Mr. President, it continues to be my hope that there

will be a consensus reached among Senators as to how to move forward in

Iraq. This is indispensable if there is to be an accommodation between

the President and Congress.

I had hoped to make a floor statement on Iraq during the Senate's

consideration of the DoD authorization bill, but the majority leader

took that bill off the floor after there was only consideration of the

Levin-Reed amendment. That action deprived the Senate of an opportunity

to consider the Warner-Lugar and Salazar-Alexander amendments and

perhaps other amendments which might have secured the requisite 60

votes to structure a new U.S. policy for Iraq.

When a tally is made of the Senators who have voted for or

cosponsored legislation aimed at altering or reevaluating U.S. policy

in Iraq, the total is 62. When Senators are added who have made public

statements critical of the President's policy, the number could

possibly reach or exceed two-thirds of the Senate membership.

A July 2007 vote, had it been successful, would have had no binding

effect since the President already had sufficient funding to continue

until September 30 and would need additional funding only in the next

fiscal year, 2008, beginning October 1.

The time for Congress to have asserted its constitutional power of

the purse to withhold funding was this spring during consideration of

supplemental funding for approximately $120 billion. On April 26, 2007,

following a vote in the House of Representatives of 218-208, the Senate

passed the conference report to H.R. 1591, the fiscal year 2007 Troop

Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability

Appropriations Act on a vote of 51-46. However, because this bill

contained target dates for withdrawal, on May 1, 2007, the President

vetoed the bill.

After the House failed to gather the two-thirds majority required to

override the President's veto, on May 24, 2007, the Congress approved a

bill, H.R. 2206, which did not include targeted dates for withdrawal

and which was subsequently signed into law by President Bush on May 25,

2007, Public Law 110-28.

When the Levin-Reed amendment was considered, it was a forgone

conclusion that there were not anywhere near 60 votes to invoke

cloture, let alone the 67 votes needed to override a veto. With the

removal of the bill from the floor, the Senate was prevented from

considering alternatives to the Levin-Reed proposal, and denied the

opportunity to have a vote or votes to demonstrate dissatisfaction with

the President's policy.

This action deprived the Senate of an opportunity to craft a

compromise around Warner-Lugar or Salazar-Alexander to get the 60 votes

and put the president squarely on notice that funding in September was

unlikely unless the President's policy showed significant progress.

Perhaps the Levin-Reed proponents would have rejected the other

amendments as being insufficiently forceful, but Senators never know

for sure how they will ultimately vote until there is floor debate,

careful analysis, informal discussions on the floor and corridors, and

talk in the cloakroom. Much of the Senate's productive work occurs

during quorum calls when Members hassle and jawbone on the issues.

Since so many Senators demonstratively want a change, it was at least

worth a try in daylight compared to the futile all-nighter.

Of particular interest to me were the provisions of the Warner-Lugar

proposal on having a contingency plan and redefining the mission. For

three decades, Senators Lugar and Warner have served on the Foreign

Relations Committee and Armed Services Committee, respectively, with

both rising to chairman. Their combined tenures in the Senate are more

than 60 years. To say these colleagues bring a significant amount of

thought and authority to this debate is an understatement.

Regrettably, we did not have the opportunity to debate and vote on

their proposal.

The Warner/Lugar amendment is an attempt to ensure that the U.S. is

prepared to implement changes to U.S. policy following the September

report, to be provided by General Petaeus and Ambassador Crocker, on

the progress

of the President's current strategy in Iraq.

The Warner-Lugar amendment recognizes that conditions in Iraq have

changed considerably since the initial invasion to topple Saddam

Hussein's regime and States that the joint resolution passed by

Congress in 2002 to authorize ``the use of the Armed Forces of the

United States against Iraq'' requires ``review and revision.''

In addition, the amendment calls for enhanced U.S. diplomatic efforts

to work with the Government of Iraq to establish a consistent

diplomatic forum related to Iraq that is open to all parties in the

Middle East. Because of the potential for the Warner-Lugar amendment to

provide a basis for a Senate consensus, I am cosponsoring this

amendment.

As explained on the floor by Senator Lugar on July 13, 2007:

This type of planning and diplomatic engagement should be occurring

today. I believe a vote confirming this could have led the President to

do that.

Prior to the 2002 U.S. invasion of Iraq, I publicly stated my

concerns about the potential fallout from such an action. On February

13, 2002, I took to the Senate floor to express my belief that there

should be a comprehensive analysis of the threat posed by Saddam

Hussein and what an invasion would amount to in terms of U.S.

casualties:

As I stated on the Senate floor on December 6, 2006:

Eight months after my February 13 statement, on October 7, 2002, I

returned to the floor to express my concerns over the lack of a

comprehensive plan for Iraq:

Five years later, we are in the midst of a highly controversial troop

surge in Iraq.

Following the announcement of the President's plan to surge, I met

with President Bush on two occasions. Following these meetings I told

the President directly that I could not support a troop surge. I also

had extensive discussions on the President's plan with the highest

ranking members of his national security team including Secretary of

State Condoleezza Rice, National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley and

Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte.

