First of all, I commend the Senator from New York for an

excellent presentation. As I understand it from his comments, the

principal question before the country now is the whole issue of a surge

and the certain timeliness of it. We know that the President was able

to extend, for example, marines in place over there and get a certain

number of troops over there, but we know this is something that is

going to happen in the future. A chunk of the troops are going over in

February, another group in March, and another group in April.

In the Armed Services Committee yesterday, we learned it is not just

the 20,000 the President talked about, but that number is going to be

exceeded. We heard from General Pace.

As I understand what the good Senator has said, we have had four

surges previously over there. This concept, this idea, has been

utilized previously and none were successful. Secondly, as I understand

what the Senator has said, the leading generals, General Abizaid and

General Casey, previously suggested that this concept did not make

sense; it only inflamed the insurgency. Is that the Senator's

understanding?

The third part of the Senator's speech, which I hope our

colleagues will listen to, is the reference to the independent study by

Baker and Hamilton, where a bipartisan recommendation said that such an

activity would not make sense.

So does it make sense when we have that kind of lineup, so to speak,

where we have the military, the background of surges, the independent

study made by Republicans and Democrats alike--we are faced now with a

surge, so we have to take action and express ourselves. Doesn't it make

sense for this body to express itself on that particular policy issue?

Isn't that the responsible thing to do?

Just a final point. Madam President, the Senator has

stated it well. Basically, the recommendations of those generals I

mentioned--and General Abizaid said he had inquired of all the combat

commanders--all of the combat commanders--whether there should be an

enhanced presence in Baghdad, and he testified before the Armed

Services Committee that we should not.

But isn't the point the Senator is making is to underline what all of

the generals have said and Maliki has said; that is, it is a political

resolution, it is a political decision? What we are seeing now is

resorting to a military solution when the independent study commission,

the generals on the ground, and the political leaders in that country

have said what is necessary now is a political resolution, a political

decision, and we find an administration that has effectively discarded

that as an option and is going to the military option.

As I understand, the Senator believes we ought to have a political

resolution, political courage by the parties in power there; that we

here and the U.S. troops can't care more about the freedom of the

Iraqis than the Iraqi people and they have to stand up, step up, and be

willing to make their judgments.

Madam President, I had the opportunity to read the

national intelligence report on Monday. There has been both an

intelligence report and a declassified report. Even in

the declassified report, would the Senator say, in his evaluation of

the best of the intelligence community that has been reviewing this

situation that every aspect of that intelligence report is basically in

support of the conclusions the Senator has outlined here? This is not

something just the Senators from New York or Massachusetts are making

up. This is a conclusion which has been made by the intelligence

agencies about what the nature of the battle is in Baghdad today.

I thank the Chair.

Madam President, to pick up where the good Senator from New York

stopped, we had yesterday at Saint Francis Xavier in Hyannis, MA--I was

unable to attend because I was here in the Senate--the funeral of a

young serviceman who was lost. At the end of last week, a young

serviceman named Callahan from Woburn, MA--his fourth time in Iraq, a

father of four--was lost.

Woburn, MA, is a very interesting blue-collar community. They had the

highest percentage of casualties in the Vietnam war of any community in

my State. They had high school class after high school class that

joined the Marines and suffered devastating casualties in Vietnam. It

is also a storybook community on civic action--water contamination in

that community resulted in the deaths of a number of children there.

But the community is made up of extraordinary men and women and

families. They are weathering through this extreme, extraordinary

tragedy.

Sixty-four brave soldiers from Massachusetts have been lost, killed,

and this is the overriding, overarching issue in question: What can we

do after 4 years where our service men and women have done everything

we have asked them to do? They have served in Iraq longer than it took

to end World War II, to sweep through Africa, to cross Western Europe,

cross through the Pacific, and they are still out there. Many of us

believe, as we mentioned a few moments ago, that the solution lies not

in the increasing surge but in a political resolution and determination

and decisions made by the Iraqis for their own future. It is, after

all, their country.

