I thank the gentleman for yielding. Mr.

Speaker, we face three questions here tonight: Where are we? Where do

we want to be? And how do we get there?

First, where are we? We are in phase three of a conflict in Iraq. In

phase one, we overran Iraq in response to an American national security

threat. We won.

Then came phase two. We were forwardly deployed; the terrorists

brought the fight to us; we busted up terrorist networks. America was

protected from further attacks. We won.

Now comes phase three. At best, Iraq is engulfed in a sectarian

killing spree. At worst, Iraq has descended into a civil war.

So where are we? We are thankful for the incredible work of our

military in winning phase one and two. We are aware, and I think all of

us are aware, that only the Iraqi people can win phase three.

It is a neocon mistake to charge our warfighters with building an

Iraqi national consensus. Iraqis must decide for themselves if they

want to live in a unified, pluralistic, and peaceful Iraq. No amount of

American military might can compel that result.

So where are we? Thankful for the successes and the outcomes that we

can control; aware of the outcomes that we cannot control.

Where do we want to be? We want the Iraqis to take responsibility for

their own country. The President is wisely pressing them to do so. We

want the Iraqi leadership to make some key political decisions that can

bring reconciliation. We want them to divide up the oil fairly, to

allow banned Baathists back into positions of public trust, and to

develop a working model of pluralism. We want the Iraqi leadership to

know that they don't have forever, and that they should settle these

reconciliation questions quickly. And we want to avoid the error of

nation building.

The job of the U.S. military is to crush, kill, and destroy the

enemies of the United States. They are not nation builders; they are

warriors, and they do their jobs very, very well.

As commanded, our military entered Iraq to destroy what we

understandably believed were threats to our national security. We were

successful in destroying those threats and, thereafter, in interrupting

terrorist networks. Those were outcomes that we could control.

Now, we are rightly asked for inputs that we can control, but we are

faced with outcomes that only the Iraqi people can control. It is right

to evaluate the quality of our force's inputs, but wrong to hold them

accountable for outcomes beyond their control.

Diplomats, statesmen, peacemakers, and everyday Iraqis must work to

develop a path to progress, a path that has milestones along the way,

and which has rewards for meeting those milestones and consequences for

failure.

If the Iraqi people follow the path to progress to a peaceful,

pluralistic, and unified Iraq, they will have been successful. The path

may lead to something less. Any lesser outcome is the responsibility of

the Iraqi people. So we want a path to progress, and we hope for the

blessings of liberty for Iraq.

Now, how do we get there? The President has ordered an increase in

troop strength in Iraq. He thinks a surge in troops will give breathing

room for the development of a path to progress. I am concerned that a

surge will have the opposite effect: that we will give breathing room

to the death squads; that our servicemen and women will be caught in

the crossfire; and that the surge will end right where it began. In

fact, that is what happened in Baghdad in August and September of 2006.

I am concerned that a surge sends a conflicting message. On the one

hand, we are telling the Iraqi leadership, ``Hurry up, you don't have

forever.'' On the other hand we are saying, ``No, not to worry. We are

increasing the size of the American security umbrella.''

I want all Iraqi factions and all leaders of Iraqi factions to worry.

I want them to see us reaching for the button that would bring down

that security umbrella. I want them to imagine the click of the button

and the feel of the wind from that descending umbrella.

The resolution before us isn't written the way I would have written

it, but it is the resolution before us. Resolutions are the way that

Congress discharges its constitutional responsibility to communicate

with the President. This resolution says we disapprove of the surge.

Parties on both sides have added additional and conflicting meaning to

those words. In the end, I just have to vote on the basis of the words.

That is why I am going to vote in favor of the resolution and express

my concern about the effectiveness of the surge.