Madam Speaker, before I begin, I would also like to second

what the Speaker said with regard to Leo McCarthy. He was also a member

of the National Commission on Gambling, which I was the author of. And

he came by my office a number times. And I was actually going to put

his bio in the Congressional Record. So I thank the Speaker for that

comment, and second it.

Madam Speaker, I was the author of the amendment to set up the Iraq

Study Group. I felt that more should be done to look at what we were

doing in Iraq, and so we put together a group and picked 10 people. It

was chaired by former Secretary of State Jim Baker and former

Congressman Lee Hamilton, head of the 9/11 Commission. Also

serving on it was former Secretary of State Larry Eagleberger; former

prominent lawyer, Vernon Jordan; former Justice of the Supreme Court

Sandra Day O'Connor; former Member of the House and Chief of Staff, in

the Clinton administration, Leon Panetta; former Secretary of Defense,

in the Clinton administration, Bill Perry; former Senator, and Governor

from my State, Chuck Robb; and at one time, up until the end, a month

before, current Secretary of Defense Gates, former head of the CIA.

This group was provided the opportunity to, in depth, to take a look

at what was going on in Iraq and to develop some recommendations. The

resolution that I have introduced as House Con. Res., that puts the

Congress on record in support of the recommendations of the Iraq Study

Group.

Now, here's a group that has taken 9 months to analyze extensive

hearings. Also there were 45 military and diplomatic experts, retired

and active duty, of all political persuasions, along with key

congressional leaders that came up with these recommendations. So I am

asking Members to support my resolution when it comes up next week in

support of this.

Secondly, it makes a major effort and encourages the administration

to adopt also a diplomatic effort in addition to what it is doing. We

urge the administration to engage Syria the same way that President

Reagan during the 1980s, when we were defeating communism, President

Reagan, God bless him, one of the greatest presidents we have ever had,

gave the famous speech in Orlando about the evil empires. But he was

also having his administration engage with the Soviet Union. And when

Ronald Reagan then gave his speech, saying,

Reagan also had emissaries going to Moscow to engage.

Those of us in the Congress, when we used to go behind the Soviet

Union, the Berlin Wall in the Soviet Union, during the 1980s would

always meet with the dissidents, would always attempt to meet with the

leadership of the government on behalf of freedom, on behalf of

liberty.

President Reagan was self-confident in what he believed. He believed

that to engage the Soviets was not a sign of weakness. It was a sign of

strength.

Madam Speaker, I would like to put in the Record an article from the

Wall Street Journal by Abraham D. Sofaer, who was counselor to

Secretary of State Schultz, who also explains how Reagan engaged with

the Soviets and how it is appropriate now how he would engage with

Syria.

I am hopeful and I ask all Members to support the resolution when it

comes up.