provoking, elegant, eloquent exercise in being involved in the marketplace of public ideas, perhaps most famous, though perhaps not the most substantive thing he said in that campaign, is when they asked what he would do when he was elected. Bill Buckley famously said: I will demand a recount. And that is a good message for all of us when we approach campaigns.

Well, I continued to be involved with him in communication in many ways. My wife and I had the privilege of spending wonderful evenings with him and his late wife Patricia at their home in Stamford, CT. These were classic evenings of great food, some drink, and good spirited conversations—cigar and brandy to follow—but always open to ideas and always with a ready willingness to laugh. In fact, he passed away earlier today, apparently in his study in his magnificent home on Wallace Point in Stamford, CT, probably working on a column or some other piece of writing.

I was particularly grateful to him for all that I learned from him, all the good times I had with him, and in some sense, you might say I would not be a United States Senator were it not for Bill Buckley, although Buckley would not say that. When I ran for the Senate in 1988, let's just say with the diplomacy that marks this Chamber that Bill Buckley was not a fan of the incumbent Republican Senator, and he called me up and said—I wish I could impersonate him—Joe, I'm thinking of endorsing you. Do you think that will help?

I said: Well, now, that's very good of you. Then he interrupted and said: Please understand this is the only time I am likely to endorse your career. So I said that it probably would; what do you have in mind?

Well, he actually wrote a column, a very good column in the National Review, and I think in his syndicated column. He also, with the puckishness that was part of him, started something he called Buck PAC, which was, he said, a PAC open to anyone in Connecticut whose name was Buckley and who was committed to the defeat of the incumbent Senator at that time. He printed bumper stickers and the like and helped out in the campaign.

I said to him after I won that election—and I won it by very little—that I thought that in a close election—as the Presiding Officer of the Senate knows, there are so many reasons one is successful—but I said: You have reason, Bill, to take part of the credit. I won by less than 1 percent of the vote. And I said: You know, I would go so far as to say you played a rabbinical role for me in this campaign.

Well, what do you mean by that? So I said: Your endorsement of me and the columns you wrote said to Republicans in Connecticut who really didn't like the incumbent Senator, it is kosher to vote for LIEBERMAN. And he laughed. I remember that well.

There is so much I could say about his contribution to our country, to his openness to ideas, to his civility. One could disagree with Bill Buckley, as I did quite frequently, and never lose respect or affection, dare I say love, for a wonderful human being. We would all benefit from that.

I perhaps would close this impromptu tribute to Bill Buckley, mourning his loss today, by offering condolences to his family: Chris Buckley, his son, who is a wonderful writer and confuses me as well as others with the multisyllabic words that he uses just as his father did; his sisters, Priscilla L. Buckley of Sharon, where the family has longed lived; Patricia Buckley Bozzell of Washington; Carol Buckley of Columbia, SC; his brothers, Judge James Buckley of Sharon, CT, and F. Reid Buckley of Camden, SC; and a granddaughter and grandson.

I pray that they will be strengthened by their faith and comforted by good memories and pride and the extraordinary person in Bill Buckley.

I think most fitting of all, I will end with a quote from President Reagan on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the National Review in 1985. Reagan says when he first picked up his first issue of National Review, he received it in a plain brown wrapper and still anxiously awaited his biweekly edition but no longer in a plain brown wrapper.

But this is what Reagan said of Buckley:

> You didn't just part the Red Sea—you rolled it back, dried it up, and left exposed, for all the world to see, the naked desert that is statism. And then, as if that weren't enough, you gave the world something different, something in its weariness it desperately needed, the sound of laughter and the sight of the rich, green uplands of freedom.

I thank the Chair for giving me the opportunity to bid farewell in this Senate Chamber to a great American and a dear friend, William F. Buckley, Jr. I pray with confidence and the faith that Bill Buckley had that his soul will be taken up truly in the bonds of eternal life.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:47 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Acting President pro tempore.

PROVIDING FOR THE SAFE REDEPLOYMENT OF UNITED STATES TROOPS FROM IRAQ—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, another day in Iraq. Today American taxpayers' dollars will be spent in Iraq, almost a half a billion dollars. More than $400 million will be spent today in Iraq.

Here is what we get from it as seen by—you pick about any newspaper—the Washington Post, which was at my doorstep this morning: ''Suicide Bomber Hits Bus in Iraq's North, Killing at Least Eight.''

A suicide bomber detonated his explosive belt outside a bus in Northern Iraq on Tuesday, killing at least eight people, injuring at least eight others.

You drop down, it tells about all of the violence.

The Tall Afar bombing followed a bloody weekend of attacks against Shiite pilgrims, the deadly incident taking place Sunday when a suicide bomber killed at least 63.

As we learned yesterday, that one blast injured more than 100. You drop down in this news article:

Even as overall violence has fallen, the recent attacks underscore the tenuous security environment and the resiliency of the insurgency.

In volatile Diyala Province, it goes on to explain how 21 people were kidnaped yesterday. At the bottom of the page, it has the names of three of our soldiers who were killed. And then, of course, we have General Casey. General Casey, the Army Chief of Staff, said yesterday in testimony before the Armed Services Committee:

The cumulative effect of the last 6 years plus at war have left our Army out of balance, consumed by the current fight and unable to do the things we know we need to do.

We have had some good debate. My Republican colleagues think the war is going great. I think they are certainly entitled to their opinion. But it has been a good debate. We, of course, have spent time on Iraq on this side of the aisle, but also on how the war has done so much to damage our security and our economy.

There is a book coming out tomorrow or the next day that talks about—it is by Mr. Stiglitz, who is a Pulitzer Prize winner—maybe Nobel; I think Nobel. It is called ''The $3 Trillion Mistake.''

The book is on the war. Now, in actual numbers that I understand, in about a year they will be up to $1 trillion. Mr. Stiglitz, an economist, far smarter than I am, says it is $3 trillion. That is what we have talked about. This war that will soon be going into the sixth year has been devastating to our country.

We had a meeting that just took place about the budget. The President's budget cuts virtually everything. One of the victims in his budget is Public Broadcasting, cut by 70 percent. I talked to Senator CONRAD as we were leaving. I said: What did you do with Public Broadcasting?

We restored the money.

And even restoring it takes into consideration some of the cuts the President has made in that program over the 7 years he has been President.

We do not have money to do the basics this country needs to do because we have borrowed $1 trillion to take care of the war.

So we have had a good debate. Each side has spent a little over 3 hours discussing these issues. I believe there has

been sufficient debate on the motion to proceed.

I ask unanimous consent that all postcloture time be yielded back and the motion to proceed be agreed to; that the Senate now vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to S. 2634, and that if cloture is invoked, notwithstanding rule XXII, the Senate immediately proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to H.R. 3221, the vehicle we will use for the housing market crisis.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I will make two quick comments. Certainly I respect the majority leader's comments. He talked about the fact that violence is down in Iraq. But, of course, the suicide bombers continue to wreak havoc. We all deplore that.

I was in Israel last week at the border town in Gaza—Sderot is the name—and terrorism from Hamas continues to bedevil the people of that town with rockets coming over every day. But they cannot leave and leave the terrorists to prevail there. I think the same thing is the situation in Iraq.

The majority leader talks about the costs, and they are significant. But the costs if we had to come back in and clean up after the terrorists take over, if we left prematurely, could be far greater than what we are expected to have to pay. In any event, it is very difficult to put a price on freedom and security.

I think we have had a good debate. We have speakers on our side actually for about another about 4½ hours or so. But as I told the majority leader, we could yield back some time on our side to work with the majority leader to develop a schedule that would be convenient for all of the Members.

At this time, because of the precise nature of the unanimous consent request, I object on behalf of the minority but would suggest it should be possible this afternoon, early this afternoon, for the majority and minority leaders to sit down and work out a schedule that would meet the needs of all of our Members and convenient for the entire body.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about Iraq. Following the bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samarra, our enemies tried to plunge Iraq into chaos, and in certain parts of Iraq they were succeeding. Terrorists and extremists were pitting Iraqi against Iraqi, Sunni against Shia, Shia against Sunni. In Baghdad, Iraqi families were being forced to leave their homes and to resettle in areas where other members of their religious community resided.

Iraqi police and army units were nowhere near capable of taking the lead during operations. On the political front, progress was very slow. When the going got tough, many called for U.S. withdrawal and abandonment of Iraq.

Thankfully, the President did not listen to the calls for defeat and retreat. The President reviewed our strategy and changed course. This change was needed. I visited Iraq twice before this change of strategy. I can tell you it was a dangerous place. During one of my trips, we had to take a helicopter from the Green Zone to Baghdad International Airport because of an IED threat.

In January of 2007, the President and General Petraeus launched the surge of American forces into Iraq. The Iraqi people quickly realized that something dramatic had happened. Those who had worried that America was preparing to abandon them instead saw tens of thousands of American forces flowing into their country. They saw our forces moving into the neighborhoods, clearing out the terrorists, and staying behind to ensure that the enemy did not return. They saw our troops, along with provincial reconstruction teams, coming in to ensure that improved security was followed by improvements in daily life.

The surge is now achieving its primary aims of improving population security in Baghdad and reversing the cycle of sectarian violence that plagued Iraq. Although there is much more work to be done, security has improved considerably since General Petraeus began implementing this new strategy that became fully operational in mid-June.

According to the U.S. military, monthly attack levels have decreased 60 percent since that time. Civilian deaths are down approximately 75 percent. Although al-Qaida in Iraq remains a dangerous threat, its capabilities are severely diminished. Thousands of extremists in Iraq have been captured or killed, including hundreds of key al-Qaida leaders and their operatives.

Iraqi forces now have assumed responsibility for security in 9 of 18 Iraqi provinces and are now leading combat operations all over the country. Iraqi security forces and concerned local citizen groups continue to grow, develop capabilities, and provide more security for their country. The Government of Iraq is committed to one day assuming fiscal and overall responsibility for CLCs, which some now call the Sons of Iraq, and has begun structuring vocational training programs for these CLCs who want to rejoin the civilian workforce.

The President's strategy in Iraq has put us on a path to success. U.S. and Iraqi troops, working together, have achieved significant results. Violence is down dramatically and political progress is being made. The Government in Baghdad recently passed debaathification legislation and a pension law, and is sharing oil revenues with the different provinces.

Significant bottom-up political progress is occurring at the local level in Iraq, where provincial governments continue to spend national revenue on reconstruction, and many people are engaging in local politics.

On the economic front, the central Government of Iraq recently reached its 2007 target of $30.2 billion in budget revenue 1 month before the end of the year. The Government of Iraq recently completed early repayment of its outstanding obligations to the International Monetary Fund. The Baghdad Chamber of Commerce recently hosted a business expo which more than 8,000 executives, entrepreneurs, salesmen, and investors attended.

Mr. President, approximately 2 weeks ago, I traveled again to Iraq and was briefed by General Petraeus, other commanders on the ground, and Iraqi security officials. Petraeus and his troops are obviously and undoubtedly doing a remarkable job at turning things around. This was a different trip for me. There was a more secure feeling in the air. I felt optimistic, more so than at any other time since the war started. You can tell that things have remarkably changed for the better. I visited a town south of Baghdad where 3 months ago al-Qaida had been in total control. I felt so safe that, along with two other Senators and our staffs, we walked through a local market without a helmet and spoke to dozens of residents, including children, through a translator. One of the Iraqi people's biggest fears is that America will surrender and leave prematurely. They fear for their lives, their children, and the future of the country if we surrender.

Great, almost unbelievable strides have obviously been made, and we are headed in the right direction. Despite this fact, some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle continue to introduce defeatist legislation, such as what we have before us today, S. 2633, that call for tying our hands on this front line of the war on terror. So as things get better and better, the Democrats continue to call for retreat. They continue to politicize the war in Iraq, persisting in calls for troop withdrawal, when the surge is demonstrating real success, both military and political.

Scaling back withdrawing when we are succeeding so brilliantly clearly equals defeat and makes absolutely no sense. The Democrats have concluded that America has lost and refuse to listen to the judgment of our military leaders.

Responding to whether gains made in Iraq would be lost if we abruptly withdrew our troops, Speaker of the House NANCY PELOSI recently stated:

> There haven't been gains. The gains have not produced the desired effect, which is the reconciliation of Iraq. This is a failure. This is a failure.

Such defeatist nonsense is not the way to boost the morale of our troops on the ground or to show gratitude for their success. I call on the Speaker to visit Iraq, to talk to our troops, to talk

to the Iraqi people, and to see how successful the surge is working for her own eyes.

Further, I find it peculiar that the Democrats keep calling for withdrawal over and over again when initially they criticized the administration for not sending more troops to Iraq. When plans for the surge were announced, they roundly attacked it, going so far as to say the war was already lost. Then when the surge began to show great success, Democrats again criticized it and said the only purpose of the surge was to enable political reconciliation in Iraq. Now that both military and political successes are being realized, the Democrats are once again going to have to redefine what failure looks like.

When General Petraeus first took command, he said, ''Hard is not hopeless.'' Today, there is hope and optimism in Iraq. Amazing progress has been made. I should not have to say this, but we must support our troops, not just in word but in deed. The Democrats need to stop playing games with the brave men and women who are sacrificing so much for this country. They need to stop introducing legislation that ties strings to money for our troops. They need to stop introducing legislation that would prematurely bring our troops home and ruin all the gains they have made over the last 5 years. Partisan politics need to be set aside. We need to come together as a Congress, as a country, and get behind the effort and the mission in Iraq. Let's finish what we started, not just for today but for the future. We are all Americans first. It is time we started acting like that.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, yesterday one of our colleagues came before this body and stated for all who cared to listen that he was weary, weary of this war.

I, too, am weary, but weariness does not lead me to embrace the policy of surrender or succumb to the nihilistic business that is defeatism.

History is replete with examples of leaders who fell victim to the temptation of defeatism. Shall the Senate similarly repeat this folly?

No, sir.

In this country, commitment and dedication to noble pursuits have defined our great Nation. We must not give way to weariness now.

The Senate is where great ideas and thoughts are to be put forth and considered, ideas and thoughts that are designed to lead to a better life for the American people and secure a safer world where the inalienable rights of all are respected.

But I, too, am weary, weary of the policies of appeasement that have become the guiding principles of some in the majority party. Have they learned nothing? Has history not taught us, through the pain and suffering of millions, that the philosophy of appeasement only provides a slight respite from the forces of evil before they unleash incalculable pain and suffering on the innocent?

What happens if we adopt the troop withdrawal legislation before us? Do they really think al-Qaida is just going to leave us alone? Make no mistake, the majority of the forces that oppose us in Iraq are affiliated with al-Qaida.

Do the supporters of this bill think al-Qaida will conclude: ''Well, we have won in Iraq, now let's leave the Americans to live in peace?'' Does anybody really believe that?

That is the question the American people have to ask themselves. What will happen if we pick an arbitrary time to leave Iraq based on a policy of appeasement rather than accomplishments of our new counterinsurgency strategy?

I have been to Iraq twice. The first time, I admit to being a little discouraged. The second time was a year later. During this second visit, we actually flew into Al Anbar really before it was completely as open as it is today. We walked the streets of Ramadi. We highfived with the kids who were on the street. The difference between my two visits was striking. It was a complete change and that change is because of our current military leadership.

Again, the question the American people have to ask themselves: What will happen if we pick an arbitrary time to leave Iraq based on a policy of appeasement rather than the accomplishments of our new counterinsurgency strategy?

Simply put, what happens the day after?

Will not al-Qaida use Iraq, with the world's third largest oil reserves, as a bank to fund their worldwide activities? Will they not use Iraq as a base to launch attacks against all those who disagree with their radical policies?

What are the answers offered to these questions by the proponents of this legislation? From what I can discern from the Members who have taken to the floor to defend it, the answer is simple: nothing. They simply do not have a plan for the day after.

What of the nearly 4,000 servicemembers who volunteered to fight for their country and who have now paid the ultimate sacrifice? Does their memorial in history read: Thank you for your service, but some Members of Congress grew weary, and therefore your sacrifice and the sacrifices of your family were in vain.

I know what those sacrifices are like. Our family lost my only living brother in World War II on the Ploesti oil raid. That was the raid that attempted to knock out Hitler's oil reserves and it was one of the most important operations of World War II.

My brother's loss was hard on our family. But we were proud of my brother. We were proud that he was willing to sacrifice his life for us, just as we are proud of our young men and women who are fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan today.

What is General Petraeus's conclusion, if we begin a precipitous withdrawal? Almost everybody has praised General Petraeus. You just have to. My gosh, the man has completely transformed the situation in Iraq. He has been right in his approach toward these problems over there. He wrote the Army's manual on fighting insurgencies.

As recently as February 15, General Petraeus stated what we all know to be true if we were to begin a precipitous withdrawal:

> You would see a resurgence of ethno-sectarian violence. You would see al Qaeda regain its safe havens and sanctuaries. There's no telling what would happen with displaced persons.

In other words, if we leave, the chaos that could result might make the wholesale slaughter that occurred after the fall of Indochina look minuscule by comparison. I wonder what fanciful legislative fix our colleagues will offer then.

So what is the alternative? Do opponents of this bill offer only empty rhetoric?

No, we support the comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy devised and implemented by General Petraeus. It is a strategy that is producing remarkable results, results that point to only one conclusion. In little over a year, the coalition has regained the initiative.

For example, General Petraeus stated in his December 30 briefing that overall attacks have decreased by 60 percent. Civilian deaths are also down by 60 percent. The ethno-sectarian component of those fatalities has decreased by 80 percent.

Those findings are supported by other commanders in Iraq, including MG Joseph Fil, the commanding officer of the 1st Cavalry Division and the officer who until December was responsible for our operations in Baghdad. He stated in an interview late last year with the New York Times that coalition forces have dramatically reduced, if not eliminated, al-Qaida's presence in every neighborhood in Baghdad. The general also pointed out that murders in Baghdad are down 80 percent.

In addition, during a recent briefing, LTG Raymond T. Odierno, who just returned from Iraq and has been nominated to become the Army's new Vice Chief of Staff, stated that terrorist operations in Baghdad have decreased by 59 percent. In the past year, suicide attacks in Baghdad have been reduced 66 percent, from 12 to 4 a month. The number of improvised explosive device attacks in Baghdad has also declined by 45 percent.

