Madam President, I have been privileged on a number of

occasions to be in that chair when Senator Kennedy was speaking. I say

this with affection and admiration. Senator Kennedy has been clear from

the beginning of this conflict that he is against the war in Iraq, and

I respect his clarity. But it is interesting that while the senior

Senator from Massachusetts has been entirely clear and entirely

consistent, the junior Senator from Massachusetts, the Democratic

nominee, could not have been in more confusion, leaving the American

people in a greater sense of chaos than words could make possible.

It is amazing, interesting, that we have in Senator Kerry a decorated

Vietnam veteran, and yet we have in Senator Kerry a man who now is

falling in the polls who faces tonight an opportunity to clarify for

the American people his position on Iraq. With plummeting poll numbers,

it has to be asked, why has his fortunes as a war hero and veteran been

so reversed?

I find the answer in the Good Book in a verse where Paul says:

I do not know that there is a more certain sound than Senator

Kennedy. I cannot imagine a more uncertain sound than Senator Kerry.

Let's review the record. Whether you are for or against the war,

those are positions one can argue, as I have done on the side of the

war on terrorism that includes Iraq, or as Senator Kennedy has against

Iraq as a part of the war on terrorism, but let's review what Senator

Kerry has said to the American people.

Did going to war in Iraq make us more secure or less secure?

Apparently, Senator Kerry is not sure. He is saying now that we traded

a dictator for chaos in Iraq. That has made us less secure. But during

the primary season, he ravaged Howard Dean by saying:

Yet those are two diametrically opposed positions.

Yesterday on ABC's ``Good Morning America,'' Diane Sawyer asked him

this very question. He said: We won't know until we know whether this

has been successful or not. Thank Heavens President Roosevelt did not

have that position after Corregidor or President Lincoln after

Antietam. I think John Kerry was right: People who cannot make up their

minds should not be President of the United States.

But which is it? If, indeed, as Senator Kerry has claimed, we are

less secure, then it seems that he is lacking a serious component of

judgment.

Can Senator Kerry, by virtue of bringing a new face to the

Presidency, convince some of our reluctant allies to participate more

vigorously to bringing democracy in Iraq? He believes he can, despite

the fact that both the French and German governments have said time and

again, repeatedly, no matter the outcome of the American election, they

will not do more to help in Iraq.

So it seems to me that Senator Kerry is playing a rather false hand

to the American people. It is an illusory promise. It just will not

happen.

I have heard the Senator complain that we do not have enough troops,

and now he wants to pull the troops home. So the question is, Should we

increase the number of American troops or should we bring them home and

leave Iraq to the Iraqis? This is a question about which reasonable

people can disagree, but Senator Kerry's statements indicate he

disagrees again with himself.

First he says we should do what the military leaders say, even if

that means deploying more troops to Iraq. Then he said he intends to

get all Americans troops home in his first term. Then last week he said

he does not intend to increase troops at all. Specifically he said:

I agree with him; he would certainly change the dynamics on the

ground. The enemies of freedom in Iraq would feel emboldened to wait it

out until the United States leaves, rather than recognize the

democratic process is irreversible. That is not the kind of dynamic I

want to see or the American people deserve to see.

When the Senate voted to give President Bush the authority to go to

war, did we mean he could actually start a war? This is a question that

I, as a Senator, take very seriously. Senator Kerry voted for the

authorization, just as I did, but is now saying:

And that the Senate also gave the President the ``authority not to go

to war.'' End of quote from John Kerry.

Yet what did the resolution actually say, Madam President? It could

not be clearer. You heard what John Kerry said, what he thought it

said, but he should have read it. It says: ``Joint Resolution to

authorize the use of the United States Armed Forces against

Iraq.'' If my colleague read nothing else in the resolution but that

first line, he would still have known what this resolution was designed

to do.

Later in the text, in case anyone missed the intent, it states:

Which authorizes the use of the Armed Forces--

There is no room for disagreement about what we are doing with this

resolution. He voted for it. I did. An overwhelming majority did. And

it does not say what Senator Kerry now says it said.

I take responsibility for voting on matters of war and peace very

seriously, but we cannot have it both ways. We cannot expect to have

credibility in the world, that Senator Kerry so consistently states he

would bring, if we squander our words in meaning in such a way as he

now does on matters as important as authorizing war and peace.

What do we do going forward, Madam President? On September 20,

Senator Kerry gave a speech outlining his latest plan for Iraq. He had

four main points.

The first: The President must get international support so American

troops do not have to ``go it alone.''

The fact is, 32 countries are contributing 25,000 soldiers to the

coalition effort in Iraq.

The second part of his plan: The President must get serious about

training Iraqi forces.

Yet there are currently almost 100,000 fully trained Iraqi soldiers,

police officers, and other security personnel out of the 164,000 Iraqis

out there on the front lines defending their freedom and protecting

their country. An additional 75,000 Iraqis have received some form of

security training to guard important facilities.

The third point: The President must carry out a reconstruction plan

that brings tangible benefits to the Iraqi people.

Yet the United States has already spent more than a billion dollars

on urgent reconstruction projects in areas threatened by the

insurgency. In the next several months, over $9 billion will be spent

on contracts that will help Iraqis rebuild schools, hospitals, bridges,

as well as upgrade the electricity grid and modernize the

communications system.

This point is actually particularly laughable, given that Senator

Kerry, who now says we have to do this, voted against the money to do

this. He voted against the $87 billion before he says he voted for it

that included nearly $20 billion in vital reconstruction for Iraq.

Again, the uncertainty.

His final point: The President must take immediate steps to guarantee

elections in Iraq will be held next year.

Yet an Iraqi electoral commission is now up and running and has

already hired personnel and is making key decisions about electoral

procedures. The commission launched a public education campaign to

inform Iraqis about the process and encourage them to become voters,

and United Nation's electoral advisers are on the ground in Iraq.

What is particularly interesting about this is that on May 24, 2004,

nearly 4 months before Senator Kerry's speech in New York, President

Bush laid out a five-step plan for helping Iraq achieve democracy and

freedom. Everything Senator Kerry proposed was part of the President's

plan he announced in May, and the administration has been implementing

it.

In conclusion, at the present time, Senator Kerry issued a press

release stating that the President's speech laid out general

principles--and this is laughable--``most of which we've heard before''

because they are part and parcel of the President's plan.

So if the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, no one will prepare to

battle, and that, I believe, is the reason for Senator Kerry's

plummeting in the opinion polls of the United States.

I yield the floor.