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House of Representatives

The House met at 8 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MCNULTY).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 16, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MICHAEL R. MCNULTY to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker, House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Almighty and Eternal God, we pray that You bless this country we love with all our hearts. We thank You for those who founded this Republic upon faith, respect for law, and constitutional rights of individuals and the common good of the Nation.

Fan the flame of freedom in the hearts of all Americans, and especially those who serve in the Armed Forces. Strengthen the resolve of all the Members of the United States House of Representatives, that they, attentive to Your commands, may follow their consciences and always do what is right as they wrestle with complex issues.

Grant that what they say with their lips they believe in their hearts, and what they believe in their hearts they may bring to practice in their lives and in the Nation.

May Your light so shine upon America that the world may see in us a glimpse of Your glory both now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LINDER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. LINDER led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

IRAQ WAR RESOLUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3 of House Resolution 157, proceedings will now resume on the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res 63) disapproving of the decision of the President announced on January 10, 2007, to deploy more than 20,000 additional United States combat troops to Iraq.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. When proceedings were postponed on Thursday, February 15, 2007, 8½ minutes of debate remained on the concurrent resolution.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 2 of House Resolution 157, and as the designee of the majority leader, I demand that the time for debate be enlarged by 1 hour, equally divided and controlled by the leaders or their designees.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, that will be the order.

The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) now has 35½ minutes remaining, and the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) has 33 minutes remaining.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL).

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, we gather today to consider a question that is profoundly simple: Do we support the President's plan to further escalate America's involvement in Iraq, or not? After 4 long, painful years in which we have seen so many young lives lost, are we now willing to put even more of our brave heroes in harm's way, or will we acknowledge that the current course is failing, that doubling down on the status quo while hoping for a better result would be foolish.

There are those who oppose this resolution because they say it would hurt the troops' morale. Hurt morale? Our leaders promised them they would be greeted as liberators. Instead, we have put them smack in the middle of a shooing gallery, policing someone else's civil war, backing an Iraqi government that refuses to stand up for itself.

We have sent our soldiers back time and again. We have sent many of them without the life-saving equipment and armor they needed, and now they say this resolution would hurt troop morale? To suggest that more of the same just won't do.

They have done their duty with courage and discipline. Now it is time for Congress to do its duty. They deserve not to be sacrificed in the furtherance of a policy that failed for the last 4 years.

From the beginning, this war has been a saga of miscalculations, mistakes and misjudgments for which America will pay in many ways for years to come. Let us not compound those bad judgments by ratifying another.

The President assures us that this escalation of war is the most promising path to a more peaceful Iraq. For the

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past 5 years we have accepted the President's assurances on Iraq, only to learn that the facts on the ground belied his aggressive assertions and rosy rhetoric. We accepted his assurances about the presence of weapons of mass destruction and Saddam's links to al Qaeda. We authorized a war on that basis, only to learn that much of what we were told simply wasn't true.

Against stern warnings, we accepted his assurances and those of the Vice President that a post-Saddam Iraq would welcome our presence and overcome deeply engrained sectarian differences. It simply wasn't true. We accepted their assurances when they told us General Shinseki was mistaken when he said we needed far more troops to stabilize Iraq than the administration planned, and that the cost of this war would be minimal. It simply wasn't true. We accepted their assurances when they told us the insurgency was in its last throes. It simply wasn't true.

Each of the last three troop surges has been countered with a surge in violence. It is for that reason that a bipartisan group of House Members and the American public oppose the forth troop increase. More troops doing more of the same is not a policy, it is not a strategy, it is not a tactic, it is the status quo plus.

The time is past for accepting this administration's assurances at face value. The human cost of its repeated assurances is too great.

Mr. Speaker, 3 years ago I asked permission to establish a temporary memorial to the fallen in Iraq in Statuary Hall. The leadership at that time refused, so I began posting the pictures of the young soldiers we have lost outside my office. I have watched as that grim line of photos has grown past my doorway to fill the corridor. More than 3,000 dead, more than 20,000 wounded. When I walk by those photos, I see the purpose, I see the pride, and I see the promise in their young faces. They were sons and daughters, husbands and wives, mothers and fathers who will never see their kids grow up.

I ask you, how long must this grim line of photographs grow before we acknowledge that this policy is not working? How many corridors must these memorials fill before we we say, not on my watch? How many more lives must we lose? How many more hearts must be broken?

It is time for this Congress to tell President Bush that his assurances are not enough. This escalation does not mean stability in Iraq, it will mean more loss and more photographs in the corridor.

I urge you to vote ''yes'' on this resolution.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I want to yield myself 1½ minutes to respond to the first assertion just made by my colleague, to the effect that we sent the troops in without what he called lifesaving equipment.

When we finished the Clinton administration, virtually no one in any of the 10 Army divisions, which, incidentally, had been cut from 14 Army divisions when that administration went into power, none of the 10 divisions that were left, virtually none of them had any bulletproof vests, any of this body armor that we talk about that our troops have today.

When we went into the first operation, we had much more than the Clinton administration had. At that point we had a number of the inserts, of the so-called Small Arms Protective Inserts. We had the outer tactical vests that incorporate those inserts with all of our Marines, with all of the infantry units going in with the U.S. Army. And very quickly after that, we developed a plan in which we fielded body armor for not only the people on the front lines, the infantry, the artillery, the armor, but also everybody that is in theater.

Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely outrageous to tell the American people that the Americans were dangerously unequipped when we went into Iraq. We went in with better equipment than we have ever had in any wars that this country has ever fought. And today, we have fielded over 40,000 pieces of new equipment that we didn't have 4 years ago that makes our troops yet more efficient.

I would like to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LINDER).

Mr. LINDER. I thank my friend for yielding.

It has been interesting to listen to this debate over several days. Two thoughts stand out. One side says nonbinding resolutions achieve nothing and insult the troops. The other side has retired to opinion polls. The American people want to end this cost of human and financial treasure. They said so in the last election.

Thank God John Adams never consulted public opinion polls. There was never a time when more than a third of our Nation was in favor of independence and freedom. Thomas Paine said, ''If there must be trouble, let it be in my day, that my child may have peace.''

World War I was not America's war, no one attacked us; but an attack was made on freedom, and we responded. The doubters wondered why we would spend money on a war so far from our shores which didn't threaten us. The doughboys at Vimmy Ridge knew why they were there.

Hitler didn't attack us, he didn't even threaten us; he threatened all that freedom meant to the world. And while we were engaged in Southeast Asia after Pearl Harbor, we still sent troops across the channel on D Day. Many mistakes were made. Troops drowned before getting to the beach. Support aircraft bombed the wrong areas. 9,386 Americans died in the Battle of Normandy and are buried there on that hill.

But the Boys of Pointe Du Hoc climbed that ridge under withering machine gun fire. They silenced the machine guns, took out the embankments and walked across Europe, and in 11 months Europe was free. We then spent billions of dollars to rebuild a free Europe.

After World War II, we spent 50 years in a war against an idea. It was a battle of the two great religions, communism and freedom. When Whittaker Chambers left communism for freedom, he told his wife that he feared that he was moving to the losing side. He knew that communism could not survive if its people believed in a higher faith; he concluded that freedom could not survive if they did not. He had become a believer; he was unsure if we remained believers.

Many of those Cold War years were not pretty. Between 1970 and 1980, the Soviets increased their influence in Cuba, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Nicaragua, Grenada, Mozambique, Angola, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, South Yemen, Libya, Iraq and Syria. We watched and were timid. We even had Members of this very body go to some of those nations' dictators to apologize for our defense of what we believed; we believed in freedom.

When Israel watched its athletes murdered at Munich, we urged caution. When terrorists continued to kill Israelis, we continued to urge caution. For 21 years we urged that great friend of ours not to respond in kind. We were timid. After the attacks began against America, beginning with the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Centers, we remained timid. We chose not to engage all of the opportunities we had to be bold. In the face of a declared war against our government and our people, we were timid.

And then September 11, 2001. We stood together on the Capitol steps in solidarity that lasted a good week, and then it became politics as usual.

I don't know if this fight for freedom can succeed when about half of our Nation doesn't know we are in it; nor do I know whether our Nation can come to an honest conclusion about what we are engaged in when all they see is the worst side of everything.

When I was last in Iraq, a young man told me about going through a city and all the residents came forth to say thank you and throw flowers. He asked the embedded reporter if that was worth a picture; he was told, ''That's not news.'' I don't know how the whole story gets told.

I do know this: This President knows that he and his commanders have made some wrong decisions, but he knows, as we must know, that this war has always been about the principle, the virtue, the idea of freedom, and to walk away now will have catastrophic consequences for its future.

President Bush believes that our Nation, more than any other, ought to defend the right of people to live free. That is the only victory we can ever have over an ideology that cannot survive in a free society.

President Bush knows why Lincoln said that he often found himself on his

knees because there was nowhere else to go.

□ 0815

He also knows, as did Lincoln, that a President must continue to fight for posterity, even when it becomes unpopular to do so.

If you believe, as I do, that the idea of freedom is still worth defending, you will vote against this resolution.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS).

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise with deep concern that this President has chosen to escalate the war in Iraq instead of charting a course towards peace.

Today, I am reminded of the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., when he spoke out against the war in Vietnam on April 4, 1967. He said, ''The world now demands a maturity of this Nation that we may not be able to achieve. It demands that we admit that we have been wrong from the beginning of our adventure in Vietnam,'' we could substitute Iraq, ''and that our actions have been detrimental to the people of that Nation.''

Mr. Speaker, war is messy. War is bloody. It tends not just to hide the truth but to sacrifice the truth. And the truth is that this was a war of choice and not a war of necessity. It was ill-fated from its inception at the highest levels of Government, and persisting in error will not fix a policy that was fundamentally flawed from the very beginning.

Thousands of our sons and daughters have been left dead on the battlefield, and tens of thousands are changed forever, wounded physically and spiritually by the brutality of war. Our soldiers are the best men and women in the world, willing to sacrifice all they have at a moment's notice to protect our freedom. They do not deserve to pay with their lives for the errors of this administration.

Mr. Speaker, we will never find the answer to the problem we have created in Iraq down the barrel of a gun. The lasting solution to this crisis will rise from skillful diplomacy, not military might. The Good Book said, ''Come let us reason together.''

We must never, ever be afraid to talk. What harm comes from sitting down with Syria, Iran and our allies in the Middle East to help bring the warring parties together? John F. Kennedy once said, ''Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable.''

My greatest fear here is that the young people growing up in the Middle East will never forget this American invasion. My greatest fear is that they will grow up to hate our children, our grandchildren and generations yet unborn, because of what we are doing today in Iraq.

Yes, we must maintain a strong national defense. We must defend our borders. We must bring an end to terrorism. But not at the expense of our democracy, not at the expense of the very principles this Nation was founded upon.

I want to close by asking a question of old, Mr. Speaker. What does it profit a great Nation to gain the whole world and lose its soul? Gandhi once said, ''It is either nonviolence or nonexistence.''

Martin Luther King, Jr., once said, ''We must learn to live together as brothers and sister or perish as fools.''

It is better to heal than to kill. It is better to reconcile than to divide. It is better to love than to hate. That is why we must vote for this resolution. We must do more.

We must not place more of our young people in harm's way. We must not continue to make our soldiers sitting ducks in a civil war. As Members of Congress, we must continue to stand up, speak up and speak out. It is our duty, it is our right, it is our moral obligation. We must find a way to get in the way until we bring our young men and women home, and not to continue to escalate this war.

Vote for this resolution. It is the right thing to do. We must send a powerful and strong message to this administration to stop this madness.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 7 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER).

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution. But, as this debate progresses, we should be proud of the sincere expressions of concern by our colleagues on both sides of the aisle and both sides of this resolution, for the lives and well-being of America's defenders who are now at risk in order to protect our country, our communities and our families.

All of us have been to heartbreaking wakes, funerals, burials; all of us have gone to the bases to see off our Reservists and our National Guardsmen and to wish them Godspeed; and all of us have been on the tarmac to greet them when they return, sometimes having lost comrades, killed or wounded. All of us want to do what is right for our defenders and for the future of our country.

So we need to be extraordinarily careful. Whatever we do today honors their efforts and their sacrifice. We should not be the authors of a policy that ensures the lives of these American heroes have been lost in vain. If at the end of this episode our country is at greater risk, then indeed their lives will have been lost in vain.

I am supporting this last effort, this last chance, if you will, to see that our commitment to Iraq will not result in failure. A failure now will have consequences that are worse than the price that we are now paying in blood and treasure. We do not have the option of walking away without consequences. No amount of midwest corn pressed into ethanol will allow us to ignore the Middle East.

Helping establish moderate democratic governments in the Middle East is not just a favorite of the people there, but it is an imperative to our own prosperity and security. Our dependency based friendships with oil-rich yet dictatorial regimes has set the parameters for the fundamental decisions American leaders have made. It has skewed our ability to be a force for freedom and progress. And it is freedom and progress that shield us from the whims of feudalistic, corrupt despots and religious megalomaniacs. It is the onslaught of freedom that will change that reality that we are now dependent upon.

That is what we had to deal with, and now we have come to this moment of decision. I wish it were not so. But it is a sad reality that what is right is usually not easy. The right course is, in the long term, usually frustrating and heart-wrenching. There are stalls and reverses to every historically significant event and undertaking.

There are always those who walk away when the road gets rough, who cannot see the end and when uncertainty looms. If one seeks certainty, bold actions will never happen. Only if we are bold to our enemies and steadfast will we ever succeed in any international endeavor.

The current conflict in Iraq has several dimensions; and, yes, it is between the Sunnis and the radical Shiite sects of Islam, a bloody Janus, with one face to Tehran and the other to Riyadh.

But don't be fooled, Mr. Speaker. The murderers, torturers and the haters on both sides revile the United States. The sword of Sadr and the bombs of al-Qaeda have turned on each other, but they both have a dream that is close to their hearts, and that dream is a nightmare to those who cherish freedom and to those who stand with liberty and seek comity among the people of the world. That macabre nightmare is the removal of the United States influence from the Muslim world.

You see, there is another force in Iraq and throughout that part of the world, where the majority of people are guided by the visions of the prophet Mohammed. Those of whom I speak are those Muslims who desire liberty and justice, who want government to be elected and directed by the people, who do not want to live their life in fear and would choose a positive relationship with the western world.

They are there, as we have witnessed in one of the most devout Muslim countries of the world, Afghanistan. It was not the American soldiers but the Afghan people themselves who drove out the Taliban and al-Qaeda from their country. Similarly, moderate Muslims, people of good will all over the Middle East, and they are there and they tremble that America will lose its resolve and retreat before a radical form of Islam.

An American retreat condemns them to suppression under the heels of fanatic Muslims who hate our way of life

and are willing to murder anyone who suggests that Islam and the West can live in peace with one another and that we can respect each other's faith and build a better, more peaceful and, yes, a freer world.

Mr. Speaker, if the sole superpower cannot stabilize Iraq, we are not a superpower. If we cannot thwart such a gang of bandits and savages as we face in Iraq, who will stand with us anywhere? Who will be our ally? We must not lose in Iraq.

But what does that mean? That means we must not leave that country defeated and in retreat or we and our families will lose and in the short run pay a horrible price. Yes, if we retreat from Iraq, these ghouls who kill civilians, who would kill civilians and are currently killing civilians by the tens of thousands, they will follow us home and they will be emboldened.

The sides are chosen, the game is in play. We will determine, not the terrorists or the radical lunatics, who stands and who falls, who marches forward and who retreats. All of this will be determined by our military capabilities, our technological advantages, but even more so by our will, by our desire and by our sure grit.

What we do today makes the future. We choose how it will be shaped.

I am reminded of General Petain, the French commander who fought the Germans at the Battle of Verdun. Some attribute the phrase ''they shall not pass'' to him. Well, he rallied the French people to that German onslaught. But, 20 years later, he capitulated to Nazi Germany almost without a fight, because he and the people of France viewed the Second World War as not worthy of the price necessary to prevent a Nazi victory.