Baghdad is not the only area where we have seen success. During my trip to Iraq last year, I was able to witness the dramatic changes that have occurred in Al Anbar, where al-Qaida has been thrown out of vast areas of that province, including its major cities,

Ramadi and Fallujah, areas that were once deemed refuges for al-Qaida's vile perversion of a dignified and peaceful religion.

The success of Baghdad and Al Anbar is also being repeated throughout Iraq. In the north, Operation Iron Harvest has been launched.

This operation has already achieved some important successes. For example, during the month of December, the coalition and Iraqi security forces have killed or captured over 20 al-Qaida emirs in the north. This included the capture of Haider al-Afri, who was the main security emir in Mosul and was responsible for organizing the flow of foreign fighters into the Mosul area. His replacement did not fare much better; he was captured on February 18.

The number of attacks in Diyala has also decreased. No doubt that the recent killing of the al-Qaida emir of Diyala helped this trend.

In addition, in the past two weeks, the coalition killed Abu Karrar, who was a senior al-Qaida intelligence operative and an individual who has the infamous distinction of organizing murders to be carried out by female suicide bombers.

Which leads me to the inevitable question: What do you think these senior al-Qaida leaders would be doing with their time if we left Iraq? I wonder if they ever will grow weary as some in this body have?

How are all these successes possible? The answer is our generals over there, led by General Petraeus. His strategy is based upon the classic counterinsurgency tactic of providing security to the local population, thereby enabling the Government to provide services to its people, which in turn creates in the population a vested interest in the success of Government institutions.

One of the ways this is accomplished is through the use of joint security stations. Under this tactic, a portion of a city such as a neighborhood is cordoned off, then searched for insurgents. Previously, once this was accomplished, our forces would return to large forward-operating bases, usually on the periphery of the city. The result was easy to predict. The insurgents would return once the sweep had concluded.

Under General Petraeus's strategy, our forces remain in the neighborhoods and build joint security stations. These joint security stations then become home to a company-sized unit of American servicemembers as well as Iraqi Army and police units. These facilities not only help secure the surrounding areas but simultaneously enable our forces to train and evaluate Iraqi forces. Much like the local police officer in a major urban area, our forces use the joint security stations to learn about the locale to which they are assigned and can quickly adapt to meet the unique security needs of the individual community.

The success of these joint security stations can be seen in their creation throughout Iraq, with over 50 of them in Baghdad alone. However, under this legislation, our forces will no longer be able to conduct operations from joint security stations. In fact, they would be banished to bases isolated from the Iraqi people and unable to accompany Iraqi forces on missions. Under this bill, the few remaining forces would only be able to conduct limited operations against al-Qaida. The security provided to the Iraqi people, which is the foundation of our recent success, would be entirely lost.

So let's review the policy advocated by this bill. No. 1, it guarantees defeat. No. 2, it provides al-Qaida with another base of operations, and, unlike Afghanistan, Iraq's oil wealth will provide substantial financial resources to purchase whatever the terrorists choose. In the past, it has been publicly reported that al-Qaida has actively sought the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction.

Neville Chamberlain would be proud.

So yes, I, like others, am weary, but I am weary of appeasement. I am weary of such defeatist legislation being debated on the floor of the Senate. This is a Chamber for great ideas and concepts that will ensure the betterment of the American public and lead to the freedom of oppressed people all over the world. This legislation falls far short of that August standard.

Just think about it, here we have this country, Iraq, with three different factions who are working together, who are making headway, who have enormous oil wealth that could be used for their people, who are tired of al-Qaida, who have been throwing them out of the various provinces, who are cooperating with the United States of America, and who are starting to cooperate with each other, who sit between two of the most roguish nations in the world, Iran and Syria. All of this success happening, and we have people who want to pull us out prematurely. I don't understand it personally.

I respect the sincerity of the sponsors and of those who will vote for this. I think that if we are going to be weary, let's be weary of the way to handle things.

WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY, JR.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise to reflect on the passing of William F. Buckley, Jr. I am aware of my limitations in speaking about Bill Buckley. Anything I might add to the eloquent words that have already come from his friends at the National Review and from his friend, and my friend, the Senator from Connecticut, JOE LIEBERMAN, will seem small by comparison.

Still, as someone who knew Bill, as someone who admired Bill, and as someone who learned a great deal from Bill, I would be remiss if I did not say a few words about this extraordinary man and his extraordinary life.

The life of William F. Buckley, Jr., reads like something from one of his many fiction novels. Growing up in Mexico, his first language was Spanish.

As a prep school student, he demonstrated that he was a real entrepreneur, typing his classmates' papers for $1 at a crack. And consistent with the writer America got to know over the years, he would charge an extra 25 cents to correct their grammar.

After graduating, he spent time at the University of Mexico, studying Spanish, and he served his country in the Army, making second lieutenant.

Only after serving in the Army did he go on to college, something widespread in those days—when a hot war was followed by a long, cold war—and largely unknown today with the exception of those in ROTC and benefitting from the GI bill.

As a student at Yale, he distinguished himself. In addition to his studies in political science, economics, and history, he cut his teeth as a debater and was elected chairman of the Yale Daily News.

Following college, a year in the CIA, and the publication of his book ''God and Man at Yale,'' he began a career as a writer.

In 1955, his public life began as he founded the National Review. The National Review never had a massive circulation. It continues to be subsidized by the contributions of its readers. But its significance was titanic. Simply put, there was no conservative movement before William F. Buckley, Jr., and the magazine he founded and cultivated.

For decades, the progressive left had been triumphant. Herbert Croly, The New Republic, Woodrow Wilson, and Franklin Roosevelt—there was no real answer to the arguments they made on behalf of higher taxes, a comprehensive state, and a highly regulated economy. For sure, there was a Republican Party, and Republicans continued to have electoral success. But there was no real consistent conservative point of view. The battlefield of ideas had been abandoned to the progressive left.

Bill Buckley, foot by foot, began retaking some of that ground, and establishing a framework of conservative ideas—themes of limited government, the protection of human liberty, economic entrepreneurship, and military strength in the face of a totalitarian threat bent on world domination.

The development of these ideas was not always pretty. But through fits and starts a movement grew. We first heard its voice in the 1964 Presidential election, an election in which Republicans were trounced. But by 1980, these conservative ideas had become a majority, one that helped to put Ronald Reagan in the White House.

Bill was no doubt combative, but I think most would say he was always having fun. He was a real intellectual, but he was no dour academic. He loved to sail. He used to make his way around New York City on a motorcycle. When he made his long-shot run for mayor of New York City and was asked what he would do if he won, he responded, ''Demand a recount.''

He took up the harpsichord at the age of 50. He became a novelist. His television show ''Firing Line'' ran from 1966 to 1999. I enjoyed being on ''Firing Line'' with him, basking in his wisdom, answering his questions, and on occasion irritating him to death. But I loved the man.

Bill was a man who loved the written word, and it was fitting that he passed away at his desk and at his home. His son Christopher, also an accomplished writer, noted, ''he might have been working on a column.'' And I have no doubt we would have benefitted from it, Democrats and Republicans alike.

As the authors of The Federalist Papers, Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt, and Ronald Reagan understood, America remains an experiment. It is an experiment in republican self-government. And that experiment is constantly being tested.

Bill lived through extraordinary and challenging times, times like our own that tested that experiment, and I have no doubt he was very important in helping us through them.

With wit and aplomb, he pushed the envelope. He argued and fought. He made us a better country. He was a great American who led a great American life, and America will miss him.

I have to say I knew Bill Buckley. I appreciated Bill Buckley. He had an enormous influence on me. As a former liberal Democrat, he helped me to see the merit in intelligent conservative approaches.

He appealed to so many of us, including some of my liberal colleagues, who loved to debate him and loved to chat with him, because he was at bottom a decent, honorable, funny, person who was open to basically everybody.

No doubt the absence of Bill will be even more painful to the family he has left behind. But consistent with the Catholic faith, one kept deeply by Bill, I hope this is also a moment of happiness for them as they know that Bill is now in Heaven with the love of his life, Patricia.

I offer my condolences to the Buckley family. All of you and Bill are in my prayers. His brother, James Buckley is in my thoughts in particular. It was my honor to serve with Bill's brother in a variety of capacities. His brother is a true gentleman, a wonderful human being. Although he was only here for one term, he was a great Senator. The examples of both Bill and Jim Buckley show how this unique American family has contributed so much to our public life.

I can assure you that the Congress, including members who differed with Bill Buckley, will miss his humor and will miss him personally. I know one thing: This Senator from Utah will miss him deeply.

Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Michigan and yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about what is currently happening on the floor of the Senate and what I am hopeful will happen.

Our leader, Senator REID, has one more time brought us—and rightly so—to a point to debate and try to move forward on changing course in the war in Iraq. There have been 5 years of war, with the largest expenditure now of the Federal Government in terms of monthly expenditures, and certainly in terms of loss of life. It goes on every day, day after day. All you have to do is look at the newspaper and see that families continue to pay a huge price for this war.

I stood on the floor of this Senate 5 years ago and was one of 23 Members who voted ''no'' on going into this war. But I have spent every other moment, every other vote, doing everything I can to support our troops, to make sure I do everything I can to make sure we honor them through our efforts to equip them and make sure they have the resources, and that when they come home and put on the veteran's cap that we are, in fact, providing the health care and the resources they need. I am proud to be part of a caucus, a new majority that has placed veterans health insurance, health care as a top priority to make that happen.

But I often think back to the discussions before my vote, and discussions with my husband, who is a 14-year veteran of the Air Force and the Air National Guard, and him reminding me that the best way to support American troops, the best way to support our troops is to give them the right mission. The second thing is to make sure they have the resources they need. The third thing is to make sure there is a clear exit strategy for that mission.

I did not support that mission and believe there was not the evidence that was needed to carry on that mission. I have supported those resources, however, that they need.

Now it is important, it is critical, that we as a body, as a Congress, come together to support the exit strategy, the effort to change the mission that needs to occur in Iraq, to be able to bring our people home, to be able to stop the multiple deployments, redeployments that are going on, and that we refocus on those areas of the world and those groups such as al-Qaida that truly are a threat to us. That means Afghanistan, that means other kinds of strategies to be able to truly keep us safe. That is what we need to do.

The most important thing is to keep us safe as a country, to be smart about our strategy. That is what we are debating, here: whether we are going to be smart about our strategy to keep us safe, whether we are going to pay attention to the daily loss of life in Iraq, and whether we are going to pay attention to the almost $15 billion a month that is being spent on that war, which is now a civil war, that is not being invested back home in America.

That is what I want to speak about for a moment, understanding that the most important thing is the loss of life and what is happening to our troops and their families.

As I said, I am extremely proud of the fact that we made a very top priority for us in the new majority coming in the full funding of veterans health care. We have done that. We have tackled the problems we have seen with Walter Reed and the inability for our troops, as they move between systems, to get the effective care they need by passing the Wounded Warriors legislation.

We have continued to bring forward other efforts to be able to address what I consider to be the abuse of our troops by continual redeployment without enough dwell time, rest time, for them to be here at home, as the Army Manual would require.

But we also have another very important piece of this which goes to what is happening when we have almost $15 billion a month that is being diverted from our economy, which from Michigan surely looks like a recession. I cannot speak to every other part of the country, but from our economy and our families and our communities, it is being spent on a war that a majority of Americans—not a majority of Democrats—a majority of Americans—Democrats, Republicans, and Independents—people of all persuasions in all States are saying: We no longer want to go in this direction. We want to change this mission. We want to bring our people home.

But we are now getting ready to do a budget. The distinguished Acting President pro tempore today is on the Budget Committee. He has served with distinction in the House and now in the Senate. Mr. President, you know as well as I do that we are now grappling with very tough decisions about how to address the needs here in America.

I think that on top of the issues of national policy and how to keep us safe, and the loss of life, and how to support our troops, we have to grapple with the fact that last year, for instance, when we passed, with overwhelming bipartisan support in the Senate, an effort to extend health care, health insurance to 10 million children of working families, the President vetoed it, saying it was too much money. Yet it was about half of the cost of 1 month of what we are spending in Iraq today.

Investing in children, healthy children in our country, of working families who unfortunately are working in jobs where they do not have health insurance and do not have enough of a wage to be able to afford the $1,000 a month premium or more that they would have to pay—do we focus on supporting those families and change this direction or do we continue down this road of saying no to our children?

We have the opportunity to create new jobs in the energy economy. In Michigan, we are moving full speed ahead on alternative energy, and not only in our vehicles. But windmills and

solar and biofuels and all of these things take partnerships and investments.

We have an energy tax provision—a measure for which we came one vote short of being able to override one of the multitude of filibusters that has gone on on this floor: a historic level of filibusters stopping us at every turn—we came one vote short. We are talking about having some resources to be able to put into tax incentives to be able to produce alternative energies and the infrastructures so the biofuels can actually get to the pump so you not only can buy a E–85 car but get E–85 at the pump. It takes some investments to be able to do that.

We have been told no on being able to put dollars into that area. Yet the amount of money we are talking about is less than 2 months of spending in Iraq.

Infrastructure, roads and bridges. We saw last year what happened in Minnesota in terms of a huge bridge collapse and what happened with human life and what happened to the community involved. We have roads and bridges across our country, water and sewer systems that are aging, that need a facelift, and we need to be able to get some additional dollars so we can bring ourselves into the modern age for much of our infrastructure. Yet we are told again: No, there are no resources to put money into our infrastructure. However, we are rebuilding roads in Iraq, we are rebuilding schools in Iraq.

In fact, one of the original items I will never forget was to put wireless technology into schools. That was in the budget, but it wasn't the American budget, it was the Iraqi reconstruction budget. I have been working for years to get technologies in our schools, new technology, because every single student is going to face, at a minimum, working with a computer, whether you work at a gas station or whether you work at a high-tech company. Yet we can't do that in America. We have been told by this administration and by those who had been in the majority for 6 years: No. But at the same time, it was in the budget for Iraq.

We now find ourselves in a situation with a tremendous housing crisis. In my State of Michigan, it has frankly masked a larger economic crisis, where people have been losing their jobs, they are losing their incomes, seeing all their costs go up, but they have had that equity in their home that was keeping them going. All of a sudden, all of the values go down, and we are seeing a collapse in the housing market which has rippled out way beyond housing now into our capital markets, into our entire economy. Yet when we come to the floor—and we are going to be asking shortly, after we vote to end this filibuster that is going on, on the change in the Iraq mission—we are going to be asking to come together around a housing proposal that, frankly, I think is pretty modest. It is important, it is good, it is the right thing to do, but it certainly is something within the realm of reasonableness. Yet I know it is going to be difficult to be able to get this passed. The cost of it, again, is about 2 weeks in Iraq, to be able to focus on one of the most devastating crises going on in America today.

Most middle-class families save through equity in their home. That is how most people are able to get into the middle class. We are talking about people who have worked hard, played by the rules, done all the right things, got a job, saved up the downpayment, were able to get a home, and then find themselves in a situation where they are looking around saying: Wait a minute. What is going on here? What about me? What is happening in our economy? I need some help. We are trying to do that. I hope we are going to be able to come together and do that. But if we hear one more time: No, we can't do that, we can't afford it—we are talking about less than 2 weeks of what is being spent in Iraq.

How many times have we heard all the comments about Leave No Child Behind, about the fact that we are not keeping our promises as it relates to education. We passed new high standards. We all support the high standards. What we promised was that with that would come resources to help children, help schools succeed. We have seen dramatic underfunding. Again, in this President's budget, he eliminates 48 different education programs, including efforts that focus on vocational education and other things that are important for the future—48 different programs. We will be told that if we try to invest in education, that it is too much. It is too much. We can't afford to keep the promise of Leave No Child Behind.

We passed, on a bipartisan basis, something called the America Competes Act. I wish to congratulate my colleagues. This was a great bipartisan effort. I know the Senator from Tennessee, Mr. ALEXANDER, was a real champion of that. It focuses on math and science and technology and investments in the future. I wish we had seen those investments fully authorized, fully funded in the President's budget—health research to save lives, science research, the National Science Foundation, those things that will make us competitive for the future. Every other country is racing to invest in science. We see China is racing, along with Japan and South Korea and other countries around the world, to get to that next technology, whether it is advanced battery technology research, whether it is biotechnology, whether it is new cures in health care. Yet we, the greatest country in the world, are seeing those things cut, but $15 billion a month is being spent in Iraq which is, by the way, not paid for and goes right on to the deficit for our children to pay for in the future. These priorities don't make sense. They make no sense when we look to the future.

I would like to ask the President: How about just 1 month for America? How about just 1 month? We will take 1 month of $15 billion invested to help us with jobs, keeping American jobs here, opportunity through education and innovation, helping our own families with health care, and people being able to keep their homes. How about just 1 month for America?

This debate we are having on the floor about Iraq is incredibly important on so many different levels, and that is why I appreciate Senator REID bringing us to this point. There are other pieces of this that we are committed to addressing such as a modern GI bill. My father went to school on the GI bill after World War II. We ought to be doing the same thing for our returning veterans. It will cost some dollars. Are we going to hear once again: Well, we can't afford it. We can't afford to invest in our veterans. I hope not.

The reality is there is a great connection between what is happening now in terms of filibustering our effort to move forward, to change direction in Iraq—one more time, one more filibuster—and what we want to do next, which is focus on the incredibly serious housing crisis in America. There is a connection because we are saying that not only are we not doing the smartest thing to keep us safe from a strategic, from a national security standpoint, we are also using dollars—precious dollars, taxpayer dollars—in a way that is actually making us less safe at home by undercutting our ability to have a strong economy, strong families, to support those who are in the middle class, who are trying to work hard to get into the middle class, struggling to stay in the middle class. The majority of Americans find themselves in great jeopardy right now on a number of fronts. This is the time they look to their Government to play a role to help create opportunity, to be able to make strategic investments here at home that will make sure we can continue to have the American way of life of which we are so proud.

So this matters. This matters. I am looking forward to the time when we are going to change that direction in Iraq, and I hope it comes soon. I hope we are able to say to our men and women who are on their third or fourth redeployment now: Job well done. Thank you for your service. You can come home now. Hopefully, they will come home to a veterans system that works for them, that they will come home to a GI bill of rights that creates a way for them to have opportunity, that they will come home to an economy that works for them and their families. That is our goal. We are going to keep focusing on this issue until we create that change.

I yield the floor, and I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MCCASKILL). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KYL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE SURVEILLANCE ACT

Mr. KYL. Madam President, yesterday, I inserted into the RECORD a couple of items. I wish to speak to them briefly now.

