Mr. President, let me say that I am very honored today to

join my friends, Senator Salazar of Colorado and Senator Alexander of

Tennessee, in their efforts to try to restore some nonpartisanship to

our discussion on Iraq. I feel very strongly that we should never have

a party-line vote on Iraq. We have 160,000 troops on the ground. It is

just too important an issue for one party to take one side, the other

party to take another side, and for the White House to do one thing and

Congress to do another. In fact, we talk often in this Chamber about

how there needs to be a political solution inside Baghdad. The truth

is, there needs to be a political resolution inside of Washington, DC,

when it comes to Iraq.

I am honored to lend my name today to this effort by Senator Salazar

and Senator Alexander.

One thing I have noticed in the last several weeks and months--maybe

in the last year--when it comes to Iraq is that there is a lot of

rhetoric. To be honest, that is not helpful. It is not bringing our

troops home earlier. It is not providing more stability inside Iraq. It

is not allowing Iraq to function as a sovereign nation. We need to tone

down the rhetoric and roll up our sleeves and work through this

together.

I also understand that Senator Bennett, Senator Gregg, and Senator

Casey have all joined in this effort as well. It is an honor for me to

be part of this bipartisan solution.

One of the things we are going to emphasize here is Iraqi

accountability. We know that is something which needs to happen inside

Iraq. The Iraqis need to take responsibility for their own country. The

Iraq Study Group talked about this a lot in the pages of their report,

where on page after page they talk about what they believe needs to

happen inside Iraq.

So this bill which Senators Salazar and Alexander will be filing in

the coming weeks talks about diplomatic efforts, about securing Iraq's

borders, promotes economic commerce and trade inside Iraq, political

support, and it talks about a multilateral diplomatic effort. It talks

about milestones and also about redeploying troops. After talking to so

many people in my State and around the country, I think that is where

America wants us to be. They want a stable Iraq.

It is a little bit like what Colin Powell said: It is the Pottery

Barn principle; that is, if you break it, you own it. Well, we went

into Iraq, and we have a lot of responsibility there. I think most

Americans understand that. They don't like what they see on the front

pages of the papers every day or on the evening news, but they do know

we have a responsibility inside Iraq, and they want us, in the Senate,

in the House, and also at the White House, to show leadership. This is

a time for leadership, a time for us to come together on these

principles which the Iraq Study Group laid out--not that every one of

them is exactly right, but they laid out a lot of principles that I

believe many people in this Chamber can rally around and hold on to. If

we implement these and make that our national policy, then I think we

can get better results on Iraq than we have had in the past.

I know General Petraeus has mentioned that we cannot rely on a purely

military solution inside Iraq. I think he is exactly right; I think he

is 100 percent right on that. It needs to be a multifronted effort--

security, political, economic, and diplomatic. We need to do a lot to

help Iraq get back on its feet and become a functioning nation again.

Mr. President, I am honored to join my colleagues in this effort. I

invite other colleagues to look at the Salazar legislation and consider

joining it as well in the coming weeks.