Mr. President, we all know and acknowledge that al-Qaida

and other related terrorist groups are determined to strike at the U.S.

homeland. But a precipitous U.S. withdrawal from Iraq would only serve

to fuel that determination and, as a result, surrender Iraq to al-

Qaida, which would directly threaten the security of the United States

and its allies.

Yesterday, we had a visit from Henry Kissinger who warned us that

such a precipitous withdrawal would be revisiting the nightmare of

Vietnam, where our withdrawal there created genocide among those who

had supported us and other innocent Southeast Asians. This time,

however, al-Qaida would follow us back to America. Al-Qaida would use

Iraq as a safe haven, as it once had in Afghanistan. Only this time

with oil revenues, in addition to a safe haven, it would be well

positioned and financed to launch further enhanced attacks against the

United States. Yet we continue to hear from the other side calls for

withdrawal, despite preliminary reports of progress resulting from the

surge, as my colleague from Georgia has so eloquently explained.

We continue to hear calls for timelines that would embolden the

morale of our enemies and dissuade the populace from cooperating with

U.S. and Iraqi forces, and the latest and most recent development in

the string of defeatism has come from the House majority whip. This

past Monday in the Washington Post, he stated that a strongly positive

report on progress in Iraq by General Petraeus would likely split

Democrats in the House and impede his party's efforts to press for a

timetable to end the war.

Now it appears some in the Democratic Party leadership are so

invested in retreat and defeat politically that despite whatever the

news is coming out of Iraq and regardless of the consequences, they are

committed to defeat.

Why, I ask, is the majority focused not on our national security but

on scoring political points? I guess we should pull out, cede victory

for the terrorists in Iraq, in order to keep the Democrats united for

the general elections in 2008.

What we, the Iraqi people, and all freedom-loving nations face is a

fundamental threat from barbaric cowards misrepresenting the true

nature of peaceful teachings of Islam. The terrorists of mufsidoon, as

they should be called, are condemned evildoers distorting the Koran.

They are not jihadists. Jihad is pursuing a moral superiority. These

people who commit these acts are not insurgents or jihadists. The

clearer we define the true enemy, the easier it will be to defeat them.

What we have seen for some time now is encouraging signs this has, in

fact, happened, coupled with the surge that is showing progress. Sunni

sheiks in Al Anbar have been working with us to take back their

neighborhoods and villages, fed up with the mufsidoon al-Qaida

committing atrocities.

My colleague referred to the Sunday New York Times article. Two men

who are strong opponents of the war in Iraq said, referring to al-Qaida

and other Salafist groups, as well as Moktada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army:

I observed the same when my CODEL visited Iraq in early May. The

authors said ``there is enough good happening on the battlefields of

Iraq today that Congress should plan on sustaining the effort at least

until 2008.''

So if two of the war's harshest, most longstanding critics admit we

are making a difference, why can't the Democrats give victory a chance?

Why can't they give millions of Iraqis a chance at freedom? Why can't

they acknowledge the progress being made?

Pollack and O'Hanlon said that the soldiers and marines know they

have a superb commander in General Petraeus.

It is time my colleagues in the other party who claim to support the

troops actually do so in both words and deeds. Ignoring the progress

being made by our troops because it does not suit the political ends of

some Democratic leaders is an egregious outrage. Advocating for a

precipitous withdrawal from Iraq would be a rallying cry for al-Qaida

and other mufsidoon all over the world. What are we to say to the

millions of Iraqis who have sided with us in taking back their country,

only to see them slaughtered systematically after we leave the job

before it is finished?

Our words should inspire our troops and those who are working with

us. Rest assured our soldiers and marines are listening. A recent

speech by Marine Corps Commandant Conway underscores the point:

Yet, Mr. President, the retreat-and-defeat crowd, despite encouraging

signs the surge is working, despite the fact this new strategy has only

been in place fully for just a couple of months, and despite the fact

that the Democrats have failed to offer any constructive alternatives,

other than the ones that would cede defeat, continue to push down that

line.

It is a huge disappointment to me, to others, to those who support

our troops and the efforts to protect our homeland from the al-Qaida

attacks that would surely follow a precipitous withdrawal. It is a huge

disappointment that this debate is not about how we can achieve victory

but how quickly we can declare defeat. This has become a political

debate. The focus of our national security has been sidetracked. As I

have said time and time again, we should debate legislation which

provides our troops with a clear path to victory, a victory which,

sadly, many in this body are ready to award to al-Qaida and mufsidoon

all over the world without ever having given the surge a chance.