Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for those

very, very poignant remarks laying the foundation for all of us to

understand just how serious this challenge is that we are about.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to oppose the resolution before us and urge those

who are voting for it, or considering it, to carefully reconsider their

decision.

Section 1 simply expresses all of our support for our troops who are

fighting for our freedom and freedom in the world in Iraq.

All of us agree with that piece of the statement, and each of us has

expressed our support and encouragement to our troops in our own way

and our own time.

The second section challenges the President's, actually the Commander

in Chief's, request for a surge in Iraq.

Much has been said about our going to Iraq because of the prospect of

weapons of mass destruction in the hands of the madman Saddam Hussein.

We presumed their presence, as most of the leaders of the world and

most of the intelligence communities of the world so presumed. Not

finding weapons of mass destruction does not set aside the importance

of eliminating the force of Saddam Hussein from the face of the Earth.

It was my honor to lead one of the early trips to Iraq following the

fall of Saddam. We were about to consider an $87 billion supplemental

to help finance our presence in Iraq. I wanted to take a team of

Members who would reflect much of the Congress, so that trip included

conservatives and moderates and liberals. It also included within us

Members who had voted to support going to war and those who had voted

against it.

We visited most of Iraq, Mosul, Tikrit. We spent time in Baghdad. We

visited the killing fields where over 500,000 bodies of Iraqis lie,

Iraqis who were murdered by Saddam Hussein. We saw the golden palaces

and visited the industrial sites suffering under Saddam Hussein's

neglect. We saw the economic conditions, the hand basket conditions left

by Saddam Hussein.

We stopped out of country on our way home to consider the fact that

there was this supplemental appropriations before us when we returned,

some $87 billion, discussing what we had experienced. And the

experience had a tremendous effect upon all of our colleagues. It is

properly summarized by the statement of one of our Members who said:

``You all know where I have been coming from. I voted against the war.

But after we have seen what we have seen over this long stay in Iraq, I

am afraid what I am about to do is going to be very, very unpopular at

home but I don't know how we can do anything else. Sometimes,'' he

said, ``you have to be ahead of your people; sometimes we are elected

actually to lead.''

That was almost 4 years ago. And fast forward to today. Saddam

Hussein is gone, he is dead, and he is buried. But the extremists

jihadi Islamic terrorists remain and continue to impact the entire

Middle East. That is why we must succeed in Iraq. That is why we cannot

afford to withdraw troops now.

Watching our floor debate last night, my wife turned to me and said,

``They want us to redeploy or withdraw. They want us to retreat.'' She

said, ``George Washington did not retreat when our country was in

danger.'' She questioned why we find ourselves in this kind of

circumstance today.

I was reminiscent of that early time in our history when our Nation

was threatened. The French came to our rescue, our assistance, and

indeed played a major role in our future Commander in Chief himself

being successful.

Americans should never forget that. The Statue of Liberty stands on

Ellis Island as a reminder of the French view of that young America,

its potential, a land of hope where freedom could reign and opportunity

indeed might abound. For that and many other reasons we love France,

and the French people are our friends.

But France is not entirely the same country at this point in its

history. She no longer provides such a leading light for the world. No

longer is it presumed that the French language should be the language

of the international world. Today, about 10 percent of the French

population is Muslim. Much of that population is middle class and

something less than a middle-class opportunity.

Within that group, there abounds the voice of Islamic extreme. There

are those who advocate jihad and who would wipe France as we know it

off the face of the Earth.

We should not consider withdrawing now, because a stable Iraq is

vital to our national interests and is an important part of our ability

to promote peace and economic opportunity in the entire world. It is a

critical battleground in our war against terrorism.

If we succeed in Iraq, we will have taken a gigantic step towards

stamping out the source of terrorism that exists in that part of the

world. If we are not successful in Iraq, we will meet extremist Islamic

activism elsewhere. 9/11 was only a part of a beginning. If we do not

stop extreme Islamic jihadists in the Middle East, we will see it

again, and most likely we will see it again here at home.

