Madam Speaker, I rise to speak for a few minutes about

Iraq. Every Member of the House brings their experience with them. Mine

happens to be 31 years in the military, including leading men and women

in war. I have operated with the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of

China, entered the DMZ in North Korea, dealt with the Iranians at sea

in the Persian Gulf.

When I saw us about to go into Iraq, I was concerned. I felt it was a

tragic misadventure, not because of Iraq solely by itself, but because

of what it would do to our strategic security around this globe.

I flew with my battle group over Iraq just prior to the war, after

having left the war in Afghanistan. I have always been taken in the

military by the power of our diplomacy, the power of our diplomats,

because they are the ones who often have prevented us from having to

use our military. I honestly believe there is a way to redeploy from

Iraq that does not mean just getting out nor just bringing the troops

home. Those are the wrong words.

Iraq is a set piece in a strategic environment around this world that

the United States has interest in. And there is a way to end this

tragic misadventure, to redeploy out of Iraq so we might place our men

and women where they need to be in Afghanistan, the western Pacific,

and here at home to improve the readiness of our Army that has not one,

not one active Guard or Reserve unit that is in a state of readiness to

deploy anywhere to any other contingency in this world.

And that strategy is really brought about by changing the behavior,

in particular, of Iran, who I have operated with at sea, and Iraq and

Syria, and the other nations in that region. We will not do that by

doubling down once again on a bad bet with a surge of military forces.

I know. I have watched it happen before.

This can only be resolved by a strategy that sets a date, a date

within a year by which we will redeploy out of Iraq, because that date

is not just for ending this war, it has the value of a different

strategy to leave an unfailed state, as Iran, recognizing that we will

no longer be in that state, but we will remain in the region at our

bases that we do have in Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, the United Arab

Emirates; and our carrier battle group and our amphibious ready group

in that region because we have interests there.

But by that date we change the behavior of Iran who does not want to

deal by itself with the 2 million Iraqis who have been dislocated from

their homes and have yet to overflow their borders, as 2 million others

have.

And Syria, that is Sunni, does not want as it fuels, after we leave

there, a civil war, would be fueling the Sunnis against the Shia that

the Iranians might be supporting. Neither nation wants a proxy war.

If we work diplomatically with a date certain, because they don't

want us to remain in that nation, we have the ability to bring to the

table the interested parties who can work on the extreme elements in

that nation, Iran and Syria; and we deal with the center, the

government of Baghdad, with a date certain that makes them recognize

they must also step up to the plate and assume responsibility for the

country which they have done and presently have to do as we keep a lid

politically and militarily on a simmering pot.

There is a strategy which I believe we need to pursue, Republican and

Democrat together, that sets a date of approximately a year, which

gives us time to safely redeploy. Because, remember, it took us 6

months to redeploy out of Somalia with only about 8,000 troops, when we

have 160,000 in Iraq with over 100,000 U.S. contractors. We need time

to safely redeploy with a strategy that works to bring Iran and Syria

to the table because they have interests in accommodating stability as

we remain in that region because of our interests, providing air cover

if necessary from above, from bases outside or Special Forces from

outside, as we begin to address our other security interests around the

world and here at home.