Madam President, we have been bogged down in Iraq for

nearly 4 years, which is longer than the Korean conflict or our

involvement in World War II. The war has cost more than 3,100 American

lives, seven times that many wounded, and about $400 billion. We

desperately need to change course. Shifting responsibility to the Iraqi

political leaders to reach a political settlement is the only hope of

ending the violence. That is why the Iraq Study Group urged less U.S.

military involvement as they concluded:

But instead of putting pressure on Iraqi leaders to settle their

political differences as the only hope of a successful outcome in Iraq,

the President would get us in deeper militarily. The Iraqis didn't ask

for more U.S. troops to occupy their neighborhoods in Baghdad. Indeed,

they suggested we move out of Baghdad. The idea for this so-called

surge of American troops in Baghdad was ours. It may be called a surge,

but I believe it is a plunge, a plunge into a sectarian caldron, a

plunge into the unknown and perhaps the unknowable.

Supporters of the surge argue that a Senate resolution disagreeing

with the President's plan ``emboldens the enemy,'' but that is an

extraordinarily naive view of the enemy. What emboldens the sectarian

fighters is the inability of the Iraqi leaders to make political

compromises so essential to finally reining in the Sunni insurgents and

the Shia militias. The enemy cares little what Congress says. It is

emboldened by what the Iraqi leaders don't do. The enemy isn't

emboldened by congressional debate. It is emboldened by the open-ended

occupation of a Muslim country by western troops. The enemy is

emboldened by the current course which has seen a million Iraqis leave

the country and become refugees, with thousands more leaving daily. The

enemy is emboldened by years of blunders and bravado, false

assumptions, wishful thinking, and ignorance of the history of the land

being occupied. The enemy is emboldened by an administration which says

it is changing course, which acknowledges that a political settlement

by Iraqi leaders is essential to ending the violence but then plunges

us more deeply militarily into a sectarian witch's brew.

The only hope of ending the violence and succeeding against the

enemies of an Iraqi nation is if the leaders of that nation work out

their political differences and unite against forces that would destroy

any chance of nationhood. That takes political will. That takes

pressure from us. Sending more U.S. troops takes the pressure off. It

sends the false message that we can save the Iraqis from themselves.

Sending more troops does what our CENTCOM commander, John Abizaid,

warned about when he said:

Does speaking out against the surge undermine our troops? The

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, GEN Peter Pace, firmly answered

that argument just last week when he said the following:

Just last week, Secretary Gates answered the charge that our debate

hurts troop morale when he said these words:

We owe our troops everything: equipment, training, adequate rest,

support of them and their family. We also owe them our honest

assessment.

The majority of the American people believe that a deeper

military involvement in Iraq won't make success more likely. I believe

a majority of Senators feel the same way. I hope the majority will be

allowed to so vote. If we believe plunging into Baghdad neighborhoods

with more American troops will not increase chances of success, we are

dutybound to say so, and a minority of Senators should not thwart that

expression. We owe that to the troops. We owe that to their families,

and we owe that to the American people.

I yield the floor.