Fine. I thank the Presiding Officer, and I wish to

commend the Presiding Officer for his work, as, indeed, my good friend,

Senator Alexander, and this colleague.

I must state, with a sense of total modesty, that my contribution

tonight would be just to express some concerns. I have followed the

work of your group. Very kindly, the principals on this have invited me

to join, but I have thus far not done so because I can't find yet the

answers to some critical issues I have in mind.

First, I say to my colleagues that I had a little to do with starting

the group now known as Baker-Hamilton, or the Iraq Study Group. I think

I worked with my colleague who did the major part of the work,

Congressman Frank Wolf, and then we engaged a local, highly recognized,

and well-qualified group in Washington associated with studies to take

on some of the infrastructure. It was a remarkable recruiting of

talent, which my colleague recited, and I think they did a very

credible and fine job.

It was a major contribution at a time in the fall of 2006 when there

was a great deal of concern among many of us about the situation in

Iraq. I had returned in that fall from a trip to Iraq and expressed

publicly my thoughts that the country was just drifting aimlessly

sideways, and that remark, together with remarks of others of a similar

nature, sparked the intensity of the administration's undertaking

their, I think, very thorough review leading up to the President's

remarks when he announced a change in strategy on January 10, 2007.

Now, I have referred to the Iraq Study Group work. I think there were

7, 8, 9 months that they studied, with hearings and so forth. But when

they put pen to paper and wrote it, it was a snapshot of the situation

that faced this Nation and, indeed, our partners, the coalition forces,

in Iraq. They made certain assumptions at that time which led to the

strategy they outlined.

Among those assumptions was that we had reason to believe the Iraqi

Government, freely elected, in place, was going to become a truly

representative unity government of all factions. They committed a

certain number of benchmarks, and it was thought at that time that

those benchmarks could be met. That, I think is fair to say, was an

assumption they had.

Our country, together with our coalition partners, had been in

training with the Iraqi forces for some 2 years plus at that time,

building up their own internal army, national guard, and police force.

So the Iraq Study Group, in my judgment, took a snapshot of the

situation in the fall of 2006, put it to paper, and it was in the

President's framework of things that were considered when he derived

his policy and enunciated it in January.

I, together with, I think, the colleagues on the Senate floor

tonight, said to the President, after his announcement on January 10,

that I was concerned that more of the Iraq Study Group concept was not

infused into his new strategy. I remember specifically addressing the

issue of the sectarian violence, now described by some as a civil war

of some stage, and injecting the American GI, who really had no

background in the complicated culture of the Muslim religion and the

Muslim people, into that situation.

And I am not in any way denigrating that religion or that culture.

Indeed, it is one of the oldest and, I think, most respected on Earth

today. But, nevertheless, there are among the Muslim religion a few who

really are dead set on changing the world--we know all about that--and

now they are wreaking utter havoc, primarily in Iraq, and to an extent

now in Afghanistan.

But that snapshot and those assumptions have not been borne out. We

do not have any real evidence before us today, or real basis for much

hope as to what this Iraqi Government might achieve in the foreseeable

future. The President specifically said on January 10, the Armed Forces

of Iraq will take the lead. We will be largely in a supporting role. We

will embed forces, we will train, we will supply, but they are taking

more of the lead. In fact, they have to a limited extent but not to the

extent that I believe are the hopes and expectations that were raised

in the President's January 10 framework of remarks. Certainly the

Government has not performed as we had hoped and expected. The Armed

Forces are making a contribution today but not to the degree that was

anticipated in the fall of 2006.

I could go on and recite other concerns I have about this report,

namely, can anyone point to where the Department of Defense sat down

and studied the strategy in this report and has reached conclusions as

to whether it would work better than the current strategy? Would it

bring about a greater strength of government? Would it bring about a

greater will, simple will among the Iraqi forces, to take on more and

more responsibility?

I think, before we recommend to this body and, indeed, if it were to

pass and become legislation, to the President, that he consider

implementing a major portion, as this amendment describes, of the

recommendations of the Iraq Study Group, someone better bring forth a

careful military analysis of what might occur given the situation

today--not the situation in the fall of 2006--of what would happen if

we made a shift in strategy from the one now employed to this.

That is essential, if we are asking Senators to support that. Show us

some analytical study of this strategy and how it would bring about

greater results than the current strategy being employed.

There is great credibility attached to this report, primarily because

of the extraordinary membership--their experience, their achievements

in the private and public sector. Do we know for a fact that all

members of that committee are endorsing the concept that now the Senate

should lift their report as written and prepared some 8 months ago? Are

there not some among that group who might question today whether the

assumptions that they had that led to their report are still there to

support now a shift of strategy? I don't know. I don't see that

evidence. I

wish to see something from the members, each one, because I think it

would be difficult if we shifted to this Iraq Study Group and one or

more of the members of that group got up in the public and said: What

we said then is simply not going to work today.

