Mr. President, on January 11, 2 months ago--it seems

incredible it has been that long ago, but it has been--President Bush

announced his new war plan, the so-called surge. At that time,

administration officials gave the American people the strong impression

the President's plan would require the temporary--temporary--deployment

of 21,500 new troops in Iraq. During the last several days, news

reports confirm this new plan was nothing more than a bait and switch,

a new name for an old, failed policy.

First we learned that 21,500 troops cited by the President did not

include support in other elements and the true number of additional

troops associated with his proposal could have been as many as 40,000

troops. Then, over the weekend, we learned two other troubling facts

about the President's plan.

In the wake of continued violence in Iraq that prompted one of our

top generals there to call for more troops, the American commander in

Iraq, General Petraeus, made it clear still more troops are needed.

Even more disconcerting, according to a recent New York Times report:

President Bush is not surging; he is sustaining his failed policy.

The consequences of the President's flawed policy in Iraq are

staggering. Yesterday, three more American troops were killed. We are

fast approaching 3,200 dead Americans. We may be there; last count was

3,195. More than 25,000 now have been wounded. It has stretched our

military, it has eroded our veterans health care system, and plunged

Iraq deeper and deeper into chaos. No matter how one looks at it,

America is less safe today because this President has waged war in

Iraq. We must change course, and it is time for the Senate to demand he

do it.

Soon, the Senate will again have that opportunity to tell the

President to change course. We have been blocked in efforts to have the

debate on Iraq.

Last week we offered the Republicans yet another opportunity to debate.

It is my hope they will agree to this debate on Wednesday morning.

I appreciate very much the Republican leader voting for cloture. We

are going to finish that bill tomorrow.

It is my hope they will agree to this debate so we can complete this

important work; that is, the 9/11 bill, and then turn our attention to

the war.

America is losing about 20 soldiers a week, about 3 a day, and

spending $280 million a day in Iraq. It is a downward spiral that will

continue unless the Senate joins the American people in demanding a new

direction in Iraq.

The war hangs over all we do in the Senate this year. Even if we

debate this week, we will not be done. We are getting something from

the House on the supplemental and we will return to this issue of the

supplemental, very likely, and we will continue until there is a change

of course. There is very much work to do--the priorities everyone knows

about, such as immigration, stem cell; we have the budget ahead of us.

There are also issues such as the crisis in the judiciary and the

intelligence authorization bill, that will demand our attention in the

weeks ahead. I hope we can promptly complete action on the 9/11 bill

tomorrow, and I am confident we will do that. We have so much to do.

There is a lot of negativity about what we do here in the Senate, but

when you sort through all of it, and I recognize the war in Iraq is

hanging over everything we have done--but when you look at what we have

done these past few weeks in the history of the 110th Congress, we have

done OK. We have been able to do the work on ethics and lobbying. We

have done the minimum wage bill. We completed the continuing resolution

and we are going to complete 9/11 legislation soon. It appears we are

going to be able to do the reform of the Attorney General's problems

that have been so much in the press recently. We have confirmed the

only appellate court judge who has been brought to the floor. We hope

to do another one within the next week or so. We now have another one

on the calendar, so we will do that. The Judiciary Committee has three

over there they are looking at now. I know the distinguished Republican

leader is very concerned about moving appellate judges. We are going to

do our best to cooperate with him in that regard.

Simply in closing my remarks today, I recognize we have a difficult

situation with Iraq. Sometimes we need to sort through all that and

recognize we have been able to accomplish a lot, and it has been done--

the only way it can get done--on a bipartisan basis. We have had a few

bumps in the road, but if we are patient and willing to recognize there

will be bumps in the future, even having both sides not hold any

grudges--legislative grudges, at least--I think we have the ability to

do a lot more in this Congress.