Mr. President, I am honored to join with my friends in

this particular effort. I congratulate the occupant of the chair,

Senator Salazar, and Senator Alexander for putting this forward. We are

seeing people come on board in equal numbers on both sides of the aisle

to demonstrate that this is a bipartisan effort.

Some might say this is an attack on the President's plan. I do not

see it in that fashion at all. I think this is a demonstration of

bipartisan support for an American plan, to see what we can do to get a

more stable Iraq.

When I go to Iraq and talk to the experts, they tell me the war is

being fought on two fronts: It is being fought in Iraq and in

Washington, DC. Al-Qaida has declared Iraq as the front line of their

war on the ``great satan,'' which to them is the United States of

America. The battle being fought in Washington, DC, has to do with

America's resolve in standing up to al-Qaida. The word that is going

out from Osama bin Laden in his audiotapes, and the letters that are

being circulated, is that if we can just hold on long enough, the

battle will be resolved in Washington, DC, as the Americans decide they

no longer want to continue the fight.

By demonstrating in a bipartisan fashion that the Senators of the

United States are willing to talk about long-term commitments and long-

term solutions, we are making our contribution to winning the war in

Washington. General Petraeus has been charged with the security portion

of the war in Iraq. The Iraqi Parliament and the Iraqi Government

themselves must deal with the political problems in Iraq. We must not

let them down by partisan bickering in Washington that encourages al-

Qaida to believe America will walk away from its responsibilities.

This piece of legislation is not about name calling or blaming for

past mistakes. There is no question there have been past mistakes. We

will let the historians sort that out. Our responsibility is to do

today what is needed to bring about an eventual proper resolution.

In every war America has been in, there have been times of darkness,

times of despair. Think about Abraham Lincoln and what he faced with

the continuing bad news from the front in his effort to keep the Union

together. Think about World War II and the bad news that came out of

the first encounters in North Africa and some of the other American

efforts where we were repulsed. If we had all said we are going to turn

our backs on this and walk away, we would not have the kind of world of

peace we have received as a result of our efforts in those wars.

Now is the time for the Congress to say: Regardless of what may or

may not have been a mistake in the past, we still have to stand

together and move forward on the basis of intelligent analysis, and we

are using as our starting point as that analysis the Iraqi Study Group.

The President is not hostile to this. I think he is open to it, and I

think it is incumbent upon the Congress to say to him: Look for new

solutions, but base them on sound analysis, and if you will, we will be

with you, we will move forward in a bipartisan manner to see to it

America does not fail in Iraq.