Mr. President, I commend Senator Warner, Senator Nelson,

Senator Levin and others who have worked so hard on this resolution. I

do believe, like my colleagues, that this measure and an alternative

measure deserve an up-or-down vote by the Senate. That is what the

American people want, and that is what they should receive.

We embarked on this effort in Iraq more than 4 years ago. From the

very beginning I thought this was not a response to an imminent threat

to the United States or even to the region. It was based upon highly

speculative and, it turns out in many cases, flat wrong intelligence.

It represents, in my view, a flawed strategy because the approach the

President has taken in Iraq fails to recognize that the major regional

threat was not Iraq but Iran and failed to recognize the huge amounts

of resources that will be necessary to successfully occupy and

stabilize a country the size of Iraq with the cultural and historical

issues that are inherent in that country.

The strategy, as I said, I think was flawed. Strategy, to me, means

having a clear objective and putting forth the resources necessary to

achieve that objective. The objective in Iraq shifted from the WMD

allegations, to terrorist connections allegations, to creating a

transformative oasis of democracy and free enterprise in a country that

has not seen that in many years. And the resources were never adequate

for the task.

One of the most important resources in a strategy is public support.

I think one of the major problems with the President's last address a

few days ago when he talked about Iraq and his so-called new strategy

is that, I believe, he squandered significantly the willingness of the

American public to support any proposal made. Without that public

support, it will be very difficult to sustain our activities in Iraq.

I think the proof of this failed strategy is evident. Today Iran is

in an enhanced strategic position vis-a-vis the United States and is

being much more difficult to deal with, with respect to the region and

to its aspirations of nuclear technology. We have compromised our

efforts in Afghanistan and in Pakistan where real significant threats

exist to the world and to the United States. We have diverted our

attention from North Korea and from the Iranian aspirations for nuclear

technology.

According to many experts such as Hank Crumpton, who is leaving as

the Assistant Secretary of State for Counterterrorism:

Of course, we can talk at length about the incompetent execution of

these policies in Iraq, but I want to go right to the heart of what the

President is talking about. He suggests that we have a changed

strategy. I would suggest that perhaps we are changing our tactics; we

are taking American units and putting them in the heart of Baghdad. But

it seems that this surge is more of the same, more of the clear hold

and build, more of involvement in the existing conflicts of the Iraqi

people and not essential to our national security, which would be to

protect ourselves from terrorists there, to stabilize the country so it

doesn't disintegrate, and also to go ahead and to train, continually

train the Iraqi security forces.

Many have criticized this surge on purely military grounds. Too few

troops. The doctrine calls for more than 120,000 troops to cover the

city of Baghdad. We will be lucky to muster 50,000 to 60,000 to 70,000.

Including Iraqi security forces.

There is a lack of unity of command. There is uncertain leadership by

the Iraqis. Their commanding general is a virtual unknown who has been

plucked by Maliki to lead this effort, probably more for political

reliability than for tactical skill. And the rolling start, the gradual

buildup has already led many Iraqis in Baghdad to suggest that our

efforts have further compromised their security, as evidenced by the

bombing just a few days ago of a marketplace in a Shia neighborhood in

Baghdad.

The strategy we have to pursue is a complementary and reinforcing

strategy involving military, political, and economic steps, together

with regional and international diplomacy. It rests fundamentally on

the capacity of Iraq and non-DOD, nonuniform military advisers to carry

the day. Frankly, the Iraqi Government is in too many cases

dysfunctional and incompetent, and elements outside of our uniformed

military personnel--our State Department officials, our Agriculture

officials, our Justice officials, our AID officials--have not been in

Iraq in sufficient numbers and in sufficient quality to deal decisively

with these issues. There is nothing in this plan which suggests that

situation will change.

I think we are also at a point where we have been informed by the

National Intelligence Estimate of the true nature of the struggle in

Iraq. It is a sectarian battle between Shia and Sunni, with insurgents

who, according to the NIE, accelerate the violence between these two

sectarian groups. It is an existential battle where the Shias feel

insecure because they have labored for many years under the yoke of the

Saddam Hussein regime, and they don't want to go back there. It is

existential from the Sunni position because they see themselves

entitled to rule.

I think our best course is outlined in the Warner resolution, clearly

stating our disapproval and disagreement with the augmentation as the

resolution describes, and focusing ourselves on reconciliation, on both

military efforts, but scaled back, and also concentrating on diplomacy

and economic activities. I would hope that at least we could get a vote

on it and, frankly, I think it will pass.

I yield the floor.