Well, did that defeatism and appeasement, what did it do? The cost was unimaginable.

Let us today not make this severe misjudgment again about the magnitude of the downside of retreating before an evil force that threatens the West. There will be a cost with the retreat.

So let us note that what we do in Iraq will determine if the West will truly stand behind any ally of freedom and any enemy of radical Islam. Let us make sure there is hope in the Middle East and throughout the world.

Mr. Speaker, let us today not make this severe misjudgment again about the magnitude of the down side of retreating before an evil force that threatens the West. There will be a cost if we retreat. Many in this Chamber supported military interventions around the world during the 1990s, including numerous civil wars, situations from which they now claim the United States should steer clear. However, the consequences of withdrawal from Bosnia or Haiti pale in comparison to withdrawal from Iraq.

What happens in Iraq determines if the West will truly stand behind democratic government in the Middle East and elsewhere in the Islamic world. Moderate Muslims must have confidence in our ability to triumph over our fears, to withstand humanitarian impulses to simply disengage from conflict, not to give in to force and pressure when applied by an enemy. Otherwise, we lose. The world loses. The moderates of the Islamic world will never prevail against this evil unless we are with them and have courage and persevere, unless we are willing to hold the line, until the moderate forces in the Islamic world can take up the fight with a reasonable chance of victory.

On the flip side, only a defeat of radical Islam will bring peace to that troubled region. A loss of faith in America's ability to persevere in the Middle East would be a catalyst for catastrophe. That region in chaos would disrupt the entire world economy. Shifts of power would channel enormous resources into the hands of the enemies of Western civilization, enemies of the United States. It's a frightening picture that doesn't need to happen.

How is this different than a year ago? The difference is 1,000 American lives lost in a distant, foreign land. America is war weary. I too am weary. Every story of another young person, blown apart, rips at my heart. Those Americans who have gone are volunteers, heroes all. We owe it to them not to call it off and change direction in haste. To withdraw quickly, without honor, that would indeed mean their lives were lost in vain. It would mean the next front line battle will be the home front.

I, then, am one who is not anxious to declare defeat and retreat from Iraq. I am willing to give the Iraqi people a while longer, a slot of time, to step forward and meet the bloody, yet historic, challenge that faces them. We can't do it for them, but we can, as the world's leading free nation, give them this chance. Otherwise, we are clearly not a leading nation at all. We are too weary to lead. That is not the America I know. Today we define ourselves, to the world, and to our children. We must have a commitment to our ideals and courage.

America has a crucial role to play in this world and we are America. Let us not fail in this our historic responsibility.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota, the chairman of the Agriculture Committee, my friend, Mr. PETERSON.

Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, by nearly all measures, the situation in Iraq is a mess. And yet what seems crystal clear to most Minnesoteans the President says that we still have a realistic chance to achieve his vision for a free and democratic Iraq and that all is needed is a short-term addition of 21,000 American combat troops. Does nobody seriously think that this is true, that success is only 21,000 more soldiers away?

Mr. Speaker, I am against the President's plan. I have given this President the benefit of the doubt on more than one occasion. But his plan to send in more troops does not pass the test of common sense. If a short-term surge was going to deliver victory and democracy in Iraq, we would have already done it.

This idea would have made more sense at the beginning of this war. And more troops at the start were what many experts counseled. I was serving on the Select Intelligence Committee when the President, senior Pentagon officials, and senior intelligence officials told us that Iraq was a threat to our national security. At the time, we had a great deal of confusing and occasionally conflicting information.

We questioned them about this, and their response was that the information that they had required us to act and that they had a plan for the aftermath. I gave them the benefit of the doubt then, and I believed them.

But as time passed and events unfolded, we all learned that, at best, we had received unreliable information and, at worst, we had been misled.

□ 0830

Mr. Speaker, I want to focus now on the soldiers in the Minnesota National Guard and talk about what the President's plan is going to mean for them.

A Minnesota Guardsman, a staff sergeant who is currently deployed in Iraq, and, by the way, that is the same rank I held when I left the Guard, sent a letter to the editor of one the newspapers in my district; and I want to read some of it to you.

He says, ''My unit, the Second Battalion, 136th Infantry, Bear Cats of Minnesota, which are now the 34th Infantry Division 1, First Brigade, is on its second deployment since 2003. In 2003, we were mobilized for a 10-month deployment to Bosnia. We returned home in April of 2004 and were mobilized again in October, 2005, for our current Iraq deployment. When our current deployment is complete, the 134th Combat Battalion will have spent 490 days in combat, exceeding the current record held by the First Armored Division, an active duty armor unit, by 35 days. A great deal has been asked of us and more will be asked of us in the near future. But our benefits do not reflect the burden that we carry.''

He says that, ''while the State and the people of Minnesota have been extremely generous towards their soldiers, the Federal Government continues to treat Minnesota soldiers like unwanted stepchildren by neglecting to give them the benefits that better reflect their roles in today's military, that is as full-time, front-line soldiers who are used on a regular basis, rather than sparingly. However, it is not our choice to be full-time soldiers, a capacity that we essentially fill for the military, given the frequency of deployments and the sheer numbers of National Guard and Reserve troops deployed across the globe at any one time. If the military is going to use the National Guard in an active duty capacity, it must increase our benefits to go along with the responsibility or there will be no National Guard for the Federal and State governments to rely upon in times of crisis.''

Mr. Speaker, I think he said it clearly; and I couldn't agree more. When called upon to serve our country, the Minnesota National Guard has a proud

history of answering that call. Over 2,500 soldiers of the Minnesota National Guard are in Iraq. Many of them were already deployed overseas, as I said, in Bosnia; and they were slated to come home in March. But, instead, they are having their tour extended for 4 more months because of this administration's plan.

Now they are scheduled to come home in July and will have spent 22 months away from their families. They will have been deployed a total of 36 months out of the last 5 years. In my opinion, that is unacceptable, and I say, enough is enough.

The soldiers of the Minnesota National Guard are performing their duties admirably. They are performing well or better than the regular Army. They are serious about completing their mission; and, from my experience, they will always do more than what is asked of them.

Another group of people that I would like to recognize are the Guard's families. They are not in harm's way, but they wake up every day worrying, not knowing what that day will about bring for their loved ones. They didn't enlist for the military, but they share their daily effects of this war.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to oppose this plan.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 5 minutes to Mr. WESTMORELAND, the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, if this undemocratic, smoke-and-mirrors Congress had been in power throughout our Nation's history, I am not sure we would have much to celebrate this weekend when we commemorate Presidents Day. On Monday, we honor the Presidents who guided our Nation through its toughest moments, Presidents who made tough decisions in the face of public skepticism despite great peril and unimaginable sacrifice.

Not all Americans supported General George Washington's campaign against the British, yet our Nation's father led a ragtag band of underfed and underequipped soldiers to victory over the greatest military of its day.

Not all Americans supported President Lincoln's decision to go to war to preserve the Union. It seems inevitable today, but, at the time, many Americans would have preferred to save the lives, treasure, and misery and just let the Nation cleave into two. But Lincoln decided to preserve the Union, a Union that, in time, would become the greatest, most powerful nation on earth, even though he had to wage the deadliest war in U.S. history, with 600,000 lives lost.

I wonder what the forebears of today's Democratic Party would think of their policy of retreat and defeat? What would they think of the timidity in the face of great danger?

What happened to the legacy of Woodrow Wilson, who faced down American skeptics to lead us to victory in World War I?

What happened to the legacy of FDR, who faced down American isolationists to defeat the evils of German fascism and the militarism of imperial Japan?

What happened to the legacy of Harry Truman, the first President to realize the peril of the Soviets and entered our war-weary Nation into the fight against the spread of communism?

The wisdom of their decisions wasn't necessarily clear to all Americans of their day, but the judgment of history validates their leadership.

Today, our Commander in Chief sees the danger to our Nation's security and freedom posed by Islamic extremist forces in the Middle East. Many in this Congress choose to believe that the violence in Iraq is a local problem. To some degree, it is, but it is also a problem for the United States.

If we were to follow the proposals of Democratic leaders, we would pull out our troops and let Iraq become a failed State. Anarchy in Iraq would give al Qaeda and other extremists a safe haven to train and plot attacks. It was in the failed states of the Sudan and Afghanistan that al Qaeda was able to plan the African embassy bombings, the attack on the USS *Cole* and the September 11 disasters.

The smoke and mirrors Democratic Congress wants it both ways. On the one hand, they say this is a nonbinding resolution. On the other hand, they say this is a first step.

Given how Democratic leaders have battled to one-up each other and have allowed their rhetoric to spiral, how can this nonbinding resolution be anything but a first step?

How can Democrats stop with the nonbinding resolution if they agree with Senator OBAMA that lives lost in Iraq have been ''wasted?''

This nonbinding resolution expresses disapproval of the military plan to strengthen our forces in Iraq and give them the resources they need. By the end of this week, every Member of this House will be on the record and answerable to their constituents about whether they are for or against the military plan.

My colleagues who vote for this resolution are for one of two things. They are either for retreat and defeat, or stay the course.

We all agree that changes need to be made, that changes need to take us toward a stable and peaceful Iraq. Withdrawal would take us in the opposite direction.

Let's reject this smoke-and-mirrors resolution and continue to fight, take the fight to the terrorists.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend, the gentleman from Massachusetts, the chairman of the Financial Services Committee, Mr. FRANK.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, we have just heard a great example of an important form of political debate. The Republicans specialize in this. It is kind of political necrophilia. There is this love of dead Democrats among many Republicans. Democrats who, when they were alive were trashed by the right wing, once they are dead and safely no longer possibly candidates for office, get lionized. Nothing of course shows that better than with Harry Truman, but it is John Kennedy, and it is others.

The assertion that the Democrats who are supporting this resolution, and the unspoken Republicans who will be joining with us, that we somehow oppose the use of force is terrible history. It is wrong. In fact, the most recent entirely successful use of military force by the United States came from a Democratic President, Bill Clinton—he's still alive, so don't say good things about him—and supported by Democrats in Congress, and it was opposed by many of the Republicans, including many of the current Republican leadership.

Under Bill Clinton, American military forces were used quite successfully; and the result is not perfection but a much better situation in the former Yugoslavia than we had before. And the Republicans brought forth, guess what, nonbinding resolutions.

Now, they pretend to be upset about nonbinding resolutions. Frankly, I was a little encouraged when I heard the Bush administration criticize nonbinding resolutions, because, up till now, I had thought that Bush and Cheney thought that everything we did was nonbinding with regard to national security. So they were at least implicitly conceding that some things can be binding.

But the fact is that the Democrats strongly supported—I didn't mean to make it partisan, they did—the effort in Yugoslavia over Republican opposition.

And then let's talk about terrorists. We were attacked in 9/11 from Afghanistan and overwhelmingly, with only one exception, Democrats in the House and Senate supported the war in Afghanistan. We are continuing to support that war in Afghanistan.

I am critical of an administration which has diverted military resources and energy and political resources from Afghanistan. They are weakening the number one fight against terrorism, which is in Afghanistan. And that is one of the reasons for opposing this war in Iraq.

Now, the war in Iraq has been, in my judgment, the greatest national security disaster in America history. And it isn't one in which we got sucked in and had to defend ourselves. It was an entirely voluntary error. This administration unwisely went into Iraq on inaccurate grounds; and not only did they make the wrong war, they have been disastrously wrong in virtually every decision. So the question now is, are we doing more good than harm to the causes we care about?

I believe, in fact, that fighting terrorism, fighting extremism, fighting that particularly radical fundamentalist form of Islam, not all Islam, obviously, by all means, that that is

weakened by our being in Iraq. It has clearly weakened our effort in Afghanistan. The commanders in Afghanistan beg for more troops, and instead they go uselessly to Iraq, uselessly not because of the lack of capacity of the fighting people but because they are condemned to fight in a very mistaken strategy.

It has emboldened radicals elsewhere. This administration predicted that our overthrowing Saddam Hussein would strengthen the forces of moderation. In fact, it has weakened them.

Let's remember that when America invaded Afghanistan with the overwhelming support of both parties and the united support of this country, we were popular in the world. We mobilized the world. And since that time came the invasion of Iraq. And because of the mistaken decision and the poor way in which it is carried out, I do not think there has been a time in recent history when America has been less able to accomplish in the world the things we want to accomplish.

So then the question is, okay, but isn't this escalation going to change that?

There is zero reason to think that. First, we are told this is what the administration says. If ever any group of people forfeited their right to be listened to, it is the collection of people who have shown an aggressive incompetence with regard to Iraq. Can anyone think of a single decision from the invasion forward that has been correct, that has been borne out by events?

So why do you take people who have been wrong about everything, wrong about the politics, wrong about the military situation, wrong about the economy, and then you say, oh, but this time we think they got it right. Maybe it is the theory of random occurrences, that people, having been wrong so often and so consistently, they are owed one. But that is not a basis on which we ought to be making a decision.

This war in Iraq continues to hurt rather than help our efforts overall. If I thought we were doing some good there, then it would be a different story. But the causes of the disaster, in addition to the rampant incompetence of this administration at virtually all levels, the cause of the disaster is internal, it is ethnic and political and a whole range of other things within Iraq. It is not a lack of American firepower.

So to try to resolve this disaster by taking the advice of people who created the disaster and have been wrong about it would be a terrible error, and I hope the resolution passes.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, let me just take 2 minutes to respond to my colleague who has just made a number of points.

First, there are a number of live Democrats that I like to refer to. When somebody asks me whether or not Saddam Hussein was indeed a dangerous terrorist in and of himself, I like to take the words of all of the Democrat leadership of this country in the 1990s, when, in their words, there was no Bush administration to trick them, who made that point very, very forcefully.

Secondly, the invasion of Iraq and the taking of Baghdad in record time with very low casualties has been described by most military leaders as being a remarkably efficient and effective operation. In fact, while we had people saying that our troops would be bogged down, the same talk shows would be interrupted with a news flash that Tommy Franks had taken yet another stronghold of Saddam Hussein.

□ 0845

We took Baghdad with very low casualties, very, very quickly, in a very effective and efficient military operation.

Lastly, I don't think that the gentleman can say that there have been no ripples, no ripples whatsoever in the Middle East with respect to freedom and democracy and people wanting to be free as a result of the elections in Iraq. There clearly was action in Libya where they moved lots of parts of their nuclear weapons program which are now residing in the United States, I think as a result of American actions there. Clearly actions toward freedom, toward ejecting the Syrians from Lebanon and moving toward multiparty elections in Egypt. All imperfect to be sure but nonetheless reactions from our operation in Iraq.

Lastly, I would just say to my colleague let me just say to my colleague, there are no smooth roads. The smooth roads not taken, that have been held out by the armchair critics, like we should have kept Saddam Hussein's army in place, that was an army with 11,000 Sunni generals. What are you going to do with an army with 11,000 Sunni generals? Certainly not establish stability in a country in which you have a Shiite majority.

The idea that we needed to have 300,000 Americans in Iraq and yet at the same time put an Iraqi face, as a number of the critics have said, on the military apparatus.

So I think a number of the gentleman's points have been strongly disproven by the American operation in Iraq. We are in the second period right now of a three-phase operation: stand up a free government; stand up a military capable of protecting that free government; lastly, the Americans leave. Let's give the second phase a chance to work.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON).

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Will the gentleman yield to me 15 seconds to respond?

Mr. HUNTER. I like a full debate. If the gentleman will hold on.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Who yields time?

Mr. HUNTER. Let me allow the gentleman from Missouri to yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman from Massachusetts 30 seconds.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. If the gentleman from California wants to claim Iraq as a success, he is entitled to do that. I must say that the initial victory was a very deceptive one, because it led to the current situation. But the biggest difference between us, I guess, is when he cites Lebanon as one of the successful ripples, as he says. In fact, the terrible tragedy that went on in Lebanon that was initially something that was promising, we have had that war with Hezbollah in control in Israel, I think Lebanon is a further sad example of the extent to which this misguided and badly run operation in Iraq has sadly strengthened the most radical and anti-American forces in the Middle East, not weaken them.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I want to yield myself 15 seconds to make a response to that last point.

