Mr. Speaker, I plan to vote for this resolution, but to

surge or not to surge, that is the wrong question. Just saying ``no''

is simple obstructionism. What we need is a new way forward to replace

the old way that is not getting us anywhere. It has become clear that

trying to establish a

multiethnic Iraqi democracy, while laudable, simply cannot be

accomplished by non-Iraqis.

The fact is, Iraq has never been a unified country with enough common

interest to foster the give and take of democracy. During the First

World War, Britain seized the Mesopotamian region from the collapsing

Ottoman Empire. Iraq was created out of three separate provinces to

keep the Turks out while allowing the British access to the local oil.

Captain Arnold Wilson, the British civil commissioner in Baghdad,

argued that the creation of the new state was a recipe for disaster. He

warned that the deep differences among the three main communities, the

Sunni, Shia and Kurds, ensured the new country could only be run by

what he called the antithesis of democratic government.

After a rebellion in 1920, which resulted in the deaths of some 2,000

British soldiers and 8,000 Iraqis, the British, through the leadership

of Secretary of War Winston Churchill, largely extricated themselves by

choosing a Sunni to be king and strongman.

In light of this history, we should seriously consider that we have

two basic options:

First, choose a faction to stabilize and rule the country through

force, much as all of Iraq's previous regimes did, and that is hardly

an attractive option.

Or, second, bring about a partition of the country, to form a loose

confederation where the Shias, the Sunnis and the Kurds can each govern

themselves while leaving the others alone.

Our enterprise in Iraq has been carried out with the best of

intentions, and our men and women in the Armed Forces have performed

with great heroism, skill, and honor. But we have to accept reality. We

have a responsibility to help stabilize the situation, and doing so is

in our national interest.

But I don't think it is fair to ask our sons and daughters to be

policemen in a civil war. Sadly, it seems that most Iraqis do not

embrace democratic government unless it is dominated exclusively by

their own individual groups.

The Sunnis, the Shia and the Kurds are willing and able to establish

law and order within their own ethnically homogenous areas. The efforts

to push out other areas currently underway in Iraq are deplorable, but

it is surely not unexpected given Iraq's history and desperate

situation.

The sectarian militias have popular support because they have easily

understood plans to establish security within their spheres for their

own people. Instead of fighting the militias, we need to co-opt them.

We need to help acceptable local tribal leaders, government leaders and

religious authorities establish authority over their areas.

We also need to seek the positive involvement of Iraq's neighbors.

Some of them may be meddling, or may be tempted to meddle, but at the

end of the day, instability in Iraq means instability for everybody in

the region.

Let's set about the task of helping Iraq's three main groups to

regroup and stabilize their own territories so that we can withdraw to

our bases and ultimately get out all together.