I probably will not use more time, but at least I am

protected. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, I listened carefully to the comments of my colleague,

the Senator from Connecticut. I appreciate the frustration he expressed

about what has gone on in the last hours here and the difficulty of

presenting to the country a Senate that appears unable to make up its

mind about what resolution we ought to vote on.

The fact is, the last 24 hours in the Senate have not been a profile

in courage; they have been a profile in politics. Rather than protect

the troops, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have decided

to try to do what they can to protect the President. I think they have

made an enormous mistake.

The fact is, if we voted on the Warner resolution, those who support

the mission, the escalation--but the mission, as the Senator from

Arizona said--have a chance to vote no, and those who believe the

escalation is a mistake have an opportunity to vote yes. It just does

not get any clearer than that.

No matter what happens with all this argument about the process of

one resolution versus another resolution, the bottom line is that

people who on Sunday shows and in hearings stand up and say they oppose

the escalation were, yesterday, unwilling to allow the Senate to vote

on that. They were unwilling to have a vote of conscience on the

question of the direction of this war.

So rather than protect the troops, those troops who are about to be

sent into a mission that, in fact, does not resolve the issue of Iraq--

and perhaps even makes it far more dangerous, certainly more dangerous

for those troops being asked to perform it--are not protected by the

Senate, making its best effort here to try to make a vote that

disagrees with the President.

The Senator from Arizona was down here a few minutes ago asking the

question of the majority leader: If you do not support the troops'

mission, then aren't you, by definition--if you vote as we would like

to vote here--not supporting the troops? That is just an extraordinary

leap of logic which has no basis whatsoever in real reasoning.

The Senator from Arizona himself has criticized the policies of this

administration time and again--in fact, not enough. But time and again,

he has said Mr. Rumsfeld was wrong or he did not have confidence in him

or this and that. Was that a criticism of the troops? Was that not

supporting the troops? I am absolutely confident the answer is no. I

know, and we all know, the Senator from Arizona supports the troops,

but he has been able to draw a distinction between criticizing the

policy and support for the troops. I will tell you, the best way you

support the troops, you support the troops by getting the policy right.

Right now, all over the Hill here in Washington, there are veterans

of the Iraq war who are going around and talking to Congressmen and

Senators and the public, advocating that this mission in Iraq ought to

change, that we ought to begin a process of terminating our involvement

there. They have a very different view of their own service than that

which is expressed by some on the other side of the aisle. The fact is,

there is a growing sentiment among many of those being asked to do this

very difficult job that the missions they are being sent on don't, in

fact, always make sense.

I remember--and I know the Senator from Arizona remembers--what it is

like to be a troop in a war. I remember being on a river in Vietnam

when the Secretary of Defense was flying over us on one of his visits

to take a look at what was going on. Every single one of us said to

each other: Boy, wouldn't it be great if he came down here and talked

to us and found out what we really think is going on. We would have

loved the policy to change. The fact is that more and more of the

veterans I have talked to who are returning from Iraq and some,

regrettably, as Senator Dodd and I noticed a few days ago, whom we met

over there who have not returned alive, are against what is happening

and believe there is a better way to manage this war.

What we are trying to do is have a vote, albeit on a nonbinding

resolution, a vote that expresses the view of the Senate with respect

to this war. We have a moral obligation to make that statement in the

Senate. It is our duty to have that vote. The soldiers in Iraq are

performing their duty. Why aren't the Senators in the Senate performing

theirs? Is it their duty to obstruct? Is it their duty to protect the

President, to prevent a vote? Even though they go out publicly and talk

about their opposition to the war, their opposition to the escalation,

their belief that the direction is wrong, we are not supposed to vote

in the Senate on the question of whether you support the troops or

don't support the troops by sending an additional 21,000 troops over

there. Now is the time for the Senate to register its opposition to the

escalation.

