Mr. President, we have been discussing this topic now

for some time, and it seems that there are a succession of ways in

which to fail.

The Democratic leadership in the Senate is looking to persuade the

American people that our national security would improve if we

immediately withdrew U.S. forces from Iraq and provided our enemies

with a timetable and roadmap for our withdrawal. This is exactly what

S. Res. 9 would do. It would require the beginning of the withdrawal of

U.S. troops from Iraq within 120 days.

The distinguished Senator from Connecticut said he didn't even think

that was acceptable; that it should be even less than 120 days. So the

underlying goal is to remove all U.S. combat forces by March 31, 2008.

There will be exceptions for those who will stay to protect personnel

and to do the training of Iraqi forces, but the overall premise is to

diminish the U.S. presence in Iraq. To that end, I ask: What is the

goal, just withdrawal or success? If all we are about is withdrawing,

there are many ways to do that. This timetable might be appropriate, if

that were the only goal. But if the goal is success, if the goal is the

opportunity for Iraq to succeed in its effort at democracy, a different

plan must be followed.

Setting artificial, arbitrary timelines for withdrawal has been

opposed by Republicans, Democrats, our military leaders, and the Iraq

Study Group. In the words of the Democratic leader on January 31, 2005:

In the words of the current chairman of the Foreign Relations

Committee, in June of 2005:

Let me repeat that: It will only encourage our enemies to wait us out

if we give a deadline.

Democrats are trying to bring before us the 17th version of how we

would manage the war in Iraq. Seventeen plans in less than 2 months and

none lead to victory. Can you imagine if the commanders on the ground

actually had to take orders from the Senate? Thankfully, in our scheme

of Government and the way our Government was set up, we only have one

Commander in Chief, one person giving the orders to our armed services

so that they might succeed at our endeavors.

This attempt to micromanage the war at every level by Senate

resolutions is not what our Government should do at a time of war. The

President put together a new plan and a new team. General Petraeus is

on the ground as the Iraq allied commander, and Admiral Fallon with the

Central Command. Both of these distinguished military leaders testified they

supported the current plan, and this Senate confirmed General Petraeus

by a vote of 81 to 0.

So now what is our message? We send you to war but we don't want you

to execute your plan?

We are so fond of this whole atmosphere of anti-Bush and the

President that we forget that this is a plan that General Petraeus, our

military leader on the ground in Iraq, has said he believed was a plan

that had a reasonable chance for success. So I say give General

Petraeus and his plan a chance for success on the field.

Our forces have not suffered a single military defeat in this entire

episode. Obviously, we have had some losses, and a high cost in lives

and injuries and treasure, but we have not had a single military

defeat. The sacrifice of our troops, their sacrifice, must be for a

purpose: a state of Iraq that is not a failed state.

In hearing after hearing in the Armed Services Committee, I have

listened to our military leaders, as well as intelligence experts, give

us the same message, and their message is clear: A precipitous

withdrawal from Iraq would almost surely result in a failed state, and

a failed Iraqi state would be a disaster for the Middle East and our

own national security.

I would suggest a rapid exit from Iraq is not in America's best

national interest. I urge my Democratic colleagues to articulate how

exiting Iraq, allowing chaos to reign, allowing thugs to rule the

streets, and fear to rule the hearts of the Iraqi people will make

America safer.

For years, my Democratic colleagues have been calling for a change of

course. Well, President Bush provided one, a way forward politically,

economically, and militarily. The new team, a new commander, and our

commanders in the field, have said we need more troops, and the

President provided them.

By the way, early indications are that things are a little

encouraging. American and Iraqi forces, side by side, are walking in

the streets of Sadr City as we speak. It is too soon to tell, but so

far, I, for one, am encouraged. This may just work. Why not give it a

chance?

The Democrats have provided 17 plans. None will give Iraq a chance to

succeed. I have a plan. Let's support our troops by providing them the

funding they need and allowing those responsible for executing the war

to do their job. Let the generals on the field run the war.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle try every day to equate

this global war on terror to Vietnam. I do not believe there are many

similarities, but I believe there is one. That war, Vietnam, was lost

in Washington, and this one can be, too. Let's not do that.

The distinguished junior Senator from New York said it best on

September of 2005:

That statement was true then, and I believe it to be true today.

During this debate, I want to hear how nonbinding resolutions,

dragged out over several weeks, Saturdays included, resolutions with

the sole purpose to undermine our Commander in Chief, will do anything

but confuse our troops, embolden our enemy, and complicate our efforts

to combat terrorism and support this young democracy in the heart of

the Middle East.

I oppose S. Res. 9. It is wrong for Iraq, it is wrong for the Iraqi

people, it is wrong for the stability of the Middle East, and it is

wrong for the national security of the United States.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.