Review with me for a moment where we have been in Afghanistan and

Iraq and where it may take us. Al Qaeda was nurtured and gained

strength in Afghanistan. America had played a key role in forcing the

former Soviet Union to cease its incursion in Afghanistan. The Islamic

extremists who surround the likes of Osama bin Laden took advantage of

the vacuum of Afghanistan, and used it as a training ground that would

provide the terrorists an opportunity to spread their jihad around the

world and spread terrorism with it.

America cannot allow the likes of Osama bin Laden to have places like

Afghanistan to serve as training grounds. It is in our vital interests

to see that Iraq, for example, does not serve as a recruitment and

training ground for the forces who oppose freedom and oppose our very

way of life.

Make no mistake about it, there are forces in the Islamic world who

do not believe we should exist. They may be relatively new or small in

number, but there are those of Islamic jihadist extreme who are

committed to the death of the nonbelievers. There are those on the

extreme Imam fringe who teach hatred for the infidels in mosques all

around the world.

We do not want to believe in such extremism as a country or a people,

but the true believers want all of us to be dead, all Englishmen, all

Germans, all French people, all Americans who are not committed to

their belief. The heathens should be dead. How else would one be able

to convince men, women, and children to strap themselves with bombs and

kill the innocents by the thousands? If not death to all infidels, how

else would a mother praise Allah as her young child explodes as a bomb

in a crowded train station?

The war on terror goes well beyond Iraq. But make no mistake, that

war will not be won by walking away from Iraq.

The President has called for a surge of just over 20,000 troops. That

request does not flow from a naive presumption that maybe, just maybe

the battle for Baghdad can be won by a few brave men.

The call for these troops is a change in strategy, a strategy that

suggests that, with the leadership of such brave men committed to

taking the Iraqis out front, can lead the way to a successful change in

Baghdad, indeed, a change throughout Iraq; a strategy that the

President would suggest involves clearing areas of Baghdad, clearing

other areas throughout Iraq, stabilizing them, and then providing the

real opportunity for democratic growth and change in Iraq.

A successful stabilization of Baghdad indeed is only the beginning

point in Iraq. To me, this kind of change is the real hope for the

people, not just of Iraq, but of the entire region. To me, that is the

definition of success in Iraq.

If we are successful, we will have changed the face of the Middle

East. A successful Iraq will send a great message to the likes of Iran,

Syria, Yemen, and Indonesia.

The chance for a long-term peace and the chance for stability in the

entire Middle East is the great strategic interest of the United States

saving tens of thousands of lives are worth a great commitment by the

world's only remaining superpower. The economic values that are to be

gained from stabilizing the region are impossible to estimate, but they

can be measured in multiple trillions of dollars.

But what happens if we walk away now? Also difficult to estimate, but

here are but a few of the possibilities. And listen to the

possibilities:

First, instability is replaced by a new kind of centralized

authoritarian control potentially, perhaps an arbitrary government with

Saddam-like controls. Shia would very likely be in charge, and force

would be exercised in the name of stability.

Beyond that, Kurdistan in the offing; an insecure Kurdish population

to the north would do all it could to provide for its own protection.

The prospects of independent Kurdish region or state would create major

tension between Turkey and Baghdad and that new region in northern

Iraq. Beyond that, Sunni Iran would look upon the new direction of Iraq

with great concern because of sectarian differences.

Fourth, the jihadist extremists of Islam would have increased sway in

the entire region. The threat of terrorism all over the world would be

a reality to those who would but look. Indeed, the prospects, to say

the least, should be frightening to anybody who will but look.

Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Speaker, all of our country, please realize

that this is not the time to walk away. This is the time for the only

remaining superpower in the world, America, to lead on behalf of

freedom, to lead on behalf of people who are looking for opportunity

and change for the entire world.

Mr. Buyer, I very much appreciate your extending me this time.