Mr. President, I rise today to talk about Iraq and Iraq-

related issues. I had the opportunity this past weekend and the

previous weekend to spend a good deal of time with the Missouri

National Guard men and women in Missouri who do a great job in

providing civil response to tremendous problems, whether it is floods

or tornadoes or, in some instances, an ice storm that was devastating.

Many of them have been to Iraq and Afghanistan and are going back, and

they are proud of what they do. They know they are doing the job the

military was assigned to do, and they are proud of it and we should

support them.

Mr. President, it is noteworthy that I mention again my colleague and

National Guard Caucus Cochair Senator Pat Leahy and I will reintroduce

the National Defense Enhancement and National Guard Empowerment Act

later today.

This comprehensive legislation recognizes the paramount contributions

that our citizen soldiers and airmen have made not only in Iraq and

Afghanistan, but all over the globe and particularly here at home.

The bill provides four central planks: the elevation of the Guard

chief to the rank of general, a seat for the chief of the Guard Bureau

on the Joint Chiefs of Staff; mandates that the Deputy NorthCom

position be for an eligible National Guard officer; and it allows for

the National Guard Bureau to identify and validate equipment

requirements, particularly those unique to the Guard's homeland

missions.

When we went after the terrorists in Afghanistan, the Guard was

there. When we needed to establish order and stability in Iraq, the

Guard was there. When Hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated the Gulf

Coast, the Guard was there. When a natural or man-made disaster

strikes, the Governors call on the Guard, and the Guard is there. The

next time America needs military forces overseas, the Guard will be

there.

Unfortunately, when the Pentagon makes key decisions that impact the

Guard, the Guard is still not there.

The need to empower the National Guard is not only still there but

grows each day. We need to give the Guard more bureaucratic muscle, so

that the force will not be continually pushed around in policy and

budget debates within the Pentagon.

Time and time again, the National Guard has had to rely on the

Congress, not its total force partners in the active duty, to provide

and equip fully the resources it needs to fulfill its missions.

Our legislation will end this nonsense. We will put the National

Guard on an equal footing with other decision makers responsible for

national security and the transformation of the military forces.

As GEN Steve Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau put it, they

need to be ``in the huddle'' at the Pentagon if they are to be in the

game. This will ensure that the next time the 430,000 National Guard

citizen-soldiers and airmen of the Guard are discussed at the senior

levels of the Pentagon, the Guard will be there.

Additionally, I remind my colleagues that the Fiscal Year 2007

Military Construction and Quality of Life Appropriations bill was not

passed into law. As a result, approximately $17 billion in new

construction and BRAC projects authorized by the Congress in 2007

cannot proceed.

The military service chiefs have urged the Congress to pass this

legislation

The projects funded by the Fiscal Year 2007 MILCON bill are necessary

to sustain readiness and quality of life for U.S. service personnel. I

also ask that letter from the Navy and Army Secretaries and Service

Chiefs that raise concern about the risk by operating under a

continuing resolution be printed in the Record.

I ask unanimous consent that letters in support of this legislation

be printed in the Record.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in

the Record, as follows:

Mr. President, one of the big questions that is being

discussed today is what the President's plans are in Iraq and whether

we should submit a resolution condemning the troop increases. I find it

passing strange that many of the people pushing for a resolution to say

we shouldn't send troops just adopted by a unanimous vote the

confirmation of General Petraeus, who has said he believes he can do

the job if he has the additional troops. He says the number is 21,000.

Who are we to second-guess an experienced general who knows what the

needs of his men and women in service are?

I have listened to many of the persuasive arguments on the other side

about their concerns about the Iraq war. There are some who want to cut

off completely our involvement--cut and run. They have an argument;

they make a legitimate point. I hope we have a chance to vote on it

because the intelligence community leaders from DNI to the military

intelligence head to the CIA said cutting and running now would be a

disaster resulting in chaos, in additional killing of Iraqi citizens,

and giving the entire area over to al-Qaida and probably bringing in a

region-wide conflict. So that is at

least a position that I understand how they take it, but I will fight

very hard against it.

