Mr. President, the primary objective of the bipartisan

resolution my colleagues and I are introducing today is to convince a

bipartisan majority of Senators to oppose deeper military involvement

in Iraq by the United States and to get the Iraqis to reach a political

settlement among themselves as the only way to end the violence in

Iraq.

The resolution would send a clear message that Congress does not

support the plan to increase the number of U.S. troops in Iraq because

it is based on the false premise that there is a

military solution to the violence and instability in Iraq, when what is

needed is a political solution among the Iraqi leaders and factions.

Iraq's own Prime Minister Maliki acknowledged recently that

The resolution states that it is not in the national security

interests of the United States to deepen our military involvement in

Iraq by increasing the number of U.S. troops.

The resolution calls for the transition of our military mission in

Iraq to a more limited one of training, counterterrorism, and

protecting the territorial integrity of Iraq. It also calls for greater

engagement of other countries in the region in the stabilization and

reconstruction of Iraq.

Last week the President said that he had made clear to Iraq's leaders

that America's commitment is not open-ended. I welcome these words. But

the reality behind the President's new rhetoric is that the open-ended

commitment continues--more American military men and women would be

sent into the chaos of Iraq's sectarian violence without condition or

limitation.

President Bush also indicated that the Iraqi government needs

``breathing space'' to make political progress. The opposite is true.

The Iraqi leaders don't need breathing space--they must feel real

pressure to reach a political settlement. Increasing our military

presence in Iraq takes more pressure off. The Iraq Study Group put it

this way last month:

President Bush also said that the Iraqis have set benchmarks for

themselves. But look at the track record of the Iraqi government in

meeting some of its past benchmarks and promises: Iraqi President

Talibani said in August 2006 that Iraqi forces would

That pledge has

not been kept. Prime Minister Maliki said last June that he would

disband the militias and illegal armed groups as part of his national

reconciliation plan, and in October he set the timetable for disbanding

the militias as the end of 2006. That commitment has not been kept. The

Iraqi Constitutional Review Commission was to present its

recommendations for changes in the Constitution to the Council of

Representatives within four months of the formation of the Government

last May. The Commission has yet to formulate any recommendations.

Prime Minister Maliki put forward a series of reconciliation milestones

to be completed by the end of 2006 or early 2007, including approval of

the Provincial Election Law, the Petroleum Law, a new De-Baathification

Law, and the Militia Law. Not one of these laws has been enacted. The

Iraqi army pledged six battalions in support of American and Coalition

efforts during Operation Forward Together last summer. In fact, Iraqis

provided only two battalions.

This is not a track record that inspires confidence in Iraqi pledges

and commitments.

The President said that

How did the President say we are

going to do that? What will the consequences be if the Iraqis continue

to fail to meet these benchmarks, particularly since some of them have

been established and missed in the past? The President said

That is an empty threat

given the fact that the Iraqi Government has already lost the support

of the American people, and it hasn't affected their behavior. The

President's most recent plan, like previous ones, includes no mechanism

to hold the Iraqis to their commitments.

Just two months ago General Abizaid testified before our Committee

against increasing the number of U.S. troops in Iraq. He told us:

Deepening our involvement in Iraq would be a mistake. Deepening our

involvement in Iraq on the assumption that the Iraqis will meet future

benchmarks and commitments given their track record would compound the

mistake.

For America to supply more troops while the Iraqi leaders simply

supply more promises is not a recipe for success in Iraq. Telling the

Iraqis that we will increase our troops to give them yet more breathing

space will only postpone the day when Iraqis take their future into

their own hands and decide whether they want to continue to fight a

civil war or make peace among themselves.

This resolution does not limit any future course of action that

Congress may decide to take. What it would do is send a powerful

message to the President and the Iraqis that Congress does not support

an escalation of our military presence in Iraq.