Mr. President, I rise, first, to offer strong words of

support for the statement that was just offered by the distinguished

Senator from Massachusetts. I also rise today to speak in support of

the Iraq resolution the Senate will consider tomorrow.

The news from Iraq is very bad. Last week, a suicide bomber stood

outside a bookstore and killed 20 people. Other attacks killed 118 Shia

pilgrims. On Sunday, a car bomb went off in central Baghdad, and more

than 30 people died. The road from the airport into Baghdad is littered

with smoldering debris, craters from improvised explosive devices, and

the memories of our sons and daughters.

The civil war in Iraq rages on. The insurgents have started to change

their tactics. They hide in buildings and along the streets and wait

for our helicopters. They have shot down at least 8 U.S. helicopters in

the last month. More of our soldiers are dying or coming home with

their bodies broken and their nerves shattered to a VA system

completely unprepared for what they need to rebuild their lives.

It is not enough for the President to tell us victory in this war is

simply a matter of American resolve. The American people have been

extraordinarily resolved. They have seen their sons and daughters

killed or wounded in the streets of Fallujah. They have spent hundreds

of billions of dollars on this effort--money they know could have been

devoted to strengthening our homeland security and our competitive

standing as a nation. The failure has not been a failure of resolve.

That is not what has led us into chaos. It has been a failure of

strategy, and it is time that the strategy change. There is no military

solution to the civil war that rages on in Iraq, and it is time for us

to redeploy so that a political solution becomes possible.

The news from Iraq is very bad, and it has been that way for at least

4 years. We all wish the land the President and the Vice President

speak of exists. We wish there were an Iraq where the insurgency was in

its last throes, where the people work with security, where children

play outside, where a vibrant new democracy lights up the nighttime

sky. We wish for those things, but there is no alternative reality to

what we see and read about in the news, to what we have experienced

these long 4 years.

I repeat, there is no military solution to this war. At this point,

no amount of soldiers can solve the grievances at the heart of someone

else's civil war. The Iraqi people--Shia, Sunni, and Kurd--must come to

the table and reach a political settlement themselves. If they want

peace, they must do the hard work necessary to achieve it.

Our failed strategy in Iraq has strengthened Iran's strategic

position, reduced U.S. credibility and influence around the world, and

placed Israel and other nations in the region that are friendly to the

United States in greater

peril. These are not signs of a well-laid plan. It is time for a

profound change.

This is what we are trying to do here today. We are saying it is time

to start making plans to redeploy our troops so they can focus on the

wider struggle against terrorism, win the war in Afghanistan,

strengthen our position in the Middle East, and pressure the Iraqis to

reach a political settlement. Even if this effort falls short, we will

continue to try to accomplish what the American people asked for last

November.

I am glad to see, though, that this new effort is gaining consensus.

I commend Senator Reid for his efforts. He took the time to listen to

so many of us from both Chambers of Congress to help develop this plan.

The decision in particular to again begin a phased redeployment, with

the goal of redeploying all our combat forces by March 30, 2008, is the

right step. It is a measure the Iraq Study Group spoke of, an idea I

borrowed from them, an idea that, in a bill I introduced, now has more

than 60 cosponsors from the House and Senate and from both sides of the

aisle. They have supported this plan since I announced a similar plan

in January.

The decision to allow some U.S. forces to remain in Iraq with a clear

mission to protect U.S. and coalition personnel, conduct

counterterrorism operations, and to train and equip Iraqi forces is a

smart decision. President al-Maliki spoke at a conference and warned

that the violence in Iraq could spread throughout the region if it goes

unchecked. By maintaining a strong presence in Iraq and the Middle

East, as both my bill and the leadership bill does, we can ensure that

the chaos does not spread.

I should also add that the decision to begin this phased redeployment

within 120 days is a practical one. Our military options have been

exhausted. It is time to seek a political solution to this war, and

with this decision we send a clear signal to the parties involved that

they need to arrive at an accommodation.

While I strongly believe this war never should have been authorized,

I believe we must be as careful in ending the war as we were careless

getting in. While I prefer my approach as reflected in my bill, I

believe this resolution does begin to point U.S. policy and Iraq in the

right direction. An end to the war and achieving a political solution

to Iraq's civil war will not happen unless we demand it. Peace with

stability does not just happen because we wish for it.

It comes when we never give in and never give up and never tire of

working toward a life on Earth worthy of our human dignity. The

decisions that have been made have led us to this crossroad, in a

moment of great peril.

We have a choice. We can continue down the road that has weakened our

credibility and damaged our strategic interests in the region or we can

turn toward the future. The road will not be smooth. I have to say

there will be risks with any approach, but this approach is our last

best hope to end this war so we can begin to bring our troops home and

begin the hard work of securing our country and our world from the

threats we face.

The President has said he will continue down the road toward more

troops and more of the same failed policies. The President sought and

won authorization from Congress to wage this war from the start. But he

is now dismissing and ignoring the will of the American people who are

tired of years of watching the human and financial tolls mount.

The news from Iraq is very bad, but it can change if we in this

Chamber say ``enough.'' Let this day be the day we begin the painful

and difficult work of moving from the crossroad. Let this day be the

day we begin pulling toward the future with a responsible conclusion to

this painful chapter in our Nation's history. Let this be the day when

we finally send a message that is so clear and so emphatic that it

cannot be ignored.

I yield the floor.