The primary item was a letter that had been sent to the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee by Attorney General Mukasey and Admiral McConnell, the Director of National Intelligence. It was a letter that tried to explain the problems we are having in gathering intelligence on terrorists as a result of the lapse of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act provisions, the so-called Protect America Act.

What we are debating right now is a resolution that focuses on when and how we should leave Iraq. Presumably, the next resolution we will be debating focuses on developing a strategy to fight al-Qaida. Most of us appreciate the fact that the best way to deal with terrorists, the very first thing we should do is to have in place a good intelligence-gathering capability, primarily in understanding the communications that terrorists are having with one another abroad.

The reason that is the No. 1 part of a strategy in dealing with terrorists is that unlike a war in which we are fighting an enemy with uniforms representing another country, these terrorists are shadowy characters who live anywhere in the world, who travel all around, who get together in cells every now and then and plan some kind of activity which is designed to terrorize, whether in London or Spain or Malaysia or the United States or wherever.

In order to fight the terrorists, we first want to understand what they are up to and then prevent it from occurring.

If we are having to react to a terrorist attack after it has occurred, we are in a very bad situation.

We created the Department of Homeland Security, and we have a lot of different plans and procedures for dealing with an attack after it has occurred. But in many respects, then it is too late.

So in this war against these radical Islamists, these terrorists who would kill anywhere they can and target innocent people, the very first thing we want to do is to be able to have good intelligence on that activity.

We collect intelligence in a variety of ways, but in modern times, one of the best ways to collect intelligence is by intercepting communications. There are a variety of means by which that is done. One of the things the Congress did was to develop a law that provides protection to American citizens and others to ensure that this intelligence collection does not impinge on our civil rights. We do not want to have the Government eavesdropping on us, and that is appropriate for us to ensure.

The problem is, because technology has outpaced the law back when it was written in the 1970s and technology now enables us to do electronic intercepts against foreign targets through some very sophisticated and new means, the law that set up the process for getting approval to do that takes far too long, it is far too complicated and, in fact, the bottom line is it just plain does not work. It is ''paperwork in an electronic era'' kind of comparison.

So the President came to the Congress and said: You have to get a new way of doing this activity that enables us to utilize this new technology we have to intercept these communications. And last August, we passed the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, the FISA law—it has another acronym, Protect America Act—which enables us to utilize this new technology and also, importantly, to provide that the telecommunications companies that work with us do not have to worry about somebody suing them because they are helping the U.S. Government collect intelligence.

The law we passed had two problems. No. 1, it expired after 6 months because some in the Congress felt they wanted to take another look at it; and, secondly, it did not have liability protection for these telecommunications companies for the previous work they had done for us. It was only for the work going forward. The telecommunications companies essentially said to the U.S. Government: We are not going to continue to do this work for you unless you can ensure we are not going to get sued and that the lawsuits that are currently pending go away.

I am oversimplifying. The lawsuit said: You shouldn't have done what you did because the U.S. Government shouldn't have been engaged in this kind of surveillance.

That is not the fault of the telecommunications companies. They were simply doing what the Government asked them to do. They were a volunteer to provide their services, their very essential services, to help us collect this intelligence. As with any other volunteer, you should not get sued just because you stopped to help somebody along the side of the road who got hurt in an accident. The same thing is here. The Government asked them to volunteer their services to help collect this intelligence, and they should not be sued. But lawyers being what they are filed some lawsuits, and those lawsuits need to go away.

The President said: When you revise the law and pass it in February of 2008, make sure you have liability protection not only going forward but also for the suits that have already been filed. Sure enough, the Intelligence Committee in the Senate, by a bipartisan vote of 13 to 2 or 12 to 2—but a very strong bipartisan vote—agreed to extend the law for another 6 years and add the retroactive liability protection, precisely what is needed.

However, when the bill was sent over to the House of Representatives, the House Democratic leadership said: No, we are not going to take this up and promptly went on the recess that we just got back from, a 12-day period in which Congress was not in session. During that period of time, the law lapsed and General Mukasey and Admiral McConnell in this letter made it clear that during that period of time, we lost intelligence that could be very meaningful to us. We don't know whether it is or not because we lost it. We could not collect it. But the kind of intelligence that we have been collecting under this program has been very helpful for us to know what these terrorists are up to so that we can prevent attacks.

We are now in a situation where we are not able to commence certain intelligence gathering. In addition, and perhaps more important in the long run, we have not done anything to solve the problem of these lawsuits, the retroactive liability, with the result that, as they write in this letter, the telecommunications companies are becoming increasingly concerned about their ability to continue to help us. They are all responsible to their shareholders, and their shareholders do not like to see their company is getting sued. It reduces the value of the company. It creates problems and costs. When they try to do business with other companies, the other companies say: Wait a minute, are you involved in these lawsuits? If so, we don't want to enter into a new contract with you.

They work with companies all over the world. A lot of these companies are concerned that American telecommunications companies are going to have this kind of exposure, and they don't want to get involved in it.

It can hurt business substantially, as a result of which some of these companies have conveyed to our intelligence community their distress, anxiety, and concern about continuing to participate in this program.

Fortunately, through negotiations, according to this letter, companies are still working with us. They are still participating, but without them we have no program. This is not something the U.S. Government can do on its own. This is something that only works if all of the companies that provide our telecommunications services are working with us.

So we have to act pretty soon or we could well be in a situation where the very companies that are critical to the operational success of this program decide that discretion is the better part of valor on their part and they are just not going to be able to continue to help us. At that point, we have lost one of the most important intelligence-gathering operations in this war against terrorists.

I want to go back to the days following September 11, 2001. There was a lot of finger-pointing. A commission was established to try to figure out what went wrong. There were a lot of areas identified where we should have known better, and had we done things differently, at least potentially 9/11 could have been prevented.

We found that the FBI and CIA were not talking to each other, and the Justice Department had constructed a sort of wall between the two, even within the FBI itself which prevented one hand from communicating to the other very important information. In fact, there is information relating to a couple of terrorists that, had they been able to talk to each other, might well have resulted in these terrorists being picked up in the United States, people who were directly involved in the 9/11 attack and, at least theoretically, could have been prevented had they been able to communicate with each other.

The bottom line is, retroactive, after 9/11, we could have been doing more but did not. That report was very critical of the Congress, of the administration, of the intelligence community, of the FBI, CIA, and others for not doing everything that could have been done to prevent 9/11.

If there were to be, God forbid, another terrorist attack on the United States and the commission that is inevitably going to study what happened would look at the days prior to that event in the Congress, what they would find is a House of Representatives that is sitting on its hands, that is unwilling to take up the Senate-passed bill. That bill passed with 68 Senators voting yes, obviously Democrats and Republicans voting yes, a very strong bipartisan bill. The President says he will sign it. He said we need it. The intelligence community says we need it.

Now it has been 2 weeks, and we don't have a law that enables us to engage in this intelligence collection.

What happens if before we get that law there is an attack or even an attack after that based upon communications of terrorists that we could have intercepted but didn't because we didn't have the means to do it?

There is going to be a lot of finger-pointing, and rightfully so. The Senate said we are going to do our part, we are going to pass this law so there are no gaps in our intelligence collection.

The House of Representatives continues to sit on its hands. What will it take to get the House leadership to take up the Senate-passed bill and send it to the President for his signature? I hope it doesn't take another terrorist event.

This debate we are having about our policy in defeating al-Qaida and how Iraq fits into that is part of an overall debate about our approach to the war against militant Islam, the terrorists who strike innocent people. As I said in the beginning, the most important thing that we can do in starting our effort in the war is to have good intelligence. In this case, the best offense is not going to war in some foreign country, not bombing somebody, but finding out what these bad actors are up to and preventing them from putting their plans into effect.

Partially because it has been quite a long time since 9/11, and partially because it is not possible to talk about some of these events because they are highly classified, the American public probably is not as aware as it should be of the kind of activities that go on every day. What happens every day is that there are all over the world thousands of would-be terrorists meeting, planning, communicating, training, and, in some cases, carrying out their intentions engaging in terrorist activity. And because we have had good intelligence collection, much of which is done through this electronic interception of communications, we have been able to stop specific terrorist attacks. Some of these are chronicled by the communications from the Attorney General and the Director of National Intelligence. Some are laid out in reports from the CIA and other unclassified reports—just to mention one: an effort to blow up elements of the Los Angeles Airport, LAX. There are others. I have kind of forgotten which ones are classified and which aren't, so I am not going to describe any more. But the reality is, it is going on all the time, and only by good intelligence can we find out in advance and then either infiltrate the cell, work with our counterparts in another country to round up the bad guys, or perhaps, if the plans haven't gotten to the execution stage, use our knowledge to gain additional information to track other terrorists. In any event, at some point, when it looks as if the plan may be about to be executed, either we or our allies have to come in and arrest the individuals so that the attack doesn't occur. But we can't do that if we don't know what they are up to.

It is unfortunate that a lot of the information about how we collect intelligence has gotten out, but it is fortunate that we have companies in the United States that are willing to cooperate with their Government because they are in a position to help the Government intercept these communications. It just happens to be because of the way the modern telecommunications technology now works.

We should be doing everything we can to protect these volunteers, in effect. They have relied, in good faith, on the representations of the Government that the President had the authority to engage in these operations and requested their services. This is not my conclusion, this is the conclusion of the Senate Intelligence Committee in its report on the legislation we passed. It pointed out that it had examined the record and found these communications companies had, in fact, acted in good faith. So there is no reason for them to be subjected to lawsuits. Unless those lawsuits go away, it is quite possible that one by one the companies that are assisting us are going to conclude that it is not in their financial best interests to do so and that, as much as they would like to, they are simply not in a position to continue to be able to do so. That would be disastrous for our intelligence gathering.

So, as I said, the fix is the legislation that passed the Senate. It is a good bill. It reauthorizes this program for 6 more years and adds the one important additional element, and that is the protection from liability.

It also adds some additional civil liberties protections, by the way, for Americans abroad. One of our colleagues, Senator WYDEN, had inserted the provision that adds an extra layer of protection for an American who might happen to be abroad and find himself or herself a target of some of this interception because of a call made to the individual or that individual making a call to somebody else who is under surveillance and so on. It is a rather rare occurrence, but we have provided protections so that a warrant would have to be obtained in that circumstance, and Americans' civil liberties would be protected.

So no one should be under the assumption here that somehow or other reauthorizing this law lets the Government loose to begin spying on people. Believe me, there is so much information out there which we don't even have the time or the ability to check out that we are not going to go out of our way to spy on people on whom we have no reason to spy. This is simply a matter of trying to identify those instances in which known terrorists, or people who affiliate with these terrorists abroad, are communicating with each other.

By the way, importantly, if that communication comes into the United States, we want to know whom they are communicating with here because that could be the late stages of an operation. That could be an indication that there is an element embedded in the United States—a terrorist cell, perhaps, that is ready or at least is in the process of planning to engage in some kind of attack.

So these are the kinds of things we need to know about and which have protected the American public since 2001. It is no accident that America has not had an attack on our soil since 2001. It is also no accident that, frankly, the number of attacks in other places around the world is far less than would have been the case had we and these other countries not had in place good intelligence-gathering operations and good cooperation, I might add, among our intelligence services once we find out something that needs to be acted upon.

So as we debate these resolutions that focus on getting at al-Qaida—our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are insistent that we should be focusing our efforts not on extraneous aspects of this war against terrorists but

on al-Qaida—I simply say to all of you that focusing on al-Qaida means first and foremost getting good intelligence on what they are up to. In today's modern world, that cannot be done without a reauthorization of this law that enables us to collect this telecommunications intelligence. That is not going to happen unless the bill passes and is sent to the President. Every day that goes by that the House leadership sits on the legislation we here in the Senate passed and doesn't send that to the President is another day of vulnerability. It is a day in which we will never get back the intelligence we might have collected.

This is not something where we can catch up. It is not something where it is not doing us any harm. As General Mukasey and Admiral McConnell pointed out, it is lost information forever. That telephone call we might have communicated is not going to happen again. Now, maybe a subsequent call will, but we will never have the benefit of the communication that occurred yesterday or the day before or later on today because we don't have the ability to engage in that collection.

I can't think of anything more important to our national security than getting this legislation adopted. It is one of the reasons we agreed with the majority leader's cloture petition to debate this question of how we should be focusing our effort on al-Qaida, because we wanted to ensure that the American people understood what is at stake here and understood what is at risk by the House of Representatives not taking up and passing the Senate legislation on intelligence collections abroad.

Madam President, I hope the House leadership will take this up quickly, will get the bill to the President so that he can sign it into law and Americans will once again be protected by the most advanced techniques and technologies we have.

I see my colleague from Tennessee is here, our distinguished conference chairman, and I will relinquish the floor so that he may speak. I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Arizona, and I appreciate his remarks. I agree with his sentiments.

I might start with that. I thought the Congress got off to a pretty good start this year. The President and the House of Representatives agreed on an economic stimulus package. All of us had different ideas about it, but the President and the House agreed on something, sent it over here, and we had what I would call a principled debate about it—a disagreement over whether to spend $40 billion more on it than the House-passed legislation, and the Senate objected to that. That was dropped. Then we passed it, sent it to the President, and he signed it. That spirit of having a principled argument, resolving it, and helping the American people got us off to a good start. We did the same thing on the FISA legislation Senator KYL, the Senator from Arizona, just described. He was a major force in that. That was a principled debate as well.

Samuel Huntington, the distinguished Harvard professor who is the former president of the American Political Science Association, says that most of our conflicts in our democracy are conflicts between or among principles, with which most of us agree—for example, liberty and security. Each American has a right to liberty, each American values security, and we debated that here for nearly 6 months, from August through today: If we are going to intercept communications from terrorists overseas calling into this country, under what conditions may we do that and still respect our traditions of liberty? Security versus liberty. Differences of opinion.

The Judiciary Committee got in the middle of it. The Intelligence Committee was in the middle of it. In the end, the members of the Intelligence Committee produced a piece of legislation by a vote of 13 to 2, a bipartisan piece of work they believed respected liberty and security—and after a good debate here on the floor of the Senate, nearly 70 Senators agreed. That is about as well as you can do in the Senate when you have a major difference of opinion. And off that went to the House of Representatives.

Well, if what happened here was an example of what Americans like to see from their legislators, what happened in the House of Representatives is not what Americans like to see.

What I think most Americans want to see in Washington is not that we always agree. I mean, this is a debating society. It is the Senate. The issues are here because we don't agree, in many cases. So we have these debates on liberty versus security, for example, and then we resolve them. We show that in the end we resolve them. That is what people like.

Then it goes over to the House of Representatives. And let me put it in the words of some Tennessee folks last week. I was in Tennessee last week when the Senate was out of session, and the most frequently asked question, the most frequently made comment went something like this—and I will paraphrase, but just a little bit:

Senator ALEXANDER—someone in the back of the room at Ashland City might rise and say—I have a question for you. How is it that the House of Representatives has time to investigate baseball, has time to play politics with the White House staff members, has time to take a 10-day vacation, but doesn't have time to deal with an intelligence bill?

And I had to say to them: I am disappointed with what happened in the House of Representatives because it did so well with the economic stimulus package that I thought we were off to the kind of start the American people would have agreed with.

So I believe most Americans understand that the failure to deal with the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act legislation means this: It means fewer surveillances. It means fewer companies and individuals willing to cooperate with our Government in overhearing conversations between those who would destroy us when they call in to our country to talk about it. And it means we are less safe as a result of that.

My hope would be that we can deal with this Intelligence bill quickly and promptly. The House of Representatives is certainly capable of that. There are good men and women there. We recognized that when we basically adopted the House's economic stimulus package, with minor adjustments. Some Senators said: Well, the Senate ought to have a lot to say about that. Well, we—most of us in the Senate—are rarely guilty of an unexpressed thought, that is true, but it is not a bad idea for us also to recognize wisdom and good ideas when they come from the other part of the Capitol. We saw in the economic stimulus package some wise decision making and, for the most part, adopted it, with some amendments.

My hope would be that the House of Representatives would do the same with the Senate's 68-vote decision on the Intelligence bill. My understanding is that there is a majority of Democrats and Republicans in the House of Representatives today who agree with the Senate bill and who would vote for it if it were brought up. If they will do that, that would be very helpful.

I see the Senator from Oklahoma is here. Would he like to make some remarks between now and 4 o'clock?

Mr. INHOFE. Yes, I would.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I would like to take 4 or 5 minutes to say a word about William Buckley and then turn the floor over to the Senator.

Mr. INHOFE. Would the Senator yield? I would like to know what the regular order is here.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is no order.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I ask unanimous consent that following my remarks, the Senator from Oklahoma be recognized for 15 minutes.

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

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY, JR.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, the news came today that William F. Buckley died. For most Americans, that brings back a lot of memories. Since the early 1950s, he has been synonomous with public television. ''God and Man at Yale'' was an important book, even though he was a very young man when he wrote it. And William F. Buckley's style, his choice of words, his manner of speaking, and his unfailing courtesy have set an example for debaters of important issues in this country for more than half a century.

In 1984, a couple of years after I had been a guest on ''Firing Line,'' which

was William Buckley's television show, I sat next to him at a dinner. It was a Howard Baker fundraising roast in Washington, DC. William Buckley was the master of ceremonies.

I wrote about that visit in a little book I put out after I was Governor called ''Steps Along the Way.''

''When do you write?'' I asked him.

''Anytime,'' he replied. ''Books are about the only thing I write in a methodical way. I do them in Switzerland, after I ski, between about 5:30 and 7 p.m.''

I told him that when our family had visited Chartwell, Winston Churchill's former secretary said that Churchill sometimes dictated 5,000 words in a night.

Buckley was surprised. ''I can do 1,100 or so in a couple of hours,'' he said, ''Sometimes more, maybe up to 2,800 words at a time, but 5,000 would be a very productive night. With the advent of computer technology I can know exactly what I do each time I write. For example, my last book took 112 hours.''

''When do you make corrections?'' I asked him.

''I do that in about thirty minutes the next morning, before I go skiing.''

''You mean that you finish off the last day's work so you can be ready to start when you return from skiing?''

''That's right. Then I send the transcript to five friends. When the transcripts come back, I put the five edited versions side by side and decide what changes to make.''

''What about your columns?'' I asked him.

''How long do they take to write?''

''You mean after I get them in mind?'' He said.

''Yes.''

''About twenty to thirty minutes. Westbrook Pegler once told me it took him eleven hours to do a column.''

