I thank the Presiding Officer.

Mr. President, some weeks ago--and I mentioned this in my remarks

during the debate we were having on the resolutions with regard to Iraq

and the war--I said several weeks ago I had the privilege of attending

and speaking at a farewell dinner in honor of LTG David Petraeus and

his wife Holly at the Command and General Staff College of the United

States Army at Fort Leavenworth, KS. And, of course, now General

Petraeus is in Iraq and involved in the new mission as prescribed by

the President and the subject of great debate not only here but in the

House of Representatives, which is voting as I speak on their

resolution in regard to this matter.

It was quite an evening of tribute in behalf of the general who has

become admired and beloved serving as commanding general of the Army's

Intellectual Center in Leavenworth, KS. Throughout the evening I had

the opportunity to again visit with David Petraeus, his feelings about

his new mission, his impressive knowledge with regard to this most

difficult war in Iraq, the history of the region, his understanding

with regard to the nature of past wars, his understanding of insurgency

in past wars and the insurgency we now face in Iraq.

While at the Command and General Staff College, he wrote the Army's

new manual on counterterrorism. Let me say, as a former marine, as the

Presiding Officer is as well, I helped write a similar manual years ago

for the U.S. Marine Corps. So I find this man unique in his knowledge

and his command ability. But when I was asked to make remarks after the

dinner--they would always invite a Senator to make some remarks and,

unfortunately, sometimes that turns into a speech--I was glad I said

what I said, and virtually everybody in that room told me I had said

what they cannot say. Those who wear their officer rank on their

shoulders or their enlisted stripes on their sleeves in most cases do

not comment on policy decisions or politics, no matter how strongly

they feel. They follow orders, and they serve their country. But I

believe my remarks to the general and his officer corps and the

veterans of many previous wars are pertinent to the issue we face in

this debate.

Before I express my views, I want to stress that I regret we are at a

stalemate in this body. Obviously, they are not in the other body, in

terms of a vote at least, on this issue of vital national security. I

think most in the Senate wish we could debate this issue with comity,

with cooperation, and, yes, in a bipartisan fashion. And I think the

American people who are concerned, obviously frustrated and angry about

the war, would certainly appreciate that, but that is not the case.

This issue, very unfortunately, is wrapped around a partisan and

political axle.

Our good friends across the aisle insist that we debate and vote on

one of three nonbinding resolutions--there may have been an agreement

on maybe one more vote--in regard to the war in Iraq, and that is all.

They wish to debate and vote on the House resolution which is now being

debated in the other body and about to come to a conclusion, or the

Warner resolution, which I think are very similar, and then call it a

day because both resolutions support the troops but not the mission.

This is the rub for many of my colleagues and myself, and it is about

as far as the majority wishes to wade in the waters of withdrawal at

this time. I realize if we were to consider other votes, it would be

more pertinent to the issue, especially the amendment by Senator

Feingold, and that would be wading in the water a little deeper than

they would want to at this particular time.

Others of us wish to debate and vote on the McCain resolution--I hope

we can do that--and the Gregg resolution and, as far as I am concerned,

the Feingold resolution. I oppose the Feingold resolution, but I admire

his forthrightness and his courage. But we are being denied that

opportunity.

Most perplexing to me is that those who are covering this debate

within the media--and it is never a good idea to say anything that

could be possibly defined as critical of the media. I note there are

none or there may be two, but, obviously, everybody is watching the

vote on the House side.

Having said that, how on Earth can we describe this situation by

writing headlines and 15-second news sound bites saying Republicans,

like myself, have voted to stifle debate? I want to debate. Let's have

a debate. Let's have a full debate and vote on the House resolution

and/or the Warner resolution--vote on both of them--but let us also

debate and vote on resolutions offered by Senators McCain, Gregg, and

Feingold. I will vote for Senator McCain's resolution. I will vote

along with Senator Gregg. I would not vote for Senator Feingold's

resolution but, again, I think his resolution is probably the most

determining in terms of effect, and he should get a vote.

We are not stifling or shutting down debate; our colleagues in the

majority

are. Either we are not capable of explaining what I believe is a very

simple proposition or some in the media cannot discern what is obvious.

This is like playing baseball, although it isn't like playing

baseball--that is a poor allegory, but it is the one I have chosen--

playing baseball with one strike and then you are out. You say: Wait a

minute, usually in a baseball game you get three strikes. What happened

to the three strikes? Where are my other two strikes? Where are my

other resolutions that I want to debate, that I want to support because

they are pertinent to this, certainly as much as the others? They are

nonbinding as well. And the umpire--in this particular case the

distinguished majority leader--says: Back to the dugout, Senator

Roberts, I am sorry. We run this ball game. You don't have any further

strikes.

I have information that the House has just passed the House

resolution 246 to 182. That is a pretty solid vote. So, obviously, we

will be getting to vote on that resolution, and I hope we will get to

vote on these other resolutions.

