Mr. President, let's get on with this micromanaging the

war business. Maybe if the administration was micromanaging the war, we

wouldn't be here today. They said there were weapons of mass

destruction in Iraq. Maybe if they had micromanaged the intelligence

community, we wouldn't even have gone into Iraq in the first place.

No. 2, they said, We are ready to go. If Mr. Rumsfeld had

micromanaged the U.S. military, maybe we would have had enough troops.

Maybe if they had micromanaged the war, they would have had enough body

armor. Maybe if they had micromanaged the system, we wouldn't have the

scandal at Walter Reed. Maybe if they had micromanaged, we wouldn't

have this horrific backlog at VA. They are the ones who should have

been micromanaging the war, and if they can't do it, they need to get

out of the way and let us pass our resolution.

The distinguished whip from the other party said he wants us to

finish by sundown. We would like to sunset the war. That is what we

would like to do. It is time for our troops to come home, and it is

time for us to bring them home swiftly. But we have a moral obligation

and a constitutional obligation to bring them home safely. This is why

I support the Reid resolution. This resolution states clearly that the

Congress and the American people support our troops. Yet, at the same

time, we are saying bring the troops home by March 31, 2008. Unlike the

reckless incompetency that got us into the war, we are following the

guidelines of the Iraq Study Group, wise heads who pondered some of the

best ways to a new way forward.

The Reid resolution sets a framework and a time line for doing what

needs to be done and assuring our troops that we honor their service,

and we are

going to protect them on the battlefield. We are going to make sure

they have the resources to do the job, and when they come back home, we

want to be sure they have health care and they have jobs and they have

job training.

I know the distinguished Presiding Officer has been a leader in

making sure that when our troops come home, they have job training, and

I thank him for that.

I am not new to this position on the war. I never wanted to go to war

in the first place, not because I am a pacifist--and I respect those

who are--but I read that national intelligence report; I am on the

Intelligence Committee. I had very grave suspicions about the level of

weapons of mass destruction Saddam had. But I also believed it was the

U.N.'s job to go to Iraq and do the work that the U.N. was supposed to

do.

I opposed giving the President unilateral authority to engage in a

preemptive attack just because he said we were in imminent danger. I

wish he had micromanaged that a bit. Maybe we wouldn't have had to go.

I said the United States had to exhaust our diplomatic options, and I

encouraged the administration at that time: Please, stick with the U.N.

so the U.N. can meet its responsibility to deal with the Saddam threat.

I said we shouldn't go on our own and we should work with the U.N. and

the international community.

The day of the vote when I spoke, I said I didn't know what lies

ahead. I didn't know if our troops would be greeted with flowers or

with landmines. Go to Walter Reed and Bethesda Naval Hospital and talk

to those coming home from Iraq. You know what we got. When we got

there, there were no weapons of mass destruction, but destruction sure

happened.

After 4 years of fighting, are we better off in Iraq? The United

States went to war with Iraq, now we are at war within Iraq. Saddam is

gone, we are still there, and now we are in a civil war. It is time for

us to come home, and it is time for us to come home following the Iraq

Study Group recommendations.

We need a new way forward in Iraq. The Iraq Study Group gave us 79

recommendations. Surely, we could agree on 50. If the administration

wasn't being so isolated and so rigid, they would know it is time to

engage in the international community, that it is always better to send

in the diplomats before we send in the troops. Let's send in the

diplomats so we can bring our troops back home.

The Iraq Study Group calls for enhanced diplomatic and political

efforts in Iraq and outside Iraq. It provides a direction for the U.S.

Government and the Iraqi Government to follow that would bring our

forces home by the first quarter of 2008. That is what the Reid

resolution calls for.

The Reid resolution sets a goal of bringing all U.S. combat forces

home by March 31, 2008, except for limited numbers of troops for force

protection, training of the Iraqi troops, and targeted counterterrorism

operations. It would begin a phased redeployment within 4 months after

the passage of this legislation. But it also develops a comprehensive

diplomatic, political, and economic strategy. Finally, this resolution

requires the President to report to Congress within 60 days.

That is why we support this resolution. Are we micromanaging? No, but

I wish the administration, as I said, had micromanaged the war. We

wouldn't be in the debacle we are in now.

I support the Reid resolution because I believe what the Iraq Study

Group said, that the Iraq problems cannot now be solved with a military

solution, no matter how brave, no matter how smart. It requires a

political solution by the Iraqis and a diplomatic solution with Iraq's

neighbors. It says the Congress and the American people will not just

support the troops, but protect them.

I want this war to end, and I believe this Reid resolution will do

that. Yet, in ending the war, it is my responsibility to ensure our

troops are brought home not only swiftly but safely.

Mr. President, I have had sit-ins in my office four times during the

last 3 weeks. Four times, people have come to my office to sit in. Some

come to protest, some come to get arrested, but all have a right to

speak out. They want me to vote against the spending for the war. Well,

there is no way a responsible Senator can vote against spending. There

is no one line item that says: War, yes or no. That is not the way the

supplemental works. That is not the way the defense budget works. That

is not the way our entire budget works. There is no vote that says:

War, yes or no.

So I won't vote for defunding the war. I say to the protestors--I say

to those well-intentioned liberal activists--know that we are on your

side, but what are you asking us to vote against? Do you want us to

vote against the pay for the soldiers and for their spouses and for

their children? I won't vote against their benefits. What do you want

us to vote against--the bullets and what they need to fight? I won't

vote against that. Do you want us to vote against the body armor and

the armored humvees they need for survival? I won't vote against that.

What if they are injured? One of the things that save their lives on

the battlefields is the tourniquet. I won't cut off the money for the

tourniquets. I want them to have the tourniquets to cut off the

hemorrhaging on the battlefields. When they come out of there, there is

the jet fuel that gets them on the medevac from Baghdad to Germany to

Walter Reed and Bethesda. We will clean up Walter Reed, and we will fix

Bethesda Naval Hospital, but they have to get here. When they get here,

they need medical care. Hats off to acute medical care.

Now we need outpatient care. Now we need long-term care for the 50

years or so these men and women will have the need for it. We have had

22,000 people receive Purple Hearts in Iraq, and more have been injured

than we will ever know or we will know years from now. So I can't vote

against funding.

I tell all who are listening that you can sit in every single day,

you can follow me throughout my Senate career, you can follow me to my

grave--I will not vote to in any way harm the U.S. men and women in the

military, nor will I cut off the support for help to their families. If

you want to picket, you want to protest, you want to disrupt my life,

better my life is disrupted than the lives of these men and women in

uniform.

I am going to support this Reid resolution because I believe it helps

bring the war to an honorable end, but at the same time, we are going

to support our troops. It is time to stop the finger-pointing, and it

is time to pinpoint a new way forward.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.