''Do you make changes?'' I asked him.

''No.'' Said William Buckley.

''I've been doing it for nineteen, no, twenty-two years. I know the rhythm, the internal consistency of the column. I have it down. I don't change it. That would be like asking a jazz pianist to change his improvisation.''

That was William Buckley in 1984. He was a pianist. He really preferred the harpsichord, the clavichord. He told me he played Bach because you played what you loved the most. He loved music. He loved talking. He loved people. He loved his family. He was, of course, a wonderful conservative leader. He changed the way many Americans thought about our Government and our society. And he always seemed to have the right thing to say.

In 1996, after I had competed for the Presidency, I was at some dinner. He walked all of the way across the room. You never know what to say to someone who has lost an election. It is kind of like what do you say to someone at a funeral? But he walked all the way across his room and put his hand on my shoulder and said: That was a noble thing that you did. That has always struck me as the one of the nicest things anybody has said to me after having lost an election.

So I will miss William Buckley. So will our country. So will the conservative movement. My family and I send our condolences to the Buckley family. We know they are proud of his life. They will miss him. I am glad to have these few minutes on the Senate floor to remember William F. Buckley's contribution to our public life.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. I understand I have 15 minutes. I might wish to take a little bit longer than that. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for as long as 30 minutes.

Mr. DOMENICI. Reserving the right to object, I was supposed to be recognized next on our side. I was not going to speak long. I had rearranged an appointment.

Mr. INHOFE. You go ahead. I want to hear everything you have to say. Let me suggest that after the Senator from New Mexico, at the conclusion of his remarks, I be recognized for up to 30 minutes.

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

The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. Madam President, might I say to the Senator from Oklahoma, I greatly appreciate what you have done. I thank you very much.

I have always been in complete support of our troops who risk their lives every day to defend the United States of America. I voted for every dollar requested to fully fund our troops and against every effort to dictate the tactics of war from the Halls of Congress.

However, last year I began to express my concerns about the deteriorating conditions in Iraq and called on the Iraqi Government to do more and to do more quickly. I pointed to benchmarks laid out by the President and Congress that had a great deal of resonancy to them and that were rather unanimous in terms of support.

These were benchmarks on the ways that the Iraqi Government could and should move its country forward. I am glad to say that since General Petraeus took charge in Iraq, conditions have improved and the benchmarks have been met. I am glad to say that since General Petraeus took charge in Iraq, conditions have improved.

Iraq's different sects are working together. There has been a renewed spirit of reconciliation among Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds. A debaathification law has been passed. Iraqis are taking an interest in their own safety and security, forming neighborhood watch groups and looking out for each other.

There is no question, I know there are some who would not like to admit the facts, but the facts are the facts. Things have changed since last year in Iraq and they have changed for the better. I have briefly outlined how it happened and who made it happen.

There can be no doubt that the military hero of this war is General Petraeus. There can be no doubt he carries a heavy burden on his shoulders now to see if things can be wrapped up in a way that is good for the Iraqis, good for the entire Middle East and obviously in many ways would vindicate America's activities and what we have done there.

Iraqis are taking an interest in their own safety and security. They are forming neighborhood watch groups and are looking out for each other. One thing, and this kind of disturbs me, is that much of the information which I have to get, because I am not able to go to Iraq, is to talk to our own Senators who have been there. Because even though things have changed, Baghdad is safe, we just are not getting the coverage from the press of the United States or the press of the world that the change deserves. Because everybody in America should know what I am saying in this speech.

The very simple fundamental things that have happened have happened since General Petraeus set about with his approach that he told the country about. He named it. He told the President about it, and he did not ask for too much in order to exhibit and exercise his leadership.

Moreover, an Iraqi Army brigade recently deployed itself for operations against al-Qaida. Partially because of these efforts, there is less violence in Iraq now than when the insurgency began.

The Iraqi Government has passed an amnesty law for the country's Sunnis. Many said it would never be done. It was. The Government has further passed a budget—maybe we will not even pass ours this year, but they passed theirs for $50 billion for 2008. That is a compromise between the Sunnis, the Shiites, and the Kurds. They were able to sit down and solve their problems, their budget problems, and to pass a budget.

That is truly significant and truly different and obviously indicates that things have changed for the better. Oil revenues are going to Iraq's provinces to fund reconstruction efforts. That is another one everybody said would never happen, they will never be able to reach agreement on that. They have.

Even the New York Times has noted progress in Iraq, reporting that the newly passed legislation in Iraq:

> Has the potential to spur reconciliation between Sunnis and Shiites and set the country on a road to a more representative government, starting with new provincial elections.

That is something when the New York Times would choose to say that. They have not covered it very well, but at least the words I read are words found in the New York Times, which would clearly indicate that even they, they of little faith and they of quick judgment on the war in Iraq, had to say what I have quoted.

Now, I am proud to be here today to note this progress, the progress of the Iraqi Government, because it is the progress of the Iraqi people, the people whom we went there to help.

It is their progress, their victory, their win. Yet we are proud it was led by an American who has apparently an exceptional capacity in these areas, the areas that festered and caused these people to remain far apart until the last 18 months.

They have made significant, notable progress in the past 6 months and are on the right path to a stable and secure Iraq. General Petraeus and our soldiers deserve our thanks, our thanks and support for their efforts in Iraq and in the larger global war on terror.

I yield the floor and thank my friend once again for yielding to me.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. I understand my friend is here wishing to speak. I have a quick unanimous consent request.

I ask unanimous consent that at 6:30 tonight, all postcloture debate time be yielded back and the motion to proceed be withdrawn; the Senate then proceed to the cloture vote on the motion to proceed to S. 2634; further that the time until 6:30 p.m. be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the final 20 minutes equally divided between the leaders, with the first half under the control of the Republican leader and the final 10 minutes under the control of the majority leader.

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

Mr. REID. Madam President, for all Members, we will have a vote at 6:30 tonight on the second Feingold piece of legislation. Following that, if cloture is invoked, of course, there is 30 hours on the motion to proceed. I have had a number of conversations today with the distinguished Republican leader. He and I will discuss later this evening and tomorrow how we are going to work through the rest of this week. My goal, as has been indicated a number of times over the last 24 hours on the Senate floor, is to make sure that sometime this week we are on the housing stimulus package, and we will do that. We will see if we can do it with an agreement rather than running out all the time.

As I indicated earlier today, I think the debate on this Iraq legislation has been good. My friends on the minority side think the war is going great. We have some concerns on this side.

Just in passing, I had a meeting in my office about an hour ago. We have a wonderful facility being built in Las Vegas, a performing arts center. It will be wonderful. It will be like the Kennedy Center. They have raised all but $50 million of this $475 million project. I told those who were assembled: This is about the same amount of money being spent in 1 day in Iraq, the $420 million, the money they have raised.

It has been a good debate, a good discussion. I think it is good that the body spend some time on this very important issue. One thing that has been quite good, and I commend Senators on both sides, is it has been a very civil debate. We have a significant disagreement on the situation in Iraq, but we have had a good debate. The American people should feel good about the discussion. It has been very tempered and dictated by actual feelings on both sides.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, let me echo in part the majority leader's comments with regard to the process. As he has indicated, we will have a vote at or around 6:30, and then he and I tomorrow will discuss how we move forward on the housing issue. It would be our intent to either get to a vote or get on, based upon a consent agreement, that subject matter no later than sometime at a civilized hour tomorrow.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the time at 5:55 today—Senator MCCONNELL and I have from 6:10 to 6:30. Senator FEINGOLD has asked that he be recognized at 5:55 until we speak.

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

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I would like to take a little longer view of what is going on right now in the war for the liberation of Iraq, the good things that are happening, the surge, and kind of go back to give a better perspective as to how we got here in the first place.

There was this euphoria that was going around back in the early 1990s: The Cold War is over, we don't need a military any longer. They talked about such things as the peace dividend at that time, and this is what precipitated 9/11. The Clinton administration came in, and this is the amount of the actual DOD budget at that time. This was the baseline. This is a very simple chart that tells us a lot. If we were to merely have maintained the level of defense spending as it took place in the last year of the Bush 1 administration and then had nothing except the inflation rate, which wasn't all that great, it would be this black line taking us up to fiscal year 2001. This was what would have happened if we didn't do anything else. But down here the red line indicates where President Clinton made his budget request. That was his annual DOD request. If you forget about the middle line, the difference between his request and if we just maintained the same position that we were in in fiscal year 1993, it would have been $412 billion less; in other words, in that short timeframe, we would have cut defense real spending in constant dollars by $412 billion.

The Congress didn't let that happen. This middle line, the green line, is what actually was budgeted. So what we did was to say to the White House: You are not taking good enough care of our military needs. And so we raised it by about $99 billion over that period. That means the real shortfall was $313 billion in that timeframe.

I show this chart because there was an attitude in this country at that time that there weren't any real serious problems. People kept saying we were the world's greatest superpower, and we appropriated more money than anyone else. I wanted it to continue that way, but there were some things that were going on that I would like to remind us of. That was called an acquisition holiday or a peace dividend. I think it was more of a holiday in leadership at that time. International terrorism took to the forefront as bin Laden began his war against freedom. Afghanistan was used as a training ground for terrorists, and the Taliban regime allowed al-Qaida unfettered mobility. We were on holiday. We were not fighting back. They took advantage of this in some major attacks.

Somehow I think the memory of the American people isn't very long because they forgot about these attacks that were taking place. Remember the first attack on the World Trade Center was in 1993, February 26. It was a car bomb that was planted in an underground parking garage below the World Trade Center, and that was way back in 1993. In 1996, the Khobar Towers, we remember that well. They were bombed by Hezbollah with the intelligence pointing toward al-Qaida, still al-Qaida. At the same time this was going on, in northern Africa their presence was visible at that time. Further on down in southern Africa we had the Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. That was in 1998. That was in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi. It went unanswered at that time. So we had all of this going up through 1998.

Then there is the year 2000, when suicide bombers used a boat to attack the USS *Cole* while it was moored in Yemen.

Yemen is right at the horn of Africa on the other side. And now we know that as the squeeze has taken place, that has become a very prominent place for al-Qaida and for the terrorists. So you had Djibouti, we were starting to put troops in there, but we had that suicide bombing. That was a major thing. It let us know, it reminded us that we could have a ship, the USS *Cole* at that time, and have nothing but just a little outrigger going out there and blowing it up and causing the deaths and the damage that took place.

The response—this was back in the first of the Clinton years—was pretty benign. It was restrained and at best inconsistent. Operation Infinite Reach included cruise missile attacks against Afghanistan and Sudan. There was no real change. The administration was distracted at that time. This inadequate response has been cited as a factor emboldening al-Qaida to undertake further plans. Yet we continued on our holiday at that time. In Operation Restore Hope, we became embroiled in Somalia, and we remember what happened in the streets of Mogadishu when finally the people woke up when they saw the naked bodies dragged through the streets. President Clinton directed U.S. forces to stop all actions except those required in self-defense, and we withdrew from the country shortly thereafter.

It is kind of hard for America to get in the habit of withdrawing. We stake out our position, and we have historically stood strong and carried it out. In

1999, as a NATO member, the United States became involved in a bombing campaign against Yugoslavia and a subsequent U.N. peacekeeping force. The holiday that we were on at that time ignored the rising threats against our national security, mortgaged our military, leaving a bold challenge for the next administration.

The first Rumsfeld confirmation was rather enlightening because what we did at that time was to try to determine what our needs were going to be for the future. We had to rethink where we were before. And at that time we were trying to reevaluate where we were. We were recalling some of the bad things that had happened. We remember so well the 1991 Persian Gulf war. There was a group that went over, a bipartisan group. I remember Tony Coelho at the time. He had been the Democratic lead in the House. I was in the House at the time. We had the first freedom fight, and we sent a group over to Kuwait. It was the day that the war was officially over. The problem was the Iraqis didn't know that the war was over at that time, and so we had the first freedom fight. We went over there.

Al Haig, I ran into him the other day. We kind of relived that experience we had over there. We had with us a very special guest. He was the Kuwaiti Ambassador to the United States. He had his daughter. They were a family of nobility. They had a palace on the Persian Gulf. But, of course, they hadn't been there because that was a war zone, that was Kuwait. So we went over there, this group of nine of us, Democrats and Republicans, and I remember when the wind shifted, the oil fields were still burning. It was a mess over there. But they wanted to go back, the Ambassador wanted to go back and see what their house looked like, if it had been damaged in the war.

When we got there, we found that his house had been used for one of Saddam Hussein's headquarters. His daughter, she was either 7, 8, or 9 years old. I remember so well because she wanted to go up and see her bedroom and the dolls and all of that. We went up into this mansion on the Persian Gulf, a beautiful place, only to find out that her bedroom had been used as a torture chamber. There were body parts stuck to the walls. I saw a little boy who had his ear cut off, maybe 6 or 7 years old, because they found him carrying a tiny American flag. That was back at the time when unconscionable murders were taking place where Saddam Hussein, after that was over, started killing anyone who was suspect and torturing them to death. There are stories documented that people would beg to be dropped, lowered into vats of acid head first so they would die quicker.

Being put through grinding machines, like you are shredding documents; the open graves; the documentation of weddings that were for a while taking place—many of them outdoors; that is the way they did it over in that area—and Saddam's sons, at that time they were alive and the regime was in there, they would go through and bust up weddings and rape all the girls and take them and bury them alive. I actually looked down into those open graves, and people were so quick to forget what a monster he was.

I have often said, even if that had not happened, even if we did not have the problems with the terrorist activity in Iraq and the fact that they were training people in Iraq to be involved in terrorist activity—al-Qaida was very prominent—that even if that had not been the case, how could we as a country allow the hundreds of thousands of people to be tortured to death in such a cruel way? I do not think we could. Certainly, we could not if people had a chance to see it.

So the time went by, and they started talking about, of course, going into this liberation movement in Iraq.

Now, there has been a lot of discussion over the years about weapons of mass destruction. Those of us who were over there—I would say to you, Madam President, that while I have not been this many times to Iraq, I have actually been in the area 27 different trips—27 different times. Sometimes it was at CENTCOM, sometimes the Horn of Africa and other areas. But, see, the terrorist activity and the war was not just in Iraq. It was in the whole surrounding area. So in all those times I was there, I had a chance to, on a firsthand basis, see what was involved.

We know we had to go in there. We know we had to go in there and finish what had been started in Iraq.

Now, there are three things that were started. No. 1, we had to liberate Iraq from a tyrannical leader—we have already talked about him—No. 2, eliminate a safe haven for terrorists and their training camps; and then, No. 3, to help the Iraqi people create a free and democratic country strategically located right in the Middle East where we have the greatest needs.

Well, No. 1, the liberation of Iraq: After the first Persian Gulf war, I told you, we had what we called the first freedom flight into Kuwait. But that liberation was necessary to put an end to Saddam Hussein's regime of torture.

Now, when they talked about weapons of mass destruction, yes, weapons of mass destruction were not found. We know they were there. They were used on the Kurds in the north. Saddam Hussein used weapons of mass destruction to painfully murder thousands of his own people using gas that burned them alive. That was happening. But, nonetheless, for those of us who were aware, that was not the real reason.

If you look at the second reason, that Iraq was a major terrorist training area—a lot of us are familiar with Samarra and Ramadi, but some have forgotten or may have never even known about some of the other areas.

Sargat was an international terrorist training camp in northeastern Iraq near the Iranian border, run by Ansar al-Islam, a known terrorist organization. Based on information from the U.S. Army Special Forces, operators who led the attack on Sargat said: It is indeed more than plausible that al-Qaida members trained in that particular training camp.

Now, one of the interesting places where this was taking place was a place called Salman Pak. In Salman Pak they had—and I think it is still there to this day—on the ground an old fuselage of a 707, and that was used to train people on how to hijack airplanes. I have often wondered if that could have been where the perpetrators of 9/11 got their training. I have no way of knowing. We never will know. But we do know this: That location, along with the problems in Sargat, had major training areas for the terrorists. So we were able to shut those down. I would say this: That alone would be enough motivation for us to go and liberate the people of Iraq.

But the third one is to help the Iraqi people create a free and democratic country. Iraq is trying to do what we tried to do 230 years ago. They are risking their lives, as we risked our lives some 230 years ago. They are seeking a constitution, a parliament, freedom, and democracy. These are things they are trying to accomplish.

I think of that first election that took place out in Fallujah, when the Iraqi security forces were going to vote. I was there. I was in Fallujah actually for all three elections, I believe. But I remember the Iraqi security forces in that first election. Everybody remembers the purple fingers so they could identify who was voting in those elections. And these guys—the security forces—went out and voted the day before the elections. They did not wait for the elections. They were doing it the day before so they would be there on election day to provide the security.

People were risking their lives to go out and vote. We know the cases of people being attacked by the terrorists to keep them from voting. They were easy to identify because of the purple fingers. But these guys were gladly going in there at that time, going to vote, and then returning the next day to protect our people who were there.

Our men and women serving in Iraq are providing the Iraqis the same inspiration our forefathers provided us. Iraq is becoming an example to the world of how to reject terror and confront those who practice it. The world sees now the Iraqi citizens are realizing their potential, signing up as Concerned Citizens, sons of Iraq—72,000.

It is a pretty amazing thing when you look and see that instead of the mass graves and all these things, you are seeing a mass participation in Iraq. They are returning to normalcy now. A lot of people are asking: Is the surge really working? I do not believe anyone is out there who can conscientiously deny that the surge has worked.

It was about a year ago that General Petraeus went in. What happened? Three things happened. One was that

Petraeus—by far, the greatest guy for the job out there; and I do not think anyone except moveon.org disagrees with that now—that Petraeus took over. Secondly, the surge, in certain strategic areas, increased in numbers. But the third thing that happened was there have been so many resolutions like the one that is before us right now that I refer to as ''resolutions of surrender'' that got the attention of a lot of the religious leaders.

I often draw a distinction from my own personal experience. I have met with the political leaders, of course, like all the other Members who have gone over there. I have done it more because I have been there more times. But the religious leaders are the ones who have the greatest impact on what is going on in Iraq. Up until—and this is a statement no one has refuted—up until about a year ago, our defense intelligence people would attend and monitor the Friday night mosque meetings that took place throughout Iraq. These are with the clerics and the imams, the religious leaders. Prior to that time, 85 percent of the messages that were preached, I guess you would say, in the mosques were anti-American. To my knowledge, there has not been an anti-American message given from a mosque in Iraq since last April because they realize if we leave, then the terrorists will move in.