My last point wasn't that Lebanon is California or New York or Massachusetts. My last point was that the free elections in Iraq inspired the Lebanese to work to eject the Syrian influence, which I think the gentleman would agree was not a good influence in Lebanon. It inspired people to want to be free.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Does the gentleman consider Lebanon or Syria free today?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. HUNTER. If the gentleman gets more time, I will be happy to engage with him.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON).

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Thank you, Mr. HUNTER, for your leadership, your military service, and your son's military service.

Mr. Speaker, complete discussion regarding the way forward in Iraq is certainly appropriate. In fact, it's our duty as elected public officials. It is sad that the resolution before us offers no solutions. It is contradictory to say in one paragraph that we support the troops and in the next paragraph oppose reinforcements for them. As the parent of a son who served proudly in Iraq and three others in the military, I want to fully support the troops.

Al Qaeda spokesman Zawahiri has made it clear that Iraq is the central front in the global war on terrorism. In a January 22, 2007 transcript, Zawahiri boasted, ''The backing of the jihad in Afghanistan and Iraq today is to back the most important battlefields.'' The enemy know Iraq is the central front of the global war on terrorism.

We must put our trust in the commanders on the ground who are living the situations we are merely debating. General David Petraeus in Baghdad is an accomplished general with a proven record of success. He has expressed his confidence that victory in Iraq can be achieved—provided he has the personnel required to do so. General

Petraeus has just been unanimously confirmed by the U.S. Senate to lead our troops in Iraq. We need to support him with reinforcements.

In my six visits to Iraq, I have gone to encourage our troops, but each time it is them who have encouraged me. They know firsthand that the enemies fighting us today in Iraq want to fight in the streets of America tomorrow. We must face them today to protect American families.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The question is, where are we today? We are looking at this conflict today and the consequences that it has upon tomorrow and tomorrow's military readiness.

I spoke about the lack of readiness last summer. Others did as well. We had a hearing on it a good number of months ago, our committee responded, and we thank the gentleman from California for helping in that massive effort to re-equip our Army as was necessary, and hopefully we will be able to do more in the future.

But where are we today? Yesterday regarding the issue of readiness of our Army, the Army Chief of Staff, General Schoomaker, said that the increase of 17,500 Army combat troops in Iraq represents only the tip of the iceberg and will potentially require thousands of additional support troops and trainers as well as equipment, further eroding the Army's readiness to respond to other world contingencies.

In the last 30 years, there have been 12 military engagements, some large, some small, that our country has engaged in. The Pentagon says they would only need some 2,500 support troops for the 20,000-plus combat troops. The Congressional Budget Office says there is going to be a necessary 13,000 in additional support troops. But the issue of readiness is real, it is there today because of additional combat troops, and that is what we are debating today. That is exactly the issue today. The readiness of tomorrow is contingent upon what happens today.

I yield, Mr. Speaker, 5 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK).

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, as we wind up this debate on escalating the war in Iraq, I wish to thank Speaker PELOSI for allowing Members of Congress to express themselves on the most serious debate that will occur in the 110th Congress. Perhaps more importantly, we should thank the American people for voting for a new majority which has allowed a free and open debate on the President's plan to escalate the war. With their votes, the American people have clearly demanded a new direction for the war in Iraq. Today's debate symbolizes more than just a debate on escalating the war, the debate symbolizes a new direction for America's policy in Iraq driven by the American people, not by a President who has lost touch.

In October of 2002, just before the general election, President Bush insisted a vote be held on Resolution 114 which would allow the use of Armed Forces of the United States as he determines to be necessary and appropriate in Iraq. At that time, I argued that the United States did not have the moral, legal and ethical authority to go to war with Iraq and that our Nation would lose its moral authority to speak out against aggression throughout the world.

It would be very easy for me to stand here and remind my constituents that I voted against the war in Iraq. It is sufficient, however, to simply note that the evidence to justify the war has been repudiated. Rationale for this war has been inadequate. And our Nation's credibility has been eroded.

While some of us opposed the war in Iraq, our support for our troops has never wavered. Congress has appropriated the supplies and the resources to assure that our troops have what they need to accomplish their mission and return home safely. We know too painfully that more than 3,100 Americans have not returned home and more than 23,000 have been wounded. We have visited with the wounded and comforted the families of the fallen. We simply cannot allow the President to continue to fight this war as if there were no consequences for our troops, their families and our country. By standing up against this escalation of the war, we are supporting the troops.

Because of this war, many lives have been shattered and broken. I speak of the lives of family members who have lost loved ones. I speak of the brave troops recovering from their wounds at Walter Reed Army Hospital or the recently dedicated amputee clinic in Texas. As a Nation, we are comprised of a reasonable, noble, compassionate and determined people.

I believe that it is not in our Nation's best interest to leave a shattered and broken Iraq behind. Still, we cannot continue with a policy of military might and no diplomatic foresight. Instead of military escalation, our Nation should embark upon a diplomatic and political escalation. The current administration with its ''military might makes right'' philosophy is no longer applicable in Iraq. This administration has not seriously focused on the diplomacy and political persuasion necessary to end this war.

I am struck by the recent news out of Korea. It is reported that after years of negotiation, the administration may have reached an agreement with North Korea on its nuclear threat. The journey was long, discussions were difficult, diplomacy was frustrating, but we may have accomplished our goal without having to go to war. There is a lesson to be learned here, reflected in the words of an American journalist, Anne O'Hare McCormick, who said:

''Today the real test of power is not the capacity to make war but the capacity to prevent it.''

I call on the Bush administration and this Congress to escalate diplomacy. I call on the Bush administration and this Congress to escalate political pressure. This war is a mistake and what we need now is a President who has the courage to admit his mistake. We need a President who will bring peace and stability to Iraq through diplomacy rather than military force.

In an earlier time, in an earlier war, a young man spoke out. That young man was Bobby Kennedy and his words have lived with me for many years. So to our service men and women, to my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives, and to those whose hearts are burdened by war, I leave you Bobby's challenge:

''Diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped each time a man stands up for an ideal or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest wall.''

Our vote for this resolution will not stop the war in Iraq. It will not restore the shattered and broken lives here in America and in Iraq. It will not bring peace and stability to Iraq. But it will send a tiny ripple of hope.

I still believe in that tiny ripple of hope.

I still believe in diverse acts of courage.

I still believe in the greatness of America.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) for 4 minutes.

Mr. KIRK. I thank the distinguished chairman.

Our uniformed men and women have given great service to the Nation by ending a tyrant's rein and fostering elections in a region that only knew dictatorship. In my judgment now, the time for decisive military action led by American and British forces is ending and the Iraqi stage should be delivered to new political leaders to work out their own differences. I will support the House resolution that recommends against the troop surge because the United States should increase the responsibilities of the elected Iraqi government to solve its own problems while reducing the number of American combat troops sent overseas.

I did not come to this conclusion lightly. The long-term security of our country depends on the United States not being defeated in the Middle East. To prevent the collapse of democracy, tolerance and supporters in our region, we need a policy that relies on America's key strengths and builds additional support among our citizens and allies.

Looking back on the last years, our troops in Iraq achieved two major objectives: First, they ended the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein, a leader that

invaded two separate United Nations member countries and ordered the murder of several hundred thousand Iraqis. Second, they backed the United Nations' sponsorship of Iraq's three national elections that approved a new constitution and government.

□ 0900

Iraq is no longer a military threat to her neighbors or minorities, especially her Kurdish families, who no longer fear that a third genocide campaign will be launched by their very own government. These are major achievements, worthy of the bravery and sacrifice of Americans in uniform.

But Iraq now faces new challenges that should be solved by Iraqis, not the U.S. military. Iraq's government, led by a Kurdish president and a Shia prime minister, faces a daunting enemy composed of people that would restore the old dictatorship, or worse. But this struggle is primarily political, not military. Foreign troops, be they American or British or otherwise, are not well-suited to advance the elected government's writ.

In the coming months we should build a longer term plan for the United States and our allies in the Middle East. Man for man, Iraqi combat troops operating under the authority of their own elected government are better suited for this mission than Americans on the front lines of Iraq.

The U.S. military can offer unique advantages to the Iraqi government in our ability to provide the Iraqi army and police with logistics, communications, training and intelligence, in a way that only Americans can provide. Over the coming months, Americans should be focused on these missions, making sure that our Iraqi allies are more effective in extending the authority of their government. By winding down the combat duties of Americans, we will dramatically lower the risk to our men and women stationed overseas while providing a decisive advantage to the elected government of Iraq. This is how to win the battle and secure a lasting government for the Iraqi people.

Our plan should be strengthened by a diplomatic initiative among Iraq's neighbors and the World Bank to support the elected government in its plans for reconstruction. To date, the World Bank has been ''absent without leave'' in delivering help to this founding member of the International Bank For Reconstruction and Development.

Our efforts, based on the key American advantages, while reducing the number of American combat troops, will improve the prospects for peace and build support for our goals here and among our allies.

Mr. Speaker, I join with many Members today to say if it were up to us, we would recommend a different course of action that involves less risk to Americans. As a military man, I am fully aware that the Constitution does not place 535 Members of Congress in the direct military chain of command, and Americans who wear the uniform are also not shy in debating various courses of action. They have as many opinions on various issues as any civilian community, and that is their birthright as Americans. But as volunteers who wear the uniform, they take on an additional heavy obligation to make a decision, to bring an end to the debate, and to confront the enemies of the United States as brothers and sisters united by a common bond.

In coming days, our troops will face danger, not as Democrats, Independents or Republicans, but as Americans.

We in Congress should draw on their strength once our decision is made. When a course of action is set, we are not neutral in the contest. If Americans are engaged in combat, we are for the Americans winning. We will give them the tools to bring an end to the conflict as rapidly as possible. The debate in Congress will soon close and the course will be set. For those Americans who serve farthest from home, they should know that after a vigorous debate, their democracy will make a decision, and we will back those charged with its implementation with everything needed to succeed.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 5 minutes to my friend the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT), the chairman of the Budget Committee and also a member of the Armed Services Committee.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and rise to support the resolution and to talk about something the President seldom mentions, the cost of the war in Iraq. In deciding what we should do, cost is not the determining factor, but it is considerable, and with costs overall approaching $500 billion, it has to be a factor.

During the first Persian Gulf War we had real allies, Britain, France, the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia, and our gross cost was around $80 billion in current dollars. But Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States contributed in kind about $16 billion, and allies like Germany and Japan and Saudi Arabia contributed in cash around $60 billion, so the net cost to the United States was a mere $4 billion.

Because we had allies willing to share the burden, the cost of the first Gulf War was minimal. But in this war our President was able to enlist only one major ally, Great Britain, and he chose to go it alone with a motley coalition. That is one reason this war is proving more costly than the first, in lives and in dollars.

So far, over 3,100 service men and women have been killed in action; so far, over 23,000 have been wounded in action, many of them grievously; and so far, Congress has appropriated $379 billion for the war in Iraq.

As we speak, two supplemental appropriation bills are on deck. One is to cover operations in Iraq for the rest of fiscal 07, and it provides $100 billion to the $70 billion provided last year. The other supplemental is to cover operations in Iraq during fiscal 08, and it provides $145 billion. These bills, when passed, will push appropriations for the war in Iraq over $600 billion. $600 billion. When the 08 supplemental is added to the 08 base budget, these two will push appropriations for fiscal year 2008 alone to $643 billion. In constant dollars, that is more than we spent at the peak of Korea or Vietnam.

In a few weeks we will enter the fifth year of our engagement in Iraq. You would think after 5 years spending would come down. But spending over this time has not come down, it has gone up. Three years ago, 2004, the Pentagon was obligating money for Iraq at the rate of $4.8 billion a month. Today the Pentagon is obligating money for Iraq at the rate of $8.6 billion a month, and considering the supplemental for 07, with $170 billion, and the surge in Baghdad, the obligation rate will probably rise to $10 billion a month by the end of this year.

To support this surge, the President has called for five brigades, 21,500 additional troops. He sends a supplemental of $3.2 billion to pay for these troops. The CBO says, how about the support troops? How about the staff? This will cost billions more.

CBO has also looked out 10 years and tried to figure what future costs might be. By its estimation, future operations in Iraq and Afghanistan together could come to $824 billion between 2008 and 2017. Mind you, this assumes that the troops deployed in these theaters will be declining from a little over 200,000 today to a steady state of 75,000 in 2013.

If future costs are split 75–25, then over the next 10 years that is another $600 billion in store for us. Surely, surely at this juncture, as spending surges head upwards to more than $10 billion a month, surely we should ask whether we want to raise our commitment of troops and thrust them into a civil war with no clear exit, no timetable for completion, and, worse still, an urban war.

The Pentagon will say they can't see past 2008 and they don't know what the budget is for the outyears, and they will probably dispute this end state of 75,000 troops in the two theaters 10 years from now. And I hope they are right.

But there are other costs, the cost of ''reset,'' of refurbishing or repairing our equipment, which our commanders have told us could easily be $60 billion to $70 billion. And I haven't talked about the toll on our troops and their families, where some will soon be going for their third tour. The dwell time between tours is now 1 year instead of 2 years.

Whenever you go into the field to visit these troops, you have to be impressed with their attitude, with their readiness to serve and their willingness to sacrifice. I have always come away from these experiences saying thank God there are such Americans. They deserve our admiration and support, but they also deserve something else. They deserve not to be asked to do

what Iraqi troops and Iraqi police should do themselves.

For the past 2 years, the Bush administration has said to us just forebear, just wait, because we are training Iraqi forces, and as soon as these forces are stood up, ours can be stood down. Well, 118 Iraqi battalions have been stood up, and none of ours have been stood down.

In the Defense Authorization Act for 2006, Congress enacted this policy into law. We called for 2006 to be a year of transition. The resolution before us embodies that notion. The resolution heeds that advice. It does not call for pulling out our troops. It does not call for cutting off our funds. It says simply but solemnly that we disagree with the surge of our troops, thrust into what the Intelligence Estimate has called ''self-sustaining sectarian violence,'' especially when there are more than 118 Iraqi battalions trained to take on that task.

It is time for them to stand up and us to stand down, and Baghdad is a good place to start.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON), the ranking member on the Committee on Education and Labor.

Mr. MCKEON. I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H. Con. Res. 63 and in support of a just cause that is facing a critical turning point. The outcome hangs in the balance, and, Mr. Speaker, we should not kid ourselves into believing that victory is foreordained.

Churchill once said that there would not be war if both sides did not believe that they could win it. The enemy we face in Iraq and in the broader war against the radical Islamists is driven by an apocalyptic vision of God, and because such apocalyptic visions are rooted in faith and not facts, they are very hard to dispel. We, therefore, face an opponent who is neither open to reason nor to compromise, nor will he necessarily be defeated by calculations of military strategy and prudence.

We face the paradox of a perilous time. At the opening of the 21st century, we are opposed by an adversary who preaches the savagery and barbarism of the 12th century. We face in Iraq an enemy that will allow us absolutely no quarter, and, Mr. Speaker, I am bound to say that I think we in this chamber, and, indeed, even in the country at large, have been slow to grasp that fact.

However, the difficulty of the fight should not dissuade us from waging it if the cause is just, and the cause is just.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the sad duty to attend the funerals of several of the servicemen killed in Iraq who come from my district. There are those who say that we should not withdraw from Iraq because to do so would mean that they died in vain. That is not correct. Nothing that we have done or will do will ever subtract one ounce from the valor and nobility of those who have died in the service of their country.

As Lincoln said in the Gettysburg Address, ''We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract.''

