Mr. Speaker, the resolution under consideration today

presents Congress with a single option--to endorse the Administration's

handling of the War in Iraq. Such an endorsement means committing our

troops to protracted, open-ended involvement for an indefinite number

of years while incurring thousand of additional casualties and spending

hundreds of billions of dollars.

Unfortunately, this is a counterproductive option. I do not believe

the newly elected Iraqi government can achieve the politically daunting

challenge of building a democracy as long as there is an expectation

that the United States will always be there providing the principle

security and defense roles for the country.

Exceedingly difficult compromises between the ethnic and secretarian

factions in Iraq need to be made, and those compromises must be

determined by the Iraqis themselves. The Administration's course

currently is emboldening these factions to seek maximum advantage for

their respective groups--even as the business of building a united

country is harmed significantly. The result is a full blown insurgency

which increasingly looks like a civil war in destruction and effect.

The Administration did not foresee these challenges, and certain

officials still appear to be in denial of this reality. The United

States deserves new leadership on Iraq and a new course, and the

Administration should take the steps to remove those who have brought

us to the present circumstances and revitalize our effort with a new

leadership team.

I have traveled to Iraq on three occasions. After my last trip in

October 2005, I came away strongly believing in the need for a timely

transition of responsibility to Iraqis. One month later, when this

House debated a resolution ordering an immediate withdrawal of troops

from the nation, I opposed the resolution, but I noted the following:

``We need to come together on an exit strategy for our soldiers based

upon the transition of security to the Iraqis themselves in order to

give the new democratic government of the people of Iraq a fair chance

of success.''

I still oppose an ``immediate withdrawal'' ordered by the U.S.

Congress. Some will argue that opposition to an indefinite U.S.

military presence in Iraq means support for immediately abandoning

Iraq. This is completely false. I favor leaving military commanders

with authority for the military redeployment and troop drawdown. I do

not favor near term deadlines imposed by Congress as the way to

accomplish this result.

I strongly support our troops and their families. I support giving

them the resources they need to do their job, and the benefits they

deserve.

I support winning the Global War on Terror.

For these reasons, I cannot support this resolution. It is too open-

ended, too blind to the reality of the difficulties we are facing, and

too simplistic a resolution for the complex situation in which we find

ourselves.