I met with GEN David Petraeus on January 31, 2007, who has been

confirmed as the United States' top commander in Iraq. Following these

meetings, I was not convinced the administration possessed a

comprehensive plan to deal with the situation in Iraq and too many

uncertainties persisted to warrant my support for a surge of U.S.

personnel.

On February 5, 2007, I spoke on the Senate floor regarding the surge:

At this time, I have not seen a plan that sufficiently addresses a

strategy for victory in Iraq. Various reports indicate military

advisers differ on the impact of an increased troop level in Iraq. It

is not clear what the surge will ultimately accomplish and if it will

be successful. Nonetheless, there are indicators that mandate we create

contingency plans and consider other options. The Iraqi Government has

failed to deliver on prior pledges which makes me hesitant to think

they have the ability to deliver on new ones. According to many

measurements, progress in Iraq has been poor and the situation is

deteriorating. What is clear is that any solution will necessarily

include political compromises by Iraq's various sects as well as an

emphasis on a regional dialogue--something for which the Iraq Study

Group advocated.

Another proposal offered by Senators Salazar and Alexander would have

used the work of the Iraq Study Group, which was led by former

Secretary of State James Baker and former Representative Lee Hamilton,

as a guide for our policy in Iraq. This legislation garnered bipartisan

support including five Republicans and seven Democrats.

The amendment states that U.S. support should be conditioned on the

Government of Iraq's political will and substantial progress towards

national reconciliation, revision of de baathification laws, equitable

sharing of Iraqi oil revenues, free and fair provincial elections and

mechanisms to ensure the rights of woman and minorities.

Like the Warner-Lugar proposal, this amendment calls for enhanced

diplomatic efforts. Specifically, the measure calls for a new

``Diplomatic Offensive'' to deal with the problems in Iraq and the

region; energize other countries to support reconciliation in Iraq;

engage directly with the Governments of Iran and Syria to obtain their

commitment to constructive policies towards Iraq and the region,

encourage the holding of a conference in Baghdad of neighboring

countries and convey to the Iraqi Government that continued American

support is contingent upon substantial progress toward and assist in

the achievement of the milestones.

Because of the potential for the Salazar-Alexander amendment to

provide a basis for a Senate consensus, I am cosponsoring this

amendment. There is no inconsistency in cosponsoring both Warner-Lugar

and Salazar-Alexander. They complement each other.

Both the Warner-Lugar and Salazar-Alexander proposals address the

issue of diplomacy in the region. I have consistently urged the

administration to work with Iraq's neighbors, including Iran and Syria,

in order to develop cooperative stabilization efforts. To that end, I

have met with President Bashar Assad of Syria. I have met with Iran's

Ambassadors to the United Nations, Seyed Muhammed Hadi Nejad Hosseinian

and Muhammad Javad Zarif, on four occasions in New York and Washington,

DC. Additionally, I was the only Member of Congress to attend the

September 2006 address by former President Khatami at the National

Cathedral.

During my meetings with Iranian officials, I developed a proposal for

an exchange of visits by Members of Congress to Iran and Iranian

parliamentarians to the United States to try to open dialogue between

our two countries. In January 2004, my efforts to foster such a

dialogue were successful. There was a tentative agreement for U.S.

Members of Congress to meet with Iranian parliamentarians in Geneva.

Regrettably, this parliamentary exchange never came to fruition.

In an effort to jumpstart this exchange, on May 3, 2007, I sent a

letter, with support from Senators Biden, Hagel and Dodd and

Representatives Lantos, English, Moran, Gilchrest and Meeks, to the

Speaker of Iran's Parliament suggesting we convene a meeting of U.S.

and Iranian parliamentarians.

I have amplified my strong belief that dialogue with nations such as

Iran and Syria is necessary in an extensive Senate speech on June 16,

2006 and most recently in an essay ``Dialogue

With Adversaries'' published in the winter edition of The Washington

Quarterly. While we can't be sure that dialogue will succeed, we can be

sure that without dialogue there will be failure.

I am not alone in calling for enhanced dialogue with U.S.

adversaries. Of the many suggestions gleaned from the Baker-Hamilton

commission, one passage crystallizes their conclusion:

However, the President's plan places a disproportionate emphasis on

military force while neglecting the needed diplomacy and political

efforts.

Having served in the Senate for 26 years, holding the chairmanship of

the Intelligence Committee and senior positions on the Appropriations

subcommittees on Defense and Foreign Operations, I am aware of what

challenges nations like Iran and Syria pose to the United States. A

world in which Iran seeks nuclear weapons and supports terrorist groups

such as Hezbollah is not a safe world. A world in which Syria provides

refuge for Hamas and Hezbollah and permits its territory to be used as

a conduit for terrorism is counterproductive to peace and stability. I

expressed my views on the danger the connectivity between Iran, Syria

and Hezbollah poses to peace and security in an August 2, 2006, floor

statement.

Today, however, Americans are not dying from nuclear weapons or from

direct attacks by Hamas and Hezbollah. Many are dying policing a civil

conflict.

