the amendment that is pending before us.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 12:30 having arrived, the Senate will now stand in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:45 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. SUNUNU).

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2007—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, the distinguished Democratic leader seeks recognition now. I ask unanimous consent that the majority leader be recognized immediately following Senator REID.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I will at an appropriate time send an amendment to the desk. The amendment will read as follows:

At the appropriate place insert the following:

It is the sense of the Senate on the Need for a New Direction in Iraq Policy and in the Civilian Leadership of the Department of Defense.

Here are the findings.

1. U.S. forces have served honorably and courageously in Iraq, with over 2,600 brave Americans having made the ultimate sacrifice and over 20,000 wounded.

2. The current ''stay the course'' policy in Iraq has made America less secure, reduced the readiness of our troops, and burdened America's taxpayers with over $300 billion in additional debt.

3. With weekly attacks against American and Iraqi troops at their highest levels since the start of the war, and sectarian violence intensifying, it is clear that staying the course in Iraq is not a strategy for success.

Therefore, it is the sense of the Senate that:

1. Our troops deserve and the American people expect the Bush Administration to provide competent civilian leadership and a true strategy for success in Iraq.

2. President Bush needs to change course in Iraq to provide a strategy for success. One indication of a change of course would be to replace the current Secretary of Defense.

In war, strategy is the searchlight that illuminates the way ahead. In its absence, the U.S. military would fight hard and well but blindly and the noble sacrifices of soldiers would be undercut by the lack of thoughtful leadership at the top that soberly assessed the realities of the situation and constructed a response.

That is a direct quote from a book called ''Fiasco,'' which was written by Washington Post senior Pentagon correspondent, Thomas Ricks. The quote concerns a war and a Secretary of Defense I would like to talk about today. The war is Iraq, the Secretary of Defense is Donald Rumsfeld.

For me, it was not a quick or easy decision to come to the floor to demand that President Bush replace Secretary Rumsfeld. I have always held the opinion that the President of the United States deserves ample leeway in determining who serves in his Cabinet. Regrettably, after 5 years of mismanagement and mistakes in Iraq that have made America less safe, the time for that leeway has passed. So, today, as I have indicated, I will offer an amendment expressing the sense of the Senate that President Bush replace Secretary Rumsfeld immediately.

This amendment is bigger than Donald Rumsfeld. This is about changing course in Iraq and the President demonstrating to the American people he understands America cannot stay the course when the present course is taking our country in the wrong direction. The United States currently has about 140,000 soldiers serving in far away Iraq. Thousands have served coming from Nevada. Hundreds are there right now. They are bravely performing their jobs, but it is time for the President to do his and chart a new direction in that far away land called Iraq.

In the last month, scores of U.S. soldiers and marines have been killed. Hundreds of U.S. troops have been wounded. More than a thousand Iraqis have been killed. American taxpayers have lost another $12 billion to this mismanaged war. The totals for this conflict now approach 2,700 Americans killed and over 20,000 Americans wounded. A third of these wounded soldiers and marines are missing arms, legs, eyes. They are paralyzed or coping with brain injuries, and over $300 billion of debt already has been expended for which the American taxpayer must foot the bill.

Today, because of Iraq, the readiness of our troops has declined to levels not seen since Vietnam. There is not a single Army nondeployed combat brigade that is currently prepared to meet its wartime mission. I repeat, not a single nondeployed combat brigade is currently prepared to meet its wartime mission. And the Chief of the National Guard has said the Guard is ''even further behind or in an even more dire situation than the Army.''

In peacetime such a state of our military would be disturbing. At a time of war, this is unacceptable. The facts on the ground do not lie. All the speeches by President Bush, all the speeches by the Vice President, all the speeches by Secretary Rumsfeld do not change what is taking place on the ground in that desert called Iraq. The current course in Iraq is not working, not for our military, not for the Iraqi people, and not for our security.

Five years after the attacks of September 11, 2001, America is not as safe as it needs to be. Secretary Rumsfeld and the Bush White House have mastered the politics of national security, but as we have seen day after day, week after week, month after month, in Iraq they have failed to do what it takes to make America safe.

This is not a personal attack. I am not looking to pick a fight with Secretary Rumsfeld or the President of the United States, but it is about making America as safe as we can and should be. Secretary Rumsfeld's failed track record is well documented, and the consequences of his mismanagement on American national security are well known. Secretary Rumsfeld was a leading participant in the administration's cherry-picking and manipulation of intelligence in the run-up to the war, exaggerating Iraq's connections to al-Qaida and the threat posed by its weapons of mass destruction—which didn't exist.

As a result of his and others' actions, our Nation was rushed to war based on faulty facts, and the Pentagon is now spending $20 million on a public relations campaign to rebrand the war to the American people. New money, $20 million—public relations.

Secretary Rumsfeld was one of those who ignored the advice of the uniformed military and went into battle in Iraq with too few troops and no plan—no plan to win the peace. As a result, the insurgency was able to gain a foothold in Iraq, and now even the Pentagon is forced to conclude that civil and sectarian strife threatens our troops and the future of the country of Iraq. Secretary Rumsfeld was the one who directed disbanding the Iraqi Army and purging of all Baath Party officials from the Iraqi Government. His lack of preparation delayed the training of Iraqi security forces for untold time.

As a result, here we are, more than 3 years later, with not a single Iraqi Army battalion that can operate independently—not one. We should remember the Secretary's mistakes are not all buried in the past. Just last week he demonstrated again he is not the man for the job. As he spoke to the American Legion this became very clear. His remarks were wrong, they were unnecessary, and they were a slap in the face to every American.

Rumsfeld's speech was filled with reckless, irresponsible assertions, but the most insulting and misguided words compared the critics of the Bush administration's Iraq policy to those who appeased the Nazis, leading to World War II—a statement made by our Secretary of Defense. These assertions were offensive and indicative of a Secretary of Defense who has lost his way, who is not capable of overseeing America's defense or certainly a new direction in Iraq; who is more concerned, it seems, with the Bush administration's political fortunes than the safety and security of the American people; and who must be replaced.

Keith Olbermann of NBC observed, after Rumsfeld's comments, as follows:

[His speech] did not merely serve to impugn the morality or intelligence—indeed the loyalty—of the majority of Americans who oppose the transient occupants of the highest offices in the land. Worse, still, it credits those same transient occupants—our

employees—with a total omniscience; a total omniscience which neither common sense, nor this administration's track record abroad, suggests they deserve.

We need to change course, and it starts at the top with President Bush.

Before anyone dismisses this amendment as partisan politics, I would like to remind my colleagues that Democrats are not alone in criticizing the poor performance, the faulty performance, the unfortunate performance of Secretary Rumsfeld. In fact, on page 18 of the Hill newspaper today, there is a full story on all the Republicans who oppose Secretary Rumsfeld and say that he should leave.

From the military we have heard from at least eight retired generals have called for his resignation. These are some of the best of the best. Who are these eight? Are they fly-by-nighters? Do they have any ability to speak, to say Rumsfeld should go? Who are they?

Retired MG Charles Swannack, former commander of the Army's 82nd Airborne Division—that is a real soldier; retired MG John Batiste—whom we have all met; he used to come and brief us here—who commanded the Army's 1st Infantry Division in Iraq in 2003 and 2004. I would think he would know or have some idea of the competency of the Secretary of Defense.

Third, Marine LTG Greg Newbold; No. 4, MG Paul Eaton, who was in charge of training Iraqi troops in 2003 and 2004; Former NATO Commander Wesley Clark, a four-star general; Army MG John Riggs; Marine GEN Anthony Zinni, the former Commander of the United States Central Command; LTG Paul van Riper, United States Marine Corps, Director of the Command and Staff College, Quantico, VA.

Those are just eight. There are many more.

From the Republican side of the aisle, we not only have page 18 of the Hill—anyone within sound of my voice can read that. I am not going to go through all the names. We have heard, though, from Senators in this body—Senators MCCAIN and HAGEL, two war heroes from Vietnam. JOHN MCCAIN served in a prison war camp for years—not months, years. Senator HAGEL saved his brother from death in the battlefields of Vietnam. Both are highly decorated. I repeat, two heroes of Vietnam who have been harsh critics of the Secretary of Defense have said they have no confidence in Rumsfeld. Senator HAGEL said:

> The concern I've had is, at a very dangerous time, (the) Secretary of Defense does not command the respect and confidence of our men and women in uniform . . . There is no real question about his capacity to lead at this critical time.

This is Senator HAGEL quoted in the Lincoln Journal Star.

In the House of Representatives, the list is very long. I will not name all of the Members. Longtime Congressman Chris Shays from Connecticut, who has been in Iraq 14 times, is quoted in today's New York Times as saying he would vote for an amendment of ''no confidence'' if it came to the House of Representatives.

These men are card-carrying conservatives. If we go out of Congress, we can find other leading conservatives. How about William Kristol?

> Actually, we have a pretty terrific Army. It's performed a lot better in this war than the secretary of defense has . . . Surely Don Rumsfeld is not the defense secretary Bush should want to have for the remainder of his second term.

From the Washington Post, that is a direct quote.

Across the country and in my own State of Nevada, people from all walks of life have called for Donald Rumsfeld to step down, asking the President to make a change. This would be a start in the change of direction. There is a reason for this bipartisan groundswell: Having the right leadership to keep America safe is not a partisan issue; it is a national priority.

Today in the Senate, I hope we see similar bipartisan support for this amendment, this vote of no confidence. There is no better way for the Senate to show the American people and, indeed, the world that we are committed to success in Iraq and a more secure America than by demanding that President Bush find leadership from the Pentagon that matches the skill, determination, and commitment of our valiant troops. We need a vote on this amendment. It cannot fall to parliamentary tricks. Our troops and the American people must be given the opportunity to see that the Senate stands with them in seeking a new direction for our country.

This amendment, which I will send to the desk later, says:

SENSE OF THE SENATE ON THE NEED FOR A NEW DIRECTION IN IRAQ POLICY AND IN THE CIVILIAN LEADERSHIP OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Findngs:

1. U.S. forces have served honorably and courageously in Iraq, with over 2,600 brave Americans having made the ultimate sacrifice and over 20,000 wounded.

2. The current ''stay the course'' policy in Iraq has made America less secure, reduced the readiness of our troops, and burdened America's taxpayers with over $300 billion in additional debt.

3. With weekly attacks against American and Iraqi troops at their highest levels since the start of the war, and sectarian violence intensifying, it is clear that staying the course in Iraq is not a strategy for success.

Therefore it is the sense of the Senate that:

1. Our troops deserve and the American people expect the Bush Administration to provide competent civilian leadership and a true strategy for success in Iraq.

2. President Bush needs to change course in Iraq to provide a strategy for success. One indication of a change of course would be to replace the current Secretary of Defense.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, the distinguished Senator, the Democrat leader, the Senator from Nevada, is a close friend. I am sad to disagree with him as violently as I do.

I have known Secretary Rumsfeld, Don Rumsfeld, for many years. He came to Washington with Congressman Jerry Ford. He has been in and out of Washington. He has done a great many things, committed a great portion of his life to the service of this country. He is highly intelligent. He is one of the first persons to serve as Secretary of Defense twice. He served previously as Secretary of Defense. He was a person who served in the White House. He has been a very impressive Secretary of Defense.

Since 1981, either Senator INOUYE or I have been the chairman of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. During that time, we have met with Secretaries of Defense. I met with them prior to that time, and I served in the Eisenhower administration and knew the Secretaries of Defense then and knew them personally. I can think of no one who has worked harder as Secretary of Defense than Don Rumsfeld.

I have been in meetings with him and members of the Joint Chiefs—with all of the Joint Chiefs—with other members of the defense and intelligence establishment. The rapport he has built up among those who serve this country in uniform and serve this country in the intelligence field is overwhelming. I have been to meetings he has held with the Chiefs, just quiet dinner meetings, to discuss basic subjects that were part of our jurisdiction, the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee jurisdiction. I have seen the way those people interact with Secretary Rumsfeld.

I know some people say there are dissidents in the Department of Defense. It would be surprising in a country as large as ours, with a Defense Department as large as ours, if there were not some. I do believe he has the support of those who are involved in managing our activities at home and abroad now in the defense area. He has a steady hand. I know he has the trust of the President. I admire the work he has done.

I find it unfortunate that this bill will be held up now for a period of time debating the future of Secretary Rumsfeld. I say categorically that this amendment is nongermane to this bill. It is subject to a point of order. I will make the point of order when the amendment is laid down. Everyone realizes that.

The time we take to discuss this subject is going to delay getting this bill to the President to be signed. I repeat what I have been saying for over a month: it must be to the President and signed and the money ready to be allocated on October 1. The funds are absolutely necessary this time. There will be no bridge for this period. These moneys must be available. I hope Members of the Senate will be brief. I will be reasonably brief in terms of what I am saying about my good friend, the Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld.

He has forged close relationships. He has earned senior military leaders' confidence. Just 2 weeks ago, I was in Fairbanks with him when he dedicated the Lend-Lease Memorial, the memorial to those Army Air Corps pilots who flew planes to Fairbanks and the Russian pilots who flew the planes on into Russia, going across the Bering Strait, going across Siberia, going across the Urals and into the area where they could be used in the defense of the Allies against the Nazi challenge to the world. Secretary Rumsfeld was overwhelming.

The interesting thing was our partner at the dinner table was the Secretary of Defense from Russia—a gentleman with a great deal of capability, by the way. He speaks English very well. We had a delightful conversation about the past, about the war.

It was my honor to serve in World War II as an Army Air Corps pilot. I was pleased to see so many of my colleagues. Everyone was delighted with Secretary Rumsfeld and was overwhelmed to have their pictures taken with him.

This man deserves the support of the Senate. He does not deserve the opposition, I am sad to say, in my opinion, on a purely political basis. There may be some on this side of the aisle who have lost confidence, but this Senator has not.

I hope and I pray that Members of the Senate will be reasonably brief in their comments on this proposal.

Mr. WARNER. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. STEVENS. I am happy to yield.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I will eventually address my own remarks, but as the distinguished Democratic leader spoke, we had the majority leader here. It was his intention, of course, to follow the Democratic leader with his remarks. He was called to the White House, and therefore we will have to hear from our distinguished majority leader later in the day on this matter.

If I could ask my colleagues across the aisle, perhaps we could alternate. Senator STEVENS has spoken; perhaps I could follow your next speaker as a matter of comity.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, let me say initially——

Mr. STEVENS. I still have the floor. I am happy to yield. I want to have the consent entered into. If the Senator from Illinois is willing to enter into the agreement, we can go back and forth across the aisle. I am happy to agree to that unanimous consent with that understanding.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Let me say initially that I am sure during the course of the debate there will be many raising the question of whether we should spend this time on this debate. The fact that we might spend 4 hours on the debate over a war we are now facing for our fourth year indicates that it truly is appropriate.

What we would like to do is ask unanimous consent that the following Democratic Senators be recognized in the order as stated with the understanding that if a Republican Senator seeks recognition, they would be recognized in alternating fashion.

I will read the list of Democratic Senators in the order in which they will speak: Senators SCHUMER, DURBIN, LEVIN, REED of Rhode Island, KERRY, CLINTON, KENNEDY, HARKIN, BOXER, DAYTON, CARPER, DORGAN, MURRAY, and MIKULSKI.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, at this point in time, I reserve, with the understanding that I encourage it be agreed to, but the distinguished Senator from Texas, the Senator from Alaska, and others are going to work on the sequencing over here, so I wonder if we could just informally say we will follow that until such time as one of these two come over and agree.

Mr. DURBIN. In response to the Senator from Virginia, this only reflects the order of the Democratic speakers, but if the Senator would like to withhold the agreement of this until the Senator has his complete list——

Mr. WARNER. A list, thank you.

Mr. DURBIN.—I am happy to do that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The request is withdrawn.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that Senator SCHUMER from New York be recognized for this side of the aisle.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I will be brief. I know we have a long list of Members who wish to speak on this weighty and important matter.

First, I compliment the minority leader. The resolution he has put forward is well thought out and covers a range of issues for those who believe the war in Iraq needs a new direction; therefore, I am proud to support this resolution. I hope we can get bipartisan support for it. Most Americans—Democrats, Independents, and Republicans—believe we need a new direction in Iraq. That is what this resolution personifies.

Our troops on the ground and their loved ones here at home deserve a clear policy, a plan, from this administration—not rhetoric, not name-calling, not ''kneecapping''—a plan, a direction. We cannot continue to pour lives and resources into Iraq without a clear plan for transitioning the security of Iraq to Iraqis. With the insurgency diving into civil war, we need to come up with this plan now.

No Americans anticipated that the main goal of our troops would be to police a civil war, knowing the longtime hatred between the Shiites and the Sunnis, between the Shiites and the Kurds, and the Sunnis and the Kurds. Yet that is what this war is devolving into right now.

In sum, to fight a war on terror, we need to be both strong and smart. With Secretary Rumsfeld and this administration, you do see a great deal of strength, but we do not see enough of the smarts. We can have both. The two are not contradictory.

Furthermore, Secretary Rumsfeld's comments last month before the American Legion show he does not get it. The President's comments yesterday show he doesn't get it. We do not need to be reminded that Osama bin Laden is still alive. It is 5 years since September 11, and he is still alive. We will address that in an amendment both colleagues from North Dakota will bring up.

Certainly, when Secretary Rumsfeld tries to draw the analogy to World War II, the analogy is flawed. Back in the late 1930s, indeed, there were many Americans who wished to appease Hitler and thought he could be won over. I don't know of an American who thinks we can appease the terrorists, al-Qaida and the others who strike against us. It is a false analogy. I dare them to name a single Member of this Senate or the other body or anyone else who is seeking appeasements of the terrorists.

Secretary Rumsfeld's speech in Utah was a low point. We got a lot of name-calling, more slogans, but for all the hype, we did not get any new policies. One has to ask: Is the name-calling, is the hype—are there imperfect historical analogies made because there is no plan? That is what it seems to be.

When the American people—Democrats, Independents, and Republicans—are crying out, in droves, for a change in direction and a new policy, we hear none. We never get a plan. Unfortunately, we also often do not get straight answers.

When Secretary Rumsfeld was asked by a member of our Armed Forces about the lack of body armor, he could not give a direct and forthright answer. We must get answers on what has gone wrong. We need to hear a plan for getting it right. Unfortunately, we have heard neither from this administration, and particularly our Secretary of Defense.

This is not even about the end game because that is the President's responsibility. And we are going to be focusing on President Bush repeatedly on that issue. This is also about the implementation of the administration's own goals, and that falls on Secretary Rumsfeld's shoulders.

When a schoolteacher tells one of our colleagues, Senator DORGAN, that she had to pay for the body armor for her son who was in Iraq, something is wrong with the implementation. That does not go to the plan. That does not go to whether you are a hawk or dove. Everyone would think our troops would need body armor. Yet tens of thousands did not get it on Secretary Rumsfeld's watch.

When Iraq was supposed to have, by now, a self-sufficient army that could guard against a civil war, and it is not even close, the implementation of that falls on Secretary Rumsfeld's shoulders. Not even discussing whether democratization is right, it has not been done appropriately or properly.

So to say that Secretary Rumsfeld should be removed from office does not let the President off the hook. He is responsible for the policies, and those are not working. But Secretary Rumsfeld has not only gone along with those policies, he has been the lead figure in the failure of the actual implementation of those policies.

Democrats want new strategies and new ideas to fight a strong war on terror, to secure the peace in Iraq. We certainly do not want the continuation of the status quo, which is clearly not moving Iraq in the right direction.

There have been major tactical failures which Secretary Rumsfeld and the administration refuse to admit: failure to protect vital infrastructure, failure to protect the streets from looters and violence, failure to protect a strong Iraqi security force.

However, these failures are among many, and they are things that neither the President nor Secretary Rumsfeld will own up to, much less address.

People in this administration, this week, are giving a lot of speeches on this topic. But they never talk about a plan, a change in direction, what we are doing wrong, why it has not worked, and what has to change to make it right. If you ignore the realities and simply engage in a game of name-calling and sloganeering, you are never going to solve the very real problems.

In conclusion, Mr. President, the bottom line is very simple: The American people want some answers. What is the game plan in Iraq? How are we going to win the war on terror? We need answers to these questions and a new direction in Iraq. Removing Secretary Rumsfeld from office will be a first step to accomplishing that goal.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. DEMINT. Thank you, Mr. President.

I am afraid if my Democratic colleagues spent half the time helping us fight this war on terror as they do attacking the administration we would be a lot closer to winning this war. But, unfortunately, they are very united in defeatism, in their negative attacks on the President, and, in the process, encouraging terrorists all around the world, sending the signal that America is frustrated and ready to quit.

America is not ready to quit.

As they continue their attacks, I would like to remind them of the progress we have made since President Bush took office. Before President Bush took office, after 8 years of President Clinton's administration, Afghanistan was a worldwide staging area for terrorism, where the training took place, communications were organized, financing took place. Iraq was sitting on multiple chemical weapons in defiance of the United Nations resolution. Numerous terrorist attacks had occurred against our warships, our embassies. And our administration, under President Clinton, did nothing.

Again, terrorism was unchallenged and undetected. President Clinton was doing exactly what our Democratic colleagues want President Bush to do now. They tried to stop the PATRIOT Act so that we would not have the tools to fight terrorism. They have tried to stop the interception of communications from terrorists into this country so we could not find out who they were and what they were planning. They have complained about tracing the financing of terrorism around the world—when this President took action.

We need to remind our Democratic colleagues that before President Bush took office, 9/11 had already been planned under the Clinton administration, been financed. The communication was set up. All the tools that the President needs and has used to protect us were not used then. So 9/11 has happened.

But since 9/11, this President took action. And with the support of this Congress, he along with his staff has changed Afghanistan. Afghanistan is no longer the staging area for terrorism. And a signal has been sent to any country that does it.

Afghanistan is now a democracy. Women can vote and go to school. Iraq no longer has control of their arsenal of chemical weapons. Iraq is moving toward a democracy, admittedly with many difficulties.

But if our Democratic colleagues had their way, Iraq would become the new staging area for terrorists. Being between Iran and Syria, if we leave before this country can stand up on its own, everyone knows it will be in the hands of terrorists.

We cannot retreat. We must fight this global war that has been declared on us. There is a reason there has been no attacks in this country since 9/11. It is because we have been attacking the terrorists all around the world.

The Democrats are united. They are united in the idea of retreat and defeatism. They attack this President with no ideas of their own. They are trying to take the tools to fight terrorism away from this President—the PATRIOT Act, the interception of communications, tracing finances. On every turn, the Democrats are obstructing the things that have changed with this President that allowed terrorism to grow unchallenged for 8 years under the Clinton administration.

Now my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have stooped to attacking members of the President's Cabinet. I think it is time to get this amendment off the table. It is not germane. We need to get back to the business of approving the resources that our soldiers need.

I would appeal to my Democratic colleagues to stop performing for an audience and help us fight this war on terror.

Mr. President, I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am glad the Senator from South Carolina is still on the Senate floor because I want to make clear that debating the war in Iraq is not a performance. It is part of our responsibility. This is the world's, maybe the Nation's, greatest deliberative body. And if we do not take a few hours to address the policies and strategies in Iraq, then we are not living up to our responsibility.

The Senator from South Carolina went on to say that we tried to stop the PATRIOT Act. The Senator was not here when the PATRIOT Act was considered. He was still a Member of the House, and he may not know what happened. But with the exception of one Member on our side of the aisle, every Senator voted for the passage of the PATRIOT Act. It was a strong bipartisan vote. Also, for the reauthorization of the PATRIOT Act, it was a strong bipartisan vote.

When it came to obstructing the President's efforts in Iraq, I will concede I was 1 of 23 Senators who voted against the authorization of force. But I have voted for every penny this President has asked for to wage this war in Iraq. On a bipartisan basis, we have provided this President with every resource. So this version of the past which the Senator from South Carolina has recounted, I think, is deficient in many respects. I hope when he reviews the record he will realize that.

I will also tell you that I believe this is an important debate today, and it is, of course, focused on the Secretary of Defense but, more importantly, focused on our strategy in Iraq. The Democratic side of the aisle believes we need a strategy for success. We need to make certain that when we do leave Iraq, it is with our mission truly accomplished. And that means, of course, changing direction on our policies in Iraq.

As we pass this bill, which will add to the nearly $300 billion in our national security effort, we continue to make a great investment in Iraq—no greater investment than the human lives that have been lost by our brave American soldiers who have served there. Yet it is our responsibility, in fact I think it is our constitutional responsibility, to question the policies of the administration when we disagree with them.

Retired GEN Wesley Clark stated yesterday that our Nation made a strategic mistake in invading Iraq.

We went into that war on the basis of poor intelligence, with too few troops, and without the necessary equipment. Our troops paid a heavy price for those decisions.

Today, we face a situation in Iraq which the Pentagon told us last week is dangerously close to civil war. We cannot continue along this same pattern. Our soldiers deserve better.

If we are to change policy in Iraq, we need new leadership at the Department of Defense. We need a fresh start. We need a new team. We need a new direction when it comes to our strategy in Iraq.

Our Armed Forces have shown extraordinary courage. They have done everything we have asked of them. With courage and with dedication they have adapted to conditions on the ground with enormous skill and ingenuity. But decisions by the leadership at the highest levels of the Government—at the White House and at the Department of Defense—have magnified the challenges our troops face.

I listened as the Senator from South Carolina talked about nuclear weapons in Iraq and weapons of mass destruction. I am sure he did not mean to state that we found those weapons of mass destruction because, despite the best efforts of our Government, we have found no evidence of the weapons of mass destruction we were told were the reason we had to invade this country. We have found no evidence of the nuclear weapons program which we were told threatened the United States with mushroom clouds.

So to suggest today, as some still do, that there really were weapons of mass destruction when we invaded Iraq, we have never found them, and it is an indication that the American people were misled, misled from the highest levels of our Government as to the true threat against the United States. That is, indeed, unfortunate. And it is unfortunate, as well, that the President, the Vice President, as well as the Secretary of Defense, and others, made statements that misled us into believing that there were threats in Iraq that clearly did not exist.

But when we talk of the record of the Secretary of Defense, even beyond the misleading statements which led to our war, the fact is that at a moment in time the Secretary of Defense said to the President: We are ready to go to war.

We know now we were not ready to go to war.

Do you recall on February 25, 2003, Army Chief of Staff GEN Eric Shinseki testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee? He stated that, in an invasion of Iraq, ''any postwar occupying force would have to be big enough to maintain safety in a country with ethnic tensions that could lead to other problems.''

He was asked how many troops were needed. General Shinseki said:

> Something on the order of several hundred thousand soldiers.

And he added:

> Assistance from friends and allies would be helpful.

For his candor and his honesty, he was replaced. Instead of sending the necessary troops to make sure we lived up to the Powell doctrine with overwhelming force and responded to the possibilities that were ahead of us after Saddam Hussein was deposed, for his candor and honesty General Shinseki's command was replaced.

The administration was not about to stand still for someone in uniform telling them the stark, honest truth: that without enough soldiers, the ones we sent to war would be in danger.

So we invaded with too few troops to secure the peace. As a result of that decision, and the decision to disband the Iraqi Army, the initial insurgency took hold in Iraq. The miscalculation by the planners and the leaders made life more dangerous for our soldiers on the ground in Iraq.

Since then, sectarian violence has exploded, creating conditions that now approach civil war. And every one of us recalls the situation involving the equipment given our troops. I remember my first visit to Walter Reed Hospital, meeting a National Guardsman from Ohio who lost his right leg at the knee. He said:

> I was in one of those humvees that just had canvas on the side. A bomb went off and I lost my leg. You have to do more to protect those soldiers.

He wanted to go back, even with his amputation, just to show his commitment to our Nation. The leadership under Secretary Rumsfeld didn't show the same commitment when it came to protecting our troops as they road in humvees. I recall a friend of mine whose son is a member of the military police with the U.S. Army. He told me he and his wife went out to buy the body armor that his son wasn't given when he went to Iraq. Have we reached that point, spending billions of dollars, as we have, when individual families have to take up collections at churches or reach into their savings accounts to provide the most basic equipment?

The fact is that that happened, and it happened under the watch of Secretary Rumsfeld. Today, we know the situation with our military. Brave men and women are still willing to serve, but we understand that readiness is a serious issue. Bonuses are being given for those who will join the military or stay in uniform. We understand that the standards have changed because of the difficulty meeting enlistment goals. But these are reality. We know that the National Guard across the United States has 34 percent of the equipment they need to do their job.

Let me remind everybody that the decision to invade was the decision of this administration and this Secretary of Defense. They picked the date, the time, and they established when readiness would be adequate. Sadly, they were wrong. The administration chose to invade Iraq but failed to plan for its aftermath. You have heard about the generals who spoke out, calling for a change in the leadership at the Department of Defense, calling for Secretary Rumsfeld to go. As Senator REID said earlier, these generals were under his command. Many of them had important responsibilities and saw up close this Secretary in action.

I thought one of the most dramatic statements was made by retired LTG Gregory Newbold, a Marine Corps general. He said:

> We need fresh ideas and fresh faces. That means, as a first step, replacing Rumsfeld and many others unwilling to fundamentally change their approach. The troops in the Middle East have performed their duty. Now we need people in Washington who can construct a unified strategy worthy of them. It is time to send a signal to our Nation, our forces and the world that we are uncompromising on our security but are prepared to rethink how we achieve it.

General Newbold went on to say, in some of the most touching and dramatic words I have read:

> The cost of flawed leadership continues to be paid in blood. . . . They must be absolutely sure [speaking of our soldiers] that the commitment is for a cause as honorable as the sacrifice.

