Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I

thank him for his outstanding leadership on this floor and within the

Republican Study Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very happy to come to the floor today and debate

this resolution with my fellow members of the Republican Study

Committee. But if press reports are to be believed, I am disturbed by

the reason that we are here, and that is, is this a poll driven

resolution?

We all know that our Democratic colleagues now have one of the lowest

congressional approval ratings in almost 50 years. We know they don't

want to spend time on this floor debating how little has been achieved

in their tenure, and perhaps they want to spend even less time talking

about what they have achieved; the single largest tax increase in

American history, a secret earmarking plan gone awry, and a spendorama,

spending millions and millions on peanut storage, NASA and dairy

products, put into a

bill to support our troops in harm's way.

Putting polls aside, why are we here? Make no mistake about it. What

we are debating today is whether or not to declare defeat in Iraq, the

battlefront in our war against radical Islam.

Everyone knows that fighting this battle in Iraq is costly, but

losing this battle in Iraq is even costlier.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes life presents us with lousy options, but that

is a reality with which we must deal. Iraq must be seen in the larger

context of our war with radical Islam. The battle lines are drawn; and

whether or not we like it, they are drawn in Iraq.

Don't take my word for it. Take the word of Osama bin Laden: ``The

epicenter of these wars is Baghdad. Success in Baghdad will be success

for the United States. Failure in Iraq is the failure of the United

States. Their defeat in Iraq will mean defeat in all of their wars.''

And we have to soberly reflect upon the enemy that we are facing.

Listen to the number two in al Qaeda, al Zawahiri: ``Al Qaeda has the

right to kill 4 million Americans, 2 million of them children.''

Mr. Speaker, two of those children are my children. And I take this

very, very seriously.

Al Qaeda has further vowed to expel the Americans from Iraq. They

have vowed that they will ``launch a jihad wave to the secular

countries neighboring Iraq.''

Again, this is the enemy we face and we face him foremost in Iraq. If

we leave Iraq before subduing him, he will follow us here to our

shores. And make no mistake about it. The consequences are immense.

Read the National Intelligence Estimate. Read the report of the Iraq

Study Group. Precipitous withdrawal declaring defeat will not end this

war. Instead, it will make it worse. It will send it to neighboring

countries. It may lead to genocide.

Now, I have listened to the debate of my colleagues carefully. Some

still complain about the decision to go in. It's a moot point. Many

want to complain about mistakes or incompetence of 3 years, 2 years, or

perhaps 1 year ago that may or may not be accurate. Today they are

irrelevant.

The question is what do we do now? We have a new commander. We have a

new strategy. We have a report due in September. We have signs of hope.

Let's give it a chance. There is too much at stake to declare defeat

today.