I thank the chairman for yielding. I thank the committee

for bringing this bill to the floor. I appreciate what my very close

and dear friend and one of the best Members of this Congress, in my

opinion, Maurice Hinchey, has just said. Like many Americans, he thinks

and many Americans think this doesn't go far enough. From the

perspectives of perhaps everybody in the Chamber, it doesn't go far

enough towards the position they would like to take. It is not a

perfect resolution, but then again none are.

What it does do, however, is try to say that if we are going to make

decisions in the House of Representatives on an issue so critically

important to our country and to the welfare of our troops that are in

harm's way that we have the advice or at least the opinion of the

administration as to how actions ought to be taken. Therefore, if there

are those of us who believe, as I know my friend from New York does and

some others, that we ought to redeploy, change course, redirect our

efforts, the best advice and counsel that we could get on how to do

that ought to be from our military leaders.

And what this resolution simply says is, and I agree with my friend

from Connecticut that we can say, hopefully, with a somewhat unified

voice, perhaps not unanimous but somewhat unified voice, if we were to

take the position that the gentleman and I shared when we voted for

redeployment within a timeframe, tell us how that would be done. Tell

us how it would be done consistent with the safety of our troops. Tell

us how it would be done consistent with trying to leave behind as

stable a government or community as possible in Iraq. Tell us how it

could be done to enhance the possibility of political reconciliation in

Iraq.

The surge has not accomplished that. If the surge was intended to

bring political reconciliation, General Petraeus said it had not.

Ambassador Crocker said it had not.

So I congratulate and thank the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr.

Tanner), the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. Abercrombie), and others who

have joined in this effort to try to come to a step that will be a

positive step. I think this is one of those steps.

And I would urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, whatever

your particular position is, that we ought to have in front of us a

considered, considerate plan of how we would accomplish an objective if

this House, hopefully, could summon the votes to seek that objective

and mandate that objective.

So I thank Mr. Skelton for bringing this to the floor. I thank him

for his leadership on this issue, and I would urge all of my

colleagues, understanding full well the concerns that have been

expressed so ably by the gentleman from New York, my friend (Mr.

Hinchey), that this legislation will send a strong message to many,

including the administration, that we want to have the information that

we need to make the best decisions that we can make. We may differ on

what those decisions ought to be.

But, hopefully, what we will not differ on is that if we can have the

best information and advice as to how to obtain an objective, then the

legislation we pass will be better, will provide for the safety of our

troops and provide, hopefully, for the success of a redeployment within

a timeframe that many of us believe is absolutely essential.