Mr. President, you have just heard an extraordinary

speech, and I want to put it in perspective, if I may.

There was a Foreign Relations Committee meeting several weeks ago at

which one of the Senators insinuated that the Secretary of State didn't

understand this war because she didn't have enough of a personal

interest. Well, we thought that was an unfair question because this is

a woman who is spending 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, trying to do the

right thing for our country, and that was considered a personal thing

that was out of line.

We have just now heard a U.S. Senator make a speech that was a

wonderful, principled speech on the merits of what he is going to

support in this war effort, the resolution that will come before us,

and he never mentioned that he had a personal interest. So I want to

mention it. I want to mention Sam Bond.

Sam Bond is a Princeton graduate. He is the light of Senator Kit

Bond's life. He is his only child, his only son. Sam Bond has been a

star from the day he was born, and we have all heard about it. Sam Bond

graduated from Princeton University, and he didn't get a job on Wall

Street to then sign up to go to business school. No, Sam Bond signed up

for the Marine Corps.

Sam Bond has spent 1 year in Iraq already, in Fallujah, and he is

going back in 1 month. Sam Bond is going back to Iraq in 1 month, and

we just heard the Senator from Missouri not even mention his only son

because he is talking about what is right for our country. He believes

that Sam Bond's future depends on our doing the right thing in Iraq. So

I applaud Senator Bond, and I applaud Sam Bond.

I want to talk about the resolution that we are going to vote on at

some point. First, I think Senator Bond is correct; that we ought to

have the right to vote on at least two resolutions, not just one that

is unamendable. This is, as we have been reminded time and time and

time again, the most important issue raging in our country and maybe

the world today. So I think having two resolutions, or one amendable

resolution, is a legitimate request because there are legitimate

differences of opinion. There are legitimate debatable issues that I

think the Senate is capable of putting forth for our country,

representing the division in our country on this important issue.

Some people say we should never have gone into Iraq. In hindsight, it

is an easy thing to say. Let's remember what we were looking at as

Senators, and let's look at what the President was looking at as the

Commander in Chief of this Nation, whose responsibility it is to

protect the people of this country. The buck stopped on the President's

desk.

I don't agree with everything the President has done. Not one person

on the Senate floor agrees with everything the President has done. But

I will tell you this: no one--no one--can ever say this President isn't

committed to one thing, paramount in all of his responsibilities, and

that is to protect the people of the United States. He is doing what he

thinks is best to protect our children and freedom for our way of life.

When he went into Iraq, many people questioned whether it was the

appropriate thing to do. I did myself. But the President had just been

through 9/11, where we saw airplanes used as weapons of mass

destruction that killed thousands of Americans and people working in

New York City. So he said, to look at it from his view: I can't afford

to take a chance that a weapon of mass destruction would hit America

again, only this time it would be a chemical or a biological weapon.

I believe that is what the President was thinking. He knew that

Saddam Hussein had chemical weapons, had used them on his own people

and had kicked the weapons inspectors out in 1998. He had kicked the

weapons inspectors out. Why would he have done that, was the thinking,

if he didn't have something to hide?

Then there were the intelligence reports. There were the intelligence

reports that we saw and there were the intelligence reports that the

President

received which were at a much higher level than even we were able to

get. All of that pointed to Saddam Hussein having weapons of mass

destruction and the capability to deliver them. So it is a legitimate

debate to ask why are we there, but it is not the debate we ought to be

having today.

The debate we ought to be having today is what should we do to have

success in Iraq because success in Iraq and Afghanistan is a part of

the war on terror.

After 9/11, we didn't treat what happened as a criminal act. In 1993,

after the first World Trade Center bombing, that is what America did.

We treated it as a criminal act. America didn't know this was the

beginning of a war on terror. Then there was Khobar Towers, attacked in

Saudi Arabia, and 19 American soldiers killed. We treated it as a

criminal act. There was the bombing of our embassies, and then there

was the USS Cole. We treated those as criminal acts. But America woke

up on 9/11/2001 and realized, finally, 10 years after the war had

started, that America and our way of life was under attack. This was

not a crime, it was the continuation of a war.

