Madam President, tonight I believe we have

seen the introduction of a resolution which not only has had bipartisan

support in its prior form but will receive very strong bipartisan

support in its current form, as amended.

I rise to support this resolution for a number of reasons. I think it

is important that we continue to support our troops in the field and

those who support the troops across the world. I think it is important

that we thank them for their service and that we make it very clear

that this resolution does not impair their ability to move forward in

their command.

It is also important to point out that while some of the cosponsors

haven't had the opportunity to review this, it is being circulated to

them so that they do have the opportunity to review it. And I am sure

they will become cosponsors with the new resolution.

It is important to point out that in this resolution, benchmarks are

included that I believe will help break the cycle of dependence in Iraq

by empowering and requiring the authority of the Iraqi Government and

the responsibility of the Iraqi Government to take a greater role in

the battle in Iraq, particularly as it relates to Baghdad. We generally

believe that it is inappropriate for our troops to intercede in the

battle between the Sunnis and the Shias on a sectarian basis in battles

that are of a similar nature that

certainly do involve sectarian violence. There is a greater role for

the Iraqi Government and the Iraqi military. This resolution in its

present form will assure the assuming of that greater role, that

greater responsibility by the Iraqi Government and certainly by the

Iraqi Army.

It is a pleasure for me to introduce and thank our cosponsor, the

Senator from Maine, Ms. Collins.