Mr. President, let me, first of all, commend our

colleague who just spoke. Senator Lieberman is very knowledgeable. It

has been such an honor for me, in the years I have been in the Senate,

to be serving on both the Armed Services Committee with him as well as

the Environment and Public Works Committee.

I very much am opposed to Senator Feingold's bills. But I wonder, in

this short session, in the short time we have left--we have such things

to debate: the budget, housing, energy, consumer product safety,

education, farm programs--and I have to ask: Why are we wasting

valuable time on these bills? And why at this time do we need another

report?

The National Security Strategy was written in 2006, and another will

be required 150 days after the new administration comes in. The

National Military Strategy review has been completed, and the Chairman

of the Joint Chiefs is conducting his own additional review. The

Quadrennial Defense Review will be out later this year. And the

National Defense Strategy is also mandated by law. We currently have

the strategy in place to win the global war on terror.

The study prescribed by S. 2634 ties the hands of our military by

telling them to outline a strategy that does not let them utilize the

full extent of their resources.

Furthermore, the substance of Senator Feingold's bills has been

debated and defeated. On December 18, 2007, we voted against an

amendment of the same nature as S. 2633 from the very same Senator,

Senator Feingold. It was a troop withdrawal amendment, it was No. 3875,

and it was defeated 71 to 24. We have already done this. Senator McCain

said it best when he said that a majority had, by December 18, engaged

in no less than 40 legislative attempts to achieve the misguided

outcome of precipitous withdrawal. This makes Nos. 41 and 42. All of

these 40-odd, time-wasting attempts have been defeated. Why? Because we

are doing the right thing in Iraq.

We did away with the oppressive regime of Saddam Hussein, where mass

graves, torture, and rape were normal and everyday occurrences. We did

away with terrorist training camps in Samarra, Ramadi, Sargat, Salmon

Pak--and incidentally, Salmon Pak, in that training camp, they had a

fuselage of an old 707 there, teaching people how to hijack airplanes.

I guess we will never know whether the perpetrators of 9/11 were

trained there. But nonetheless, there were four training camps there.

They are gone now. They are closed.

We helped the Iraqi people create a free and Democratic country,

where representation and the rule of law are replacing coercion and

terror. The Iraqi Parliament has passed legislation that has reformed

the de-Ba'athification, enacted pension reform that allowed former

Ba'athists to collect their pensions. They enacted a law defining the

provincial and central government roles and responsibilities. They

passed the 2008 budget--faster than we are doing it, actually--and

enacted an amnesty law that could lead to the release of thousands of

detainees, removing a stumbling block standing in the way of

reconciliation.

We have done the right thing, and we are winning.

It is interesting. A lot of the people who were the defeatists come

back now--Katie Couric is an example--who says we are actually winning.

Less than half the al-Qaida leaders who were in Baghdad when the surge

began are still in the city. They have either fled or were killed and

captured.

In addition to the list Senator Lieberman talked about and in terms

of the successes, there has been a 75-percent reduction in religious

and ethnic killings in the capital, they have doubled the seizure of

insurgents' weapons caches, there has been a rise in the number of al-

Qaida killed and captured, they have knocked out six media cells,

making it harder for al-Qaida to spread their propaganda, and Anbar

incidents of attacks are down from 40 a day to less than 10 a day.

There has been economic growth, markets are open, and the streets are

crowded.

We have been over there and we have seen it. You didn't used to be

able to do that. The Iraqi Army is performing well.

The Iraqi citizens formed a grassroots movement called Concerned

Citizens Leagues. This is interesting because this is allowing

citizens, as we have in Washington, DC, and in Tulsa, OK--we have

groups that go out there to protect ourselves, and that is what these

people are doing. They are unarmed. They are going out now with paint

cans and drawing circles around undetonated IEDs and unexploded

ordnance.

COL Tom James, one of the commanders of the 3rd I.D. in Iraq, said

last Friday, February 22:

We are winning because we are supporting our war fighters with a

fundamental advantage, allowing them to command and control their

forces--not doing it from here. Senator Feingold's amendment serves to

tie the hands of our commanders on the ground.