Here is what Lieutenant General Newbold of the Marine Corps said in closing:

> My sincere view is that the commitment of our forces to this fight was done with the casualness and a swagger that are the special province of those who have never had to execute these missions—or bury the results.

He is not alone in this assessment, nor is he alone calling for a change in leadership at the Pentagon. For those who stand before us and say that any time we are critical of the policy of this administration we are somehow not standing behind the troops, I will tell you these are words spoken by troops, by soldiers and marines who have been there, paid the price for swearing to stand by our Nation.

Now we have a report from the Pentagon that the situation on the ground in Iraq is deteriorating—a grim portrait last week of Iraq—saying violence has reached its highest level in the last 2 years, with executions, kidnappings, bombings, and torture killings of more than 3,000 Iraqis a month. Ninety percent of the bodies coming into the Baghdad morgue are execution victims. Many were gruesomely tortured before being killed.

According to that assessment, the number of attacks in Iraq over the last 4 months is up 15 percent, and the number of civilian casualties in the last 4 months is up 51 percent. Over 137,000 people have been internally displaced in Iraq since last February, pushed out of their homes. We know it is because of rising sectarian strife and violence. The report from the Pentagon, for the first time, concedes that ''conditions that could lead to civil war exist in Iraq.''

Today, we have about 140,000 troops in Iraq, and 2,657 brave Americans have given their lives in that conflict as of September 5. We owe it to those who gave their lives and who still serve, and their families who stay behind and pray for their safety, to make sure they have the right leadership.

This is not a question of will. This is a question of leadership and mission. Our soldiers deserve better. They deserve leadership from the Pentagon that will provide them with the equipment they need, the direction they need to make certain that they truly come home with their mission accomplished. We need to change the leadership in the Department of Defense, and we need to change the leadership of this Secretary.

The Pentagon's report makes it clear:

> Since the last report, the core conflict in Iraq has changed into a struggle between Sunni and Shia extremists. . . .

Is that something we bargained for when we voted for this? Did we bargain for the fact that our soldiers are standing in the crossfire of a civil war today? How many times have we been promised that the Iraqis will come to the rescue? We are spending billions to train them and replace our troops. It is not a credible statement until American soldiers start coming home.

Many of us believe that the Iraqis will not stand and fight and defend their own country as long as they believe the American soldiers will do the job. The best military in the world is there to protect them at no expense. We have to let the Iraqis know that this is their responsibility.

I will close by saying this debate makes one thing very clear to the people of America. Neither this Republican President nor this Republican Congress will challenge, nor will they change a policy that has cost us too many brave American lives, 2,657 sons and daughters, husbands and wives, cousins and friends—the people we love who have given their lives so far. Sadly, last week, 18 were added to that list. More were added yesterday.

We have now spent over $300 billion. We are in the fourth year of this fight. There is no end in sight. Suggesting a change in leadership so we can start to move forward in a new direction toward a real victory is long overdue.

Change may not take place in this Republican-controlled Senate. We have been told they will object to even taking a vote on this issue about whether we are confident in the leadership of Secretary Rumsfeld. But even if change will not take place in this Chamber, the American people will still have the last word on November 7.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia is recognized.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, at this time, we seek the benefit of the comments of the Senator from Texas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas is recognized.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, listening to the comments of our friends across the aisle, you would think this is more about an election than it is about winning a war. The problem is not so much in the eyes of the critics or the Islamic extremists who attacked the United States time and time again, until we finally woke up on September 11, 2001, and realized we were at war. The problem is not them; the problem is us. It is America. It is America's leaders. We are the problem.

This is more important than any party. This is more important than any election. This is more important than any single person. This is about whether we will win this war that was declared against the United States that we finally woke up and realized was going on, on September 11. It dates back as long ago as 1979, when the U.S. embassy in Tehran was overcome and for 444 days American citizens were held captive by Islamic militants.

Our friends on the other side of the aisle would like to claim that this is all about Iraq and a mistake that was made going into Iraq, and but for that mistake the world would be rosy and we would be at peace. But that is revisionist history.

The fact is that in 1979, when our embassy was captured and Americans were kidnapped in Tehran, and in 1983, when 241 marines were killed in Beirut by Hezbollah, the same terrorist organization that has been lobbing Katyusha rockets, supplied by Iran through Syria, into Israel—yes, this is the same enemy that continued to attack American embassies in Africa in 2000, and killed 17 American sailors on the USS *Cole*. Yes, this is the same enemy that killed almost 3,000 Americans on September 11, 2001, in New York City and Washington, DC, and but for the brave actions of a few on Flight 93, perhaps thousands more would have been killed.

Recently, I attended a speech where the Deputy Secretary of Defense spoke. He asked the question:

> Do you know why it was that these Islamic extremists killed 3,000 people on September 11, 2001? It was because they could not kill 30,000, and because they could not kill 3 million. Is there any doubt in anyone's mind that an ideology that celebrates the murder of innocent civilians in order to accomplish their objective would stop at anything, use any weapon at its disposal to accomplish its ends?

Mr. President, I disagree with our colleagues on the other side of the aisle that this war is limited to Iraq and that if we were to withdraw our troops precipitously, the world would suddenly be a rosy place and we would live in peace.

Unfortunately, this debate seems to be more about criticizing those who are prosecuting the war. No, we are not going to be critical of the men and women in uniform, but our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are all too ready to criticize those who command them, the civilian leadership in the Department of Defense and the Commander in Chief. I am not saying they don't have a right to criticize them. I am not saying that they have been perfect and haven't made mistakes. But I think we need to keep our eye on the threat. The threat is not just Iraq, the threat is in Afghanistan, it is in Madrid, it is in Beslan, it is in London. It is a threat driven by an extreme ideology that celebrates the murder of innocent civilians to accomplish its goals. What would be the consequences of doing as our colleagues on the other side of the aisle suggest, leaving before the Iraqi security forces are able to provide security for their fragile and fledgling democracy? It would be the same mistake that we saw occur in Afghanistan. After the Soviet Union was defeated and Afghanistan became a failed state, we saw the rise of the Taliban and saw its partners in al-Qaida and Osama bin Laden.

Our friends on the other side of the aisle talk about a change in direction, fresh ideas, new direction. Those are campaign slogans. They are not about solving the problem. They are not about beating the enemy, defeating the enemy who declared war on us as far back as 1979.

I know that our colleagues have been critical. Again, they have every right to be. This is America. We believe in free speech. We believe in people being able to express their views no matter how mistaken, no matter how naive.

This administration and the Secretary of Defense have been criticized for saying we need to stay the course, we need to keep the faith, that what we are doing in Iraq and what we are doing in trying to fight and defeat this enemy of Islamic extremism is important to the security of this country because if we were to do as some of our friends on the other side of the aisle suggest and leave Iraq before the Iraqis are able to provide basic security, it would become another failed state. And, no, this is not George Bush's Vietnam because after Vietnam, the Vietcong did not follow us here. That is exactly the threat with which we are confronted today.

The Islamic extremists who have declared war on America and the West will follow us here unless we deal with them on the offensive there. And, yes, every time we seem to talk about the tools that are necessary to win this war, we run into a brick wall of opposition on the other side of the aisle, such as listening to international phone calls between al-Qaida operatives and their confederates here in the United States. Yet our friends on the other side of the aisle said: Foul; the President doesn't have the authority to do that. Only Congress has the authority to do that. So we get into a big food fight about who has the power, who has the authority, not about working together to solve the problem.

When it comes to the issue of how do we deal with those who have been captured on the battlefield and detained in Guantanamo Bay—sources of important intelligence that have disrupted and deterred terrorist attacks and saved American lives—it seems as if the focus is all too often on what should we be doing to make the detainee's life better rather than what should we be doing to get that intelligence which will allow us to detect, deter, and disrupt terrorist activities.

Now the world has turned an anxious eye toward Tehran once again, where the same radical ideology has caused them to supply, through Syria, weapons to Hezbollah, a terrorist organization that has killed more Americans than any other in the world, save and except al-Qaida.

Is there any doubt that if Iran had been able to supply biological, chemical or nuclear weapons to Hezbollah in order to achieve its stated goal of wiping Israel off the map, is there any question that they would have withheld their hand, that they would not have done so?

I have to say I think this must be a very strange picture to the civilized world, those who actually believe we are serious about fighting this enemy who has declared war against the West and against our way of life and against our values, that instead of focusing together on how do we defeat this enemy who declared war on us, we have somehow turned this into an election-year effort to discredit and vote no confidence for the Secretary of Defense. It is the wrong direction.

Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle say there is no plan for success and, of course, there is. It is to provide training to the Iraqi security forces so they can provide security, and we can bring our troops home, allow this new Government in Iraq to resolve its differences after 30 years of tyranny, try to work through the sectarian conflicts by creating a coalition government, and then to allow the Iraqi people to enjoy the prosperity so they can see the benefits of self-determination and free and fair elections.

But our colleagues on the other side of the aisle seem to be long on criticism, long on complaints, and short on plans. They have yet to offer a single concrete idea about what they would do differently to win this war and defeat this enemy. I, as one Senator, would welcome their ideas, if they have ideas, so we can work together to defeat the common enemy because, as I said, this is more important than any election, than any party or any person. This is about the safety and security of our Nation and our hope and dream that the values we represent can be exported—and the blessings of liberty along with it—to other nations that have never known anything but the boot heel of a tyrant.

I hope our colleagues will reconsider and will not pursue this distraction, will not pursue this unwise and inappropriate vote of no confidence against the Secretary of Defense.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARTINEZ). The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, our current policy in Iraq has not been working; it is not working. It is making us less secure against the common enemy which the Senator from Texas has correctly identified. It is, indeed, a common enemy. The question is whether the current course we are on is contributing to the defeat of that enemy or whether the current course we are on is making us less secure, as our resolution states.

It is long past time for a change in course. When you find yourself in a hole, the first thing you should do is stop digging. Unfortunately, President Bush and the administration just keep digging us into a deeper and deeper hole.

The President has given the Iraqis the impression that our commitment in Iraq is open ended. He reinforced that impression when he said last month: We are not leaving so long as I am President.

The Iraqi leadership needs a wakeup call, a dose of reality. They need to be told: If you don't get your political house in order, if you don't reach a political settlement that leads to the end of the Sunni insurgency and leads to the dismantling of the Shia militia, then we cannot save you from yourselves. It is in your hands, we must tell the Iraqis, not ours. Whether you want to put together a nation or whether you have a civil war is your choice. We have opened the door for you. We have given you an incredible opportunity which no other country would even consider giving but ours. We have paid for it in blood and treasure. But only the Iraqis can utilize that opportunity. We cannot force them through that door that we have opened for them.

The Iraqi leadership now is operating under the misconception that we are there as long as they want us or as long as they need us. That misconception must end. They must be told that they must make the political compromises, they must share resources, they must share political power, that only they can decide if they are going to, in fact, avoid an all-out civil war and defeat the insurgency. We cannot do that for them.

We have been there now longer than we fought the Korean war. They have had an opportunity to create a constitution. By now, they were supposed to consider amendments to that constitution. That apparently has been shelved by the Iraqi political leadership. That is unacceptable to us; it is unacceptable to the American people. The American people want the Iraqi leadership to make the compromises they need to make to avoid an all-out civil war. They must take hold of their country.

We must begin, I believe, a phased withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq this year, by the end of this year—and the Iraqis should be told by the end of this year that the phased withdrawal is going to begin. It is essential to do this in order to prod the Iraqis to reach the political settlement which, according to our top commander in Iraq, is essential if all-out civil war is going to be avoided.

This cannot be won militarily. The military piece has been done. We have 80 to 90 percent of the Iraqi military force now trained. It is the political will in Iraq which is lacking, and that will must be brought to bear. We must prod it, we must pressure it, we must push them to do what only they, again, can do.

I believe they must face an abyss. These decisions are obviously difficult, we know that. There is a long history there that needs to be overcome. But the Iraqi leaders must face the abyss. They must face a very stark choice: civil war or nationhood.

The American security blanket is now providing a negative incentive to reach those kinds of essential decisions. Instead, similar to a broken record, President Bush and members of his administration keep saying that the choice in Iraq is between staying the course or withdrawing, cutting and running. That is not the choice. There is a third choice: changing the course, changing the negative dynamic in Iraq, which is the best and, I believe, only hope of achieving our mission. Staying on this downward spiral in Iraq makes no sense.

Some of the President's recent comments on Iraq sound as if he is out of touch with the reality on the ground. For example, the President was extremely naive when he said at a recent press conference that the violence in Iraq, Lebanon, and Gaza was the result of ''groups of terrorists trying to stop the advance of democracy.'' But it is a terrorist group, Hezbollah, which is part of a democratically elected Government of Lebanon, and the democratically elected Government in Iraq supported and identified itself with Hezbollah, a terrorist group, and its attacks on Israel.

The President also said at that August 21 news conference that ''Saddam Hussein had relations with Zarqawi,'' a terrorist who was killed in Iraq. That simply is not true. It continues an administration's tactic of trying to link Saddam Hussein and al-Qaida, a link that our intelligence community has repeatedly said did not exist. It continues a pattern of this administration of falsely linking Saddam Hussein to the people who attacked us on 9/11 in an obvious effort to win public support for the administration's Iraq policy.

It is part of a continuing pattern of misleading and false statements, such as the effort which lasted over years of making the American people believe that there was a meeting in Prague between the head of the Iraqi Secret Service and Mohammed Atta prior to 9/11, Mohammed Atta being the lead hijacker and attacker on us on 9/11. That was false. The intelligence community did not believe that meeting took place. And yet month after month prior to the war and after the war, the administration kept pointing to reports of the meeting that suggested the link between the people who attacked us on 9/11 and Saddam Hussein, trying to create the impression that Saddam Hussein was part of that attack, to such an extent that over half the American people believed that, in fact, there was such a link.

Finally, the President recently insisted there be no withdrawal of American troops so long as he was President. He gave a long list of reasons for his statement, and one of those reasons was that it is what the Iraqi people want, to quote the President. The President is badly misinformed.

An April 2006 survey of Iraqi public opinion conducted by the University of Michigan and reported in U.S. News leads to the opposite conclusion. This survey found that almost 92 percent of Iraqis oppose the presence of coalition troops in Iraq. Even more disturbing than that is the fact that this number was an increase from the 74 percent of Iraqi people who opposed the presence of coalition troops in Iraq in 2004. So that in the 2 years from 2004 to 2006, the percentage of Iraqi people who oppose the presence of coalition troops in their country increased from 74 percent to 92 percent. And almost 85 percent of that 92 percent—almost 85 percent of Iraqis—are ''strongly opposed to the presence of coalition troops.''

So our open-ended commitment of troops is not supported even by the Iraqis, and it sends the wrong message to the Iraqi leadership.

Our strategy in Iraq is not succeeding. We need to change course. The longer we maintain our failed stay-the-course approach, the weaker we are in the war on terrorism. The Iraqis need to hear a wake-up call from the President instead of a soothing message that we will be there so long as he is the President.

President Bush has repeatedly said that as the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down. The Iraqi security forces are 85 percent stood up. Where is the Presidential promised response that there be at least the beginning of a standdown as the Iraqis have been standing up? Where is that commitment being kept, so critically important to the American people, so repeatedly made by the President of the United States: As the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down? It doesn't say after all the Iraqis have been fully trained, even though they are nearly there. It says as they stand up. And the reason that is so critically important is because as long as the present policy continues, that the Iraqis believe we will be there as a security blanket even though they do not make the political decisions and compromises which are essential to their success, our policy of staying the course, our open-ended commitment makes it less likely that we are going to succeed in Iraq.

I think every Member of this Chamber believes we have a common enemy, and that is the religious fanatics who terrorize innocents. They are a common enemy and we all want to see them defeated. But the current course that we are on makes it more difficult for us to defeat that enemy where they are, and it makes it less likely that we will have the ultimate success which is so essential to our own security.

The amendment that is being offered calls on the President to change course in Iraq. It also says that one important indication of that change would be the replacement of the current Secretary of Defense. I have said in the past that I would call for the changing of the Secretary of Defense if I thought it would represent a change in the administration's policies in Iraq. I have focused on the policies, not on the personalities. But, in my view, as the resolution says, replacing Secretary Rumsfeld would be an indication, finally, that the Bush administration recognizes the need to change course in Iraq, and because it is that policy change which is so essential, I will support the resolution and hope that the Senate is allowed to vote on it.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the University of Michigan poll to which I made reference and which was referred to and utilized, I believe, in U.S. News and World Report.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

TABLE 3

	Do you support or oppose the presence of coalition forces in Iraq				
	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Total (percent)
Sunni Arabs:					
2004	1.8	3.8	5.5	89.0	100
2006	1.5	.4	.9	97.2	100
Shiiti Arabs:					
2004	5.8	13.0	17.7	63.5	100
2006	3.1	2.3	4.9	89.7	100
Sunni Kurds:					
2004	37.3	42.7	7.5	12.1	100
2006	10.6	26.1	32.7	30.6	100
All:					
2004	10.0	15.7	13.3	61.0	100
2006	3.6	4.7	7.2	84.5	100

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, before my colleague departs, I wonder if I might engage in a colloquy with him. I am the next speaker on this side. I have allowed my colleagues to go ahead of me to accommodate them. If the Senator wants to recite his unanimous consent request, we have absolutely no objection, and I would simply add to it that following the speaker on the Democratic side who follows me, the distinguished Senator from New Hampshire be recognized to speak on our side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COBURN). Is there objection?

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I made an earlier unanimous consent request that we were going to alternate. I could read the list that we currently have subject, of course, to the arrival of Senators. But it is our hope that we would have Senator KERRY followed by Senator KENNEDY, and then Senators JACK REED and HILLARY CLINTON, followed by Senators HARKIN, BOXER, DAYTON, CARPER, DORGAN, MURRAY, MIKULSKI, and LAUTENBERG.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, we have no objection. I would simply ask that it be amended such that following my taking the floor on our side, as I understand it, the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts will speak, and then the Senator from New Hampshire on our side will be recognized.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I say to my good friend and colleague, we have had 28 wonderful years together on the Armed Services Committee. Now, with the passage of time, the responsibility of the management of that committee rests on our two shoulders, I as chairman at the present time, incidentally succeeding my good friend as chairman before me for a brief period, and he is now a distinguished ranking member. But I would like to start my remarks with a question to my good friend by asking Senators as we participate in this debate to consider what I regard as a very interesting approach to this debate as characterized by our President in a news conference on August 21.

He said the following:

You know, it is an interesting debate we are having in America about how we ought to handle Iraq. There is a lot of people—good, decent people—saying: Withdraw now. They are absolutely wrong. It would be a huge mistake for this country.

And I continue to quote the President:

There are a lot of good, decent people saying, get out now. Vote for me. I will do everything I can, I guess, to cut off money, is what they will try to do to get our troops out. That, too—

The President said—

is a big mistake. It would be wrong, in my judgment, for us to leave before the mission is completed in Iraq.

I will refer to this later. But this is the tenor. It seems to me that it is a very balanced and respectful tenor because the President went on to say:

I will never question the patriotism of somebody who disagrees with me. This debate has nothing to do with patriotism.

I take my cues from his approach and the manner in which he addressed the importance of the debate and how those who participate in it hopefully will be guided by his impressions.

To my good friend from Michigan, I listened very carefully to much of what he said, and I commend him in the sense that he is consistent in his approach. But what I want to draw the Senator's attention to is, what are the consequences—to the whole region, to the people in Iraq, to the war we are waging against terrorism, to our people here at home—what are the consequences if this somewhat fragile and new Government struggling to put down its roots and exercise the full reigns of sovereignty, what are the consequences should it fail to be able to exercise the full spectrum of responsibilities of a sovereign nation that Iraq is now? It is a sovereign nation. I believe those consequences, of their inability to govern, the inability of those in control of their armed forces—we are not in control of their armed forces—they are a sovereign nation. It is the Prime Minister who will issue the orders to their armed forces, not General Abizaid or General Casey. We work in concert with them, but they are a sovereign nation.

What are the consequences if this Government were not able to exercise the reins of sovereignty because of such conditions of further deterioration in the security situation? What are the consequences, I ask my good friend?

I would name several, in my judgment. First and foremost, that nation is sitting on the second largest oil reserve in the world—the second largest oil reserve. There it is. It is not the property of the United States. It is not the property of the coalition forces. We are not there to fight over the oil. But we are there to try to elect a government—or not elect, but let a government handle those natural resources which can quickly, if properly extracted, turn into hard cash. If those reserves fall into the wrong hands, hands which are dealing with terrorism, which support terrorism, which are antithetical to every principle of free democracies in the world, ours or other free nations, it would give terrorists unlimited cash to pursue their goals on terrorism—unlimited. And you couple unlimited cash with the cruelest, yet regrettably most effective weapon of war of the terrorists; namely, the human bombers, who, regrettably, they can purchase for dollars—for Dinars—you are facing not only the coalition forces in Iraq but the forces of freedom the world over, a very dangerous combination of unlimited funding and the human bomber.

The world stood in awe as we watched the human bombers inflict time and time again disastrous consequences on Israel. Now we have watched how they inflict disastrous consequences on our coalition forces in Iraq and, unfortunately, in a growing number of instances in Afghanistan.

Secondly, if that Government were to fail after all of the courage that the coalition of nations, working with the United States, has shown in trying to give the Iraqi people a sequence of free elections, a freely elected government, a constitution; if that Government were to fail, it would seriously affect the credibility of the United States of America in that region and complicate the already complicated problem posed by Iran, a nation that is thus far manifesting an unrelenting intent to acquire the capabilities to manufacture and possess nuclear weapons.

I would love to hear this Chamber debate what would be the consequences to that region if Iran were to obtain that capability and put it in its arsenal. There is no chapter in world history to match that threat—not the Cold War that our Nation and other nations faced with the Soviet Union. We always knew the Soviet Union had a degree of rational, objective understanding of the consequences of the use of the nuclear weapon. I have not seen any manifestations of this current Government in Iran that they operate in any rational, objective way.

So I ask my friend, as you spell out your fervent belief that we should begin, as you said just now—I copied it down—a ''phased withdrawal,'' could that not trigger instability in that fragile Government? Take, for example, their legislative body which just convened again this week. Each of us travels to and from this Chamber with a sense of absolute security in this country that we can do so safely. But each member of that legislative body, as they traverse Iraq, given the instability of that country in many areas, questions the personal safety of individuals serving in this Government. If the message were that we are going to start to withdraw, it might well cause that individual legislator or member of the Cabinet of the Maliki government to say: Wait a minute. Am I going to take all these personal risks to myself and to my family if this Government is not going to succeed? And what if this withdrawal were to trigger, in the minds of many of those brave people stepping up to serve in public service in Iraq today—it might well trigger to them: I better consider my own personal safety rather than trying to continue this public service.

Mr. LEVIN. It will trigger exactly the opposite. If the Iraqis finally recognize that our commitment is not open-ended, we are not going to be their security blanket, if they finally recognize we cannot do for them what only they can do for themselves—share power, share resources, consider amendments to their Constitution, which were supposed to have been considered by now—that statement to them will trigger a reality in them that only they can save themselves; we cannot save them. We can give them an opportunity—and we have, at great cost of blood and treasure. As I said before, I know of no other country that would do what we did, what we have done for mankind, which is to give people an opportunity for freedom.

I didn't vote for this war. I thought it would unleash forces which would be very negative. But now that we are there, I have always believed—my dear friend from Virginia knows this—that we should maximize the chances for success. The road we are on now is not a road to success. We are on a downward spiral now. Sectarian violence is increasing, not decreasing. So the consequences are consequences which we both want to avoid. The consequences which the Senator from Virginia outlined are consequences which are clearly negative, and every person in this Chamber and in this land would want to avoid those consequences. But how do we best prod the Iraqis to take hold of their own situation and share power, share resources, recognize the rights of each other, become tolerant, give up the revenge slayings which are going on there? How do we force them to do that if we say we are here for some open-ended time?

The President says some people want to withdraw now—and some do. What I believe is we should give fair notice to the Iraqis that in a reasonable period of time, since their army is now almost fully stood up, we are going to begin a phased withdrawal, and that should begin by the end of the year so that it can be done in a way which is planned, thoughtful, but that it finally impress on the Iraqi leaders that: Folks, it has been 3 or 4 years. You have had elections. You have had an opportunity to pass the Constitution. You have a civil war some folks say is going on. You and you alone can address the issues which are driving that civil conflict.

We cannot as Americans solve their political disputes. That is what I believe is at stake. We all want to avoid the consequences. The issue is, How do we best avoid the consequences which the Senator from Virginia has outlined? Stay the course? Is that avoiding the consequences? I don't think so. We get deeper and deeper into that mire, and the very consequences, the consequences which the Senator from Virginia has outlined, are the consequences which are more likely to occur if we do not change that negative dynamic which exists in Iraq with a wake-up call which the President alone can give to the Iraqis. Only the President can tell the Iraqis: Folks, there is no open-ended commitment here. You have to take hold of this situation. I think only the President can do that.

We can try, and that is what we are doing. Some Senators believe we should try to send that message to the Iraqis. I think the good Senator from Virginia was present at the White House when I urged the President to stop counseling patience when the Iraqis should understand that the American people are impatient. We are impatient, and rightfully so, at the failure of the Iraqi political leadership to reach those political compromises

which are essential to avoiding an all-out civil war, and end the insurgency.

The Senator was present when I urged the President: Please, Mr. President, you know I voted against the war. I am not expecting you to grab on to my advice. I have been a critic. I have been a critic of the way the war has been handled. The Iraqi Army being disbanded was a tragic mistake. The failure to have a plan for the aftermath was a terrible mistake. There were a lot of mistakes. But to the extent you are willing to consider this message, Mr. President, let the Iraqis know the American people are impatient, instead of counseling patience.

The President looked me in the eye and said: That is a useful message. In other words, it is a useful message for a Senator to be delivering. But he implied—by implication—he is not willing to deliver that message himself to the Iraqis.

What this argument is about, in my judgment, is that the President needs to deliver that message to the Iraqis in order to help them recognize that is the only way they can succeed—if they take hold. They have to look into that abyss. They have to see some stark alternatives. They, the Iraqi leadership, have to see some very stark alternatives: settle the issues politically, defeat the insurgency thereby, avoid all-out civil war thereby. You have to do it, folks. We can't do it for you. I believe that has to be laid before the Iraqis as the best chance of avoiding those very negative consequences which the Senator from Virginia outlined.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I respect my colleague's views. We have had this debate several times before. I recognize and feel, as do you, as do I and I think every Member of this Chamber, the extraordinary losses in this country of 2,600-some men and women who have given their lives and some over 20,000 who are trying to recover from wounds and the impact on their families. That is an enormous sacrifice.

But what I say to you, my dear friend: You pose a big gamble. If you are not right and this legislature interprets that as a signal, the public servants in Iraq interpret that as a signal, the members of the Iraqi security forces—namely, the army—hear that their support base, logistically and other ways, the United States, that we are beginning a phased withdrawal, this could trigger the opposite reaction. If that Government were not able to function because of the lack of security and they lose reins of sovereignty, I ask my good friend, what happens? If these oilfields—maybe not all at once but fractionally—what happens if this country begins to divide in three parts: the Kurds in the north, the Sunnis in al Anbar, and down south in the Bosra region, the Shia? Iran is flexing its muscles in various ways, and as you and I know their influence is being felt in that country. What happens if they see we are not there with the resolve that our President, time and time again, has stated?

Yesterday, I was privileged, along with others, to be in the audience when he delivered what I thought was one of his strongest and best speeches, sketching the whole history of the war on terrorism and with direct quotes of the principals who are fighting against our interests here in this country. I ask, what happens if that Government fails to exercise the full range of democracy? What is your anticipation?

Mr. LEVIN. I think it is more likely that the Government will succeed if they recognize that they are the ones who have to succeed and we can't do it for them. The gamble that we are now taking is greater, which is continuing on a course of action which is failing.

You know, the first argument which was used to go to Iraq was there were weapons of mass destruction. That was the first argument which was used. That didn't work out as the basis for the policy. The next one was we are going to promote democracy in Iraq. Now the argument is there were no weapons; we are not doing very well on the democracy side since that democratic Government is supporting at least one terrorist and probably two terrorist groups, in Lebanon and in Gaza, so the democratically elected Government is giving substance and support to what we believe is terrorism. So now there is a third argument used for this policy, that our leaving will create a huge problem.

First it was weapons of mass destruction. Then it was we were promoting democracy. Now it is we cannot leave because look what will happen if we leave.

Look at what is happening because we are staying in an open-ended way because they don't see that stark choice they face because they are relying on Uncle Sam's security blanket. That is what must be changed. That is the dynamic which I believe must be changed, and the only way to change it is in a reasonable way, a thoughtful way, a planned way, to say: Folks, we have to do what we said we would do—as you stand up, we are going to stand down. You have known that now for years. We are going to carry out that policy which the President has enunciated.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I have one other question for my colleague, and let me preface it with the following. You are a signatory of a letter, dated September 4, to the President, along with a number of your colleagues and the distinguished Democratic leader and the distinguished House Democratic leader and others. In it, you say the following:

> In short, Mr. President, the current path for our military, for the Iraqi people and for our security is neither working nor making us more secure.

That is your basic thesis. And you list in here:

> Therefore, we urge you once again to consider changes to your Iraq policy. We propose a new direction, which would include: (1) transitioning the U.S. mission in Iraq to counter-terrorism, training, logistics and force protection; (2) beginning the phased redeployment of U.S. forces from Iraq before the end of this year; (3) working with Iraqi leaders to disarm the militias and to develop a broad-based and sustainable political settlement, including amending the Constitution to achieve a fair sharing of power and resources; and (4) convening an international conference and contact group to support a political settlement in Iraq, to preserve Iraq's sovereignty, and to revitalize the stalled economic reconstruction and rebuilding effort. These proposals were outlined in our July 30th letter and are consistent with the ''U.S. Policy in Iraq Act'' you signed into law last year.

