Mr. President, I thank the Senator for his remarks. I

certainly agree it would be a mistake to send any message that we are

not in support of our troops and, indeed, that is what voting on one

message would do. Certainly, there are different views in the Senate

and legitimately so. We recognize that. That is the way it is in

Congress.

I resist a little bit the idea that has come up on the other side of

the aisle that we have not talked about this, we have not debated it. I

say we have talked about it, we have talked about it for several

months. We have debated it. There is clearly a difference of view. Most

everyone has the same idea that the situation must be changed and must

be improved there. No one argues with that.

The issue is that we can back off and deny the support we have for

what we have accomplished or we can move forward with the President,

who has a change in plan. That is something we need to remember. We are

not talking about simply continuing to do the same thing. We have new

leadership there, we have some new strategies there, we have some ideas

as to what might be done.

Our troops continue to do an incredible job, but it has not gone as

well as we would like. Therefore, it is appropriate that we make some

changes. In order to make some changes, it is probably necessary to

change the arrangement we have, change the numbers so we can do

something and to begin again to devise a movement that will get us out

of there in a relatively short time.

Our military leaders know that. They accept that. Their plans embrace

that idea that we have to do something different, that we have to start

coming to some transition and conclusion. The President also has

acknowledged this.

It is not simple. None of us like war. None of us like to have our

troops at risk, there is no question about that. But the fact is there

exists a terrorism threat to the United States, somewhat centered in

this area. The fact is, we need to complete the task and to be able to

turn some stability over to a government in Iraq that can move forward.

The United States cannot complete this mission alone. And the Iraqis,

of course, must keep their commitment to do more than they have.

Fortunately, we are seeing some movement in that direction. We are

seeing the support building, and we need to continue to press for that

with the surrounding countries.

The President has made it very clear to the Iraqi President that our

support is not open-ended. I hope we continue to do that.

The administration has installed new leadership. We have had good

performance there, but we need to be moving in a somewhat different

direction, a change from what we are doing. That is the plan. That is

what it is all about.

I am a little discouraged that we act as if we have not talked about

it, we act as if we have not made a move upon it, and now we have a

nonbinding resolution. But as the previous speaker said, we also need

to offer more than one amendment. There are different options. We have

to recognize the Senate is close in numbers, and we have some

differences. We have to have an opportunity to talk about different

things. Hopefully, that is what this is all about.

It is peculiar political posturing to sound off with sense-of-the-

Senate resolutions on the heels of having unanimously confirmed the

general who is going over there to take over. He has a plan. It would

be discouraging to him, I am sure, to learn we are sending him over

there, but we are not going to do the things he needs to do. It is

important for folks to understand this plan does not involve just

sending troops and put a bandaid on the problem. We have commitments

from the Iraqi Government to step up security and reconciliation

efforts. We need to make

decisions from where we are now at this point in the fight to move in a

somewhat different direction.

One thing is for sure. We are not moving the ball by just talking

from the sidelines. Here we have an opportunity to do that--not a

never-ending commitment but one to make some changes, complete this

task. However, of course, it is a little premature to be debating a

nonbinding resolution but, nevertheless, we have different views and

that is where we are, and that is fine. But I think, in fairness,

politically, we do need to have the opportunity to act on more than

just a single amendment so we can have some chance to talk about other

items that have an impact on Iraq.

The resolution will only serve to score political points and

undermines our efforts to achieve a positive result in what we are

seeking to do. So I am concerned today with respect to this process,

but we can make it work. And we need to make it work. Here we are.

Let's make sure we have an opportunity to make it balanced, we have an

opportunity to talk about both sides, we have an opportunity to talk

about some of the other kinds of opportunities.

The majority will not let the minority offer amendments, and they

should. This is not a one-sided debate, and there are certain items we

need to discuss.

Leader McConnell has made more than one good-faith effort to meet the

majority in the middle of the aisle, and we, I hope, will continue to

do that. We must do that. We have proposed to give the majority the

votes they want if they will simply give us the votes we would like to

have. That seems to make a great deal of sense.

So we are in sort of a procedural tie-up on something for which we

know there are differences on the policy, clearly, and we will simply

have to work on that. And we have to recognize the responsibility and

the commitment the President has made and the plan he has to change

things there so we can go forward. So we need to give the troops and

the Iraqis the opportunity to work more to change the situation there.

So the purpose of this whole exercise, of course, is to put a

government in place in Iraq so they can take care of themselves, for us

to be able to remove our being there and our commitment there. I think

we have a chance to do this. So I hope if we are going to move, we have

a chance to move on more than one opportunity and one resolution. And I

think that will be the case.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.