So we are there now. We are not succeeding. Success would be a

stabilized Iraq, an Iraq where people can go to the market in security

and buy food or necessities and visit and have coffee on the street.

That is what success in Iraq will be. Success in Iraq will be when they

have self-governance. Success in Iraq will be when there are not

security forces that kill people of a different sect. Success in Iraq

will be when they are a stable neighbor in the Middle East and

terrorists will not be able to get a foothold.

We are not succeeding yet. How can we do better? We should be

debating how we can do better to succeed. If victory is not the end

result, we will have failed our children and grandchildren. So I ask,

what could possibly be the purpose of passing a resolution in what has

been considered the world's most deliberative body that would send

General Petraeus to take charge of Baghdad and a new strategy and say,

General Petraeus, we have faith in you but not the mission? That is not

the right resolution to pass in this Senate.

I hope we can debate that resolution, and I hope we can debate

against those who would send a signal to our troops that we don't have

faith in the possibility of success in their mission. I want to debate

a resolution that would say we are not going to send any more troops,

and even if we need troop protection we are not going to send those

troops because Congress is going to take the place of the Commander in

Chief and the generals on the ground.

I want to debate a resolution that would cut off funding for our

troops in the field. I would like to debate what would happen to our

troops who are there now if a signal were sent that we were not going

to give them the support they needed to do the job they have right now.

I very much hope that we will be able to take up the Levin-Warner

resolution, and I hope we will be able to take up an alternative which

will not have amendments because those are not in order. But we must

have the ability to exercise a voice that would go in a different

direction, that would set benchmarks for what the Iraqi Government must

do if they want America to stay and help them become strong and stable

and free.

I want to be able to debate also the McCain-Lieberman resolution

because I think there will be a clear choice. And I hope that we have

the opportunity to bring that out to the American people because there

are consequences of setting a timetable and trying to have some kind of

graceful exit strategy that basically says this is too tough for

America, we just can't take it and, therefore, we are going to walk

away.

How about keeping our commitments, so that our allies and our enemies

will know, when they are partners with America or enemies of America,

we will stick through thick and thin, arm in arm with our allies and be

formidable against our enemies? How about having a strategy that says

we have not succeeded in the way this has gone, so here is a different

approach? We expect the Iraqis to stand up now. We are going to help

you, but you must lead. You must meet certain benchmarks if you are

going to keep us helping you help yourselves.

We want the Iraqi people to succeed because we don't want terrorists

to takeover Iraq, get the oil revenue and come and deliver their

weapons of mass destruction to America. That is what we are talking

about. That is what is at stake in this war. How we execute our

responsibilities as Senators who have the leadership mantle is going to

determine how successful our troops can be.

I hope we can have that debate. I hope we can have the debate on the

Levin-Warner resolution. I hope we can have a debate on the Gregg

resolution. I hope we can have a debate on the McCain-Lieberman-Lindsey

Graham resolution because I think it would be the right thing for the

American people. But don't try to put one resolution on the floor with

no amendments and call that an opportunity to have a voice. No one

could keep a straight face and say that is a fair process.

There are 100 Members of the Senate. I do not question one Member's

patriotism. I do not question the motives of one Member. Everyone has a

view that we believe is the right way for our country. We ought to be

able to support resolutions that put forward those views. This is too

important to have a struggle over process keep us from having the

ability to come together and try to reason and pass one good resolution

or two that would allow us to have a voice in this debate. The world is

going to listen to what we say. I hope we don't send the wrong signal

to our allies or to our enemies that America cannot stand it when it

gets tough. America is the beacon of freedom to the world. If we do not

stand and fight for freedom, who will? America must never step back

from that mantle and that responsibility. Freedom will die everywhere

if we don't fight and keep it for America and our allies.

Let's have that debate. Let's have that debate on whatever differing

resolutions come forward. I am not afraid to debate the Levin-Warner

resolution, and I am certainly proud to support the Gregg and the

McCain-Lieberman resolutions. I wish to talk more about it.

I yield the floor.