However, we should pause to note that our service men and women are fighting and sometimes dying because they know the terrible price that will be paid if our adversaries prevail. They have seen, as I have seen when I traveled to Iraq, what a world our enemies would have us live in. It is a world filled by a grotesque and distorted vision of God. It is a world of slavery and submission, where the Almighty is not a benevolent and loving creator of his children, but rather is a pagan idol that demands blood sacrifice and glories in the murder of the innocent.

You need look no further than the carnage in Baghdad, or Kabul, or Mogadishu, or never let us forget the Twin Towers, to see the truth in that axiom. That is what our enemy, for all his talk of God, seeks to do, and we are all that stands between our adversary and the realization of this nihilistic vision.

Mr. Speaker, there are those in this House who are far better versed than I in the strategy and military calculations that are the essence of this conflict. There are those who say that we mistakenly entered the war in Iraq on the basis of flawed intelligence. This, I think, underestimates the nature of our adversary.

Given the expansiveness of our enemy's nightmare vision, I think it is safe to say there would have been a war in Iraq no matter what we did. That, of course, will be for historians to decide. But this much I do know: We stand for hope. We fight for peace in a world that is free. We sacrifice now so that the little children that I met when I was in Iraq might live in a better world tomorrow, and because they will have a better world, we Americans will live in a safer one. To quote DeGaulle, ''Behind this terrible cloud of our blood and tears here is the sun of our grandeur shining out once again.''

Mr. Speaker, I do have one concern. I think that we in this Congress have allowed too wide a gap to develop between the society we help to govern and the war we have been compelled to wage. We have to correct this, because we will not win this war in Iraq or beyond unless we as a Nation come to grips with what we face and begin to act accordingly.

We must never forget, to quote Lincoln again, ''Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it, nothing can succeed.'' Right now I look around me and I see a Congress and a country distracted, and nothing could be deadlier to our security and our hopes for a better future.

To some extent, this is understandable. America is and has every right to be tired of conflict. In 1917, for the first time we went ''over there'' to make the world safe for democracy. In 1941, in Churchill's evocative phrase, the new world stepped forth, yet again, to the rescue and liberation of the old.

□ 0915

Then after 1945, we stayed on to wage the long twilight struggle that came to be called the Cold War.

Then, in 1989, a miracle. We stopped holding our breaths. The Berlin Wall came down and the Soviet Union disappeared. The hair trigger nightmare of the nuclear world seemed to recede. We came off of the figurative tip-toes on which we had been standing for nearly 50 years. We had grown so accustomed to it that when the Cold War ended, we scarcely realized just how nerve wracking, and what a strain, it had all been.

Now here we are again. More war, more sacrifice, more death. It is not a pleasant picture but it offers this. It offers hope. It offers an alternative to yet another in a long line of obscene and perverted visions that seem to be forever conjured in the minds of men.

Mr. Speaker, I have dared to say today something that very few of us seem to be willing to say. We could lose this war.

There is nothing in the stars that says we must prevail. In history, freedom is the exception, not the rule. So I say to my colleagues, we must press on in Iraq. We must fight wisely, but we must not falter.

Churchill once said in the midst of another terrible war, ''Give us the tools and we will finish the job.'' Mr. Speaker, it is the duty of this House and of this Congress and of this Nation to give our men and women the tools they need to see this conflict through to the end. We must send them the reinforcements they need to win this war—and that is why, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to defeat this misguided resolution.

Most of all we must stand together. That way, when our children and grandchildren look back at this moment in history, they will say that at the threatened nightfall the blood of their fathers ran strong.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 3½ minutes remaining.

Mr. SKELTON. The gentleman my friend, Mr. MCKEON, raised a very interesting issue about who is really involved in this war in this country. My opinion is those in uniform and their families.

All one has to do is to go to Walter Reed and the Bethesda hospitals, go to visitation or a funeral, and those are the ones, and the saying good-bye to the National Guard and Reserve units, the active duty units, the farewells and the welcome homes, those and their families are those that are involved.

And I am afraid the gentleman is correct, that they are the only ones that are actually involved with this war.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SKELTON. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding. I have great respect for him, and I know of his strong dedication to the troops and to the people serving.

I had in my office yesterday a constituent, a young man that played football for my brother at home. I introduced him to the chairman. He has spent the last 3 years at Walter Reed. He says he is like one of those dinosaurs that has a big mouth and two hands that he can't use, and he does struggle, and he has a bad leg. He was a master sergeant and he protected his troops but he took rounds from mortar. In talking to him he said, this debate is very distracting and hard for the morale of the troops.

I pray that they will understand that all of us have different feelings, but we do understand their devotion and their commitment to duty, and they understand our commitment. We just see things differently, and at the end of the day, I hope what we end up doing is what will be best for our troops and for our country and for the world.

Mr. SKELTON. Reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman. He reiterates what I have been saying, that it seems like the members in uniform and their families are the ones truly involved in this war.

Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 2 of House Resolution 157, and as the designee of the majority leader, I request that the time for debate be enlarged by 1 hour, equally divided and controlled by the leaders or their designees.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, that will be the order.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my friend, the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. DEGETTE).

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the resolution.

I fundamentally disagree with the President's plan to add thousands of troops to the Iraqi conflict. It is time for a new course in Iraq, a rational course, a more humane course of action. It is long past time to start a phased withdrawal of our troops from Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, this debate is about policy and direction. Surely, the facts on the ground cannot be used to support continued or increased combat involvement in Iraq. Iraq is in a civil war. That is the truth, and it is time we accept the implications of that fact. Our soldiers have no business acting as unwanted umpires or surrogate police officers.

The latest National Intelligence Estimate concludes the term ''civil war'' accurately describes key elements of the Iraqi conflict. If this is the state of the current conflict, what do we expect the U.S. military to do about it? Settle centuries of theological or religious disagreement? Become diplomats? Whose side do they choose and what would their mission be?

I do not believe combat forces permanently stop such conflicts. The troops themselves tell us they are untrained for this role, a role that puts them at extreme risk.

Yet, the President mistakenly continues to believe we are fighting illusionary battalions on phantom battlefields. So, in his mind, we need more troops for victory, a surge that will overwhelm and destroy.

Well, that is how he sees it, but he ignores the evidence and reports of our generals, our troops, our Iraq Study Group, our diplomats, most of our allies, the views of the Iraqi people and anyone else who actually tries to find out the nature and state of the conflict.

He rapidly and recklessly proceeds ahead with one policy shift after another.

He searches for a light at the end of the tunnel, but there is no light. It was extinguished long ago. There is only darkness and despair. The chaos deepens daily, and the President sits in the Oval Office hoping that somehow, somehow it will turn out all right in the end.

This is neither policy nor leadership. The administration's policies are the stuff of dreams and fantasies, not hard core determinations of our Nation's interests or the best course for addressing strategic threats.

Mr. Speaker, hope is not a strategy. The escalation of troop levels makes no strategic sense. We must not hesitate to describe the President's policy in words that are honest and clear. We confront a policy that is wishful thinking, not realistic assessment. The administration's policy is like a conjuring trick of denial, delusion and determined folly, which will only deepen the disaster. We are given the vision of a make-believe story instead of a responsible and realistic policy.

Civil wars are solved through diplomacy, negotiation and political compromise. These are the types of developments identified by the NIE that will make a difference in Iraq. While the NIE warns against the rapid withdrawal of coalition troops, American forces can come home in a careful, safe and deliberate manner.

As the Nation's Representatives, it is our constitutional duty to stop this madness. It is our constitutional mandate to conduct oversight, and it is our constitutional imperative to act. That is what the Founding Fathers wanted. They constructed the Constitution to provide checks and balances. They did not give the President a blank check.

The Constitution is a sacred document to this body. We swear to uphold it and to defend it. We do just that when we demand accountability from the President. We honor our constitutional requirement when we scrutinize policy. We defend our constitutional process when we demand that the President listen to the American people and end unilateral actions that undermine our Nation's strength and place our troops in an untenable, lethal and unwinnable situation.

Mr. Speaker, I did not come here to ignore my oath to the American people. I did not come here to watch our Constitution be rewritten by presidential arrogance and disregard. And I did not come here to relinquish my sworn duty to protect and defend this sacred document. I did not come here to ignore the American people who want this war stopped now.

Mr. Speaker, support this resolution and begin a phased withdrawal.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5½ minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT), a member of the Armed Services Committee.

(Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, when the original resolution that brought our military to intervention in Iraq came to the Congress, I interpreted it as asking the Congress to turn over to the President our military to use anytime he wished, anywhere he wished, against any country he wished, now and forever more.

Feeling that this was patently unconstitutional, I was very pleased when the International Relations Committee, chaired at that time by Henry Hyde, revised the resolution and narrowly focused it on Iraq. That resolution had strong encouragement for the President to obtain a U.N. resolution so that when we went into Iraq it would be a part of a U.N. coalition. The U.N. would own that war; we wouldn't own it.

When the President did not get the U.N. resolution so strongly encouraged by that original resolution that we voted on, I then voted for the Spratt substitute because I felt that if we were going to send our young men and women into war, that it needed to be with the full support of the American people through their elected officials, and we needed to have that additional debate. That didn't happen. I felt that we went in with unrealistic expectations.

There is no country around Iraq that has anything like the government that we would like for them to have. Several of the countries have dictatorships. We call them royal families. Saudi Arabia, the Arab Emirates, Kuwait, but they are dictatorships. Several countries, Jordan and Syria, have kings. Iran is essentially a theocracy ruled by the mullahs. The only country that comes even close is the vestiges of the Ottoman Empire, Turkey, where they have a sort of democracy, but several times in the last few years the military has thrown out the civilian government, telling them they need to start over, hardly the kind of government that we have in this country and that we envision for Iraq.

So I thought that there were very unrealistic expectations. That was a very steep hill to climb; that success was unlikely, and therefore, I wanted to go in under a U.N. resolution.

What now? I hope I am wrong, but I believe that there will be one of two

likely outcomes, either another strong man, hopefully more benevolent, than Saddam Hussein, or three loosely federated states with an overarching entity that pumps the oil and distributes the revenues on a per capita basis.

Now, we have a resolution before us and how should one vote? If you believe that the President is the Commander in Chief and has a right to pursue the war in the way he chooses, then you would vote ''no'' on this resolution.

If you believe that this resolution sends the wrong message to the enemy that we are losing our resolution, our resolve, then you would vote ''no.''

If you believe this sends the wrong message to the troops, I know the first clause says we support our troops, but then one might argue that the right hand is taking away what the left hand gave because in the second clause we say that we do not support the surge, which some may interpret as not supporting our troops; then you would vote ''no.''

But if you believe that the Iraqis need to stand up so that we can stand down, then you would vote ''yes.''

If you believe that the surge will not help, which is very likely, then I think you need to vote ''yes.''

If you believe the surge might actually hurt by placing more of our brave young men and women in harm's way, I understand that a fair percentage of the violence over there is directed against us, if that is true, then how do we reduce the violence by putting more of us there, then you would vote ''yes.''

If you want to send a message to the President, the Congress and the American people, that this war can't go on forever, then you would vote ''yes.''

If you want to send a message to the troops that we are watching, that you won't be there forever, that you have the support of your citizens and your Congress, then you would vote ''yes.''

This is obviously a very complex vote. Whether you vote ''yes'' or whether you vote ''no,'' there will be unintended, unwanted messages that will be sent. Being required to vote either ''yes'' or ''no'' on a resolution like this is a little bit like requiring the husband to answer the question, ''yes'' or ''no,'' ''Have you stopped beating your wife?''

If that is true, then perhaps the best vote on this is a ''present'' vote.

It is so true here that what you see depends on where you stand. There has been a lot of quite intemperate rhetoric on both sides. It is hard sometimes to imagine that we are debating the same resolution.

It is so true here that he who frames the question determines the answer.

Mr. Speaker, we shouldn't be here. After the debate, this vote is somewhat irrelevant. Indeed, the listening Americans have each cast their own vote. In spite of all the divisive rhetoric, I want one thing to be certain, that all 435 of us want only what is best for America, what is best for our troops, a good and bright future for the Iraqis and especially want to assure our brave young men and women there that they have the total thanks of a grateful Nation.

□ 0930

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. SNYDER).

Mr. SNYDER. Personally, Mr. Speaker, I wish this resolution of disapproval articulated our disapproval of the administration's failure to accomplish certain chores in preparation for our fine troops undertaking this new mission under General Petraeus.

Everyone, including the President, now acknowledges mistakes over the past 4 years, but those well-documented errors are not the mistakes I am talking about. Now, today, mistakes are being made. Now, today, high-ranking officials in the administration fall short in their performance.

Why, after 4 years of the Iraq war, is the Secretary of State unable to get the appropriate reconstruction, economic development, and other necessary personnel to Iraq? Why did the State Department recently have to request the Defense Department to help fill in these necessary positions? Why have the efforts of political reconciliation been so ineffective? Why has the American diplomatic effort in the region been so ineffective? Where are the trained police and judges who will need to deal with all the detainees to be arrested in Baghdad? Why aren't an adequate number of property detention facilities not available for these future detainees that are sure to come from an aggressive effort to decrease the violence in Baghdad?

General Petraeus, clearly one of America's finest military leaders, during his recent opening statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee, felt an obligation to plead for the help and commitment from other U.S. government agencies commensurate with what our troops give 24 hours a day, day after day, week after week, month after month.

I have had references being made to Winston Churchill, but I remind those speakers who make such comparisons that we are not a parliamentary system. If we were, the Secretary of State and other high-ranking officials would be gone because of their failures. We are, thankfully, the American system; and in our responsibility to support our troops, we know we must not just equip and train them. We know that all agencies of American government, the nonmilitary agencies, must pull their load if our fine troops are to be successful.

So we now have a situation where our new commander on the ground, General Petraeus, says he needs the additional troops. On the other hand, he says he needs all the other agencies of government to step forward with, in his words, ''an enormous commitment.''

It is clear this commitment of other agencies is not yet being made. Regardless of the result of this vote today, our troops will still be in Iraq needing the commitment of all government agencies.

The House leadership has stated that this resolution today is the first step of other legislation to come. This other legislation to come must address the issues of the shortcomings of other agencies of U.S. government, the nonmilitary agencies of U.S. government. Our troops deserve the help.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) 7 minutes.

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, since learning we would consider a resolution regarding troop levels in Iraq, I have spent considerable time listening to veterans of this war and other wars questioning some of America's top national security officials, reading every e-mail, literally every letter on this most serious issue of this day that has come into my office from my constituents. I have listened to voices of leaders of other nations who surround Iraq. I have read the National Intelligence Report. I have read the Iraq Study Committee Report. I have been given books such as ''Fiasco'' to digest, and I have reached out to the parents of brave Americans who are on their way into this conflict, and I have heard from the parents of sons who were lost in this conflict. I have heard strong opinions on both sides of this issue, and I have reflected upon my own vote to authorize the war in the first place.

To say the least, it has been an agonizing experience. Agonizing, because I want to do what is right for America with minimal sacrifice to the brave Americans who wear our Nation's uniform. I want to do what is right to protect our freedom and our security.

I will always remember the days and nights when the smoke from the burning Pentagon wafted into the apartment I lived in just blocks from that building. I remember the images of that day when rescue personnel were trying to save lives, only to lose their own. I remember the pledge I made to myself that I would never let that happen to America again if I had my way.

So I supported implementation of the 9/11 Commission Report. I supported efforts to improve our intelligence gathering and processing efforts so that America does not miss key indicators of danger or, worse, misinterpret the data that is gathered.

Policymakers must be given accurate, reliable intelligence if we are to make responsible decisions. Had Congress been given an accurate intelligence assessment, I doubt the vote to invade Iraq would ever have come to this floor in the first place, and I certainly would not have cast the vote I cast because the threat was not what we were told it was, despite the horrific brutality of Saddam Hussein and his henchmen sons.

Unfortunately, though, we cannot edit history; we cannot change the

past. Our responsibility is to the present and even more so to the future, America's future.

