I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, this is one of those debates that you just have to take

a deep breath and say, is this our finest hour or one of our worst, or

somewhere in between? With this new Democratic majority, I thought

there would be a reaching out to both sides of the aisle. I thought, on

something so important, they would say, we went into Iraq on a

bipartisan basis, two-thirds of the House, including Mr. Murtha and

others, and three-quarters of the Senate voted to go into Iraq.

We did not find weapons of mass destruction. And this administration

made some terrible mistakes early on in disbanding the army, the police

and the border patrol and allowing the looting. I understand the

tremendous discontent. And this war has not turned out the way many had

hoped. And certainly when we look back we can say a lot of it was

predictable. But we attacked them; they did not attack us. I want to

say it again: We attacked them; they did not attack us. We abolished

their entire security force. I think of New York State. New York State

had 19 million people. Imagine if a hundred thousand prisoners had been

let out from Rikers Island and Attica, and then we said, no police in

New York City, no police in Albany, no police in Syracuse, no police in

Buffalo, no police in any of the towns in between. But do not worry, we

are going to have 150,000 Arabic speakers spread out across all of New

York, and they will keep the peace. Well, we did that to Iraq, but it

is much larger than New York, and it has 26 million people instead of

19 million. So a lot of what has happened is predictable.

But now, when you talk with the Iraqis and you talk with the

neighbors of Iraq, they say, we did not want you to go in, but we sure

as heck do not want you to leave until you leave this a better place.

We could, on a bipartisan basis, work this out. And there will be a

point where bills like this will not be considered because we will come

up with a bill that says, well, there are some of you on this side of

the aisle that do believe in timelines, but timelines that actually

work, not timelines that guarantee defeat of any chance of success.

We expect that maybe you would say to us, well, we call you an

occupying Nation, that is what you say we are.

Well, fine. Then let's negotiate with the Iraqis like we negotiated

with the South Koreans. That is a possibility. Why aren't we

negotiating with them?

The Iraqis, if they want, could ask us to leave. They have their own

government. They have their own leadership. Why not have a plebiscite

in that Nation? Why not have the Iraqi Council of Representatives vote?

Why aren't we talking about those things? Why aren't we talking about

the Iraqi Study Group, which Republicans and Democrats have both agreed

have merits to it? We could potentially have a resolution that many of

us could support. Why aren't we having an approach on the other side of

the aisle that says, we need to find common ground and work it out

together? I believe this: I believe two-thirds of the Iraqis want us to

leave, and I believe two-thirds want us to stay. That is what the polls

say. They do not want us to leave until we leave it a better place.

I believe the Iraqis are a proud people, and they want to be treated

with dignity. What this resolution does is simply pull the rug out from

under our new Secretary of Defense, which all of you said you wanted,

pulls the rug out from General Petraeus, who received 100 percent

support in the Senate. Our general has said, give me a chance to show

that we can win back Baghdad. That is what he has asked.

What this resolution does is say that one part of the equation, the

military, disappears. And we all have agreed you cannot win it

militarily, but you cannot win it without the military. You cannot win

it just with a change in politics, but you cannot win it without it.

You cannot win it just with economics, but you cannot win it without

it. It takes all three. And it is almost like, in a way, you want us to

lose. It is almost like we are going to tie one hand behind our back

and then say there is a failure because we have not given them all

three parts.

I cannot tell you how objectionable I find this. I find it

objectionable that we would not allow the Iraqis to stand up on their

own. They need us to train their military, their police and their

border patrol. They need our troops embedded in there because they do

not have any sergeants and corporals. We are embedded in there to help

identify who among all those privates that we are training can be

leaders among those troops.

This is an unwise resolution. It is a partisan resolution. It is a

bad message for us to send the Iraqi people. They do not know what to

think about this Congress, but they do know this: We are more divided

than they are, and we do not even have bombs blowing up.