Madam President, the first reason to vote no on this

motion to proceed is that we have no ability to amend or an alternative

that would be allowed by the majority to reflect a different point of

view. When I hear people on the other side say don't let the minority

thwart the efforts of the majority, what the majority is saying is we

only want one resolution, our resolution. Whatever happened to

amendments? Whatever happened to the ability to have alternative

resolutions?

This is the tenth time in this very short period that this Congress

has been in session that cloture has been used to stifle minority

rights. It is unprecedented in this body. I hope we will go to a time

when the Senate will be able to work together in a bipartisan way,

agree and disagree civilly, have the ability to exercise minority

rights, and then have a majority vote. We don't have to have only one

procedure that allows for one view but does not allow for alternatives

and amendments. That is not the way the Senate is supposed to operate.

The second reason to vote no on this motion is the resolution itself.

The resolution says we support the troops who are there now and the

troops who were there in the past but not those who will come in the

future. Presumably the majority is saying that we will not support

future troops because they don't support the President's plan. But

troops who are rotating in to replace troops leaving would also not be

supported. Since when do we select which members of the armed services

we will support and which ones we will not in the middle of a mission?

It is untenable on its face. We should never allow this flawed

resolution to go forward without any alternative and without any

amendments.

The third reason we should use every procedural avenue to derail this

resolution is, we are undercutting the Commander in Chief and the

troops who are on the mission right now. This is a rare departure for

the Senate to undercut a mission of our military while troops are in

harm's way performing the mission with a nonbinding resolution. The

purpose of doing this can only be to undercut the Commander in Chief to

the rest of the world because it will not stop the mission itself.

As was said earlier today, there is not a Member of the Senate who

doesn't believe this is a risky proposition. It is. We are all worried

about it. I have talked to General Petraeus about it, as have many of

my colleagues. How, General Petraeus, do you see this working? He is

the commander and he is the one who is putting this proposal together

to fight a type of war we have never had to fight before, with an enemy

that is willing to kill themselves in order to kill Americans and

innocent Iraqis.

We have had to adjust; there is no doubt about it. I don't think

anybody is saying that we believe we are in a good situation in Iraq.

But the idea that we would pass a nonbinding resolution which undercuts

our troops who are valiantly performing the mission is something I

cannot remember that we have ever done.

I will quote from the Senate Armed Services hearing when Senator

Lieberman asked General Petraeus if such a resolution, a nonbinding

resolution condemning the strategy, would give the enemy encouragement,

some clear expression that the American people were divided. General

Petraeus answered: ``That is correct, sir.''

Yes, the American people are divided. It is a very different matter

for the Senate to pass a resolution with no alternative that says we

support the troops who are there now and the ones who served in the

past but not those who will be coming after the resolution is passed.

It is unthinkable.

I hope we will come to our senses. I hope we will be able to talk

freely, to debate but not to pass a resolution that says to the world,

to our enemies, as well as our allies, we do not have faith in those

who would go to perform a mission going forward, faith in the military

who created this plan.

I hope the Senate doesn't pass this. I hope we will have an agreement

that will allow alternatives, as we have always done since I have been

in the Senate, and many years before me. I hope our leaders will be

able to sit down and craft a resolution that opens the process so that

everyone will have a voice, not just a few in the majority. Maybe it is

51. Maybe it is 52. Maybe it is 53. But we should have 41 Senators

standing up for an alternative resolution that would allow other people

to have the ability to vote for the support of our troops, whether they

are there now, whether they were there in the past, or whether they

will be there in the future. That is the difference between this

resolution the majority is trying to get passed without any alternative

or any amendment, and what we would put forward, which is to say: We

will support all the troops today or tomorrow, and we will win this

war, for there is no substitute for victory, if our children are going

to live in freedom.

I yield the floor.