Madam President, I would like to say a word about the

remarks just made by my colleague from Indiana, Senator Lugar. It has

been my honor to serve with Senator Lugar now for 11 years. I count him

as a friend, as a valued colleague, as a neighbor in the Midwest.

I believe the speech which he has just made on the floor of the

Senate is in the finest tradition of the Senate, like its author.

Senator Lugar's speech was thoughtful, thorough, and honest. It was a

challenge to all of us on both sides of the aisle, Democrat and

Republican alike: To step back from the debate on Iraq, take an

inventory of where we are, make an honest appraisal, and move forward.

I think it is a challenge to all Senators. I am sorry it was

delivered at the time of night when few of our colleagues were here,

but if we are fortunate some followed it on C-SPAN as Senator Lugar

presented it.

I made notes during the course of the speech. I am sure I have missed

some valuable and important things that Senator Lugar said, but I will

just tell you that I do not disagree with his conclusion. I believe, as

he does, that the factionalism in Iraq has reached catastrophic

proportions, that it is doubtful they will be able to patch together in

the near term the government which we had hoped for.

I agree with Senator Lugar completely about the fatigue of our

military. We have the greatest military in the world, the best and

bravest, not only in Indianapolis but in Springfield, IL, and all

across the Nation. We are so proud of these men and women and what they

fight for and the representation of our great Nation.

I think Senator Lugar hit the nail on the head when he said the

strongest fighting force in the world is not indestructible. We are

pushing them to the absolute limit, and that is a reality.

His third point about the timetable of our debate is a valuable one.

Some wonder if there are members of the administration who are waiting

for the clock to run out, the day to come when they leave Washington to

turn this issue over to another. That would be a serious mistake,

because in the meantime we know that American lives will be lost and

opportunities may be squandered.

That point was made very effectively by Senator Lugar this evening. I

made some notes of things he said that I believe summarize our

situation so effectively. He said that a course change should happen

now. He called for a sustainable, bipartisan strategy in dealing with

Iraq. He called for a rational course adjustment that must be initiated

very soon. He said that far more important than just Iraq are our

Middle Eastern goals that are languishing because of our current

strategy.

I could not agree with him more on the four points he set out as our

Middle Eastern objectives to keep Iraq from becoming a terrorist haven,

to stop Iraq from spreading instability into the region, to prevent

Iranian dominance of the region, and to limit the loss of U.S.

credibility in the region as a result of this war.

I think he is correct in his analysis. He said that the current surge

strategy is not effective. He believes, as I do, at this moment in time

total withdrawal is not consistent with our regional goals. I want to

bring American troops home as quickly as possible, as many as possible.

We have said from the beginning on the Democratic side that there are

certain responsibilities we must still accept in that region: To stop

the spread of al-Qaida terrorism, to make certain the Iraqis, as best

we can, are prepared to fight this battle, and to protect our own

forces during the withdrawal.

He called for downsizing to more sustainable positions, to put our

troops in a position where they can respond if necessary. He called for

attempts to end imposing our forces between sectarian warring factions.

That, I believe, is our highest priority. To think that our men and

women in uniform are now caught in the crossfire of a civil war with

its origins 14 centuries ago in a sectarian battle is just

unacceptable.

He said the longer we delay plans for redeployment, the less likely

it will be successful. I could not agree with him more. He called for a

tactical drawdown of U.S. troops to make diplomatic efforts more likely

to succeed.

I agree with Senator Lugar when he said we are running out of time;

we have to move the Iraqi policy between the politics of the moment. He

said the administration and Congress must suspend knee-jerk political

combat over Iraq.

Forty years ago as a law school student, I came and sat in that

gallery in a chair and watched as Senator Robert Kennedy came to the

floor to give a speech on Vietnam. He walked through those doors with

his brother, Senator Ted Kennedy. Their families were in the gallery.

He stood on this floor, again, in the evening hours after most Senators

had gone home. He spoke about bringing the war in Vietnam to a close.

It was an important speech in the history of our Nation and certainly

in the history of the Senate, and I think it made a difference. I

believe the speech that was given tonight by my colleague from Indiana,

Republican Senator Richard Lugar, is that kind of speech. I think it is

the starting point for a meaningful debate, a debate which looks at the

Middle East in a new context and in a realistic context, and realizes

that it is time to change direction in our course in Iraq.

I salute my colleague. I hope every Member of the Senate tomorrow

will ask for a copy of the speech from the Congressional Record, read

it carefully, and then come to this floor when we return after the

Fourth of July break and begin our debate over the Defense

authorization bill, and realize

that during the course of that debate we can reach across the aisle on

a bipartisan basis and make a difference.

I thank Senator Lugar for his contribution to this most important

issue which challenges us today.

Madam President, I yield the floor.