If you pursue the logic of the other side of the aisle when they say:

Well, we can't have a vote here, we shouldn't express anything, we

shouldn't try to change anything, then we are complicit in the very

process with which we disagree. If lives are lost subsequent to our

unwillingness to stand up and vote, do we bear any responsibility for

the loss of those lives? Do you go home and say to yourself at night,

to your wife or your children: Do you know I did everything possible to

try to stop what is happening? When you make the next phone call to a

mother or father or wife in your State and express your sorrow for

their loss in the next days ahead, will you also be able to say, with a

clear conscience, that you did your best to try to prevent that loss,

to set this war on its proper course? I don't think so. I don't think

anybody, with a clear conscience, can say that.

I hate the fact that we are reduced to having a vote on something

that isn't at this moment going to change the direction. But every step

is incremental; every step is a building block. Every step helps to

build the change of opinion we need to achieve in this country, where

people will understand the way you best define patriotism and the way

you best defend the interests of our troops on the ground in Iraq.

Surely, we haven't reached a point in the Senate where you can't even

have a debate on the most important life-and-death issue facing people

in this country. What are we supposed to do? Pack up and go home and

let the President continue to make a mistake? Are we supposed to be

somehow satisfied that the President has earned the right and the new

Secretary of Defense? Who knows yet; the decision is out. But the

record of the last 5 years, 6 years is one of mistake after mistake

after mistake after mistake after mistake, one after the other, from

the planning to the numbers of troops, to what you do afterwards, to

how you preserve the peace, to what kind of politics we are going to

pursue.

So we are doing what we can, within our limited power, with 60-vote

restrictions, to register our disapproval to sending an additional

number of troops, which has been told to the American people is 21,000

but which, in fact, is over 40,000 when you finish with the support

troops who are necessary. These troops deserve a policy that is worthy

of their sacrifice. No Senator that I know of is not committed to

success. We would like to be successful. But what is the definition of

success now?

We have heard month after month from Ambassador Khalilizad. General

Casey, over 7 months ago, said this is the last 6 months for Iraq. They

have a fundamental 6-month period within which they have to get their

act together, and if they don't, serious problems.

That time came and passed. What happened? We hear another promise of

the next few months. We have had months and even years now of these

promises about how this is a moment of turning the corner. This is the

critical moment for Iraq. This is the moment of the difference.

Everybody has known for the whole last year or more that you have to

resolve the oil revenues issue. As I stand on the floor tonight, the

oil revenues issue is not resolved. They say they are making progress,

they are getting closer, but it isn't resolved.

The fundamental question of federalism, the role between the Shia and

the Sunni and a strong Baghdad and a strong central government is

unresolved. That is a fundamental part of the struggle. Our troops,

with their technology, with their great weapons, with their

unbelievable willingness to sacrifice and their courage, they can't

resolve that issue. Iraqi politicians have to resolve that issue. Right

now, as we are debating or not debating this issue, Iraqi politicians

are still jockeying for power at the expense of our young men and

women. I object to that. I get angry that we have to have a private

fundraising effort to put together a rehab for our soldiers--thank God

for the people who did it--in order to take care of those who are going

to be wounded. And our people are talking about patriotism and

supporting the troops? We have lost all contact with what is reasonable

or what is real in this effort.

It is unacceptable that any young American ought to be giving their

life or going through the sacrifice for Iraqi politicians who refuse to

compromise, for a legislature that refuses to even meet. Less than 50

percent of them can be convened, a Parliament that doesn't meet, that

is the democracy we are supposedly fighting for--Shia and Sunni

politicians who are jockeying amongst each other, creating their own

militias, each of them playing for a future with a U.S. security

blanket lying over it, preventing the full explosion of the kind of

sectarian violence that would flow, if all were left to their own

devices. That is the one thing our presence is doing. There is a

stopgap. It does prevent absolute chaos, but it is creating a slow,

cancerous, insidious kind of chaos that is building on itself.

A couple of days ago, the largest number of civilians were killed by

a bomb, by one single suicide bomb. It gets worse by the day because

the fundamental issues of difference between people who have always

lived there and will live there after we are gone are not resolved.

If you stand back from this and look at it and ask, as any reasonable

American would ask: What do you do to resolve this, what do you do to

make a difference in Iraq, I don't think any American is going to come

to the conclusion that a soldier with a gun is going to make that

difference. General Casey has told us he doesn't believe it will make

the difference. General Abizaid said he didn't think it would make a

difference. The President has even said there is no military solution.