So that is why we are getting—it has been talked about by many people on the Senate floor—the attitudinal change. The neighborhood watch programs—in my hometown of Tulsa, OK, we have a neighborhood watch program. We have them in Washington. They have them over there, with private citizens who have the courage to go out without any arms and confront terrorists; where they can, through their own intelligence and sheer numbers, determine where there are RPGs and IEDs that are not detonated, and then they identify them by little orange paint cans, where they draw a circle around there, and then we can go in there and detonate these and save many lives.

Well, we are today experiencing all that help. I can remember when our troops who were working out of Baghdad would come back to the Green Zone every night. They do not do that anymore. They go out and they actually bed down and live with the Iraqi security forces and their families, develop intimate relationships with them. It is a totally different thing there altogether.

I can remember there was not a way in the world you could walk through the markets in Baghdad. The last time I was there, I walked through, and I intentionally did not take anybody with me except an interpreter because I did not want to give that image that you have to have armed guards and all that, and I remember stopping and talking to people. I like to single out people who are holding babies. They have this love for us that they did not have before.

So we now see these changes that are taking place. We see that basic economics is taking root and Iraqis are spending money on Iraqi projects. Iraqis are taking back control of their country. We are helping the Iraqi people create a free and democratic country where representation and the rule of law are replacing coercion and terror.

The Iraqi Parliament has passed legislation that reforms debaathification. They have enacted pension reform that allows former Baathists to collect their pension. They have enacted laws defining provincial and central government roles and responsibilities to delineate what each person is supposed to do—the distinction between the police and the security forces, what their functions are, what their missions are.

They passed a 2008 budget. They did it sooner than we did it in this country. They enacted an amnesty law that could lead to the release of thousands of detainees, removing a stumbling block standing in the way of reconciliation.

More than any previous legislation, these new initiatives have the potential to spur reconciliation between Sunnis and Shiites and set the country on the road to a more representative government, starting with new provincial elections.

Now, in the future, where do we go from here? Our Nation has paid, and continues to pay, a heavy price. People in this Chamber have talked about the heavy price. They are right. It is not cheap. It is very expensive. We have paid a heavy price in dollars and lives, with our sons and daughters and brothers and sisters. We are doing a difficult thing. But just as Americans have always tried to do the right thing, we are doing the right thing in Iraq.

Iraq is at a decisive turning point in their journey toward democracy. The fight in Iraq is not about today or tomorrow but about many tomorrows to come and about the future. It is about our grandchildren's grandchildren and the world they will live in.

It is not just Iraq. Right now, a lot of concern is taking place as to Iran and Ahmadinejad and some of the political leaders and the things they are promoting. One of the greatest obstacles they have in Iran is they are right next door to Iraq, and there are so many people who share family members, and they are looking over wistfully and seeing that people are getting married without the disruptions, that girls are actually getting an education. This is not the Iraq they knew before. So these things are happening.

Secretary Gates said:

> If we were to withdraw, leaving Iraq in chaos, al Qaeda almost certainly would use Anbar province . . . as another base from which to plan operations not only inside Iraq, but first of all in the neighborhood and then potentially against the United States.

Al-Qaida is not the only threat to America and our ideals. I mentioned a minute ago Ahmadinejad. He said, on August 28, 2007—just a short while ago—

> Soon, we will see a huge power vacuum in the region.

Now, what he was talking about is the type of resolution we are considering right now. He is saying a cut-and-run resolution would create a huge power vacuum. What else did he say? He said that expecting this defeatism, expecting that we would vote for this—which we are not. We are not going to vote for this resolution. We know that. We have had the same resolution voted down 71 to 24 the last time we had a vote on it. But, nonetheless, he said: ''Of course, we are prepared to fill the gap. . . .''

So you have Iran filling the gap that would be there if we were to get up and leave in the victorious moments we are having now.

Iran's nuclear work continues, including recent doubling of their enrichment of uranium, which could easily be used as part of a nuclear weapons program, a decision in the hands of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

In the last 2 years Iran has continued to develop ballistic missile technology, launching missiles over 2,000 kilometers.

Coalition forces have intercepted Iranian arms shipments in Iraq, including materials that are used to make explosively formed penetrators, the EFPs, the most deadly of the IEDs, which are being used against American troops. This is what Iran is doing today.

Coalition forces have also detained Iranian agents in Iraq. A lack of a secure and stable Iraq means instability in the Middle East and a clear avenue for terror and oppression to spread. Instability in the Middle East will continue to spread, as it already has, into Africa, Asia, and Europe, and ultimately find its way to our shores.

We know what is happening right now in Africa. I know probably more than some of the others do, because I have seen firsthand. I have sat down and talked with such Presidents as President Museveni in Uganda. I have talked to Prime Minister Meles in Somalia—in Ethiopia, and many of the others, including John Kufuor in Ghana, all about the threat they face of terrorism all throughout Africa. In our infinite wisdom here, it was our decision a few years ago to go in and help the Africans build five African brigades, so that as this moves into their area, they are able to fight off terrorism without using our troops. We have such programs as the 1206, 1207, and 1208, where we are arming and equipping, training and equipping programs for these countries. These are things we are helping them do so we can avoid having to be on the front lines of the battle against the terrorists. They can do that too.

Patrick Henry said:

> We shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations, and who will raise up friends to fight our battles with us.

That is what is happening over there at this time.

So the coalition forces have been doing a great job, and right now we are observing the successes of the surge. They watch with great interest as defeatist legislation is repeatedly brought up on the floor, hoping that Congress will do what they cannot: give them victory in Iraq and the Middle East. So we must not try to micromanage our military. One of the two bills that is on the floor right now would actually micromanage it. It is as if we in our infinite wisdom in the Senate are smarter than General Petraeus, General Odierno, and all of the professionals. Yes, I was in the U.S. Army many years ago, so I have some hands-on experience in this type of thing, certainly not that of the professionals. The worst thing we can do is try to micromanage our military and place restrictions on them, telling them how many troops they should withdraw and what our troop strength should be over there, and at the same time anything we do over here, the enemy knows we are doing it also. Our professional warriors want to and can succeed with our support.

That is what this is all about. I have no doubt in my mind we will defeat these things. In a way, I am glad Senator FEINGOLD brought these bills to the floor, because this gives us a forum to talk to the American people about things they may not be getting in the media. It is interesting that it used to be when I went over to Iraq, the first thing the kids over there would ask me is why doesn't the media like me. They don't talk that way anymore. Even people who were anti this administration, people such as Katie Couric, went over and observed what is going on. Once you go and observe, you can see we are winning, this is working, and this liberation is taking place.

I know my 30 minutes has expired, but we are here to continue what we have started. The worst thing we could do right now is to take success out of the hands of the military who are successfully winning the liberation of Iraq and start to micromanage this politically from the Senate floor. This isn't going to happen. We are winning over there now. It is so refreshing, after all these years. Yes, it has been a long time. People keep reminding us this is longer than World War II. I know that, because each year I have had an opportunity to spend time over there, quality time, and see the changes that are taking place via the plan of this genius named David Petraeus, it is working. So we don't want to get in their way, and we won't get in their way, and we will go ahead and defeat these bills and let the military run the liberation as they see fit, and we are going to join them in our victory.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, I know we are on a 30-hour postcloture period dealing with a piece of legislation related to Iraq. I want to speak about something else today, but let me at least begin by describing a somewhat different view.

The fact is, Saddam Hussein was hung until he was dead, hung by his neck, and this brutal tyrant is dead. I suppose most of us wish that Osama bin Laden had been brought to justice, but it is Saddam Hussein who has been brought to justice in the country of Iraq. He is dead. The Iraqis have their own Constitution because they voted for it. The Iraqis have their own Government because they voted for it. The American taxpayer has spent $16 billion training 350,000 police and soldiers in Iraq for security purposes. Now the question is: Do the Iraqis who have been trained for police protection and security—both in the police force and as soldiers—do they have the will to provide for their own security? If they do not, this country cannot do it for any great length of time.

We have been in Iraq for almost 5 years. Some day we are going to leave Iraq. The question is not whether; the question is when and how. The American people are not going to have us in Iraq for 10 and 15 and 20 years. That is not the case. We are spending massive amounts of money, about $16 billion a month. Last year the President asked for more than $190 billion in emergency funding for the war. That is $16 billion a month, $4 billion a week.

It is time we begin to understand we have needs here at home, to begin taking care of things here at home. We are spending money on hundreds of water projects in Iraq. We are spending money on road-building in Iraq. We are spending money on health clinics in Iraq. Yet we get a President's budget sent to us saying we don't have enough money for those things in our country. We will dramatically cut water projects in the United States. We will cut back on all of these investments in the United States, even as we are making those substantial investments in the country of Iraq.

My point is that at some point we are going to have to bring American troops home. We can't keep doing as the President suggests, and that is spending emergency money by sending soldiers to Iraq and putting this on top of the debt so that when those soldiers come back from Iraq, they can help pay the debt. That is not the right way to approach what is happening in the country of Iraq.

All of us want the same thing for our country. We want our country to succeed. We want our country to confront and defeat terrorists. Yes, we want Osama bin Laden. Osama bin Laden is the person who heads al-Qaida. We are told by the Director of National Intelligence that he is safe and secure in northern Pakistan. There ought not be one square inch on the face of this Earth that is safe or secure for those who murdered Americans on 9/11. Yet more than 6 years later, this administration has not brought the leader and the leadership of the terrorist organization that attacked our country to justice. That is a failure, in my judgment, and it is a failure that results from taking our eye off the ball and having too few troops in Afghanistan and allowing Osama bin Laden to escape through Tora Bora, and then invading Iraq and committing ourselves to that over a lengthy period of time. The result is the greatest terrorist threat—according to the National Intelligence Estimate, the greatest terrorist threat against our country at this point is the leadership of al-Qaida. They are in a safe and secure haven in northern Pakistan. It seems to me that 7 years after 9/11, that has to be considered a failure. My hope would be all of us would engage in ways that begin to devote our attention to the greatest terrorist threat facing our country, and that is, as the National Intelligence Estimate says, the leadership of al-Qaida. They are recruiting and building new training camps and strengthening themselves even as we are tied down in the country of Iraq spending $16 billion a month.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for 15 minutes on another subject.

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

MEDAL OF HONOR FOR WOODROW WILSON KEEBLE

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, this is a picture of a man named Woodrow Wilson Keeble, a Sioux Indian. Woodrow Wilson Keeble died 26 years ago. If you take a look at this soldier's medals, you will see two Bronze Stars, a Silver Star, the Distinguished Service Cross, the second highest medal given in our country, and Purple Hearts.

I want to tell my colleagues about Woody Keeble, a big man, well over 6 foot, and well over 200 pounds. On Monday of next week at 2:30 in the afternoon, at the White House, President Bush will present the Medal of Honor to Woody Keeble. As I said, he has been dead for 26 years. His wife Blossom Keeble died last summer. We had hoped this would be done before his wife died, but that was not to be the case.

I want to tell my colleagues about him because it is so unusual that a Medal of Honor will be presented posthumously to a soldier who demonstrated great acts of courage and heroism in both the Second World War and the Korean war.

He was a Lakota Sioux born in Waubay, SD, and grew up in Wahpeton, ND, and lived most of his life there. He was wounded at least twice in World War II and three times in the Korean War. Let me describe what he did so that my colleagues will know why he is being given the Medal of Honor all of these years later.

In World War II Woody Keeble served with the famed 164th Infantry Regiment of the North Dakota National Guard. Shortly after joining in 1942, he found himself on Guadalcanal, in some

of the most aggressive and dangerous hand-to-hand combat in the Second World War. He was in combat in the South Pacific until the war ended. He saw a great deal of combat. One of his fellow soldiers said the safest place to be was next to Woody. Woody earned a Bronze Star and Purple Heart in the Second World War. Woody was an unbelievable soldier.

Then the Korean War came along and at age 34 this Lakota Sioux Indian signed up again. He said: Somebody has to teach the kids how to fight. So he went to Korea. He was attached to George Company, 2nd Battalion, 19th Infantry Regiment of the 24th Division. They were near the Kumsong River in North Korea in October of 1951. He was the acting platoon leader of the 1st platoon of ''G'' Company. Casualties were very heavy. Because the company's officers were killed, he ended up in charge of the 1st Platoon, the 2nd Platoon, and the 3rd Platoon. It was brutally cold in North Korea at the time, and the enemy, the Chinese, were entrenched on a hill with a rugged cliff, and the side of that mountain was a very difficult thing that the U.S. troops had to take.

So Woody Keeble, in charge of these three platoons, made three attempts to take that hill from the Chinese. The Chinese had three machine gun nests on top of the hill and soldiers in trenches defending that hill. Three times these platoons, with Woody leading them, went up the hill, and three times they were repulsed and rejected, with heavy casualties.

After three attempts to take that hill, Woody Keeble decided he would try it by himself. With grenades and a Browning Automatic Rifle he crawled back up the hill to the Chinese positions. Witnesses said he crawled through very heavy machine gun fire and through a blizzard of grenades. Woody Keeble scaled the hill, went around the pillboxes and knocked out all three machine guns by himself and then cleared out the trenches between them. When he returned they extracted 83 pieces of shrapnel from his body—83 pieces of shrapnel. But he wouldn't leave the battlefield until all of his men were on top of the hill and in a defensive position and only then would he allow himself to be evacuated.

Right after the engagement all of the surviving members of G Company signed a letter putting him in for the Medal of Honor. It got lost and never got from the battlefield to the Pentagon. They did it a second time a month later and it too never got from the battlefield to the Pentagon.

But in this photo, my colleagues can see the medals he did get: multiple Purple Hearts, wounded five times; two Bronze Stars, a Silver Star; the Distinguished Service Cross, the second highest medal. He was a well-decorated soldier. He went to Korea to help teach those kids how to fight and it turns out he is the one who climbed the hill and saved his soldiers, knocked out three machine gun nests by himself.

Many years later the question was asked: Why was he not given the Medal of Honor? Those with whom he served began piecing together the action that day, all of those who were eyewitnesses and a part of the action on that hill in North Korea.

A woman named Merry Helm especially took it upon herself over the years to try to reconstruct Woody's story. It took a lot of time to do so. Then it was sent to the U.S. Secretary of the Army with a request that he review the original request that had never been received at the Pentagon that Woody Keeble be awarded the Medal of Honor.

The Secretary of the Army looked into the case and decided that Woody Keeble had indeed earned the Medal of Honor. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs agreed.

But then all the people involved were informed that there is a 3-year statute of limitations on the request for a Medal of Honor. The Secretary of defense could only consider Woody's case if that statute of limitations was waived.

At the request of those who had worked on it, I and my colleague from North Dakota, Senator CONRAD, and our colleagues from South Dakota, Senator JOHNSON and Senator THUNE, introduced legislation on an appropriations bill that waived the 3-year statute so the Secretary of the Defense could look at this case and decide.

The Secretary of the Defense began evaluating what happened on that hill in North Korea on a cold day when Woody Keeble was a real hero. He eventually decided, having looked at all the information, that, indeed, this Lakota Sioux Indian who served this country in two wars, was wounded five times, deserved the Medal of Honor. He sent it to the White House with the recommendation that the President approve the Medal of Honor.

This coming Monday, at 2:30 in the afternoon, I will be at the White House witnessing a ceremony at the invitation of the President in which the President Bush will present a Medal of Honor posthumously to a really remarkable, courageous American soldier named Woodrow Wilson Keeble, the only Sioux Indian ever to have received the Medal of Honor, someone who served this country with unbelievable courage and distinction and valor.

After the Korean war, he came back to Wahpeton, ND, and worked at the Wahpeton Indian School much of his life. He suffered multiple strokes, suffered significant health problems, and died 26 years later.

The moment won't pass without some notice because the President is making a presentation on Monday. However, I wanted to say something here on the floor of the Senate so those who read the RECORD of the Senate will understand this was an extraordinary American.

We are hearing a lot of discussion these days about the bill on the floor of the Senate dealing with Iraq and about who stands up for soldiers, who cares about American soldiers. The fact is, every single person in this Chamber cares about American soldiers and wants to support them, understands that they get up in the morning in some parts of this world—in Iraq especially—and they strap on body armor before they go out because they know there is a chance they can be killed or harmed. All of us understand what soldiers are doing for this country. I believe the one thing that unites this Chamber is we want to do right by American soldiers. The story of Woody Keeble is a story that ought to inspire all of us about what soldiers do for our country.

I have told my colleagues previously about another soldier, another American Indian. His name was Edmund Young Eagle. He was from the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe of North Dakota. He went to war. He was in northern Africa, he was in Normandy, he was in Europe. He came back and lived with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. He never had very much. He had kind of a tough life.

At the end of his life, he was lying in a hospital bed at the VA hospital in Fargo, ND. His sister asked if I would get the medals he earned in the Second World War and never received. I did, and I took them to the VA hospital on a Sunday morning in Fargo, ND. The doctors and nurses crowded into his room, and Edmund Young Eagle—who at the time I didn't know was going to die 7 days later of lung cancer. Edmund Young Eagle was a sick man but very proud that morning. We cranked his bed up to a seated position, and then I pinned on his pajama top a row of medals this American Indian had earned serving his country in the Second World War. As sick as he was, he said quietly to me: This is one of the proudest days of my life—seated on his hospital bed wearing his pajama tops with his military medals.

There are so many whose names we will not talk about on the floor of the Senate today, but I do say Woody Keeble and Edmund Young Eagle are just two of thousands—millions of American soldiers over the years who have refreshed this democracy by being willing to risk their lives.

I wanted to call to the attention of the Senate Woodrow Wilson Keeble. I am enormously proud of him and his family and his memory, and I am anxious to be at the White House on Monday when he receives posthumously the Medal of Honor.

STRATEGIC PETROLEUM RESERVE

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, I wish to make a couple of additional comments on another subject.

The price of oil is bouncing around at $100 a barrel, the price of gas is up to $3.00, $3.50, or more per gallon. There are people who kid about having to take out a loan at the bank to fill their gas tank. The question is, What is happening with oil?

Let me tell you something. In the Energy & Natural Resources Committee this year, we have had witnesses testify that there is not a bit of justification for the price of a barrel of oil to be over $50 or $65 a barrel right now. So why is it $100 a barrel? Two reasons. One is that we have unbelievable speculation, a carnival of greed, with hedge funds and speculators neck deep in the futures markets speculating on oil. We have investment banks for the first time that are actually buying oil storage tanks so they can buy the oil and keep it off the market in order to sell it later when the price is higher. There is unbelievable speculation in the futures market pushing up oil which has nothing to do with the fundamentals of supply and demand, and there ought to be a full and complete investigation. I am asking the GAO to do that.

