Mr. President, for a week now we have had this

speculation, the rumors, and then finally the deliberations in front of

the Senate Foreign Relations Committee of a resolution disapproving the

President's increase of the forces by 21,000 in Iraq. A resolution was

passed out on a vote of something like 12 to 9 yesterday. It was

bipartisan in the passing, but it was basically a partisan vote. Save

for one member of the minority on the Senate Foreign Relations

Committee, all of the minority voted against the resolution. But almost

to a person, all of the members of the Senate Foreign Relations

Committee, both sides of the aisle, had expressed their

dissatisfaction, individually in their statements in front of the

committee, with the President's intention to increase the number of

troops, which is already underway, as we know, as we have been reading

the commentary in the press.

So we have that resolution. Then we have a resolution introduced by

Senator Warner. This Senator from Florida looks at these two

resolutions, and they are almost identical. So this Senator is one of

several Senators who has cosponsored both resolutions. This Senator is

one of several Senators who has been trying to bring the two together

to be folded into one, since it basically, in substance, is the same

thing in both of them. Yet for one reason or another, that has not been

accomplished.

Therefore, next week, we expect both of those resolutions to come in

front of the Senate. At this moment, it looks as if it will be the

Senate Foreign Relations Committee product that will then be amendable

and I suppose with a substitute amendment. Then we go through all the

amendatory process. Now, that may be the way the Senate will work its

will, but it is not necessarily the way it could be done the easiest,

if we could have great minds come together in a bipartisan way on two

resolutions that virtually say the same thing.

I bring this up simply to say we get so wound around the axle and so

worked up over the particular number of troops when, in fact, looking

at the underlying conditions in the Middle East and in Iraq, where

there is so much at stake for our country: The oil and gas in that

region, the east-west trade routes that go through the area, all of the

international capital investment that is in that region of the world,

and all of the capital that is produced that flows out of that part of

the world--all of that instability in the region, brought about as a

result of instability in Iraq, is going to have a major global impact.

The former commander, the former combatant commander of the U.S.

Central Command, General Tony Zinni, a now retired 4-star Marine

general who served as the head of Central Command back under the

Clinton administration, has written extensively on this, and he points

out that there is a complexity we have unleashed by going into Iraq

that is not only the Sunni-Shiite conflict but also the Arab-Persian

conflict. General Zinni, in his upfront, blunt-talking way says:

There are three options in Iraq: Fix it, contain it, or

leave it.

And he doesn't feel, and this Senator doesn't feel, that we can take

the third option of picking up and leaving it because of the enormous

consequences. And if we can't fix it, we have to contain it, but then

you are going to have to own that containment and have a containment

strategy executed by the United States because the region can't do it

for itself. And containment, according to General Zinni, is very messy

and is probably much tougher in the long run.

So perhaps as we discuss next week these two resolutions over the

issue of 21,000 troops, let's remember that in the long run, for us to

be successful in stabilizing Iraq, we have to look to additional issues

that have to be solved, such as the economics there, the diplomacy, the

security--a lot of what the Iraq Study Commission has come forward with

in their plan. And let's also understand that as we talk about what we

want to do to stabilize Iraq in getting the Iraqi security forces able

to provide their own security, that getting them provided with guns and

other equipment isn't going to provide the security that you need

because, the Iraqi security forces need civil affairs and psychological

operations and counterintelligence and intelligence forces. They are

going to have to have civil affairs moving in behind their military

operations in order to paint buildings and create infrastructure so

there will be something positive left behind.

Remember, the doctrine under Secretary Rumsfeld was ``clear, hold,

and build.'' The problem was, they cleared an area, but they never held

it. They never got around to the point of building. General Petraeus

said yesterday in our committee we were going to go in and clear, hold,

and then we have to be able to build. Whether we talk about 21,000

troops or not, you cannot build in the midst of sectarian violence of

Shia, Sunnis, and the overall Arab-Persian conflict. Until we address

these issues, at the end of the day, Iraq is not going to be

stabilized. In a destabilized society, a priority has to be in

rebuilding institutions in social, economic, and political areas.

One of the things the United States may consider increasing its

emphasis on, since we have so many agencies of government there all

doing their own thing, is an interagency coordinating mechanism to help

bring everything together so, indeed, ``clear, hold, and build'' has an

opportunity to be executed and then, hopefully, an opportunity to

succeed.

I wanted to offer some additional ideas, a lot of which have been

inspired by General Zinni, someone who understands how to operate in

that part of the world as we debate next week the resolutions over

whether we would indicate our approval of the President's plan. Maybe

when we debate that, we can debate the deficiencies of not only what

has been done in the past but what we have to do in the future in order

to give that country an opportunity to stabilize.

I hope it is not too late. I must say, this Senator feels at times it

is too late, particularly with these almost 1,500 years of sectarian

violence that occurred after the death of Mohammed in the 600s A.D.,

that it was the rebellion started by his son-in-law that ultimately led

to the Shiite sect which was born out of rebellion and wanting to get

revenge. We have seen that play out over centuries and centuries.

Again, we are seeing it play out now in Iraq. But we must be optimists

and we must try, for the stakes are exceptionally high.