First of all, Mr. President, the quote the Senator from

Kentucky gave of Abraham Lincoln is one of my favorites. I have a

little book called ``A Book of 100 Poems.'' In that book, in addition

to the poem, is the letter President Lincoln wrote to Mrs. Bixby. It is

not a poem but is as beautiful as any poem written.

I have, over the years, taken those words, ``assuage the anguish of

your bereavement'' and I have used that phrase in letters that I write

to many people who have suffered deaths in their families.

I say to my friend from Kentucky, that is a beautiful letter that

President Lincoln wrote. In my ``Book of 100 Poems,'' the letter is

copied that he wrote in hand to Mrs. Bixby.

I appreciate the Senator reading that most magnificent letter, the

words of President Lincoln.

Of course, talking about Pat Tillman makes everyone understand a

little better the sacrifices being made in Iraq.

In response to my friend from Kentucky, the distinguished assistant

Republican leader, in the first war, I voted for it. I was the first

Democrat to announce it publicly. For the first President Bush's

excursion into Iraq, over 90 percent of the costs of that war were

borne by other countries. The casualties were not all U.S. casualties

in that first war.

In this war, more than 90 percent of the costs of the war are borne

by American taxpayers. More than 95 percent of the casualties in Iraq

are Americans. That number is now approaching 800. Twenty-one Americans

were killed on Saturday and Sunday in Iraq.

My friend, the senior Senator from Kentucky, talks disparagingly--

whether he means to or not--about the United Nations. The President

cannot have it both ways. At his press conference he was asked what his

plan was. He said he was waiting to hear from the envoy of the United

Nations in Iraq. He and his administration continually refers to

Brahimi as a person who is beginning to bring some degree of stability

to the plan.

The reason the President answered the question that way is the United

Nations brings some sense of legitimacy to what is going on there. More

importantly than that, if the plan goes forward as some anticipate,

there would be others coming to help. It would take the burden off of

the U.S. taxpayer and especially the men and women of our armed

services.

We are bearing a tremendous burden, not only with our Regular Army,

Navy, and Air Force but with our Reserve Forces, a tremendous burden on

our Reserve and Guard. Those, including the President, obviously, who

refer to Mr. Brahimi are thinking about the need to cut some slack

there to the United States.

The United Nations is an organization we helped create. We are the

largest donor to that organization. It is an imperfect organization, I

would be the first to recognize that. However, it must play a role. It

is one of the only ways that I can see that we can move forward with

more of the support of the American people, which is being lost.

I voted for the resolution to go to Iraq the first time--you have

already heard me say that--and the second time. We cannot cut and run

in Iraq. We have to do what we have to do to bring stability to that

very unstable part of the world.

However, let's not run down the United Nations. We need them to help

bring in others so we do not bear 95 percent of the casualties and more

than 90 percent of the costs of what is going on there. There are other

countries there and I appreciate them being there, but as far as

numbers of troops, we have 135,000 troops; the British have 10,000. The

next largest contingency of troops we have is hired security guards. We

need to do better than what we are doing in Iraq. This is not in any

way to take away from the valor of the men and women serving in that

country.

Just last night, somebody lobbed a mortar shell into a military

compound there. The soldiers are running around thinking that is all of

it and in comes another one and kills five or six of them. These

soldiers, these servicemen of ours serving in Iraq, every minute of

every day are fearing for their lives, whether they are carrying a gun

or driving a truck. We need to have this matter resolved in a way that

is not happening now.

I cannot give a blueprint of what needs to be done, but I am grateful

the President is recognizing Mr. Brahimi can do some good there. That

may not be the only answer, but it is an answer. I hope we can move

forward in this matter and bring peace and stability to an area that

needs it. I recognize if we could bring peace and stability to Iraq, it

would help the whole Middle East. If we could help establish a

democracy in Iraq, it would add to the democracy we already have in

that area, Israel. It could set a system where other countries would

have to focus on how they treat their people. I am all in favor of our

bringing about a better situation in Iraq than certainly existed under

the regime of Saddam Hussein.

I appreciate the comments of my colleague from Kentucky. I know his

heart is in the right place. Hopefully, we can join in moving forward

on this most important issue.