The other issue is one that I find preposterous, and I am going to do everything I can in the coming days and weeks to stop it. Do you know that even as the price of oil is bouncing up at $100 a barrel of oil, this Government, this Department of Energy is putting oil underground for storage? We are awarding royalty-in-kind contracts to companies to take oil out of the Gulf of Mexico and instead of them selling the oil and putting it into the supply to put downward pressure on price, we are putting 60,000 barrels every single day underground in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Having the Strategic Petroleum Reserve is fine. Save it for a rainy day, save for our security, put some away—I understand that. But why would you do that when oil prices are $100 per barrel? The Strategic Petroleum Reserve is 97 percent full, and we are taking 60,000 barrels per day and sticking it underground? That is preposterous. Toward the second half of this year, the Department of Energy will be putting approximately 125,000 barrels per day underground. There ought not be one additional barrel go underground at that point. It ought to go into the supply.

I used to teach a little economics. I understand supply and demand. If you decrease supply, you increase price. It is just a fact. So this administration, by taking this royalty-in-kind oil from the Gulf of Mexico and sticking it underground into the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, is pushing up the price of oil and gas.

In fact, we had a witness in the Energy & Natural Resources Committee who testified that the Department of Energy is taking light, sweet crude off the market to put into the SPR. That is a subset of oil, a much more valuable kind of oil. One witness said just that amount—sticking it underground by this administration could have increased the price of oil by as much as $10 per barrel. What is our Government doing increasing the price of oil by 10 per barrel? What do they think? Does somebody have their wires crossed someplace, and could they please see if they can figure out maybe with some common sense what they ought to do when oil is $100 a barrel, and that is stop putting oil underground and put it into the marketplace so we put some downward pressure on gas prices?

I introduced legislation that puts an end to this practice. I am chairman of the appropriations subcommittee that funds the Energy Department's programs, including the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. I say to the Secretary and to those who made this decision: One way or another, I am going to win on this issue. We are not going to allow you to continue to stick oil underground when the price of oil is $100 a barrel and the price of gas is ranging up between $3.50 and $4 a gallon. We are just not going to allow you to continue to do that. This Congress is going to use some common sense and say stop it.

Mr. President, that was therapeutic to say. My hope would be that at some point soon I will have a chance to offer that amendment, and we are all going to have a chance to vote on it. I will insist we vote on it. I believe this Congress is going to tell this administration to stop it, use a reservoir of common sense; don't stick oil underground when it's $100 per barrel. Put it into the supply, and put downward pressure on the price of oil. How about standing up for the American people and American drivers? Let's do that.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Madam President, is there any prearranged agreement on the speaking order?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is an order that the Senator from Wisconsin will be recognized at 5 minutes to 6. There is no other sequence.

Mr. BROWNBACK. I see my colleague from California. I would like to speak for a few minutes. We are shortly coming to the hour. I don't know if we have been alternating back and forth.

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I only need to speak for less than 10 minutes, if I may, because I have been sitting here for a very long time.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Madam President, the time of the agreement says at 5 o'clock the Senator from Wisconsin gets the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. No, at 5:55.

Mr. BROWNBACK. At 5:55. I thought the Presiding Officer said 5 o'clock. I will be happy to yield. I ask unanimous consent that after the Senator from California speaks, I be allowed to speak and then my colleague from South Carolina be allowed to follow me.

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

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I thank my friend and colleague. I will be brief because the message I have is a pretty straightforward message; that is, it is time for a change in Iraq. It has been a long time coming. We have been there 5 years, longer than we were in World War II, and it is time for a change in Iraq. It is time for a good change. What does that mean? It means that it is time for the Iraqis to stand up and fight for themselves.

We know the violence there continues. We know that 15 percent of that violence is being perpetrated by foreign fighters, al-Qaida, and the rest—85 percent—is Iraqi-on-Iraqi ethnic violence. If the Iraqis are not ready to stop hurting each other and blowing each other up, if they are not ready to give that up, then we need to be ready to start pulling our troops out. It is pretty clear to me after 5 years that all our presence is doing at this point is acting as a recruiting tool for al-Qaida. Because we have this open-ended commitment—some on the other side are talking about 50 to 100 years—there really is not anything on our side to exert that leverage on the Iraqis. They are not fulfilling the benchmarks in the Government that this administration said they had to do.

Here we have a situation where we have now lost 3,972 fighters on our side. Twenty-one percent of those were either born in California or were based in California. 29,275 Americans have been wounded, some of them grievously wounded, many more have traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress. The suicide rate is off the charts.

There is no way out. There is no plan. There never has been a plan. It seems to me this open-ended commitment has to stop, and the Feingold bill essentially says we are going to have a very responsible withdrawal. There is no end date, but we are going to start it within 120 days of enactment of the bill, and we are going to shift the mission so that it continues training Iraqis.

By the way, I don't know if I mentioned this, the taxpayers of our country have paid to train 440,000 Iraqis.

We are spending $10 billion a month. That leads me to my final point of why I wanted this time this afternoon.

We have to start looking at what this is costing us. I say it is time for America. We are shortchanging our children. We need to provide health insurance to many of our children. To provide health insurance to 10 million uninsured children for 5 years would cost us what it costs for 5½ months in Iraq. To enroll all eligible 3- to 4-year-olds in Head Start for 1 year would cost us 3 months in Iraq. To enroll 2.5 million kids in afterschool programs—and, boy, do I have a feeling for that one because I worked with Senator ENSIGN to set up the first afterschool program, and it has been shorted. For 7 days in Iraq, we can enroll 2.5 million kids in afterschool programs for 1 year.

What else can I tell you about the funding? We are shortchanging America's workers. We can immediately replace structurally deficient bridges in the United States and create more than 3 million good-paying jobs for 6½ months of the cost in Iraq. Don't you think our workers deserve it? I do.

We could extend 13 additional weeks of unemployment insurance to the

chronically unemployed workers in high-unemployment States. One month in Iraq.

We could help an additional 1 million families keep their heat on this winter through the LIHEAP program. One day in Iraq, Madam President.

My colleagues come here and they have no end in sight for Iraq. Open checkbook for Iraq. Iraq in the morning, Iraq in the afternoon, Iraq at night, Iraq for 20 years, 50 years, maybe 100 years, as one Senator said. We can't afford it anymore.

OK, let's look at what else we could do. For those people like myself who care about homeland defense, for 6 weeks in Iraq we could ensure full interoperability of all our communication systems. Our firemen could talk to our policemen, who could talk to our sheriffs, who could talk to our hospitals, who could talk to our Red Cross. Six weeks in Iraq. We could provide first responders with 3 million communications devices for 1 month in Iraq. We could provide firefighters with 12 million breathing devices for 1 month in Iraq.

Finally, if you care about America's environment, as I do, and many of the people I represent do, we could extend renewable energy production tax credits for 4 years. We could do those tax cuts for investments in renewables for 3 weeks in Iraq. For less than 3 days we could erase the Superfund backlog. And for less than 1 day we could triple the Energy bill authorization to train green-collar workers.

The American people have got to connect the dots here. We can't take care of our own. We can't take care of our kids. We can't do what we have to do for our workers. We can't do what we have to do for our businesses. We can't do what we have to do for our environment. And the reason is, our priority right now in this government, because of this administration and their friends in Congress, is Iraq in the morning, Iraq at 10 o'clock in the morning, Iraq at noon, Iraq at 5, Iraq at night, and we ignore the needs of our people.

There is a time and a place to say to a country that is independent, after all we have done for it: Enough is enough. We trained 440,000. We put our American lives on the line. Our brave soldiers have done everything asked of them and more. They allowed three elections to be held. They got Saddam Hussein, they got Saddam's family, and they found there were no weapons of mass destruction. They did everything we asked them to do. And the Iraqi Government takes tiny little steps, baby steps forward, while we continue having our soldiers die and get wounded and our taxpayers have an open checkbook.

My people come and say to me: Why can't we do more for our kids? Why can't we do more to protect our environment? Why can't we do more for our workers and our businesses? Why can't we do more to protect our people by investing in homeland security? I am now telling them the truth: Because the money is floating out of here straight to Iraq.

And by the way, a lot of it is not accounted for—$9 billion missing in cash that was sent. The administration shrugs its shoulders: Oh, well, we don't know much about it. Scandals in contracting, embassies that are larger than the U.N. complex. Some of the Iraqi people call it GW's palace. I was in Saddam's palace, and I will tell you something. That was not a happy feeling because that is not something that we want to replicate, huge buildings like that, fancy. How much does it cost? Almost $800 million. It was supposed to cost $592 million. It doesn't matter, it is in Iraq. Open the checkbook and write the checks, says the President, the Vice President, and their friends in Congress, who are coming here and saying: No, no, no, every time we want to finally begin to bring this war to a close.

Well, I have to tell you, I am ready for change, my constituents are ready for a change, and right now the Feingold legislation is responsible because it says we will keep troops there to protect our forces. We will slowly start bringing them home. We will redeploy them and have all the money we need to responsibly do that. And we will go after al-Qaida.

I voted to go to war against Osama bin Laden. What happened to Osama bin Laden dead or alive? Oh, no, this administration turned around, went into Iraq, and as a result, we are not safe. Al-Qaida has reconstituted itself, and we are shortchanging the American people.

I thank Senator BROWNBACK for allowing me to go first, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PRYOR). The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from California for her comments. I respect her thoughts and her opinions and her consistency of position. I disagree, and I will articulate why on that.

Mr. President, we have been arguing and debating on Iraq for some period of time, since we have gone to war, which we did on a bipartisan basis, and aggressively decided that this was an important strategy to pursue together. We did that 5 years ago. We have invested a lot of time and energy and life and blood and limb from this country.

I was with a young man from Wichita, KS, yesterday who has a prosthesis on the bottom right of his foot. He was pleased to serve in Iraq. He doesn't like it that he has lost his foot, but he wants us to win and he wants us to see it on through.

So here we are, 5 years later, a lot of investment, particularly of people and lives, and it would seem as if a fair number of people now in this body would say: OK, we have done it long enough, let's quit. Let's pull on out and let's hope it all works out.

I don't think that is a responsible strategy. If I am hearing the people who have served there right, they want to see it through. They want to see us win, and they want to see us get it done right. They want to see us be able to bring a democracy that can stand on its own—certainly not perfect, but one that can stand on its own in that region of the world. And they don't want to see us lose the investment we have made to date. And we have made a heavy investment. They don't want to see us walk away from it and say: OK, we didn't get it quite the way we wanted to. They do not want to see us walk away at such a point that the soldiers or the foreign fighters follow us back here and we see another 9/11.

The bottom line is the safety and security of the young people we have talked about so much. We want to keep this place safe and secure. And one of the best ways to do that is to keep on the offensive.

Mr. President, over the last few years, and particularly this last year, we have debated a lot of Iraqi resolutions, and they have all failed except one. One resolution has passed. It is the one I want to talk about. It is the one I did with JOE BIDEN, the Biden-Brownback resolution on devolving power and authority in Iraq. We voted and voted and voted last year. Nothing passed but this one. And because of it, what we were talking about is the model of devolving power and authority, a federal system, in Iraq.

I have met with Iraqis since that period of time, and a number of them have challenged and questioned: OK, is this really the right way to go? We don't want to see the country broken up in three parts.

I say: We are not talking about breaking the country up in three parts. We have 50 States, and we are one country. We are talking about three or five states or regions there but one country. You devolve power and authority from the center so it is not just one group, a Shiite-dominated central government that is dictating to a Kurdish, Sunni, Shiite country. Let's devolve that power and authority out. That passed. That passed.

Now, what has happened since that has passed on the ground? Well, we are seeing nice progress actually taking place, political progress at the local and provincial levels is happening. We saw recently the Iraqi Parliament pass a legislative package—three bills together. They did something we do here often. You can't get one bill through, you can't get two, but three you can somehow get a coalition enough to pass it through. That is what they did, establishing the 2008 budget, clarifying provincial powers, and then offering amnesty for Sunni political prisoners, all three very important.

That middle one, clarifying provincial powers, is a key one. I talked with one of the respected scholars on this, Michael O'Hanlin, on the phone today. He is one of the authors of the federalism approach in Iraq. We have a

military strategy that we are taking advantage of today that is providing political space, and he believes we need to devolve authority and power to the regions. You are seeing that now taking place legislatively by the central body in Iraq, clarifying provincial powers.

As I was talking with Mr. O'Hanlin, and also in my own thinking, we recently mostly talked about regions, and he is saying: Well, whether it is a region or a province, it is devolving of power and authority, and it is happening. And it is a good thing to get that out of the centralized area. What is allowing that to take place is more local governance. It is allowing people, whether they be Sunni or Kurd, or Shiite, or in a mixed area, to be able to solve more of their own problems rather than being dependent upon the central government that may have a bit of ideology or edge that you don't agree with, as happens around this country at times where people don't agree with what happens at the Federal Government, but they are wanting that decision to be made at the State level. That is starting to happen in Iraq. And it is diffusing some of the powder keg.

Now, we are far from solving this, but the political space that has been granted by the military surge in the area is allowing this devolution of power and authority to happen. So we now have clarifying provincial powers taking place. The laws, as I mentioned, are not perfect, but they are giving this power and authority out to the regions. We are now seeing political progress at the local and provincial levels, and that is driving some of the politics at the national level. None of that could happen without security at the national level in Iraq, without U.S. troops there on the ground. Iraqis can gain stability by continuing to decentralize and move more power closer to individual Iraqis.

I believe provincial elections later this year will accelerate the importance of local politics in Iraq, and that is what we want to take place because what we were seeing coming together was Shiite against Sunni, and the Kurds sitting in the north refereeing from time to time but other times staying off to their own and saying: Look, we are just going to sit up here and hope someday we will be able to have a nation and let those two guys fight. But now, instead, you are seeing this going down to Sunni councils and Shiite councils, and in some cases mixed neighborhoods.

You do continue to see an ethnic move in neighborhoods, particularly in Baghdad, and some going more Sunni and others going more Shiite in some regions or some mixed ethnic or other religious communities that exist there and some Christian populations that are there. But you are seeing it start to work because we continue to provide the security umbrella.

Now, let's take the security umbrella off. Let's have the Feingold amendment pass and send the signal to the Iraqis that we are moving out; that we are going to take care of our own areas, you take care of your own areas. What do we think at this most critical moment would happen if you pull that security piece out, the U.S. security piece out? Well, I think you would stop this move toward local and provincial. You invite more Iranian-financed problems into the region, in the hopes that the Shiite can take over and then dominate and possess all of Iraq—Sunni areas and possibly Kurdish areas as well, although they are pretty well fortified amongst themselves. You invite Sadr back in with his militia, where he just recently, for another 6 months, asked his militias to stand down.

I think you invite back into the picture at this key political moment for Iraq a bunch of forces that are going to hurt the long-term future. And so it seems to me this is a bad idea at a particularly bad time for us to pull troops out of Iraq.

Now, I had trouble with the surge at the outset. I really questioned whether it was going to work. But the surge has worked, and this is coming from somebody who was a cynic as to whether this was going to work in that region.

But that, along with the Sunnis deciding, okay, we are going to build up our region here, and these awakening councils that have taken place, along with evolving this political power and authority, and our better counterterrorism strategy. It is working. So why on Earth would we change something we have invested so much in now that is starting to produce the results we want? Why on Earth would we change that at this point in time? That does not seem to make much sense, of why you would do that at this point in time.

I am a strong proponent of continuing to devolve this power and authority in Iraq. I think it is the way forward for them, as it was the way forward for our country when we had 13 original colonies that did not necessarily agree with each other but said, okay, let us have one Federal Government, but each one of us is going to maintain our own power and authority in a number of regions. Then over a period of years, we kind of worked things out. Over 50 years we have divided power and authority to State and local, Federal Governments, and this is going to take time for the Iraqis, but they need the political space our military provides. To pull out now, or to send a signal even of pulling out now, I think would be very harmful to the long-term investment we have made. I think it would send a signal to the region that we are going to allow the Iranian influence to spread. It would also invite much more aggressive actions, even toward us, and the pursuit of us here and other places around the world.

That piece is speculation. We do not know what is going to happen in the future. But it does seem as though we are on a sort of track now that we can look to the future with some bit of optimism, whereas the other route of pulling out would certainly lead to a great deal of pessimism by the Iraqis and toward me about what we are going to be doing in providing the long-term security for the United States when we know that the terrorist objective is to attack and come after us, that you are likely to see a devolution to a terrorist state, or an Iranian-type of satellite state in Iraq if we pull out precipitously, either of which are options that I think would be completely wrong for us to do as a nation and something I cannot support.

For those reasons, I certainly would be voting against the Feingold amendment. I urge my colleagues to do that. I say, let us stick with something that is starting to work. It is not perfect. Let us stick with something on a political strategy that is starting to work. It is not perfect, but we have a model for it ourselves in the United States in our own history. It seems this would be a particularly unwise time to move off of that one bit of resolution that we have agreed upon, on political authority being devolved and to change a strategy on the military at this point in time.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. DEMINT. I want to thank you and all my Democratic colleagues for allowing me some time on the floor to discuss the progress in the war. This allows us as Republicans to contrast our position versus the position of retreating and announcing that we are giving up on Iraq.

We have heard a lot of talk here today, and apparently there is too high a pricetag for freedom. Certainly you can make an argument that it is expensive to be in Iraq, just as other wars have been expensive and deadly to our country.

World War II, the importance of that war can never be underestimated, and the price on it could not be estimated. The fact that we need to fight wars to show our strength as a nation has been proven time and time again. I am worried that the Senate is not united in the need to show strength against the war on terror.

Last year at this time, my Democratic colleagues had said that the war in Iraq was lost, and implicitly the war against terror, since the front line today on the battle against terror is in Iraq. It was announced here on the Senate floor that the war was lost, that we were in a hopeless civil war in Iraq. Since then we have had about 40 votes, or different variations of votes to cut funding, to withdraw, to retreat, sending a terrible signal to our troops and our enemies that we lack the resolve that is necessary to win this war. Whether we call it running and retreating or giving up or saying America cannot win, all of those words and ideas emanated from the Senate floor from the majority side in the past year.

