Mr. President, the Presidential campaign is heating up

and after considerable flipping and flopping, Senator Kerry claims to

have finally presented the American people with something resembling a

firm position on Iraq. It is a four-part plan, and frankly it resembles

the plan President Bush has been pursuing for the last year and a half.

I call it Senator Kerry's ``too little too late to gain credibility''

plan.

Although Kerry has characterized the administration's policy as a

failure, perhaps he simply believes it would be a success were he the

one implementing it. I wonder. Let us take a look.

The first part of Senator Kerry's plan is to ``internationalize

because others must share the burden.'' Let's leave aside the

inconvenient fact that Senator Kerry has denigrated the 19 countries

that participated in the liberation of Iraq or the 34 helping to secure

and rebuild that country today as a ``trumped up and so-called

coalition of the bribed, the coerced, the bought and the extorted.''

This from the man who is so confident of his diplomatic skills.

Senator Kerry fails to understand that no amount of diplomacy will

convince the countries whose interests compete with ours, or the

nations that share our interests but lack our will or capacity to act,

to join our efforts to bring security and freedom to the Middle East

and the terrorists to their knees.

Senator Kerry wants to bring U.S. troops home within the first 6

months of his administration. So his plan is not to share the burden;

it is to pass the buck. But to whom would he pass the buck?

The Financial Times reported yesterday that Germany and France will

not send troops to Iraq even if John Kerry is elected. Indeed, how

could Senator Kerry convince any nation to send troops to a conflict he

himself has called ``the wrong war at the wrong time''?

It would be nice to see the United Nations pulling its own weight

once in a while, but one would have to be living in a fantasy world to

believe that it will do so. If it continues to allow tyrannies like

Sudan to chair the Human Rights Commission, the U.N. will follow the

League of Nations into permanent and deserved irrelevance.

The second part of Kerry's plan is to ``train Iraqis because they

must be responsible for their own security.'' Adding further confusion

to his inconsistent claims that, first, the U.S. needs more troops in

Iraq, that he would bring them home within the first 6 months of his

administration, and that this would make America stronger at home and

more respected in the world, Senator Kerry now claims the U.S. is not

doing enough to train Iraqis to provide for their own security.

Well, about a year ago I traveled to Iraq and I stood with GEN David

Petraeus in Mosul where I witnessed the graduation ceremony of an Iraqi

security force, a unit trained by the 101st Airborne. I recall being

impressed that so many Iraqis were willing to risk their lives to help

secure their newly free country.

Petraeus completed his tour as the commanding general of the 101st

Airborne in February of this year. After making sure his soldiers

returned safely to Fort Campbell, KY, Dave Petraeus received his third

star and went back to Baghdad, where he assumed responsibility for

training Iraq's army and security forces. He is the right man for the

job and, for me, his views carry enormous weight. He had an op-ed in

the Washington Post this past Sunday that I would commend to my

colleagues, in particular the junior Senator from Massachusetts. In it,

he notes:

But he cautions that:

This is David Petraeus.

So it would seem the training of Iraqis is well underway.

The third part of Kerry's plan is to ``move forward with

reconstruction, because that's an important way to stop the spread of

terror.''

I agree. When I spoke with General Petraeus in Iraq last year, he

told me that: ``Money is ammunition,'' and that it was critical to get

the Iraqi economy working again in order to provide jobs for Iraqis who

may otherwise turn to violence. I returned to Washington and lobbied my

colleagues to vote for the $87 billion to supply our troops and for

Iraqi reconstruction, because I had seen firsthand how important it was

to get Iraq's economy back on track.

It is a shame Senator Kerry was not listening to General Petraeus

when he voted against this $87 billion for our troops. In fact, Senator

Kerry still does not seem to get it, because he complained just

recently that too much money was being spent on reconstruction in Iraq

and too little was being spent in America.

We won the debate on the $87 billion for our troops and

reconstruction in spite of Senator Kerry's--and Senator Edwards'--

opposition. And although I am heartened Senator Kerry has come to

appreciate the importance of this aid, I hope he understands that

Presidents, unlike Senators, do not often get second chances to make

crucial decisions.

The fourth and final plan in Senator Kerry's plan is to: ``help the

Iraqis achieve a viable government, because it is up to them to run

their own country.''

You could call this the ``Do as I say, not as I do'' plan, because

Senator Kerry may have undermined the credibility of Iraq's Prime

Minister--who traveled to America to consult with President Bush, to

deliver a speech to a Joint Session of Congress, and rebut the

criticism of those who believe Iraq and the world are not better off

with Saddam Hussein in an Iraqi jail.

Kerry's wrong-headed criticism of Ayad Allawi--who risks his life

every day to bring peace and democracy to Iraq--was as repugnant as it

was undiplomatic. If a President Kerry were to treat foreign leaders as

disgracefully as he treated Prime Minister Allawi, he would find it

difficult to live up his campaign promise of being ``more respected in

the world.''

Yet, Kerry has already done diplomatic damage, in my view. By

maligning the judgment of America's most important new ally in the

Middle East, Senator Kerry has fired a political shot that will be

heard more loudly in the streets of Baghdad or Tehran than in Boston or

Orlando. His comments were intended to undercut President

Bush's standing in the eyes of American voters, but they may have the

consequence of undermining Prime Minister Allawi's position in Iraq.

If a potential President of the United States doesn't take the Iraqi

Prime Minister seriously, why should the terrorists?

Writing about Iraq's transition from totalitarianism to democracy,

General Petraeus concluded his op-ed with this line: It will not be

easy, but few worthwhile things are.

Bringing democracy and stability to the heart of the Middle East is

more than worthwhile. It is a critical component of our war against

terrorists. For if we fail to offer an alternative to the corrupt

theocracies and dictatorships of that region, we will forever be

fighting the war against terrorism defensively, making it much more

likely that we will be fighting terrorists in Chicago and New York than

in the cities where they live and train.

We have an opportunity to fight side by side with our new Iraqi

allies against the terrorists who share goals and tactics with those

who hijacked planes on 9/11, who murdered hundreds of school children

in Russia, and who bombed innocent civilians in Bali, Istanbul, Riyadh,

Madrid, Jerusalem, and elsewhere. And if we fail to win this fight it

will not be just Prime Minister Allawi's credibility that suffers, it

will be our own.

Mr. President, I ask that General Petraeus's op-ed be printed in the

Record.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in

the Record, as follows: