Mr. President, I join my colleague, the Senator from Texas,

in urging the Senate to think very carefully about passing what appears

to be a nonbinding resolution, but what, in fact, has dramatic

consequences.

It is true that a nonbinding resolution would not change the policy

of the President; he is the Commander in Chief. He has decided on a new

strategy after consultation with a lot of people, and that new strategy

is now being implemented in Iraq as we speak.

The Senate, last Friday, confirmed GEN David Petraeus to carry out

that policy. By the way, it seems quite incongruous we would, on the

one hand, confirm General Petraeus, pat him on the back, and say: Go do

the mission in Iraq--by the way, we disagree with the mission. That is

one of the bad messages that is sent.

I would like to talk a little bit more about the sending of messages

with the nonbinding resolutions. That is obviously what the proponents

of the resolutions would like to do. They have talked about sending a

message. Mostly they are trying to send a message to the President. Of

course, any Senator who wants to talk to the President has that

capability. We do not need to send messages to the President publicly

in areas that cause harm. We should think about the consequences of

such a message to our enemies, to our allies, and most especially to

the troops that we send in harm's way.

Think for a moment about the consequences of a message that says that

we disagree with the President's strategy, we disagree with the

mission, and we don't believe that any more troops should be involved

or that the United States should remain in Iraq beyond a very limited

period of time. The message that sends to our enemies is a devastating

one.

As General Petraeus testified before the Senate Committee on Armed

Services, war is about breaking the will of your opponent. He feared

the consequences of such a resolution which he said would not be

helpful because it would send a signal to our enemies that we don't

have the support in the United States Government necessary to break the

will of the opponent.

These terrorists well understand this is a contest of wills. Can they

outlast us? Osama bin Laden thinks we are the ``weak horse,'' as he

puts it, and he is the ``strong horse''; that we left Vietnam, that we

left Lebanon, that we left Somalia, and we will leave Iraq before the

job is done as well. And he believes that. So there is a test of wills

going on. And if the enemies come to believe they can outlast us, that

their will is stronger than ours, then it is very difficult to defeat

them in this war against terrorism.

The message it sends to our allies is we are not necessarily a

reliable ally. Certainly, to people in the neighborhood--the people in

Afghanistan, in Pakistan, and elsewhere--you can imagine they would

quickly begin to hedge their bets because of the neighborhood in which

they live. If we are going to leave, and they have to continue to live

with these bad actors, then, as before September 11, you will see them

begin to hedge their bets and provide support for, in one way or

another, terrorists who live in that neighborhood. That is against the

national security interest of the United States.

The message that is sent to our troops is perhaps the most

devastating because it says: We have sent you on a mission, and yet we

do not believe in the mission. We are putting you in harm's way. You

may, in fact, die trying to complete your mission, but it is not a

mission that we believe in.

Think about the message that sends to the troops and to the families.

Very interestingly, last Friday, ``NBC Nightly News'' had an

interview with three soldiers from Iraq talking about this very point.

It was in the Brian Williams newscast. He called on Richard Engel,

reporting from Baghdad, who had interviewed these three soldiers. I

think what they had to say should instruct us. He talked about the new

mission they were on, and he said:

This is David Engel, the reporter, speaking--

Then, this is what SPC Tyler Johnson said:

Engel then said:

Then SSG Manuel Sahagun said:

Finally, Engel said:

SPC Peter Manna said:

Engel closed his report saying:

That is the message we send to our troops: that they may be dying in

vain, that they may be putting their life on the line in vain because

we do not support the mission we put them in harm's way to accomplish.

That is a devastating blow to morale.

Just imagine what you would do if you were the parent or the spouse

of one of those soldiers who got killed and came to believe the mission

we had sent them on was no longer a mission that we supported, and yet

we continue to keep them in harm's way.

My view is, if you think this war is lost or that we cannot win it,

that you have the courage of your convictions and vote to cut off the

funds and bring the folks home right now before any more die. But if

you believe, as the President does, that we must not leave Iraq a

failed state, that there is still an opportunity there to succeed, and

that his plan deserves a chance to succeed, then we should not support

resolutions that send a different message.

That is why I want to urge my colleagues to think very carefully

before supporting any of these resolutions which may be nonbinding on

the President but, nevertheless, have severe consequences to our

enemies, to our allies, and to the troops we put into harm's way. This

is serious business we are about. We need to consider it seriously and

not undercut the troops we put in harm's way.