Mr. President, first of all, I thank the

senior Senator from Virginia for his considerable work in drafting this

resolution and working over the weekend with us and our staffs, who

worked very closely together to prepare this Iraq resolution.

I think it is important to say as well that I respect the work done

by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee today in considering the

resolution submitted by, supported by their chairman, the distinguished

Senator from Delaware, Mr. Biden. I have a great deal of respect for

Senator Biden's work.

This is an area where there can be more than one idea about how to

approach something, but at the end of the day, it is going to be

important to have a resolution that has broad bipartisan support.

I also appreciate the work of Senator Collins, who, as our colleague,

has worked very closely on this resolution together with her staff to

be able to submit it today in this fashion by putting it not only into

the Record but on the floor so it can become part of the business of

the Senate.

There will be some who would say: Why is there a need for a second

resolution? Well, this resolution offers a new set of ideas, more

broadly worded, and in some cases, clearly, more likely to be

bipartisan for Senators to consider. Given the fact that the Senate

Foreign Relations Committee resolution came out on largely a partisan

vote, we think this resolution, because it is picking up bipartisan

support, will be, in terms of content and support, consistent with an

effort to bring about a bipartisan resolution with broad support.

The recommendations of the Iraq Study Group have not been followed to

any significant extent to date. In some respects, they have been almost

on a skyhook for future consideration. It was our feeling that many of

these recommendations of the Baker-Hamilton study group should be

included in a resolution, and we included many of those recommendations

in the body of our resolution.

We also worked very carefully to avoid political rhetoric or any kind

of rhetoric that threatens the real objective. The real objective of

this resolution is to stress to the White House that we disagree with

the approach this plan takes by putting more men and women in our

uniform in harm's way to fight, to do battle, to overcome the sectarian

violence and the possible civil war of the Sunnis and the Shias and

various subgroups within those religious and political elements. We

also believed it was important to stress benchmarks and to empower the

Prime Minister and the Iraqi Government to be able to meet certain

objectives, certain goals, and to be able to deliver.

At the end of the day, we think it is important to send a strong but

unified message to the White House and Iraq. The more support the

resolution receives in the Senate, the stronger our message will be. So

tonight I am very pleased and am certainly proud to be here with my

colleagues to say that at the end of the day, we think the strength of

this resolution to uphold our responsibility will be in the best

interests of our country and our military and that our colleagues

should join together with us in opposition to the surge of U.S. troops

to be placed in Baghdad. It is the responsibility of the Iraqi

Government and the Iraqi military to overcome the battles between

sectarian groups within their own country and to seek less of a

military resolution and certainly more of a political resolution to the

problems that exist at the present time.

With that, let me say that I would like to see our unanimous consent

be modified to include up to 10 minutes for Senator Salazar from

Colorado to speak on the resolution afterward, if there is no

objection.