Mr. President, I rise today to call the attention of the

Senate to the most-underreported story of the year: the continuing

success of our troops in Iraq. In particular, I would like to call my

colleagues' attention to an article by the American Enterprise

Institute's Fred Kagan in this week's Weekly Standard, which

articulately speaks to the magnitude of the change in direction that

has taken place in Iraq.

The article reports how our soldiers and marines turned an imminent

victory for al-Qaida in Iraq into a humiliating defeat for them and

thereby created an opportunity for further progress not only in Iraq

but also in the global struggle against terror. In the past 5 months we

have seen stunning results from the Petraeus strategy: terrorist

operations in and around Baghdad have dropped by 59 percent; car bomb

deaths are down by 81 percent; casualties from enemy attacks dropped 77

percent; and, violence during the just-completed season of Ramadan--

traditionally a peak of terrorist attacks was the lowest in 3 years.

However, Mr. President, winning a battle is not the same as winning a

war. Our commanders and soldiers are continuing the fight to ensure

that al-Qaida does not recover even as they turn their attention to the

next battle: the fight against Shia militias sponsored by Iran.

What's more, these victories are not irreversible. Al-Qaida is a

resourceful organization. If we let up, they can still recover. That is

why our strategy on the ground must be based on the advice and

experience of our generals and not the political necessities of the

majority party here in Washington. We must resist politically-motivated

maneuvering, whether it be in the form of artificial timelines for

withdrawal or efforts to have politicians in Congress change the

mission that has been delivering results.