Many even voted against the funds to surge the troops that has proven to be such a success over the last several months. Some of the funding as late as the end of last year was held hostage to gross earmarks that were unnecessary in a time of war. How can we talk about the war on terror being so expensive when we held those funds hostage to other things that were certainly not a high priority?

I am afraid my Democratic colleagues, at least many of them—I know this is not true for all of them, but too many clearly do not understand the threat of terrorism in our world today and what that means to our country and our freedom. Too many have forgotten the importance of a strong military and how that results in peace around the world when nations respect the power of the United States of America. But who can respect America any longer, after stating our resolve to stand Iraq up as a free and stable democracy, if in the middle of that challenge we decide to retreat and withdraw?

The very fact that we have talked about it so many times has sent a signal of weakness that has empowered our enemies and likely put more of our forces at risk. I hope this is the last time we do it this year.

Everyone has a right to dislike the war, to say it is too expensive. But our responsibility here in the Senate is much different than the average citizen. When we send a signal that we are not supporting the key mission of our military, we do much to demoralize our troops, and to strengthen the resolve of our enemies.

Again, I hope this is the last time we will do it. My Democratic colleagues cannot have it both ways. They continue to try to say they support the troops, but everything they actually do undermines them, pulls the rug right out from under what they are trying to do. It's a lot of empty rhetoric. But in the last week we have seen from the Democrats on the House side, a key essential part of our intelligence system is being threatened because we will not give the administration the tools to use our technology to intercept messages from terrorists who might be planning to attack us or our interests around the world.

I returned from Iraq a couple of weeks ago. This is my third trip. I saw a marked difference from anything I had ever seen before. The statistics have been talked about here on the floor of the Senate: The monthly attacks have decreased 60 percent since June of last year; civilian deaths are down over 75 percent in the last year; al-Qaida in Iraq remains a threat but their power and ability to do damage has been greatly diminished.

I wish to talk a little bit about the trip. I joined Senator ENSIGN and Senator TOM COBURN on this trip. Once we landed in Baghdad, we took a helicopter to a small community about 30 miles south of Baghdad. This was a community that was controlled and terrorized by al-Qaida up until about 3 months ago. You would not even go down Main Street in an armored vehicle, we were told by our troops there.

Yet we landed at an American outpost there, American soldiers were living in that community a couple of blocks from the Iraqi Army outpost where they were living in the community, and we walked out of our outpost on the main street and talked to the citizens who had opened their markets, talked to the Iraqi soldiers, and talked to the citizens who were helping to patrol the area. In this picture here I am talking with one of the local sheiks, Sheik Ali, who told us that al-Qaida only a few months before had dragged his father in front of him and shot him and killed him.

Next to him is an Iraqi soldier whom we helped to train. They are as sharp as any soldier you would expect to see. This community is well protected. Colonel Ferrell, who is in charge of the outpost, who took us down the main street, was giving us briefings and we were talking to the sheik as well as the Iraqi soldiers. They were proud to tell us what was happening there.

The sheiks and the local tribes are the key to working with the American surge and have freed much of Iraq in the last 6 months. These local leaders have turned against al-Qaida, because al-Qaida has done such damage and such brutality to their families and their communities that they are now talking with us and helping us to defeat al-Qaida in that area there.

I have another photo here. I know it is difficult to see. But we were walking down a street that was empty except for bodies a few months ago. These little markets have opened. As we walked down the street, in this case it was mostly American soldiers walking with us, except for this group—these young men in the green jackets which they called in this community the ''Sons of Iraq.'' Our military pays them to help patrol every day. When I asked the colonel, when all of these citizens came running out to us, why were they not worried about them blowing themselves up and killing all of the soldiers and us who were walking down the street, the colonel responded: Because we know everyone who is here.

A lot of these folks from the markets came out and hugged our soldiers. I tell you, I couldn't have felt better to see our soldiers so appreciated in that area, to see these young men with walkie-talkies. Their job is to patrol, to make sure if any stranger comes to the community, that they notify the Iraqi Army and the American Army so that these people can be checked out.

We saw a number of trucks with mattresses and furniture piled high, of people moving back to this little community—who had moved out months and years before because al-Qaida had run them out. We walked down several blocks. Probably 80 to 100 markets have reopened, and the people were glad to see us. They were cheerful. They feel as if they have their community back.

We have not won this war yet, but we can see everywhere we go that Iraqis are standing up and taking back their country for themselves. And our troops, along with the Iraqi troops whom we helped to train, and the Sons of Iraq are guarding and protecting their community.

I want to talk about one Marine here. This is Major Alston Middleton, who actually went to Porter-Gaud High School in Charleston. He is a Marine working in the base where we are training Iraqi soldiers. Every 3 weeks we are producing 2,500 new Iraqi soldiers who go straight from that camp to the battlefield. They are being trained with the same equipment and arms they will be using when they get there.

He is proud of what he is doing. Everywhere we went, our troops wanted to prove to us that what we were doing was necessary, it was right, it was working, and we could win it. It was important to them that we know it.

When I asked them what do they need that they do not have, the answer I got—more than any other answer—was: Do not forget us. Some of the rhetoric on this floor has sent the signal to our troops that we are forgetting them and do not appreciate what they are doing.

This Marine, away from his family, like all of the other Marines, sailors, soldiers, and airmen we see there, many of them away from their children and spouses for over a year, we know what sacrifices they are making. But I am afraid these Marines are not respected in some parts of this country. I am afraid the Democrats on the Berkeley City Council in California—and some here may say that is an isolated situation, but it is not, because they are taking their signals from what they hear right here on the Senate floor. They called our Marine recruiters unwelcome intruders. They called them thugs. They called them Bush's murderers. When you see the video and what they called our Marines, while our Marines are sweating and bleeding and dying for us and our freedoms.

What the Berkeley city council did was not freedom of speech. The protesters had their freedom of speech for months, but that wasn't good enough for them. They wanted the power of government behind them to support their point of view at the expense of the Marines and all Americans who appreciate our Marines and love what they do. We need to recognize that some of the things that have been said right here are sending a signal to people like the Berkeley city council to show disrespect for people like Major Alston Middleton, who is willing to put his life on the line for us.

I have introduced a bill we call the Semper Fi Act, named after the Marine motto, which means ''always faithful.'' It is just to rattle the cages a little bit

of the city council in Berkeley, to tell them: OK, if you want to take exception to our Federal mission there in Berkeley, certainly you don't deserve these secret earmarks we have sent to Berkeley in the last several months. But the Marines are always faithful and always have been. They are faithful to our country, to each other. We need to be faithful to them and all those who are fighting for us.

This discussion on the floor is again trying to have it both ways, that we support our troops, but then we don't. We don't support them when we don't support the very mission we have asked them to give their lives for. We can't have it both ways. We can't keep having this discussion which questions, before the whole world, the very mission we have asked of our soldiers, sailors, Marines, airmen, and Coast Guardsmen and all the civilian support staff we have in Iraq and Afghanistan and throughout the world who are fighting the war on terror. We are going to win the war on terror because of the resolve we have to be free and peaceful as a nation.

I hope we will get the message here that our troops have in Iraq and Afghanistan and around the world, that sometimes you have to fight for the freedom we have here in this country. Now is the time we have to fight. The fact that we have shown resolve in the last year has resulted in clear successes in Iraq that are undeniable. We know we can win this battle, but this battle will not be the last one. The terrorists are going to be here for a generation or more. If they are not in Iraq, they are going to be in Afghanistan or they will be in Africa. They are going to be somewhere, if they are not here, doing their terrorist deeds against the peaceful people of the world. We have to show resolve. Our enemies must know that we will never stop until we root them out and do away with them.

I also want to make one last comment because the folks from South Carolina are in so many ways very involved with the effort in Iraq. In fact, over the last several years the airmen at Charleston Air Force Base flying C–17s carry more of the cargo, supplies, and arms into Iraq than any other base in our country. This picture is one of the crews that flew us out of Afghanistan back to Kuwait on our way home. But we actually had three teams out of Charleston that moved us from Kuwait to Baghdad, out of Baghdad and to Afghanistan and back. They are proud of what they do. They wanted us to know, and me to tell you, that they believe this mission is important and that we can win it. Every day they save lives and deliver freedom.

All they need is our support, not our empty rhetoric, our real support and our belief in them and what they are doing. I came back with that belief and that resolve, that what we are doing is right. If we continue what we are doing, we will win, and we will continue to set the terrorists back on their heels and keep our country safe.

I thank the men and women at Charleston Air Force Base who are making all Americans proud as they serve all over the world on their missions.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, what time remains for our side of the aisle?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Fifteen and one-half minutes on the Democratic side.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise to talk about Iraq and Senator FEINGOLD's legislation to start bringing our troops home from Iraq. But as I stand here on this floor, I listen to one of our colleagues speak of a group out West who may have said something disrespectful and offensive about our troops and that this group may have learned it here on this floor and I feel I must respond. That is an insult to all of us who are part of this body. It is outrageous to say this group learned that here. No one here disrespects our troops. No one here wants anything but the best for them. We ought not to start off that way, as we discuss the Feingold legislation.

I wish to begin my remarks with President Bush's now infamous declaration almost 5 years ago when he announced ''mission accomplished.'' We sadly remember that day, when the President landed on the aircraft carrier USS *Lincoln* like a conquering hero, standing before a huge banner, which we see here portrayed. We remember watching as President Bush declared that day to be the end. It turned out to be a stunningly casual statement, not unlike another remark the President made when he said, talking about the enemy, ''bring them on.'' I served in Europe during World War II, and I never heard a commander invite more of the enemy to come to fight.

When the President stood there that day, the insinuation was that it was the end of major combat operations, the end of America's casualties, the end of America's role as the major player in Iraq's future. But many of us remember fearing that it was not the end.

Today, as we look at the terrible costs to our troops, to their families, to our priorities here at home, to the war against the terrorists who attacked us, and to America's standing, we realize that day in 2003 was only a beginning. When the President stood on the deck of that carrier, America had lost 139 of our troops in Iraq. As we stand here today, we have lost almost 4,000. To be exact, 3,968 Americans have died in Iraq; 102 of those troops had ties to my home State of New Jersey; 95 percent of the mothers, fathers, sons and daughters we have lost were killed in action after President Bush said ''mission accomplished.''

That mission was not accomplished. President Bush's war has left children growing up without parents and parents to grow old with no children. His war has caused nearly 29,000 troops to leave the combat theater with their wounds. Nearly 700 of them lost limbs, and many more have left with wounds to their minds. Our troops are returning home from the Iraqi desert with traumatic brain injuries and post-traumatic stress disorder, making it so difficult for them to return to their families, their jobs, and their lives.

Instead of spending $3 billion each week to wage war on education or childhood disease in America, the President is spending $3 billion a week to wage war in Iraq. Amazingly, I found someone who doesn't know that sad fact—the President's own Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Mr. Nussle. I recently asked him how much we were spending each week in Iraq, in a budget hearing. Director Nussle said he didn't know. Almost everybody in America besides him knows very well—$3 billion each and every week. It is unacceptable. It is an insult to the American people who are funding this war and an insult to our troops who are still fighting it.

The President will claim we are making military progress in Iraq and that the surge is working. But let's tell the American people the truth. America lost 901 mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers in the year 2007 alone; 2007 was the deadliest year for America since the start of the Iraq war.

More than 3,300 members of New Jersey's Army Reserves and National Guard are scheduled to deploy to Iraq this year. Just a couple of weeks ago, I went to Fort Dix, a major military base in New Jersey. I talked to people who already served there on extended tours, and they were weary. They were willing to do their duty. They respected their obligation. But their families were not happy. The people I saw, the spouses, the children were not happy about their wife or husband, or mother or father going away again. Some of them are going to get hurt, and some of them may never come home. As they do their duty with honor and bravery, they count on us to do ours.

Their deployment is a reminder that the President's surge is fundamentally flawed. His solution is built on military strength, when a political and diplomatic solution is what is needed in Iraq. Iraq, not America, needs to accomplish these goals, and we want them to do it. We want them to make it possible for us to start bringing our troops home as soon as possible. They have to do it. It is their responsibility. It is their country, and we want to end our presence there.

The surge is also a distraction from the war President Bush started in response to 9/11 but never finished. That was the war on terror.

When the President spoke to our country after September 11, he said:

> I will never forget this wound to our country or those who inflicted it.

But it appears that he has forgotten. He has forgotten about Osama bin

Laden, the man who inflicted those terrible wounds on the victims, their families, and this country. He has forgotten that the war against al-Qaida and the hunt for Osama bin Laden began and continues outside Iraq. And because we have lost our focus, Afghanistan is now spinning back toward violence and chaos.

After the U.S.-led invasion of 2001, the Taliban was down and wounded. Now it seems the Taliban is growing stronger. Over the past 2 years, southern Afghanistan has seen the worst violence since the Taliban was dismantled. Last year was the deadliest year for troops in Afghanistan since 2001. Today, al-Qaida has also found sanctuary in remote areas of Pakistan, and the Afghani-Pakistani border is so porous that terrorists flow through it like wind.

If all of this were not bad enough, just look at what the President's war has done to America's standing and prestige in the world. There used to be a time when people saw America as the moral leader, and Americans were proud of this country's standing in the world. In World War II, for example, we had strength because most of the free world was with us. Now is not one of those times. Now much of the world is against us. More than 70 percent of Iraqis disapprove of American presence in their country, and 67 percent of citizens across the globe believe American forces should leave Iraq within a year. Countries that were our allies when we first invaded Iraq, such as Italy, Poland, Spain, and Denmark, have left us in the desert. And Great Britain, one of America's greatest historical allies, sent its troops from Iraq into Afghanistan.

President Bush, why are we not so wise?

To date, the President has spent more than $526 billion on the war in Iraq. That is more than half a trillion dollars on a war that continues to take American youth, empower our rivals, turn our friends against us, and let our enemies remain on the loose.

If that cost were not unbelievable enough, the President had the audacity to ask the American people to spend even more. He has a pending request of $105 billion for the rest of 2008, and Defense Secretary Robert Gates has estimated that Iraq will cost another $170 billion for 2009. Every dime we spend on Iraq is a dime we cannot spend on our home—on homeland security for our cities, police for our streets, education for our children, and health care for our families. In fact, the President has requested just now a cut of $800 million from a critical homeland security grant program, leaving Americans more exposed to dangers at home.

It is time for us to realize it is never going to be enough money. Former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld used to say we would stand down when the Iraqis stood up. No one says that anymore.

So let me stand up and make it clear: It is time for the troops to start coming home. They have earned the right to get back to their loved ones, their kids, their spouses, and their country. I hope we will see that day in the not too distant future.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the Senate once again is debating a bill by Senator FEINGOLD, Senator REID, myself, and others to change course in Iraq. And once again, I urge the Senate to act.

This is a war started under false pretenses, waged with incompetent political policymaking that disserved the bravery and sacrifice of our fighting men and women. This is a war that now slogs on—week after week, year after year—with nothing but a ''pause'' on the horizon, and still no end in sight. The toll of American casualties rolls on, and so does the drain on the Nation's resources, heading inexorably past the hundreds of billions of dollars toward an unfathomable trillion dollars.

The war has sapped our credibility, strained our alliances, and complicated our security challenges.

Meanwhile, Osama bin Laden remains at large and al-Qaida has been given the opportunity to regenerate. The northwestern frontier between Pakistan and Afghanistan is a lawless extremist haven.

A redeployment of American forces along the lines of the Feingold-Reid measure would force the Iraqis to realize that our presence is finite. If they want to step away from the abyss, it will take real reconciliation and the will to get it done.

The Bush administration's failed policy in Iraq has stretched our military to the breaking point, diluted and diverted our efforts to counter al-Qaida and its affiliates in Afghanistan and elsewhere, and roiled the Middle East with instability. The sooner we change course the sooner we can implement a sound, sensible, and sustainable policy that truly advances our security interests.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I am pleased we have had a chance to debate S. 2633, the Feingold-Reid bill requiring the safe redeployment of our troops from Iraq. I am very grateful to the majority leader for allowing this debate and for cosponsoring this legislation. He is a strong opponent of the war, and he understands how it is distracting us from our top national security priority: defeating the global threat presented by al-Qaida and its affiliates.

While the debate on Iraq is refreshing, the Republicans still will not allow us to actually vote on the bill. In fact, if you listened to the other side during this debate, it was apparent they believe leaving large numbers of U.S. troops in Iraq indefinitely for an open-ended military mission is somehow in our country's interest.

The American people must be scratching their heads and thinking: What is it going to take to get those folks in Washington to listen to us? I can assure them—and I can assure my colleagues—we will have more debate and votes on Iraq. Members will have still more opportunities to listen to their constituents, and to listen to the warnings about the global threat from al-Qaida and the intolerable strain on our military. And they will again have to decide whether to keep ignoring those warnings and give the President the green light to continue a war without end in Iraq.

In a few minutes, the Senate will vote in relation to another Feingold-Reid bill, S. 2634, addressing al-Qaida. Before I discuss that bill, I wish to respond to some of the criticisms that have been leveled against the Feingold-Reid Iraq redeployment bill.

I am glad some of my colleagues have apparently taken the time to read the Iraq bill, but I wish some of them had read it a little more carefully, or thought a little harder, before voicing some of their concerns.

Of course, some of the criticisms come from Members who have no interest in stopping or slowing down the war. But I have even heard a few complaints from Members on our side who oppose the war. In fact, some Democrats seem to be trying a lot harder to come up with arguments against this bill, and against Congress acting, than they are trying to end the war. One or two senior Democrats are actually lobbying hard behind the scenes against the Feingold-Reid bill. That is disappointing, to say the least, and it shows us all what we continue to be up against as we try to bring this war to a close.

Let me start by pointing out that the Feingold-Reid bill does not—does not—restrict the Government's ability to go after al-Qaida and its affiliates around the globe. In fact, one of the main purposes of the bill is to ensure we have the full capability to do just that. When it comes to our troops in Iraq, however, we cannot allow this President to use the narrow exceptions in this bill to continue his misguided policies. The language in the bill has been crafted to try to ensure the administration does not—and cannot—continue to maintain a heavy military footprint in Iraq.

Specifically, the first exception in the Feingold-Reid bill allows funding to continue for ''targeted operations, limited in duration and scope, against members of AQ and affiliated international terrorist organizations.''