In some areas of the world, America has made strong diplomatic progress on the most difficult issues facing our planet. I speak of the recent agreement with North Korea coming out of the Six Party talks. I am reminded of the willingness of Libya to give up its weapons of mass destruction and come into line with the world community. And while much work remains regarding Iran's nuclear development, America's work with other countries and through the United Nations is having an effect on Iran.

Meanwhile, our troops and our work internationally in Afghanistan continues to show progress, even in light of the recent resurgence of the Taliban. Consider the historic role NATO is playing to bring peace and stability to that far-off land.

So if we are accomplishing good in Afghanistan and elsewhere, why is the situation in Iraq still such a mess? And what can or should America do there now that will hasten Iraq's move towards stability and hasten the bringing home of our troops to America?

As my colleague from New Mexico, HEATHER WILSON, so eloquently and forcefully asked this week: What are America's strategic interests in Iraq, and how can we best achieve them?

These are the serious questions of our day, and these are the issues tragically missing from this nonbinding resolution.

In this new world where war is not waged by armies in uniform with codes of honor but by terrorists who blow up food markets and behead journalists, how do we respond in an effective way to prevent the insanity from coming again to our shores? How best do we prevent a whole region from ripping apart at the seams and perhaps taking much of the world with it?

While Congress has a clear constitutional role and responsibility when the Nation is at war, where is the line that Congress should not cross? Are we really best equipped to decide precisely how many reinforcements are sent into which battle? Isn't that a decision best left to the commanders in the field? Can Congress really give General Petraeus a unanimous vote of support to lead our effort in Iraq and then turn around and deny him the strategy he told us he believes is necessary to win?

A former colonel in the Air Force wrote to me recently on this very topic. She said, ''Some in Congress say they support General Petraeus but don't want them to undertake the mission they were confirmed to do. It seems right out of Alice in Wonderland.''

And if Congress is going to make these decisions, then have we really carefully analyzed where the other 134,754 troops in Iraq are, what they are doing, and what they should do?

Another of the e-mails I received was from a veteran of the Vietnam War who, like many other veterans of that conflict, urged me to vote against this resolution; and he wrote, ''Our troops need unqualified support. They don't need to be told they are participating in a lost cause.''

Indeed, this two-sentence nonbinding resolution does send a very mixed message to our troops. Moreover, this resolution is a lost opportunity to address at least five major issues that a serious Congress needs to address.

First, this resolution fails to even mention the Iraqi role. Where is the siren call for the Iraqi government to keep its word and perform as promised? We cannot expect for long to do for Iraq what it is unwilling to do for itself.

Second, this resolution fails to even mention the need for this administration to embrace the Iraq Study Group Report's call for aggressive diplomatic initiatives with Syria, Iran, and other nations in Iraq's neighborhood. Where is the call for enhanced diplomacy?

Third, this resolution fails to even mention the need to replenish the equipment that our National Guard units have left behind while serving our country overseas. My State's own National Guard's ability to conduct training is deeply affected by lack of equipment.

Fourth, this resolution fails to call on Iran, Syria, and other nations to stop directly or indirectly supplying the weapons and explosives to those who detonate car bombs in Baghdad and elsewhere in Iraq, killing women and children as they try to buy food in local markets. Where is the condemnation of their actions?

Fifth, this resolution fails to define what our strategic national interests are in Iraq and how we can best achieve them.

I know that I stand alone in my State's delegation by opposing this resolution. I have been told by some I should just vote for it. It would be easier politically for me because then the problem is off my back. It is someone else's. They will own it. I cannot do that and look at myself in the mirror.

I cannot ignore the counsel recently given to us by diplomats in the region whose advice we ignored when America took on this challenge in Iraq and who now counsel us with most seriousness in the strongest of terms against leaving Iraq before the country is stabilized. They have made it clear to this Member of Congress that failure in Iraq will have grave and dangerous consequences to the entire region. In short, we broke it, we need to fix it before we leave it.

But fixing Iraq does not mean ending religious differences, differences that have ripped apart that region for 1,300 years or more. Fixing Iraq does not mean installing our form of democracy. Fixing Iraq means ensuring a new terrorist haven is not created or allowed to be created from which they can train and plan safely to carry out attacks against the West. Fixing Iraq means ensuring their government can stand on its own and not collapse into a sinkhole that drags other nations in the region into an abyss.

Given the glaring shortcomings of the nonbinding resolution we have before us today, I will vote ''no'' for as many of those who served in Vietnam have told me its message does undercut our troops. Moreover, it fails to call for the increased diplomatic initiatives in the region, it fails to call for Iraq to do its part, it fails to define our strategic national interests of stabilizing Iraq so as to prevent the creation of another terrorist training haven, and it fails to address the very real needs of our National Guard.

It is unfortunate that the opportunity to actually affect these very serious policy choices was not allowed on the Floor of the House today. It is, indeed, a missed opportunity for America.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind all Members not to traffic the well while another Member is under recognition.

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA).

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, on January 23 of this year, the President in his State of the Union address said, ''This is not the fight we entered in Iraq, but it is the fight we are in.''

Nearly 4 years after President Bush took us to war, 4 years, that is longer than our involvement in World War II, it is fair to say that this is not the debate we expected to have, but it is the debate we must have. We owe it to our troops who have fought honorably and valiantly, and we owe it to the American people.

More than 3,100 American soldiers dead, more than 23,000 American soldiers injured, $500 billion in costs, 14,000 weapons that our Nation bought for the Iraqi Army missing, $9 billion in reconstruction funds missing. Mr. Speaker, stay-the-course has failed, and sending 20,000 more troops is no more than stay-the-course on steroids.

The American people would know this had the previous Republican Congresses exercised their oversight responsibilities to tell the American people what was going on. They would have known, for example, that we have already tried three previous troop surges. In each case, between 17,000 to 21,000 troops. Have we seen the improvement? What are things like today? Where were the hearings to find out how those troop surges went? Where are the reports? Mr. Speaker, this is a debate long overdue.

The truth is, Iraqis must take responsibility for their own future. When General John Abizaid met with commanders on the ground in Iraq, he was asked, ''If we get more troops, will we succeed?'' And here is what he told them: ''They all said no. And the reason is because we want the Iraqis to do more. It is easy for the Iraqis to rely upon us to do this work. I believe that more American forces prevent the Iraqis from doing more, from taking

more responsibility for their own future.'' That, General Abizaid said on November 15, 2006.

U.S. troops are sitting today in the crossfire of a civil war. We have no guarantee that an Iraqi Shi'a soldier will defend an Iraqi Sunni civilian and that an Iraqi Sunni soldier will defend an Iraqi Shi'a civilian. Iraqis must decide what future they want. Only Iraqis can save Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, we need to redeploy our troops responsibly, to continue training Iraqi soldiers, and to refocus our efforts on counterterrorism. And we need a surge in diplomacy, not troops.

The consequences of stay-the-course are real. Just yesterday, President Bush exhorted our allies to help us, not in Iraq, in Afghanistan. The U.S. is sending more troops and billions of dollars more. His words were telling yesterday. Quote, ''The Taliban and al Qaeda are preparing to launch new attacks.'' New attacks. ''Our strategy is not to be on the defensive but to go on the offensive.'' 1,985 days since the 9/11 attacks, and Usama bin Laden remains free, and we hope to go on the offensive in Afghanistan.

Americans deserve to hear the truth and the consequences, not slogans. ''Mission accomplished'' wasn't true. ''Stay the course'' didn't work. And this new Congress will not be paralyzed by those who argue that we must stay the course in Iraq to support the troops. The troops didn't chart this course, the troops didn't ask to be plunged into the middle of a civil war, and the troops didn't under-man and under-equip.

It is time that the buck for the debacle in Iraq stops where it belongs: Here in Washington, D.C. And if the President won't accept that reality, then guess what? This new Congress, this new Democratic leadership is prepared to stop the buck here.

This is a debate we must have. This is a debate about us. Us, those of us here in this Chamber. Will we lead? Will we be responsible overseers of this war? Will we heed the call of the American people?

Today, with this vote, Mr. Speaker, we will tell our troops, our generals, our beloved people: We hear you loud and clear. It is time for a new direction in Iraq.

□ 0945

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. FERGUSON).

Mr. FERGUSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with mixed emotions. I am proud of our troops and the sacrifices they have made in Iraq, their dedication, their perseverance and the love and support of their families here at home. I am disappointed that the strategies employed thus far have not been more successful and that our progress in Iraq has been too slow, and I am saddened that those who have drafted this resolution are offering no alternatives of their own for our mission in Iraq. Indeed, they are prohibiting consideration in this Chamber of any alternative.

Therefore, I will vote against this resolution.

I believe most Americans share the same goal for Iraq, a stable government that can serve its people, a strong security force that can protect its people, and a growing economy that can encourage prosperity for its people.

We want the Iraqis to succeed, and we want our troops to come home. There is no question and no denying that mistakes in the planning and execution of the war have led us to where we are today. Hindsight is 20/20, and we can all offer suggestions for how things should have been done differently, done better, done more effectively during the past 4 years.

But that is not what is going on in this Chamber here today. Members are being cynically asked to vote on a resolution that does not address victory or success. It does not offer a pathway toward the peace and the prosperity that are vital to the region. It simply plays politics with the war and, in so doing, does our troops and their families here at home a terrible disservice.

While no one in this Chamber or any general in uniform can guarantee the success of this new initiative in Iraq, we can safely say that not pursuing it and continuing the status quo will lead to failure. Iraq then likely would fall into further chaos and transform itself, much as Afghanistan did a decade ago, into a breeding ground for terrorists, who plot attacks not on our troops in Iraq but upon our civilians here at home.

Make no mistake, failure of the U.S. mission in Iraq will not end the war. It will only shift the battlefield. The terrorists are at war with us, whether we fight back or not.

The consequences of failure in Iraq would be as dramatic as the fruits of victory. An Iraqi government stable enough to take the lead role in providing for its own internal security will allow us to achieve our collective goal, the return of U.S. troops. Rather than being allied with terrorists, Iraq would be an ally with America and the war on terror. In so doing, it would honor the more than 3,000 American men and women who have died fighting for its freedom and countless more who have been wounded and will bear for their lifetimes the scars of battle.

The status quo in Iraq is unacceptable. We need a new strategy, new tactics, new commanders on the ground, and a new and sustained commitment from the Iraqi government that they will do more of their share.

We know that the road ahead will be difficult and that the prospects for success are dwindling. But I believe a renewed and amplified effort by U.S. forces and Iraqi troops to retain security in Baghdad may offer the best hope we have for the lasting success of the U.S. mission and for the future stability of Iraq's government. It may also be, I believe, our last chance for victory. The President knows this, and I believe the Iraqi government and its people know this, too.

It is in that spirit and with that understanding that I will vote against this resolution. Our collective prayer is for the safety of our troops, for their success, and that they will be reunited with their families here at home as soon as possible.

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN).

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I love America. America means something to me. No one loves the Constitution more than I. No one believes in the Declaration of Independence more than I. No one respects the flag and the Pledge of Allegiance more than I. No one appreciates the American soldier more than I.

So I stand here today in the well of the United States House of Representatives as a proud American who understands that it is not the Constitution that gives us or protects government of the people, by the people, for the people. It is not the Declaration of Independence that preserves the concept of all persons being created equal. It is the soldier.

It is not the Pledge of Allegiance that preserves liberty and justice for all. It is the soldier. It is the soldier who shields those who would make real the great American ideals. Regardless as to how we feel about the war, we should all thank God for the American soldier.

Mr. Speaker, our soldiers have done their job. More than 84,000 National Guard and Reservists have been deployed more than once since 2001. More than 170,000 soldiers in the Army have served more than one tour of duty. More than 23,000 soldiers have been wounded, and more than 2,200 of these from Texas were from Texas alone. More than 3,100 soldiers have died, including more than 200 from Texas.

Our soldiers have liberated Iraq from a ruthless, brutal dictator. Our soldiers have answered the clarion call for help for which too many will never come home for the holidays and far too many will never see home again.

So for this I say, God bless the American soldiers, their friends, their families, and their loved ones.

Mr. Speaker, the American people have been that friend, indeed, in Iraq's time of need. In addition to blood, sweat and tears, the American people have spent more than $267 million, not per year, not per month not per week, but more than $267 million per day on this war.

Mr. Speaker, with this money, according to CNN and the National Priorities Project, we could have hired 6.4 million public school teachers. We could have built 3.3 million public housing units. We could have insured 220 million children for 1 year.

On a more lofty level, America has helped the Iraqi people develop a constitution. We have helped the Iraqi people establish democratic elections. We have helped the Iraqis reconstitute their military and overhaul their constabulary.

Mr. Speaker, after all that we have done, more than 23,000 wounded. After all that we have done, 3,100 are dead. After all that we have done, more than $267 million per day. After all that we have done, whenever we leave, it will not be cut and run. We have helped the Iraqi people to have the opportunity to embrace freedom and democracy.

It is now time for the Iraqi people to seize upon this precious, priceless opportunity and have a free and independent Iraq, something that all the money in the world cannot buy and not even the most powerful military in the universe can impose.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot want liberty and justice for all Iraqis more than all Iraqis want liberty and justice for themselves.

If the Iraqis want government of the people, by the people, for the people, then their soldiers, not ours, must provide it. We can stay in Iraq forever and never have a free and independent Iraq, not as long as the Iraqi people engage in an uncivil war with each other. You can debate whether it is a civil war or not, but there is no debating that it is an uncivil war that they are having with each other.

Mr. Speaker, because I support our soldiers and oppose the President's policies, I will vote for the resolution.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. GARY G. MILLER).

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to this resolution condemning the President's proposal for achieving success in Iraq and overall victory in the global war on terror. We are not formulating policy today. We are not offering the President an alternative. All this resolution is saying is that we do not support our Commander in Chief, and all it is doing is emboldening the terrorist enemies we are facing today.

I am the first to welcome an open discussion about our involvement in Iraq. But, without the opportunity to consider an alternative, this is not open discussion. Why isn't this an open discussion? Because although the majority party has the authority to govern, they have no plan to lead.

For over a year, the majority party criticized the President for not making changes in his strategy in Iraq. Well, the President has made changes, and the majority party still is not satisfied.

We can all agree that our progress has not been as swift and decisive as we once hoped. We all recognize that the war in Iraq has carried on longer than we wanted and consumed more resources than we expected. However, we all knew from the beginning that it would not be easy, that the war against terror would not be a quick fight.

But when the going gets tough, it does not mean that we should give in and come home. As we cannot and must not turn back, we need a fresh approach to move forward. The President, along with his generals on the ground, have proposed a way forward. He has put forth a strategy to suppress the sectarian violence in Iraq and allow democratic reforms to take hold and economic institutions to flourish.

His plan is the only plan that provides for a way forward in Iraq. For us in Congress, it is not our job to become involved in tactical decisions that will lead to success in our mission. It is our responsibility to help shape the parameters of the mission and to conduct oversight on our progress in achieving the mission.

Republicans in Congress have proposed setting verifiable benchmarks with which we may measure our progress in Iraq. Such benchmarks will help us hold the Iraqi regime responsible for the progress made towards democracy, stability and peace in the country. We should be discussing our responsibility as oversight today, but we are not. We are left with debate on an empty and nonbinding resolution.

I am a proud cosponsor of Congressman SAM JOHNSON's bill to ensure that funding is not cut off or restricted for members of the Armed Forces deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan. We must support every effort in our fight against terrorists. If the majority allowed us an opportunity, I would have gladly supported a vote on that bill to reaffirm that the House will not abandon our Armed Forces under any circumstance.

Whether the majority would like to acknowledge it or not, the fight we are engaged in against terrorists in Iraq is not a new fight. It has been waged for a decade. We have faced terrorists in Beirut, we have faced terrorists in Saudi Arabia, and we have faced terrorists here on our own soil on September 11, 2001.

We have learned it is absolutely essential to confront terrorists abroad before they attack us at home. Despite what some of you may say, our withdrawal will not end the terrorist threat. After all, it is they who have declared Iraq to be the central front in the struggle.

