Mr. President, I appreciate the remarks of the

distinguished Senator from Texas, who is indispensable to the Senate.

Today we are confronted with a struggle that could very well define

the world in which our children and their children will live. Many will

say this statement is hyperbole or politically

expedient and designed to disguise a troubled policy. I only wish that

were so.

Today we are fighting to prevent Iraq and Afghanistan from

disintegrating into failed states, where that chaos will be exploited

by those who wish to undermine--and even destroy--mainstream Muslim and

Western civilization.

In the past, these terrorists used Afghanistan and other developing

nations as safe havens from which attacks against Americans were

planned and executed throughout the world. One hardly needs to be

reminded of the bombings of our Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania or the

attack on the USS Cole to see this is true, not to mention the events

of September 11, 2001.

What would happen if we were to permit these terrorists, and others

who wish us ill, to have another such safe haven? Of what would they be

capable? Just today we have read in the papers of Khalid Shaikh

Mohammed's confession to many of the world's worst acts of terrorism.

Remember that from Afghanistan, a country without significant

infrastructure or resources, these terrorists were able to orchestrate

the greatest attack on American soil since Pearl Harbor. Just imagine

what their capabilities would be if they were able to control only a

fraction of the oil wealth of Iraq. Is that the world in which we want

our children and our grandchildren to live--a world in which

uncertainty and fear become a part of everyday life?

As one prominent Democrat stated before he reversed his position and

announced his intention to run for President:

Were mistakes made in the conflict in Iraq?

In a word, yes. I am sad to say important errors were made. Perhaps

one of the greatest occurred over the past 30 years right here in our

Nation's Capital. Past and present administrations, Congresses, and

Department of Defense leaders primarily concentrated on training and

equipping our forces to fight what is called in military circles ``The

Big War.''

In such a conflict, large formations of mechanized divisions, corps,

and armies seek to fight decisive battles on a conventional

battlefield. This is not to say maintaining such a capability is no

longer vital to our national security. It remains an absolute

necessity.

However, in large part, due to the resolve of many of our military

leaders not to fight ``another Vietnam,'' for the bulk of our Armed

Forces, the skills necessary to fight a counterinsurgency had withered

and atrophied. This is exemplified by the fact that the Army-Marine

Corps Doctrine for Counterinsurgency had not been updated for 20 years,

until December of 2006.

As General Petraeus, our new commander in Iraq, wrote 1 year ago:

Other dire mistakes were made.

Many of those errors can be directly attributed to the decisions made

by the Coalition Provisional Authority which originated from or were

ratified by the senior civilian leadership at the Pentagon at the time.

This includes the decision to disband the Iraqi Army without providing

alternative means for the employing and sustaining of its former

members. These former Iraqi soldiers went on to become the foundation

of the initial insurgency. We might have been able to prevent that had

we chosen another route.

Another mistake was the decision to eliminate the first three levels

of leadership, not only in Government ministries but hospitals,

universities, and Government-run corporations. Managers, no matter how

junior, who were members of Saddam Hussein's Baathist Party were

removed. The result was those who had the managerial experience best

suited to rebuild Iraq's institutions were arbitrarily dismissed, even

if they had not played any role in Saddam's atrocities.

In sum, many of the problems we confront today are as a result of our

own shortsightedness and the administration's failure to fully and

comprehensively develop and execute a plan for stabilization of Iraq

after the fall of the Saddam regime.

So how do we go forward? We do have options.

Some, such as the authors and supporters of S.J. Res. 9, argue that

we should unilaterally bring the bulk of our forces home from Iraq. Yet

we all know what would happen if that were to occur. Iraq would be a

failed state offering a safe haven for terrorists, not to mention the

thousands and thousands of Iraqis who would be killed. Those who make

this argument forget--or perhaps they do not know--that unlike our war

in Vietnam, we face an enemy who is religiously committed to bringing

the fight here to our shores. If the terrorists know we will withdraw

the bulk of our forces in 120 days, as this legislation calls for, all

the enemy has to do is husband its resources or ``lie low'' until that

date. Perhaps the terrorists will launch fewer attacks to lull us into

a false sense of security that this defeatist strategy is working.

Then, with the cold calculation for which these terrorists have become

notorious, they will spring on the Iraqi people before their

Government's institutions--which were completely destroyed in 2003--can

mature and fully take over the reins of fighting and defeating this

insurgency.

These are not compelling options. At their core these ``solutions''

do not have the goal of victory but consist of resignation to an

inevitable defeat.

So how do we win? How do we defeat the terrorists and give the Iraqi

people a fighting chance to claim a destiny of their own, a destiny

that is based upon peace and the rule of law? The answer is not simple,

but what great endeavor ever was?

First, we must learn from our mistakes. Then we must implement a

strategy that harnesses the tactics and strategies that have defeated

other insurgents in the past and apply those lessons to the conflict in

Iraq. That is what our new strategy, called Operation Fard al-Qanun--

which is Arabic for ``enforcing the law''--sets out to achieve.

