Mr. President, I thank my good friend, the Senator from

Minnesota, for her kind remarks about the people who have served.

I emphasize my support for the resolution--actually, the

resolutions--that were so painstakingly put together by a number of

senior Senators from both sides of the aisle, only to be denied a full

debate and an open vote through the procedural motions yesterday

evening.

Winston Churchill once wrote about watching good ideas getting

nibbled to death by ducks. Last night, we saw this phenomenon in

action. We had before the Senate a measure that would allow this

Congress to speak clearly of concerns regarding the woeful lack of

leadership by the President on an issue that affects our Nation and our

military people such as no other. And the other side--including some

Senators who had helped to draft the resolutions and had their names on

it--punted the ball down field rather than giving the people of this

country the debate they not only need but are calling for in every

opinion poll.

Quite simply, there is no way, other than through a strong resolution

or restrictive language in an appropriations bill, for this Senate to

communicate to this administration that its so-called new strategy is

lacking in the most crucial elements that might actually lead to a

solution in Iraq. This is not a strategy. It is a one-dimensional

tactical adjustment that avoids the elements of a true overarching

national strategy. It relies too heavily on our military, while

ignoring the overwhelming advice of those with long experience in this

region that we must pursue robust diplomacy in order to bring this

misguided effort to a conclusion.

There have been allegations by those on the other side that we who

take this position are not supporting the troops. I submit that the

best way to support the troops would be for this administration to

outline and pursue a comprehensive strategy that includes the

diplomatic measures that will be essential to ending our involvement.

Mr. President, a reminder: During the Vietnam war our military killed

more than a million enemy soldiers--enemy soldiers--by official count

of the present Hanoi Government. Actually, that count is 1.4 million

enemy soldiers. But without a clear strategy and without adept

diplomacy, that simply was not enough. From the very beginning in Iraq,

this administration has consciously neglected its proper diplomatic

duties. It has attempted to frame the debate over Iraq's future as one

of military action on the one hand and a set of vague guidelines to the

Iraqi Government on the other, as if the rest of the region were

somehow not crucial to the eventual outcome. This, in and of itself, is

a recipe for continued violence and for American failure in Iraq.

It is widely known that the Iraqi Government lacks the power to

control the myriad of factions that are causing chaos. The latest

National Intelligence Estimate not only confirms this, it indicates

that these factions have been broken into so many different components

that it is not even fair to call this problem one of sectarian violence

any longer. The administration knows this. Most of the administration's

strongest supporters know this. Their reaction has been to increase the

pressure on an impotent government and to go to the well, again and

again, asking for even greater sacrifices from the military, while

ignoring their most basic responsibility, which is to put together a

clear diplomatic effort that will bring full context to the issues that

face us and, in short order, end our involvement. This is not

supporting the troops. This is misusing the troops.

With respect to the troops, I would caution any political leader who

claims to speak on behalf of the political views of our men and women

in uniform. Our military people are largely a mirror of our society,

particularly in the enlisted ranks, and their political views are as

diverse as our own.

As one example, last year, a survey of those in Iraq indicated that

more than 70 percent believed that the United States should exit Iraq

within a year. That was a year ago. As I have said before, it is

inverted logic to claim we should continue to fight this war on behalf

of the troops. The fact is, they are fighting this war on behalf of the

political process. They deserve political leadership that is

knowledgeable and that proceeds from an assumption that our national

goals are equal to the sacrifices we are asking them to make.

For the last 5 years, from before this invasion, this administration

and its supporters have refused to admit the most fundamental truth of

the entire war. It is a truth that was echoed over and over again last

month by expert

witnesses during more than a dozen hearings before the Foreign

Relations Committee and the Committee on Armed Services, both of which

I am privileged to serve upon. It is a truth that this administration

and the architects of this war too often refuse to recognize, perhaps

because they fear it might potentially embarrass them in the eyes of

history.

The unavoidable truth is that this war will never be brought to a

proper conclusion without the active participation of the other

countries in the region--all of them.

We hear stories of the Saudis helping the Sunni insurgency. We are

told by this administration Iran is equipping and training portions of

the Shia militias. We hear Turkey and Iran are quietly cooperating to

limit the influence of Kurds. We hear Syria is the favorite starting

point for many al-Qaida guerillas who infiltrate into Al Anbar

Province. We know the entire region is being flooded with refugees from

the violence in Iraq, including, especially, Jordan and Syria.

None of this is surprising. Indeed, all of it was predictable and

predicted, even before the invasion of Iraq. I recall many of the

speeches by the Presiding Officer on those points. What is truly

surprising and unsettling is that this administration has not developed

an overt diplomatic effort to bring order out of this chaos in a way

that might allow us to dramatically decrease our presence in Iraq and,

at the same time, increase the stability of the region, increase our

ability to fight terrorism, and allow us to address strategic

challenges elsewhere in the world.

These countries have historic, political, and cultural ties to Iraq.

They are going to be involved in Iraq's affairs in the future, long

after the United States departs the region. It is in our national

interests and, as a great nation, it is our obligation to take the lead

in causing each of these countries to deal responsibly with Iraq's

chaos and with its future. We did exactly this in 2001, after the

invasion of Afghanistan, bringing the major players to the table,

including India, Pakistan, and Iran, and we should do so now.

This approach would have additional benefits beyond Iraq. It would

begin to loosen the unnatural alliance between Iran and Syria which

could, in turn, increase the potential for greater stability in

Lebanon, Israel, and the surrounding territories. It would begin to

bring countries such as Iran to a proper role of responsibility inside

the international community.

