Mr. President, I rise today to oppose the resolution,

S. 574, the Senate will vote in relation to tomorrow. This resolution

states simply that:

Mr. President, the first paragraph of that resolution is a

commendable one and one every Member of this body should support, and

will. However, the second paragraph is simply inconsistent with a vote

every Member has already made and should be opposed by every Member of

this body. Therefore, the resolution as a whole should be opposed.

Exactly 3 weeks ago, on January 26, the Senate unanimously approved

GEN David Petraeus for his fourth star and to be commander of

multinational forces in Iraq. No Senator opposed his nomination. In my

12 years in the Congress, I do not think I have seen Members of

Congress express any higher confidence or support for a nominee for any

position than they have for GEN David Petraeus. I have not heard anyone

criticize him, and rightly so.

In his nomination hearing, when asked about his opinion of the

President's plan for Iraq that he now has the responsibility of

executing, General Petraeus said:

General Petraeus supports this plan. Now, the same Senate that voted

unanimously to confirm General Petraeus is going to vote on whether

they agree with the plan he supports and that they confirmed him

to execute. That vote has not been taken yet, so obviously we don't

know the outcome.

Some people would like to mislead the American people into thinking

that Republicans are opposed to debating Iraq and the various

resolutions in Iraq. In fact, Republicans welcome that debate, and that

is why many of us are here today. However, Republicans rightfully

oppose the Democrats' dictating what resolutions can be considered.

If Senators truly disapprove of this decision, they should be willing

to vote for or against a resolution that clearly expresses their

convictions, and that is exactly what Senator Gregg's resolution does.

However, Democrats are not willing to do that. Senator Gregg's

resolution expresses the sense of the Congress that:

If Senators truly do not support the mission we are sending General

Petraeus and our men and women in uniform to carry out, then they

should be willing to have an up-or-down vote on the Gregg resolution.

For the record, let me restate my position on the proposed troop

increase. Several weeks ago, President Bush addressed the situation in

Iraq before the American people, and everyone was anxious to hear his

plans for a new strategy. It is clear that Americans want a victory in

Iraq; however, they do not want our presence there to be open-ended. I

agree, and most importantly, I believe it is time for the Iraqi

Government to step up and take responsibility. They need to take

control of their country, both militarily and politically. I believe

the Iraqis must deliver on their promises.

I come from a strong and proud military State, home to 13 military

installations, and our service men and women have answered the call of

duty and performed courageously. No one questions our troops'

performance and unwavering commitment, and we will continue to support

them. Many of our troops, including the 3rd Infantry Division based at

Fort Stewart, GA, and Fort Benning, GA, are preparing to head overseas,

some for their third tour of duty in Iraq, as we speak today.

The President's decision to send additional combat brigades to

Baghdad and Anbar Province in western Iraq is aimed at defeating the

insurgency in those areas and increasing stability for the Iraqi

people. However, we must also see an increased commitment from the

Iraqis. This is also part of the new strategy, and I am committed to

holding the administration and the Iraqis accountable in this area.

Those of us in Congress have a responsibility to ask questions and seek

answers on behalf of the American people when our strategy and tactics

are not getting the job done.

I have expressed my concern and frustration with progress on the part

of the Iraqis not only to the President and the White House advisers

but to our military leadership testifying before the Senate Armed

Services Committee as well. In my conversations with the White House

and with the Department of Defense leadership, I have made it clear

that my support of any increase in troops is conditioned upon those

troops being sent on a specific mission and upon the completion of that

mission that they should be redeployed.

I firmly believe that just a large increase in troops without having

a specific mission will only increase insurgent opposition and that a

withdrawal of U.S. forces at this time would be detrimental to Iraq's

security and extremely dangerous for American soldiers. That particular

issue has been affirmed by every single individual in the U.S. military

testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee. Failure in Iraq

will result in expanded and intensified conflict in the Middle East,

and that kind of instability is clearly not in the best interests of

America or the international community.

Now that the President has taken serious steps to admit his mistakes,

take responsibility, and revise the strategy, Americans do seek

positive results. It has been said by many of my colleagues, as well as

many of my own constituents, that the situation in Iraq requires a

political and not a military solution. I strongly agree with that

position. However, it is not possible, in my opinion, to have a

political solution or to make political progress if citizens are afraid

to leave their homes for fear of being shot or kidnaped or if they are

afraid to let their children go to school because it is unsafe to do

so. Some level of order and stability must be in place before a

political solution can take hold.

In America, we take order and stability for granted because we are

blessed to live in a country that is extremely safe, secure, and

stable. However, Iraq is not the same as the United States. They do not

live in a secure and stable society, and order and stability must be in

place before there can be

any hope for a long-term political solution. The additional troops we

are sending are meant to create that order and stability, particularly

in Baghdad. Unfortunately, the Iraqi military and Government is not yet

mature enough to do that job themselves, so we are partnering with them

to help them succeed.

There is nothing easy or pretty about war, and this war is no

exception. This war has not gone as well as any of us had hoped.

Additionally, the President's new plan, which is already being carried

out in Iraq, is not guaranteed to work. However, it is my firm

conviction that the President's plan deserves a chance to succeed, and

we in the Congress should do all we can to help it succeed. The Reid

resolution does not do that. That is why I urge my colleagues to vote

against cloture on the motion to proceed to the Reid resolution

tomorrow. The resolution opposes the President's plan without offering

any alternative. It opposes the mission which the Senate has

unanimously confirmed General Petraeus to carry out.

I urge a vote against the implementation of cloture tomorrow.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.