Mr. President, we have before us one of the most important

issues that has ever faced our country, certainly in modern times. The

future of Iraq will affect the United States, the Middle East, and the

world for decades to come.

No one in Congress and no one in the United States wants to see

America humiliated, defeated, or in any way lose its purpose. The issue

of Iraq involves all of us. The Congress of the United States must have

a role to play.

Our responsibility is to join together in a bipartisan effort to work

to develop a consensus to deal with the great challenges of our time. I

know of no challenge that is greater today, before this country, than

Iraq. When a Nation commits its men and women to war, it is the

greatest challenge that any of us will ever deal with in our time in

the Congress.

We owe it to the American people to help find a bipartisan consensus

of purpose, to help develop a policy worthy of our men and women in

uniform. The American people not only deserve but they expect a

consensus. This resolution is not about trying to assign blame on the

Administration. It is not about replaying past mistakes. This

resolution is about moving forward. It is difficult but it is our

responsibility.

Some of us believe that the course that the President announced

Wednesday was not the appropriate course. I do not believe that the

United States should be sending more American troops into the middle of

the tribal, sectarian civil war that is occurring in Iraq.

Senators Biden, Levin, and I have focused personally on writing this

resolution because we felt it must reflect a responsible, forward-

looking, and constructive approach. We must remain focused on a

strategy which seeks to advance America's national interests and allow

America to leave Iraq honorably.

The American people look to its government for responsible policy. A

policy that can be sustained. A policy that reflects a clear consensus

of purpose regarding our objectives, our strategy and our policies.

This is what our resolution seeks to achieve.