In reply, a letter, a very respectful letter, was forwarded to all signatories on September 5. It was signed by the Chief of Staff of the President, Joshua B. Bolton. It is interesting, his observations. You say stay the course. Did you have an opportunity to look at this letter? Fine. Let me just read it. He cites as follows:

> Thank you for your September 4 letter to the President. I am responding on his behalf.
>
> A useful discussion of what we need to do in Iraq requires an accurate and fair-minded description of our current policy: As the President has explained, our goal is an Iraq that can govern itself, defend itself, and sustain itself. In order to achieve this goal, we are pursuing a strategy along three main tracks—political, economic, and security. Along each of these tracks, we are constantly adjusting our tactics to meet conditions on the ground. We have witnessed both successes and setbacks [acknowledging that, Senator] along the way, which is the story of every war that has been waged and won.
>
> Your letter recites four elements of a proposed ''new direction'' in Iraq.

This I think most important. He cites in this letter that three of those elements reflect well-established administration policy and the fourth is dangerously misguided.

I ask unanimous consent this be printed in the RECORD following this paragraph.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit 1)

Mr. WARNER. He recites the changes in the administration adaptation to the ever-changing situation on the ground and with the Government. He recites each of the four points raised in your letter and addresses how this administration is pursuing a revised strategy.

To say we are staying the course is an inaccurate statement.

Mr. LEVIN. But the President says we should stay the course.

Mr. WARNER. I understand.

Mr. LEVIN. But the President of the United States says we should stay the course.

Mr. WARNER. This outlines the course we will embark on at this point in time. I urge my colleagues to read this letter in the context of our debate today.

I thank my colleague.

EXHIBIT 1—RESPONSE FROM THE CHIEF OF STAFF JOSH BOLTEN TO A DEMOCRATIC LETTER

SEPTEMBER 5, 2006.

Senate Democratic Leader HARRY REID,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR REID: Thank you for your September 4 letter to the President. I am responding on his behalf.

A useful discussion of what we need to do in Iraq requires an accurate and fair-minded description of our current policy: As the President has explained, our goal is an Iraq that can govern itself, defend itself, and sustain itself. In order to achieve this goal, we are pursuing a strategy along three main tracks—political, economic, and security. Along each of these tracks, we are constantly adjusting our tactics to meet conditions on the ground. We have witnessed both successes and setbacks along the way, which is the story of every war that has been waged and won.

Your letter recites four elements of a proposed ''new direction'' in Iraq. Three of those elements reflect well-established Administration policy; the fourth is dangerously misguided.

First, you propose ''transitioning the U.S. mission in Iraq to counter-terrorism, training, logistics and force protection.'' That is what we are now doing, and have been doing for several years. Our efforts to train the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) have evolved and accelerated over the past three years. Our military has had substantial success in building the Iraqi Army—and increasingly we have seen the Iraqi Army take the lead in fighting the enemies of a free Iraq. The Iraqi Security Forces still must rely on U.S. support, both in direct combat and especially in key combat support functions. But any fair-minded reading of the current situation must recognize that the ISF are unquestionably more capable and shouldering a greater portion of the burden than a year ago—and because of the extraordinary efforts of the United States military, we expect they will become increasingly capable with each passing month. Your recommendation that we focus on counter-terrorism training and operations—which is the most demanding task facing our troops—tracks not only with our policy but also our understanding, as well as the understanding of al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations, that Iraq is a central front in the war against terror.

Second, your letter proposes ''working with Iraqi leaders to disarm the militias and to develop a broad-based and sustainable political settlement, including amending the Constitution to achieve a fair sharing of power and resources.'' You are once again urging that the Bush Administration adopt an approach that has not only been embraced, but is now being executed. Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki is pursuing a national reconciliation project. It is an undertaking that (a) was devised by the Iraqis; (b) has the support of the United States, our coalition partners and the United Nations; and (c) is now being implemented. Further, in Iraq's political evolution, the Sunnis, who boycotted the first Iraq election, are now much more involved in the political process. Prime Minister Maliki is head of a free government that represents all communities in Iraq for the first time in that nation's history. It is in the context of this broad-based, unity government, and the lasting national compact that government is pursuing, that the Iraqis will consider what amendments might be required to the constitution that the Iraqi people adopted last year. On the matter of disarming militias: that is precisely what Prime Minister al-Maliki is working to do. Indeed, Coalition leaders are working with him and his ministers to devise and implement a program to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate members of militias and other illegal armed groups.

Third, your letter calls for ''convening an international conference and contact group to support a political settlement in Iraq, to preserve Iraq's sovereignty, and to revitalize the stalled economic reconstruction and rebuilding effort.'' The International Compact for Iraq, launched recently by the sovereign Iraqi government and the United Nations, is the best way to work with regional and international partners to make substantial economic progress in Iraq, help revitalize the economic reconstruction and rebuilding of that nation, and support a fair and just political settlement in Iraq—all while preserving Iraqi sovereignty. This effort is well under way, it has momentum, and I urge you to support it.

Three of the key proposals found in your letter, then, are already reflected in current U.S. and Iraqi policy in the region.

On the fourth element of your proposed ''new direction,'' however, we do disagree strongly. Our strategy calls for redeploying troops from Iraq as conditions on the ground allow, when the Iraqi Security Forces are capable of defending their nation, and when our military commanders believe the time is right. Your proposal is driven by none of these factors; instead, it would have U.S. forces begin withdrawing from Iraq by the end of the year, without regard to the conditions on the ground. Because your letter lacks specifics, it is difficult to determine exactly what is contemplated by the ''phased redeployment'' you propose. (One such proposal, advanced by Representative Murtha, a signatory to your letter, suggested that U.S. forces should be redeployed as a ''quick reaction force'' to Okinawa, which is nearly 5,000 miles from Baghdad).

Regardless of the specifics you envision by ''phased redeployment,'' any premature withdrawal of U.S. forces would have disastrous consequences for America's security. Such a policy would embolden our terrorist enemies; betray the hopes of the Iraqi people; lead to a terrorist state in control of huge oil reserves; shatter the confidence our regional allies have in America; undermine the spread of democracy in the Middle East; and mean the sacrifices of American troops would have been in vain. This ''new direction'' would lead to a crippling defeat for America and a staggering victory for Islamic extremists. That is not a direction this President will follow. The President is being guided by a commitment to victory—and that plan, in turn, is being driven by the counsel and recommendations of our military commanders in the region.

Finally, your letter calls for replacing Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld. We strongly disagree. Secretary Rumsfeld is an honorable and able public servant. Under his leadership, the United States Armed Forces and our allies have overthrown two brutal tyrannies and liberated more than 50 million people. Al Qaeda has suffered tremendous blows. Secretary Rumsfeld has pursued vigorously the President's vision for a transformed U.S. military. And he has played a lead role in forging and implementing many of the policies you now recommend in Iraq. Secretary Rumsfeld retains the full confidence of the President.

We appreciate your stated interest in working with the Administration on policies that honor the sacrifice of our troops and promote our national security, which we believe can be accomplished only through victory in this central front in the War on Terror.

Sincerely,

JOSHUA B. BOLTEN,
Chief of Staff.

Identical Letters Sent To:

The Honorable Harry Reid, Senate Democratic Leader.

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, House Democratic Leader.

The Honorable Dick Durbin, Senate Assistant Democratic Leader.

The Honorable Steny Hoyer, House Minority Whip.

The Honorable Carl Levin, Ranking Member, Senate Armed Services Committee.

The Honorable Ike Skelton, Ranking Member, House Armed Services Committee.

The Honorable Joe Biden, Ranking Member, Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

The Honorable Tom Lantos, Ranking Member, House International Relations Committee.

The Honorable Jay Rockefeller, Vice Chairman, Senate Intelligence Committee.

The Honorable Jane Harman, Ranking Member, House Intelligence Committee.

The Honorable Daniel Inouye, Ranking Member, Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee.

The Honorable John Murtha, Ranking Member, House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee.

Mr. LEVIN. And I thank my friend.

Mr. WARNER. I return to the President's August 21 news conference. That sets the tenor for how we should address this debate not only in the Senate but across the land as we direct our attention to this important subject. The President concludes another paragraph in that news conference:

> And so we will continue to speak out in a respectful way, never challenging somebody's love for America when you criticize their strategies or their point of view.

That is the context in which I wish to address the Senate this afternoon and have tried to do so in a respectful way, just as the President said.

I turn to another part of the letter I referred to, written by the Democratic leadership, in which they say:

> We also think there is one additional measure you can take immediately to demonstrate that you recognize the problems your policies have created in Iraq and elsewhere, consider changing the civilian leadership at the Defense Department.

Everyone has a perfect right to do that. That has been stated in this letter.

We go back to the basic strategy of this great republic, as laid down by our forefathers in the Constitution. The President was given the responsibility as Commander in Chief, as President, to assemble the Cabinet of his choosing—or her, in the future, if we have a female President. He has exercised that. This Senate has given its advice and consent, as is required under the Constitution for each of the Members, including Secretary Rumsfeld.

I draw upon my distinguished colleague from Alaska, his comments about Secretary Rumsfeld. Similar to the Senator from Alaska, I, too, have known Secretary Rumsfeld for a very long time. When I was Secretary of the Navy, he was in the White House at that time. I had some contact with him. In the ensuing years, I served under three Secretaries of Defense in my 5 years in the Department of Defense. In the ensuing years, in my

years in the Senate, I have worked with each and every one of the Secretaries of Defense, so I have some understanding, modest though it be, with regard to that office and those who have served in that office.

I find in my dealings with Secretary Rumsfeld over the years he has been in office—I worked on his confirmation, as a matter of fact, at that time—I have found him, much like the Senator from Alaska, to be an individual with whom I could work very successfully. I have established a working relationship and a mutual respect. I believe it is a fundamental right of the President to make his choice.

This debate, in a way, is an attack on the President as to his choice and to his constitutional right to select his own Cabinet. In so doing, we must respect that Constitution and his right to do so. He has chosen Secretary Rumsfeld. Within the past day or two, he has reiterated his unwavering support. Consequently, we must recognize it comes down to the Constitution, the Presidential right to select members of his Cabinet.

I join my colleague from Alaska and other colleagues in resisting, in every way, any call by which to indicate a lack of confidence in the President's choice for the Office of Secretary of Defense.

I may have further remarks to deliver on this subject as the debate continues, but at this point I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I begin by saying, I have been listening to the debate for a good period of time. It is a pleasure to hear the Senator from Virginia, who is always civil in his approach to these debates and who always asks intelligent and probing questions. The colloquies I have had with him, and certainly the colloquy I listened to a moment ago, are what the Senate ought to be about. It has been an intelligent, healthy exchange with respect to policy in Iraq.

I will speak to the question of Secretary Rumsfeld in a few moments, but I share some thoughts. Regrettably, the debate that preceded the Senator from Virginia, without mentioning Senators specifically, is relatively insulting and is not worthy of the subject and its importance.

One colleague talked about how war was declared against the United States on September 11 and drummed up America's passion that we all share about opposing terrorists. However, he did exactly what a lot of people on the other side of the aisle have been doing for 4 or 5 years now, which is conflating the war on terror into Iraq.

Let me remind my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, I have not heard one person in this country who doesn't want to do everything in the power of our Nation in order to stand up to terrorists. We all voted to go to Afghanistan. We all voted to take on the Taliban and al-Qaida. If the President had kept his eye on the ball and done what was necessary in Afghanistan and not outsourced the job to Afghan mercenaries, we would have perhaps used the 101st Airborne, the 82nd Airborne, the 10th Mountain Division, or the 1st Marines to do what the CIA, it is now known publicly, was arguing adamantly we ought to be doing, which was surrounding Tora Bora and capturing or killing Osama bin Laden and those thousand or so people up there with him. The President wouldn't have had to quote Osama bin Laden yesterday if we had done the job at Tora Bora. That is what we voted to do, every single one of us.

We gave the money. We have consistently voted for the PATRIOT Act—the vast majority—and voted for the reorganization of our intelligence community and done everything in our power to fight terrorists.

Let me remind our colleague who wanted to drum up the passion of the Nation about being attacked on September 11, that it was not Saddam who attacked us. It was not anybody from Iraq. It was Osama bin Laden and other terrorists.

The fact is, there are more terrorists today in Iraq than there were on September 11. There are more terrorists in the world today who want to kill Americans than there were on September 11. Is that a policy that is working?

More terrorists today want to kill Americans than on September 11, when the whole world was united behind the United States of America, when newspapers across the world said, ''We are all Americans now,'' and everyone was ready to do what we needed to do in Afghanistan. We squandered that. This administration has squandered it. There has been a complete and total lack of accountability for what has happened in between.

I heard one of our colleagues come to the Senate and say it would be a mistake to leave before Iraq can provide its own security. We are not talking about leaving before they can provide their own security. I heard another colleague say what a mistake it would be to withdraw precipitously. Precipitously? What is precipitous about saying we are going to set a target for withdrawal a year from now? A whole year from now we are going to stand up their forces, to provide for the security of their nation. That is not precipitous.

I am tired of a whole bunch of people who want to conflate, distort, and mislead Americans with a phony debate about the war on terror.

Iraq was not the war on terror. Today it is not the center of the war on terror. Are there some terrorists in Iraq? You bet there are. It is the best training ground in the world for terrorists. It is a poster child for recruitment for terrorists. And they are coming. And where are they going? They are going to Europe. Europe is now the center of al-Qaida. I don't know how many people know that. There are cells in Germany and elsewhere in Europe. We are providing the training ground.

The fact is that Iraqis themselves do not want al-Qaida there. If we can provide them the capacity to provide for their own security, believe me, they will drive out whatever is left of the remnants of foreign tourists because the Shia don't like them, the Sunnis don't like them, the Kurds don't need them and don't like them, and they will not survive, except to the degree that they currently provide a convenient connection between the interests of the different parties in Iraq that can only be resolved politically.

Now, let's come back to that. Let's get away from this phony debate we have had in the Senate and this country. Secretary Rice said this can only be resolved politically and diplomatically. General Casey has said there is no military solution. If there is no military solution, what is the solution?

The Senator from Texas said: Give me a plan, give me an idea, one idea that is different. Well, we have done it. We have suggested, many of us, including distinguished people such as General Zinni, who knows the region. He is about as good and as tough and as patriotic as there is a soldier in America. He believes, as I and others do, the only way to resolve what is happening in the Middle East and Iraq is through diplomacy and political effort.

I suggested during the discussion of the amendment that I had several months ago we ought to have an international summit. The Secretary-General of the United Nations believes it. The King of Jordan believes it. The President of Egypt believes it. A whole bunch of people in the region believe that unless you get the full measure of all the parties together—the Sunni, the Shia, the Kurds, the factions of Iraq, the Iraqis themselves, obviously as a government, the Arab League, the neighbor states, including Syria and Iran—you cannot begin to resolve this problem.

Ask yourselves the simple question: How is this going to be resolved? How are American forces going to come back? They are going to come back if you provide the measure of stability to Iraq that it deserves and needs. How do you provide the measure of stability it deserves and needs? By providing confidence to the people and confidence to the parties that the differences between them are adequately resolved, that there is a level of investment, of a stakeholder investment in all of those parties.

How do you get there? You don't get there by not talking to each other. You don't get there by not having the kind of summitry and diplomacy that has guided the world through most of the last centuries of civilized behavior. That is not taking place. There is a total absence of the kind of effort that can help to resolve what is happening in Iraq.

Our soldiers have done their job. They have provided the opportunity for

democracy. They have provided for several elections, for the transfer of authority. And to measure plans—the Senator from Texas said: Give me a plan—what was the plan of the Republicans, of the administration? The plan is: As they stand up, we will stand down. What American has not heard those words from the President? ''As they stand up, we will stand down.''

Well, what has happened? Eighty-five percent of their forces are now supposedly trained. You cannot have it both ways. At some point the game has to stop. Either there really are 85 percent trained, and they are making progress—which they keep telling us—or they are not. If they are, then why aren't we able to withdraw a few troops? Either they are or they are not. And you ought to be able to withdraw some of those troops. The fact is, we are not standing down.

The violence over the last month was the worst. They have just upped the number of people in the morgue, tripled it. It is the worst month in the last months. And each month keeps on being a worse month than the month before.

Now, somewhere along the line, I learned in the military there is accountability. If a captain runs a ship aground, he is gone. That is it—usually with no questions asked. I noticed that the commander of the Cole was held responsible, even though it was not his fault for what happened in the bombing of the Cole, and he is not going to be promoted. These things affect careers and they affect your tenure. Ask General Shinseki. Ask the folks who were involved in Abu Ghraib, at least at the lower levels.

What happened to the accountability in this administration, particularly within the military branch, the Pentagon, for the decisions that have been made along the way?

Our plan says we will set a date by which time the Iraqis have to assume responsibility so that we leverage the Iraqis to assume that responsibility. Now, is that precipitous—a year from now? I do not think so, particularly when you read the language of what we laid out, which says the President has the discretion to leave troops there to complete the training. There is nothing precipitous about allowing the President to have the discretion to complete the training and leave troops there. That is not a withdrawal even, complete and total.

Secondly, we allow the President the discretion to keep sufficient special forces there to fight al-Qaida.

And, thirdly, we allow the President to be able to protect American facilities and forces.

Now, that is pretty broad, folks. It is time we had a real debate about what is going to empower the Iraqis to be able to take control over their own future, and we had a real debate that does not try to scare the American people. The way fear has been thrown around by this administration is disgraceful. And they keep drumming up terrorism and suggesting that Iraq is somehow the center of this war on terror, which it is not now today and never has been.

This administration has made our Nation less safe than it ought to be because they have focused so much time and energy and effort—and squandered it—in Iraq. They have lost allies and regional links that we ought to have traditionally because they have pushed people away from us. They do not have credibility in the region. It is extremely difficult for them to conduct diplomacy with people who, frankly, do not trust them.

In fact, they have empowered Iran. Iran is stronger today because of Iraq than it would have been without Iraq. And there is no expert on Iran who will not tell you that. Are we safer because Iran is stronger today? Because we are so bogged down in Iraq we do not have the ability to do what we need to do?

I listened to my colleagues talk about Secretary Rumsfeld. I heard them say that they have known him a long time, that they have a good working relationship, that there is a mutual respect, that they like him, that he is smart, and a whole host of things that are part of working with somebody through the years. I respect that.

But none of that goes to the fundamental question of whether you have confidence in his judgment. None of that goes to the question of whether he has made such a series of mistakes that he is a symbol, an emblem, of our failure in Iraq and is one of the reasons you cannot get other countries and other people to the table to help resolve the differences here.

I called for Secretary Rumsfeld to resign 3 years ago. Three years ago I felt that the level of the mistakes were so significant—in the deployment of troops, in the abandonment of a plan for postwar Iraq, in the choices that were made—that I thought that track record exhibited terrible judgment, poor planning, and ideologically driven decisionmaking, to which this administration has consistently turned a deaf ear.

I think the office of Secretary of Defense ought to be above politics. And I think it also ought to never be beyond accountability. But under Secretary Rumsfeld it has been profoundly political, as we saw last week reemphasized again, and it has been utterly unaccountable.

The Secretary's record says a lot about the question of accountability in this administration and certainly has not stopped him from speaking his mind.

A few days ago, Secretary Rumsfeld gave a low and ugly political speech, smearing those who dissent from a catastrophic policy. And then he spoke of moral confusion in our country. Well, there is some moral confusion around.

I think it is immoral for old men to send young Americans to fight and die in a conflict with a strategy that is failing and a mission that has not weakened terrorism but strengthened it.

I think it is immoral to not tell the truth to America about the progress in that war just to get through a new cycle or an election.

I think it is immoral to treat 9/11 as a political pawn and to continue to excuse the invasion of Iraq by exploiting the 3,000 mothers and fathers, sons and daughters who were lost on September 11. They were attacked and killed, I remind the Senate again, not by Saddam Hussein but by Osama bin Laden.

And it is deeply immoral to compare a majority of Americans—a majority of Americans—who oppose a failing policy and seek a winning one; we do not seek to quit, as one Senator suggested—we seek to win. And we have a better strategy for winning. And to compare those who seek a better strategy to win to appeasers of fascism and Naziism is an insult to the quality of debate we ought to have in this country. And it is overtly political.

The leaders in this administration have shown they will do anything, say anything, twist any truth, and even endanger our Nation's character as one America simply to execute a political strategy for the election.

I heard one Senator talk about political strategy. Karl Rove has been pretty open about expressing where the Republicans need to go in order to try to win; and it is to exploit security.

Americans, I believe, now see through this charade. They know the truth. They know we have a ''Katrina'' foreign policy, a succession of blunders and failures that have betrayed our ideals, killed and maimed soldiers, and widened the terrorist threat instead of defeating it.

In the place of accountability, we have vicious, partisan attacks on anyone who opposes those policies with a suggestion not for how you quit, not for how you run but for how you win—how you win.

We have watched Iraq sliding further and further into a bloody civil war, with too few troops and no plan. Who is responsible for too few troops and no plan? The President and Secretary of Defense.

I have heard Republican colleagues privately express their reservations about this policy and about this Secretary. Can we afford to trust our Pentagon to an individual who seems to be the last person to acknowledge the mistakes that have been made? Secretary Rice said there have been thousands of mistakes.

Who admits to the fiasco of hubris and mismanagement that falls largely at the Secretary's own doorstep, who can only reach for a sort of clumsy, rhetorical brick to hurl at the opponents, suggesting, without an ounce of shame, that they are soft on Hitler. Soft on Hitler?

We are too long overdue for some accountability. But instead of the pink slips that they so richly deserve, this

administration's worst foreign policy failures are instead rewarded. You get a Presidential Medal of Freedom. George Tenet, who presided over the intelligence failures leading up to 9/11, Medal of Freedom. Paul Bremer, who botched the occupation, Medal of Freedom. And somehow it seems the only people in this administration who are rewarded are those who make the mistakes, while those who tell the truth are punished.

According to Secretary of State Rice, we know this has to be resolved politically and diplomatically, but it is not.

Who is accountable for those mistakes? Who is accountable for young people dying as a result of mistakes? Who is accountable for billions of dollars being spent as a result of mistakes?

We are all human. We all make mistakes. We understand that. But there is a point of accountability in the carrying out of a high public job, where mistake compounded on mistake compounded on mistake begs for accountability.

On issue after issue, Secretary Rumsfeld has made the wrong decision. You may like him, respect him, admire his long years of public service, but he has been wrong, when he could have listened to General Shinseki, and other generals, and put in enough troops to maintain order. We have heard a whole group of other generals speak out about what happened over there. He chose not to listen. He chose not to listen. He was wrong.

When he could have implemented a detailed State Department plan for reconstructing post-Saddam Iraq—guess what—he ignored it, threw it away, would not have anything to do with it. He was wrong, again.

When he could have ordered the protection of American forces by guarding the ammo dumps and making sure a plan was in place to move efficiently through the territory that they were taking, where there were weapons of individual destruction, he chose not to. He was wrong. And he exposed our young men and women to the ammo that now maims and kills them because they chose not to act. Who is accountable for that?

When he could have imposed immediate order and structure in Baghdad after the fall of Saddam, do you know what he did? He shrugged his shoulders publicly on television and he said Baghdad was safer than Washington, DC, and he chose not to act. He was wrong.

When the administration could have kept an Iraqi Army selectively intact, they chose not to. He was wrong.

When they could have kept an entire civil structure functioning and provided basic services to Iraqi citizens, they chose not to. And they were wrong.

When they could have accepted the offers of the United Nations and individual countries that were provided at the time in order to give us on-the-ground peacekeepers to help us and reconstruction assistance to help us so the American taxpayer and soldier did not carry the whole burden, he chose not to. They were wrong.

When they should have leveled with the American people that the insurgency had grown—when many of us were on the floor of the Senate saying the insurgency is growing, it is out of control—they ignored the insurgency, chose to ignore it. And they were wrong.

Wrong decisions, wrong priorities, but, tragically, no accountability.

Some Republican Senators have had the courage to come to the floor and talk about this lack of accountability and talk about these judgments that were wrong. How did it get so wrong? It got so wrong because, in part, the Secretary became so enamored with ''new think'' and transformation at the Pentagon that he failed to see the limits. He believed the American military could operate lighter, smaller, leaner.

A lot of people spent a great deal of time in the 1990s thinking about this. They looked at the first Persian Gulf war, and they saw how the application of air power and stealth and precision munitions, combined with the latest information technology, could radically change the way wars are fought. And operationally they were right. But at the operational level, we had a military that emerged from the Clinton administration prepared to apply its technological advantage against any enemy.

Witness the fact that it was the Clinton buildup and capacity that, in effect, was used because the President had only been President for 10 months. They had not transformed the military. That was the military that succeeded in routing the Iraqi Army. It was that military that drove to Baghdad in 3 weeks. And that is an edge that we all want to maintain forever.

But Secretary Rumsfeld failed to understand that the wars of the future would not be fought only at the operational level. He fell in love with the vision of the Armed Forces of the future and lost track of the reality of the current threat.

He believed that a heavy dose of shock and awe was all it would take to break our adversary's will. That failure to see past the operational level was part and parcel of an administration that came to power with nothing but contempt for nation building. They scoffed at the lessons learned previously. That is why the Secretary began his tenure trying to slash Army end strength and boots on the ground to fund missile defense. He was betting, unwisely, that America would not find itself in anymore failed states.

So now we have the fifth summer of Mr. Rumsfeld's tenure coming to a close, and we find ourselves engaged in massive stability operations in two failed states, Iraq and Afghanistan. In short, Mr. Rumsfeld was wrong again and again and again. American troops have had to pay the price for that, as has the American taxpayer, and too many Americans have paid with their lives.

I believe personally that Secretary Rumsfeld should be held accountable for this job. When faced with widespread looting in Iraq, the Secretary quipped that freedom is messy. When he was asked by a soldier why they were sent in without the necessary armor, he said that you go to war with the Army you have, not the Army you want—despite the fact that parents were able to buy armor for their kids on the Internet and elsewhere. He has dismissed international law regarding military detainees and abuses at Abu Ghraib. He still refuses to acknowledge that the Army and Marine Corps are too small for the missions they face. Earlier this year, he even supported cuts to the National Guard.

Mr. President, I believe his stubbornness is our weakness. He likes to talk about the war on terror as the long war, but in this long war he is stretching the Army to its limits. Its officers and noncommissioned officers are sent on back-to-back deployments with inadequate resources. Despite their heroic service, they are leaving this military. It is costing us enormous extra sums of money to hold it together.

Mr. President, the Secretary's benefit of the doubt has come and gone. I think the moment of accountability is long overdue. Americans deserve leadership they can trust. We need to change the course in Iraq. We all want to be successful, but the current course is not leading to that success. And if it is, then there is no reason they cannot begin an adequate redeployment, as General Casey said—in fact, General Casy's own dates coincide with the dates of those of us who suggested to set a date about a year from now. You can always change a date if you have to. If the situation on the ground doesn't change adequately, you have flexibility. But unless you leverage the willingness of the Iraqis to assume responsibility for their own future, there is nothing that American troops can do except continue to be sent out on missions where they discover improvised explosive devices the hard way. We have too many young Americans who are in Bethesda and Walter Reed as a consequence of that policy. I believe there was a better policy to fight terror, to liberate us, and to fight broadly in some 65 countries around the world where al-Qaida is embedded. We need to fight that, and we need a greater troop level and capacity on the ground in Afghanistan.

All of these things are needed, and they are all suffering because of decisions made and not made. I believe on credibility and the track record of decisions based on ideology, this Secretary is not the person for the job.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire is recognized.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I have listened to the Senator from Massachusetts speaking. In many ways, I find it a bit disingenuous. I had planned to speak specifically about other points relative to this resolution. I think it is appropriate to respond to some of what he has said. Of course, he is the former standard bearer of the party in the prior election and, therefore, a voice of considerable import on policy in this Nation relative to the position of the Democratic Party.

The Senator gave a litany of what he deemed to be errors—some of which I agree were errors—that have occurred relative to the way we have pursued this battle in Iraq. It is a litany as if he is a Monday morning quarterback and had the answer now to what would have been the correct process. It sort of makes you think that if he were giving a discussion about the Red Sox, he would not have put Bill Buckner at first. He would not have picked Bucky Dent. He would have given Carlton Fisk his contract. Or he would not have traded Babe Ruth.

When you come to the Senate floor and pick out a series of events as unique items that flowed within the context of a major effort to confront the terrorist threat to this Nation—he uses the term ''hubris'' and mismanagement. I would say it is a bit of hubris to take that position on the Senate floor.

The Senator failed to mention, for example, that as a result of the initiatives of this administration, led by this President and this Secretary of Defense, over 50 million people today are free who were not free; that women in Afghanistan are no longer closeted in their homes and threatened with death if they wear the wrong garment on the street, or shot in soccer stadiums in Afghanistan, but women have the right to move about as they wish; that there have been elections in Afghanistan that have brought to power a democratic government, which is under pressure today, yes, because of those forces that represent our enemies, and our enemies seek to undermine that democracy. He failed to mention that Iraq, which has suffered for 20 years from a genocide executed by a homicidal leadership, is now free and that the people of Iraq no longer have to fear mass murder of the proportions that occurred under Saddam Hussein; that a government that was and had produced chemical weapons and used them against their own people—specifically the Kurds—was no longer in power; that we have had a series of democratic actions in Iraq that have led to a freely elected government, which involves a coalition of very disparate groups—Sunnis, Shiites, Kurds, and subdivisions within those various clans of political purpose; that that government is moving forward, and that it has stood up an army that is a responsible army, not one of threat to its people but an army of defense of its people. And it is in the process of taking responsibility or defending those people from forces in that nation who wish to return to chaos, to genocide, and to a government that is lawless in the name of fanaticism.