S. 2633 legislates defeat. There is no other way to put it. The

amendment legislates defeat. Secretary Gates said: If we were to

withdraw, leaving Iraq in chaos, al-Qaida most certainly would use

Anbar Province . . . as another base from which to plan operations not

only inside Iraq, but first of all in the neighborhood and then

potentially against the United States.

I must remind Senator Feingold and the cosponsors of this amendment

that al-Qaida is not the only threat to America and to our ideals.

Ahmadinejad said on August 28--this is very interesting. He said:

A power vacuum.

He said this expecting our defeatism--he is talking about these

resolutions--he said:

Now here is Iran, a country which recently declared a doubling of its

uranium enrichment program and has been testing ballistic missiles,

talking about filling this gap, the void that would be created.

A lack of a secure and stable Iraq means instability in the Middle

East and a clear avenue for terror and oppression to spread, and

already has spread, into Africa.

I have had occasion to be in what we refer to as the CENTCOM and now

AFRICOM and EUCOM some 27 times since 9/11. A lot of that time is down

in areas such as Djibouti and in the heart of Africa, where we have our

forces down there, because with this squeeze taking place in the Middle

East, there is a lot of the terrorist traffic going into Africa. As for

S. 2634, as the one before it, it is a thinly veiled attempt to end the

war in Iraq by legislating defeat.

The bill proposes to micromanage military strategy by forcing the

administration to narrowly define the future movement and employment of

military personnel. It attempts to define the type of missions the

military can conduct and places constraints on the length of time the

military can deploy. It falsely presumes our professional warriors

would be better served by limiting their deployments rather than

supporting their victory over the enemy.

By the way, all these people who now talk to me about the long

deployments--and I agree the deployments are too long--I wonder where

they were in the 1990s when we cut down the size of our military, when

we brought the number of divisions down from 18 to 10. I can remember

being on the floor saying this day was going to come and that some day

we were going to say: Why did we cut back so far?

Again, COL Tom James, speaking about our recent successes, said:

Proposing specific deployment and dwell times would limit the

flexibility

of our commanders to conduct operations in the field and infringe on

the President's authority as Commander in Chief.

So this is the same flexibility that allowed the Commander in Chief

to surge forces and turn the tide in Iraq. I am one of those who

personally observed the changes that took place in Iraq with the surge.

It was about a year ago right now. I recall a report where our

intelligence was actually attending all the weekly Friday mosque

meetings, and at that time, my recollection is 85 percent of those

messages given by the imams and the clerics were anti-American

messages. That stopped in April, and they realized things are working

there. There is so much talk about the political leaders, I kind of

look at the religious leaders as part of the reason for the successes

we have had.

So I think we have already voted on these. They have been voted down,

and we don't need to waste any more time on it. I think common sense--

when we sit on the Senate Armed Services Committee, as we did this

morning, and we looked at the brilliant generals who were testifying

before us, such as General Casey, these people spend a lifetime knowing

what is going on and how to negotiate wars. We are winning. Things are

good right now. I have often thought--I was honored in 1991 to be on

the first freedom flight back to Kuwait. At that time, the Iraqis

didn't know the war was over. They were still burning the fields. I

remember going into one of the houses that actually was the Ambassador

to the United States from Kuwait, a family of nobility, going into

their home. They wanted to see what it looked like. Saddam Hussein had

used it for one of his headquarters, and the little daughter going up

to her bedroom to see what it looked like, they had used her bedroom

for a torture chamber. The unimaginable things that were going on over

there: Looking into the mass graves. I would think that those

individuals on the other side, if nothing more--if that were all there

were to it--would say we have to finish. It is our humanitarian

responsibility.

We are experiencing a victory, the surge is working, and I hope we

will be able to dispose of, in a very quick way, these two bills

authored by Senator Feingold.

I yield the floor.