Mr. President, there is an old statement which has

become enshrined in our society now as the alcoholic's prayer. It goes

like this:

I suggest that as we face the world today as the world's strongest

power economically, militarily, culturally, educationally--in almost

every category--we should view our responsibilities through the prism

of the alcoholic's prayer: Grant us the serenity to accept the things

we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can, and the

wisdom to know the difference.

As I listen to the debate on Iraq, as I listen to the partisan and

political comments, many of them well-meaning and properly addressed, I

pray for the third leg of that saying--the wisdom to know the

difference between the things we can change and the things we cannot

because many of the things being raised with respect to our situation

in Iraq are things we cannot change. Many of the complaints are against

things we can change, but we are not because we are wallowing in

complaint and self-criticism when we should be moving ahead.

Let me give you an example. The first question we need to address

with respect to our military activity in Iraq and elsewhere in the

region is this: Are we engaged solely in a military exercise with

respect to Iraq or are we, in fact, in a world war against terrorism?

We need the wisdom to get the answer to that question and know the

difference because the difference is vast.

I am one who believes that we are, in fact, engaged in a worldwide

war against terrorism. We must have the serenity to accept the fact

that war is not going to go away if we ignore it. There are many who

say there is no connection between Saddam Hussein and 9/11; therefore,

we should spend all of our time going after those who dealt with 9/11

and not pay any attention to Iraq. Well, that may have been a

legitimate argument prior to the time we went into Iraq, but it is now

irrelevant because we are there. We are there because this body, with

over 70 votes, gave the President our support for going in there; and

the United Nations, by a unanimous vote in the Security Council, gave

the President support to go in. This body and the United Nations

overwhelmingly, along with the House of Representatives, said this is

the right thing to do. We did it, and we must accept the fact that we

are there, and complaining about maybe we made a mistake doesn't change

the reality that we are there.

I am one who thinks we made the right decision. I am happy that David

Kay, the inspector for weapons of mass destruction who went into Iraq,

thinks we made the right decision. When I talk to audiences in Utah, I

say: How many of you know that David Kay discovered there were no

weapons of mass destruction in Iraq? Everybody raises

his hand. Then I say: How many of you know that David Kay said, based

on what he discovered, that Saddam Hussein was more dangerous than we

thought? Well, we didn't know that. But that is a fact that we must

recognize and have the wisdom to go forward in the face of that fact.

Now, if indeed we are engaged in a worldwide war on terror, that

means that our being in Iraq is not only for the sake of the Iraqis, it

is for the sake of Americans. Some say we have no business being there,

it is not our country, we don't care. Well, one of the realities we

have to face is we are involved in the world whether we like it or not.

Those on the campaign trail who are saying bring the troops home are

the same people who are saying stop buying at any retailer who

purchases goods abroad. Those who are saying don't have anything to do

with any company that has any employees abroad do not realize the

fundamental truth that America is involved in the world whether we like

it or not, and we cannot withdraw. We cannot become isolationists. We

cannot hide behind our two oceans militarily or economically.

The world has fundamentally changed. It fundamentally changed when

the Berlin Wall came down and the ``evil empire'' ceased to exist. We

are engaged around the world whether we like it or not. We must have

the wisdom to recognize that fundamental truth and act accordingly; we

must have the courage to act according to the truth.

I went to Iraq with the leader and my colleague Senator Ensign from

Nevada and spent a day with the commanders there. You can say that in

one day in Iraq, what do you learn? Obviously, you don't learn

everything you need to in one day to know the whole situation, but you

learn a whole lot more in one day in Iraq than you do sitting in

America reading the newspapers.

I learned the forces that are opposed to us in Iraq have as their

goal civil war and a failed state. Ultimately, what they want to have

happen is for the Iraqi government that is being created now to fail.

They want the Iraqis in anarchy. They want the economy destroyed. Why

would they want such terrible things? They think out of that chaos they

can seize power and come back into control.

Most who are involved in this insurgency are former supporters and

officers of Saddam Hussein. They are hoping that through chaos they can

recapture that which they could not hold in the face of the American

military incursion into that country.

Grant us the wisdom to know the difference between a difficult

situation and an impossible one. There are those who are saying Iraq is

Bush's Vietnam. I do not think Iraq is Bush's Vietnam because Bush did

not go into Iraq with the same motives that President Kennedy went into

Vietnam, with the same naivete that President Kennedy and President

Johnson pursued Vietnam.

We should have the courage to change the situation in Iraq by

persistence, by holding the course steadily, and by recognizing that

there are people in the Middle East who do want freedom.

There are pessimists who say: No, come on, Bennett, you say to accept

the things you cannot change, and one of the things you cannot change

is that the Muslim people do not want freedom.

I refuse to accept that. Maybe I do not have the wisdom to recognize

the difference, but I refuse to accept that.

Having visited with some of the Iraqis, I have found some who said

they clearly do, most particularly the new Prime Minister Allawi. We

visited with him. He struck me as a very clear-headed, careful guy who

fully understood the situation.

As we were finishing our conversation, I said to him: Accept our

thanks for your willingness to put your life on the line for this

effort.

His life is in jeopardy. Two ministers of his government have already

been assassinated, and he is clearly the chief target of those who

would plunge Iraq into civil war.

I was interested in his answer. When I thanked him for his

willingness to risk his life to make this government work, he looked at

me and responded: It is my country.

There is an Iraqi leader willing to risk his life for his country. We

have the responsibility, I believe, to do everything we can to help

him.

I yield the floor.