Mr. President, I have great respect for my colleague,

Senator Feingold. If I am not mistaken, he opposed the authorization of

military force in Iraq and has consistently opposed that policy. I am

not supportive of the Levin amendment. I think it would result in a

precipitous, irresponsible, and dangerous redeployment of our soldiers,

confusing to our allies, placing our soldiers who remain in Iraq at

greater risk, and placing the Iraqi soldiers, many of whom, indeed, are

standing with us right now to fight al-Qaida in Iraq, making their

lives more dangerous. In fact, they are taking more casualties than we

are. It is not correct to say they are not performing. We wish they

would perform much better. We wish the Government was stronger. But, in

fact, we are at this very moment shoulder to shoulder in operation

after operation around Iraq.

I will note this. This is not a little, bitty nation we are leaders

of. This is the United States of America, a great nation. Two months

ago, the Congress

of this great Nation voted to fund the surge in Iraq, and this Senate

voted 99 to 0 to confirm General Petraeus to lead that surge. We

required an interim report on July 15 on how things are going and a

more serious, comprehensive report from General Petraeus himself in

September. OK? That is what we did, and that is what we are doing.

For the last, I believe, 3 weeks, the surge has been complete. For

only 3 weeks have we had the full complement of troops as part of this

surge. Already some things have happened militarily that are good in

Iraq.

So before we get the general's report in September, without anything

other than our own opinions from reading newspapers and watching TV and

sitting in our air-conditioned offices, we are now going to come along

and abrogate what this great Nation did 2 months ago because of some

political pressure or some spot they saw on the evening news, placing

our soldiers at risk, undermining the policies we are asking them to

execute at this very moment. Even pushing for that at this time I think

is irresponsible.

I wish to be on record as saying I understand the difficulties we are

facing in Iraq. I understand the courage our soldiers are displaying. I

understand the risks they are subjected to right now, and we want to

see the situation improve. All of us do. But we voted for this policy.

The surge has just started. We need to give General Petraeus a chance

to proceed with it and not flop around irresponsibly and come up with a

withdrawal policy that is so rapid that I am not even sure the military

can effectively carry it out under the Levin amendment. As a matter of

fact, they cannot effectively carry it out.

Mr. President, I guess we are still in morning business. I see my

colleague, Senator Nelson from Florida, whom I respect so greatly. He

chairs the Strategic Subcommittee of which I am pleased to be the

ranking member.

I believe I am to be recognized in a few minutes on a separate

amendment, but if Senator Nelson has some comments he would like to

make at this time, I will consider yielding to him and see what our

schedule is.