So if there is indeed no military solution, my question to this

administration is: Where is the robust diplomacy and the robust

political jawboning, arm twisting that is necessary to get a solution?

Where is it? It is invisible to the average American.

If we don't get serious about that diplomacy, if we don't have a

summit that some of us have been calling for for 3 years, and that is

ultimately the only way to resolve these differences, then our soldiers

are being sacrificed and being asked to sacrifice each day without a

reasonable policy that is guiding this war.

What are we left to do? Are we left to say that our colleagues can

stop a vote? We are going to walk away, and we are not going to try to

do what we can to change this or to stop it? I don't think so. That is

not the Senate that I came to serve in or I think most of our

colleagues came to serve in. This is a silly sort of process that is

going back and forth.

If you are opposed to the escalation, you ought to have a right to

vote on it. If you are for it, you will have the right to vote for it.

Go register your vote and then go out to the country. The troops over

there are tougher than anybody in this room. They understand what their

mission is. And what we do, ultimately, barring the effort to either

cut off the funds or force the President to do something with 60 votes

that we don't yet have, is not going to change their dedication or

their courage or their commitment to the specific mission. Because that

is the kind of troops we have.

But while we are talking about the kind of troops we have, let me ask

a question: Our troops, most of them, go through basic training. They

go through a specialized school. They train with their brigade unit

company for a while. Then they are sent over. Most of our troops are

ready to go to battle, and some of them do, new recruits, within 7

months, 9 months. We are now at the 3-year mark, 4-year mark on

training of 300,000 troops in Iraq. What I hear from the experts is the

problem with them is not training. The problem is motivation. How much

training do you think the terrorists get? How much training do you

think the guys get who have those machineguns and go out? Where is

their training camp? Where are their barracks? Where is their 9-week

basic training or 12 weeks? Most of those people are out there in a

matter of days and hours because they are motivated.

Right now in the streets of the West Bank and the streets of Lebanon

and in the streets of Iraq, the guys we are struggling against are

getting up earlier, staying up later, and they have more motivation.

And the guys we are supporting and putting forth money and guns and all

the technology and all the training in the world are not motivated.

Many of them don't show up. So unless we deal with this issue of

motivation, of people who are willing to die for their country and

people who are willing to go out and put their lives on the line and a

group of politicians who are willing to make the decisions necessary to

resolve this, this is going to go on and on and on, and it is not going

to end well.

Everybody knows what the public assessment is on the latest NIE.

People are learning privately what it is. The fact is, these are

difficult times over there. This is not getting better. It is getting

worse. Twenty-one thousand troops are not going to change that. An

escalation is not going to change that. More troops on the ground

raises the stakes. More troops on the ground provides more targets.

More troops on the ground raises the stakes in a way that says, because

we heard it from the administration: Boy, this is kind of our last-

ditch stand. And if we don't make this work, we don't know what is

going to happen. What a wonderful message to send to the other side.

We are being accused of sending bad messages. If you raise the stakes

like that but create a mission and actually can't necessarily achieve

it, you are preordaining the potential of even worse consequences

because you will make the negotiation even harder. You will make it

harder for the surrounding countries to say: This is sensible, we ought

to get involved now. And you will make it harder for the people there

to make the compromises necessary because they know that down the road

is this confrontation with reality with an administration that has

already said: We don't have a plan beyond this.

What a predicament. That just defies common sense. So we have made

matters worse. We will raise the stakes, but we don't have a way to

deal with it. A wing and a prayer. This is a ``Hail Mary'' pass by this

administration, with no guarantee. I think our troops deserve some

guarantees of an outcome.

The best guarantee I can think of is to redeploy them in a way that

puts more emphasis on what the Iraqis need to do. It doesn't mean

leaving Iraq completely. There are plenty of over-the-horizon

strategies, such as in the desert deployments, a capacity to be there

for emergency assistance, to tamp down chaos and go after al-Qaida, an

ability to remain in a truly supportive training role without having

our troops on the front line of a civil war. But those are not the ones

they are putting on the table, and that is not what we hear them talk

about.

