Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may

consume.

Mr. Speaker, during the debate on Iraq yesterday, we heard many times

from some of our Democratic colleagues that they had no intention of

defunding our troops in Iraq. Some even expressed outrage and

indignation when some of our Republican Members made mention of their

plans for defunding the troops. However, defunding plans clearly

demonstrate their policy is to withdraw from the global war against

Islamic militant extremists by surrendering to the enemy in Iraq.

We are faced with two options in Iraq, Mr. Speaker, to move forward

or to retreat. Some of my Democrat colleagues appear to be united in

opposing any effort to adopt a more vigorous strategy in Iraq and,

instead, are ready to retreat. This resolution is but the first step in

that direction.

Despite denials, the evidence is that the effort to cut the funding

of our troops in Iraq and, in turn, for all of our efforts there are

well underway.

Several bills have already been introduced by Democrat Members to

compel a withdrawal. Let me read the titles and the provisions.

H.R. 508, to require the United States military disengagement from

Iraq, which mandates a withdrawal of U.S. forces within 6 months of the

enactment of this act and which cuts off funding for any deployment or

continued deployment of forces in Iraq. Let me emphasize that again. It

cuts off funding for any deployment, not just an increase, not just

sending reinforcements, but for any deployment of U.S. forces in Iraq,

including those already there, and it even limits the number of embassy

personnel.

Also, H.R. 438, to prohibit an escalation in the number of members of

the United States Armed Forces in Iraq, which states that funds

appropriated or otherwise made available to the Department of Defense

under any provision of law may not be obligated or expended to increase

the number of members of the United States Armed Forces serving in

Iraq.

H.R. 746, to provide for the safe and orderly withdrawal of United

States military forces and Department of Defense contractors from Iraq,

which mandates the beginning of the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq

within 30 days of the enactment of this act and complete the withdrawal

no later than 180 days later. It also prohibits

funds to increase the number of Armed Forces serving in Iraq or to

extend the deployment of those already there.

Or H.J. Res. 18, to redeploy U.S. forces from Iraq, which states that

the deployment of United States forces in Iraq by the direction of

Congress is hereby terminated, and the forces involved are to be

redeployed at the earliest practical date.

When we offered a proposal to prohibit the cutting off of funds for

our troops, that is what we wanted to do on our side of the aisle, a

proposal to prohibit cutting off of funding of our troops in harm's

way, the Democratic leadership blocked it from coming to the floor.

Why? Well, based on the bills that I just mentioned, the only

explanation I would think is that they fear that their caucus would

indeed vote to cut off funding for our troops and leave them to face

the enemy without the necessary resources.

So, within this context, they offer this nonbinding resolution which

the Democrat leadership claims to support the troops. But how can such

a claim be credible? Because in the second paragraph of the resolution,

it opposes sending the reinforcements that our troops in Iraq need to

confront the enemy.

Our commanders in the field say they need the reinforcements in order

to address the security situation in Iraq. My stepson Douglas Lehtinen

and my daughter-in-law, Lindsay, served in Iraq as Marine officers.

Lindsay will soon serve in just a few weeks in Afghanistan. They

understand the difference between saying we support our troops but we

don't support your mission. It is the mission that matters.

Some of our colleagues seek to deny our troops that level of support,

that level of backup which could be the difference for Dougie, for

Lindsay, for so many others between death and survival.

This resolution seeks to substitute the assessment of the military

commanders with the views of lawmakers. We claim to know more than the

commanders.

Rather than focusing on the strategic policy issue, the Democratic

leadership has drafted a resolution that undermines tactical military

matters and seeks to override the decisions of our military commanders

and the position articulated by General Petraeus. They do not want to

discuss the grave consequences of withdrawal and surrender. They do not

want to discuss the nature of the enemy, the Islamist militant

extremists who seek to destroy us, who like vultures descend on us to

prey on our weakness.

Some of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle seek to focus

on the abstract rather than on the reality. They believe that security

will come from withdrawal and surrender. On the contrary, retreat

guarantees that the Islamic militants will intensify their efforts

against us. All we need to do is focus on bin Laden's own words.

In his 1996 Declaration of Jihad and other statements that he made,

he repeatedly pointed to America's weakness being its low threshold for

pain. As evidence, bin Laden pointed to the U.S. withdrawal from

Somalia in 1993 because of casualties from the attacks of al Qaeda and

its allies. Bin Laden said of our retreat from Mogadishu, ``The extent

of your impotence and weakness became very clear.''

Bin Laden and the global Islamic militant network continued to test

our resolve throughout the 1990s and today. They launched multiple

attacks against U.S. targets with little response on our part. Then

came the deplorable attacks on 9/11.

But they won't stop there, Mr. Speaker. They won't stop in Iraq, they

won't stop in Afghanistan. They have made it abundantly clear that they

will not stop until they dominate the world. Just listen to the words

of bin Laden.

He said, ``The jihad in Palestine,'' referring to the attacks against

Israel, ``and in Iraq is a personal duty incumbent upon the residents

of the two countries alone. But if they are unable to carry it out,

this duty is incumbent upon the residents of the adjacent countries,

and so on and so forth, until the circle includes all the Muslim

countries.''