On this point, I cite an important historical reference. In 1971,

China, similar to Iran today, was considered a rogue Nation. China, in

those days, was already a nuclear power. It had an American war on its

borders in Vietnam, a war it was actively assisting. We, the United

States, took the initiative, aggressively opening China through

diplomatic energy and, over time, helped to bring China into the

international community. We should not be afraid of taking similar

actions with Iran and also, by the way, with Syria.

The bottom line of all this is this administration and its supporters

must understand the realities that are causing us as a Congress to

finally say ``enough is enough;'' that the time has come for a new

approach; that the answer in Iraq and to our fight against

international terrorism and to our diminished posture around the world

is for us to show not only our prowess on the battlefield but also our

leadership in the diplomatic arena; that, indeed, we have an obligation

to the men and women who have served so selflessly on our behalf, to

match their proficiency and their loyalties with the kind of thoughtful

leadership that will bring this effort to a proper conclusion.

If there were other ways to convince this administration to change

its ineffective one-dimensional approach to the situation in Iraq, I

would welcome them, but after 5 years of political disarray, I do not

believe it is so. I support this resolution as a first step in

reclaiming America's strategic purpose and international reputation. I

urge my fellow Senators to do the same.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BOND. MO Mr. President, I came to the Senate to talk about the loss

of a great soldier and dear friend of mine, but before I do that, I

will comment on a few things we have heard discussed this morning.

First, our efforts on this side are to get an opportunity to debate

and vote on the Gregg amendment. The Gregg amendment, very simply

stated--I don't have the full text in front of me--supports our troops.

It says we should support our troops and not cut off funding. That is a

valid viewpoint. We are at war. Traditionally, this Senate has

supported our troops. That used to be the absolute baseline which

everyone accepted. The main resolution that has been referred to, I

fear, goes in the wrong direction.

We, in time of war, ought to debate, and we will debate fully, and

everyone will have an opportunity to express their views--but I think

it is very important we not only have an opportunity to vote on the two

resolutions which have been discussed but also to vote on the Gregg

amendment. As soon as we can get agreement to do that, I am confident

the leaders can move forward.

I have also heard in the Senate a number of comments from Members who

do not support a cut-and-run policy. I have addressed previously the

disaster of an immediate withdrawal from Iraq. In open testimony, the

intelligence community--the Director of National Intelligence--the

Director of CIA, the Director of Military Intelligence, said chaos

would reign in Iraq if we withdrew precipitously. It would fall into

chaos. The primary beneficiary of that chaos would be al-Qaida. Osama

bin Laden and Al-Jazeera have said how important it was for them to

establish Iraq as their main base of operations.

Second, there would be chaos and slaughter of innocent civilians,

both Shia and Sunni. There would be a tremendous increase in the deaths

of civilians. But even more frightening, the neighboring states would

likely be brought in. The Sunni states would likely come to the aid of

their Sunni brethren, and if that had not already triggered the

entrance of Iran into it on behalf of the Shia, it surely would, and we

could potentially be facing a major Middle East conflict with many

states involved.

I have heard it said that the Levin-Warner resolution asks we chart a

new direction. We have charted a new direction. And the way forward is

a new direction. The President has the agreement of Prime Minister al-

Maliki and the Shia, Sunni, and Kurdish government of Iraq that they

will take control and they will assume responsibility. They need help

in training particularly their police, but they will take control. That

is where we need to be.

We can help pick off the al-Qaida and the other committed

international terrorists, the radical Islamists. But we need them to

resolve this civil strife between Shia and Sunni, and do so in a fair

way, including the Kurds and the Sunnis.

This happens to be the military plan the Baker-Hamilton group

supported. They said to enable the Iraqi security, military, and police

to take over, we should send in some troops temporarily. That is what

the President is doing, adding another 21,000 to support them.

Is this going to work? Well, again, with the release of the National

Intelligence Estimate on Iraq and the open testimony of the leaders of

the intelligence community, they said it is an open question. It is a

tough decision. But it is the best option we have.

Yes, they think there is a chance it will work. And the Iraqi

Government knows this is their last best chance. They had best make it

work. And they best get their police trained and their military

trained.

Many people have called for bringing in other nations in the Middle

East. That is what the President and Secretary Rice have done, to bring

in other nations that will help rebuild the Sunni areas and help

provide support to the Iraqis.

There are some people who say we should not have an unlimited

commitment. Well, the President has told not only this Nation but Prime

Minister al-Maliki there is a time deadline. We are committed to them

but not indefinitely. And if they do not take advantage of this

opportunity, it will be their country which will fall into chaos

and be the battleground, perhaps embroiling the entire region, but

certainly wiping out and causing great death and destruction in their

own country. So we do have a new direction.

Now, some are pushing a resolution that challenges the President's

implementation of the plan. We are trying to be generals and say

General Petraeus--whom we just confirmed unanimously because he is such

a great general, who said we should have those 21,000 troops--they are

challenging his military judgment in the implementation of the plan.

I know many of my colleagues have followed military policy for many

years, but I do not think we in this body can determine for the

generals what the proper level of troop commitments is. They are the

ones who take responsibility for the lives of their men and women. To

send a message by adopting a resolution that says we oppose the

President's plan, implementation of his plan, is not going to change

sending more American troops there.

But it will tell al-Qaida: Good news, boys, the Congress is opposing

the President. Our chances look better to take over the country.

And it will send a message to friendly countries that are trying to

help the Iraqis telling them: Sorry guys, we are not interested in

winning this, so you probably would not want to waste your effort

helping us.

Finally, what does it send as a message to our troops: We do not

support the military plan they are being asked to carry out, the men

and women who are risking their lives? Does that make any sense? I fear

not.

I hope we can reject very soundly the Levin-Warner amendment and

adopt the Gregg amendment and also the McCain amendment.