I thank the gentleman for

yielding.

Mr. Speaker, the manner of our withdrawal from Iraq will dramatically

affect the credibility of American foreign policy. Our actions must not

lead to anti-Semites masquerading as the President of Iran with the

misimpression that his thirst for nuclear weapons can ever end with the

realization of his dream of nuclear holocaust, this time engulfing the

Jewish national homeland. In the larger geopolitical context, like it

or not, credibility is the currency of a global Superpower.

The argument has been made on this floor that our engagement in Iraq

has had the effect of diverting our attention from other threats to our

security interests such as a nuclear North Korea or the military

buildup of China or even a resurgent Russia.

The recent glimmer of hope from the multiparty talks with the hermit

kingdom demonstrates that it is possible for our Nation to, yes, walk

and chew gum at the same time. The war in Iraq has not come at the cost

of disengagement. However, perhaps more importantly, we cannot avoid

the fact that

the manner in which we turn control over their country to the Iraqis

will send a message across the globe to friend and foe alike of whether

we are a reliable ally and a predictable adversary.

It is simply not possible for us to divorce our role in the world

from our credibility as a Nation. The stakes are great for Iraq, but

they are just as great, if not greater, for those of us in the United

States, for those of us presently in the United States and for our

children and our grandchildren.

Although everyone including the President has acknowledged the fact

that things have not gone as planned in Iraq, this should not lead us

to overlook the fact that the Iraqi people have chosen their Nation's

leadership in democratic elections, three in a row, with more and more

people participating, larger percentages of the population

participating, in numbers and percentages that frankly would embarrass

our country when you look at the turnout we have for elections.

Sometimes we explain the low turnout in our elections because of bad

weather. Their bad weather was not the question. It was the threat of

death if they participated in elections, and yet they went forward to

do so.

They ratified a Constitution that represents a dramatic departure

from the rule of one of the most repressive regimes of the globe, and

we sort of slide by that and say, well, we got rid of Saddam Hussein,

but look at the mess those people are in over there. It is a difficult

proposition. This President warned us after 9/11 it would be a

difficult proposition; it would take fortitude; it would take

persistence; it would take resolve.

At the same time, however, it is this very hope of democracy that has

led those extremists who fear such a prospect to lash out in a wave of

violence. In this regard, we must not fall prey to the error of failing

to hold those responsible for violence accountable for their murderous

actions.

The idea that we are somehow responsible for violence in Iraq is both

preposterous and the crassest form of moral ignorance. Those who commit

the murders, those who drill holes in people's brains, screw fellow

human beings to walls and consider decapitation a form of religious

expression, they are the ones who are responsible for the atrocities

and massive human rights violations concerning the people of Iraq.

Charles Krauthammer aptly captures such moral illogic with the query

of whether the police in America are somehow responsible and have on

their hands the blood of the 16,000 murders they failed to prevent last

year.

The tragic irony of such logic is that it suggests that those who

murder in order to manipulate the Western media and public opinion by

the spectacle of mangled bodies and blood-stained streets should be

able to realize their aim of driving us away from the scene of their

crime. We must not reward these thugs by giving them what they want. We

are in Iraq to protect the Iraqi people, and the blame for the violence

should be placed where it belongs.

As Prime Minister Blair so eloquently stated the proposition: ``Here

is where we have to change radically our mindset. At present, when we

are shown pictures of carnage in Iraq, much of our own opinion sees

that as a failure, as a reason for leaving. Surely,'' Prime Minister

Blair says, ``it is a reason for persevering and succeeding. What is

the purpose of the terrorism in Iraq? It is to destroy the prospect of

democratic progress. In doing so, they hope to deal us a mortal blow.

They know victory for them in Iraq is defeat not just for Iraqi

democracy but for democratic values everywhere.''

The challenges before us relate to the formulation of policy, but

this should not be considered in a vacuum. The most important asset of

the United States in Iraq is the quality of the men and women of our

Armed Forces. It is in this regard that the person in charge of the

responsibility of implementing our new policy, General David Petraeus,

is well-suited to perform such a task.

In addition to his experience in the area around Mosul, he is the

coauthor of the recently released Military Field Manual on

Counterinsurgency Doctrine. History provides us with examples where

military commanders have been brought into a theater of operations in

order to turn around what seemed at the time less than promising, as

illustrated by the appointments of General Grant, or even General

Patton, to name just two examples.

If there ever was a need for such leadership in Iraq it is now.

General Petraeus is a critical component to our prospects for progress.

And I know everybody says they support General Petraeus, they support

our troops. But it does seem odd that when the other body confirmed

General Petraeus unanimously, they followed it up by suggesting what he

was going about was a fool's errand. And I know everybody here supports

our troops, but listen to what you are saying. On the one hand you say,

``Godspeed, General Petraeus,'' and on the other hand you say, ``You

are doomed to failure.''

The need to meet the challenge of stabilizing Iraq, primarily in

Baghdad and Anbar Province, is essential to the orderly withdrawal of

American forces. Any precipitous action which fails to accommodate this

concern would likely have untold consequences for innocents within

Iraq, the broader Middle East, and ultimately the security of the

American people.

Again, however, it must be emphasized that the long-term success or

failure of democracy in Iraq rests with the Iraqis themselves. As Faoud

Ajami of Johns Hopkins University has pointed out, we have given the

gift of freedom to the Iraqi people, which, by nature, entails the

conclusion that their future is in their own hands.

This new strategy, and I stress it is a new strategy, recognizes that

our remaining days in Iraq must be dedicated to making this transition

to a new political order possible, not just getting out, but getting

out as we succeed in our effort to establish a stable democracy in

Iraq.