Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

And I also want to thank all of you for coming down here this evening

for a thoughtful dialogue on the issues of war and peace that confront

this country and literally the rest of the world.

I would just like to speak to the issue of Iraq in the context of

where we are in the world today. This is not our grandfathers' world.

This is not our parents' world. This is a new configuration that can't

be compared to World War II or even the Cold War. This is a world that

is now filled with tiny splintering, struggling countries and cultures.

The Soviet Union is gone. Southeast Asia, Africa, Latin America, we see

a great deal of struggling third world countries, cultures, people

trying to find their place, their niche.

One of the countries, the United States, has a golden opportunity to

integrate ourselves with the rest of the world to encourage peace and

security. And if we notice around the world, the world is integrated

right now. The world is integrated globally. It is integrated

economically with trade. It is integrated politically. It is integrated

when there are disasters. We saw what happened with the tsunami to

countries like Sri Lanka and Thailand and India and Indonesia when the

world responded. The integrity of the world's compassion for these

people was extraordinary.

The world is also integrated with disease. Whether it is Ebola,

malaria, bird flu, TB, you name it, the world is integrated.

And one of the ways I think to solve the problem, besides solving the

problem of Iraq on the House floor the way we are doing it tonight with

a discussion, is to integrate our integrity with the great land mass

that is around this great globe. The integration of integrity.

I want to make a quick quote by a former artist, media person,

diplomat named Norman Cousins, who wrote a fabulous book called ``Human

Options.'' In the book is one extraordinary quote, ``History is the

vast early warning system.'' And if we look at how we dealt with the

Soviet Union over decades of time, it was step by step by step with

dialogue. What did we do with China over decades, even after China said

that they would like to destroy the United States, even if it wiped off

half the population of China? It was step by step by step of dialogue.

What did we do with the Cuban Missile Crisis? It was dialogue.

Unfortunately, we never had a dialogue with Ho Chi Minh. We lost

probably a million people on both sides of that conflict.

What is the issue here with Iraq? It's a dialogue with the Iraqis,

it's a dialogue with the Sunnis, the Shi'as, the Kurds. It's a dialogue

with the Syrians, the Iranians. It's a dialogue with the Middle East.

It's a dialogue with the international community to integrate ourselves

to make a commitment to the politics, to the economics, to the security

of all the peoples of the world.

So, there is hope. There is movement. And the way to solve one

conflict is to understand the nature of the culture. Talk first, for as

long as is necessary. And that dialogue got us out of the Cold War with

the Soviet Union. Nixon went to China. Kennedy did not bomb Castro in

Cuba. That can work today.

I will close with this comment from a book I recently read by Anthony

Zinni called ``The Battle For Peace.'' And Anthony Zinni described the

Cold War

where one man is in a room with a cobra alone for decades, and the man

wakes up one morning and the cobra is gone, but the room then is filled

with bees; a whole different set of circumstances. And you don't deal

with the bees the way you dealt with the cobra.

I thank all you gentlemen for coming here tonight for this integrated

dialogue so our integrity can mesh a little bit better and we will find

a solution.

I think when you generate ideas like we're having

tonight with this decision, people are free to have an enthusiastic

conversation where we can see each other's individual ingenuity. And

then it is that collective ingenuity, that individual collective

ingenuity that spawns these kinds of ideas that solve problems.

I couldn't agree more that the Iraq Study Group reassemble to

evaluate where they were just 6 months ago in their recommendations to

where we might want to be in September or sometime this fall is an

excellent idea. And I am pretty sure that those men and women would

come together to do this second reevaluation.

The other thing is, I think we, as members of our group here, Members

of Congress, we need to do some preparation ourselves prior to whatever

that announcement, whatever that assessment is going to be in

September, we have to have some preparation for what we think the

status of the conflict in Iraq needs to be.

And the third thing, while we are preparing for this report by

General Petraeus, while we are encouraging the Iraq Study Group to

reevaluate the status, as General Petraeus will, I really think it's

important for us to continue to pursue a dialogue with all of Iraq's

neighbors, including Iran and Syria.

Now, we all know that the Ahmadinejad administration, if I can say

that, has said some pretty pointed, scary, threatened things. But it is

my understanding that the Iranian people do not see the world, do not

see the United States through Ahmadinejad's eyes. The Syrian people,

the parents, the fathers, the people who want good lives for their

children, the Chamber of Commerce in Damascus wants to have a

relationship with the United States. There are many, many business

people, many, many people in Iran that want a relationship with the

United States.

So as we are preparing for this discussion in September, where we are

with the surge and where we are with the conflict, let's get the Iraq

Study Group together. Let's prepare for that statement so we understand

where we think we should be. And then let's continue to pursue, however

difficult it is, this dialogue.

I thank the gentleman.

Just very quickly on the comment from the gentleman from New York,

Syria is basically a secular country. It is not an Islamic state. It is

secular. They feared al Qaeda and the Taliban, and they don't want al

Qaeda in Iraq creating chaos. Al Qaeda was basically the enemy of the

Iranians. It was the enemy of Iraq. It was a disruptive factor in the

Middle East.

So careful analysis of each country, using the best diplomats in the

world that the United States has, has the potential for unraveling this

very difficult, chaotic situation. We know we need a military presence

in the Middle East, we know we need a political presence in the Middle

East, and we know we need an economic presence in the Middle East. With

the emphasis on the politics and the economics with the Middle Eastern

countries, I think we can back our way out of this chaos.