He failed to mention any of that as the results of the efforts of this administration. Those are pretty big things. Instead, he picks out the little events—fairly big in some instances—of error. Yes, there have been some errors, and nobody denies that for a second. But the purpose is to defeat our enemies, and we have set as a goal in that process setting up a government in the nation of Iraq that will speak to the basic values that are fundamentally western—individual liberty, democracy, rights for women, and a marketplace economy. And we have had considerable success in that effort. We are not there yet, and we do not know if we will accomplish the final goal because, obviously, there are forces at work who do not wish to have us accomplish that goal.

But to dismiss this as a failure and to point to a series of incidents as an example of failure and never acknowledge the 50 million free people, the fact that an entire half of the population that had been written out of the ability to participate in civilized life—specifically women—are now brought into the process of having a decent lifestyle, the fact that we have had elections, the fact that we have an army in place that is their army, the fact that we are moving toward a nation based on democracy and law—we have a long way to go, but we are moving that way—to dismiss that and say that because of a series of errors, which he deems to be errors—and in some instances I agree—we should call for the removal of the Secretary of Defense because of those events is just ignoring reality.

In fact, he used the terms on innumerable instances, saying he did not want to see a partisan fight; he thought the Secretary of Defense should be above politics. So how can you then come to the floor of the Senate and make the speech that was just made? It was ''overtly political,'' to use his term, which was for the purpose of exuding a political strategy that if you attack the Secretary of Defense, you weaken the Presidency and will do better in the election. It was, to use his term, ''a viciously partisan attack.''

There is inconsistency which cannot go uncalled. So let me point it out. This proposal is not an attack on Donald Rumsfeld. That is not the purpose of this attack. That is the politics of this attack. It generates a good press release, and it is a sound bite event to call for the Secretary of Defense to resign. But that is not what this is about. We all know that.

This is about the policy of fighting people who have determined that America should be extinguished from the face of the Earth, that Americans should be killed and our culture should be destroyed, and whether our efforts in Iraq are a legitimate part of that defense as we confront that threat.

It is the position of the other side, it appears, that Iraq is not part of the battle or essential to the battle against Islamic fascism, Islamic fundamentalism. I find that position to be untenable. That is hardly the position taken by our enemies. The words of Zarqawi and the words of bin Laden have been very specific: Iraq is where they see the war being waged. Their purpose is to use Iraq as a bootstrap to pursue their goals of basically undermining and destroying western culture and killing Americans. You need to believe their words. If your enemy tells you what they are going to do, and your enemy then does what they tell you they are going to do, you have to start taking them seriously when he tells you something else. And when Osama bin Laden and Zarqawi say Iraq is where the war is being fought, where the effort to pursue Islamic fundamentalism is being pursued and aggressively undertaken, then you have to take that seriously.

But it appears that the other side believes that Iraq is a distraction to our efforts. Well, the track record doesn't show that. Have we been attacked in the United States since 9/11? The reason we have not been attacked, in some measure, is good luck, good fortune, but it is also the fact that this administration has put into place an aggressive effort to fight terrorism not in America—Islamic fundamentalism and fascism—not on our soil but to take the fight to their soil and to meet them where they are.

That policy appears to be working. We can't take great solace, obviously, because who knows when they will attack us again and when they will breach our capacity to be secure.

I don't claim that we are anywhere near secure. In fact, I made it very clear that I have serious reservations about things we still need to do to make ourselves secure. But the fact is that the concept, the basic philosophy of pursuing the terrorists, the Islamic fundamentalists, the Islamic fascist movement, on their territory versus waiting for them to attack us and hoping to get them through our intelligence capability before they do that is a policy which is the correct policy.

Yet the other side of the aisle has had enough of it. They have had enough of it. So they want to use the stalking horse of attacking the Secretary of Defense as a process for basically undermining the policies and efforts which have led us at least to this point to some level of security as a nation. They don't appear, from what I have heard here so far, to really even have an offer of an alternative that is specific enough that it could be said to be a real alternative.

A letter was sent to the President outlining their alternative. They outlined four initiatives in this alternative. Three of them we are already pursuing and pursuing aggressively. The response from the administration was put in the RECORD earlier today by the Senator from Arizona.

The diplomatic process is going forward. I heard the Senator from Massachusetts talk extensively about the diplomatic need, that this should be resolved diplomatically, and I believe his words were that there is no military solution, there is only a diplomatic solution.

I only point out the obvious: You can't get to a diplomatic solution without having a military on the ground that makes things stable enough so that diplomacy can go forward. If you withdraw the military, you have chaos, and there is no diplomacy that is going to straighten that out. So that argument is a little disingenuous, to say the least.

Sure, there isn't a military solution in the sense that this is a war involving nationhood, nation against nation in the tradition of the wars of the 20th century, but there are military actions that can be taken and need to be taken which involve finding those people who wish to do us harm and eliminating them before they can do us harm. And a big part of that involves the intelligence and the on-the-ground capability which we gain by being in Iraq and having an influence in that nation which is leading toward a form of democracy.

Another big part of that which is again military based is allowing Iraq to evolve to the point where it can actually show the rest of the Islamic world that democracy is not an enemy, that democracy gives people good options; that giving people rights, especially women, is not bad for them but actually is good for them; that a culture which is open, which is market oriented, which has a reasonable level of freedom, is a better way of life than a culture which is closed and which denies people the rights to participate other than through some sort of extremist control, such as the Taliban had. It becomes a beacon of opportunity to look to. We are not there yet, but we are never going to get there if we don't make the effort.

So if we look at their proposals—and, as I said, three of them have already been met. What is the fourth one? The fourth one is to begin what they refer to as—I will quote this. This is actually not their fourth one, it is their second one—although the other three have been met—in their letter to the President:

> . . . beginning the phased redeployment of U.S. forces from Iraq before the end of this year.

This year. The Senator from Massachusetts kept saying a year from now to begin the redeployment. Their position is not a year from now; their position is this year to begin redeployment.

What does this term ''phased redeployment'' mean? I wonder how many focus groups they ran that one through before they decided to use that terminology, ''phased redeployment.'' I will tell you what it means. It is a phrase, the purpose of which is to give political cover to those who wish to stand in opposition to the administration relative to what is happening in the war against the Islamic fascists.

In practice, were it ever to be executed—in other words, if you were actually to start pulling down troops before the end of this year—you would have set an arbitrary date and you would start removing American troops. What would happen to the troops left there? We all know Iraq is not yet ready to defend itself. Would that not put at even greater risk American soldiers left on the ground? How could you look the people in the face who are in the divisions and who are in the brigades who have been left behind as you started to pull people out prematurely and said: Oh, good luck, you are now a bigger target because we aren't there to give you the cover you need.

Phased redeployment before the end of this year, arbitrary date set for the purposes of making a political statement as we head into an election—it is not very good policy, to say the least, even if it is policy. It isn't policy. It is just politics, a political statement.

With whom are they going to replace Donald Rumsfeld? Howard Dean? Ned Lamont? I mean, these are the standard bearers of the position of their party. They want to take out Donald Rumsfeld and I presume they want to put in Howard Dean and Ned Lamont, two people whose purpose it is to speak for the party—one being the chairman of the party, one being the most recent standard bearer of the party—to immediately withdraw, to take our troops out of there now and to let happen what happens.

I am not going to use the pejorative to describe that. I think the American people are sophisticated enough to recognize that policy makes no sense. Howard Dean as Secretary of Defense? Maybe we should amend this and say ''and we shall replace him with Howard Dean.''

Howard Dean was a pretty good Governor from Vermont. I enjoyed working with him when I was Governor of New Hampshire. He wouldn't be a very good person in the Defense Department. He is not a very good person on foreign policy, and he clearly does not understand the threat, in my opinion, that the Islamic fundamentalists reflect.

The Howard Dean-Ned Lamont policy is a policy based on naivete. It is a policy that rejects the reality of the situation, which is there are people out there who wish to kill us and destroy our culture, and there are a lot of them, unfortunately. They feed off weakness, and they believe we are weak and will believe we are truly weak and will be able to make that case should we begin a phased withdrawal this year when we have no military capability of covering that withdrawal and protecting our troops who are left behind. It is a policy that is firmly grounded in Birkenstocks and clearly not grounded in the reality of the world as it is but the world as they wish it were.

We have a truly extraordinary military. I recognize everybody on both sides of the aisle understands that. There isn't a Member in this Chamber who hasn't been to a funeral and tried to console a member of a family of someone who has been lost in this war, in this battle. These are exceptional people who defend us and who carry forward our flag. They need to understand that their purpose is good and their purpose is right. And it is. Their cause is to find the people who wish to do America harm and who have said they intend to do America harm and to eliminate them before they can attack us and do us further harm.

Iraq is an integral part of that cause. Have there been mistakes there? Absolutely. Absolutely. It is terribly unfortunate, and we all recognize that. But have there been successes there and very significant successes there? Yes, there have been. As I said before, 50 million people, between Iraq and Afghanistan, are now free, women brought from behind the closeted doors of their houses into society, press availability, elections, governments formed, security forces who report to a government. We have a long way to go, but these soldiers have served extraordinarily well, and they have accomplished a great deal. To use this attack on Donald Rumsfeld as a stalking horse as an attack on the policies of Iraq I don't believe does anybody any good.

If the other side of the aisle wishes to debate the Iraq issue in context of the policy, fine, but to personalize this in such a manner—to quote the Senator from Massachusetts—is viciously partisan and overtly political and is not constructive to our ability to pursue this war or to our need to assure our soldiers in the field that they fight for our right and just cause.

Under the leadership of this President and the Secretary of Defense, Secretary Rumsfeld, the military has received the largest increases in resources since World War II. We have taken an approach to the military which has been to essentially get them whatever they need to do the job and do it right and make sure our soldiers are safe. Errors have been made along the way in accomplishing that, but the attention and the commitment to resources have been there, and this President and this Secretary of Defense take a second seat to no one in our history relative to their commitment to the men and women who wear the uniform of the United States of America.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, like others, I have had the good opportunity to listen with great interest during the course of the afternoon about the nature of the resolution which is before us which questions the serious judgments of the Secretary of Defense in bringing us to where we are. He is the principal architect of the Iraq policy. I have listened to others talk

about the general nature of the threat in terms of our national security.

In most recent times, we have an excellent Department of Defense study, some 63 pages long. We referenced it yesterday. It talks about the principal challenges we are facing in Iraq. I will briefly mention parts of it.

It talks about sustained ethnosectarian violence is the greatest threat to security and stability in Iraq; breaking the cycle of violence is the most pressing immediate goal of the coalition in Iraqi operations; conditions that could lead to civil war exist in Iraq, specifically around Baghdad; concern about civil war with the Iraqi civilian population has increased in recent months.

It goes on and talks about both Shia and Sunni death squads are active in Iraq and responsible for the significant increase in sectarian violence; militias—small, illegally armed groups—operate openly and often with popular support; civilian casualties increased by approximately 1,000 per month since the previous quarter; executions in particular reached new highs in the month of July; and rising sectarian strife defines the nature of violence in mid-2006.

Now we have to ask ourselves: How could all of this come to pass? Who was the architect that brought us to this situation? Clearly, it is because of the persistent, stubborn insistence of those who believe that we ought to stay the course, the principal architects being the Secretary of Defense and the President of the United States.

As has been mentioned here time in and time out, America was struck by al-Qaida, not Saddam Hussein. All of us gathered together to support the attacks that took place in Afghanistan and the isolation of Osama bin Laden and the belief, as has been pointed out earlier in the course of the afternoon, we had a real opportunity to catch and to punish and to bring to justice the individual that was the principal architect of 9/11. But instead, the administration moved military units and moved focus out of that search for Osama bin Laden into Iraq—into Iraq. It was Osama bin Laden who was the architect, not Saddam Hussein, and as a result, we have effectively taken our eye off the principal author of terrorism.

Even as the President of the United States spoke yesterday, 17 times he mentions Osama bin Laden. He was the one who was the architect. We should have been after him for the last 4 years. Instead, we have been weighted down with the resulting conditions that I described earlier, and the principal architect of that is the Secretary of Defense. He was wrong when he represented that there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq that threatened the United States. He was wrong about the connection of al-Qaida to 9/11, as was demonstrated by the 9/11 Commission. He was wrong about the insurgency being just a group of deadenders. He was wrong about the administration of Abu Ghraib. He has just been continuously wrong, and we have the current situation which is outlined not by those of us who are supporting this resolution but by the Department of Defense.

Let's look at what the military does to its soldiers when they have failures in the performance of their duty. Here we have just mentioned, and it has been discussed over the course of the afternoon, the series of blunders by the Secretary of Defense—a series of blunders. Let's look at how the military treats its people.

In 2003, the Navy fired 14 commanding officers. In October of that year, the commanding officer of a Prowler aircraft squadron lost his job after one of his jets skidded off a runway. The Navy cited a ''loss of confidence'' when they made the decision to dismiss him.

In December of 2003 and January of 2004, the commanding officers of the submarine *Jimmy Carter* and the frigate USS *Gary* were both fired because of ''loss of confidence.''

In 2004, the Navy fired the captain of the USS *John F. Kennedy* aircraft carrier for running over a small boat in the Persian Gulf. The Navy didn't hide the incompetence or gloss over the facts. It responded decisively. It stated plainly it had ''lost confidence'' in the captain's ability to operate the carrier safely. He was the eleventh commanding officer of the Navy to be fired that year.

In February 2004, the commanding officer of the frigate USS *Samuel B. Roberts* was fired for a ''loss of confidence'' after he spent a night off the ship during a port visit to Ecuador.

For military officers in the Navy, the message is clear: If you fail, you are fired. The message to the civilian leadership of this administration is equally clear: If you fail, there are no consequences, no accountability, even if more than 2,600 Americans lose their lives.

It is time for the Department of Defense to run a tighter ship at all levels of command, including the civilian leadership. Those leaders at the Pentagon should be held at least to the same standard of accountability to which military officers in the Navy are held.

Secretary Rumsfeld must be held accountable for the massive failures in Iraq. Civilian control of the military is one of the great cornerstones of our democracy. But what if the civilian leaders don't know what they are doing and mindlessly lead our troops into battle unprepared? Clearly, there must be accountability for this breathtaking incompetence which has put our soldiers in daily danger and weakened American national security.

In a hearing by the Senate Armed Services Committee in 2004, former Defense Secretary Harold Brown described the key to accountability:

At each level, the question is a loss of confidence. And in the Navy, the loss of confidence goes with grounding your ship. At a higher level, the loss of confidence has to be determined on a basis that is somewhat broader, the full performance. And I think that applies at the highest military levels. And it applies at the level of the Secretary of Defense and his staff.

That is what this resolution is all about.

The Bush administration has had its chance, and it has failed the basic test of competence. It is more focused on the spin of war than the real war in Iraq.

There is broad agreement among military experts, Members of Congress of both parties, and the overwhelming majority of the American people that we need to change course in Iraq. We need this administration to face up to its mistakes and correct them. A good place to start would be for the President to replace Secretary Rumsfeld. It is long past time for Secretary Rumsfeld to go, and I urge the Senate to pass this resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. STEVENS. Another speaker on our side is coming. I wish to not make a statement in that queue, so to speak. I just want to speak as a manager of the bill. I was under the impression we would be able to get through this discussion prior to the submission of this resolution and be able to go ahead with the votes we have. We have at least three votes left tonight, and we have assurance that we are going to pass this bill tomorrow, and there are still quite a few other amendments out there.

So I would like to know—can I inquire, may we get a time agreement from the other side of when this bill will pass tomorrow? I would like to know what is going to happen to this bill now? We had the understanding—I agreed we could not finish it on Wednesday, as we initially agreed—that is today—and that we would finish it tomorrow. But we had not anticipated this prolonged discussion about a resolution that hasn't even been introduced yet.

Is the distinguished deputy leader willing to enter into some discussion about this?

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, if I could respond to the question of the Senator from Alaska, it is my understanding there was an attempt to reach a time agreement before this started and, unfortunately, there was objection on the other side of the aisle. But——

Mr. STEVENS. We have not had any request for a time agreement. I have been willing to enter into a time agreement from the very beginning—from the very beginning.

Mr. DURBIN. I would be happy to discuss this with Senator REID, and we will move quickly as our Members come to the floor prepared to speak. We have tried to alternate back and forth, and we are prepared to continue to do that. Our goal is to finish this bill by tomorrow.

Mr. STEVENS. I would suggest then—is the Senator from Delaware going to speak next?

Mr. DURBIN. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. STEVENS. Pardon me. It is my eyes. I am sorry. Let's just skip this space and we will have a speaker come and follow him when he is finished.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota is recognized.

Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, I join today with many of my colleagues in expressing ''no confidence'' in Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and urging President Bush to replace him. I truly respect the Secretary's commitment to public service, and I recognize that he has one of the most difficult jobs here or anywhere in the world. He is a stand-up, tell-it-as-he-sees-it man, the kind we need more of in Washington. Unfortunately, the way he sees it has too often been wrong.

His disastrous failures in prosecuting the war in Iraq have left our courageous American troops mired in a quagmire there with no end in sight. And his shameful rhetoric last week comparing critics of his failed policies to the appeasers of Hitler was clearly a desperate attempt to divert attention away from his own failures.

Recent polls show the number of Americans who support the Administration's policies in Iraq is down to 39 percent compared to a high of 76 percent in April 2003.

That loss of public confidence has occurred not because Americans are appeasers—they most certainly are not—and not because Americans don't support our troops because they most certainly do support them and admire their incredible courage and patriotism as they persevere in the awful, deteriorating conditions there.

That loss of the public confidence in the Bush administration's war has occurred because Americans can tell the difference between success and failure. They can see that the President's policies are not succeeding in Iraq. They can see that the Iraqi Government and the Iraqi people are not winning against their own countrymen who oppose them. And the conditions in Iraq are getting still worse, not better.

All of the administration's rhetoric won't change their failed plans, policies, and practices that have created this mess.

Shortly before the invasion of Iraq, then-Army Chief of Staff Eric Shinseki testified before the Armed Services Committee that more than twice the number of U.S. troops that the Secretary was planning to commit to Iraq would be needed to secure the country after Saddam Hussein's overthrow.

For his foresight and his candor, General Shinseki was essentially dismissed by the Secretary, who preferred to believe the administration's favorite Iraqi exile, Ahmed Chalabi that the country would go back to work the day after Saddam's regime was toppled.

So when widespread looting and disorder occurred instead, the Secretary of Defense dismissed its significance. We now know that General Shinseki was right and President Bush, Secretary Rumsfeld, and Mr. Chalabi were wrong.

And that the initial civil disorder was a warning of much worse upheavals ahead, for which the Bush administration and its appointed Iraqi administrators were completely unprepared.

Even more tragically, they remain unprepared even today. Increasing violence, widespread corruption, nonexistent public services, failed improvement projects, delays, failures, and finger-pointing—those are the miseries that Iraqi citizens must endure today.

Democracy is a great thing, but democracy as we know means life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Most Iraqis today fear for their lives, more and more are losing them, and reportedly almost 1 million Iraqi citizens have fled their country.

The New York Times today has an article about Iraqi citizens who are changing their names, something that is almost forbidden in the Iraqi culture, because it is the only way they know to save themselves from being pulled out of their cars or their homes and murdered simply because of their identity. The story states, and I will quote in part:

> Stories abound of Iraqi civilians being stopped at checkpoints by militia men or uniformed men and having their identification cards scrutinized. They are then taken away or executed on the spot if they have a suspect name or a hometown dominated by the rival sect. In Baghdad, Shiite death squads, sometimes in police uniform, operate many of the illegal checkpoints, Iraqi and American officials say. The most infamous episode of this kind took place in July when Shiite gunmen set up fake checkpoints and went on a daytime rampage through the Jihad neighborhood of Baghdad, dragging people from their cars and homes and shooting them after looking at their identification cards. Up to 50 people were killed.

Liberty, as we know, requires basic security, which the Bush administration and the Iraqi Government are failing to provide. And the chance to pursue happiness for many Iraqis is tragically even less possible now than it was under Saddam Hussein's evil regime.

This is the disaster for which over 2,600 heroic American soldiers have given their lives. Almost 20,000 have given their bodies, and for which Secretary Rumsfeld must accept responsibility—but won't.

Instead, what we are getting is another round of overheated and misleading rhetoric from the Secretary, the Vice President, and the President.

Last week was a repeat of some of the 2002 conventions where they first trotted out their overheated and misleading rhetoric to stampede Congress into supporting the Iraqi war resolution.

Saddam Hussein and his supposed weapons of mass destruction were then called urgent threats to our citizens' safety.

The Secretary of Defense, the Vice President, and the President all claimed proof positive that Saddam Hussein was developing nuclear weapons that would soon, if not already, present mortal danger to our national security.

Critics, skeptics, and even questioners were derided and dismissed as being appeasers of the then-Hitlerian menace of Saddam Hussein.

The administration offensive succeeded in persuading the majority of Congress and the American people. I was 1 of only 23 Members of the Senate to vote against the Iraq war resolution in October of 2002.

Yet even with bipartisan support for their war resolution, the President and others still used it politically to try to defeat Democrats in the 2002 midterm elections—just as they are now trying to do in this year's midterm elections.

Once again their rhetoric is misleading at best and blatantly wrong at worst.

Just yesterday the President repeated his claim that Iraq is the central battlefield where the war against terrorism will be decided.

There is no question that we must win the war in Iraq because we started that war, and once you are in it you must win it or suffer serious consequences.

But the worsening violence in Iraq, which the Bush administration and the Iraqi Government are failing to control or contain, is, by all rational accounts, primarily and mostly Iraqi-against-Iraqi sectarian violence.

To the extent that Al-Qaida and other terrorist organizations are operating in Iraq it is because of the openings and opportunities President Bush has provide them by creating a leaderless and lawless state.

Al-Qaida, as we have just witnessed, is not using Iraq as its central battlefield, but rather Heathrow Airport, or bombings in Spain, Jordan, and Egypt.

Osama bin Laden is by all accounts not masterminding his next assault against the United States from Iraq but rather from Pakistan or Afghanistan, where the al-Qaida allied Taliban is now resurgent due to other failed Bush administration policies, including their tragic and disastrous failures to meaningfully help rebuild that country.

Five years after 9/11, Osama bin Laden is still alive, unscathed, and plotting against the United States because the Bush administration has failed to devote the military personnel, the resources, and the diplomatic efforts necessary to find him and eliminate him.

Given the administration's attempts to exploit next month's fifth anniversary of 9/11 to its political benefit, it is a disgrace to the Americans Osama bin Laden murdered and to their families—this terrible criminal remaining alive and free to operate against the United States.

Let me conclude with excerpts from public statements made recently by

two U.S. generals with firsthand experience of the situation in Iraq. The first are excerpts from an article in the Washington Post by GEN John Batiste, a retired Army major general who commanded the First U.S. Infantry Division in Iraq. He wrote on Wednesday, April 19, 2006:

I had the opportunity to observe high-level policy formulation in the Pentagon and experience firsthand its impact on the ground. I have concluded that we need new leadership in the Defense Department because of a pattern of poor strategic decisions and a leadership style that is contemptuous, dismissive, arrogant and abusive . . .

We went to war with the wrong war plan. Senior civilian leadership chose to radically alter the results of 12 years of deliberate and continuous war planning, which was improved and approved, year after year, by previous secretaries of defense, all supported by their associated chairmen and Joint Chiefs of Staffs. Previous planning identified the need for up to three times the troop strength we committed to remove the regime in Iraq and set the conditions for peace there . . .

Our current leadership decided to discount professional military advice and ignore more than a decade of competent military planning . . .

We took down a regime but failed to provide the resources to build the peace. The shortage of troops never allowed commanders on the ground to deal properly with the insurgency and the unexpected. What could have been a deliberate victory is now a long, protracted challenge.

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld claims to be the man who started the Army's transformation. This is not true. Army transformation started years before this administration came into office. The secretary's definition of transformation was to reduce the Army to between five and seven divisions to fund programs in missile defense, space defense and high-tech weapons . . . the Army remains under-resourced at a time when it is shouldering most of the war effort. Boots on the ground and high-tech weapons are important, and one cannot come at the expense of the other.

Civilian control of the military is fundamental, but we deserve competent leaders who do not lead by intimidation, who understand that respect is a two-way street, and who do not dismiss sound military advice. At the same time, we need senior military leaders who are grounded in the fundamental principles of war and who are not afraid to do the right thing, Our democracy depends on it. There are some who advocate that we gag this debate, but let me assure you that it is not in our national interest to do so. We must win this war, and we cannot allow senior leaders to continue to make decisions when their track record is so dismal . . .

Secondly, a statement in Time magazine on Sunday, April 9, 2006, by LTG Greg Newbold, who states:

From 2000 until October 2002, I was a Marine Corps lieutenant general and director of operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. . . . Inside the military family, I made no secret of my view that the zealots' rationale for war made no sense. And I think I was outspoken enough to make those senior to me uncomfortable. But I now regret that I did not more openly challenge those who were determined to invade a country whose actions were peripheral to the real threat—al-Qaeda . . . I am driven to action now by the missteps and misjudgments of the White House and the Pentagon, and by my many painful visits to our military hospitals . . .

What we are living with now is the consequences of successive policy failures. Some of the missteps include: the distortion of intelligence in the buildup to the war, McNamara-like micromanagement that kept our forces from having enough resources to do the job, the failure to retain and reconstitute the Iraqi military in time to help quell civil disorder, the initial denial that an insurgency was the heart of the opposition to occupation, alienation of allies who could have helped in a more robust way to rebuild Iraq, and the continuing failure of the other agencies of our government to commit assets to the same degree as the Defense Department. My sincere view is that the commitment of our forces to this fight was done with a casualness and swagger that are the special province of those who have never had to execute these missions—or bury the results . . .

The consequence of the military's quiescence was that a fundamentally flawed plan was executed for an invented war, while pursuing the real enemy, al-Qaeda, became a secondary effort. . . .

So what is to be done? We need fresh ideas and fresh faces. That means, as a first step, replacing Rumsfeld and many others unwilling to fundamentally change their approach. The troops in the Middle East have performed their duty. Now we need people in Washington who can construct a unified strategy worthy of them. It is time to send a signal to our nation, our forces and the world that we are uncompromising on our security but are prepared to rethink how we achieve it. . . .

This debate is long overdue on the Senate floor, and I thank our Democratic leader for it.

This debate is about how to finally win in Iraq, how to bring our courageous troops home as safely and as soon as possible, with their victory secured by the Iraqi Government, the Iraqi military and police, and the Iraqi people.

Our heroic soldiers deserve better than the President's apologies, again defending the failures of the past and the continuing failures of the present. They deserve a new strategy to win victory in Iraq and a new leader to achieve it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, we are here ostensibly debating a resolution that deals with the Secretary of Defense but, of course, the conversation has devolved into a discussion of the war against the radical Islamists and the battle in Iraq, a battlefront of that war.

Let me begin, though, by asking unanimous consent that at the end of my remarks we have printed in the RECORD a letter from Josh Bolton, of the administration, to the distinguished minority leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, that letter goes to one of the points of the resolution that we are ostensibly debating, a resolution which seems to mock the phrase ''stay the course,'' claiming that the current stay-the-course policy has made America less secure.

I guess it all depends on what you mean by stay the course because, if you mean by stay the course don't abandon the effort, then of course the administration and the Senate do not want to abandon the effort and therefore do want to stay the course. At least the people on this side of the aisle do not want to abandon the effort. But if it means don't change the way you are doing anything, obviously that is another matter. The problem is, it is a straw man for those on the other side to argue that the administration is not willing to change anything. The letter from Mr. Bolton to the distinguished minority leader will demonstrate the fact that, just as the enemy is agile and changes its tactics, so, too, has the United States changed the way that it deals with the enemy in Iraq.

So, yes, stay the course if by that we mean don't abdicate the mission; no, if it means don't ever change the way you operate.

The other part of the resolution I found rather odd was the condemnation of Secretary Rumsfeld, which for days now we heard is coming. I was rather bracing for an indictment of the Secretary of Defense who, of course, needs no one to defend him. He is an honorable and effective and totally self-sacrificing public servant who has served the President and the American people well. But I noted that the big indictment is that President Bush needs to change course in Iraq—undefined how that change in course might operate—to provide a strategy for success—the strategy was announced over and over by the President, reiterated in his speech yesterday—and one indication of a change of course would be to replace the current Secretary of Defense.

I suppose it would be. That is a bit of a tautology. But it doesn't suggest that it would do anything or accomplish anything except, perhaps, embarrass the President, perhaps undermine our credibility abroad, perhaps embolden our opponents and raise questions by our allies. That is not a very constructive proposition by our friends on the other side of the aisle. But, on the other hand, not much that they have offered is very constructive.

It is easy to criticize, easy to play Monday morning quarterback. It is a little more difficult when you are in the middle of the battle, charged with the responsibility of success. I shudder to think what these Monday morning quarterbacks would have done in World War II or World War I, a day after the landing on D-day or at Iwo Jima—10,000 casualties. Or the Civil War. It occurs to me we would not be here debating as a unified nation today if one of the greatest generals in the history of America, Robert E. Lee, hadn't made a monumental mistake at Gettysburg. The reality is mistakes are made in war and it is very difficult while the war is going on, and before the historians have the context in which to reflect on it, to debate the mistakes, especially when the enemy is listening and certainly our allies and our troops are listening as well.

