Mr. President, I rise today to discuss Iraq, as I have

every day this week that we have been here. First, I know we all have

the deepest gratitude and respect for the sacrifice of the brave men

and women serving our country so valiantly in Iraq. Make no mistake

about it, the troops are doing their job. I am concerned, however, that

their mission is not worthy of their great sacrifice, especially the

President's surge.

The surge, despite earlier reports this week, has failed to meet the

objectives set out by the President. And the President can't change

that fact by changing the goal. He is now claiming progress in Iraq as

evidence that the surge--directed at Baghdad--is working. While the

President has claimed progress in Anbar, it was not the surge that

brought the momentary calm to this region, because the surge was

focused mainly on Baghdad, and the difficult process of political

reconciliation. Its objective, as stated by the President himself, was

to create breathing room for the central Iraqi Government to make

political progress.

Our brave troops have been in Anbar for years and years, doing the

first-rate job they always do in what is a very difficult environment.

Now, however, some elements of the local population, and some of their

leaders, have made common cause with the brave men and women of our

military. They have cooperated with our troops out of distaste for the

brutal methods of al-Qaida. While this is a welcome and helpful

development, it is neither the foundation upon which a successful long-

term strategy can be launched, nor is it a result of the surge, which

was targeted mainly at Baghdad and the national Iraqi political

process.

We have heard about successes in the past. They are temporary. They

are not based on any permanent structural change or any permanent

change in the views of the Iraqi citizens. The Shiites, the Sunnis, and

the Kurds still despise each other. They dislike each other more than

they like any central government. We have heard about success in the

past in Baghdad, and we have heard about success in Fallujah, and they

vanish like the wind because the fundamentals on the ground haven't

changed.

Now, at a time when the American people are crying out for a change

in course, some are pointing to a temporary situation in one province--

Anbar--as a way to continue the present misguided policy. It makes no

sense. It makes no sense because the fundamentals in Iraq stay the

same. There is no central government that has any viability, and the

warlords in Anbar Province have no relationship with the central

government whatsoever. The Shiites, the Kurds, and the Sunnis, as I

have stated, dislike each other far more than they like or want any

central government, and these two facts doom the administration's

policy to failure.

We should not have our brave soldiers fighting a civil war caught

between rival political and religious factions. We desperately need a

change in course, a change in course that recognizes the political

situation on the ground, and I urge that this body move forward to do

just that.