Let me talk for a few minutes about the other costs of this war, the

$200 billion which is in the President's budget for the war in Iraq and

what the implications of that will be, so that Americans can understand

more completely the costs.

It comes from children's health, as the President's budget underfunds

the CHIP program by $8 billion. That program has been extremely

successful in providing health care to low-income children.

Will the Chair let me know when I have 2 minutes remaining?

Yet there are still more than 8 million children in

America with no health coverage, and there is a health care crisis for

our Nation's children. But what does the President propose to do about

it? His budget will make the crisis even worse by cutting 400,000

children from the Children's Health Insurance Program.

It comes from our seniors and our disabled citizens. The President's

budget cuts $66 billion from Medicare, which is a lifeline to millions

of retirees and disabled Americans. If the President has his way, more

than 700,000 people in Massachusetts who rely on Medicare could see the

quality of their care go down.

It comes from those battling mental illnesses. Each year, 25 percent

of Americans suffer from some sort of mental illness. We owe it to them

and their families to do all we can to ensure they are able to lead

full and productive lives. Yet the President's budget cuts mental

health assistance by $159 million.

It comes from Hurricane Katrina victims. Despite massive ongoing

needs on the gulf coast, the President's budget offers no additional

assistance to help people rebuild their lives.

It comes from the Nation's defense against epidemics, such as the

flu, as the President proposes to slash funding for the Centers for

Disease Control by $165 million.

It comes from Medicaid, our health care lifeline for the poor, which

the President intends to cut by $50 billion over the next 10 years. In

Massachusetts, 880,000 citizens depend on Medicaid, and this budget

places them at risk.

It comes from our children's education. The President's budget

underfunds the No Child Left Behind reforms by almost $15 billion. In

my State of Massachusetts, these cuts would leave behind more than

51,000 children. Nationwide, we have 3.5 million children who are not

participating in the program whatsoever. Yet they will have a

requirement to meet sufficiency in the year 2012.

It comes from our youngest children. By cutting $107 million from the

Head Start Program, the President fails to give the youngest children a

strong start in life. This is a program which is tried, tested, and

true.

It comes from our students with special needs. When we passed the

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, we made a promise to

disabled children and their families that they were to receive the

education they deserve. President Bush's budget breaks that promise by

cutting funding to IDEA by $290 million. We made the commitment we were

going to provide 40 percent of all the funding. We are now at about 18

percent of funding, and we are reducing that. It is shifting the burden

onto the families and the local communities.

It comes from school safety. Our children ought to be able to go to

school without fearing violence, but this budget cuts funding for Safe

and Drug-Free Schools. With all the challenges of schools and violence

in schools, it cuts back the funding for Safe and Drug-Free Schools.

It comes at the expense of our teachers. Over the next decade, this

Nation will need to hire 2 million more teachers, but this budget cuts

funding for teacher quality grants.

It comes at the expense of students. At a time when college costs are

skyrocketing, the President's budget completely eliminates the Perkins

Loan Program, which over 500,000 students depend on to help them afford

a college education. We know that a college degree is a ticket to a

bright and better future, but this budget closes the college door

instead of opening it wider. There are already 400,000 young people who

are qualified to get into our fine community colleges, public colleges,

and private colleges and don't do so because of a lack of funding.

It comes from our workers who are looking for good jobs to support

their families because the President's budget slashes $1 billion from

programs that train Americans for jobs. Madam President, listen to

this: In Massachusetts alone, there are 25,000 people waiting to be

enrolled in job training programs.

In Boston, there are 25 applicants for each job training slot. There

are 78,000 jobs that are out there today that are looking for trained

people, 25 people for every training slot, 275,000 people who are

unemployed. What is wrong with

this picture? We are cutting back on the training opportunities for

those individuals to be able to pay more in taxes and provide more

hopeful futures for their children.

This budget can find $200 billion more for the war in Iraq but not a

dime for people at home trying to better their lives. They come from

families who need help putting food on the table. The President wants

to cut the Food Stamp Program by $600 million, leaving nearly 300,000

families wondering where they are going to find the next meal for

themselves and their children.