I think that is important because you are trading on the credibility

of men and women of clear conscience, extraordinary backgrounds, who

did, I think, a very fine job as best they could based on facts which

have largely changed, or facts or assumptions that have not

materialized.

We talk about a bipartisan resolution. I think the colleagues tonight

joined me some weeks ago in putting together a consensus of a

bipartisan nature, to go forward and to guide this Nation. It was,

somewhat to my surprise, taken almost verbatim by the appropriators and

included in the recent appropriations bill--I say recent, it was 6 or 8

weeks ago--and is now the law.

Part of that report that I wrote together with colleagues here said

we ought to have an independent analysis of the Iraqi security forces

as they exist today and what they might represent 2, 3, 4, 5 months

into the future. I must say--I say it with a sense of humility--I

persuaded a former commandant of the Marine Corps, Jim Jones, a man who

has enormous credibility on both sides of the Congress, House and

Senate, to head that group. I have met with him. He brought in

distinguished retired military officers. Tonight, as we are here

debating, they are in Iraq, preparing a report for this Congress and

for the President as to their best judgment as to the military

proficiency, the capability and will to fight of the Iraqi forces today

and what is the likelihood that will improve in the months to come,

because so much of all of our strategy, be it the surge strategy or any

strategy, is dependent on that. As the President has said most

eloquently: When they stand up, we will stand down.

I believed we needed an independent study, not to criticize the

Department of Defense which for months has provided report after report

of their analysis, but we ought to get a second opinion. That is now

being prepared and will be brought forth, I think, in large part and

made public prior to the President making his September 15 analysis.

That report we put together, which was adopted by the appropriators,

the bill we had here, required the President to report to the Congress

on or before July 15. I believed it was very important for colleagues

to have a current analysis by the President, drawing upon the CENTCOM

Commander, Admiral Fallon, drawing upon General Petraeus and other

elements of the administration, to provide the Congress with a set of

facts so, on the assumption we leave here early in August on a recess,

we have a current analysis provided by the executive branch.

That report will be forthcoming. I think it is imminent. I happen to

know the dates--I think we do--but I am not at liberty to divulge them

tonight.

That report will also analyze the benchmarks, which benchmarks we

recited in that bill which was voted on by this Chamber, or adopted by

over 50 votes. We had to have a 60-vote margin. We couldn't make the 60

but we made it over 50. They will talk about each of the benchmarks and

whether the Iraqi Government has made them and, if they have not, what

the administration has done to try to encourage the Government to meet

those benchmarks.

At this point in time there is a lot of conscientious work going on

directed at the September timeframe when reports by General Jones and

his group will come forth, the President will make another report, I am

hopeful that the intelligence components of our Government will have an

upgraded National Intelligence Estimate--so much is to be learned, when

all this information is brought to the attention of the American public

and to the Congress in the first weeks of September.

It is my urging that colleagues at this time in the debate on this

bill, the annual authorization bill, try not to preempt and prejudge

how this information will be formulated and given to the American

public early in September.

I will close with a bit of a personal story. In 1951, 1952, I was

privileged to serve in the United States Marine Corps. I was with a

squadron of fighter bombers in old, cold Korea during that winter. I

was a ground officer, a staff officer. I don't claim any fame

whatsoever. I was doing my duty. But I watched those aviators as they

would take off every day. I had occasion, because of my duties, to go

up to visit the infantry and watch them.

At the same time, in the fall of 1951-1952, there was sort of a

conference going on, largely in Panmunjon and elsewhere, to try to

bring about peace and resolve that conflict. I remember these

individuals who had to go out in harm's way each day, many of them, and

said: I am wondering if I am going to be the last soldier, marine, or

airman to take the last bullet because next time we may wake up and

they have resolved this problem.

It dawned on them, but they went on and performed their duties. I say

there is some parallel to this situation. Were the Senate to adopt this

piece of work--about which I say to my colleagues, you have worked hard

on, your hearts are in it--it would send a signal that what the

soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines are doing today, carrying out

the orders of the Commander in Chief, it would put in question that

strategy. Their minds would go through that same thought: Well, if they

are going to change it, why don't we change it right away? Because I

don't want to be the last soldier to take the last bullet, if we are

going to change this strategy and this strategy is not achieving the

goals that were laid down.

It has the possibility of bringing about a great concern of those

young people, so valiantly fighting and giving life and limb to carry

out the orders of the President.

