bin Laden

wishes. I wonder what they will buy with all that money. Remember,

shortly after the liberation of Kabul, there were numerous media

reports that al-Qaida was working on chemical weapons.

So, with that in mind, I again ask: Do we have the resolve to see our

commitments through?

As we seek to answer this question, I am reminded of events that

occurred during the summer of 1940. The Nazi armies, seemingly

invincible, had conquered Western Europe. France, the Netherlands,

Poland, Denmark, Norway, and Belgium had all fallen.

The British Army, after its rescue from Dunkirk, no longer possessed

sufficient numbers of artillery and tanks to defend against the

blitzkrieg. All that stood between Hitler and complete victory was the

English Channel and 650 fighters of the Royal Air Force.

Then Hitler offered a deal. In exchange for a ``free hand in

Europe,'' the Nazis would provide ``guarantees'' that they would not

invade Great Britain.

Despite the fact that the British Army lacked sufficient equipment to

effectively repulse an invasion, Prime Minister Churchill resolved to

keep his nation's commitment to the people of Europe. He would not

abandon them.

His words, which I will paraphrase, still echo today:

This is the lesson that history teaches us: that resolution to see

your commitments through is what great statesmen and nations are made

of--that peace and justice can only be restored through bold action.

So what do my colleagues on the other side of the aisle offer,

knowing full well this lesson of history? In a word: defeat. In his own

words, the Democratic leader said on the floor of the Senate, on April

19, the ``war is lost.'' To be fair, the leader did attempt to temper

his words by saying:

So what plan, or new course, does the Democratic leader or other

Democrats offer? How can we, in his words, ``succeed in the Middle

East''?

His answer can be found in the conference report to this bill. But I

warn anyone who attempts to read this legislation, first you must wade

through billions in spending allocated to projects and programs that

have nothing to do with the war before you learn how our Democratic

colleagues plan to ``succeed in the Middle East.''

What is their plan for victory? Well, their legislation states that

no matter what happens, the bulk of our forces will begin to withdraw

after July 1, or if the President makes certain certifications, after

October 1.

So what is their strategy? I believe Winston Churchill would have

characterized the Democratic strategy as: guaranteed defeat.

Is this resolve?

Is this determination to see our commitments through?

No.

This is the worst case of capitulation to appeasement since Neville

Chamberlain spoke the words ``peace in our time.''

What is needed now is leadership. Now, at this critical moment in

history, great nations need to follow Churchill's advice, yet the

Democrats offer us only Chamberlain's.

The Democratic leaders previously stated, in 2005:

Wise and sound words. That was real leadership. Unfortunately, that

was when the polls supported their position to stand firm. Now the

Democratic leaders have reversed themselves because the polls have told

them that is what they should do.

Two days ago, during an interview on CNN, the Senator from Nevada was

asked if he would believe the words of our new commander General

Petraeus ``that there is progress going on in Iraq, that the so-called

surge is working. Will you believe him when he says that?''

What was his response? ``No, I don't believe him, because it's not

happening.''

Now, I find this to be an incredible remark. Less than 3 months ago,

the majority leader had joined a unanimous Senate and voted in favor of

General Petraeus. But this was more than just another confirmation

vote. The major subject of his confirmation hearing and the subsequent

debate on the Senate floor was the new strategy the general had

outlined.

So what is the new strategy? Simply put, General Petraeus is

executing one of the tenets of a classic counterinsurgency strategy by

providing and maintaining security to the local population and

neighborhoods in Baghdad. Only when this is achieved will the Iraqi

Government be able to continually offer basic services such as clean

water and electricity, which are the backbone of any modern society.

This, in turn, creates conditions where the Iraqi people can begin to

develop a growing economy and where families feel safe to send their

kids to school. As these goals are achieved, more and more of the

population will desire even greater stability and will support and work

toward creating Iraqi Government institutions and security services

that maintain and enhance this new, secure environment.

How is this different from the past? Previously, U.S. forces would

clear an area of insurgents, but, unfortunately, soon thereafter, our

forces would leave and the insurgents would return. Now, under General

Petraeus's plan, American and Iraqi security forces will

maintain security in the cleared neighborhoods of Baghdad. To date,

over 50 security force units, based in what are called garrisons, can

be found in the neighborhoods of the city, and even more are planned.

That is why the additional forces that we are sending to Iraq are

vital. It is not more for more's sake, but to maintain a secure

environment for the Iraqi people and to help them stand up for

themselves.

Based upon the briefing that the Senate received yesterday from

General Petraeus, and information I have examined as a member of the

Senate Intelligence Committee, I can report that we are seeing signs of

progress.

Frankly, I believe the changes that have been made in the last 3

months are remarkable and need our full support, and it is readily

apparent we do not yet have all the promised forces deployed and in

Iraq.

So let us return to the question that I asked when I began my

remarks: Do we, as Americans, have the resolve to see our commitments

through? Or will we falter?

That is what the vote on this conference report will demonstrate.

Will we stand with firm resolve behind our commitments and see our new

strategy through? Or do we adopt a policy of appeasement and hope that

al-Qaida, and those who wish us harm and seek to destroy the values

that we hold so dear, do not follow us home to our country?

What side of history do you wish to be on? Based on America's history

and our resolve that has seen us through so many difficulties in the

past, I believe the American people do not want retreat, they want

success and security.