But just to reflect on a couple of these, one comment by one of the Senators was the problem is we are trying to do a war without enough military. A lot of us on this side of the aisle have steadfastly supported a stronger more robust military. Sometimes we don't get a lot of support on the other side of the aisle for that. But the comment was we do need more troops, from a Senator who wants to withdraw our troops.

I happen to agree with my colleague, the senior Senator from Arizona, who has said we need more troops. The best way to do that, at least under current circumstances, is to not withdraw an American soldier for every Iraqi trained but combine the two armies as the Iraqis are trained up in order to go into a place like Baghdad and get control. That is not reducing troops, obviously; that is enhancing the total power there.

How do we get more troops if every time we train up an Iraqi an American has to leave? Or we set a timetable for leaving by the end of the year? I am at a loss to understand this notion: Our problem is we need more troops, so let's bring our troops home. I don't get it. Unless, of course, we are not concerned about the outcome—and that is the question.

That, unfortunately, is the question that must be in the minds of our allies. It must be in the minds of our enemies when they hear a debate like this and they hear: We need more troops, let's bring our troops home. They must ask: Okay, what does that mean? Does it mean America is in it for winning or does it mean we are going to be leaving, and the vacuum that is created will be an opportunity to move in and do our evil deeds?

The President, in his speech yesterday, was very clear about the nature of the enemy, an enemy that sees the Iraq battlefront as a central part of what he called World War III, their attempt to either make us bow down to their will or kill us or, if we succeed, they die trying. It is a win-win for them either way, according to them.

The reality is, this is a battle we cannot leave. This is a fight we cannot walk away from. If we are going to win the war against the terrorists, we have to win the battle in Iraq. There is no other way around that proposition. We cannot abdicate Iraq and still hope to win this war against these radical Islamists, at least not without taking horrendous casualties and losses in the meantime until our allies and some in America determine it is worth fighting, that it is a serious enemy, that we have to do whatever it takes to win, and that includes fighting in places such as Iraq.

I conclude with this notion, and the Senator from New Hampshire made the point earlier in a very eloquent way. After recounting all of the carping and criticism of what could have been done differently, he asked: Is there no credit for what we have achieved in Afghanistan, a country that was ruled by the Taliban, where women were beaten, where people were taken to the soccer stadium and shot, where little girls could not go to school and on and on, an altogether horrific place? Is there no credit for the fact that the people of Afghanistan are now free? Is there no credit for the fact that a brutal dictator who killed thousands and thousands of his own citizens, gassed many of them to death, killed hundreds of thousands of people in neighboring countries and was prepared to do battle with us, is there no credit for the fact that Saddam Hussein is gone, that his people have now been afforded the opportunity to freely elect their own government, and we are in the process of helping them secure that freedom? Is there no credit for the fact that Qadhafi decided America's will was pretty well demonstrated in Afghanistan, and he was not going to buck that will by continuing his evil way and developing nuclear weapons, so discretion being the better part of valor, he would get on the right side of history and be with us in this war? Is there no credit for any of these achievements?

No, no, not when you are discussing the President of the United States, who in some circles has to be vilified in the name of political discourse. This is not the way to conduct this debate. The way to conduct a debate over the strategy and over the course of history is to have a civil discussion that does not focus on an individual in the administration—who, after all, is only one person making the decisions and who has served this country ably—but, rather, on the strategic objectives over the goals.

Can anyone doubt what the goals in the war have to be? Can anyone doubt that the goal has to be to retain the ability of the country of Iraq to keep terrorists out and to ensure the safety and security of their own citizens in the future? I don't think there can be any doubt about what the goals ought to be.

Yet the President was right yesterday in reiterating those goals because there appear to be some who have lost sight or who have not ever realized the true evil nature of this enemy, who don't quite comprehend what it will take to defeat this enemy, who do not connect the dots to see we cannot walk away from Iraq and still be able to defeat this enemy, the radical Islamist, both the Sunni and the Shia Islamists, the people who would do us evil if we do not stand in that way. If you do not understand the enemy, I suppose it is not hard to conclude that, because the going is getting tough in Iraq, we ought to leave. The people who believe that are very strong, as the President said, maybe quite patriotic but very wrong.

It is the terrorist leaders themselves who believe that Iraq is a central battlefield in what we call the Third World War, a war that obviously the United States is leading. With our allies, we need to bring this to a successful conclusion.

I quote from the President's speech the words of Osama bin Laden who said:

> I now address the whole Islamic nation. Listen and understand. The most serious issue today for the whole world is this third world war that is raging in Iraq.

He calls it a war of destiny between infidelity and Islam and concludes that the whole world is watching this war, and it will end in victory and glory or misery and humiliation.

In the latter, I think he was correct. We have to make sure that it is his misery and humiliation and the terrorists' misery and humiliation that is the result of the conflict in Iraq and not that of the United States. In order to ensure that, it is incumbent upon us to prosecute this war to a successful conclusion and not leave this difficult battlefield prematurely—in the process, by the way, support those who are working very hard on our behalf, not denigrate them. It is fine to show the loyalty and the gratitude to our troops that the resolution does, and which I do, but it is also important to show that same kind of gratitude to other people who are trying very hard to protect the American people. That includes the President of the United States and the Secretary of Defense.

EXHIBIT 1

RESPONSE FROM THE CHIEF OF STAFF JOSH BOLTEN TO A DEMOCRATIC LETTER

SEPTEMBER 5, 2006.

Senate Democratic Leader HARRY REID,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR REID: Thank you for your September 4 letter to the President. I am responding on his behalf.

A useful discussion of what we need to do in Iraq requires an accurate and fair-minded description of our current policy: As the President has explained, our goal is an Iraq that can govern itself, defend itself, and sustain itself. In order to achieve this goal, we are pursuing a strategy along three main tracks—political, economic, and security. Along each of these tracks, we are constantly adjusting our tactics to meet conditions on the ground. We have witnessed both successes and setbacks along the way, which is the story of every war that has been waged and won.

Your letter recites four elements of a proposed ''new direction'' in Iraq. Three of those elements reflect well-established Administration policy; the fourth is dangerously misguided.

First, you propose ''transitioning the U.S. mission in Iraq to counter-terrorism, training, logistics and force protection.'' That is what we are now doing, and have been doing for several years. Our efforts to train the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) have evolved and accelerated over the past three years. Our military has had substantial success in building the Iraqi Army—and increasingly we have seen the Iraqi Army take the lead in fighting the enemies of a free Iraq. The Iraqi Security Forces still must rely on U.S. support, both in direct combat and especially in key combat support functions. But any fair-minded reading of the current situation must recognize that the ISF are unquestionably more capable and shouldering a greater portion of the burden than a year ago—and because of the extraordinary efforts of the United States military, we expect they will

become increasingly capable with each passing month. Your recommendation that we focus on counterterrorism training and operations—which is the most demanding task facing our troops—tracks not only with our policy but also our understanding, as well as the understanding of al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations, that Iraq is a central front in the war against terror.

Second, your letter proposes ''working with Iraqi leaders to disarm the militias and to develop a broad-based and sustainable political settlement, including amending the Constitution to achieve a fair sharing of power and resources.'' You are once again urging that the Bush Administration adopt an approach that has not only been embraced, but is now being executed. Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki is pursuing a national reconciliation project. It is an undertaking that (a) was devised by the Iraqis; (b) has the support of the United States, our coalition partners and the United Nations; and (c) is now being implemented. Further, in Iraq's political evolution, the Sunnis, who boycotted the first Iraq election, are now much more involved in the political process. Prime Minister Maliki is head of a free government that represents all communities in Iraq for the first time in that nation's history. It is in the context of this broad-based, unity government, and the lasting national compact that government is pursuing, that the Iraqis will consider what amendments might be required to the constitution that the Iraqi people adopted last year. On the matter of disarming militias: that is precisely what Prime Minister al-Maliki is working to do. Indeed, Coalition leaders are working with him and his ministers to devise and implement a program to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate members of militias and other illegal armed groups.

Third, your letter calls for ''convening an international conference and contact group to support a political settlement in Iraq, to preserve Iraq's sovereignty, and to revitalize the stalled economic reconstruction and rebuilding effort.'' The International Compact for Iraq, launched recently by the sovereign Iraqi government and the United Nations, is the best way to work with regional and international partners to make substantial economic progress in Iraq, help revitalize the economic reconstruction and rebuilding of that nation, and support a fair and just political settlement in Iraq—all while preserving Iraqi sovereignty. This effort is well under way, it has momentum, and I urge you to support it.

Three of the key proposals found in your letter, then, are already reflected in current U.S. and Iraqi policy in the region.

On the fourth element of your proposed ''new direction,'' however, we do disagree strongly. Our strategy calls for redeploying troops from Iraq as conditions on the ground allow, when the Iraqi Security Forces are capable of defending their nation, and when our military commanders believe the time is right. Your proposal is driven by none of these factors; instead, it would have U.S. forces begin withdrawing from Iraq by the end of the year, without regard to the conditions on the ground. Because your letter lacks specifics, it is difficult to determine exactly what is contemplated by the ''phased redeployment'' you propose. (One such proposal, advanced by Representative Murtha, a signatory to your letter, suggested that U.S. forces should be redeployed as a ''quick reaction force'' to Okinawa, which is nearly 5,000 miles from Baghdad).

Regardless of the specifics you envision by ''phased redeployment,'' any premature withdrawal of U.S forces would have disastrous consequences for America's security. Such a policy would embolden our terrorist enemies; betray the hopes of the Iraqi people; lead to a terrorist state in control of huge oil reserves; shatter the confidence our regional allies have in America; undermine the spread of democracy in the Middle East; and mean the sacrifices of American troops would have been in vain. This ''new direction'' would lead to a crippling defeat for America and a staggering victory for Islamic extremists. That is not a direction this President will follow. The President is being guided by a commitment to victory—and that plan, in turn, is being driven by the counsel and recommendations of our military commanders in the region.

Finally, your letter calls for replacing Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld. We strongly disagree. Secretary Rumsfeld is an honorable and able public servant. Under his leadership, the United States Armed Forces and our allies have overthrown two brutal tyrannies and liberated more than 50 million people. Al Qaeda has suffered tremendous blows. Secretary Rumsfeld has pursued vigorously the President's vision for a transformed U.S. military. And he has played a lead role in forging and implementing many of the policies you now recommend in Iraq. Secretary Rumsfeld retains the full confidence of the President.

We appreciate your stated interest in working with the Administration on policies that honor the sacrifice of our troops and promote our national security, which we believe can be accomplished only through victory in this central front in the War on Terror.

Sincerely,

JOSHUA B. BOLTEN,
Chief of Staff.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. DURBIN. Will the Senator from New York yield for a moment?

Mrs. CLINTON. Certainly.

Mr. DURBIN. I make a unanimous consent as to the remaining speakers on the Democratic side, if I might. I apologize for interrupting the Senator from New York.

I ask unanimous consent that the following speakers be recognized on the Democratic side in sequence, alternating with Republicans: Senator CLINTON for 10 minutes; Senator HARKIN for 15 minutes; Senator BOXER, 6 minutes; Senator CARPER, 5 minutes; Senator DORGAN, 10 minutes; Senator MURRAY, 5 minutes; Senator MIKULSKI, 5 minutes; and Senator LAUTENBERG, 10 minutes.

The sequence may be different, depending on who is in the Chamber, but those are the times allotted for which I ask unanimous consent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from New York is recognized for 10 minutes.

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, we are debating this resolution for two simple reasons. First, no matter how the lily is gilded, things are not going well in our war against terrorism, and there is no doubt we need new leadership.

Second, this Congress has abdicated its constitutional responsibility to conduct oversight and hold the administration accountable for the decisions which it has made over the course of the last 5 years.

This is quite unusual in American history because ordinarily the Congress would play that role of check and balance.

In the middle of World War II, which really was a world war, then-Senator Harry Truman was the chair of a commission looking into war profiteering and other matters related to the conduct of the war. There was a Democratic Congress, a Democratic President. Yet the Congress, under then-Senator Truman's leadership, fulfilled its responsibility.

During the Vietnam war, which ripped this country apart, Senator Fulbright felt compelled to hold hearings about the conduct of that war. A Democratic Congress, a Democratic President, fulfilling its responsibility.

We have seen none of that, with very few exceptions. This Congress has been either intimidated or negligent in the fulfillment of its responsibilities to hold the administration accountable. Absolute power not only corrupts, but it can lead to bad decisions. This has been a very small group of decisionmakers.

Recently, the President changed the leadership of his economic team because we all know the economy is not doing as well as advertised. Profits are up, productivity is up, but average wages and income aren't. It is getting harder and harder for the average American to make ends meet. So the President changed his economic leadership, changed his Chief of Staff in the White House. Yet there is no accountability with respect to his security team.

I just returned, as did my colleagues, from our recess. I visited throughout my State. In every kind of community, people are expressing deep concerns about the direction we are heading when it comes to the war in Iraq, when it comes to American security interests. New Yorkers, as most Americans, want things set right in Iraq, when so much both has gone wrong and seems to continue to go wrong.

We are asking for some accountability. There is no illusion on this side of the aisle that this resolution will pass. We know it will not. We may not even get a vote on it because, heaven forbid, the other side would have to stand up and actually vote. We know that many on the other side share our doubts. Privately, they will say some of the most harsh and critical comments about the Secretary of Defense, about the President, about the Vice President, and the conduct of this war. However, they abdicate their responsibility in public. We have no illusions we are going to get a vote. Yet we owe it to ourselves, our troops, our fellow citizens to raise these issues.

One doesn't have to read the recently published book ''Fiasco'' or the book before it, ''Cobra II,'' to see how badly things have gone. We know that. At the center of so many of the wrong calls, the misjudgments, the strategic blunders has been the Secretary of Defense. No one is questioning his patriotism,

his honorable service. We are questioning his judgment and his leadership.

We went to war with the Secretary of Defense we had. Now it is time to complete the mission with the new Secretary of Defense we need. It is past time.

Our friends on the other side will come forward and make the most impassioned arguments about how things are going, how we have to stay the course, and what has to be done in order to succeed. But under Secretary Rumsfeld's leadership, it has not happened. We have a full-fledged insurgency and full-blown sectarian conflict in Iraq. I don't care what you label it—civil war, sectarian violence—the fact is the Iraqis are losing hundreds and hundreds of lives. As of yesterday, 2,652 service men and women have been killed in Iraq; amongst them, 123 New Yorkers.

We didn't go with enough troops to establish law and order, to put down a marker as to our authority as we replaced an authoritarian dictatorship. We went with this dysfunctional bureaucracy known as the Coalition Provisional Authority, which disbanded the Iraqi Army which we are now trying to recreate.

Secretary Rumsfeld rejected virtually all of the planning that had been done previously to maintain stability when the regime was overthrown. He deliberately and repeatedly underestimated the nature and strength of the insurgency, the sectarian violence, and the spread of Iranian influence.

Let us not confuse the leadership's failures with either the remaining mission in Iraq, the war on terrorism or with our support for our troops. What we have is a failure of leadership to accomplish that mission. What was hailed as our shortest war has now become one of our longest.

What was hailed as a model of democracy teeters on the brink of complete anarchy. What was the leadership that quickly claimed credit for success has been lethargic in the face of misjudgments and setbacks. I do not see what other conclusions one can draw. We will have the same President and Vice President for the next 2 years. But why not ask the President to exercise his judgment to bring in new leadership, to send a new signal to our troops, to our military leadership, to our friends and our allies, and to our country that—guess what—we get it, we need new leadership.

When I confronted Secretary Rumsfeld a month ago, he continued to obfuscate and deny responsibility. He denied he ever painted a rosy picture in Iraq. In response, my office compiled a list of 13 statements, out of many he had made, which clearly painted a rosy scenario.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that those statements be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD BY SENATOR CLINTON

In the August 3 Armed Services Committee hearing, I had the following exchange with Secretary Rumsfeld:

CLINTON: Well, Mr. Secretary, I know you would, and I know you feel strongly about it, but there's a track record here. This is not 2002, 2003, 2004, '5, when you appeared before this committee and made many comments and presented many assurances that have, frankly, proven to be unfulfilled. And . . .

RUMSFELD: Senator, I don't think that's true. I have never painted a rosy picture. I've been very measured in my words. And you'd have a dickens of a time trying to find instances where I've been excessively optimistic. I understand this is tough stuff.

I ask unanimous consent that the following quotes from Secretary Rumsfeld be included in the Record:

CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS

July 9, 2003: Senate Armed Services Committee hearing

''The residents of Baghdad may not have power 24 hours a day, but they no longer wake up each morning in fear wondering whether this will be the day that a death squad would come to cut out their tongues, chop off their ears, or take their children away for 'questioning,' never to be seen again.''

September 30, 2003: House Appropriations Committee hearing

''My impression is that the war was highly successful.''

Source: Transcript of Hearing of House Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Defense on President's FY '04 Supplemental Request for Iraq and Afghanistan, available online from FDCH Political Transcripts on Lexis-Nexis.

February 4, 2004: Senate Armed Services Committee hearing

''The increased demand on the force we are experiencing today is likely a 'spike,' driven by the deployment of nearly 115,000 troops in Iraq. We hope and anticipate that that spike will be temporary. We do not expect to have 115,000 troops permanently deployed in any one campaign.''

May 7, 2004: Senate Armed Services Committee hearing

''Senator BAYH. So my question, Mr. Secretary, my final question is just very simply, do you believe we're on the right course presently, or is dramatic action necessary to regain the momentum so that we can ultimately prevail in what is a very noble and idealistic undertaking?

Sec. RUMSFELD. I do believe we're on the right track.''

June 23, 2005: Senate Armed Services Committee hearing

''But terrorists no longer can take advantage of sanctuaries like Fallujah.''

June 23, 2005: House Armed Services Committee hearing

''The level of support from the international community is growing.''

March 9, 2006: Senate Appropriations Committee hearing

''Sen. ROBERT BYRD. Mr. Secretary, how can Congress be assured that the funds in this bill won't be used to put our troops right in the middle of a full-blown Iraqi civil war?

Sec. DONALD RUMSFELD. Senator, I can say that certainly it is not the intention of the military commanders to allow that to happen. The—and to repeat, the—at least thus far, the situation has been such that the Iraqi security forces could for the most part deal with the problems that exist.''

PRESS INTERVIEWS AND OTHER FORUMS

November 14, 2002: Infinity CBS Radio Connect, interview with Steve Kroft

''The Gulf War in the 1990s lasted five days on the ground. I can't tell you if the use of force in Iraq today would last five days, or five weeks, or five months, but it certainly isn't going to last any longer than that.''

December 18, 2002: CNN ''Larry King Live''

''The Taliban are gone. The al Qaeda are gone.''

February 7, 2003: Town hall meeting with U.S. troops in Aviano, Italy

''And it is not knowable if force will be used, but if it is to be used, it is not knowable how long that conflict would last. It could last, you know, six days, six weeks. I doubt six months.''

February 20, 2003: PBS ''NewsHour''

''Lehrer. Do you expect the invasion, if it comes, to be welcomed by the majority of the civilian population of Iraq?

RUMSFELD. There's obviously the Shia population in Iraq and the Kurdish population in Iraq have been treated very badly by Saddam Hussein's regime, they represent a large fraction of the total. There is no question but that they would be welcomed.''

March 30, 2003: ABC ''This Week with George Stephanopoulos''

''We know where [the WMD] are. They're in the area around Tikrit and Baghdad and east, west, south and north somewhat.''

February 1, 2006: Department of Defense News Briefing

''Q: One clarification on ''the long war.'' Is Iraq going to be a long war?

Sec. RUMSFELD. No, I don't believe it is.''

Mrs. CLINTON. It is time for the Senate to exercise our responsibility, for the Members of this Chamber to decide: What do we owe our constituents, our young men and women in uniform? What do we owe history in terms of our responsibility? We know the answer. Whether we stand up and deny it or not, we know the answer. History is going to judge this period harshly. And I wish we could, as a body, redeem ourselves and redeem this mission, give it a chance for success, with new eyes and ears, with a new way of thinking and leading.

I have no idea whom the President might ask to replace the Secretary were he to be asked to leave or resign, but I have to believe that some fresh thinking, some new ideas would make a difference. It is time we put our policy, our chance for success, ahead of politics, that we put wise decisionmaking and new leadership ahead of the status quo. When it is not working, why do we keep digging a deeper hole? So I hope this body would exercise responsibility in the only way open to us, since we cannot have the oversight and accountability the Congress should be demanding.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, does the distinguished Senator from Alaska, the chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, wish to speak?

Mr. STEVENS. No. We are alternating speakers on each side, and Senator INHOFE is coming.

Ms. MIKULSKI. While we are waiting, my remarks are 5 minutes. May I proceed?

Mr. STEVENS. Yes, you may.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I thank the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Thank you very much, Mr. President. I appreciate all the courtesy.

Mr. President, this is really a sad day for me. It is a very sad day, as we are coming up on the anniversary of September 11, as I remember the fear that gripped the Capitol and gripped the United States of America. I remember us being outside on the steps of the Capitol on the evening of September 11 when we stood together and sang ''God Bless America'' together, when we were one Nation indivisible and when we were united and we were so determined to fight that global war against terrorism.

I joined with all of my colleagues and I voted to give the President the power to use lethal force to pursue the terrorists and pursue the Taliban and take the fight to Afghanistan. And how pleased I was with the victory in Afghanistan and the way, then, that the Afghan people came together in their Loya Jurga to choose Mr. Karzai to be their leader and to lay the groundwork for a democratic Afghanistan. I thought we were going to make Afghanistan the jewel of the Middle East, where the Muslim community could flourish, a democratic community could emerge, and women would be able to exercise their rights. How joyful we were when those little girls were going to school the same way as the little boys. But it was not meant to be. Afghanistan did not get the backing and support it needed, and along the way there was the recommendation to go to war in Iraq.

In 2002, 1 year later, we were debating the war in Iraq. Well, on October 10, 2002, I disagreed with the resolution before the Senate, with the request to give the President the authority to wage war in Iraq, using a unilateral approach, and to engage in a preemptive war. I did not agree that the world and the United States of America faced a clear, present, immediate danger from weapons of mass destruction.

That information was coming from our CIA, and it was coming from our Department of Defense, which had cozied up to a dissident named Achmed Chalabi, the guy who hung around London, being paid $300,000 a week from the CIA, eating Dover sole, with no backing, no information. He sold us a bill of goods. There were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Rumsfeld was one of the ones who made that argument, along with the CIA.

So where am I today? Today, I really do believe we need a fresh approach. One of the ways to get it is through new leadership. Ordinarily, I would not single out a personality. I would agree with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, that this is about policies. But we have gotten nowhere. So I have joined with my colleagues to ask for Donald Rumsfeld's resignation.

I have been asking for his resignation since 2004 because I watched us go from being at war with Iraq to being at war within Iraq. Well, this dangerous incompetence has been wrong for America and wrong for our troops and wrong for our allies and wrong for the Iraqi people.

Rumsfeld was wrong about the Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, and he led us into war on inaccurate evidence. As a member of the Intelligence Committee, I know that Rumsfeld skewed, selected, and exaggerated information about weapons of mass destruction. And our men and women in uniform have been paying for this deception ever since.

Rumsfeld was wrong about what it would take to secure Iraq. We sent our troops to war without sufficient body armor, without armored humvees, and unprotected for the war in Iraq, where they face daily attacks by IEDs and RPGs. It was up to the Congress, and actually the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, to add over $1 billion to make sure our troops have the protection they need.

Well, now they need to have new leadership, as well as new protection and new weapons. And along the way, when we hear we are going to listen to our generals in the field—what generals in the field? Those generals who said we need more troops or different strategies, who disagreed with Rumsfeld's rosy projections were muzzled. Warnings about lawlessness and looting were ignored. The State Department's reconstruction plan for Iraq was dismissed and laid aside.

DOD's own report says now sectarian violence is the dominant trend in Iraq. But the Secretary of Defense, Mr. Rumsfeld, refuses to admit what our generals can clearly see: Iraq is slipping into a civil war and sectarian violence. And whose side are we going to be on? We have said this must be a year of transition. And the transition must begin with Mr. Rumsfeld resigning.

Now, Mr. Rumsfeld also assured us about the cost of the war. I was in the meetings. I was in the hearings. He said: Don't worry, American taxpayers will not pay for the war. With our shock and awe, and this quick war, we are going to have a mission accomplished, that the war will be over, and the cost of rebuilding will be paid for by Iraqi oil. Well, Iraqi oil—drip, drip, drip. When do we get a chance to see it? There is no Iraqi oil coming to the United States. Why? Because the infrastructure is broken. Because of the corruption. And because we were once again oversold.

Finally, we need to hold Rumsfeld responsible for the prisoner abuse scandals. The abuse at Abu Ghraib is deplorable, despicable and dishonorable. It does not reflect the values of the United States, or the code of conduct that most of our Soldiers live by every day. Rumsfeld's leadership created a command atmosphere where terrible abuse of prisoners was not just tolerated, but encouraged. But only junior enlisted and young officers have been held accountable, while high level military and civilian leaders are let off the hook. This is unacceptable.

Rumsfeld is completely incapable of speaking the truth—or facing the truth—about Iraq. His dismal performance has undermined U.S. credibility in the world, and undermined the President's credibility with the American people. We face serious threats from terrorism and rogue regimes, and our brave troops are risking their lives every day around the world. We need a Secretary of Defense we can trust. Donald Rumsfeld should resign now.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I think I made my point, and I am willing to yield my time. We need new leadership. We need a new Secretary of Defense.

I yield my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, first of all, let me say I have listened with some interest. Unfortunately, the committee I chair has had meetings all day, and I have not had a chance to really get involved in this discussion. But I have been listening to people criticizing Secretary Rumsfeld, talking about the war, and I just wonder what war they are talking about and what Secretary they are talking about because it certainly is not what is going on right now.

I can remember so many times during the 1990s when we had this euphoric attitude that somehow the Cold War was over and so we no longer needed a military and so we knew we could do some downgrading at that time. I can remember so many times on the floor saying we will rue the day we did this, we are going to have to rebuild, not knowing at that time that this would have to be during a time of war.

At that time, our Army divisions went down by about 50 percent. The tactical air wings went down by about 50 percent. Ships went down from 600 to 300. And again, people were thinking, there is no need to have this strong of a military. And they did not seem to think there was any kind of a threat out there. Nobody really thought about what we call today the asymmetric threat.

Now, that is what Secretary Rumsfeld inherited. I remember so well, about 6½ years ago, at his confirmation hearing, I asked a question. I said: Right now, we have downgraded the military to the point where we are going to have to build it up again. And as we try to anticipate the problems we will be facing that we must prepare for today, that will come 10 years from now, you are going to have all the four star generals, who are all smart people, but they are not going to guess it right.

I can remember one time, in 1994, I was in the House Armed Services Committee, and we had someone testify that in 10 years from then we would no longer need ground troops. That was in 1994. So I asked: What is the answer to this? If we are going to try to have our kids, our troops go into the field on some future date 10 years from now, how are we going to be sure they have the best of everything?

He said: Well—I am going from memory now, but he said—all throughout the 20th century the amount we spent on defense equaled 5.7 percent of GDP. At the end of the 1990s, we were down to 2.7 percent.

I said: Where should it be?

He said: Probably, in order to be prepared for any contingency in the future, we would have to be somewhere between 4 and 4.5 percent or maybe even 5 percent of GDP.

That is the problem he inherited. And he was hired because he has had the vision to restructure this and set about doing that job some 6½ years ago.

During his first month, he called for flowcharts to be created that would detail the interdepartmental relationships at the Pentagon. What he received back looked like a bowl of spaghetti.

It was totally disorganized. He had to expose this, and we all know now what he did. He started in on reforming the Pentagon. Nobody else did it prior to him. He was the one who did it. We know the big picture changes and takes time when we shake up the very foundation of the Pentagon, but he did it. We were shifting from a division-oriented force to a modular brigade combat force, from a conventional base enemy toward an asymmetric war, while maintaining our ability as a modernized nation. Much progress has been made in the Army's system of dealing with divisions and organizing them into modular brigades, combat teams that are more capable and faster to deploy. He increased force size from 33 brigades to 42 brigades. I didn't agree with him at first.

I remember that out in Oklahoma we were shocked when he made the announcement as to one of the programs that we had, that we were working on, the development of a modern nonline-of-sight cannon called the Crusader. It was going to take us out of the World War II technology. Right now, the best thing we have in terms of artillery is the Paladin, and that is World War II technology. It is one where you have to swab the breach after every shot. That is what we were faced with at that time. I criticized him for junking that program. He had a bigger picture in mind. It was a future combat system for the Army.

He looked at the Navy and said the biggest problem was spare parts. Donald Rumsfeld concentrated on that and now has ships ready to be deployable. Another change in the Navy was instead of bringing a ship all the way with a crew out to a battle area, he leaves the ship there and flies the crew back and forth and increases the ship's efficiency at sea by about 50 percent. That is common sense, but it is something that nobody else did. It took Donald Rumsfeld to come along with the idea to do that.

In the Air Force, he recognized at that time that—I think it was probably under his supervision that General Jumper had the courage to stand up and say: Now we are sending our airmen out with equipment that isn't as good, potentially, as the enemy's. He talked about our strike fighters, and the best that we had were the F–15 and the F-16. We slowed down the F–22 development, the joint strike fighter. But General Jumper stood up and said—and Rumsfeld agreed—that now the potential is that the enemy has better equipment than we do. What he was referring to was the SU series the Russians were making, SU–27s, SU–30s, and SU–35s were, in many ways, superior to what our airmen and women were flying.

