Madam President, I rise for a few moments to address the

subjects that have been discussed for the last 30 minutes. First of

all, I rise in particular to lend my support to Senator McConnell who

has seen to it that the Senate is able to fully express itself on the

issues before us in Iraq. No one should be confused about this debate.

There are many opinions here, and every one of them deserves the right

to be expressed.

Secondly, I rise in support of the President's plan, and I am going

to explain why in just a second. First, however, the Senator from New

York made a statement a minute ago that I want to open my remarks with.

The Senator from New York said not many people are paying attention

to what we debate on the floor of the Senate, that they are too busy

working in their daily lives. That may very well be right, but I want

to tell you who is listening to every word. First, it is the men and

women in our Armed Forces, their families, and their loved ones. All

you have to do is go to Iraq, where I have been many times, go to any

mess hall or almost any command post, and CNN and Fox are streaming

constantly. Our men and women watch what we say, so what we say on this

floor is important. The resolutions we send, binding or not, should not

send mixed signals.

There is another audience that listens to what we say, and they are

our enemies. They listen as well. Those networks are their intelligence

agencies. The messages we send should not be a message which relays a

lack of confidence to our troops or to our Commander in Chief.

I am on the Foreign Relations Committee. I have spent 20 of the last

28 hours of committee meetings listening to experts from a variety of

resources, and two things became quite clear. There were varying

opinions on whether a surge would work. Some thought it would

conclusively; many thought it would not. Most gave it varying degrees

of potential success. Without exception, however, everyone I heard

testify, when asked the question: What would be the ramifications of

withdrawal or redeployment, everyone, in one degree or another, said

there would be tens of thousands of lives lost, and possibly millions,

and the sectarian violence that we are trying to quell now could spread

through the region.

The way I see it, we have two choices right now at this stage of the

game. Choice one is an opportunity for success. Choice two is a recipe

for disaster. I choose the opportunity for success. I think the message

we ought to send to our troops is that we support them, we wish them

Godspeed, and we pray for their success.

A second message we need to send, which this debate has very

helpfully done, is a message to al-Malaki and the assembly in Iraq and

the people of Iraq that we came to their country with three objectives,

two of which we have secured. One objective was to seek out the weapons

of mass destruction the entire world believed were there. Second was to

allow a constitution to be written and a free election to be held. Both

of those things have been accomplished.

The last most elusive goal that we had was to secure the nation and

train the Iraqi military so it could carry on that security and let

that fledgling democracy go forward. That third goal, which has been

elusive, has gotten closer. The President's strategy to send additional

troops to Anbar and to Baghdad requires the absolute cooperation of the

Iraqis and the commitment of their military to assist side by side. If

they blink and look the other way, they will have failed themselves. If

we blink and we look the other way, we will have failed not only them

but we will have failed the people of our country.

Make no mistake about it, the war in Iraq that we are now in is not

the war we entered, but it is the war we are in, and those are the

words of our President. Regardless of where mistakes may have been

made, those of us, and I am one of those, who voted to support this

when we went into Iraq did not vote for failure. I hope and I pray that

our soldiers will be successful, that al-Malaki and the Iraqi military

will come through and perform, and I am going to do everything I can to

give them that support because I choose an opportunity for success over

a recipe for failure.

With regard to the mistakes that have been made, I want to be crystal

clear because there are some awfully selective memories on the floor of

the Senate. I remember what I believed when I voted to go into Iraq. I

remember what the National Intelligence Estimate said. And I remember

the horror of 9/11 and the fear of weapons of mass destruction. We

voted to do what every other member of the United Nations voted on in

Resolution 1441, and that was to seek out what the world thought was

there. While we didn't find the smoking gun, we found a lot of the

components and a lot of the evidence. We found the 400,000 bodies in

mass graves and the tyranny of a horrible dictator in Saddam Hussein.

We accomplished our goal of deposing him and allowing the Iraqis to

determine a free democratic society.

In the critical days of this battle, it is time for us to stand

forward and stand strong and give this opportunity for success that the

President has proposed a chance to succeed, rather than subscribe to a

recipe of failure. These are trying times, and I respect the opinions

of every Member of this body expressed on this floor, but remember who

our audiences are and how important it is that the message that we send

not be mixed, not be one of a political message but be a message of

commitment and resolve.

I will support the President not out of partisanship, not out of

blind loyalty, but I will support the President because the evidence

submitted in all of the hearings in the Foreign Relations Committee

told me we have two choices: We can choose an opportunity to succeed or

we can subscribe to a recipe for failure. I choose success, and I pray

God's blessings on our men and women in the Armed Forces of the United

States.

Madam President, I yield the floor.