This provision allows operations against AQ in Iraq because fighting al-Qaida is central to our national security. But it does not allow the President to continue the current opened-ended mission because it is not in our national security interest to leave our troops on the front lines in the middle of an Iraqi civil war.

The ''limited in duration and scope'' language prohibits operations without a clearly defined counterterrorism objective, such as the current open-ended

mission. And, of course, this provision, like the rest of the bill, only applies to Iraq. It does not affect any other U.S. operations around the world. But if my colleagues are particularly troubled by this ''duration and scope'' language, I am open to discussing with them any reasonable modifications that do not open new loopholes. And this is no reason to completely block the Senate from even considering the bill. My colleagues are free to try to amend it, if they will only let us take it up.

If my colleagues think we should have U.S. troops conducting operations in Iraq against other organizations that are not affiliated with AQ, then we do, in fact, have a difference of opinion. We need to be clear about our priorities. Our top national security priority is the threat posed by al-Qaida and its affiliates. Pitting our brave men and women in uniform against groups or entities in Iraq that do not pose a direct threat to the United States is a misuse of our resources, and it is exactly that mistake I am trying to fix with this legislation.

Obviously, at all times, U.S. troops in Iraq will be able to defend themselves against any perceived threat, regardless of who it comes from. But when we are talking about planning and conducting operations, those operations would need to be targeted against members of al-Qaida or affiliates. If we cannot figure out who we are launching operations against, and if we cannot figure out how to distinguish between al-Qaida in Iraq and the many other unsavory actors in Iraq who do not directly threaten our interests, then we have a serious intelligence problem which underscores the degree to which this war is distracting us from our top priority.

The Feingold-Reid bill also allows U.S. troops to remain in Iraq to provide ''security for personnel and infrastructure of the United States Government.'' A question has been raised about whether U.S. troops could also provide security for non-U.S. coalition forces under this provision. Of course, the vast majority of foreign troops in Iraq are U.S. troops. We are the ones holding the bag there, and that is a direct result of this administration's decision to rush to war without building a strong, sustainable coalition. So raising concerns about non-Iraqi coalition forces is largely a red herring. However, I respect the contributions of those coalition troops, and I would be open, again, to discussing ways in which we can ensure they are protected without opening up a big loophole to keep a lot more U.S. troops there. Again, technical concerns such as this are no reason to block us from even considering the bill. Frankly, it sounds like an excuse not to deal with the real issue, which is our need to get out of this situation.

The Feingold-Reid bill also permits U.S. troops to be stationed in Iraq to provide ''training to members of the Iraqi Security Forces who have not been involved in sectarian violence or in attacks upon the U.S. Armed Forces. . . .''

This does not require any kind of guarantee that ISF troops receiving training have not been involved in sectarian violence or attacks upon the U.S., as some have suggested. It just requires some good-faith effort to make sure we are not assisting some of the very people responsible for destabilizing Iraq and killing Americans. That seems pretty reasonable, doesn't it? Just kind of a good-faith effort to make sure we are not helping people who have already killed Americans. One would think that was reasonable.

This should not be controversial. We have a policy as a government of not supporting militaries around the world that commit undisciplined acts of violence, and this administration ostensibly vets foreign militaries thoroughly under what is known as the ''Leahy Law.'' I do not see why we should make an exception for Iraq, particularly when the GAO and General Jones have issued reports showing that the ISF is compromised by militias. If we continue to arm and train the ISF, we may simply be contributing to ongoing instability in Iraq. At a minimum, then, we need to be careful to ensure we are not giving some of the worst actors in Iraq the tools to perpetuate further violence and bloodshed.

Oh, and by the way, we have already trained over 439,000 ISF personnel. This certainly raises questions about how much more training they need. We need to make sure the President cannot keep tens of thousands of troops in Iraq policing the civil war under the guise of ''training.''

Indeed, the ''training'' U.S. military personnel in Iraq are providing is not what is traditionally thought of as training, such as boot camp. Our training is all field training, and there is no bright line between training and joint operations.

Now, some folks here think that is fine. They want U.S. troops to continue being embedded with Iraqi troops, conducting joint operations. The Feingold-Reid bill would not foreclose all joint operations or the equipping of ISF. U.S. troops could continue to conduct joint counterterrorism operations with ISF so long as the operations target al-Qaida or affiliated international terrorist organizations. But U.S. troops could not be embedded with Iraqi Security Forces for ''training'' purposes. And the U.S. may continue to equip ISF but may not deploy U.S. troops to Iraq solely for this purpose.

Some on our side want U.S. troops to continue providing ''logistical support'' to Iraqi forces indefinitely. This, again, is a backdoor way to keep substantial numbers of U.S. troops on the front lines, performing basic combat support functions, such as providing air support. Even seemingly run-of-the-mill logistical operations can be extremely dangerous in the chaotic environment in Iraq. That is not in our national security interest, and it is not something we should permit. We need a full redeployment, not a halfhearted half measure.

I hope my colleagues will rethink their opposition to the Feingold-Reid bill. If they do have these kinds of concerns about it, particularly some of the more technical concerns I have addressed, well, let's actually allow the bill to come to the floor and let's have amendments and votes. That is our responsibility as legislators, and we owe it to our constituents and our men and women in uniform to have this debate in the open and on the record.

S. 2634

Mr. President, while we may be done debating Iraq for now, the Senate has another opportunity to support a bill that would help get our national security strategy straight. That bill is S. 2634, which I also introduced with Leader REID, along with Senators BOXER, BROWN, BYRD, CASEY, CLINTON, DODD, HARKIN, LAUTENBERG, LEAHY, MENENDEZ, OBAMA, SCHUMER, and WHITEHOUSE.

Frankly, it is a pretty modest bill. It simply requires the administration to provide Congress with a report outlining a comprehensive, global strategy to defeat al-Qaida and its affiliates, one that ensures we are bringing all of our assets to the table: military, diplomatic, intelligence, and other. The strategy must ensure that U.S. resources and assets are targeted appropriately to meet the regional and country-specific threats that we face and that troop deployments do not overstretch our military. This seems pretty straightforward. Don't we want to make sure we are correctly prioritizing the geographic threats posed by al-Qaida and its affiliates around the world? And don't we need to make sure all of our assets, including military intelligence and diplomatic ones, are properly focused on addressing those threats? Shouldn't we make sure we aren't imposing an impossible burden on our military in the process? It appears, however, that the administration is afraid of what such a strategy would say; namely, that while it is focusing its attention and resources on Iraq, the threat posed by al-Qaida and its affiliates in Pakistan and many places around the world is growing.

The DNI—the Director of National Intelligence—warned this month that al-Qaida:

> has retained or regenerated key elements of its capability, including its top leadership, operational lieutenants, and a de facto safe haven in the Pakistani border area with Afghanistan.

Yes, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, ADM Mike Mullen, testified recently that:

> The most likely near-term attack on the United States will come from al-Qaida via its safe havens in Pakistan.

In a recent report led by former NATO Commander GEN James Jones, he called Afghanistan a ''strategic

stalemate'' and warned that ''Afghanistan remains a failing State. It could become a failed State.''

So while our military and intelligence experts are saying this, the President's Iraq policies have stretched our military to the breaking point. Yesterday, the Senate heard testimony from top Army officials that the Army is under serious strain and must reduce the length of combat tours as soon as possible. Listen to what GEN George Casey, Chief of Staff of the Army, had to say:

> The cumulative effects of the last 6 plus years at war have left our Army out of balance, consumed by the current fight, and unable to do the things we know we need to do to properly sustain our all-volunteer force and restore our flexibility for an uncertain future.

These are the words of GEN George Casey: out of balance, unable to do the things we need to do.

We need to heed these dire warnings and recognize that the President's Iraq policies are unsustainable. The Feingold-Reid bill, S. 2634, would force the administration to confront that reality and to confront the dangerous threat posed by al-Qaida while our troops are bogged down in Iraq.

Unfortunately, the administration has its head stuck in the sands of Iraq. It actually threatened yesterday to veto this commonsense bill. I guess the President doesn't want the American people to know how off track we are. Well, believe me, they actually know. They have been watching over the past few years as this administration has confused the war in Iraq with the fight against al-Qaida. They want a change, and they don't want to wait another year for another President and another Congress to finally act on their concerns.

I hope my colleagues listen to them and listen to our intelligence experts when they warn us about the serious threat posed by al-Qaida in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. If they do, this bill will pass 100 to nothing, and the American people will breathe a sigh of relief that finally their voices are being heard.

Madam President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CANTWELL). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, in a few minutes we will have a procedural vote on another proposal by the junior Senator from Wisconsin, a bill that would direct the administration to produce in 60 days a new global strategy for defeating al-Qaida. But first, a word about the first Feingold bill which dictates withdrawal.

Last year's bold decision to launch a counterinsurgency plan under General Petraeus has renewed our hopes for a unified Iraq to govern, defend, and sustain itself as an ally in the war on terror. Our men and women in uniform have protected the Iraqi people, scattered al-Qaida, deterred militias, and helped to create an environment that has led to progress not only at the tactical level but in government and in reconciliation as well. We owe them all a great debt.

In September, General Petraeus outlined his plan for bringing these men and women back after a job well done and for transitioning our mission to one of partnership and overwatch. I might say parenthetically, I was just with General Petraeus's wife a few moments ago, who is at a reception here in the Capitol complex for people from the Fort Campbell area. Earlier in General Petraeus's career, he was the commander of the 101st Division of the storied Screaming Eagles who have been at the tip of the spear in both Afghanistan and Iraq over the last 4 years. General Petraeus has had three different assignments in Iraq. We are all thoroughly familiar with his current assignment, but his wife is a good soldier indeed as well, and I had an opportunity a few moments ago to thank her again not only for his contribution but for her sacrifice as well.

This reduction in forces that General Petraeus's mission has made possible has already begun, and the Iraqi people are prepared for provincial elections in October. Due to the success of the Petraeus plan, Sunnis now serving as Sons of Iraq and defending their own Nation will now have a real stake in those elections. When General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker return this April, we should listen to their recommendations to ensure that the hard-earned gains of the surge are maintained.

But one thing is already clear from the successes we have recently seen. Congress needs to stop considering this war in fits and starts and through piecemeal debates. We need to understand that our interests in the Persian Gulf and Iraq are long-standing and will not vanish because we have a Presidential election in November. We can't wish the dangers away.

This leads me to the second Feingold measure calling for a new strategy in defeating al-Qaida. We deal with global strategies and long-range plans through the national security strategy, the national military strategy, the Quadrennial Defense Review, and through the annual defense legislation. If the Senator from Wisconsin wanted to know how our global strategy to combat al-Qaida fits into the context of these reports and reviews, he might have asked the administration to produce such a document in the annual Defense Authorization Act. Also, I might suggest that one sure way of strengthening our fight against al-Qaida and other terrorists would be for the Democratic leadership over in the House of Representatives to stop blocking a vote on the bipartisan, Senate-passed FISA bill. We know there is a bipartisan majority in the House of Representatives to pass the same bill that passed the Senate by a large bipartisan majority. A good way to strengthen our efforts against al-Qaida would be to take up and pass that bill.

It would be irresponsible to cut off funds for troops in the field. We will not pass a bill that does so. But we welcome debate on the al-Qaida report because we are ready to provide all of the resources required to defeat al-Qaida, to include quick passage of the Defense appropriations supplemental, full funding of the 2009 Defense Appropriations Act, and passage of a FISA bill that will allow our intelligence community to continue to hunt terrorists.

We must also consider the full cost of our Nation's global commitments and our need to modernize our ground, air, and naval forces. We should also give the administration ample time to complete this study which should serve as a sound guidance for the incoming administration.

So we welcome a debate on how to best hunt al-Qaida and defend the Nation, and if we are to get on this bill, we will be debating amendments that make this report more meaningful.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Madam President, some parts of the Iraq war are open for debate, but there is a lot we know for sure. These are the facts: Nearly 4,000 American soldiers have been killed, 30,000 wounded, and the wounds of a third of them are very serious. We have thousands and thousands of amputees, more than 3,000 double amputees, blind, hearing loss, head trauma that will affect them the rest of their lives. I talked this morning about a returning Iraqi soldier who has post-traumatic stress disorder. He cannot work. He is losing his home. These are the facts. We still have 150,000 more troops in Iraq. News from the Pentagon is that there will be 8,000 more troops in Iraq in July than before the surge started.

GEN Colin Powell told us last year the Army is ''about broken.'' General Casey, Chief of Staff of the Army, confirmed what General Powell said. Yesterday, he said:

> The demand for our forces exceeds the sustainable supply.

General Casey basically confirms what General Powell said: The Army is broken.

The day before yesterday, on public broadcasting, there was a good report that dealt with ADM Tim Keating, commander of the Pacific Command, a huge command, and basically the whole report is how hamstrung he is in trying to do his job. He cannot do it anymore because, as indicated in the report, there are not enough resources anymore because they are all being shipped to Iraq and now some to Afghanistan. Those are the facts.

I had visiting me today some people who were so excited—Don Schneider,

who used to be president of a bank in Las Vegas and is now chairman of a board of trustees of an organization that is building a performing arts center in Las Vegas. One foundation gave as a start $150 million to the organization. They have raised $420 million. They need $50 million more for this organization. I said to him: $420 million is how much we spend in Iraq in 1 day—1 day. That is what this beautiful performing arts center in Las Vegas costs.

Madam President, $400 million a day, 7 days a week. There are not weekends off. These are taxpayers' dollars we are borrowing. There are no holidays. New Year's, Christmas, Easter—it doesn't matter, we work right through, and another $400 million of taxpayers' money is borrowed. And the number is going up, not down. The world should understand that America has done its share.

I personally dispute the wisdom of going into Iraq. I said, and I have said many times, the worst foreign policy blunder in the history of this country is the invasion of Iraq. But we are there. When is enough going to be enough? How many more days spending $400 million are we going to need in Iraq? When is enough enough? Is 4,000 soldiers enough killed? Is 30,000 wounded? How many blind soldiers do we need?

No one disputes the heroic efforts of our troops, but as I indicated yesterday, my friend—I named my son after him, and he named his son after me. He used to be a model. He joined the military. He is a helicopter pilot. He served a tour of duty in Afghanistan, and he sent me e-mails about what he was doing over there. He came home, and I had dinner with him in Las Vegas. He was being shipped to Iraq. I don't get e-mails from him anymore. I asked his dad why. He said he wants to come home. All of them should come home is what he said. So he is not sending me e-mails anymore. He thinks I might be disappointed in him. I am not disappointed in him. He is a valiant soldier.

How much more do we need to do? When is enough enough? Five years of war, I guess, according to the Republicans, is not enough. We are going to start in a few days the sixth year of this war. When is enough enough?

Back here a number of years ago—it has been 5 years ago now—I met the Iraqi Governing Council. I can remember that meeting as well as if it was yesterday. We were in Senator Frist's office. The head of the delegation from Iraq said: I know people think we have the second largest supply of oil in the world, but that is wrong. We have the largest supply of oil. We have more oil than Saudi Arabia.

Iraq is a wealthy Nation. When is there enough American blood and treasure for Iraq? Can't this wealthy nation take care of itself?

The matter on which we are going to be voting in just a few minutes is not very complicated. This bill is to require a report setting forth the global strategy of the United States to combat and defeat al-Qaida and its affiliates.

Section 1. Report on United States Global Strategy to Combat al-Qaeda and Its Affiliates.

(a) Report Required—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of Homeland Security, in coordination with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Director of National Intelligence, shall join and submit to Congress a report setting forth the global strategy of the United States to combat and defeat al Qaeda its affiliates.

That is pretty simple and direct. That is what we are voting on. That is what the legislation is all about. Why would anybody be opposed to this legislation? It is straightforward legislation.

It is clear that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are not serious about any of this Iraq legislation. They had an opportunity to talk on it. As I said earlier today, it has been a good debate. They believe there still is not enough of American blood and treasure in Iraq. I do. The American people do. Twenty-five percent of Republicans believe we should be coming home from Iraq. This is not some Democratic idea; it is an idea of the American people.

How can they object to this matter on which we are going to vote in a few minutes? How can they not vote overwhelmingly for this legislation? If they had an honest reason to disagree with a report on the fight against terrorism, that would be one thing. That is not what is going on here. This is a stall that has been going on so that we will not have the opportunity to start the debate on a stimulus package dealing with housing.

Of course, we brought up these matters, and if they were allowing us to go forward with these pieces of legislation dealing with Iraq and have amendments like, of course, what has happened—but, no, motions to proceed, 30 hours. We broke the record last year in 1 year of a 2-year filibuster plan. They broke all records, and they are at it again.

Keith Olbermann, an MSNBC anchor, says at the end of every one of his telecasts:

This is the 1,764th day since President Bush declared ''mission accomplished'' aboard an aircraft carrier. We all know the mission has not been accomplished. We all know we're not safer today than we were when we began this misguided war now five years ago. It's time to turn the page and begin to rebuild a moral authority to address the growing challenges we face throughout the world.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I thank my majority leader, Senator REID, not only for his statement but also for bringing this matter to the floor. I especially thank Senator FEINGOLD. I have been happy to cosponsor this measure.

I believe, as do many of us today, that the decision to invade Iraq was, in fact, the worst foreign policy decision of our time, maybe beyond that. We will pay a heavy price for it, but we will not pay a price as a nation as great as the price paid by the families who have lost in combat a son or daughter or husband or wife they dearly loved. Those men and women are true heroes.

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

Mr. REID. I thought the vote was at 6:30 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The remaining time is under the control of the minority.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I yield back the remaining time on this side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back. Under the previous order, the motion to proceed to S. 2633 is withdrawn.

REQUIRING A REPORT SETTING FORTH THE GLOBAL STRATEGY OF THE UNITED STATES TO COMBAT AND DEFEAT AL QAEDA AND ITS AFFILIATES—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 576, S. 2634, global strategy report.

Russell D. Feingold, Edward M. Kennedy, Patrick J. Leahy, Robert Menendez, Ron Wyden, Sherrod Brown, Richard Durbin, Bernard Sanders, Patty Murray, Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Frank R. Lautenberg, Christopher J. Dodd, John D. Rockefeller, Amy Klobuchar, Charles E. Schumer, Tom Harkin, Barbara Boxer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call is waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that the debate on the motion to proceed to S. 2634, a bill to require a report setting forth the global strategy of the United States to combat and defeat al-Qaida and its affiliates, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. BYRD), the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY), and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) are necessarily absent.

Mr. KYL. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BOND), the Senator from