So, anyway, we got this back on schedule and now we have some 66, 68 F–22s flying. I see a couple of the Senators on the floor who will join me in wanting to enhance that program of F–22s and move the joint strike fighter forward. That is something that this Secretary did, which others were not willing or capable of doing and didn't have the foresight to do.

I have to tell you this, Mr. President. I was there during the confirmation hearing, and I said publicly on the Senate floor that the liberals are not going to like Rumsfeld for one major reason: they cannot intimidate him. He is not one to be intimidated. He has stood up to them, and he tells the truth; he tells it like it is. People in politics, many times, don't like that.

Turning to Iraq, the positive things that have changed in Iraq are economic change, where the economy is recovering after 30 years of a bloody dictatorship that we are aware of. In 2005, the Iraqi economy grew an estimated 3 percent. It is estimated to be some 10 percent in 2006. The International Monetary Fund is anticipating that. Under Saddam Hussein's regime, the Iraqi standard of living deteriorated rapidly. The per capita income there dropped from $3,800 in 1980 to $715 in 2002. Today, the economic recovery is picking up, with GDP growing from $18.9 billion in 2002 to $33 billion in 2005.

I have to say this, also. So many of the people who criticize what is going on over there in the war don't go over there and see. If you watch CNN and the networks and read the New York Times, you will not get an accurate picture of what is going on. I have been there more than anybody else. I have been in the Iraqi AOR 11 times, during all of the elections. I was in Fallujah during that election. I recall very well a general there named Mahi, who had been the brigade commander for Saddam Hussein; he had hated Americans. He hated Americans until the Marines went into Fallujah and started this embedded training. He learned to love them so much that he looked across at me and he said, ''When they rotated the Marines out, we all cried.'' Then he renamed the Iraqi security forces in Fallujah to be the Iraqi Marines.

Then, up in Saddam's hometown, I was there when they blew up some of the Iraqi security forces who were training. Forty were either killed or near dead. What you didn't get in the media was the success story, the support from the Iraqis. Each family of the ones who were killed in Tikrit supplied another member of the family to take the place of the one who died. You don't see that in the news. I was fortunate to have arranged to be there at the same time that their Government took over. The Prime Minister, Defense Minister Jasim, and the National Security Advisor were there. I asked them basic questions. Some are talking about the civil war that is going on. A civil war is not going on. If you go there and sit down and talk to them, I believe it was Jasim who said that he is Shia and his wife is a Sunni. He didn't even know what some of the other members of the Cabinet were. I wasn't sure I believed this, I say to my friend from Alabama. I went out on my own with an interpreter and I saw an honor guard force, the very elite of the group; there were nine of them. One was the leader. I said to the leader: I would like to know about the civil war, about what is happening between the Shia and the Sunnis. He said: That is just not a real thing. I have been with these guys 8 days now, and I cannot tell you which are Shia and which are Sunni. He said—and this is interesting because he repeated what Dr. Rubai said—he said: That is a Western concept.

I wish that some of these people who are criticizing what is going on would hear the testimonials we hear. A woman told me ''now my daughter can get married.'' I said: Why couldn't she get married before? She said it was because the wedding celebrations take place outdoors. Many times, the forces would come by—and we know, of course, Saddam's sons would capture and rape all of the girls and bury them alive. That is not happening anymore. For the first time, we have women going to school there. You have to go there and talk to them before you realize it.

The security forces that we criticize on the floor of the Senate are up now to 275,000 trained and equipped. I have talked to them, visited with them. I was in Fallujah when they voted. They voted 2 days ahead of time because they were risking their lives to vote. They are looking forward to the day when they are going to be able to take care of their own security. It is difficult for people to say when that day is going to come. That is a military decision. Many of the military people tell me that when they have 10 divisions

trained and equipped, they will be able to do it. Now they have 275,000, so that would be about 325,000.

They are making great progress. I heard the distinguished minority leader of the Armed Services Committee talk about a poll taken about how the Iraqi people are responding to us. If a question is worded: Do you want to have the coalition forces here from now on? Of course, they don't. They are a very proud people. They want to take care of their own problems. But they are not ready for us to leave right now. In a poll taken about two trips ago, they said 94 percent of the Iraqis support a unity government. Now they have that unity government.

In the same poll, 78 percent of the Iraqis said they were opposed to Iraqis being segregated by religion or ethnicity. And so we can show you that the Iraqi people are so appreciative. It is spooky when they recognize you as an American and come running up to you. You never know for sure what they have with them. But they come up and embrace you and they are recognizing that what we and the coalition forces have done is a remarkable thing.

Also, what do a lot of these critics I heard on the floor have in common? They are all running for President of the United States. This is going to be their issue. If they can go to the Democrats and say, I am more liberal than anybody else, I am heading up the surrender, cut-and-run caucus, that is what they are going to try to do.

I suggest that we are very fortunate that Donald Rumsfeld was here at this time. I have thought often about what might have been the alternative. The greatest possible disservice we can do, not just to the Iraqi people but to our troops there, is to use Rumsfeld and the war for political advancement. I have spent time with them over there, and I assure you that we did the right thing.

People who say there is no connection between 9/11 and Iraq don't realize that three major terrorist camps were actually in Iraq at that time. They are not open for business anymore. So I am very proud to stand here and defend our Secretary of Defense, who has done a great job, and also to say that our troops are doing an incredible job under most difficult circumstances.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, the Senate really should not have to debate the need to replace Donald Rumsfeld, the Secretary of Defense. If the Bush administration believed in accountability, if it believed in performance standards, if it believed in demanding competence from senior officials, Mr. Rumsfeld would have been dismissed long ago.

Instead, as disaster after disaster has followed disaster after disaster, and as Iraq descended first into guerrilla war and into civil war, Mr. Rumsfeld has been allowed to cling to his job.

For the record, I was the first Senator to call for Mr. Rumsfeld's resignation. I did so nearly 2½ years ago, on May 6, 2004, in response to the revelations of torture and abuse at Abu Ghraib prison. As I said then:

> For the good of our country, the safety of our troops, and our image around the globe, Secretary Rumsfeld should resign. If he does not resign forthwith, the President should fire him.

I said that on May 6, 2004. However, the scandal at Abu Ghraib is not the only disaster that can be traced directly to Mr. Rumsfeld. The Secretary of Defense has become virtually synonymous with disastrous decisionmaking. The litany of his catastrophic mistakes is familiar to all of us.

Before the invasion of Iraq, Mr. Rumsfeld sidelined General Shinseki, then the Army Chief of Staff, for daring to state that hundreds of thousands of troops would be needed to secure Iraq. Instead, Mr. Rumsfeld insisted on going to war on the cheap, with the bare minimum number of troops needed to overthrow Saddam Hussein. Mr. Rumsfeld gave no thought to securing the country after Saddam's fall. Indeed, he threw out the State Department's plan for restoring order. It was Mr. Rumsfeld, remember, who dismissed the postwar anarchy in Baghdad and other places with the phrase ''stuff happens.'' That is a direct quote from Mr. Rumsfeld.

He was complicit in the decision to disband the Iraqi Army which fed the chaos and drove many former Iraqi soldiers into the arms of the insurgency.

Again and again, he refused to increase U.S. troop strength to a level that would allow law and order to be restored in Iraq.

He gave a green light to abusive practices that led to the scandal at Abu Ghraib prison.

He dismissed the insurgency as the work of just a few ''dead-enders'' who would soon be routed.

He failed to adequately equip our Armed Forces in Iraq, including basic items such as body armor and fortified humvees.

Most recently—just last week—Mr. Rumsfeld lashed out at critics of the war in Iraq. He accused them of ''moral and intellectual confusion'' and of appeasing ''a new type of fascism.'' Those are his exact words, ''moral and intellectual confusion,'' ''a new type of fascism.''

Wait a minute. This is the same Donald Rumsfeld who visited Baghdad in 1983 and was photographed warmly shaking hands with none other than Saddam Hussein. He had been sent on that mission to court Saddam Hussein and to communicate the Reagan administration's desire to help the Iraqi dictator in his war against Iran.

Mr. Rumsfeld went on that mission after we knew that Saddam Hussein had committed mass murders, after we knew he had used chemical weapons to gas the Iraqi Kurds and Iranians. Mr. Rumsfeld is the last person to be preaching about ''moral and intellectual confusion.''

I don't know of anyone else, I don't know of anyone on this side of the aisle who has criticized the President and his mismanagement of the war, and Rumsfeld and his mismanagement, who ever went to Iraq to shake hands with Saddam Hussein, who went to tell Saddam Hussein we would share information and intelligence and whatever weapons we might need. This was after we knew that he had gassed the Kurds and Iranians, after he committed mass murders. Yet for Mr. Rumsfeld in 1983, Saddam was our guy. Let me rephrase that, Saddam was his guy, not ours.

Now, for Mr. Rumsfeld to be talking about moral and intellectual confusion, let's get real here, folks. The only person who is morally and intellectually confused is Donald Rumsfeld.

The litany of Donald Rumsfeld's mistakes and misjudgments go on and on. He has become almost a legend in his own time as a Secretary of Defense who has been catastrophically wrong again and again but who arrogantly refuses to acknowledge any mistakes.

Earlier this year, when Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said the United States made tactical errors in Iraq, Mr. Rumsfeld dismissed her, too. He said:

> If someone says, well, that's a tactical mistake, then I guess it's a lack of understanding of what warfare is about.

Maybe we should listen to those who truly do understand what warfare is about. Maybe we should listen to some of the generals.

In early April, LTG Greg Newbold, the former Director of Operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, wrote in Time magazine that the invasion of Iraq ''was done with a casualness and swagger that are the special provenance of those who have never had to execute these missions—or bury the results.''

He added:

> The cost of flawed leadership continues to be paid in blood.

About the same time, MG John Baptiste, who commanded the 1st Infantry Division in Iraq in 2004 and 2005, said:

> I believe we need a fresh start at the Pentagon. . . .We need leadership up there that respects the military as they expect the military to respect them.

Marine GEN Anthony Zinni, the former Chief of U.S. Central Command, accused Mr. Rumsfeld and his civilian advisers of ''dereliction of duty'' in failing to prepare adequately for war.

The remarkable thing about the debacle in Iraq is that nobody, aside from a few privates and sergeants, has been held accountable or dismissed. Isn't it the truth? It is always the grunts, it is always the noncoms and the privates who get the raw end of the deal. They were the ones who were thrown in prison for the scandals at Abu Ghraib. What about the people above them? No one is ever held accountable above them.

Incredible as it may seem, the four coarchitects of the Iraq debacle—Paul

Wolfowitz, George Tenet, GEN Tommy Franks, Paul Bremmer—have all been awarded the Medal of Freedom. They have all been awarded the Medal of Freedom. Paul Wolfowitz, who said we would pay for it with Iraqi oil, who said it would be over within 6 weeks, maybe 6 months at the most, was awarded the Medal of Freedom. Think about that, the architects of the debacle in Iraq. And Donald Rumsfeld has been rewarded with continued tenure as Secretary of Defense.

Meanwhile, our enterprise in Iraq continues to descend deeper and deeper into chaos, corruption, and crime. Who is surprised by this? The same Secretary of Defense whose decisions created the quagmire in Iraq is still in office, still in charge, still making key decisions.

It boggles the mind. I am reminded that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result.

We have the same disastrous civilian leadership in place at the Pentagon. Why should we expect anything but the same disastrous results?

I saw a bumper sticker the other day that said ''Support our troops, not poor leadership.'' I agree. Our soldiers and marines on the ground in Iraq are putting their lives on the line every day. They are trying their best to salvage some kind of positive outcome in Iraq. They deserve our respect and our support. They also deserve competent civilian leadership at the Pentagon.

Donald Rumsfeld ought to have the decency to step aside and allow for fresh leadership at the Pentagon. Instead, he stubbornly refuses to admit any error. He stubbornly refuses to change course. He stubbornly refuses to go.

Quite frankly, Mr. Rumsfeld has a pre-9/11 mentality, a pre-9/11 mindset. He talks about World War II, fascists, and Nazis. That is World War II.

Then, he said we have to stop the terrorists in Iraq before they get into the Philippines, Indonesia, and other places. I remember as a staff aide to a committee in the House in 1970 going to Vietnam and sitting in a meeting with then-President Nguyen Van Thieu with a bunch of Congressmen. I remember him lecturing how the Communist goal was not South Vietnam; it was just a stepping stone to the Philippines and Indonesia. And the Congressmen there lapped it up. They lapped it up. Oh, yes, we have to stop the Communists in Vietnam before they get to America. This is Rumsfeld saying this about terrorists.

As it has been pointed out, there are more terrorists in Iraq now than prior to 9/11. It seems as though for every terrorist we kill, four or five spring up.

So Mr. Rumsfeld has a pre-9/11 mindset, that he is fighting World War II or maybe even fighting the Vietnam war. That is why we need a change at the Pentagon. His tenure at the Pentagon has been disastrous—disastrous for our economy, disastrous for Iraq, disastrous for the world, disastrous for so many of our troops now injured, now deceased, killed in Iraq.

It is unacceptable. It is time for the Senate to go on record saying that it is unacceptable. That is what the amendment is all about. It is about holding Mr. Rumsfeld accountable for his tragic mistakes. It is about giving our troops the credible, competent civilian leadership they deserve, someone with a post-9/11 mindset on the world, not a pre-9/11 mindset, such as Mr. Rumsfeld has.

It is about charting a new course in Iraq. It is also about charting a new course in the war against terrorists who attacked us on September 11, 2001.

It is time for Mr. Rumsfeld to go. It is time for new leadership at the Pentagon.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to this amendment that I understand is going to be filed. I want to be brief, but I want to make two quick points.

I listened with interest to my good friend from Iowa, and he is my dear friend. I understand there are reasons one can put hindsight glasses on and one can criticize somebody for failing to take action when something has been done over a course of weeks, months, and years in this case. But what I don't hear in addition to the criticism is what we could have done or what we ought to do. All I hear is blame being put on, in this case, one man for the situation that has developed in Iraq.

I happen to have a different opinion. I have been involved from the intelligence side, as well as from the Armed Services side in this body, as well as previously on the House side. Secretary Rumsfeld has been at the helm of the Department of Defense now for almost 6 years, and during that 6 years, we, first of all, saw a movement toward transformation of our military to a leaner, meaner, more mobile military. Under his leadership, we have been headed in that direction.

During the course of that, along comes the conflict in Afghanistan, followed by the conflict in Iraq, and the overall global war on terror, which is really what this is all about.

I heard the distinguished minority leader say this morning that this is not about Donald Rumsfeld. It goes well beyond that. He is exactly right because the criticism I hear now is not just specifically at the Secretary of Defense but the overall policy of this administration toward the global war on terrorism.

I am not a military expert. I don't pretend to be, and I don't think there is anybody in this body who is an expert on the type of conflict in which we are now engaged, particularly as much of an expert as those folks who wear the uniform of the United States. All of those who have worn it, all of those who do wear it are true heroes to all of us. But the fact is, when it comes to the leadership in the Army, the leadership in every other branch of the U.S. military—but most specifically the Army because, frankly, they have carried the brunt of this in Afghanistan as well as in Iraq—there is strong leadership over there, strong individuals, men who are well educated, men who are smart, men who are well schooled in the war on terrorism but who are principally schooled in military operations. We don't hear any one of those individuals jumping up and saying: I have told the Secretary this, he wouldn't do this, and therefore we suffered the consequences of his decision.

What we have heard from my good friend from Iowa, again, is comments made by former military individuals who probably didn't agree with what this Secretary did, but they didn't say it while they were in uniform. They waited until they were out of uniform.

It is awfully easy to look back and say what we should have done. But there has been no Secretary of Defense in modern times that has had to deal with as many complex military issues as this Secretary of Defense.

This Secretary of Defense is a tough boss. He is a very tough boss, but he has a tough job to do. When I look at the men who are making comments relative to what this Secretary of Defense should have done or should not have done, I start with GEN Tommy Franks. General Franks was there from day one as the Commander of CENTCOM. Tommy Franks was the man who was leading his men and women into battle under this Secretary of Defense. He is the man who was providing tactical information to this Secretary of Defense and who made the key decisions in Afghanistan and the decisions early on relative to Iraq. And what does Franks say about the leadership of Donald Rumsfeld? He couldn't say enough nice things or enough positive things about the leadership of Donald Rumsfeld. But as the minority leader said, this goes beyond that. What we are hearing in this debate is about the policy in Iraq and not about just the leadership of that one position. And this amendment goes to that.

My second point is when we talk about in this amendment that America is less secure today than we were prior to September 11, that statement could not be any more false. All of us in this body who were here on September 11—I happened to be in the other body on September 11, and all of us who were in both the House and the Senate who had any knowledge whatsoever of the intelligence situation and, for that matter, probably 100 percent of the Members of the House and the Senate, believed that at some point in time we were going to suffer another attack by the terrorists, who wake up every single morning with their sole purpose that day being to try to decide how they are going to kill and harm Americans. Yet we are going to celebrate next Monday

the fifth anniversary of September 11. And, gosh knows we hope it doesn't happen today, we hope it doesn't happen tomorrow, but if we get to Monday, it will be 5 years that the United States has gone without suffering another attack.

There are reasons for that, and Donald Rumsfeld is one of the reasons we have not suffered another attack on U.S. domestic soil since September 11. He is part of a team. There are a lot of people who deserve credit for it. Our intelligence community is doing a much better job. We had a briefing in the Intelligence Committee from the Director of the CIA, Mike Hayden, today to find out some additional things that we are doing now, all positive things, all continuing to move in the right direction. Mike Hayden is a part of that team. As we look out at all of our other intelligence agencies around the country, from a defense standpoint as well as a civilian standpoint, they are all doing a better job than they were on September 11. They are all a part of that team with Donald Rumsfeld and Mike Hayden to make sure that we are protected as citizens of the United States.

When you look at Director Mueller at the FBI, the FBI is doing a better job today than they were doing on September 11 of helping to gather intelligence and interrupting and disrupting potential terrorist operations inside the United States. They, again, are part of that team. Every single FBI agent, whether they are on domestic soil or whether they are on foreign operations, are doing a better job of making sure that as a team they are working to protect Americans and to help interrupt and disrupt terrorist activity.

So to say that we are not as safe today as we were on September 11, 2001, is simply an incorrect statement and shows a lack of understanding about what has happened in the 5 years since September 11.

Donald Rumsfeld is in a very unique position. He is in a position of making decisions relative to every single aspect of the war on terror. Donald Rumsfeld has a boss and he has to answer to that boss, and the boss is the President. I suspect that the underlying motive behind what we are debating today is not about Donald Rumsfeld; it is one more opportunity for those folks who came on the floor of the Senate and attacked the war in Iraq and said it was time to get out and made the arguments that we ought to get out of there now, we ought to get out of there in 6 months, we ought to be out in 9 months, whatever it is—let's set a timetable and tell the terrorists: You sit where you are, and in that period of time we are going to be out of there. And when the vote came on that particular issue, there was a resounding vote in opposition to that particular philosophy in this body. I hope the next vote that we take, which will be on this particular amendment, will be just as resounding in opposition and a defeat of this amendment.

I will say that I haven't always agreed with Donald Rumsfeld. He and I have had some very public and tough battles. But he has always been fair. He has always been straightforward.

In one instance, when he called me about a matter that I was involved in, frankly, he was right and I was wrong, and I had to admit that. I made a change in something we were doing, and we moved on. In other matters, he has told me that I was right, and he was wrong. That is the kind of leader he is. He is not one who says that you either agree with me or you are simply not on the team. Secretary Rumsfeld has been in a tough position since he has been there. He has dealt with very tough decisions in a very fair and favorable way.

If you look at the men who have served under him and you start with Tommy Franks, for whom I have such great respect and who I think everybody in this body would agree is not somebody who is going to get rolled over, Tommy Franks is not that kind of individual. If he believed in something, he would encourage the Secretary of Defense under his leadership to do exactly what he thought ought to be done. Donald Rumsfeld is the kind of person who would have listened to him, and he would have done whatever General Franks recommended. When General Franks says this is the kind of guy we need in the foxhole with us, as Tommy Franks has alluded to, then he is the kind of guy we want leading the Department of Defense.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey is recognized.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, it is interesting and amazing to me to listen to the critics of dissent in this democratic society. If you disagree with the administration, they try to insult you out of order and to create positions that describe you as insignificant, willing to retreat. We watched last week as the President continued his administration, as he began yet another campaign to convince Americans that its policy in Iraq is working. But much like the President's Iraq policy itself, this latest rhetorical campaign just isn't working. There have been five Bush administration campaigns to convince America that we should stay the course, and in each one of these administration claims they fail to convince the public. The public is smarter than they give them credit for. The American people understand what is happening in Iraq, and no wordsmithing is going to change that.

The administration rhetoric continues. Last month, in a speech in Arizona, Vice President CHENEY said:

> What these Democrats are pushing now is the very kind of retreat that has been tried in the past and has failed.

Is he implying that their mismanaged offense worked? Ask the 2,600 families who lost a son or a daughter there whether they think the plan has worked. It is insulting to suggest that those who disagree suggest a retreat. They are ugly, partisan, political comments by the Vice President.

What the Democrats want—and many Republicans—is a change in the direction in Iraq and new civilian leadership at the Pentagon to implement it. The stubborn Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld approach is simply not working. The retreat the Republican administration should be concerned with is the retreat of their colleagues from this failed Iraq policy.

Some Republicans in Congress are happy to walk the plank and support the arguments that simply defy logic and others are jumping ship. We are seeing staunch Republicans, such as Representative GIL GUTKNECHT of Minnesota, saying that we lack strategic control of Baghdad and calling for a limited troop withdrawal. Representative MIKE FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania has characterized the Bush stay-the-course strategy as extreme. We all know our principled colleague, Senator HAGEL, has spoken up in favor of changing course in Iraq from these failed policies.

But through it all, the Bush administration mantra is the same: Stay the course. Don't cut and run.

The alternative to that is stay and die. Critics are either unpatriotic or, as we heard from Secretary Rumsfeld last week, like Nazi appeasers.

It seems the more the Americans call on the President to change course in Iraq, the more adamant he is to continue his failed approach. President Bush and Secretary Rumsfeld are making the same speeches now that they were making a year ago and even 2 years ago. Most of the words and phrases are the same. Nothing has changed except the date and the stage of the time.

The reality is that this administration is incompetent, and those in this Congress who stand with them are endorsing this grievous incompetence. The administration's incompetence in Iraq has put our troops in danger. The administration's incompetence in Iraq is now empowering the terrorist regime in Iran. The administration's incompetence in Iraq has strengthened, not weakened, al-Qaida and other jihadists.

In summary, this administration's incompetence has made us less safe, and Americans feel it in poll after poll and in State after State.

I used to run a large company. Any successful CEO will tell you that if one of the top executives is making mistake after mistake after mistake, you have only one course: fire him. Get rid of him. There have been so many mistakes and miscalculations by Secretary Rumsfeld it is staggering to try to understand why he is still around, to be polite, why he is still on the job. It doesn't make sense. It doesn't make sense to me, and it doesn't make sense to millions across the country.

Before the war, Secretary Rumsfeld said:

We know where the weapons of mass destruction are.

But now we know that there was no real evidence that Iraqis had WMDs. He also said that the Iraqis would welcome U.S. troops and that Iraqi resistance would be limited. That was obviously wrong. He also failed to build coalitions with our allies. That doesn't stop him from referring to the coalition experience that we are having. There is virtually no coalition existence there, with the exception perhaps of the U.K. and Canada. In fact, Secretary Rumsfeld went out of his way to mock our allies when he should have been reaching out to them.

This administration's failure to build a real coalition has caused our troops to bear the vast majority of risk and to suffer the casualties. These casualties stand at 2,652 deaths and almost 20,000 wounded.

Secretary Rumsfeld said the war would be short. He said:

It is unknowable how long that conflict will last. It could last six days, six weeks. I doubt six months.

More than 3 years later, we know that assessment was tragically wrong.

Secretary Rumsfeld also ignored warnings that he wasn't committing enough personnel and resources to win the war. When Army Chief of Staff GEN Eric Shinseki suggested that we needed more troops to maintain order in postwar Iraq, he was forced out.

Secretary Rumsfeld also was way off on the cost of the war. He said it would cost no more than $100 billion. The war so far has cost a staggering $320 billion. He missed the mark. He said—insultingly:

You go to war with the Army you have, not the Army you might want.

Is that a suggestion that our troops are less competent, less brave, less courageous, less willing to do their job? I think it is a terrible reference:

If you think about it, you can have all of the armor in the world on a tank and a tank can be blown up.

Ask the parents of those who are in the tank corps how they feel about that.

And you can have an up-armored humvee and it can be blown up.

So it means, if you take it literally, well, that is what happens. If you don't have enough armor, they just get killed. Talk to the parents. I talked to them. I visited with them. Boy, they don't feel they were as protected as they should have been.

Despite all of the funds, all of the effort, all of the sacrifice devoted to the war, Secretary Rumsfeld has failed to fully equip our troops. As we know, a number of prominent retired generals have come forward to say what many in the military have been thinking for years—it is time for Secretary Rumsfeld to leave his post.

The generals who have spoken out: MG Paul D. Eaton, GEN Anthony Zinni, LTG Gregory Newbold, MG John Batiste, MG John Riggs, MG Charles Swannack, Jr., LTG Paul van Riper, GEN Wesley Clark—distinguished military leaders who served nobly, who served bravely. Now, when they say take a look and see where we are going, they are ignored.

General Eaton, who served in Iraq, said the following about Secretary Rumsfeld:

In sum, he has shown himself incompetent, strategically, operationally, and tactically, and is, far more than anyone else, responsible for what has happened to our important mission in Iraq. Mr. Rumsfeld must step down.

In summary, business as usual in Iraq has to stop. We need new leadership. Unless Secretary Rumsfeld is replaced, we are, unfortunately, destined for more of the same pain and casualties as we have in Iraq now.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired.

The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, what we are having now is a rehash of people's complaints about the war, and they are focusing it on the Secretary of Defense in a political season. We all know we will soon have an election. So, everything anybody wants to complain about with regards to the war on terror, that they are unhappy about regarding the difficulties we now face in Iraq, is now dropped on the head of the Secretary of Defense.

The President of the United States took his case to the American people in the last election. We heard these same complaints from these same people, and they made them all over the country, and the President of the United States, George Bush, won that election. He won it with a majority of the votes of the American people. For the first time in over a decade, a President has won the majority of the votes in this country.

Now unfortunately, that is not enough.

I would just say a couple of things I think are important. This Senate, after months and weeks of debate and discussion and hearings—open hearings, secret hearings, briefings from the intelligence officers at lower rank, briefings from the CIA Director, from Defense intelligence—we came into this body and we had to do our duty. Our duty was to vote our conscience on whether to authorize military force in Iraq. That was a solemn duty. I do not think anyone here misunderstood the seriousness of that event. If they did, they are not very grown up because it was a grownup decision we were asked to make: whether we were going to commit our soldiers to military action against the Saddam Hussein regime, which had violated 16 U.N. resolutions. This regime had fired at our airplanes on a regular basis—we cannot forget that. And we were dropping bombs on him weekly and he was shooting missiles at our airplanes weekly. That had been going on for years. He was violating the resolutions, he was violating the weapons of mass destruction discovery and openness requirement that he had committed to, to the U.N.—all those things.

The situation was such that we, with many of our allies, gave him one last chance. He didn't take that chance, that one last chance to clear himself and demonstrate he had no weapons of mass destruction, and that is when we voted. There was no mystery about that.

The Secretary worked with GEN Tommy Franks, and GEN Tommy Franks approved and designed a military campaign that he believed would be successful. He moved with lightning speed and tremendous effectiveness, and it was a tremendously effective destruction of Saddam Hussein's regime in a time period far less than I would ever have thought possible and with a loss of life far less than I would have thought possible. It was a brilliant deal, and the Secretary of Defense, if you read GEN Tommy Franks' book, followed GEN Tommy Franks' decision, supported that decision and was praised by GEN Tommy Franks, the man who led this effort against Saddam Hussein and removed him from office.

Now what has happened? Many of the things that were predicted to happen didn't happen. We didn't have a humanitarian disaster. We didn't have to lose thousands or tens of thousands of soldiers in house-to-house fighting. We didn't have oil well fires. We didn't have a lot of things people projected. The people did welcome our soldiers, and they were happy to see the statue fall. You remember those scenes.

But look, we have difficulties now. There has been a persistent measure of violence in Iraq driven by a whole lot of forces. They are determined and striving every day to not allow a good and decent government to be formed and be sustained in Iraq. We have invested a lot of time and effort in that. It is tough.

I have a nephew there and the son of a good friend there in the Marines, in tough areas right now. My nephew is in the Marines. I have a sense for the effort and courage of our soldiers. It is a tough duty, and we are in a very tough struggle.

The struggle moved to Baghdad. An effort has been made to destabilize Baghdad and the Government there. We moved to counter that. That is the way, American people, it is always going to be when you deal with an enemy who has an ability to think. When you move in one direction, they will counter. When they move in another direction, you have to counter that. That is the way it will be. It is not a failure when an enemy moves in one direction for you to counter that and alter your tactics. In fact, I expect any good military commander would be altering tactics on a regular basis to stay one step ahead of the enemy. That is what we are in, and it is a tough battle.

I, therefore, ask, first and foremost, does the resolution suggest—I say the

resolution. It hasn't been offered because it is not appropriate, as I understand it, and it would not be appropriate to be offered. But any resolution to change the Secretary of Defense, is that going to help our soldiers in Iraq? Is that going to help them be successful? Is it going to make their lives better? Will it help us win this war, which we must do? We need to ask ourselves that.

