Madam President, would the Senator yield for a question?

Madam President, I was just going to ask the

distinguished Senator if he would yield. While I can't associate myself

with all of his remarks and, as I note, the press gallery and the world

will little note nor long remember our colloquy, perhaps, I wish to

congratulate him for his forthrightness and his candor and his

conviction.

The Senator and I have talked about the situation and about the need

for full debate in regard to our national security and the war in Iraq,

and I had hoped his resolution would be agreed to during the last--or

the previous attempt when we only had one resolution and that was it. I

had asked at that particular time, in a very similar situation--I was

making a speech, and the Chamber was empty, and so I can empathize with

that. But my comments were that we should consider the McCain amendment

with the benchmarks, the Gregg amendment, and Senator Feingold's,

because his is very forthright. It is very clear and very

understandable. Now, I would not vote for it, but I respect the

Senator's opinion, and I respect his candor.

The Senator has been a member, a valuable member of the Intelligence

Committee. I had the privilege of being the chairman of that committee.

I think I am the longest serving Senator on the Intelligence Committee

up to this point--10 years. It is tough work. There are a lot of times

I disagreed with the Senator, but the Senator is an extremely valuable

member of the Intelligence Committee. Upon learning all of the

intelligence from the 19 different agencies that comprise the

community, he has developed a very strong opinion. I respect that. That

is what we should be doing. We should be having a full debate. I hope

in voting to proceed that we at least get that full debate.

I would say to the Senator, one of my best friends is General

Petraeus, who used to be the commanding general at Fort Leavenworth, at

the Intellectual Center of the Army, and he wrote the counterterrorism

manual for the Army. He just finished it. We talked a lot about the

British experience in regards to what happened at that particular time

in Iraq. It is unique, it seems to me, because what the Senator wants

to do follows the same time period General Petraeus wants to inform us

as to whether we are making any progress and if we can achieve

stability in Iraq, and that is a mighty big ``if.''

I think by the summer at least, if we are not making progress, at

that particular time we are going to have to go to a policy of

containment as opposed to intervention, as the Senator has suggested.

How we do that, I am not quite sure. We haven't had that debate on the

Senate floor.

Now, this Senator, Mr. Feingold, has called for that debate, and that

is what we should be debating. It calls for a lot of different

opinions.

So I congratulate the Senator. I thank him for his candor. I thank

him for being forthright. I wish we could vote on the Senator's

resolution this time around. Does the Senator think that is even

possible?

Why not the Feingold resolution?

Madam President, if the Senator would continue to yield,

what if I ask unanimous consent that the Senator's amendment be made in

order?

If the Senator will continue to yield for a question,

you are talking about step 2. Step 1 is being considered, and your

specific resolution would be step 2 on the supplemental.

So if the Senator will continue to yield, we are on step

3 until we get to your resolution?

It would be step 3 before you would think it would be

appropriate to consider your resolution?

I have got it. I just want to make clear,

understandably, I would probably vote no--well, not probably--I would

vote no on the resolution. But again, the thing that disturbs me is

when we get to the what-ifs. What if we pass your resolution? What if

we pass somebody else's resolution? What happens if we get the troops

out? Hopefully they would not be in a situation where we have to send

them back. The what-ifs on what happens to us, which you have discussed

in a rare discussion on the floor, we haven't talked about that.

We have an honest difference of opinion, but we have not

talked about that. That is the whole point I am trying to make, that at

least the Senator is trying to force the issue in making his point, and

let nobody say that they challenge your patriotism or your intent or

whatever. I know there is a lot of rhetoric flying around. I don't

agree with that at all. I think this debate ought to take place, and

this debate is not taking place. So thank you to the Senator. And I

don't think I have endangered--well, maybe I have--my reputation just a

little.