Mr. Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity to offer

supplemental remarks to the remarks I entered into the Record

yesterday. I offer these supplemental remarks as a continuation of my

thoughts relative to the debate held yesterday, Thursday, June 15 and

continuing into this morning, Friday, June 16.

It is clear, Mr. Speaker, to anyone who reads the 730 words contained

within the body of H. Res. 861 that this resolution concerns three

principal objectives: (1) general support for American troops, (2) the

Congress's stated belief that the United States will win the war on

terror, and (3) the encouragement of the new permanent unity government

in Iraq and Prime Minister Nuri AI-Maliki to succeed, toward the

ultimate goal of stabilizing Iraq and returning American troops back to

the United States. Like so many of my colleagues, I wish this

resolution said much more: I wish that the Rules Committee had allowed

amendments to this legislation; I wish that a Democratic substitute had

been allowed. But none of those things occurred.

Try as they might, the spin doctors and the pundits on the other side

of the aisle are trying to make this vote something which it is not--a

vote indicating support for the war in Iraq. It is most certainly not

that, but is instead a political football that this Majority sees no

problem kicking around.

I was not a member of Congress when initial authorization was given

to this President to enter into this conflict; I neither support this

war nor President Bush's handling--or, rather, his mishandling, of it.

This mismanagement has been evident practically from the conflict's

inception.

The very simple fact is that the vote today on H. Res. 861 and the

surrounding circumstances, are highly political, and not substantive in

nature. All those voting on this measure today know and understand that

this is a vote scheduled by the Republican majority in Congress only to

put Democrats into what Republicans perceive is a potentially difficult

political spot. While I did not take a vote to authorize this war, it

is my responsibility to work with my colleagues to deal with its

aftermath--something that is far more difficult. And I take that

responsibility very seriously.

American troops are in Iraq right now. In my view, the establishment

of an arbitrary deadline for a pullout--whether it is tomorrow, a month

or a year from now--is irresponsible. Our military intervention has

destabilized Iraq; as a result, this Nation maintains a duty to

stabilize the situation before turning full control back over to the

Iraqis. We must leave Iraq as soon as possible, but we must do so

responsibly.

Unfortunately, H. Res. 861 does nothing toward ending the

instability. It is emotive. It inflames passions. It is red-meat

election year politics at its worst.

As I have said throughout my time in Congress, Iraq will be, in the

end, what Iraqis themselves will make of it. Congress and the

administration need to press forward and convert the well-intentioned

but arbitrary deadlines for withdrawal of our troops into responsible,

tangible plans that will serve to bring our troops home. We need to

shunt aside the inflamed politics of the day--the politics that leads

the House to take a day and a half to consider a resolution that

accomplishes nothing--and begin a serious discussion about a

responsible date for withdrawal of American troops from Iraq--a plan

that builds upon the small but substantial positive steps we have seen

in Iraq, such as the approval of a constitutional government, the

holding of free elections and the institution of a democratic

government under the leadership of Prime Minister AI-Maliki.

It is sad that June 15 to June 16, 2006, will be known more for

slogans and empty election-year rhetoric than for a realistic solution

to a difficult problem. Sadder still is the majority's steadfast

commitment to inflaming the passions of the American populace for

political gain. I supported H. Res. 861 today, but I eagerly look

forward to a day when the majority overcomes its singular focus on

politics and commences a serious discussion about how to responsibly

bring conclusion to our role in Iraq. I look forward to the day when we

can set aside the rhetoric and meaningless non-binding resolutions and

focus on a responsible and workable solution to the morass that the

President and this administration have created half a world away.