It is ironic, I have to say, that some of the people who complain about Secretary Rumsfeld not having enough troops voted consistently for the reduction of the number of troops we had by 40 percent when President Clinton was in office.

I see Senator MCCAIN here. He has been a strong supporter of defense. He has been concerned about the number of troops and said so consistently. But there are many in the Chamber today who are saying we do not have enough troops and at the same time saying they must be withdrawn ahead of time; we ought to pull the number of troops down. How ironic is that.

They say Secretary Rumsfeld doesn't listen to the generals. I say he has listened to the generals.

Mr. MCCAIN. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. SESSIONS. I will be pleased.

Mr. MCCAIN. The Senator, who is a strong supporter of the military men and women who are serving and with whom I have had the great privilege of serving on the Armed Services Committee, if I may be a bit cynical, may I ask, Does the Senator think we would be having this discussion if we were not in an even-numbered year in September?

Mr. SESSIONS. Unfortunately, I think the Senator's suggestion is correct. We are on the eve of an election. We have a motion here, a suggestion and an attack on the Secretary of Defense who is leading a war effort.

Let me ask the Senator from Arizona, who served in the military courageously and who has been actively engaged in trying to help us be successful in this war, is he troubled that the resolution and remarks that are made, even recognizing we are in an election cycle, could be such that they would add to the risk and difficulties our soldiers face?

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to respond to the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCAIN. I say to my friend from Alabama, we have many pressing areas of the war on terror in Iraq. I think we should be engaged in discussions as to how we can better equip the men and women who are serving in Iraq. I think we could discuss the situation of the acquisition of nuclear weapons by Iran and North Korea. There are many pressing issues around the world this body could be discussing.

I would respond with one more question for my friend from Alabama. I do not want to take up too much of his time, but isn't it true that elections have consequences? The fact is, when we elect a President of the United States, one of the most important things is for him to have a team around him that he can trust and that he can rely on, and the President should be able to keep that team until such time as the President of the United States loses confidence in that team.

If we begin dictating who the team is around the President of the United States, it bodes ill for any President of the United States, whether it be a Democrat or Republican or whoever, because one of the important aspects of the Presidency is to have people around the President of the United States whom he or she can trust. Isn't that one of the most important predicates of capable government?

Mr. SESSIONS. I couldn't agree more. I think the Senator from Arizona has made a tremendously important point. This President is committed to a successful outcome in Iraq. He has chosen his Secretary of Defense, and his Secretary of Defense is his person in whom he has confidence, and he does not believe changing that Cabinet Member at this point in time would help him be successful in that effort. I agree. But regardless of whether you and I might agree, it is his call. He was elected after a full debate over the wisdom and the conduct of the war in Iraq. He was reelected. I think the American people, therefore, affirmed him and expect him to choose the type people he believes will be successful.

I think the Senator makes a good point.

I would just share a couple of thoughts before my time is up. To repeat, we made a decision in this body. A majority of the Democratic side and a large majority if not all the Republicans voted to authorize this military action. Many things went far better than we could have expected. But we are now facing very difficult, persistent violence that places at risk our soldiers, places at risk the new Iraqi Government, and it is something that should not be minimized. This is a very tough time. But we have to be successful.

I know my colleagues have filed a motion and had quite a number of votes on one or more resolutions to set a date and just withdraw, regardless of what is going on in the country—to just withdraw.

Just a few weeks ago, just before we recessed on August 3, we had an Armed Services Committee hearing on Iraq. Testifying before that committee was General Abizaid. General Abizaid followed Tommy Franks as CENTCOM Commander. That region of the world is under his control. We had just voted overwhelmingly to reject a pullout of the troops in Iraq without regard to the status of the military situation in Iraq. I asked him a question at that hearing.

I see the Senator from Alaska is here. I know he has had experience in these issues. He served our country in combat.

This is the question I asked General Abizaid:

What kind of reaction, what kind of impact would there be with regard to the Islamic extremists in the Middle East? And you are a student, General Abizaid of that region. You spent time in that region as a young person. You speak Arabic and you have been with us, conducting this Iraq war, virtually from the beginning. What kind of impact would result if we were to precipitously withdraw? Would it mollify the extremists? Would it make them say, well, the United States is a nicer place now? We don't have to be so aggressive now? Or would they likely be emboldened, empowered, and more aggressive?

And just like that, General Abizaid said:

Emboldened, empowered, more aggressive.

I said:

In your opinion, would a failure in Iraq embolden and empower these radical extremists?

Yes, it would.

I asked again:

And, in your opinion, would setting a fixed date, regardless of the situation in Iraq, for a withdrawal, embolden or empower the extremist forces?

Embolden.

Then I asked General Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Marine Corps general:

General Pace, this is a matter we've discussed. Unfortunately, it's had very little support in the Senate but there is a political election coming up and people float this idea that we should just pull out. You've heard General Abizaid's comments. He's been in the region for years and been leading this effort. Would you agree with his comments?

General Pace, Marine Corps general, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said:

Sir, I agree with each of General Abizaid's responses to each of your questions.

Mr. REID. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. SESSIONS. I would, briefly.

Mr. REID. Senator STEVENS came to me and wanted to enter into an agreement that we will have two votes tonight. I am very inclined to agree to that, but I ask the Senator—we have specific times on our speakers. We need an idea as to how much longer the Senator will speak.

Mr. SESSIONS. I won't be speaking but just 3 or 4 minutes.

Mr. REID. That way we can work through there and have the votes the majority leader wants.

Mr. SESSIONS. Then he basically volunteered, he said:

Senator Sessions, sir, what I'd like to say is that the troops that serve in the region are not afraid of what's happening there. They would be afraid of what would happen if we just precipitously left.

I would carry it a little bit further because I was talking to some soldiers. Basically, what they told me was they were worried the politicians wouldn't have the gumption to stay the course and be successful after we have committed so much of our resources and lives, when we have a new government

that has been up less than 6 months, trying to get itself established, and then we send signals with this kind of debate that we might just up and leave.

Fortunately, when we have had the votes, they have not been there. It is not helpful, in my view, to have this kind of debate. We have had it before. We have had our votes. The American people have elected the President again when he stated exactly what he intends to do to protect this country from the regimes and the terrorists that are gathering in Iraq.

We have an outstanding Secretary of Defense, a man who has the confidence of the President, a man who has listened to the generals.

I was on an airplane, a C–130, flying into Baghdad with General Abizaid. We could hardly hear anyone talk on the planes. Just the two of us were sitting on one side of the aircraft. He explained to me why he thought we should not send more troops there 2 years ago. He testified recently at the hearing that he does not believe we need to send more troops.

Is Secretary Rumsfeld dictating this policy or is he listening to the general? That is what they have advised him; that is what he is doing. He is following the advice of one of the most brilliant generals in the Army, General Abizaid, the commander in that region.

If we will continue to follow that advice, if we will show strength and courage, if we continue to alter our tactics to meet the changing tactics of the enemy, this mindless violence can be defeated and a good and decent government in Iraq can be established. We have invested so much in that effort.

We voted as a Congress to undertake this action. We need to see it through successfully. We can do that. We just do not need to lose our nerve. We must win this war.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DEMINT). The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. I have listened to my friend from Alabama assert that the Democrats are really interested in precipitous withdrawal from Iraq. For the most part, the debate I have heard from our side and in our own caucus is really more reflective of the words of some of our top military leaders in Iraq with whom I met who said, as recently as last December, it is time for America to move toward the door; not to go out the door, not to close the door behind us but, again, move toward the door.

That is a pretty good way to describe the way most feel. It is time to redeploy our forces, not to leave overnight, not to leave precipitously, but to move toward the door.

Senator MCCAIN asked: Would we be having this debate if it were not September of an election year? I remember voting in 1991 to authorize the use of force to invade Iraq and to force and compel the Iraqis out of Kuwait back into Iraq. Eighteen months or so after that, September 1992, we were not having a debate. There was an election year.

Mr. STEVENS. I ask my comments not interrupt the Senator's speech in the RECORD.

Could the Senator yield to me? We have a time agreement following the disposition of this.

Mr. CARPER. I am happy to yield.

Mr. STEVENS. I ask unanimous consent following the disposition of the Reid amendment there be a period of 30 minutes equally divided in relation to the Kennedy amendment, No. 4885, with no second-degree amendments in order prior to a vote in relation to the amendment; provided further, following the vote, there will be 10 minutes equally divided in the usual form prior to a vote in relation to the Mikulski amendment, No. 4895, with no second-degree in order prior to that vote.

Mrs. BOXER. We have no objection on our side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. STEVENS. I thank the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. What I was saying, responding and reflecting on Senator MCCAIN's question, would we be having this debate if it were not September of an election year, in 1991, we voted to authorize the use of force in Iraq. Eighteen months after a number of us voted to authorize the use of force to force the Iraqis out of Kuwait and to follow them into Iraq, 18 months later, in September of 1992, a Presidential election year, we were having debates. One of the things we were not debating was the wisdom of going out, getting the Iraqis out of Kuwait and forcing them far into Iraq, into Baghdad.

The reason we are having this debate today is not because it is an election year, not because it is September of an election year, but because of how badly too much of our effort in that part of the world has been managed. It is not a reflection of our troops. They have served us valiantly. They continue to do so.

I say to my friend on the other side, be honest with yourself. If the shoe were on the other foot, if we had a Democratic administration, Democratic President, a Secretary of Defense appointed by that Democratic President; if we were in a war that the Secretary of Defense had alleged would cost $50 billion to $60 billion, and in reality was costing 10 to 20 times that amount; if we were in a war that was expected to last maybe 6 months, and we are in it 3 years later, with no end in sight; if we were in a war where basically a Democratic administration had said to the Iraqi Army, go home, we don't need you; if we were in a situation where instead of fostering a situation where we had fewer insurgents, we had at least a fourfold increase in the number of insurgents holding forth in Iraq; if we had a Democratic administration in Afghanistan that was starting to slip away from us, and we were seeing a massive increase in drug production, growing enough poppies in Afghanistan today to meet the demands of the whole rest of the world, not just the U.S. heroin addiction but the rest of the world, I say to my friends on the other side, if the effort were mismanaged as badly by a Democratic administration, I bet we would be having this debate in September of 2006.

This is a reasonable debate. I say that as one who has voted for most of this administration's nominees who had to be confirmed, who tried to help a bunch of my old colleagues, including Secretaries Thompson, Ridge, Leavitt, Whitman, and others to put together their teams to help govern this country.

Every now and then the time comes to change course. We know what we are doing is not working. One of the keys to changing course, frankly, is to change leadership.

Secretary Rumsfeld, to his credit, in response to early criticism, I am told, actually came to the President and offered to resign. And the President, to his credit, being loyal to his team, declined that offer by his Secretary. I believe that to be true.

I would say, Mr. President, if Secretary Rumsfeld feels compelled to submit his resignation to you again, accept it. It is time to turn the page. It is not the time to turn our backs on Iraq. It is not the time to turn our backs certainly on the men and women who are serving there for us on behalf of the Iraqi people today, but it is time to change course. It is time to change the leadership. That begins with the civilian leadership of the Department of Defense.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, the Senate is debating a resolution that simply asks the question: Could the Bush administration be doing things better in Iraq, the global war on terror, and with homeland security?

I know we can do better. I know we need to change course if we want to be more secure. We can do better than sending our troops into war without the armor and equipment they need. We can do better than misleading the American people about the costs of this war. We can do better than completely misreading the insurgency, which the Vice President told us over a year ago was in its last throes. We can do better than a policy that leaves our troops without a clear mission and without a plan for success.

Our servicemembers deserve better. Frankly, our security demands better. It starts with this Senate simply saying we need to change the course. We cannot tolerate more of the same. We cannot have an administration that has gotten it wrong at every turn. It is time to send that message loudly and clearly.

We all want the same thing in Iraq: for our troops to complete their mission successfully and to come home safely. But today it is not even clear why our servicemembers are still there. What are they supposed to be accomplishing in Iraq today? Overthrowing Saddam Hussein? They accomplished that. Looking for weapons of mass destruction? They looked and there were no weapons to be found. Are they supposed to be setting up an Iraqi Government? We have done that. The Iraqi people have created a Constitution. They have elected their leaders. They filled their Cabinet. Our troops have done everything we have asked them to do. What is left? What are our troops supposed to be accomplishing today? And how will the President's policies get us there? That is the discussion we need to be having.

This administration's focus—solely on Iraq—has distracted us from the larger important war on terror and has left us vulnerable. Our country faces possible threats from terrorists around the world. We need a security strategy that ensures we can fight those threats wherever they are. But, instead, this administration has become increasingly focused on Iraq. The President took a detour from the war on terror and has invested a majority of our resources in Iraq, seemingly forever. That weakens our ability to fight the important war on terror. That is another mistake.

Bin Laden is still on the loose and our homeland security efforts are woefully inadequate. This resolution sends the message that we have to get back on track on the war on terror. We cannot continue to stay the course in Iraq indefinitely and expect to make progress in the global war on terror.

The war on terror extends far beyond the borders of Iraq, and unless we deal with all the threats we are facing, we are not going to have the security we deserve in this country. But this White House has put all our eggs in the baskets of Iraq, and we are slipping behind all the other challenges we face in Iran, in North Korea, in Afghanistan.

Yesterday, the New York Times showed us how bad things have gotten in Afghanistan. And I quote:

Across Afghanistan, roadside bomb attacks are up by 30 percent; suicide bombings have doubled. Statistically it is now nearly as dangerous to serve as an American soldier in Afghanistan as it is in Iraq.

Today the Seattle Post-Intelligencer in my home State of Washington editorialized that we need to get back to work in Afghanistan. And I want to read to you what they said:

The central government's control is weakening as warlords and the Taliban reassert themselves. Casualties for international troops are mounting, making Afghanistan almost as risky for U.S. soldiers as Iraq. Opium production is at a record. The head of the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime said Afghanistan is now supplying a ''staggering'' 92 percent of the world's opium supply.

We entered Afghanistan because it had harbored al-Qaida and bin Laden—who are responsible for the terrorist attacks of September 11, which killed nearly 3,000 Americans. We still have not captured bin Laden, and the Taliban is reemerging in Afghanistan.

Iraq is not the only challenge we face, and if we do not recognize that, Americans will pay the price.

This administration has gotten it wrong in Iraq, the war on terror, and on homeland security time and again. Continuing the status quo is unacceptable, and that is the message I send with my support for this resolution.

The American people deserve straight answers and a real debate so we can get this right. Nothing is more important for our security, and nothing is more important for this country's future.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today in support of a no-confidence resolution on the leadership of Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld.

Secretary Rumsfeld has overseen a failed strategy, policy, and military tactics for Iraq that have weakened the state of our national and homeland defense.

Despite clear evidence that our current strategy is not working, he has stubbornly stuck to a deteriorating course.

We need a new direction. ''Staying the course'' is not the answer and Secretary Rumsfeld has been the key proponent of this failed policy.

I first publicly called for Secretary Rumsfeld's resignation 6 months ago, after watching 3 years of mismanagement of our war effort in Iraq.

And, since that time, I have become more convinced of the importance of changing the leadership at the top of the Department of Defense.

In truth, the Bush administration's failed strategy and tactics in Iraq have significantly diminished the United States' standing in the world and made waging the global war on terror more difficult.

Despite optimistic reports by Pentagon officials regarding the security situation near Baghdad over the past several weeks, it is clear that Iraq is on the edge of civil war.

For example, in recent days news agencies have reported that: 40 bodies, 25 of which had been blindfolded and executed by gunshot, were discovered in a mass grave in Baghdad—this from the New York Times.

The number of killings in and around Baghdad grew substantially last week despite an American-led security crackdown, with morgues receiving as many bodies as they had during the first three weeks of August combined—this from the Los Angeles Times.

Finally, the Iraqi parliament voted to extend a state of emergency throughout much of the country a strong indication that the security situation remains tenuous—this from the Associated Press.

Yet we are continuing down the same failed path, buttressing the Shiite-dominated government and preventing it from taking actions necessary to end the insurgency and prevent a full-scale civil war.

As a result of these failed policies under Secretary Rumsfeld's leadership, Iraq continues to be a nation in chaos.

Yes, there is a permanent government in place. But the ministries do not function properly; terror, kidnappings, and assassinations continue on a daily basis.

Iranian influence is growing, and Shiite militias dominate the police.

Civilian killings now top 3,000 a month, and a Sunni-Shiite civil war is emerging, with U.S. forces caught in the middle.

Despite spending almost $20 billion on reconstruction efforts, our plan for Iraq reconstruction has stalled as security requirements continue to tax our resources.

Unemployment may be as high as 50 percent, many utilities are not online, and demand for subsidized gasoline—U.S. $0.55/gallon—has led to a thriving black market and corruption. Oil production has yet to meet revenue goals.

The list of failures in our war policy in Iraq is comprehensive and long:

(1) Failed strategic, logistical, and financial planning for the Iraq war

Secretary Rumsfeld ignored suggestions early on by advisers like Army Chief of Staff General Shinseki, Senators such as John McCain, and reports by well-respected think tanks such as the RAND Corporation, that many more ground troops were needed.

For questioning Rumsfeld's plan, General Shinseki was effectively forced into early retirement.

White House economic adviser Lawrence Lindsey found himself out of a job after differing with Rumsfeld in suggesting that the Iraq war might cost up to $200 billion Rumsfeld initially argued that it would cost only $50 billion.

With the addition of emergency supplemental funding, the cost of the Iraq war has now reached $320 billion, with spending averaging $2 billion a week.

American troops went into combat without the proper equipment and protection. Hundreds of soldiers and marines were killed or maimed in the early stages of the war due to the lack of appropriate vehicle and body armor.

Yet in responding to these concerns, Secretary Rumsfeld famously quipped, ''You go to war with the Army you have.''

(2) Failed policy of de-Baathification, including abolishing the Iraqi Army with no severance pay or pensions for soldiers

Perhaps the biggest strategic mistake made by military planners, beyond the lack of adequate troop strength, was the decision to demobilize the standing Iraqi Army, while ''blacklisting'' other civilian professionals who had been members of the Baathist Party.

Many of these soldiers, government officials, doctors, lawyers, and other civilian workers, with their jobs eliminated and no money to feed their families chose to join the insurgency that has now grown to an estimated 20,000 individuals.

Remarkably, Rumsfeld until only recently tried to characterize the insurgency as a group of ''foreign fighters,'' failing to understand the deep resentment cultivated by American policies in post-Saddam Iraq.

(3) Faulty belief that capturing Baghdad meant controlling Iraq

As related in recent firsthand accounts of the initial invasion, commanders on the ground quickly identified the threat of a guerilla war, but after GEN William Wallace, who was leading the march toward Baghdad, recommended crushing the small insurgency along the way, he was nearly forced to resign.

While U.S. forces successfully captured Baghdad within 3 weeks, this strategy allowed an insurgency to grow within the Sunni triangle and hundreds of foreign fighters to stream across Iraq's unguarded borders.

(4) Failure to manage the chaos in the aftermath of the invasion

Some of the first signs that the U.S. lacked adequate troops were the pictures of Iraqis rioting and looting in several key cities immediately following the invasion.

Rumsfeld dismissed the chaos as a symbol of ''freedom and democracy,'' simply saying ''stuff happens.'' Sadly, it demonstrated to all Iraqis that American military resources were limited.

This shortage of U.S. troops also resulted in a failure to secure munition dumps and small arms that were stashed throughout the country.

The insurgency was able to thrive through access to these munitions and weapons caches, and many American troops have been killed or injured from bombs or RPGs that could have been secured in the initial invasion, had we had enough troops.

(5) Failure to stop abuse and torture

One of the greatest stains on America's reputation that will come out of the war effort is our failure to properly protect the rights of those detained by our military.

While most of our men and women have served honorably, it is clear that the Pentagon allowed a culture of abuse to develop in prisons such as Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo, and Camp Nama.

Yet despite the clear evidence of detainee abuse, no high-level official has been held accountable for these actions.

(6) Failure to maintain military readiness

The Iraq war has taken a significant toll on the state and preparedness of our military. Our armed forces are stretched thin; our men and women in uniform overburdened.

Last month, the Marine Corps was forced to issue call-up orders for 2,500 from its Individual Ready Reserve the first time it has had to do so since the war started.

Top Army commanders have suggested that two-thirds of all Army brigades do not meet the necessary state of readiness, and National Guard chief, LTG Steven Blum, estimates that two-thirds of the National Guard cannot even be deployed today.

Equipment is fast wearing out. It is estimated that the Army and Marines will need a combined $75 billion over the next 5 years for maintenance, repair, and replacement alone.

As a result of failed policies under Secretary Rumsfeld's leadership, we may well end up with a broken force and an Iraq held captive by civil war.

There must be a change in course and a change in those who have managed the war effort.

This is critical if we want to have any chance for success in Iraq.

Just last week, Secretary Rumsfeld employed truly shameful rhetoric by comparing those who have criticized the Iraq War with those who ''appease[d]'' the Nazis in the run-up to World War II.

In the speech at the American Legion conference in Salt Lake City, Rumsfeld stated:

> Once again, we face similar challenges in efforts to confront the rising threat of a new type of fascism but some seem not to have learned history's lessons.

Questioning the patriotism of those who might not support the war, he said:

> The struggle we are in is too important the consequences too severe to have the luxury of returning to the ''blame America first'' mentality.

These baseless, partisan attacks are simply over-the-top and are being used to fill a gaping vacuum created by the lack of a successful plan for Iraq.

It is clear to me that this administration, led by the President and Secretary Rumsfeld, has been wrong at almost every turn.

Still, Secretary Rumsfeld remains in place, despite a growing number of bipartisan calls for the President to replace him.

Consequently, I believe that now is the time for the Senate to assert its oversight role and move forward with a vote of no-confidence.

Ultimately, it is true that President Bush is responsible for the failures in Iraq, but no Bush administration official was closer to the war planning than Defense Secretary Rumsfeld.

Secretary Rumsfeld was and remains the chief architect of the strategy and policy in Iraq.

Consequently, it is time for President Bush to ask for Secretary Rumsfeld's resignation and pursue a course correction under new Pentagon leadership.

There must be accountability for the disastrous policy pursued in Iraq.

It is time to bring in a new team to run our military. Secretary Rumsfeld must step down.

Our men and women in uniform deserve better.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I am going to be the last speaker. Senator DORGAN will not be using his time, so I am asking that I have 4 minutes of his time, since he has given me that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. BOXER. Thank you. That will give me a total of 10 minutes.

Mr. President, I think it is a very sad day that the Republicans are not going to allow a vote on this Democratic resolution calling for a changed course in Iraq. And their reason—I sat here and listened—is that we are only doing this because it is an election year. Well, folks, I do not know how to break this to you, but every 2 years is an election year. Are we supposed to stop working in an election year? Are we supposed to stop talking about the issues that are on the minds of the American people because they may be difficult or they may be controversial or they may have consequences for us? Are we supposed to stop doing the people's business in an election year?

I do not know about my Republican friends, but I know Californians expect me to work every year—election year or not—every day, every week, every month. And I say to Senator MCCAIN, elections do have consequences. He said elections have consequences. Yes. And all of us were elected, too. Is he forgetting that? Does he think the only election that matters is the election of a President? I think our Founders would be very shocked. Our job is to provide oversight. Our job is to, in fact, advise and consent on many nominations, including the top levels of this administration. So I rise in strong support of this very important amendment Senator REID has carefully put together.

This amendment does three critically important things.

First, it is about this Congress conducting its constitutional responsibility to exercise oversight over the executive branch. It is our job, given to us by the Founders. It is our job not to be a rubberstamp Congress, not to be a compliant Congress, not to be a roll-over-and-play-dead Congress, but to challenge, to question, to push; and if things are not going well for our country—be it wages for our workers or be it education for our children or be it deficits as far as the eye can see and debt as far as the eye can see or the war in Iraq—we need to speak out. And that is what this carefully crafted amendment does.

Second, the amendment is about helping to chart a new path forward in Iraq and clearly states that we need a new direction. That is important. There are those on the other side who said this is all about Donald Rumsfeld. It is not all about Donald Rumsfeld. It talks about starting over, starting anew, getting a new strategy in place for success in Iraq.

Third, it is about calling for a new civilian leadership. As you know, in this

particular version, we do not even mention Donald Rumsfeld's name. We are basically saying it is time to change direction. Things are dangerously heading down the wrong path in Iraq.

Let's hear what the latest Pentagon report said. My friends are quoting the Pentagon, as well they should. Let's hear what the Pentagon itself is saying:

Concern about civil war within the Iraqi civilian population and among some defense analysts has increased in recent months. Conditions that could lead to civil war exist in Iraq.

They pointed out that the average number of weekly attacks—against coalition forces, Iraqi security forces, the civilian population, and infrastructure—increased by 15 percent since last spring. The number of weekly attacks has increased from approximately 640 to nearly 800. July saw the highest level of weekly attacks since military operations began.

In California, we have bases that are sending our troops out for their fourth tour of duty—their fourth tour of duty. So we are supposed to sit back and be compliant because it is an election year? Because it is an election year? Just talk to the parents and the families who are losing their family members, who are losing their sons and daughters, who are losing their moms and dads, who are seeing them come back with post-traumatic stress disorder, severe brain injury. Talk to them about it. They could care less if it is an election year. They want us to change course and bring their kids home. The fact is, we could do it if the Iraqis wanted democracy and wanted freedom as much as we wanted it for them. You show me one country that survives that cannot take care of its own security.

Sectarian violence is what is going on over there. As a result of our flawed policy, we are shorting the war on terror. We are not protecting our ports. The money is going to Iraq. It is being sucked out of the Treasury, going onto the backs of our grandchildren, to the tune of over $300 billion. And where is the money for port security? Where is the money to protect our nuclear powerplants? Where is the money to protect our infrastructure? Where is the money to protect our aircraft from shoulder-fired missiles, when we know that at least two dozen terrorist organizations have those missiles and the FBI has warned us over and over that we need to do something about it? Oh, they have to slow-walk it because they do not have the money—except for tax cuts to billionaires. They have the money for that.

So the bottom line is, this flawed strategy is shorting the war on terror. Secretary Rumsfeld how wrong could he be? He said he doubted this war would even last even 6 months. But he cannot admit a mistake. The fact is, when we went into Iraq without a plan, we turned away from the war on terror. Every single Senator voted for the war on terror—every single Senator.

I remember writing a speech, coming to this floor, and giving strong support to this President to go get Osama bin Laden, to go break the backs of terrorists, to go break the backs of al-Qaida to do it—and I would give him everything he needed. The whole world was with us. Go back to those days. Everyone was with us. But, oh, no, he had this thing, he was going to go into Iraq, even though his own State Department showed there was not one al-Qaida cell in Iraq. There were more al-Qaida cells in America than in Iraq. Took the money, took the energy, took the military, spread them thin, thought this war would be over in a nanosecond. And we have been misled. We have been misled.

So this is a very sensible resolution. Let me just read you the operative language:

Our troops deserve and the American people expect the Bush Administration to provide competent civilian leadership and a true strategy for success in Iraq.

President Bush needs to change course in Iraq to provide a strategy for success. One indication of a change, of course, would be to replace the current Secretary of Defense.

Mr. President, this resolution is written with respect to the President. It does not demean anybody. I believe it is very carefully drawn, and I think it speaks for the American people. If you look at the polls today, they are begging us—begging us—to change course. And I will tell you, it has not been easy for the American people to make their feelings known because they have changed. In the beginning, they were all for this. But they have seen what has happened. We cannot close our eyes to what is happening. And then when the Secretary of Defense looks at those of us in America—a vast majority who oppose this war—and says we do not understand history and we are appeasers, that has gone just too far.

I say to the Secretary and to this President: Get with the current times.

I even heard Secretary Rice talk about how this was somehow akin to the people who did not want to fight the Civil War. Talk about drawing up analogies that do not make any sense, there is another one.

Let's change course now. And let's start by approving this resolution. At the minimum, I say to my friends on the Republican side, let us vote on this resolution. It is our job to speak out. It is our job to do oversight. And let the votes fall where they may. But the American people deserve this vote. I thank my leader for putting this resolution together.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I will momentarily send an amendment to the desk. But my disappointment is that the majority, as they have done for years when a tough issue comes before the Senate, through technical means, is preventing Senators and preventing the Senate from expressing its will—in this instance on this resolution of no confidence. This is unfortunate. We should have the ability to vote on this amendment.

AMENDMENT NO. 4904

Mr. President, I send this amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID], for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. BOXER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. BAYH, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. CARPER, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. KERRY, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. HARKIN, and Mrs. CLINTON, proposes an amendment numbered 4904.

At the appropriate place insert the following:

SENSE OF THE SENATE ON THE NEED FOR A NEW DIRECTION IN IRAQ POLICY AND IN THE CIVILIAN LEADERSHIP OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE:

Findings:

1. U.S. forces have served honorably and courageously in Iraq, with over 2,600 brave Americans having made the ultimate sacrifice and over 20,000 wounded.

2. The current ''stay the course'' policy in Iraq has made America less secure, reduced the readiness of our troops, and burdened America's taxpayers with over $300 billion in additional debt.

3. With weekly attacks against American and Iraqi troops at their highest levels since the start of the war, and sectarian violence intensifying, it is clear that staying the course in Iraq is not a strategy for success.

Therefore it is the sense of the Senate that:

1. Our troops deserve and the American people expect the Bush Administration to provide competent civilian leadership and a true strategy for success in Iraq.

2. President Bush needs to change course in Iraq to provide a strategy for success. One indication of a change of course would be to replace the current Secretary of Defense

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I raise a point of order against this resolution on the basis of precedent of the Senate of May 17, 2000. It is not appropriate to raise this amendment as a sense of the Senate on this bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In the opinion of the Chair, the amendment is not germane. The amendment falls under the criteria of the Senate.

