Mr. Speaker, the matter before us today, the Iraq

Supplemental, is before us for the first time. However, this is not the

last time that we will vote on this bill. This bill will go to the

Senate and from the Senate to a Conference Committee and from there

back to the floor of this house. If the President exercises his veto

power, we may ultimately vote on this matter as many as three or four

times.

Today, I make no commitments about what I will do or how I will vote

when this matter comes back to this house. How could I? I don't know

what this bill will look like when it comes back . . . I don't know

what it will say. Rather, I rise to explain how I will vote today, as

this bill comes before this house for the first time.

It is clear to me that today, we have only two options. We can send

to the Senate the bill before us, with binding language to end the war

or, should this bill fail, we will send a bill that gives the President

unchecked power to continue his misguided, mismanaged war without end.

That is the choice today. And my vote will be ``yes'' to advance the

bill which begins to end the war. Reaching this decision has been

difficult. My deliberation has been long and thoughtful. The difficulty

of the decision may seem somewhat surprising given the rather stark

description I just provided of the choice before us. However, there are

several reasons why this decision has been hard.

First, the bill before us, despite its binding language to end the

war, is far from perfect. It does not end the war soon enough. It

mishandles the issue of Iraqi oil. It fails to address necessary

safeguards to prevent this President from taking military action in

Iran without Congressional authorization. The bill's shortcomings are

reason enough for a no vote.

Second, until today . . . until this vote . . . I have played a

different role. My job yesterday, and the day before (like so many war

opponents) was to fight to make the language in this bill stronger and

to make this legislation better. And having failed to accomplish all I

sought to achieve provides me with another reason to vote no.

Third, until this day I have voted against all of the Iraqi war

spending bills. I strongly favor using the power of the purse to end

the war. That this binding language to end the war is attached to a war

funding bill provided me with yet another reason to vote no.

Many on the left have invoked the words of Saul Alinsky in describing

today's vote: ``. . . I start from where the world is, as it is, not as

I would like it to be,'' he says in his book Rules for Radicals. ``That

we accept the world

as it is does not in any sense weaken our desire to change it into what

we believe it should be--it is necessary to begin where the world is if

we are going to change it to what we think it should be,'' Alinsky

continues. So today we start where this congressional world is, with

this imperfect bill as the vehicle to begin to end the war.

The choice is clear, today we can begin to end the war, or we can

stand in the way of doing so. I will vote to end the war.