I think we have to pause, reflect on what we say and what we do as we

are working on this bill. It seems to me the President is Commander in

Chief and has made a decision. He is within, I think, 48 hours going to

release this report and speak to the Nation. Practically speaking, this

amendment I presume will not be brought up--I know as a fact--prior to

his statement. But it seems to me we ought to listen carefully to what

he has to say and his resolve as to what strategy we should be

following in the ensuing days and weeks to come. I translate that into

the minds of these young people fighting this fight and their families

here at home, so worried, understandably, about the welfare of their

loved ones.

I say to my colleagues, have you looked at the intelligence? I have

taken it upon myself to go out to the various entities of the

intelligence part of our community and specifically asked them about

what they think the consequences would be if there were a change to

this strategy. I am not at liberty to give their responses but I urge

you to access on your own initiative that information and reflect upon

it as you move forward and you endeavor to persuade other colleagues to

join you in this endeavor.

Mr. President, I thank you for the opportunity to come tonight to

express my views to good friends, friends who worked with me and did

work with me on that piece of legislation which eventually became a

part of the appropriations bill and is now the law of the land. That is

the legislation that requires the President in 48 hours to make a

report to the Nation and to the Congress and to lay down what his

intentions are for the weeks to come, until he gives his next report on

September 15.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I have had the privilege of serving in

this body for 29 years. I have never met a finer gentleman than my

colleague from Tennessee. I thank you for your gracious reference to

this humble Senator.

I simply say that this has been a constructive debate. We have an

honest difference of opinion. But I would urge that perhaps you check

into some of the analysis that has been performed in certain segments

of the Government about the current operations and how the benchmarks,

so to speak--or maybe I withdraw those words--the points of strategy

that are in the Iraq Study Group will or will not adopt.

I would simply say the obvious to my colleagues, that that report of

the Iraq Study Group is still on the President's desk. I do not think

he requires the need of the Senate to tell him what is in it. He knows.

He looked at it, I have been given that assurance, very carefully

before he devised his January 10 strategy.

The concern, the greatest concern I have is sort of sending out a

signal we have throughout, that this strategy would be working better

than this current strategy. I frankly felt that and expressed that on

January 10. But I have to accept the fact that he is the Commander in

Chief. He made the decision. He decided not, at this time, to implement

the framework of the Baker-Hamilton report but to go ahead with the

surge.

I am hesitant to criticize him now. I criticized pretty heavily, if

you look at the Congressional Record, in January. I urged in several

speeches that more of this Iraq Study Group concept be incorporated in

the surge strategy. But having done that, I feel obligated now to

support the President because he is committed to follow the law of the

land as originated in this Chamber in a bill which I sponsored, and I

believe my distinguished colleague from Tennessee did vote for. That

bill, almost in its entirety, was incorporated into the appropriations

bill by the conference of the House and the Senate, and it is the law

of the land.

I hope the report that will be forthcoming in 48 hours reflects the

seriousness of how the President approached the mandates of the

Congress: Report to us on July 15. I have every reason he will do a

report no later than September 15. At that time, he will have the

benefit of a surge which is now, as envisioned, fully staffed and

implemented by our complement of soldiers, together with such other

Iraqi complements and perhaps some coalition forces, and we will then

have been shown, did the surge work.

I, frankly, think the surge, if allowed to continue in the September

timeframe, will have achieved a measure of what they set out to do. But

the corollary obligation of the Iraqi Government to accept an improved

security situation in Baghdad, created by the sacrifice of soldiers,

sailors, and airmen, and marines in the surge, and the Iraqi fighters

with them, they will not have taken advantage of what was achieved by

that enormous sacrifice. That is my great concern. I hope I am wrong.

But in the time that remains, I am doubtful the concept that greater

security in the Baghdad region will translate into greater activity and

accomplishments by the Iraqi Government.

While there may be some military success, I don't see the signs now

of the success that was anticipated by the Iraqi Government.

I close by saying I thank you for the opportunity. I commend you for

your hard work and what you believe in. That is important in this

institution, your own personal involvement and will to fight for what

you believe. But I do urge you to take a look at what the intelligence

community is looking at, determine the current military analysis. I say

to my colleague from Colorado, indeed, there were a number of

witnesses, professional retired witnesses with military experience that

contributed to this. But again, they were looking at a situation and a

factual basis that has substantially changed. I say to my colleagues,

look at the intelligence, get some military analysis, and then think

through carefully if the President has this on his desk still, it is

there, do we need to pass a bill in the Senate and send a signal that

would begin to engender some doubt in what we are doing now as being

the best course of action and the risks associated with the men and

women trying to carry forward and respond to the orders of the

Commander in Chief. That is my fervent plea to you.

I yield the floor.