We cannot withdraw. We cannot send our troops and other allies the message that we will quit when the going gets tough. Instead, we must move forward with the operations in Iraq, with the Iraqi people, to ensure that peace and stability take hold. We must change our strategy as the situation in the field dictates. To do otherwise would be foolish.

But by maintaining our commitment in Iraq, we preserve the prospects of peace. By withdrawing, we surrender our chances of permanent stability in the Middle East.

This resolution in so many words says that we cannot be successful, and we are bound to fail. I refuse to agree. I refuse to undercut the brave work of our troops by questioning their abilities and refuse to allow terrorists to flourish and our enemies be emboldened and thereby let you, the American people, down.

Our brave men and women risk their lives to provide peace and security here at home, and we are all proud to know such patriots. These young men and women, full of promise, voluntarily defend our Nation wherever they are called.

It reminds me of a young man in my district, and I presented him with his Eagle Scout awards when he was 17 years old. It was in 2003. A little less than 2 years later than that, in 2004, I attended the funeral for Lance Corporal Abraham Simpson, who made the ultimate sacrifice in Fallujah. He was just 19 years old.

When I went to the parents of Abraham and presented a flag that was flown over our great Nation after the funeral, it was honestly one of the most moving experiences I have had, not only in my congressional career but of my life. When I looked at Abraham's father in his car, I couldn't talk. All I could say to him was, ''I voted to send him there.'' Abraham's dad looked me square in the eye, with as serious a look as he could get, and he said, ''Congressman, it was the right vote.''

Like so many families across our country, the Simpson family has made a great sacrifice for our Nation. This resolution, however, says that the world, that the men and women like Lance Corporal Simpson, gave their lives for, was worthless, that America cannot be successful in the pursuit of which they nobly sacrificed themselves. I believe that we can. I know that if we stand firm in our principles and remain true to our convictions, we can succeed.

For that reason, I am going to vote ''no'' on this resolution.

I rise today in opposition to this resolution condemning the President's proposal for achieving success in Iraq and overall victory in the Global War on Terror.

FLAWED PROCESS

I know I join many of my colleagues in lamenting the process by which we are considering this resolution. We are not formulating policy; we are not offering the President an alternative. All this resolution is saying is that we do not support our Commander in Chief and all it is doing is emboldening our terrorist enemies.

While the valiant men and women of our Armed Forces are fighting for freedom abroad, the majority party has cut off democracy here in the House of Representatives so that we may consider a partisan resolution.

I am the first to welcome an open discussion about our involvement in Iraq, but without the opportunity to consider alternatives, this is not an open discussion. And why is there no open discussion? Because although the majority party has the authority to govern, they have no plan to lead.

For over a year, the majority party criticized the President for not making changes to his strategy in Iraq. Well, the President has made

changes, and the majority party is still not satisfied. Today, the majority party still opposes the President's strategy, but they have not offered any alternatives. They continue to criticize—destructively and not constructively.

WINNING THE WAR IN IRAQ

We can all agree that our progress has not been as swift or as decisive as we once hoped. We all recognize that the war in Iraq has carried on longer than we wanted and consumed more resources than we first thought.

However, we all knew from the beginning that it would not be easy—that the war against terror is not something that would be a quick fight, but that it would take years. As history has taught us, war is not an easy prospect and sometimes does not go according to plan.

But when the going gets tough, this does not mean that we should give in and come home. That is not the American way—that is not how America honors its commitments and carries out its obligations. And it is not how America pays respect to those who have fallen in its service.

As we cannot—and must not—turn back, we need a fresh approach to move forward. The President, along with his generals on the ground, has proposed a way forward. He has put forth a strategy to suppress the sectarian violence in Iraq to allow democratic reforms to take hold and economic institutions to flourish.

His plan is the only plan that provides for a way forward in Iraq. While the majority party proposes to stand still and do nothing, the President's plan aims to allow American forces to stand down as the Iraqi people stand up.

For us in Congress, it is not our job to become involved in the tactical decisions that will lead to success in our mission. It is our responsibility to help shape the parameters of our mission and to conduct oversight on our progress in achieving the mission.

Republicans in Congress have proposed setting verifiable benchmarks with which we may measure our progress in Iraq. These strategic benchmarks, concerning the transfer of military operations to Iraqi-led units, the development of democratic institutions and the rule of law in Iraq, and increased regional cooperation and stabilization, are important in moving forward in Iraq. Such benchmarks will help us hold the Iraqi regime responsible for the progress made toward democracy, stability, and peace in their country.

There is, however, no attempt at oversight in this resolution. Once again, all the majority party is doing is complaining without providing an alternative. We should be discussing our responsibility at oversight today. But we are not. We are left with debate on this empty and nonbinding resolution.

TROOP SUPPORT AND FUNDING

No matter what, we must support funding for our troops that are serving in harm's way—with no ifs, ands, or buts. I am a proud cosponsor of Congressman SAM JOHNSON'S bill to ensure funding is not cut off or restricted for members of the Armed Forces deployed in Iraq or Afghanistan. We must support every effort in our fight against terrorists.

If the majority allowed us the opportunity, I would have gladly supported a vote on this bill to reaffirm to our troops, our constituents, and our enemies that the House will not abandon our Armed Forces—under any circumstances. Unfortunately, Republican voices were shut out of this process and we are left to consider this empty and non-binding resolution.

CONSEQUENCES OF WITHDRAWAL

All we heard on this floor for the last year was talk about bipartisanship and cooperation. The talk was about the need to be more bipartisan. Boy, we sure do have short memories. Despite the partisan atmosphere here in the House, the fact is that we have to be successful in Iraq because the consequences of our withdrawal would be disastrous.

Whether the majority would like to acknowledge it or not, the fight we are engaged in against terrorists in Iraq is not a new fight—it has been waged for decades. We have faced terrorists in Beirut. We have faced terrorists in Saudi Arabia. And we have faced terrorists on our own soil—on September 11, 2001. We have learned that it is absolutely essential to confront terrorists abroad before they may attack us at home.

If we withdraw from Iraq, we give our terrorist enemies—and they are our enemies—a safe haven from which to plan their attacks against us and our allies. Despite what some of you may say, our withdrawal will not end the terrorist threat. After all, it is they who have declared Iraq to be the central front in this struggle. If we withdraw, it will only encourage the terrorists. They will not rest until their agenda of violence and hatred is advanced worldwide. We cannot withdraw. We cannot send our troops and our allies the message that we will quit when the going gets tough.

Instead, we must move forward with operations in Iraq—with the Iraqi people—to ensure that peace and stability take hold. We must change our strategy as the situation in the field dictates. To do otherwise would be foolish. But by maintaining our commitment to Iraq, we preserve the prospects of peace. By withdrawing, we surrender our chances for permanent stability in the Middle East.

CONCLUSION

The United States has a long and proud history of championing liberty. As a Civil War history enthusiast, I am reminded of the parallels between this generation's fight against terrorism and the Civil War. Both wars brought new and grave challenges to our people and our way of life. Both struggles were fraught with opposition in the press and in Congress. But imagine what would have happened to our nation if President Lincoln did not continue the fight to preserve our union.

Just as Lincoln fought against all odds and in the face of grave danger to ensure freedom for all people and to preserve democracy, our troops are doing the same today. Just as Lincoln was successful by standing firm in his commitment to liberty and democracy, I strongly believe that we can—and will—be successful in Iraq if we are to ensure our freedom for the future.

This resolution, in so many words, says that we cannot be successful—that we are bound to fail. I refuse to agree. I refuse to undercut the bravel work of our troops by questioning their abilities. I refuse to abandon our Iraqi allies when they need us the most. And I refuse to allow terrorism to flourish and our enemies to be emboldened and thereby let you, the American people, down.

Instead, we must go forward. We must continue to support our troops and their important work in Iraq. We must tell them loudly and clearly that the American people stand with them as they fight to bring liberty and security to Iraq.

Most importantly, we must honor our troops and the memory of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for freedom by rejecting this empty resolution. These brave men and women risk their lives to provide peace and security here at home and we are all proud to know such patriots.

As members of Congress, we all understand the responsibility we have when our nation calls our best and brightest to serve in harm's way. These young men and women, full of promise, voluntarily defend our nation wherever they are called.

One such brave young man from my district was Marine Lance Corporal Abraham Simpson from Chino, California. In early 2003, I presented Abraham with his Eagle Scout award to recognize his achievement of the Boy Scouts' highest rank. A little less than two years later, in November 2004, Lance Corporal Simpson made the ultimate sacrifice during the Battle of Fallujah. He was just 19 years old.

When I presented his parents with a flag flown over the Capitol of this great Nation, it was one of the most moving moments not only of my congressional career, but of my life. All I could say to Abraham's father was, "I voted to send him there." He looked me square in the eyes and he said, "Congressman, it was the right vote."

To honor his cousin's sacrifice, Marine Sergeant Jonathan Simpson, who had originally joined the Marines as a flight navigator, asked to be transferred so he could fight on the front lines. Jonathan Simpson was killed during combat operations in Iraq in October 2006.

Abraham and Jonathan Simpson, true American heroes, gave their lives in service to this Nation, and for that—and for all of our fallen heroes—I will always be humbled and grateful. Like so many other families across our country, the Simpson family has made a great sacrifice for our Nation, our ideals, and our freedom.

This resolution, however, says to the world that men and women like Lance Corporal Simpson and Sergeant Simpson gave their lives for naught—that America cannot be successful in the pursuit for which they nobly sacrificed. I believe we can. I know if we stand firm in our principles and remain true to our convictions we can succeed.

For this reason, I wholeheartedly oppose this empty resolution and strongly urge my colleagues to do the same.

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Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to the amount of debate time remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Florida has 10 minutes remaining and the gentlewoman from California has 14 minutes remaining.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS).

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, there are two fundamental questions we face in voting on this resolution: First, is it appropriate for Congress to express its views on the escalation of U.S. troops in Iraq? And second, is the escalation the best use of military forces in our war on terrorism?

First let me say that it is wrong for anyone in this debate to question the

patriotism of someone on the other side of that issue. That tactic was tried by Senator Joseph McCarthy in the 1950s. It was wrong then, it is wrong now.

In our democracy, there is nothing patriotic about questioning the patriotism of someone with an opposing view. We all love our country; we all support our troops; and we all want to defend America from terrorism.

On the appropriateness of this resolution being before the House, I believe this debate is consistent with our Founding Fathers' deep commitment to the constitutional checks and balances of government. They chose to make the President our Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. At the same time, they chose not to give the President the authority to declare war or to fund a war. Those solemn responsibilities were given to the Congress in article I of the Constitution.

It is noteworthy that on the most solemn act of government, to put citizens into harm's way, our Founding Fathers clearly chose to put in place constitutional checks and balances on the executive branch. This resolution is a proper exercise of that constitutional principle, especially given this war has now lasted longer than America's involvement in World War II, with no end in sight. Blind allegiance to the executive branch is not a constitutional principle.

The second question before us is whether the escalation in Iraq is the best use of U.S. military forces in our war on terrorism.

After nearly 4 years of combat, two facts are indisputable: First, our service men and women have served our Nation with courage and professionalism. They and their families have sacrificed above and beyond the call of duty, and I salute them.

Second; there have been major mistakes made by policymakers in Washington that have complicated at every step the challenges our troops have faced in Iraq, dead wrong intelligence on weapons of mass destruction and Iraq's involvement with September 11; rejecting General Shinseki's call to send an adequate amount of troops to Iraq in 2003, the disbanding of the Iraqi Army, the de-Baathification process, inadequate armor for our troops; and the repeated assertion that the insurgency was on its last leg, despite facts to the contrary.

Given mistakes made in the build-up to this war and its management, and the enormity of this issue in terms of lives at risk and our Nation's future, it is time for Congress to give a voice to the clear majority of the American people who oppose escalation in Iraq.

Since the President has already started the escalation, I personally hope and pray that he is right, and that more U.S. troops in Iraq will lead to long-term stability there. However, in good conscience, I must express my profound concerns for this policy for several reasons.

First; I believe until the Iraqi government creates a government that is respected by Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds, no amount of U.S. forces can stop sectarian violence there in the long run.

Second; I want U.S. forces fighting terrorists, not standing on street corners in Baghdad as target practice for Sunnis and Shiites locked into deep-rooted sectarian violence.

Third; I believe it is necessary to send a blunt wake-up call to the Iraqi political leaders that America has sacrificed our sons and daughters and hundreds of billions of dollars for their nation, but we will not do so forever for an incompetent government that is rife with corruption and sectarian bias. This is not a test of America's will, rather, it is a test of the Iraqi government's will to make the tough choices to ensure its nation's own future.

Fourth; with the increasingly serious situation in Afghanistan, where al Qaeda and the Taliban are resurging, we will definitely need additional U.S. troops there to prevent the kind of chaos that is rampant in Iraq.

For these reasons I believe this resolution is the appropriate and the right thing to do. This resolution will send an unequivocal message to the Iraqi political leaders that the time to end their corruption, their incompetence, and sectarian favoritism is over. When that message is truly heard, then and only then will there be real hope for stable and lasting peace in Iraq.

I urge support of this resolution.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to yield 4 minutes to my colleague from Florida (Mr. BUCHANAN).

Mr. BUCHANAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to this resolution. I oppose the resolution not for what it says, but for what it does and what it will lead to.

As someone who enlisted at the age of 18 and spent 6 years as a member of the Air National Guard, I can tell you firsthand that this resolution will undermine our troops' morale and diminish their ability to accomplish their mission.

Passage of this resolution is also a first step towards cutting funding for our troops, and that is something that I absolutely cannot support.

Mr. Speaker, the war in Iraq is an important part of the global war on terror. Failure in Iraq will go beyond being a disaster for American foreign policy. Failure would destabilize the country, destabilize the Middle East, and make America less safe.

The American people are well aware of al Qaeda's plans to turn Iraq into a staging area to spread global terrorism. Failure in Iraq would also result in diminished influence and credibility for America at a time when global alliances are critical to address threats from Iran and North Korea.

Mr. Speaker, this week I have been briefed by the U.S. intelligence officers, foreign ambassadors from the region, and I have reached out to many of my constituents, including Colonel John Saputo, who served in Iraq, and Colonel Lee Kitchen, who served in Vietnam. We all agree that although legitimate questions can be raised about whether this surge strategy will prove successful, the stakes are too high, the threats to America too great to walk away without giving our troops one last chance to restore order in Iraq. Passage of this resolution would deny our military leaders and our troops this one last opportunity.

Like all Americans, I want to bring our troops home safely, successfully and soon, but now is not the time for an immediate withdrawal. Now is the time to support our troops, support the values they fight for, and do everything possible to give them the best chance to succeed in their mission. This resolution does nothing to help in those efforts. In fact, it does the opposite. It is for this reason that I must oppose this resolution.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 2 of House Resolution 157, and as the designee of the majority leader, I demand that the time for debate be enlarged by 1 hour, equally divided and controlled by the leaders or their designees.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, that will be the order.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, at this time I am honored to yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentlelady from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER).

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I thank the gentlelady for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, this week on the floor, the House will provide our Nation with a clear, unambiguous answer to the most important question facing the country: Will this body side with the President's approach to the war in Iraq, or will we demand change?

Since Tuesday we have been debating President Bush's plan to escalate the war in Iraq. It is a debate that was long overdue and one which the American people and our troops risking their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan deserve.

The simple reality is that two-thirds of the American public, including myself, do not trust the President's judgment when it comes to the war. It is a conflict that has been defined by mismanagement and misinformation since it began, and the results have been devastating for the Iraqi people and for our men and women in uniform.

We know that top administration officials, men like Douglas Feith, abused the public trust and misused the work of the intelligence community when making the case for the war. Since then, every piece of evidence suggests that the strategy employed by this administration has failed in Iraq. Sectarian strife in Iraq has not abated, with routine bombings that kill dozens of civilians daily. The unemployment rate in Iraq is as high as 25 percent and 40 percent. Baghdad has only a few hours of electricity per day.

