Mr. President, as I try to count up the number of

positions of Senators articulating either for or against the various

resolutions, I count at least six, and maybe there are more.

There are some who say, yes, that the President's plan--basically,

that General Petraeus, the architect of that plan, will have

responsibility for implementing--that plan ought to get a chance.

Then there are those who say: No, we disagree with that plan. We do

not believe that General Petraeus should get the additional five

brigades that the plan calls for, but we do think in Anbar Province

additional troops ought to go in to fight al-Qaida in Iraq.

Then there is a third position I count that says we think there

shouldn't be additional troops, and we want to cap the number of

troops, period, and we want to set a timetable for their withdrawal.

That would actually be No. 4.

Some of the distinguished Members of this Senate have said these

nonbinding resolutions are shooting with blanks. What we ought to do is

have a vote on cutting off funds because that is the sole way that

Congress can have a definitive impact on what is happening. We do not

believe any funds should be appropriated for this effort. That is a

fifth position, as I count it.

Then there are those--and I find myself in this group--who say: No,

we shouldn't cut off funds that support our troops during a time of

war. In fact, we ought to give this a chance.

Some of these positions may have some commonality and some may merge

and diverge, but the point is, for the majority to say we have one vote

on one resolution, in spite of the fact there are at least six

positions, as I count them, on this issue is asking Members to

accept limited debate and does not reflect the diversity of views in

this Senate.

The vote we are going to have at 5:30 tonight--and I thank the

distinguished Senator from Virginia and others who, perhaps, share a

different view from me on the substance of the resolution, for

supporting our right to have a fair process and to have all the various

resolutions or, I should say, at least two, in opposition that ought to

be offered, that Senators ought to be given the chance to vote for.

Senator Reid, the majority leader, on the floor earlier asked

rhetorically: What makes the Baghdad security plan different from the

ones that have come before? Let me mention the specific answer to his

question. First of all, this is an Iraqi-initiated plan for taking

control of the capital of Iraq. No. 2, there will be adequate forces--

Iraqis supported by American and coalition forces--to hold

neighborhoods cleared of terrorist extremists. Third, there is a new

operational concept, one devised not just to pursue terrorists and

extremists but actually to secure the city once they are cleared.

Fourth, new rules of engagement will pursue that Iraqi and U.S. forces

can pursue lawbreakers, regardless of their communities or sect. Five,

security operations will be followed by economic assistance and

reconstruction aid, including billions of dollars in Iraqi funds,

offering jobs and the prospect for better lives.

The reason I support the plan General Petraeus is largely the

architect of, and the very same commander whom we have confirmed by

unanimous vote about a week or so ago, is because I think it represents

the last best chance for success in Iraq. I don't know anyone who

believes the status quo is acceptable.

The question is, Are we simply going to give up and see a regional

conflict? Are we going to see ethnic cleansing occur? Are we going to

see countries that have Sunni majorities come to the aid of their Sunni

brothers and sisters who might be the subject of ethnic cleansing by

the Shia majority? Are we going to allow Iraq to become another failed

state which will then serve as a launching pad for future terrorist

attacks, perhaps including against the United States? The risks of that

happening by doing nothing or by simply saying what we have been doing

now is not working so we are simply going to refuse to endorse any

alternative plan because we are not sure it is going to be successful

is giving up before we should.

While opinion polls should not govern our conduct, it is significant

the one question I have heard, when asked by Opinion Dynamics Poll on

the process we are engaged in today, the question was: Congress has

been considering a nonbinding resolution expressing opposition to the

President's plan to send more troops. By almost two to one, Americans

think passing a resolution would do more harm than good; 47 percent in

this poll that was reported February 1, 2007, say it is likely to

encourage the enemy and hurt troop morale compared with 24 percent who

think it would make a positive difference to the policy of the United

States toward Iraq.

Regardless of the sincerely held beliefs that I know Senators have on

this very important topic, the last thing we should be forced to do

would be to vote on a single resolution when there are so many

different points of view that deserve full and fair debate on what is

the most important issue that conflicts our country and, literally, the

world at this time and that is the global war on terror, the central

front of that war in Iraq and what we are going to do about it, whether

we are going to give up or whether we are going to try to secure that

country in a way that will allow it to govern and defend itself.

I yield the floor.