Mr. President, the cloture vote was very fully discussed

by the distinguished Senator from Nevada and the distinguished Senator

from Kentucky, with leadership and our ranking members, so I am

confident that somehow this matter can be worked out. I want you to

know, however, that I stand steadfast behind the content of a

resolution I put together, along with Senator Ben Nelson, Senator Susan

Collins, and some eight other cosponsors.

The question is how does the Senate bring it into focus under the

complexity of our rules. I won't take the time to deal with that now,

but I would say to those following this debate that we stand, the

Senators I mentioned, the two principal cosponsors and myself, firmly

behind this resolution, the content of which has been amended.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the amended copy of the

resolution be printed in the Record following my remarks, allowing

ready reference for those persons examining the Congressional Record.

That resolution has been distorted and misunderstood in

the debate thus far. That is one of the reasons I am so anxious to

proceed with this debate. I want to make clear, because it was

mentioned that perhaps these resolutions were brought along for

political cover, that on that issue each Senator has to speak for

themselves, but I assure my colleagues that this Senator from Virginia

has moved forward with my thoughts and my ideas in the best interest of

the country and the best interest of the men and women of the United

States military, and not for any political cover. Nor will I, in any

way, impugn the motives of Senators whose opinions differ from mine.

This being my 29th year in the Senate, I have never, to my knowledge,

ever intentionally, and I don't think indirectly, impugned the motive

of any Senator for the position he or she has taken on a matter. We are

all patriots. We are equal patriots. We all support the men and women

of the Armed Forces. Let that be understood.

I firmly believe, as we are approaching this debate, that it is

imperative that the Senate work its will, and work its will in the

open, on this issue which is so critical at this point in time in our

many years of involvement in the Iraq situation.

I solidly support the President in his view that we cannot accept

failure in getting a government, whether it is this one or an ensuing

government, in Iraq up and running and functioning such that it can

seize the full range of sovereignty in this nation, and not let this

nation implode, causing absolute disaster throughout the region.

Indeed, certainly as it relates to energy and other issues, it could

impact severely on the rest of the world, not only in energy but in a

signal that the terrorists have won. We cannot let that happen. So

let's let the Senate work its will, and I think our colleagues here,

the distinguished leaders, will work out a procedure by which we will

do that. The comment was made, and understandably, that this is a

nonbinding resolution. Nonbinding. Well, we have them in the history of

the Senate. At this time, this Senator is not voting for any cutoff of

funds. That is our one constitutional lever we can pull. As a matter of

fact, in our resolution--I refer to our resolution as the one that I,

together with Senator Ben Nelson and Senator Susan Collins of Maine

have put together--we specifically have included an iteration of the

concept advanced by our distinguished colleague Senator Gregg, which

may come before the Senate. We solidly support that concept of no

cutoff of funds.

What do we do short of that? Well, we have a debate. Somehow you have

to have some focal point, something written down, some document in

writing as to the ability of this institution, the Senate, to reach a

consensus, and a bipartisan consensus, on how best we go

forward with a new strategy in Iraq. That has been my motivation from

the very beginning, to put this institution on record on a bipartisan

basis. I am not talking about one or two Senators on that side joining

all the Senators on this side or vice versa, no, a truly on its face

bipartisan consensus, albeit a resolution without any legal force and

effect.

It is important that the people of this country give their support to

the men and women in uniform and to a strategy which they hope will

succeed in our goal of not letting Iraq implode and fall into greater

disaster than it is experiencing today. So how do they go about it? The

President, in his speech on January 10, explicitly said those who have

other ideas, generally speaking, or concepts, bring them forward. That

is what we have done. We have exercised what the President has given

us, the option to come forward.

To quote the President:

said the

President.

Using that as our chart, we then proceeded as a group to figure out

how best to comment on the President's strategy. We did say, and I

repeat it, that the Senate disagrees with the plan to augment our

forces by 21,500 and urge the President, instead, to consider all

options and alternatives for achieving the strategic goals set forth

below. Each Senator has to interpret that phrase, that sentence, as he

or she so desires. I repeat that. Each Senator has the right to look at

that and decide, one, do you disagree in any way with what the

President is doing and the force of 21,500.

I believe we can accomplish the goals this country has set out to

accomplish in Iraq, goals that were enumerated by the Baker-Hamilton

commission, in a manner that we do not need a full force of 21,500.

Indeed, that force, we now learn, could be somewhat higher than that

number if you are going to have the essential support troops joined.

Unfortunately, there was no reference to that made in the President's

speech, and right now it is a matter of debate and contention.

I don't know what the additional figure is, but in my judgment, I say

most respectfully that we do not in this resolution in any way

challenge or contravene the constitutional provision that you are

Commander in Chief and that you can deploy troops which, in your best

judgment, are for the security of this Nation and the welfare of the

troops. We don't challenge that. We simply accept your offer, we have

expressed it, so we support it.

I support, for example, additional troops if they are necessary over

and above the current level for operations in Al Anbar. On my last trip

to that region, it was clear that the marines had enough troops to do

certain portions of their mission, but it was also clear that

additional forces were needed. Perhaps they could come from within the

current force structure currently in Iraq. But perhaps you need--to use

the word ``surge''--some modest surge to meet the requirements for Al-

Anbar to be brought under a higher level of security.

Nothing in this resolution prohibits the President from having some

portion of that surge force of 21,500 utilized to do those things which

are essential--further training of the Iraqi forces, further embedding,

enlarging the number of troops to be embedded with the Iraqi forces.

Those are the sorts of things this Senator supports. Within the

framework of this resolution, I can take those stands.

But I turn now to the principal thing we have in this resolution, and

that is one of the main things that I believe has to have greater

emphasis. It is as follows. We state it very clearly in a provision in

our resolution:

I go back and I read the goals here, all set forth on page 6 of the

resolution. The military part of this strategy should: focus on

maintaining the territorial integrity of Iraq, denying international

terrorists a safe haven, conducting counterterrorism operations,

promoting regional stability, supporting Iraqi efforts to bring greater

security to Baghdad, and training and equipping Iraqi forces to take

full responsibility for their own security.

Therein is the principal motivation.