AMENDMENT NO. 4885

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, there is now, for the Kennedy amendment, 30 minutes on a side, as I understand it; am I correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It is equally divided.

Mr. STEVENS. Fifteen minutes on a side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. STEVENS. Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I yield myself 10 minutes. Just for the information of the Members, I intend to ask for the yeas and nays at the conclusion of the debate.

Mr. President, the Kennedy-Reid amendment requires the Secretaries of Defense and State to determine every 3 months whether Iraq is in a civil war and to outline a plan to protect our troops in the event of a civil war.

Under our amendment, if the administration determines that Iraq is not in a civil war, the amendment requires a description of the efforts by our Government to avoid civil war in Iraq, a plan to protect our troops in the event of a civil war, and a strategy to ensure that our troops don't take sides. If the determination is that Iraq is in a civil war, the amendment requires the Secretary of Defense to explain the mission of our troops and the duration, his plan to protect our troops, and a strategy to ensure that they don't take sides in a civil war.

At every step of the way, this administration has missed the threat to our troops, and the American people have seen it time and again. They saw it when the Bush administration disbanded the Iraqi Army after the fall of Saddam Hussein but allowed thousands to walk away with their weapons. They saw it when the Bush administration waited a full year to begin training the new Iraqi security forces. They saw it when the White House failed to see the insurgency spreading like a cancer throughout Iraq. They saw it when the Bush team failed to see the danger of roadside bombs and improvised explosive devices, yet sent our troops on patrol day after day, month after month, year after year. They saw it when the White House failed to provide the proper armor for our troops until the Congress demanded it.

Unfortunately, the administration's repeated failure to see each new threat in Iraq has put our troops and our security in greater peril. Today, once again, the administration refuses to recognize another seismic shift in Iraq—the dangerous prospect that we are drawn into a deadly and divisive civil war.

While the President and DICK CHENEY, Secretary Rumsfeld and Secretary Rice are out on the campaign trail claiming progress in Iraq, military leaders and experts are urging the White House to heed the disturbing warning signs in Iraq. General Abizaid acknowledged the clear danger when he told the Senate Armed Services Committee on August 3:

I believe that the sectarian violence is probably as bad as I have seen it, in Baghdad in particular, and that if not stopped, it is possible that Iraq could move toward civil war.

General Pace, at the same hearing, agreed about the threat of the civil war. He said:

I believe that we do have the possibility of devolving to a civil war, but that does not have to be the fact.

Others think that a civil war may have already begun. Former Iraqi Prime Minister Allawi said in March that Iraq is probably in ''an early stage of civil war.''

The British Ambassador to Iraq wrote in August:

The prospect of a low-intensity civil war and a de facto division of Iraq is probably more likely at this stage than a successful and substantial transition to a stable democracy.

Our colleague from Nebraska, Senator CHUCK HAGEL, concurred, saying in August:

We, in fact, are in probably a low-grade, maybe a very defined, civil war.

General William Nash, who commanded our troops in Bosnia after that country's civil war ended, stated on March 5:

We are in a civil war now; it is just that not everybody has joined in.

These leaders see what is really happening in Iraq, not just the White House spin. Indeed, the September 1 report prepared by the Department of Defense on civility and security in Iraq reaffirms what the American people already understand, the conditions of civil war exist. Violence in Iraq is spiraling out of control, and staying the course is not a viable option.

This is what the Department of Defense report says:

Concern about civil war within the Iraqi civilian population and among some defense analysts has increased in recent months. Conditions that could lead to civil war exist in Iraq.

Rising sectarian strife defines the emerging nature of violence in mid-2006.

Sustained ethnic and sectarian violence is the greatest threat to security and civility in Iraq.

Sectarian tensions increased over the last 3 months, demonstrated by the increased number of executions, kidnappings, attacks on civilians, and internally displaced persons.

Civilian casualties increased by approximately 1,000 per month since the previous quarter. Assassinations, in particular, reached new highs in the month of July. The Baghdad coroner's office reported that 1,600 bodies arrived in June, and more than 1,800 bodies in July, 90 percent of which were assessed to be the result of executions.

Sectarian violence is gradually spreading north into Diyala Province and Kirkuk as Sunni, Shiite, and Kurdish groups compete for provincial influence.

Both Shia and Sunni death squads are active in Iraq, and are responsible for the most significant increases in sectarian violence.

Militias and small, illegally armed groups operate openly and often with popular support. The threat posed by Shiite illegal armed groups, filling perceived and actual vacuums, is growing.

The security situation is currently at its most complex state since the initiation of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

That is all from the report prepared by the Defense Department. These facts are at odds with the administration's statement about civil war. Sectarian divisions are increasing. Militia violence and death squad activity is increasing. The number of Iraqis fleeing the violence is increasing. Yet the President, Vice President, Secretary of Defense, and Secretary of State continue to deny the possibility of civil war. As long as the administration continues to deny the plain truth, America will be behind the curve and unable to adjust to the current realities on the ground and protect our troops.

Most important, our amendment requires the administration to say what we are going to do about it. How are we going to advance America's interests in Iraq in a time of civil war? How are we going to protect our troops from getting drawn ever deeper into an endless sectarian conflict?

An article in Newsweek magazine on August 14 indicates that although the Bush administration insists that Iraq is a long way from civil war, some inside the White House and the Pentagon have begun some contingency planning. The American people and our men and women in uniform want to know what that means.

What is the role of our troops in a civil war? What is our mission? How long will it take? What are the rules of engagement? How do we prevent our troops from taking sides? As long as we are on the ground in the conflict, our troops run the risk that they will be perceived as helping one side against another.

The administration should level with the American people about their planning to protect our troops. We all agree that the Iraqis need to make political compromises necessary to stop the violence and civil war. That is plan A. But what is plan B? What is the contingency plan? What is the plan to protect our troops?

That is the purpose of our amendment this evening. The amendment is needed to ensure proper planning in the event of civil war.

Instead of attacking those who want to change our course, President Bush ought to deal with the hard, cold facts. This Defense Department report underscores the fundamental truth that our brave troops are being let down by the administration and we need to find a way to succeed.

The administration needs to look at all of the facts and honestly address the question of civil war for the sake of our military and the American people. This legislation creates a continuing obligation to ensure that analysis on civil war is done regularly. The facts in the administration's report say one thing about civil war, but the conclusion about civil war says another. We need an honest assessment about the conditions and a clear plan to protect our troops.

Our soldiers and the American people deserve more from the administration. Together, the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State need to set the White House political agenda aside and directly and thoughtfully address this ominous threat.

The administration acts as if the mere discussion of a civil war is defeatist. They have it exactly backward. This amendment is an effort to make sure that the administration confronts and deals with the facts on the ground in Iraq and recognizes the emerging threat before it consumes our troops.

We must do better. This administration owes it to the American people. Even more important, dealing with reality is essential and necessary to protect the lives of our brave soldiers.

Iraq's future and the lives of our troops are close to the precipice of a new disaster. The timebomb of civil war is ticking, and our most urgent priority is to defuse it.

For the sake of our men and women in uniform and the stability of Iraq, all Americans are anxious for success, but we need to be realistic and smart enough and humble enough to understand that even our best efforts may not prevent a civil war from overtaking events in Iraq.

We need to begin planning now for this possibility. Such planning is not an admission of defeat. It is essential and necessary for protecting the lives of our service men and women in Iraq who are performing so admirably today under such enormously difficult circumstances.

Benjamin Franklin said as long ago as the 18th century:

> By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.

This was sound advice then, it is sound advice now. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

I reserve the remainder of my time.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I yield such time as the Senator from Virginia may use.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise in strong opposition to this initiative by my fellow colleague on the Armed Services Committee, Senator KENNEDY of Massachusetts. It is rather interesting, I went back and studied a lot of military treatises and precedents, trying to analyze what constitutes a civil war—Webster's Dictionary; Edward Luttwak, ''The Dictionary of Modern War''; Pennsylvania State University's ''The Classic International War''; and other treatises. It was interesting. There is another academic, with a last name spelled K-A-L-L-Y-V-A-S. He put out a treatise on warfare in civil wars. He talks about a conventional civil war, an irregular civil war, an asymmetric, nonconventional civil war.

This is an academic exercise that yields nothing. The one thing that comes out in this study is that there are no two civil insurrections alike. There is not a blueprint that can be put on this problem in Iraq to say definitively that it constitutes a civil war.

In fact, the situation in Iraq, no matter how disturbed all of us are about the rising number of deaths and the sectarian violence, it is very disturbing and I acknowledge that. It was never, in my judgment, foreseen that this level of insurrection would take place once we had a series of elections by the people of Iraq and a government put into place.

But the basic formula of civil war has the principle in it that if the government is still functioning and if the Armed Forces of that country are still acting in support of the government, then it does not constitute a civil war.

I urge my colleagues to turn their attention to the key fact here: What are the consequences if this government fails to have a security situation that enables it to exercise the full range of sovereignty? What are the consequences? What are the consequences if these valuable oilfields—maybe not all at once, but part of them—fall into the hands of terrorists who seize them? What are the consequences of the situation devolving to the point where the nations around it feel they must inject themselves into the situation? For example, those nations with Sunni populations, Jordan and Saudi Arabia and indeed Syria and Egypt; they are not going to stand on the sidelines.

So I say to my colleague, we better look at what happens if this Government fails to receive that measure of support from the coalition forces, principally the United States, to enable it to continue to exercise the reins of sovereignty and continue to have the allegiance and loyalty of the Armed Forces which we have painstakingly trained in large numbers now and equipped.

Therein is the debate we should have to let the American people know what are the consequences. If the oilfields were to fall into the wrong hands, they would provide an unlimited source of cash for the terrorists—terrorists who have the most frightful of all weapons today; namely, the human bomber. Couple that unlimited cash and what appears to be a number of human bombers and we have a serious problem. The Middle East would be thrown into a convulsive state. The credibility of our Nation, in the eyes of the world, would be tested, and we could no longer be a strong voice in trying to bring about order in this region and to contain the most serious problem, as I see it; that is, the possibility of Iran becoming a power enabling it to have nuclear weapons.

We must maintain a strong presence and we cannot let this Government be in a situation where it can no longer exercise the reins of sovereignty.

I yield the floor.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, how much time remains on our side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 10 minutes.

Mr. STEVENS. And how much time on Senator KENNEDY's side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Three minutes.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, since 2005, the Defense Appropriations Committee has required the Department of Defense to report quarterly on the stability and security situation in Iraq. This is the most recent report. It was prepared in August and embargoed until September 1.

Six pages of the bill language is very detailed. Starting on page 233—my colleagues can look in the bill—it requires a comprehensive set of performance indicators and measures for progress and political stability in Iraq. In other words, we continue in our bill already, without the Kennedy amendment, the concept that every quarter the Department reports to us.

The first part of this report describes trends and progress toward meeting goals and political stability. That requirement is contained in section 9010 of our bill.

The second section of this report describes training development and readiness of the Iraqi security forces, including the forces of the Ministry of Defense and police and paramilitary forces of the Ministry of Interior.

The third section describes transfer of security responsibility from coalition forces to the Iraqi Government, including prerequisite conditions and criteria for assessing the readiness of provinces to assume responsibility for security.

As I said, this report is already prepared and was presented on September 1 and is on every desk in the Senate. The current report addresses the prospect of civil war on pages 33, 34, and 35. It is very clear. It has reviewed the concept of ethno-sectarian violence, and that is the greatest threat to security and stability. It also continues with regard to the concepts on page 34 and has a series of incident reports.

I can tell the Senate there is no question that the Department has discussed already in the report the concepts Senator KENNEDY wants to have discussed. It says this on page 33:

> Notwithstanding this concern, there is no generally agreed upon definition of civil war among academic or defense analysts. Moreover, the conflict in Iraq does not meet the stringent international legal standards for civil war.

In other words, they have already reported to us, as Senator KENNEDY would require. But Senator KENNEDY wants to add additional requirements now. The question he asks, for example, in section (G), subparagraph 3: is the strategy of the United States Government to ensure that the United States Armed Forces will not take sides in the event of a civil war in Iraq?

It may be that we are already taking sides. We are supporting the Government if the insurrection is there. We need to help the elected Government against the al-Qaida attacks. There is no question that should be done. But the Kennedy proposal presumes the United States must not take sides. In other words, he would prevent what we are doing right now.

The question for the strategy of the United States in taking sides is repeated in section 6 of Senator KENNEDY's amendment. I do not believe it is appropriate to direct foreign policy or military strategy through a reporting requirement on an appropriations bill.

Senator KENNEDY and Senator WARNER sit on the Armed Services Committee. That is where policy is discussed. I do not think this is the way the Senate should do business.

We are in a situation tonight where having had this discussion at length on

the other matter, I think too many Members of the Senate have not heard this debate and probably will come and say: What's going on?

The clear answer has to be that we should not dictate policy—particularly military policy—in an appropriations bill. We provide the funding for whatever policies are already established by law, by regulation, by the Commander in Chief. This is something that requires the determination of the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, and the President to set military policy.

There is a constitutional question involved here, in my opinion, in terms of what Senator KENNEDY wants to do. He wants to set up a situation whereby the Department of Defense has to decide if there is a civil war going on and if there is, then it has a set of procedures that must be followed. If they decide a civil war is not going on, there is another set of procedures that must be followed.

As a practical matter, what he is saying is reports such as this should come to the Senate quarterly and they should tell us in advance what are they going to do for the next quarter. In terms of military strategy and what we are doing over there, for those of us who have been there repeatedly, it is not possible to do that.

I certainly believe Senator WARNER outlined the whole concept of civil war very clearly. You can call it a civil war if you want, but the question is, when you put it into an amendment that demands we have a report to assess a finding by the Department, which it must make whether or not there is a civil war going on, and then give it instructions based on how it makes that decision, I think, is micromanaging the Defense Department. If there is one thing we should not do on an appropriations bill is try to micromanage the Defense Department.

I urge the Senate not to support this amendment. I do believe the reports we are getting right now give us some measurement of what is going on, and on the basis of that let's make judgments which we should make. For instance, this bill measures progress toward a democratic Iraq.

It describes the obstacles toward political progress, and it gives us a comparison of the situation in individual Iraqi homes.

It tells us about the black market in Iraq and how it might affect what we are doing over there.

It discusses the al-Qaida influence in Iraq and the recent developments in the security environment.

This is a very extensive report. Like a lot of reports, it comes to us quarterly, Mr. President, but not a lot of people pay attention to it. We do. If you look at our bill, we prepared, on the basis of the last report, a continuation of the concept of what they should do in terms of improving these reports for the coming period.

I do hope the Senate will support our position that this is not the way to go, that this is not the thing to do.

Has my time expired?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 2½ minutes remaining.

Mr. STEVENS. I yield to my friend.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, one can argue about the definition of a civil war, but what I am talking about is the concern of the commanders on the ground in Iraq. This is what GEN Rick Sanchez, former commander of the multinational forces in Iraq, said on January 7:

> The country is on the verge of civil war.

GEN Peter Pace on March 13:

> Everything is in place if they want to have a civil war.

Ambassador Khalilzad is concerned about the threat, March 7:

> The potential is there for sectarian violence to become a civil war.

General Abizaid before the Armed Services Committee on August 3:

> I believe the sectarian violence is probably as bad as I have seen it in Baghdad, and if not stopped, it is possible Iraq could move toward civil war.

General Pace the same day:

> I do believe we have the possibility of devolving into civil war.

Here we have Newsweek magazine, August 14:

> The Bush administration insists Iraq is a long way from civil war but the contingency planning has already begun. . . .

Now, the Senator from Alaska says let's look at the most recent report from the Defense Department that we received September 1. Let's look at it. What does it say?

> Concern about civil war within the Iraqi civilian populations among defense analysts increased in recent months. Conditions that could lead to civil war exist in Iraq.

And it continues:

> Conditions that could lead to civil war exist in Iraq, specifically in and around Baghdad. Concerns about civil war within the Iraqi civilian populations increased in recent months.

All we are asking for is a plan to protect our troops. What are the rules of engagement if there is a civil war? That is the issue. That is the question. That is the information they ought to have, the families ought to have, and the American people ought to have. That is what this amendment is all about.

The White House evidently is concerned, according to news reports. Generals on the ground are concerned about it. The Defense Department's own report is concerned about it. All we want to do is let Congress know and let us have the kind of planning that is going to provide the greatest protection for American troops on the ground should there be a civil war. Rules of engagement—that is all this amendment does. And it does seem to me when we are talking about plans—we heard a great deal of debate about policy today. This is about a plan to protect American troops. That is what this amendment is.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I disagree. This amendment is about changing the report requirements we have had in the past and that we have in this bill now. And we have had a satisfactory report.

If one looks at the report, there is no question there are attitudes in Iraq that indicate this may turn into a civil war. There is no question that is one of the major problems facing us today. To put on the Secretary of Defense the burden of deciding if there is a civil war and giving instructions whether there is or not, changing the basis of things we require that are serving us right now—I urge Senators to look at this report. There are graphs in the report. Are you very or somewhat concerned that a civil war might break out? There is great worry that it might. We should have that worry. But to force the Department of Defense to decide when it has turned into a civil war and give specific instructions in case they do make that decision, and if they don't make the decision—of course, that is not what the Senator from Massachusetts wants. He wants the decision that there is a civil war, obviously, because that would force a withdrawal.

This is very much connected with the debate we just had about the amendment that was considered to be not in order.

I urge the Senate to reject the Senator's amendment. I move to table his amendment and ask for the yeas and nays. Time is up, is it not, Mr. President?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion to table is not in order until all time has expired. The majority has 1 minute remaining, and the minority has 30 seconds remaining.

Mr. STEVENS. The Senator from Massachusetts has 30 seconds.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, in the 30 seconds, refer to page 3 of my amendment. If there is not a civil war, we are still asking for the strategy to protect American troops. If there is a civil war, the strategy ought to be how are we going to protect the Armed Forces of the United States. This is a plan about how to protect American troops if there is a civil war, plain and simple.

The White House is concerned about it. Newspapers have published that they are concerned about it. We ought to be able to get it, and the members of the Armed Forces ought to be entitled to that information. We missed too many opportunities in the past. Let's not miss this one.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. STEVENS. I yield back my time. I move to table the amendment and ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the motion. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) are necessarily absent.

I further announce that if present and voting, the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) would vote ''nay.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. THUNE). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 233 Leg.]

YEAS—54

Alexander	DeWine	McCain
Allard	Dole	McConnell
Allen	Domenici	Murkowski
Bennett	Ensign	Pryor
Bond	Enzi	Roberts
Brownback	Frist	Santorum
Bunning	Graham	Sessions
Burns	Grassley	Shelby
Burr	Gregg	Smith
Chambliss	Hagel	Specter
Coburn	Hatch	Stevens
Cochran	Hutchison	Sununu
Coleman	Inhofe	Talent
Collins	Isakson	Thomas
Cornyn	Kyl	Thune
Craig	Lott	Vitter
Crapo	Lugar	Voinovich
DeMint	Martinez	Warner

NAYS—44

Akaka	Durbin	Mikulski
Baucus	Feingold	Murray
Bayh	Feinstein	Nelson (FL)
Biden	Harkin	Nelson (NE)
Bingaman	Inouye	Obama
Boxer	Jeffords	Reed
Byrd	Johnson	Reid
Cantwell	Kennedy	Rockefeller
Carper	Kerry	Salazar
Chafee	Kohl	Sarbanes
Clinton	Landrieu	Schumer
Conrad	Lautenberg	Snowe
Dayton	Leahy	Stabenow
Dodd	Levin	Wyden
Dorgan	Lincoln	

NOT VOTING—2

Lieberman	Menendez

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. STEVENS. I move to reconsider the vote, and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 4895

Mr. STEVENS. Senator MIKULSKI has an amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 10 minutes equally divided on the Mikulski amendment.

The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, this is the Mikulski-Sarbanes amendment. It is very straightforward. It eliminates funding for the Army to carry out the A–76 effort that eliminates close to 400 jobs at Walter Reed, primarily little people, such as landscapers. Senator SARBANES and I objected to this contracting out because the process was flawed, unfair, and does not save the taxpayer any money.

Number 1, it started in the year 2000. It went on and cost $7 million to run the process.

The Federal employees won it in 2004. The Army changed the bar, reissued the solicitation, making up to 1,500 changes. After the Federal employees won the contract in September 2004, the Army changed the solicitation.

Having spent $7 million, it will now spend $5 million to implement it. The Army is about to spend $12 million to save $7 million. Even by Army accounting, that is a bad deal.

This process is flawed. It is unfair. It did not go by the rules. It does not save the taxpayers money. We urge the agreement of the Mikulski-Sarbanes amendment.

I reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, very briefly, no one would argue there are activities which are inherently governmental and should be performed by the Government. However, the Government should not engage in activities which are already offered in the private sector.

I am here today to share my opposition to the Mikulski amendment. If agreed to, this amendment would roll back a completed public-private job competition at Walter Reed Army Hospital. This job competition was won fair and square by the private sector because it proved to be more efficient and will save the taxpayers $32 million over the next 5 years. Furthermore, it was subject to intense review and investigation by the Army and the GAO, all upholding the Army decision to move forward to award to the private sector.

Opponents are not happy with the outcome. They appealed and lost; they appealed again and lost. Now they have appealed the contract award to Congress by offering this amendment. Congress is not in the business of awarding contracts. This amendment is bad policy and bad precedent.

Competitive sourcing is not about outsourcing or offshoring. It is about competition. It is the useful tool that utilizes competition to allow Federal agencies to evaluate whether certain functions shall be performed in the future by Federal employees of the private sector. We ought to continue to evaluate programs and activities and whether the Federal Government should be doing these kinds of things. This is essentially true if the Government is involved in activities that are available to the private sector.

It is my longstanding view that if a service is available to the private sector, there better be a darn good reason why the Government is doing it. In most cases, it simply is not right for the Federal Government to be doing things that could be done by Main Street business.

But the Federal Government is engaged in activity already offered in small business.

If this language prevails, it will undermine a portion of the administration's competitive sourcing program. With the continuing war on terror, the Army must have extra savings to meet its daily needs. The private sector will be discouraged from bidding on future competitions if the Congress demonstrates an effort to reverse legitimate acquisition decisions.

I urge all of my colleagues to oppose this amendment.

I yield the floor.

Mr. SARBANES. How much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 3½ minutes remaining.

Mr. SARBANES. I yield myself a minute and a half.

Mr. President, I listened very carefully to my able colleague from Wyoming. I don't quarrel with a lot of what he says, but this process was absolutely flawed. This was not a fair process. The rules were constantly being changed. If we are going to have competitive sourcing, it ought to be done according to the rules, with a respect for the competitive bidding process. That didn't happen here.

This was put out for bid in June of 2000. It is now September of 2006. Under current law, none of these competitions can go on for more than 3 years. In 2004, the Federal employees won this competition. And the Army came back and changed the solicitation and put in new requirements for the bids. It is totally unfair, what is happening here. I respect the competitive bidding process, but there has to be some integrity to it. It has to have some decency to it. That is totally lacking in this situation.

I urge my colleagues to support the Mikulski amendment.

Mr. STEVENS. How much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 2 minutes.

The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I normally would agree with the Senator from Maryland, but the comments that were made are really not correct.

This has been reviewed by third-party entities, including the Government Accountability Office. We received a final report on May 30, 2006. The Department of Defense strongly opposes the amendment. If the language prevails, it will undermine the competitive sourcing program.

They have learned a lot about using A–76 on an enormous entity like the Walter Reed Hospital, but this amendment would preclude the Army from implementing a contract which has been reviewed three times and has been agreed to by the GAO.

Ms. MIKULSKI. How much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland has 2 minutes.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Let's talk about taxpayers, since this is supposed to inherently do something or other, saving money to fight terrorism.

This started in 2000, as Senator SARBANES said. The Army spent $7 million

to defeat their own Federal employees. They spent $7 million in 6 years. Boy, how about that? These are the little people, the landscapers. Thank God they had the AFGE behind them.

Then, after spending $7 million and changing the rules—and with the last set of specs, they had 1,500 amendments; imagine if we had 1,500 amendments—what we now find is they are going to have to spend another $5 million to implement the savings. So they are going to spend $12 million when the original goal was to save $7 million. Come on. If we are fighting terrorism and saving money, let's leave Walter Reed alone. It is going to be closed in a couple years because of BRAC. Let the landscapers do their job. Let the doctors and nurses do their job. Let's do our job and pass the Mikulski-Sarbanes amendment.

Mr. STEVENS. The delay in this matter really came about—there is no question there is a serious delay—as it was reviewed and upheld on two occasions. These are third-party entities that did the review, including the GAO. We should not upset a process that has taken so long and is finalized now.

I yield back the remainder of my time and move to table the Senator's amendment. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second? There is a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the motion. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) are necessarily absent.

I further announce that, if present and voting, the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) would vote ''nay''.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 234 Leg.]

YEAS—50

Alexander	DeWine	Martinez
Allard	Dole	McCain
Allen	Domenici	McConnell
Bennett	Ensign	Murkowski
Bond	Enzi	Roberts
Brownback	Frist	Santorum
Bunning	Graham	Sessions
Burns	Grassley	Shelby
Burr	Gregg	Smith
Chambliss	Hagel	Stevens
Coburn	Hatch	Sununu
Cochran	Hutchison	Thomas
Coleman	Inhofe	Thune
Cornyn	Isakson	Vitter
Craig	Kyl	Voinovich
Crapo	Lott	Warner
DeMint	Lugar	

NAYS—48

Akaka	Cantwell	Dodd
Baucus	Carper	Dorgan
Bayh	Chafee	Durbin
Biden	Clinton	Feingold
Bingaman	Collins	Feinstein
Boxer	Conrad	Harkin
Byrd	Dayton	Inouye
Jeffords	Lincoln	Rockefeller
Johnson	Mikulski	Salazar
Kennedy	Murray	Sarbanes
Kerry	Nelson (FL)	Schumer
Kohl	Nelson (NE)	Snowe
Landrieu	Obama	Specter
Lautenberg	Pryor	Stabenow
Leahy	Reed	Talent
Levin	Reid	Wyden

NOT VOTING—2

Lieberman Menendez

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 4883, AS MODIFIED

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I have an amendment that we wish to adopt. As I understand it, the Allen-Durbin amendment No. 4883 has been cleared as modified. I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the amendment is agreed to.

The amendment (No. 4883), as modified, was agreed to.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there be a period for morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

ARMY CORPORAL CHRISTOPHER SITTON

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I wish to speak for a moment to honor the memory of a fallen Coloradan: Army Cpl Christopher Franklin Sitton of Montrose.

Corporal Sitton was a medic with the 10th Mountain Division, serving in Afghanistan since March. He had just turned 21 and graduated from Montrose High School just 3 years ago. Now, instead of having his whole life ahead of him, he has been taken from his friends, family and country by a roadside bomb in Kunar, in eastern Afghanistan.

Chris Sitton was looking forward to a medical career. His interest in medicine reached back to his childhood, where as a young man in Quinlan, TX he would accompany his father, a volunteer with a rescue group, on emergency calls.

Corporal Sitton's time in the Army was marked by excellence, not unlike his time in high school. Socialist Sitton entered the Army nearly 3 years ago, in January 2004. In his service, Specialist Sitton received three commander's coins, recognizing his exemplary performance in the Army. One was personally handed to him by a four-star general.

This achievement is remarkable to many but not to those who knew Christopher Sitton. Chris was a natural leader. A standout track star, he is pictured mentoring a younger teammate in a photo that hangs in his high school track coach's office. Young people naturally gravitated to him, and Chris returned their enthusiasm with a smile one friend described as big as Texas itself.

As a young man, Chris Sitton was an accomplished Eagle Scout. He was an avid athlete, a musician and outdoorsman, enjoying his time hiking, skiing and camping. But perhaps most notable, Chris Sitton left a mark on those around him as someone who was always helping others, putting them before himself.

GEN Douglas MacArthur once reflected, ''The soldier, above all other people, prays for peace, for he must suffer and bear the deepest wounds and scars.'' Chris' legacy as a son, friend and mentor, his willingness to put others before himself, shows how fundamentally he understood this calling to find a better tomorrow. Corporal Sitton sought to make the world a better place in his every action, to bring us to a better understanding of the ties that bind humanity together.

To Corporal Sitton's parents, Judy and Steve Sitton, I know that no words can ease the grief you feel at the loss of your son. I and this entire Nation share, in some small way, your painful sorrow. Corporal Christopher Sitton and his entire family will reside in my prayers tonight and remain in my thoughts.

MARINE CORPORAL JORDAN C. PIERSON

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Marine Cpl Jordan C. Pierson of Milford, CT.

Corporal Pierson, a member of Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion, was killed in action on August 24 while conducting combat operations against anti-Iraqi forces in Al Anbar Province. He was shot while on foot patrol. He had been previously awarded the Purple Heart for wounds to his arms and legs by shrapnel from an insurgent's grenade 3 months prior.

Having delayed his education at the University of Connecticut, Corporal Pierson joined the Marine Corps in December 2003. It seems to be apparent by the many recollections of his friends and family that Jordan had already proven himself a leader. They recount many of the high-spirited exploits that he both engineered and led. However, his wily deeds quickly gave way to an outstanding performance as a marine devoted to his comrades and mission.

He is fondly remembered as a brilliant light and strong leader with strength of character and self assurance, persistently watching out for his fellow marines. He is described best by his first sergeant: ''Corporal Pierson had been a bright spot in his platoon, in a place, that can take the softest of hearts into a void of darkness. Even when the gloom of combat reached deep in a man's soul, Corporal Pierson could bring the Marine back to a sense