President Assad, during our December 2006 meeting in Damascus,

suggested that a conference with regional players and the United States

would be beneficial to addressing the issues confronting Iraq. On

January 22, 2007, I conveyed this proposal and my support for it to

Secretary Rice in a meeting in her office at the State Department. One

month later, on February 27, 2007, during her testimony before the

Senate Appropriations Committee, Secretary Rice announced such a

proposal:

Very little has happened to effectuate that ``new diplomatic

initiative.'' The Iraq Study Group clearly states:

It would have been my hope that these types of meetings would have

occurred frequently in the intervening months. However, I am pleased

that the President has recently indicated a commitment to ramp up

diplomatic efforts in the region.

Had there been Senate consideration and debate on the Warner-Lugar

and Salazar-Alexander proposals, there would have been an opportunity

for more senators to explicitly put the President on notice that

funding beyond September was in jeopardy without significant

improvement.

I think this time would have also allowed Members to share concerns

about the overall struggle to combat terrorism. While considering U.S.

policy in Iraq, it is important we do not neglect other threats to U.S.

security.

Waziristan is a semi-autonomous tribal region in Pakistan's

mountainous Northwest Frontier province that shares a porous border

with Afghanistan. It is populated primarily by ethnic Pashtuns who do

not recognize the authority of President Musharrafs government in

Islamabad. Many of the Taliban who fled Afghanistan in 2001 found safe

haven in Waziristan with their Pashtun brethren.

Some accounts, including the 9/11 Commission report, indicate

Pakistan's willingness to assist the United States. Following direct

U.S. engagement with Pakistan after the September 11 attacks, the 9/11

Commission report stated that, ``Secretary of State Powell announced at

the beginning of an NSC meeting that Pakistani President Musharraf had

agreed to every U.S. request for support in the war on terrorism.''

However, that was 6 years ago. According to the Congressional

Research Service, CRS, ``Despite clear successes in disrupting al-Qaida

and affiliated networks in Pakistan since 2001, there are increasing

signs that anti-U.S. terrorists are now benefiting from what some

analysts call a Pakistani policy of appeasement in western tribal areas

near the Afghan border.''

GEN Pervez Musharraf took a largely hands-off approach to the region

after signing a truce with tribal leaders in September 2006. The truce

came after 4 years of unsuccessful army operations into the region in

which the government forces suffered heavy casualties and achieved

little. Some accounts indicate this policy has enhanced al-Qaida's

abilities: ``By seeking accommodation with pro-Taliban leaders in these

areas, the Musharraf government appears to have inadvertently allowed

foreign (largely Arab) militants to obtain safe haven from which they

can plot and train for terrorist attacks against U.S. and other Western

targets.''

Assistant Secretary of State Richard A. Boucher confirmed that al-

Qaida thrived under the truce between the tribal leaders and General

Musharraf: ``they were able to operate, meet, plan, recruit, and obtain

financing in more comfort in the tribal areas than previously.''

Bruce Riedel, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, who

served for 29 years with the CIA and held various positions such as

Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Near East

Affairs at the National Security Council, 1997-2002, stated in his May/

June 2007 essay in Foreign Affairs:

Riedel further suggests that:

Since September 11, 2001, the United States has provided Pakistan

with roughly $9 billion in aid. According to the Congressional Research

Service, CRS:

As Congress considers administration's request for an additional $785

million for fiscal year 2008, it is incumbent upon us to evaluate our

relationship with them and their performance in the war on terror.

Waziristan provides al-Qaida with much of what it lost in Afghanistan

after September 11, 2001: safe haven; territory to train and base

operations in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and beyond; and a populace

sympathetic to their aims. Failing to recognize and address the

situation in Waziristan risks negating the costly advances made in

Afghanistan over the past 6 years and jeopardizes U.S. security.

As the Senate continues to deliberate, it is my hope that we will

return to the proposals offered by Senators Warner, Lugar, Salazar and

Alexander. These should have been debated in great length as they make

more

sense in the context of not infringing on the President's authority as

Commander in Chief. Rather, these bipartisan efforts would allow the

President to fulfill a congressional requirement that he ought to be

considering and planning for the next steps.

The Senate is known as the most deliberative body in the world.

Regrettably, the Senate was not permitted the opportunity to

demonstrate this as we did not debate the various options before us.

As I stated on the Senate floor on March 14, 2007, during a similar

debate on whether to continue with the status quo in Iraq or to

legislate a date certain for withdraw:

In a democracy, the voters ultimately decide U.S. policy. As detailed

in Federalist No. 57, elected representatives must be responsive to the

people:

If this is not understood and reflected by elected representatives,

the framers placed elections into the system to remind them. Federalist

No. 57 further states:

This was the case last November when the electorate spoke loudly

disagreeing with United States policy in Iraq. As I stated on March 14,

2007:

I am making this extensive floor statement at this time to put the

administration on notice of my reservations on supporting open-ended

appropriations for the Iraq war in September. This statement further

urges the majority leader to structure the Senate debate in September

to consider the Warner-Lugar amendment, the Salazar-Alexander

amendment, and other possible amendments, as well as the Levin-Reed

amendment, to give the Senate the full range of alternatives to provide

the basis for 60 or more votes to change U.S. policy in Iraq.