So what is this operation's strategic objective? Once again, I

believe General Petraeus said it best at his confirmation hearing. He

said:

I could not agree more. Creating a secure environment is the

essential task. This is accomplished not just by conducting operations

to clear an area of insurgents but by maintaining an American/Iraqi

security force in cleared areas which assists in providing essential

services such as clean water and power to the local population and

enforcing the rule of law. This, in turn, creates conditions where the

Iraqi people can begin to develop a growing economy and where families

feel safe to send their children to school. As these goals are

achieved, more and more of the population will desire even greater

stability and will support and work toward creating Iraqi Government

institutions and security services that maintain and enhance this new

security environment.

How is this strategy different from past endeavors? Unfortunately, in

the past there were far too few American and capable Iraqi forces

available to provide adequate security once an area had been cleared

and, frankly, there are cases where political impediments prevented us

from providing adequate security. That is why the additional forces we

are sending to Iraq are so important. It is not more for more's sake

but to maintain a secure environment for the Iraqi people.

This does not mean that our forces will be going it alone. Far from

it. A key principle of the new strategy is to enhance and strengthen

our efforts to advise and train the Iraqi military and police forces so

they may eventually take over primary responsibility for the defense of

their own nation. We must also remember that training was one of the

major recommendations of the Iraq Study Group. Indeed, one of the

members of my own party, who has authored legislation disagreeing with

this new strategy--despite voting for the nomination of its

implementer, General Petraeus--stated that Iraqi forces:

I believe it is also important to add that, as of last week, three of

the four Iraqi battalions that recently entered Baghdad were at above

100 percent troop strength. Another vital element is our new commander

in Iraq, General David Petraeus. I can think of no better choice for

implementing our new strategy.

General Petraeus has long been a student of counterinsurgency

warfare. In the 1980s, when he received his Ph.D. from Princeton, he

closely studied counterinsurgency operations.

During the initial race to Baghdad, the General commanded the 101st

Airborne Division, and he is largely credited with devising and

implementing a strategy that secured the city of Mosul immediately

after the initial combat phase.

Later, when he commanded our effort to train the Iraqi Army, General

Petraeus implemented the Transition Team concept. A Transition Team is

composed of a group of advisers, primarily officers and seasoned

noncommissioned officers, who serve with Iraqi units from those units'

inception, including basic and advanced training and eventually combat

operations. This is an important strategy, since experienced U.S.

soldiers learn firsthand the operational characteristics and

requirements of Iraqi units and tailor a training program to fit the

units' needs. It also provides a detailed analysis of the individual

Iraqi units' combat capabilities. General Petraeus was also one of the

authors of the updated Army/Marine Corps Field Manual on

Counterinsurgency which was published in December of last year.

I do not know of any other officer with the intellect and experience

necessary to carry out successfully this new strategy and win the war

in Iraq. He has my confidence and apparently the confidence of most

everyone in the Senate since 100 percent voted for him and he clearly

articulated this new strategy. But what he needs is our support and

time to carry out his new strategy.

One must also remember that all of the additional forces needed to

fully implement this new strategy will not be in place until early

June.

As the General stated in a recent news conference:

So what do we offer him and the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and

coastguardsmen under his command? We offer guaranteed defeat in the

form of a joint resolution.

But with great respect for General Petraeus, I believe we have

already seen some preliminary success. For example, Richard Engel, an

NBC News reporter who has lived in Iraq for the past few years covering

the war, responded just last month about our change in tactics. He

said:

I would also like to address a matter that, more than any other, has

weighed on my heart over the past few years. That question is, Do we,

not just as a nation but as a people, have the will to see our

obligations through? This has always been an important question. But

now, during an insurgent war, where the side with the greatest will,

not technological advantage, will generally emerge victorious, it has

become the essential question.

So now we must ask ourselves: Do we have the will to see right

triumph? Do we as Americans believe in making sacrifices for the

greater good? History provides an answer.

Almost 230 years ago, the Continental Army began a retreat, or more

accurately a route, from Brooklyn Heights over the island of Manhattan

into New Jersey and then across the Delaware River. General Washington

had fewer than 1,000 troops and was confronted by the greatest Army of

the day. The Continental's enlistments were up and many soldiers,

lacking basic supplies and even food, were making plans to go home. For

all intensive purposes, the American experiment in democracy, where all

men were to be treated equal, was about to end.

Then something miraculous happened. A writer named Thomas Paine wrote

a pamphlet entitled ``Crisis.'' But panic was not his essay's subject.

He wrote about commitment and faith that freedom would one day be

victorious. His words still echo today:

Shortly, after the Continental Army heard these words, the morale,

which had been crushed by the cold winters of New Jersey, was restored

enough for General Washington to launch the raids on Trenton and

Princeton, thus saving the young Republic.

Commitment and faith had been restored--the faith that freedom is

worth fighting for, that it is worth sacrificing for, and that is what

we as a Nation must remember now more than ever.

I see the leaders are on the floor, and I will not take any more

time, so I yield the floor.