Our troops have continued to pay the price of being caught in the middle of

another nation's civil war. 84 troops were killed last month, 48 more have been killed already this month.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, corruption, fraud and lack of oversight have haunted every aspect of our involvement in Iraq. Stuart Bowen, the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, has uncovered $10 billion in reconstruction funding that simply disappeared once it was sent overseas. Projects critical to the rebuilding and stabilization of Iraq society have been handed out to private firms, using no-bid contracts, firms that failed to live up to their responsibilities.

To cite one example, the construction of a new Baghdad police college to train Iraqi security officers, a $75 million project of vital importance to stability, was completely undermined by a private construction company. The work was so shoddy that the classrooms it built posed a health risk to the students and had to be abandoned. That same fraud and lack of oversight for years have posed mortal risk to our soldiers.

In January of 2006, we learned that 80 percent of the U.S. Marines who had died of upper body wounds in Iraq would have lived if they had had the proper armor. A Pentagon report released last month stated once again that our troops have been sent into battle time and time again without proper armor equipment, a reality which still exists today.

This simply hasn't been a case of going to war with the army you have, as Mr. Rumsfeld said. We have faced these shortages in part because the Pentagon contracts were given to companies who weren't up to the job and couldn't meet the demands of the conflict.

A legitimate question might be, are we funding the troops or are we funding crooked contractors and Iraqi government officials? Hundreds of dollars have simply disappeared. These are borrowed dollars, ladies and gentlemen, mainly from China.

My friends on the other side of the aisle made two arguments against the resolution. They have told us that to condemn the President's surge means that this Congress is giving up in Iraq, and they told us that we cannot support the troops without supporting their mission.

Our troops have done their job in Iraq and they have risked their lives countless times, but now they are being asked to do something that no army can do, find a military solution to a political problem. If the mission we have given our brave soldiers is the wrong one, and the past 4 years prove that it is, why would we help our enemies by refusing to change course? If that mission is the wrong one, how is supporting the mission that is wrong supporting the troops? If the mission is the wrong one, then how is demanding a change giving up? Giving up means just the opposite, it means insisting on a continuing failing strategy.

This escalation of the war is the same failed strategy, all it will do is put more and more of our young men and women in harm's way. That reality has led it to be opposed by a bipartisan majority in this House. A Republican Representative recently said, ''This is not a fresh approach, it is just more of the same.''

The plan has been publicly opposed by numerous high-ranking generals, such as General John Abizaid, General Colin Powell and General James T. Conway, the Commandant of the Marine Corps. He recently said that the Joint Chiefs ''do not believe that just adding numbers for the sake of adding numbers, just thickening the mix, is the necessary way to go.''

We need to stop this escalation and change what we are doing in Iraq. We need to promote a political solution and a diplomatic solution to the problems.

I urge the passage of this resolution.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to Mr. FOSSELLA, who represents the families of multiple victims of the 9/11 attacks on our Nation.

(Mr. FOSSELLA asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FOSSELLA. I thank the lady for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, the question before us is whether the front line in the war on terrorism moves from Baghdad back to America.

Although this resolution is nonbinding, the message it sends to our troops on the battlefield and to our enemies is crystal clear. Our words have consequences, as powerful as our actions. We must choose them carefully, for they are being listened to all over the world. And the words this Congress speaks today will send a message to both our allies and enemies about our resolve.

It is not a contradiction to support our warriors in battle and also to seek a lasting peace. That principle has guided us through tougher times than this. Indeed, it is America's gift from one generation to the next that we create a Nation that is stronger, freer, more prosperous, and more likely to enjoy God's world in peace.

To abdicate this responsibility for political expediency is a dereliction of duty and a sign of lost faith in the promise of America.

Throughout history, it has been proven that you cannot surrender the battlefield and still win the war. This war on terrorism was thrust upon us. America and other free nations were attacked by evil forces. To leave these forces unchecked would stoke the insatiable appetite of the beast. We know this because we have seen it before.

Regarding the fall of Cambodia, Henry Kissinger wrote:

Sirik Matak, who was the prime minister, was asked by then Ambassador John Dean if he would like to be evacuated, as the United States had just announced it was leaving. The prime minister responded, in part: Thank you for your offer to transport me towards freedom. I cannot, alas, leave in such a cowardly fashion.

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As for your great country, I never believed for a moment that you have the sentiment of abandoning people which have chosen liberty. You have refused us your protection and we can do nothing about it. You leave, and my wish is that you and your country will find happiness under the sky. But mark it well, that if I shall die here on this spot and in my country that I love, it is no matter because we are all born and we must die. I have only committed this mistake in believing in you, the Americans.

The very next day the New York Times reported the evacuation with the following headline, ''Indochina Without Americans: For Most, a Better Life.''

As for the Prime Minister, he was shot; and it took him 3 days to die without medical help. Every other government official and their families were executed, and one to two million Cambodians were rousted from their homes and led to the slaughter like cattle.

Is this the fate we wish to leave millions of Iraqis who have tasted freedom after decades of oppression?

Is this the fate we wish for our allies and the leaders who are nurturing an infant democracy?

Is this the legacy we choose for our airmen and our soldiers and for those heroes who have fallen?

With an open mind I have spent hours this week listening to the debate. Like many Americans, I was willing to listen to new ideas and explore a new course in Iraq. But an opportunity was wasted, because all I have heard is no from the other side. I have not heard a plan, nor have I heard a strategy.

And let me be clear. It is not my place to question one's motivation or patriotism. But I can question judgment. This resolution is either an endorsement of the status quo or a clarion call of retreat, and neither is acceptable to me or to many in this Chamber.

Some now talk about a slow bleed strategy to cut off funding for our troops. I ask, if we surrender this battlefield, which battlefield will our enemy choose next? Will it be New York? Will it be Los Angeles? Will it be Washington, D.C.? Appeasement does not work. Just look back. The World Trade Center in 1993, Somalia, the Khobar Towers, Kenya and Tanzania, the USS *Cole* and, of course, September 11, 2001.

This copy of the Staten Island Advance, my local paper, shows the faces of some of the victims, 240 on this sheet alone. These are the people I knew, and they were the people who we promised, these 240 people who left 450

children without parents because they perished because evil people attacked this country. We made a promise to them that we will never let this happen again. I ask you, do we break that covenant? Do we surrender to the beast? To that I simply respond, no.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WU).

Mr. WU. Fanaticism, George Santyana famously said, is ''redoubling your effort when you have forgotten your aim.''

Let us measure our efforts against our aims in Iraq. After great effort, Saddam is dead. After long effort, we have established there are no WMD. We have eliminated Iraq as a threat to its neighbors. We have achieved the President's Iraq war aims.

Why are we sending 21,000 more troops there, rather than redeploying all our troops out of Iraq? Because we have forgotten our aims. Now we referee a civil war between the peoples of Iraq. The President admitted as much in his State of the Union, saying ''This is not the war we entered but the war that we are in.''

The use of force resolution we passed in 2002 nowhere authorizes our participation in an Iraqi civil war. It has, therefore, expired. The President must come back to Congress for reauthorization if he wishes to war further in Iraq or to extend the war to Iran.

The fact that we are in a civil war is backed up by our own national intelligence estimate, as well as my conversations with soldiers who served, serve or who will serve in Iraq.

I share with you a typical comment: ''I joined the Army, and I will go as many times as they send me. But I will tell you what. These folks have been killing each other for 1,000 years. They are killing each other today and may kill each other for another thousand years. I just don't see what good we are doing there.''

This loyal soldier deserves our support and our protection.

JOHN MURTHA's efforts to craft an emergency supplemental appropriations bill to protect our troops is commendable. No soldier should be repeatedly deployed to Iraq without being rested, retrained and ready. To do so otherwise is an abuse of our citizen soldiers. It is a criminal dereliction of duty. It is an abuse of power.

The Constitution gives Congress the express power to regulate the military. We must exercise this responsibility and stop the abuse of our troops by building thoughtful guidelines into our defense appropriations bills.

Some want us to believe that we must either stand aside and let the President have his way or use the blunt axe of cutting off all funding for the Iraq war. Not true. Not only does the Constitution give to Congress, not the President, the power and responsibility to regulate the military, there is ample precedent to support Congress's authority in wartime.

In the 19th century, Congress went so far as to require President Andrew Johnson to obtain the signature of General Ulysses S. Grant to any of the President's military orders before it could become valid. The President obeyed.

President Truman was forced in the Youngstown Steel case to recognize that his powers as Commander in Chief were severely limited when they undermined congressional decisions. Even though a steel strike seriously affected our ability to fight the Korean war, the Commander in Chief could not act independently of Nation's laws.

President Bush needs to learn that we are a Nation of laws and that no one in America is above the law. He needs to listen to the American people. He should heed our professional military, rather than shop for a convenient opinion.

The American people understand the challenges in Iraq are political and that no amount of military force can retrieve the situation. Only the Iraqis can solve the problems of Iraq. Our staying merely delays their day of full responsibility, and that is why this Iraqi government asked us not to escalate until, like our own generals, they were browbeaten into submission by President Bush.

We must end this war with a minimum of domestic recrimination, a maximum of motive and opportunity for the many peoples of Iraq to solve their own problems without genocide, one last chance to win the war in Afghanistan, the last known mailing address of Osama bin Laden, and we must begin the long task of rebuilding America's foreign policy on its traditional bipartisan basis.

We must forsake fanaticism and never forget our national aims.

My colleagues, this President has never had the authorization from Congress to enter a civil war in Iraq. Our mission is done. Bring the troops home.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to yield 4 minutes to the gentlelady from Wyoming (Mrs. CUBIN).

Mrs. CUBIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to House Concurrent Resolution 63.

This proposal sends a dangerous message to the terrorists in Iraq. It informs them that they have succeeded in dividing us, that they should continue training their fighters, rebuilding their resources, and then they should attack with their full force when we leave.

There is no denying the difficulty of our current situation in Iraq. Terrible fractures exist along ethnic and religious fault lines. The need to stabilize Baghdad has never been more apparent.

All these realities are reflected in the President's new way forward, which is much more than just an increase in troop strength.

On January 10, the President changed the strategy on how we will fight this war. The President has laid out in great detail a plan for the Iraqis to take a leading role in their own security, a plan to isolate violent extremism and protect Iraq's citizens, a plan to make room for political and economic progress.

Most importantly, though, this is a plan for victory, to stabilize Iraq, to secure Iraq's democratic future, and then to bring our troops home.

In testimony before the Senate Armed Forces committee, General David Petraeus, the commanding officer in Iraq, described the implementation of the President's plan, as ''a test of wills.''

General Petraeus confirmed that the congressional action against the President's new plan would only encourage our enemies. Today, the will of the House of Representatives is being put to the test.

Underpinning the resolution before us today are calls to defund our military in a time of war. This proposal most certainly does not pass the test of wills. Rather, it puts us on a path to defeat.

The expulsion of U.S. troops from Iraq is critical to al Qaeda's plan to spread their deadly jihad beyond September 11, 2001, beyond Iraq's borders, and into the greater Middle East and the rest of the world.

Failing to achieve victory in Iraq will roll back the clock in the war on terror, giving al Qaeda the opportunity to establish a base in the heart of the Arab world, a place to train, rebuild resources, and plot the demise of American citizens across the globe.

A rapid U.S. withdrawal would lead to chaos, sectarian genocide, and military intervention by Iraq's neighbors.

We can, as the President has proposed, pass the test of wills and implement our plan for victory. The alternative to the President's plan is to retreat from our objectives, setting the stage for regional conflict in which terrorist agitators like al Qaeda, Hamas and Hezbollah will thrive.

Radical Islamists have declared war on the United States. This is a harsh and striking reality. We did not choose to be put in the cross-hairs of terrorists, and yet we have been for decades.

We do have a choice, however, in whether or not we have the will to win this war. My choice is to provide for the safety of our citizens and the security of future generations. My choice is to oppose today's misguided and dangerous resolution. My choice is to vote ''no,'' and I urge my colleagues to vote ''no.''

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, at this time I am happy to yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentlelady from New York (Ms. CLARKE).

Ms. CLARKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in unwavering support of our troops. I support our troops who are stationed around the globe and, particularly, those stationed in harm's way in places like Iraq and Afghanistan. That is why I wholeheartedly support H. Con. Res. 63 which disapproves

of the President's decision to deploy more than 20,000 additional combat troops to Iraq, because support of our troops means I must vote to move them out of harm's way.

This 110th Congress debate marks the beginning of the end of the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq and a realignment of our strategy utilizing America's might against the war on terror.

Mr. Speaker, we now know that nothing said in justification of this war was fact. It was all fiction created by this administration to justify the unjustifiable.

Our military service men and women are doing their duty. They have accomplished their mission. They have brought Saddam Hussein to justice. Remember, ''Mission Accomplished.''

This administration has distracted us from the real war on terror, the war with al Qaeda. When are we going to bring Osama bin Laden to justice?

In Afghanistan, U.S. Central Command General Tommy Franks, the war's operational commander, misjudged the interest of our Afghan allies. He ran the war from Tampa, with no commander on the ground above the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. The first Americans did not arrive until 3 days into the fighting.

It is noted that Osama bin Laden slipped through the cordon ostensibly placed around Tora Bora as U.S. aircraft began bombing on November 30, 2002. More precisely, bin Laden was in Tora Bora on November 26, 2002, spoke to his fighters about the fight being a holy war, then, as quickly as he had come, bin Laden vanished in the pine forest with four of his loyalists walking in the direction of Pakistan.

□ 1030

Bin Laden escaped somewhere between November 28 and November 30, 2002, in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, 5 years ago, Department of Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz said, ''He,'' meaning Osama bin Laden, ''doesn't have a lot of good options.'' Obviously, that was false.

Further, it was reported that the administration pays bin Laden no attention, and that is evidenced by the fact that official reports no longer identify Osama bin Laden as a threat. The administration anticipated that they would have bin Laden erased by September 11, 2002. They failed at that mission.

Again, the failure of this administration to get the job done, to secure our homeland, and to get the man who masterminded the attacks upon us and continues to recruit and train al Qaeda agents is parallel to the failures of the mission in Iraq. The administration did not plan to fail; they failed to plan.

I support the men and women who put their lives on the line for our liberty. I am indebted to them, the sacrifices that they have made, and that is why I support this resolution. We must redeploy and make preparations to leave Iraq today.

As the representative of the 11th District from New York, I and my constituents deeply resent the lies and deceptions thrust upon us to justify this war by creating a distraction away from homeland security we all require as an inalienable right. The fire that I witnessed that refused to die was stamped out by the resilience of New Yorkers, Americans who believe in our democracy and the ultimate victory of good over evil.

The question I have and the question of the people from New York and the rest of America wants answered is: When will Osama bin Laden be brought to justice?

Thanks to the failed policies of this administration, Iraq is now in the midst of a civil war. Due to the lies and deceptions, the civil war in Iraq is now raging. We must redeploy our troops now. Thus far, there are 135,544 troops deployed in Iraq today.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GERLACH), with whom I had the opportunity to visit his Pennsylvania troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Mr. GERLACH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, the status quo in Iraq is unacceptable, and allowing our enemies to win is unacceptable, too. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose this House Democrat leadership resolution, H. Con. Res. 63, for three specific reasons:

First, the language of the resolution is essentially meaningless. Its passage will place the Congress on the side of the status quo.

I heard the Speaker say a few days ago that it is time for a ''new direction'' in Iraq. But where is this ''new direction'' in this resolution? It doesn't demand that all the troops return home. It doesn't advise the President to send more troops or even to reassign or relocate one soldier who is in the field today. It simply states, in essence, the current plan is bad. That may be good politics for some in this Chamber, but it is highly irresponsible and is certainly no way to fight a war.

If Congress wants to be a true partner in this fight, we must offer clear guidance, not mere criticism of the Commander in Chief. Unfortunately, this resolution is irresponsibly silent on what the ''new direction'' ought to be.

