Mr. President, first, let me express my appreciation to the

ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee. Senator Biden is

someone who has knowledge of foreign affairs that is astounding. Having

served on that committee when I was in the House of Representatives, I

know it is a great committee. It is so important to the success or

failure of what happens in this country in relation to our foreign

neighbors. I feel so relieved, knowing he is there, leading us on this

most important committee. I appreciate his statement today.

The resolution now before the Senate commends the Iraqi people for

their courage during the election on January 30. I think it is

important that we express our admiration for the Iraqi citizens. That

is what this resolution does. Millions cast their votes on that day.

They turned out at the polls in spite of threats to voters, candidates,

election workers, and in spite of acts of violence by those seeking to

undermine the election process. The acts of violence took place.

Approximately 40 Iraqis were killed that day, and a number of American

soldiers.

I think we should express our gratitude to our troops in Iraq. They

are the ones who have allowed this election to go forward. The U.S.

military was central to the success of the election on election day.

Without them and the overwhelming security they provided, there would

not have been an election.

The Iraqi Independent Election Commission and the United Nations also

did a good job. They also should be commended. They took the daunting

task of trying to hold a free and fair election in the most dangerous

conditions.

But no one should underestimate the challenges that lie ahead, as

outlined

by Senator Biden. The election was only one step in Iraq's long march

toward peace and stability. With the violence unending and the

insurgency showing no signs of weakness, the President needs to spell

out a clear and understandable plan for success in Iraq. In his State

of the Union Address, the President said only that U.S. troops will

remain until Iraq becomes a representative democracy that can defend

itself and is at peace with its neighbors. This is not a strategy for

success; it is an open-ended commitment with no end or plan in sight.

Our troops and the American people deserve better than that.

It was only yesterday that the Pentagon, through its Secretary, Mr.

Rumsfeld, when pressed for details about the insurgency and about the

plan for going forward in Iraq, said only that there is an assessment

taking place. This is not leadership.

The President needs to level with the American people. Once and for

all he needs to spell out his plan, No. 1, to crush the insurgency, No.

2, to build Iraq's capacity to defend itself and deliver basic services

to its people, No. 3, to get the reconstruction process back on track,

and, No. 4, to increase political participation by all parties,

especially the moderates, and finally, No. 5, to increase international

involvement. These are five concrete steps that must take place. Much

more is being done, for example, to enlist the international

community's help in the training of Iraqi security forces and in the

development of the Iraqi political and economic systems.

Will the President finally reach out to the other nations to take

some of the burden off our forces and off the U.S. taxpayers? The proof

will be in the President's actions, not in his rhetoric. As the

administration continues on month by month, without a firm course or

direction, the situation in Iraq grows more complex and more dangerous.

The President's own National Intelligence Council concluded that Iraq

is now a magnet for international terrorism. We have to do better--for

our troops, for the American people, and for success in Iraq.

I, again, compliment the people of Iraq for a successful election.