In my remarks at the Command and General Staff College, I told

General Petraeus we had not been personally acquainted over a long

period of years, but in our short span of time, I certainly came to

know him well. I have had several stimulating and enjoyable

conversations with him over a wide range of issues, most especially the

British experience in Iraq from 1921 to 1931, the example of Lawrence

of Arabia. Lawrence of Arabia wrote ``The Small Warfare Manual,'' and

he wrote ``The Pillars of Wisdom.'' As I indicated, the U.S. Marine

Corps had similar manuals, one called a ``Manual on Antiguerrilla

Operations,'' which I participated in, and now the manual the general

has written.

It seems we cannot get it right with regard to insurgencies. The same

things we write in these manuals we have to be careful about and pretty

well play out the problems, to say the least, that make it very

difficult.

Anyway, with regard to General Petraeus, he is exactly the right man

for the right job at the right time. He knows this. He has been to

Iraq. He was successful in his second tour. He is going back. I hope

and pray he will be successful in his third effort. Our brave young men

and women in uniform deserve nothing but the very best leadership, and

they are getting it.

But I think it is a paradox of enormous irony that the Senate

confirmed David Petraeus without a dissenting vote--not one, not one

Senator--a vote of confidence that is unique, certainly given today's

controversy and turmoil and the times. Yet at the same time, the same

Senators who gave their vote of confidence are now in the business of

what I call--I don't mean to perjure them--``confetti'' resolutions

supporting the general and the troops but not the mission they are

undertaking now. That to me is unprecedented for the Senate. I think it

is remarkable, and I have said many times that these resolutions--and

it has been said many times--are nonbinding. They have no legislative

impact. They are so-called sense-of-the-Senate resolutions. For those

who do not pay attention to the parliamentary procedure around here,

that means they are meaningless except for the message you want to

send, and that can be important to the Executive, i.e., to President

Bush and the folks back home.

With all due respect, we have long crossed the message Rubicon with

regard to sending mixed messages to our allies, our troops, the

American people, the media and, yes, our adversaries. Words have

consequences and, rest assured, our adversaries will read to try and

figure out, analyze every word of the resolution just passed in the

House and perhaps the one, maybe two resolutions we can pass in this

body, hopefully three or four, and try to figure it out. I suspect they

will be absolutely flummoxed in trying to discern the sense in reading

a resolution that states support for the troops and our new commander,

with new rules of engagement, with a limited timeframe for achieving

and reporting benchmarks of progress, but that opposes the

mission. That is a mixed message, and it should cause quite a bit of

head scratching among the 31 different terrorist organizations that are

planning various attacks around the world and even on the United

States. My real concern is that the Senate is not considering or even

talking about the probable consequences of these actions, let alone our

responsibilities should they happen.

I want to make it very clear I do not question the intent or purpose

or patriotism of any Senator, regardless of whatever resolution they

are proposing voting for. I do question the judgment and the law of

unintended effects. Bluntly put, with all this debate with regard to

nonbinding resolutions, we appear like lemmings splashing in a sea of

public concern, frustration, and expressing anger over the war in Iraq.

In this regard, I don't know of anybody in this body or anybody in

America who does not want our troops home at the earliest possible

date, and stability in Iraq, if possible. If possible--and that is a

real question here. That is not the issue.

When all of this confetti settles, the end result of all this frenzy

will be: ``General, you and the troops have our solid support--but we

don't support your mission. However, press on and good luck.''

I think that message is remarkable. This is not a profile in courage.

This is not the Senate's finest hour. If we are going to debate and

vote on nonbinding resolutions, let us at least consider resolutions

that will send a clear message or which can be of useful purpose. In

that regard, we should consider the McCain resolution. It lists

benchmarks of progress that General Petraeus has told Senator McCain

and me would be useful in his discussions with Prime Minister Maliki,

and certainly the Gregg resolution that supports spending for our

troops in harm's way. I think that is the precedent we have to set.

That is the killer in this debate, along with the Feingold resolution,

because my colleagues across the aisle do not want to vote on the Gregg

resolution, let alone the Feingold resolution.

Senator Feingold has a resolution which certainly does something. I

don't agree with his resolution, but he is at least very forthright and

sends a clear message, and he is a good Senator.

As the former chairman of the Intelligence Committee in the Senate,

let me again stress what is not happening in the Congress or the media,

and has received very little public attention regarding this challenge

we face in Iraq. No one is talking about the consequences of what will

happen if we simply withdraw or redeploy. And we may just do that,

because I do not believe this war can or should be sustained if we do

not see progress in the next 6 months. If General Petraeus doesn't come

back and tell us there has been measurable progress, where we can see

it, feel it, and touch it, we have some serious policy decisions to

make. We need to be thinking about a policy of containment as opposed

to intervention if this latest mission does not work.

