Mr. President, I rise to join my colleagues, Senators

Warner, Collins, and others, in offering this amendment to the

continuing resolution.

Last week, Senators Collins, Snowe, Smith, Voinovich, Coleman, and

myself sent a letter to the Senate leadership urging our distinguished

majority and minority leaders to reach an agreement so the Senate could

debate the war in Iraq.

We said, and I quote from that letter:

In the letter, we pledged to--again quoting the letter--``explore all

of our options under the Senate procedures and practices to ensure a

full and open debate on the Senate floor.'' That, of course, is why we

are here today.

I, similar to my colleagues, am deeply disappointed that a full and

open debate on Iraq remains stymied in the Senate. All Members--Members

of both parties--have the right and responsibility to present their

views and, if they choose, submit other resolutions regarding the war

in Iraq.

I am also deeply disappointed that both sides have used procedural

tactics in this process. My colleagues and I were assured that the

leaders were committed to reaching an agreement on this debate. That

has not yet happened, and I, similar to my colleagues, intend to do

everything in my power as a Senator to ensure a full and open debate of

the Iraq war on the Senate floor in front of the American people. We

owe it to our soldiers and their families, and we owe it to the

American people.

I wish to focus on one particular aspect of this debate and that has

to do with the resolution itself--the relevancy and importance of

Senate resolutions. In the last 15 years, there is ample, strong, and

significant precedent in the Senate debating a President's military

policies while troops are deployed overseas--Bosnia, Somalia, Haiti,

Kosovo. In each of those situations, I and many of my colleagues here

today in the Senate debated and most of us voted binding and nonbinding

resolutions regarding U.S. military operations abroad. Many of these

measures expressed opposition to the military operations, criticizing,

for example, one, the open-ended nature of the deployment; two, the

danger of mission creep or escalation of military involvement; three,

the danger of deploying U.S. forces into sectarian conflict; and four,

the failure of the President to consult with Congress.

It might be instructive to review some of the Senate's history on

these recent debates regarding these recent resolutions. Let me begin

with Bosnia.

In June of 1992, U.S. forces began to deploy to Bosnia. In December

1995, the United States was preparing to deploy substantial ground

forces into Bosnia, roughly 20,000 American ground force combat troops,

very similar to the number we are now looking at in the President's

escalation of more American troops into Iraq today.

As a result of President Clinton's decision in 1995, the Senate

considered Senate Concurrent Resolution 35, a resolution submitted by

our colleague from Texas, the senior Senator, Mrs. Hutchison. This

resolution was a nonbinding resolution. Again, this was a nonbinding

resolution. This resolution said:

This resolution also said:

So, therefore, it is saying we support our troops, but we disapprove

of the President's policy to send more troops. This resolution also

said it was a continuation of the previous debate on support of the

troops already deployed.

As Senator Hutchison said on the Senate floor on December 13:

A month earlier in November 1995, Senator Hutchison framed the

complexities of our military intervention in Bosnia in terms that are

eerily relevant to today. She said:

Opposition to the President's policy but strong support for the U.S.

military--this is similar to the debate we are having today on Iraq.

Senator Hutchison's resolution had 28 cosponsors, including our

friends and colleagues, Senators Inhofe, Craig, Kyl, Lott, Bennett,

Hatch, Shelby, and Stevens.

On December 13, 1995, 47 Senators voted in favor of Senator

Hutchison's nonbinding resolution. That day, 47 Senators believed you

could oppose the President's policy but still support our troops.

The next day, December 14, 1995, the Senate considered Senate Joint

Resolution 44, a binding resolution introduced by Senator Dole. This

resolution supported U.S. troops in Bosnia. This resolution had six

cosponsors, including our colleagues, Senators McCain and Lieberman.

On December 14, 1995, the Senate adopted this resolution by a vote of

69 to 30. That was Bosnia in 1995.

Somalia: In December 1992, U.S. troops began to deploy to Somalia.

Nearly a year later, in September 1993, the Senate debated the

objectives, the mission, and strategy of our military deployment in

Somalia. Speaking on the Senate floor on September 23, 1993, Senator

McCain framed the debate when he said:

On September 9, the Senate voted 90 to 7 to adopt a nonbinding--a

nonbinding--sense-of-Congress resolution submitted by Senator Byrd.

This resolution called on the President to outline the goals,

objectives, and duration of the U.S. deployment in Somalia and said

Congress believes the President ``should seek and receive congressional

authorization in order for the deployment of U.S. forces to Somalia to

continue.''

There are 11 cosponsors of the Byrd measure, including our

colleagues, Senators McCain, Cochran, Bond, and Warner.

One month later, after the horrible death of 18 U.S. troops in early

October, the Senate considered two binding measures to cut off funds,

one introduced by Senator McCain and one by Senator Byrd.

On October 15, 1993, the McCain measure, which would have terminated

further U.S. military operations in Somalia, was tabled 61 to 38. That

same day, the Senate voted 76 to 23 to adopt the Byrd measure to cut

off all funding in March 1994 for U.S. forces in Somalia.

There are two more very clear examples, such as the examples I have

given on Somalia and Bosnia, that I could discuss--Haiti and Kosovo--in

some detail, and I may do that later. But the point is, the facts are

clear. There is clear precedent--clear precedent--for both binding and

nonbinding resolutions, as well as legislation to redirect, condition

or cut off funds for military operations, and this is at the same time

we have and we had military forces in those countries.

So to argue, to state, to imply this is somehow not only irrelevant

but unprecedented is not the case. The Congress has always had a

responsibility, not just constitutionally but morally, to inject itself

in the great debate of war.

Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Virginia.

In conclusion, I add that the American people have had enough of the

misrepresentations, the politics, and the procedural intrigue in the

Senate. I say again to our distinguished leaders of both our parties:

It is your responsibility, as leaders of this body, to resolve this

procedural dispute so that the Senate can have a full, fair, open

debate on the war in Iraq. And I will continue to join my colleagues--

Senators Warner, Collins, Snowe, and others--in making every effort to

bring up our resolution at every available opportunity until that

debate occurs.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.