We hear these two dramatic things: We have to go down this road where

we have telegraphed our move and raise the stakes, and saying they are

talking about complete withdrawal. No, they are not. Most are talking

about how to achieve success in a responsible way which honors the

sacrifice of our troops and meets the important national security needs

of the United States of America.

The only way I know of to do that is to get to the diplomatic table;

bring our neighbors into a new dynamic where they begin to have

credibility; get Syria and others through the Arab League, the U.N,

Perm 5, and begin a process of legitimate diplomacy, such as we have

read about in the history books of our Nation for years. The great

diplomats of our country are aghast at what we are doing now. Listen to

any number of them privately, some who served in the administration of

George Herbert Walker Bush, the 41st President--Secretaries of State,

such as Jim Baker. Jim Baker is a model in how to build a true

coalition. It took him 15 trips to Syria before. On the 15th trip, he

finally got President Assad to agree to support what we were engaged

in. I am not sure the current Secretary of State has made 15 trips in

the last 5 years. I cannot tell you the exact number, but I don't think

it is 15 in the years she has been in office, let alone the prior

Secretary of State.

Mr. President, we have to get serious about what we are going to do.

The fact is, there are over 3,000 young Americans who have now died. I

think four were reported in the newspapers yesterday. There will be

more tomorrow and the next day. The fact that we are losing young

Americans is not a reason to say we should leave. But it is a reason to

say we should get the policy right. It is a reason to say we owe them a

strategy that supports the sacrifice they are making. We ought to be

able to do better than what we are doing now, Mr. President.

So this is really pretty simple. The Iraqi Study Group put forward

some 79 recommendations. They have all been cast aside. This was a

moment where the President could have brought Democrats to the table,

all of us. We could have sat down and come together around, OK, let's

put all these recommendations together. These will work, and we are

willing to support these. Let's go out jointly and see if we can

leverage the full power of the Senate and the Congress and the country

behind the kind of strategy we need in the Middle East in order to

protect these real interests, which range from Israel, to containing

Iran, dealing with the protection of the gulf states, to Lebanon, the

fledgling democracy, and obviously to stability in Iraq. We all

understand that, not to mention oil and the economy and the other

interests that we have. Those are real.

But I respectfully submit that the current policy we are on is

recklessly putting those very interests at greater risk. And the

measurement of that statement is in the fact that Iran is actually more

powerful today as a consequence of what we are doing. Iran loves the

fact that we are bogged down in Iraq because it makes it far more

difficult for us to play a legitimate card in order to deal with their

nuclear ambitions. There is nobody in the world who doubts that.

Lebanon is more in jeopardy today, with Hezbollah and Nasrallah in

greater positions of threat to the Government and the Prime Minister.

Hamas has been in an ascendency in the last months, and we have been

unable to move forward with a legitimate entity with which to be able

to ultimately make peace. All these things are worse off today than a

year ago, than 2 years ago, and worse off than 6 years ago.

If they are worse off, how do you stand there and say this is a good

policy, that we ought to keep doing what we are doing, digging a deeper

hole, and making it worse? I was over in the Middle East a month ago. I

met with leaders of the region. I can tell you that while, yes, they

say they don't want a precipitous departure and a crazy consequence of

chaos as a result, they also do want the United States to play a

sensible, constructive, and legitimate role in resolving the

fundamental issues of the region.

So I think a lot of us have had enough of hearing these phony debates

about who supports the troops. We all support the troops. This is the

best trained military that many of us have ever seen. They are doing an

amazing job under difficult circumstances. Again and again, I say that

they deserve the support of a Congress that gets this policy right and

that fights for them while they are over there and guarantees that when

they come home, they don't have to fight for themselves to have the

promises that were made to them kept. That is what this is about.

I think we can have a very simple vote. If you are for the escalation

and you think it is the right policy, vote no against the resolution.

If you are against the policy of escalation and you think it is the

wrong policy and you want to be counted, then you ought to vote aye for

the resolution. That is a vote we can have tonight, tomorrow, or any

time. Most people here know where they stand, but they are unwilling to

show the American people and unwilling to hold this President

accountable. Shame on us.

I yield the floor.