I would also point out that most of the time deadlines for withdrawal

are either in the nonbinding resolutions or they mirror exactly the

time period General Petraeus has told the Armed Services Committee he

would follow in reporting whether this new effort is making any

progress, pretty much along the lines of the benchmarks that are in the

McCain resolution. So the obvious question is: Who can better make that

judgment, General Petraeus in theater or Senators here on the floor?

We have not discussed the difficult policy decisions that may

confront us if it becomes necessary to redeploy, what that mission

might be if we redeploy, where are we going, what is the mission going

to be, or even how to withdraw.

As I indicated, Mr. President, we have not discussed the

difficult policy decisions that will confront us if it becomes

necessary to withdraw or redeploy, what that mission would be, or even

how to withdraw. The reality is what we will do when certain

consequences would take place. These are the possible, if not probable,

consequences we should be confronting and debating and explaining to

the American people and ourselves and in the media, even if some may

have a deaf ear.

First. A dramatic increase in sectarian violence quickly escalating

to a civil war--and I mean a real civil war--and a humanitarian

disaster far more devastating than what is happening now. Shia versus

Shia, Shia versus Sunni. What do we do? Thousands of Iraqis have

already become refugees and left the country.

Second. Given a civil war and struggle for control, we can expect an

incursion of Sunni troops from other Mideast countries--I want to make

it very clear about that: other Mideast countries--to prevent an

Iranian takeover of Iraq and the very real possibility of an Iraq led

by Muqtada al-Sadr, whose street appeal could endanger their own

Governments. I am talking about other Mideast countries. When that

happens, the war becomes regional. What do we do?

Third. We can expect an Iraq certainly dominated by Iran, thus

completing a Shia crescent with Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. Today,

countries such as Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt are talking about

building their own nuclear programs, given Iran's nuclear ambitions and

progress. Iran has just refused inspectors from the IAEA. With the

possibility of Shia Muslims and Sunni Muslims each working to achieve

nuclear capability and weapons, what does Israel do? What do we do?

Fourth. Iraq will become a safe haven for terrorists. This time it is

for real. What do we do?

Fifth. In their eyes, with the defeat of the ``Great Satan'' only

months away, as expected--a clear signal by this body and perhaps

inevitable--terrorists around the world are already emboldened, waiting

us out and planning more attacks; that is, if you believe what they

say.

Read Afghanistan and the Taliban and the spring offensive. Will we

soon be in the business of passing nonbinding resolutions about

Afghanistan?

Sixth. We can expect a perceived, if not real, lack of American

resolve in the eyes of adversaries and potential adversaries around the

world resulting in additional national security threats.

Read Putin and Belarus and Iran, and his recent remarkable speech at

Munich in Germany at the NATO security conference. Kim Jong Il. We are

making some progress with North Korea right now, but he does have a

penchant for missile launches on the 4th of July.

Read Hugo Chavez--31 countries in the southern command. He is the new

Castro, nationalizing his oil production and directly involved in five

different countries. What do we do?

The point is that globally and over the long term this is not a Bush

issue or a Democratic or a Republican issue, or even how you feel about

Iraq or the war. Even as we argue about whether we debate and vote on

one resolution or three or four, I hope, there are terrorist

organizations and their second-generation affiliates--guided and

inspired--are plotting attacks against the United States and throughout

the world. It is obvious we can't sustain the status quo in Iraq, but

while we debate on how to proceed, these folks are not giving up.

The irony is that should the President wake up in the morning and

say, well, the House has voted for this resolution, they are not for

this new mission, and the Senate is about to, and they may or may not

do that, so I am going to terminate it, I am going to end it, then we

are back to square one, back to a stalemate, back to the status quo.

That, to me, doesn't make sense.

Given the fact there were at least five successful attacks that

killed Americans--and others that, thank goodness, were not

successful--before President Bush came to office and before military

action in Iraq--given the fact this threat will face the next President

and future world leaders, surely we can figure out it makes no sense to

fight each other when the terrorists then and now and in the future do

not kill according to party affiliation, nationality, race, age, or

gender.

We do not need a Republican approach to national security and the

war. We do not need a Democratic approach to national security and the

war. We need, however, an American approach to our national security

and the war and to our individual freedoms. This is a time to engage in

honest dialog, to work together and think through and agree on the

strategy that will defeat our enemies and make the American people

safe. And yes, bring our troops home but in a way that we don't have to

send them back.

So I say to the leadership, with all due respect, let us end this

nonbinding business and get these confetti resolutions behind us. We

have all had a chance now to discuss the war and we need to vote on I

think at least four resolutions, and then come together with a

bipartisan commitment--a difficult and perhaps impossible task but, I

believe, a task that must be undertaken for the sake of our national

security.

Mr. President, I yield back the balance of my time and I thank my

colleagues across the aisle for permitting me to finish my remarks.