Mr. Speaker, I thank the Speaker and I thank the

gentleman for yielding, and commend our leadership for organizing this

very thoughtful and sober 3-day debate on a very serious issue.

Mr. Speaker, as Co-chair of the Blue Dog National Security Working

Group, I rise to oppose the surge and to support tough and smart

security strategies, including those outlined in H. Res. 97, authored

by the Blue Dogs, to end war profiteering, put future war costs on

budget, and adopt a Truman Committee to make those who have engaged in

fraud and abuse in Iraq accountable for their actions.

As we conduct this historic debate, however, I am mindful that, eight

time zones away, crouched in a tank somewhere in Baghdad, a 19-year-old

private is doing his best to restore order to a city descending into

all-out civil war. We owe this soldier, his mates, and their families

so much. They volunteered to put their lives on the line to keep this

country safe.

We in this Chamber also want to keep this country safe, but we do not

share those day-to-day risks. Only a handful here have relatives in

Iraq living the life of the soldier I described.

Mr. Speaker, as we have sadly learned, the intelligence that took us

to war was wrong. Some of the most inaccurate claims--that an

operational relationship existed between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein,

that vast WMD stockpiles existed with their locations pinpointed--were

presented by the administration as fact, even though the Intelligence

Community had discredited them. That was shameful.

Most intelligence agencies around the world thought, however, that

Saddam Hussein had WMD and the intention to use it against his people

and U.S. interests. They believed it, and so did I. But they were

wrong, and so was I.

The actions taken 4 years ago in Iraq created a failed state. We took

out its government and occupied the country, unsuccessfully. About one

year later, millions of Iraqis courageously elected a government, but

that government barely functions, and we continue to occupy Iraq

militarily.

Mr. Speaker, there are no good military options left in Iraq.

To the soldier currently in harm's way, I say, ``You are a hero. You

are doing your best to follow orders and to serve your country.'' But I

also say, ``We have given you a mission impossible, and that mission

must change.''

We have a moral obligation to leave Iraq in better shape than we

found it, and that will not be achieved by surging 21,500 more troops

into Baghdad. The surge will not work, and I oppose it.

But abandoning Iraq is not a viable alternative. We must invest in

strategies to contain and ultimately reduce violence there in order to

create stability in Iraq and in the region. That must now be our focus.

The Iraq Study Group made important recommendations to do this,

including changing the military mission in Iraq; tying future U.S.

support to measurable progress on national reconciliation; security and

governance; and aggressive diplomatic outreach to Iraq's neighbors--

including Syria and Iran. But this administration rejected them.

Two weeks ago, a Saban Center report by Daniel Byman and Ken Pollack

carefully assessed options to contain the spillover from an Iraqi civil

war. They include not trying to pick winners between the Sunnis and

Shia; pulling back from population centers; providing support for

Iraq's neighbors; and laying down ``red lines'' to Iran. All of these

ideas have merit.

Further good ideas come from David Schaeffer, a former U.S.

ambassador-at-large for war crimes issues, to put the Iraqi Government

on an ``atrocity watch'' and warn its leaders that they can be

prosecuted for war crimes if ethnic cleansing occurs.

Mr. Speaker, the Bush administration has made calamitous mistakes in

prosecuting this war. The surge, I fear, is yet another one. With this

resolution, Congress starts action to force a change in strategy and to

bring that soldier in downtown Baghdad and his comrades home safely--

and soon