I have had the chance to visit our absolutely spectacular food bank

in Boston, and they talk about the increased numbers that they already

have. This is going to even put more pressure on those food banks and

more pressure on those families. It comes from the poor struggling

against the bitter cold, as the budget cuts 17 percent of the funding

for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which helps low-

income families afford to heat their homes.

In my State, if you use home heating oil you need to fill your tank

generally three times a winter--three times a winter. Families are down

now where they are only able to fill--the needy who qualify for this--

less than half a tank for the whole winter. We know what is happening.

People make the choices between the prescription drugs they need, the

food they need, and the heat they need for their homes. We are cutting

that program by 17 percent.

Perhaps most tragically of all, the money for the war in Iraq comes

from our veterans themselves. Nearly half the troops returning from

Iraq will require health care services to cope with the physical or

mental toll of the war. Yet the President's budget underfunds veterans'

health. It provides only half the increase in funding required for the

VA to keep pace with the needs of our veterans.

In Massachusetts alone, there are 453,000 veterans who have served

our country when they were called to duty, and we have a moral

obligation to do all we can for them.

This is the cost of this war. This is all for a war that never should

have happened, for a war that should be brought to an end. Yet this

administration is allowing it to go on and on, with mistake after

mistake after mistake. This terrible war is having an effect not only

on our troops, who are paying the highest price, but on our children,

our elderly, our schools, our workers, and the poor here at home.

While the President forges ahead with a surge in Iraq, the American

people need a surge here at home. Americans see the cost of health care

and the cost of college going up. What about a surge in our health and

education policies to meet those needs? Americans here at home worry

about their economic security, about their jobs and stagnant wages, how

they can support themselves on their wages. How about a surge here at

home to help meet their needs?

Last week, we met with our Nation's mayors. They described the

problem of school dropouts, how these young people are turning to crime

in our communities, the proliferation of murders and youth homicides

and suicides. Where is the surge to address that problem? No wonder the

American people are growing angrier and angrier as the war wages on.

They expect Congress to be an effective restraint on the President and

his abuse of the War Powers Act.

Opposition to the escalation is clear already. How much clearer does

it have to be before Republicans in Congress and the President finally

respond to the voice of the American people? When will this war be

brought to an end? An escalation now would be an immense mistake,

compounding the original misguided decision to invade Iraq. Public

support for the war does not exist. There is no support for this

escalation. We have surged our forces four times in the past, and each

time the situation hasn't changed.

The President cannot continue to unilaterally impose his failing

policy on Americans who have already rejected it. Congress has the

responsibility to stop the President from sending more of our sons and

daughters to die in this civil war. The legislation on which the

Democrats seek a vote is our first effort to meet that responsibility.

It is our chance to go on record in opposition to the surge. It is a

clarion call for change.

I thank the Chair.

Last week, the new National Intelligence Estimate confirmed the

nightmare scenario unfolding for our troops in Iraq. The country is

sliding deeper into an abyss of civil war, with our brave men and women

caught in the middle of it. The prospects for halting the escalating

sectarian violence is bleak, with greater chaos and anarchy looming and

many additional U.S. casualties inevitable.

It is abundantly clear that what we need is not a troop surge but a

diplomatic surge, working with other countries in the region. Sending

more troops into the Iraq civil war is not the solution to Iraq's

political problems. Not only does President Bush fail to see that

reality, but he is also going out of his way to deny and defy it.

Congress needs to express its opposition to this strategy. If the

President refuses to change course, we must act to change it ourselves

to protect our troops and end this misguided war. The war today is not

the war Congress authorized 4 years ago. It is now a civil war. The war

today is not about Saddam's weapons of mass destruction or alleged

relationship with al-Qaeda, it is Iraqi against Iraqi. Iraq is at war

with itself, and American soldiers are caught in the middle.

Madam President, it is time for the Members of this body to stand up

and take a position on the issue of the surge.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.