And to focus on what al Qaeda leader al-Zawahiri said in December of

last year just a few months ago, ``Iraq, Allah permitting, is the

gateway to the liberation of Palestine and the restoration of the

Islamic caliphate.''

Or those of Iran's Ahmadinejad when he said in January of this year,

``We must prepare ourselves to rule the world.''

This follows statements made in October of 2005 when Ahmadinejad

said, ``Undoubtedly, I say that we will soon experience a world without

the United States and will breathe in the brilliant time of Islamic

sovereignty over today's world.''

It is echoed by other Iranian leaders who have threatened the U.S.

and moderate Arab governments who say that, ``Anyone who recognizes

Israel will burn in the fire of the Islamic nations. They will burn in

their fury,'' and who have expressed their commitment to bringing

America to its knees.

The Islamist militant extremist network have proven time and time

again that this is not mere rhetoric. U.S. allies in the Middle East

understand this reality. They understand the critical role that Iraq

plays in the global war against Islamic militant extremists.

For example, Jordan's King Abdullah, a courageous leader who

continues to demonstrate his country's and his people's commitment to

peace, to security, and to democratic reform, summarized the situation

we are facing in the following way. He said, ``My concern is political,

revolving around Iran, around Iran's political involvement inside Iraq,

its relation with Syria and Hezbollah, and the strengthening of this

political strategic alliance. This would create a scenario where you

have these four: Iran, Iraq, influenced by Iraq, Syria, and Hezbollah,

who have a strategic objective that would create a major conflict. Our

argument to the United States,'' he continues, ``is that a capable,

independent, secure Iraq is the best way of containing Iran. The

Iranians realize that the way to have success against the West is by

them succeeding in Iraq. So Iraq is the battleground of the West

against Iran.''

These are the words of our ally King Abdullah of Jordan. Yet some of

our colleagues choose to believe that one can reason with our enemies.

Since this resolution provides no concrete alternative, some have

expressed support for new diplomatic initiatives. However, I must ask

my colleagues: With whom? Do they propose engaging with rogue regimes

such as Iran and Syria? These rogue regimes are part of the problem,

not part of the solution.

Some of our colleagues may say that diplomatic engagement is the key

to our success. But I ask them, how are we to engage our allies in the

region to help foster security and reconciliation in Iraq if by our

withdrawal and surrender we leave them to fend for themselves against

enemies in the region who have been strengthened by our retreat? How is

diplomacy to be effective in such an abstract context?

We cannot expect to achieve success if we are operating from a

position of weakness.

The so-called diplomatic alternative offered by some is no

alternative at all. The resolution before us and the bills that have

been introduced is a compelling argument, they believe, for a

withdrawal from Iraq, but it adds to a policy of surrender.

Some may try to hide that fact by constantly repeating the empty

words that they support the troops. But supporting our troops cannot be

reconciled by refusing them the reinforcements that they need or with

the retreat in the face of the enemy.

The hopelessness with which these measures spring is alien to our

American spirit. That spirit has sustained us through many dark times,

Mr. Speaker, throughout our history. This hopeful spirit springs

directly from the hearts of the American people who have never given up

faith in their belief, in their country, in their sons and daughters in

uniform facing our enemies overseas.

Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of our revolution over two centuries

ago when our country faced almost impossible odds and many counseled

for retreat, Thomas Payne summoned forth the words that apply directly

to the debate in this Chamber when he said, ``These are the times that

try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will in

this crisis shrink from the service of their country, but he that

stands by it now deserves the love and

the thanks of every man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily

conquered, yet we have this consolation with us: That the harder the

conflict, the more glorious the triumph.''

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues therefore to reject this

resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to consume the remaining

2 minutes. And I would like to say to all Members that although the

debate tonight may have seemed uncivil at times, this is the wonderful

process that we have here in democracy in this wonderful country, my

adopted homeland. And my colleague from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt)

and I disagree on so many issues, and yet we understand that this is

indeed the greatest country in the world. We want peace and stability

to all oppressed people throughout the world.

I happen to believe that the mission of the United States of America

and the mission of the men and women who wear our Nation's uniform is a

noble one. It is noble to stand up for freedom and for democracy; it is

noble to fight against the radical Islamic Jihadists, who I believe do

want to destroy our country, who want to destroy our allies like

Israel, and want to destroy our way of life. I believe that the mission

is just and I think that those who say we cannot stay the course, then

how could they be against the decision of the President to send

reinforcements? Because the decision of the President says that staying

the course is not the right motion for the United States to make. We

want to change the course. We want a new way forward. And the way

forward is to send reinforcements to those brave men and women who are

wearing proudly our Nation's uniform, who are standing in harm's way,

and we want to give them everything that they need to succeed in their

mission.

I have been to Iraq as have many Members and I have come to

understand what their mission has been and they say, ``Don't just say

we support our troops. Say you support our mission. Don't leave us out

there in the field.''

And as I said in my previous remarks, Mr. Speaker, this is going to

be an escalation and we will soon be cutting off funding for our troops

and leave them in harm's way. That is a dangerous path.