Mr. President, in approximately half an hour we begin

proceeding to debate on the 9/11 bill. Saturday a week ago we concluded

without resolution a debate on an Iraq resolution. I come to the floor

of the Senate this morning to share with my colleagues my thoughts on

Iraq and where we are, and to do so in the context of 9/11.

When I collected my thoughts about what I would say this morning, I

thought back to a lot of lessons I learned from a great Georgian. In

fact, on Saturday of last week, the day we had that debate, it was the

75th birthday of former Senator Zell Bryan Miller of Towns County, GA.

I learned a lot from Zell Miller in my lifetime. I learned humility

when he beat me for Governor of Georgia in 1990. I learned respect for

class in 1996 when he came back and asked me to chair the State Board

of Education after he taught me a lesson in humility 6 years earlier.

When I read his book, ``Corps Values: Everything You Need to Know I

Learned in the Marines,'' I learned about commitment.

Also in the final debate I had with Zell Miller in 1990, I learned

about how you snatch victory when somebody else thought they had it. In

the closing debate, 48 hours before the general election when the

cameras went on each of us for our last 60 seconds, Zell Miller's

closing remarks were simply this.

In taking that remark, I would remind my colleagues we didn't get to

where we are by ourselves. We got here together at least in terms of

Iraq. After 9/11 happened, within days, the United States of America

changed and the President announced to the Congress we would no longer

as a nation have a defense policy based on reaction. We would have a

defense policy based on preemption. We learned on 9/11 you can't wait

to find the smoking gun in terrorism to react, because if you do, it is

too late. In the case of 9/11, there were 3,000 dead citizens of this

world because we didn't preempt. The United Nations, 171 countries,

voted unanimously in favor of resolution 1441 which authorized or

threatened military action against Saddam Hussein if he didn't

cooperate with the disclosures and the inspectors that the U.N. was

prompting. When the U.N. failed to act and this President, George W.

Bush, wanted to act, he came to this Congress and we voted

overwhelmingly to support using force to hold Saddam Hussein

accountable and to go after weapons of mass destruction and to go after

those sanctuaries of terrorism.

One would think, in listening to the debate in the Senate in the last

few weeks, that some people have bad memories. They forgot about those

votes. They forgot about the fact that George Bush didn't get there by

himself. He got there with us. Now, are we disappointed in some of the

things that have happened? Yes. Do we want to change some things? Yes.

Do we differ? Yes, and the Senate is the place we differ. But while we

differ, we should not discourage our troops. We should not discourage

the people who are deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan and around the

world in terms of our resolve.

So I would suggest as we go to the debate on the 9/11 bill, we

consider it as a wonderful opportunity to make a simple statement, a

statement that while we may differ, there is one thing we don't differ

on: We don't differ on the fact that we will give our troops the

support and the finances and everything they need to carry out the

mission to which they are assigned. That is precisely what Senator Judd

Gregg of New Hampshire wanted to do in his resolution that never could

come to the floor in that 2 weeks of debate on the Iraq resolution that

failed to get enough votes to get a final vote. It is time, with a bill

as relevant as this

9/11, which is the genesis of all we deal with today, that we send that

clear message. While we may differ on some policies, we do not differ

on the financial support and the absolute commitment to our men and

women in harm's way.

I wish to put one other thing into perspective. As much bad news as

we always talk about, a lot of good things happen. While some people

may differ with the President's commitment to a surge in Iraq, even in

the anticipation of that surge, there are some good things that have

happened. Moqtada al-Sadr left Sadr City. He saw what was coming. Prime

Minister al-Maliki already called for--and there are now talks about

it--a regional conference on Iraq, including all the neighbors in the

region--something many in here have called for, and I support,

including getting the Iranians and Syrians into dialog.

Last week, the Iraqi council approved the foundation of a hydrocarbon

bill, oil revenue sharing with the people and provinces of Iraq. That

is soon to go to that assembly. Think of something; the people of Iraq

are on the doorstep of having equity for the very first time in their

history.

There are also disappointing things that have happened. Yes, we wish

we were home with a victory already. But we have accomplished a lot,

and we are this close to accomplishing the ultimate goal, which is a

peaceful democracy in Iraq, terrorism without a sanctuary, and a

statement that people are more important than power and dictators and

terror.

The United States is the country that has, in history, led and today

needs to lead as well. I encourage our colleagues, as we get into this

9/11 debate, let's not forget about the debate we had on Iraq. We ought

to send a clear message of support to our troops, understanding that we

may differ on the policy. It should be clear and precise that this

Congress and this country will see to it that our men and women have

the finances and resources to carry out the orders to which they are

responsible and they take on without any reservation.

I began my remarks by acknowledging my friend, Zell Miller, and his

75th birthday and all of the lessons I have learned from him. He

preceded me in this Senate, and I extend to him a belated birthday wish

today in this speech. I also want us to be reminded of Zell Miller's

many speeches on the U.S. Marine Corps, service to our country,

patriotism, and commitment. Zell Miller knew as a soldier, he knew as

the Governor of a State commanding the National Guard, and as a member

of the Senate that while there may be political differences on the end

result, there should be no difference in the support for the men and

women who defend us and fight for freedom every day.

As this debate unfolds, it is my hope we will have the opportunity to

bring the Gregg amendment to the floor and vote to send a clear message

to our men and women in harm's way that we support them, the funding

will be there, and we will stay with them as they pursue the cause on

behalf of peace, liberty, freedom, and democracy in Iraq, Afghanistan,

and around the world.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.