What I don't understand is the people who say they want to do several

things: They want to see a change in policy in Iraq. They want to see

more Iraqi responsibility. They want to change the rules of engagement

so we can go after Shia death squads and there won't be any political

restrictions on it. And they want to adopt the strategy of the Baker-

Hamilton report. Many of these same people who are now urging the

adoption of a resolution said we need to send more troops. Well, when

you look at it, the President is sending some more troops for a new

strategy which involves the Iraqi leadership, Prime Minister al-Maliki,

the Shia, as well as the Sunni and Kurdish leaders. They are now

fighting without limitations on the rules of engagement. Our additional

forces will be there at the request of al-Maliki to help him stabilize

the country. This is the last best chance. This is the chance to leave

a stable Iraq which will not become a terrorist ground for al-Qaida.

Sunday, I had the opportunity to talk to Jim Baker, the lead name on

the Baker-Hamilton report. I said: Jim, is the President's surge what

you recommend militarily? He said yes. That is precisely what the

Baker-Hamilton commission recommended. He also recommended additional

diplomatic efforts. But in terms of the military effort, he said: This

is what we recommended.

Now, how do we send troops over and then think maybe we can get some

political cover back home by saying we don't really agree with it? I

don't think that does anything of real significance. There are some

things a resolution passed by this Congress expressing disapproval of

the President's plan would do, and I think they are significant and

serious.

No. 1, it would send a message to those we fight against--al-Qaida,

the Baathists, Sunni insurgents--that we are not serious; we don't

intend to support our men who are supporting the Iraqi military. It

gives them cause to fight harder and stay longer.

No. 2, it sends a message to our friends whom Secretary Rice is

trying to bring in to help rebuild the economy of Iraq and provide jobs

for unemployed young Iraqis--essential if we want to win 80 percent of

the battle against radical Islam, which is ideological. It would tell

them: you probably better not put too much money on the Iraqis because

the U.S. Congress is going to pull the plug and then it will descend

into chaos and any dollars we invest will be gone.

Third, I would ask my colleagues to think about the message it sends

to the troops who are there, to the troops who will be going there.

They are over there fighting. They are risking their lives every day.

They are willing to take on the fight because they believe it is an

important fight. They believe it is a fight we can and we must win

militarily. What message does it send to the families back home? I

think you can guess what that answer is.

I saw a very interesting article in the Washington Post on Sunday.

Robert Kagan at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and a

Transatlantic Fellow at the German Marshall Fund, has written a book.

He said:

He warns about all we are doing when we have laid out a plan and

reinforcements for the Iraqi troops. He said:

And he goes on to say that those who call for an end to the war don't

want to talk about the fact that the war in Iraq and in the region will

not end but will only grow more dangerous if and when we walk away.

As I said, our intelligence community leaders, in open testimony a

couple of weeks ago before the Senate Intelligence Committee, said if

we walk away, leaving Iraq without an army and a security force

adequate to sustain general order, peace and order in that country, not

only will innocent Iraqis be slaughtered, there will be an open

invitation for others to come in. How long can the Shias oppress the

Sunnis without having the Jordanians and the Saudis and maybe the

Egyptians come in to support them? We have already heard they would do

that, to protect the Sunnis. And if the Sunni supporters came in, it

would take about a New York minute for Iran to come in on behalf of the

Shia. What kind of conflagration would ensue? It would take a lot more

American troops to protect our ally Israel and to try to stop the

killing.

In addition, we know that al-Qaida would have a safe haven. And al-

Qaida is not mad because we are in Iraq; they just want to win in Iraq.

Muqtada al-Sadr, the No. 2 man, has been very eloquent, and he has been

backed up by his boss, Osama bin Laden, who says: We have to win. Al-

Qaida needs to restore chaos to Iraq so they will have a safe haven in

which to operate, train their suicide bombers, their jihadists, develop

means of command and control once again, perhaps get weapons of mass

destruction. Well, that is what happens if we walk away and leave Iraq

in chaos.

Back to Robert Kagan's piece:

Bob Kagan says that:

He said:

Well, Mr. President, I think that sets it up very well. I hope our

colleagues will think about that. I hope they will consider that when

they are talking about passing a resolution. It sends the wrong message

to the enemies, to our allies, and to our troops and their families at

home.

This war radical Islam has declared on us is a generational war, as

the President said. We best be laying plans to do our best to protect

our country from repeated attacks such as September 11 by al-Qaida.

That is at stake. By being in Iraq, by having good intelligence at

home, we have been fortunate to avoid another September 11 attack. If

al-Qaida had planned and regrouped, we would be much more likely to

have another.

I ask unanimous consent a copy of the article by Mr. Kagan be printed

in the Record after my remarks on Iraq.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in

the Record, as follows: