Madam President, I will not speak to the specifics of the

resolution or resolutions, but I am confident we will be allowed to

debate this week. I say that because I know--and I have complete

confidence in the two leaders--that they will, in fact, find an

accommodation. They each understand how critically important this

debate is for our country and for the world.

I have listened carefully this afternoon to my colleagues, and there

will be more intense and engaged and enlightened debate this week. But

I believe what we are about here--and we will be about this week--is

something far more important than just constitutional responsibilities

or resolutions. What we are about is finding a policy worthy of our

young men and women and their families who go off to fight and die in a

very difficult war. That is what we owe our troops. That is what we owe

this country. That is what we owe the world.

It surely is not and cannot be a weakness for America, as seen in the

eyes of the world, to openly debate the most critically important issue

that any of us will ever debate; that is, war. That is the strength of

America, not the weakness of America. The reason America has prospered

for over 200 years is because the world has had confidence not in its

power, trusted not its power, but trusted America's purpose.

In 1968, when I served with my brother and many others in Vietnam--

and I believe I speak for most who were there then, and I have heard

from a lot of Vietnam veterans about this debate--I believe that in

1968, the troops, the ones at the bottom doing the fighting and the

dying, would have welcomed the Congress of the United States into a

debate about Vietnam. They would have welcomed somebody paying

attention rather than just going along.

No, Madam President, that is a strength of this country. And surely

we have clear constitutional responsibilities. How could anyone argue

differently? We have clear constitutional responsibilities here.

I heard my colleague from Connecticut talking about nonbinding

resolutions. I don't doubt his staff's research, but I remind the

Senator that over the last 12 years there have been a number of

nonbinding resolutions debated on this floor--on Bosnia, Kosovo,

Somalia, Haiti, and others. I remind some of my colleagues who do not

believe it is in the interest of our country or our troops to talk

about nonbinding resolutions, papier mache resolutions, senseless

resolutions, that they actually voted for some of those resolutions

over the last 12 years. I would be very happy to provide for the record

a list of how everybody in this Chamber voted over the last 12 years,

if they were here, on those resolutions. It might be very interesting

and enlightening. Surely it is not because one political party controls

the White House and the other does not. Surely it cannot be that.

The National Intelligence Estimate summary--unclassified portions--

was made public on Friday. Those watching should have a clear

understanding of what that document is and who produced that document.

That document is an accumulation of the 16 intelligence agencies of

this country. None that I am aware of has had the integrity of the

institution they represent--any of those 16--ever impugned on questions

of quality of research--maybe other facets of intelligence but not the

integrity of the intent of the product. The National Intelligence

Estimate says that we are involved today, and have been, in Iraq in not

just a sectarian conflict--a violent, vicious sectarian conflict--but

an intrasectarian conflict. Is it not time and don't our troops and the

American people expect the Congress, after 4 years, when things have

gotten progressively worse, not better, to engage? And is it not our

responsibility to address the issue of escalating our military

involvement, putting American troops in the middle of a sectarian-

intrasectarian war? Is that not our responsibility? Of course, it is

our responsibility.

Madam President, I will have more to say as the debate goes forward

this week. As I noted, I have every confidence in our two leaders that

they will work out a resolution where we will have this debate because

it is clearly in the interest of our country, clearly in the interest

of our troops.

With that, I yield back my time and yield the floor.