So, Madam President, we are now debating whether to

proceed to S.J. Res. 9. I am glad the Chair clarified that. I am here

to speak briefly, to say I hope our colleagues will say yes and will

proceed to S.J. Res. 9. I will go into why I think that would be an

excellent vote for this Chamber to take. I wish to speak briefly as to

where we are procedurally.

Our Democratic leader, Senator Reid, has presented to the Senate S.J.

Res. 9. Its purpose is to revise the policy of the United States in

Iraq, and if ever we needed to revise the policy of the United States

in Iraq, it is certainly now. In my belief, it was certainly a year ago

and the year before.

As someone who did not vote to give the President the authorization

to go to war in the first place, I and a number of my colleagues have

watched with horror as we have seen take place what we predicted.

We said the President did not consider what would happen if our

troops were not greeted as liberators and, in fact, were greeted as

occupiers. We asked questions about the possibility of sectarian

violence among the Sunni, Shia, and others. We said it was a mistake to

take our eye off capturing bin Laden and finishing our work in

Afghanistan, which is crucial. We wondered why the President was doing

this when the whole world was with us after the tragedy of 9/11. He

turned around and went after Saddam Hussein, told us he was going to

get nuclear weapons, told us he was harboring al-Qaida, and I will tell

you, Madam President, all of that proved to be false.

So he took the country to war on false pretenses, and who has paid

the price for that? The military families. The dead. These families

have lost over 3,000 of their nearest and dearest, and they will never,

ever--ever--be the same.

The wounded are suffering the worst kind of wounds. These are the

folks who have paid the heavy price and who continue to pay the heavy

price.

I am proud of Senator Reid and the Democratic leadership. We promised

the people we would make this our No. 1 priority, and we are. We tried

to debate Iraq before. The Republicans stopped us. Now we are trying to

do it again.

We have a resolution I wish to share with you, Madam President. I

said it was called a Joint Resolution to Revise United States Policy in

Iraq. It says, and I am going to truncate this:

Whereas, Congress and the American people will continue to support

and protect the troops who are serving or have served bravely and

honorably in Iraq; and whereas the circumstances referred to in the

authorization in 2002 have changed substantially; and whereas U.S.

troops should not be policing a civil war, and the current conflict in

Iraq requires principally a political solution; and whereas U.S. policy

in Iraq must change to emphasize the need for a political solution by

Iraqi leaders in order to maximize the chance of success and to more

effectively fight the war on terror; therefore be it resolved that we

transition this mission away from being in the middle of a civil war

toward being supportive of the Iraqi troops and training them; that we

shall begin the phased redeployment of the U.S. Forces from Iraq not

later than 120 days after enactment of the resolution; that we then

move forward with a comprehensive strategy so that we finally resolve

this Iraq quagmire--it means that it has to be diplomatic and political

and economic--and that there be a report every 60 days so we know how

this redeployment is going.

This is a breath of fresh air. This resolution is a breath of fresh

air into a situation where you can't even breathe you are so suffocated

from the tragedy, from the deaths, from the wounded, from the

explosions every single day. So, yes, we are debating whether we should

proceed to S.J. Res. 9, and I hope we will.

In closing, let me say this. There is a lot of talk about loving the

troops, and I think every one of us in this Chamber loves the troops,

so I have a rhetorical point here. If you love the troops, and I

believe we all do, why put them in the middle of a civil war where they

can't tell who is shooting at them? If you love the troops, why do you

give them a mission they can't accomplish? They can't solve the civil

war. That has to be done diplomatically, politically. If you love the

troops, why would you lower the standards for their future colleagues

in arms? We are stunned to see that convicted violent felons are

now being taken into the military, that is how desperately stretched

the military is.

If you love the troops, why would you put them in a place such as

Walter Reed, where you have mold on the walls and vermin, and not give

them the access when they leave Washington and go back home, not give

them definitive access to the help they need?

Why would you send them, if you loved the troops, out to battle again

and again and again? I met a man yesterday whose son is on his third

tour. I have the charts in front of my office with the names of the

California dead. He looked at that, and I saw the look on his face, and

I said, what is wrong? He said, I have a son in Iraq, third tour of

duty, no rest.

So why do you have a rule that says they have to have rest; they have

to be properly trained; they have to have the proper equipment?

If you love the troops, why would you continue to send them over in

that fashion, without being properly equipped or trained? Why would you

send them out on the battlefield with post-traumatic stress and a

bottle of antidepressants, if you loved the troops?

I am proud to be a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 9. This is a comprehensive

solution. The other side of this debate keeps saying, well, where is

your solution? Here it is. It is right there. We transform the mission

to a mission that can be accomplished, not mission impossible. That

mission will be to protect United States and coalition personnel and

infrastructure, training and equipping Iraqi forces, and conducting

targeted counterterrorism operations. Now that is a mission we can

accomplish.

As for sending our troops into the middle of a civil war, that is

wrong, and I don't believe anyone who voted for that resolution--and I

am so proud and so glad I didn't vote for that resolution to take this

country into this ill-fated war, but if you voted for it, you didn't

vote to put troops in the middle of a civil war. So if that is where we

are right now, we need to change it.

You know, Martin Luther King--and I read this recently--who is one of

my heroes in life, said during the Vietnam war that what can happen to

you when you are faced with these horrible options, these horrible

choices--and by the way, the worst kind of leadership, no matter where

it comes from, is a leadership that gives you no good choices, okay?

But Martin Luther King said, when you are faced with that

circumstance--and he was talking about Vietnam, where it was tragic,

there were no good choices, what could we do--said, paralysis sets in

and people can't change. What happens is the status quo prevails and it

becomes a new reality: dead, dead, dead soldiers every day, suicide

bombs, and we can't get out of it.

The surge isn't a new strategy. It has been tried before. We know

what is happening. The enemy tells us what is happening. They are

leaving, going someplace else to cause trouble; waiting it out. We know

they will adjust to this.

There is only one solution, and that is why S.J. Res. 9 is so

important. What is the solution? We spell it out. A comprehensive

strategy shall be implemented as part of a comprehensive diplomatic,

political, and economic strategy that includes sustained engagement

with Iraq's neighbors and the international community for the purpose

of working collectively to bring stability to Iraq.

There is no more coalition of the willing. They are all leaving,

whether it is Great Britain--which now is going to have only a few

thousand troops there--Italy, Spain, Portugal. I could go through the

list. They are all leaving. We need to redeploy our troops and we need

a comprehensive strategy. I am proud to support S.J. Res. 9, and I hope

when we have this vote we will vote to proceed to this very important

resolution.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.