The second reason to oppose this resolution is that it is fundamentally vague and ambiguous. By only saying that Congress opposes the President's troop surge proposal of January 10, the resolution does not differentiate between the positive aspects of what the President called for on that date and the more controversial elements as well.

For example, I continue to have a tremendous concern over the President's plan for increasing our military force level in Baghdad to fight the sectarian violence between the Sunni and Shi'a factions of the Iraqi population. With the current lack of commitment of some Iraqi security forces and police forces to deal effectively with this violence, I am not confident of success of this surge into Baghdad. Nonetheless, I do think the strategy is correct in calling for additional American troops to go to Anbar Province to fight al Qaeda terrorists in that part of Iraq and to add more troops along the Iraq-Iranian border to interdict the flow of arms and more terrorists.

But, unfortunately, again, this resolution does not differentiate between these critical elements of the President's strategy and, therefore, on its face is weak and flawed.

The third reason to oppose this resolution is that it serves to undercut the morale and the support of our fighting men and women at the very time they are carrying out their orders. The President's decision of January 10 is now being implemented. Our troops are already carrying out this mission in the field.

I know of no instance in our Nation's history when Congress has passed a resolution disapproving a mission while that mission is in progress in the field. Can any proponent of this resolution come to the floor and cite a case where Congress has undertaken this type of action while a mission is already under way?

Any politician, it seems to me, who openly disapproves of an ongoing mission in the field only undercuts troop spirit and morale as they move forward, and that clearly lends support to the aims and the goals of our enemies. But don't accept my view on this. Listen to Gary Kurpius, the National Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, who states that this resolution debate is ''a major distraction to U.S. forces because it does nothing to improve the morale or strength of their resolve.''

So while I cannot support this resolution for these reasons, I do believe there is a ''new direction'' for us, as Republicans and Democrats, to unite behind and support. H. Con. Res. 45, introduced by Congressman FRANK WOLF, would declare Congress's support for the numerous recommendations of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, a distinguished group of Republicans and Democrats that have set forth a plan of action deserving of administration, congressional, and public support.

Included in the group's recommendation is the call to establish milestones of success for military training, government stability, national reconciliation, which would result in Iraqis taking control of their country and allowing our troops to withdraw; number two, to create an Iraq International Support Group to work with the Iraqi government to achieve these milestones; and, three, to focus U.S. assistance on training of Iraqi police forces and military personnel with the goal of completing the training by early 2008 so American troops can return home.

Contrary to the flawed, simplistic, and purely political resolution before us, the Wolf resolution offers clear, bipartisan, and nonpolitical direction for Congress to support and to promote in this very difficult time in our involvement in Iraq. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to vote down H. Con. Res. 63 and for the Democrat leadership in the House to immediately allow H. Con. Res. 45 to be voted in the full House. Because the status quo in Iraq is unacceptable and victory for our enemies is also unacceptable.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I am happy at this time to yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FATTAH).

Mr. FATTAH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me time.

My colleague from Pennsylvania is concerned about victory for our enemies. Well, the victory for our enemies is made possible by our pursuing a failed policy.

We are creating an inevitable situation in which our country continues to lose prestige and support around the world. But, much more importantly, we are losing the precious lives of our young people; and tens of thousands have been injured.

I was over at Walter Reed. I met and visited with some of the wounded soldiers. And I will never forget the day I met Cassandra Bryant, 20 years old, who lost both her legs to an improvised explosive device in Iraq. She was in a mechanical unit that was supposedly nowhere near the front line, but, nonetheless, for the rest of her life, she will have to go without her legs. Her sacrifice on behalf of our country, if in the face of a national security threat, would be understandable, and she was prepared to even give more. But to sacrifice so much. Our young people have done it in a place in a war that we should have never fought, we should have never been in.

There was ample information and evidence that Saddam possessed no weapons of mass destruction. The international inspectors were forced out of the country when, first of all, they found none and they wanted to continue their work.

This administration rushed to judgment into a war in which we have spent hundreds of billions of dollars and in which over 3,000 young people have lost their lives. And in Philadelphia, for Mrs. Zappala and for Mrs. Jeff Coat and for other mothers and fathers who have lost their sons and daughters in Iraq, this war and this effort in Iraq, which some suggest if we would just prosecute it more vigorously would somehow overnight become a success, we need to look at the conduct of this war on behalf of our Armed Forces.

This administration has failed our troops on the ground on so many occasions. On one occasion, there was a shortage of bullets. On others, we have seen reports that they were not having access to enough long rifles. We know that they have never had, in the 4 years now, enough up-armored vehicles to be able to do their patrols. We have failed to provide the body armor and Kevlar vests that are necessary and in the quantities that are needed.

The embarrassment of the conduct of this war is only equal to the stupidity that took us to Iraq in the first place. And what we need to do is not just vote in support of this resolution but this Congress would do better if we would understand that our young men and women don't wear Democrat or Republican dog tags. They are sons and daughters of our country. They are precious. Their willingness to sacrifice on behalf of our Nation should not be taken for granted.

We should move to redeploy. Forget the question of an additional surge. Why would we want to have our young people in a situation where the only time the Sunnis and the Shiites stop killing each other is when they both are willing to turn their weapons against our young people?

We are in the middle of a civil war. Clearly, in the case of a civil war, the definition suggests that we are unwelcome visitors. We should redeploy.

And if there are needs, and I think there are, for peacekeeping and stabilization forces, we should ask some of our friendly Arab countries in the region to provide some of their troops. We provide over $1 billion a year to the Egyptian military, one of the largest in the world and the largest in the Arab world. They do joint training with our troops and have done so for decades. If there is a need for troops, let us get our young people out of the way. And since the President said we went there in part to stabilize the region for our friendly Arab neighbors, let them step forward now and secure the region.

Our young people have done the hard work. They have done the heavy lifting. They have died on the fields of battle in Iraq, and it is time for this Congress to act responsibly. Let us rise on this day and speak not just in symbol but in substance on behalf of the fighting men and women of the American military.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CULBERSON), a member of the Appropriations Committee.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, the vote today is very simple: Will America give up and walk away from the fight to preserve American civilization? Are we proud of our military and will we support them and protect them in time of war?

The people of Houston's District Seven are immensely proud of the men and women of our Armed Forces. We want our soldiers and their commanders and our Commander in Chief to know that we will always support them and to know that we will do our best to protect them, especially in time of war; and we thank them for keeping us safe and free from another terrorist attack for 1,985 days.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of Houston's District Seven, I will vote no, to tell our enemies and our friends that Americans will never quit and Americans will never surrender in the fight to preserve, protect, and defend American freedom.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I am very honored at this time to yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague from the great State of California (Mr. WAXMAN), the chairman of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

□ 1045

Mr. WAXMAN. I thank my good friend for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, this administration has mishandled the situation in Iraq from the very beginning.

It misled the country into a war based on false and misleading statements about the threat from Iraq.

It failed to plan for the aftermath of the military victory.

It assumed that we would be greeted as liberators, the occupation would be brief, and that Iraq would pay for its own reconstruction.

It sent our troops to battle with dangerous shortages in body armor and devices needed to defuse remote-controlled bombs.

It sent in too few troops to Iraq to provide security, leaving the Iraqi people to rely on their sectarian militias to give them some protection from the chaos.

It disbanded the Iraqi army and, through an anti-Baathists campaign, gave the Sunnis a sense that the U.S. was aiding the Shiites against them.

It refused to take on war profiteering, even as auditors, investigators and inspector generals unearthed massive graft, fraud and abuse by reconstruction contractors.

It alienated the Iraqi people with the shameful and criminal acts of Abu Ghraib prison.

What we now have in Iraq is a defeat. We cannot achieve the illusions of the Bush administration that we will be able to create a stable, unified, liberal democracy in Iraq that is pro-American. Instead, we have sectarian fighting, death squads and a destabilized Middle East that threatens to be engulfed by the nightmare that we have unleashed.

The administration's mistakes have weakened our fight against al Qaeda. In fact, the war has enhanced the group's terrorist recruitment. The planned escalation in Iraq will divert more troops, resources and attention from the pursuit of Osama bin Laden's operation in Afghanistan; and we have enhanced the influence of Iran, not just in Iraq but throughout the region.

The President proposes an escalation of a failed policy. The fighting now only prolongs our losses and blocks the way to a new strategy. We are trying now to mediate a civil war, which is impossible. Instead, we are being drawn into that civil war by trying to prop up

a government that, in the final analysis, cannot unite the country.

Politically, this administration has tied the faith of American soldiers to a Shi'a-dominated government that lacks the authority, the will and the manpower to stop the roving gangs and insurgent militias that have shattered Iraqi society. Instead of acknowledging these failures and embarking on a new course of action, the President gives us more of the same: Send more troops to Iraq.

We need to redefine our mission and our hopes for ''success.'' Our goal should be to try to stabilize the situation, stop the killing, contain the violence.

We cannot do it alone, and we cannot do it militarily. We must seek a diplomatic strategy with Iraq's neighbors and the international community.

Certainly, it will take more action than just the resolution before us to bring about the policy changes that we need. The Congress must stand ready to use the checks and balances necessary to extract ourselves from the morass we face in Iraq. We can do that through more oversight, but it is also time for Congress to use the appropriations process to end this war.

We should pass this resolution and make it clear to the President that we will not stand for more of the same.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. GALLEGLY), a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the ranking member of a subcommittee.

Mr. GALLEGLY. I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, my concern about the Iraq resolution offered by my friends on the other side of the aisle is what impact it will have on our troops and our mission and its consequences on our mission. How can you say support our troops when you don't support sending in the people necessary to back them up to do the job that we sent them there to do to start with?

Let's be clear, Mr. Speaker, about who the real enemy is. We are at war with the Islamic jihadists. Jihadists have vowed to destroy America, the West and all sympathizers with democracy. We are at war for our very existence against jihadists who have vowed to enslave us with a fundamentalist philosophy that rejects all human rights.

The consequences of failure in Iraq are not just failure in Iraq. Iraq's stability has direct repercussions on Iran, Saudi Arabia, Israel and all of the Middle East. If our efforts to bring peace and stability to Iraq are successful, we will accomplish a great deal. If not, if Iraq fails, it will provide Islamic jihadists with a sanctuary similar to the one we removed from Afghanistan, only the sanctuary in Iraq would be many times worse, as the terrorists would have access to billions of dollars of oil resources to carry out their evil plans. Such a sanctuary would threaten Europe and the United States.

If we are in support of our military men and women, we must support their mission against Islamic jihadists. The alternative is defeat in Iraq and a greater threat of attack here at home.

A defeat in Iraq would not just be a defeat for the United States. It would also set back any chance for peace and stability in the Middle East. It would empower terrorists to unleash greater sectarian violence, which would draw all of Iraq's neighbors into a Sunni versus Shi'a conflict for control of Iraq.

I am also concerned about the resolution because it does not offer any alternative whatsoever that could lead to a successful outcome for the United States in Iraq. All the resolution does is to criticize the President's plan to augment our existing force in Iraq by 21,000-plus troops.

The Democratic resolution offers no other plan. It does not address what should be the right strategy or the right tactics. In effect, and I think this is the real issue, it endorses the status quo in Iraq, a position that I certainly can't support, and I hear lots of those that are supporting this say they can't support either, but they are de facto supporting the status quo by supporting this resolution.

I look forward to the majority offering a comprehensive proposal that would set forth a specific course of action. Then we could have a real debate on the pros and cons of the Democratic plan versus the President's plan to secure Iraq and defeat the terrorists in that country. Unfortunately, the resolution before us fails to do this, and therefore I can't support it. It should be rejected.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from New York (Mr. HIGGINS).

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, as this debate comes to a close, much has been said. Certainly not everything. The House is considering a resolution concerning the Iraq war. It expresses the unequivocal support of this body for the American troops serving in Iraq and for their families. This resolution expresses opposition to the President's planned surge, escalation, augmentation. Call it what you will. But, more than anything else, this resolution opposes the administration's deeper commitment to a fundamentally and deeply flawed military strategy.

The fact is that Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki lacks the authority or the will to confront Shi'a militias. To do so would result in a major confrontation with the militia leader Moqtada al-Sadr, without whom the Iraqi government has little support. These dangerous Iraqi alliances and compelling evidence of a strong Iranian alliance demonstrates how weak the National Unity Government is and how pathetically dependent we are on them for success in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, the American people deserve much better. Surging troop levels in Iraq was tried in 2004, 2005 and 2006. Each time, it failed to reduce violence and only served to inflame anti-American sentiment.

Under the President's plan, it is still the American troops that do most of the fighting and, regrettably, will do most of the dying. For any decent outcome in Iraq, the President has to be serious about setting and enforcing deadlines. The President needs to demand that Prime Minister Maliki stop protecting the militias and make clear there will be serious consequences if he continues to do so.

The problem in Iraq is the same as it was when the conflict started: American war planners never provided the resources to successfully create a vital and secure center from which a functioning society could evolve.

The history is clear. Modern Iraq was born out of a strong nationalist aspiration in the early 20th century. Shi'a, Sunni, Christians and Jews stood united against the British and peacefully created and coexisted in a new, ethnically diverse Iraq.

Then, Iraqis prayed at each other's mosques. Today, Shi'a and Sunni militias bomb each other's mosques with impunity. Last month, 70 college students were slaughtered by a car bomb in Baghdad. Iraqi weddings, funerals and schools are the regular targets of suicide bombers. These are called ''revenge killings.'' They are carried out in the name of destiny and in the name of God.

Where is the outrage? Where is the condemnation for these atrocities in the Arab Muslim community? Nowhere does the Koran talk about revenge killings, violence, hate or intolerance. The Koran describes the Prophet Muhammad as the Prophet of Mercy. At the core of Islamic belief is compassion, forgiveness and tolerance: To you your faith and to me mine.

Absent the real possibility of a functioning government, a functioning society, a functioning economy, the National Unity Government of Iraq cannot succeed because it lacks legitimacy in the very eyes of those it seeks to govern. Elections and forming governments are the symbols of democracy. Legitimacy in the eyes of the governed is the substance of democracy and that of free and open societies throughout the world.

Madam Speaker, I don't stand here as a partisan. I am an American, and I want my country to succeed. I want my President to succeed, regardless of party affiliation, regardless of who he or she may be.

The fact of the matter is, we have an obligation to tell the truth to the American people at every level, militarily and politically. This strategy, advanced and sustained by this administration, has been an abject failure.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT), a member of our Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Speaker, I first want to express our appreciation to the brave men and women of our Armed Forces. I have met with our troops in Iraq and in Afghanistan and our wounded soldiers in Walter Reed and Bethesda Naval Hospitals and the families of those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice defending our freedoms. We thank them for their unwavering commitment to our country and believe we owe it to them to have an open and honest debate regarding our next steps in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question that the war in Iraq has been challenging. We are fighting a war against terrorists and radical Islamic militants who are determined to kill as many Americans as possible. They believe that killing American soldiers will drive us out of Iraq and out of the Middle East, allowing radical terrorists free rein and a base to expand their influence around the world.

These are the same radical Islamic militants who bombed the World Trade Center in 1993, the Khobar Towers in 1996, the embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 and the USS *Cole* in 2000. We surely can't forget the slaughter of 3,000 innocent American citizens on our soil. And just last year a couple arrested in Britain planned to use their 6-month-old baby as a human bomb to destroy a civilian airliner over the Atlantic Ocean.

□ 1100

We must recognize that we are dealing with irrational, radical, maniacal monsters who will not respond to diplomatic niceties.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that the vast majority of Americans do not support an immediate withdrawal from Iraq, just as they do not support a never-ending deployment of U.S. forces there. They want us, they expect us, to work together and with the President to find a way to win the war on terror while bringing our troops home as soon as possible.

We should be past the point of political posturing when it comes to Iraq. Yet this resolution is more of the same, once again placing politics over policy. Instead of encouraging substantive discussion on options in Iraq, the majority has once again shut us out of the process and refused to consider any alternative to their point of view. That is truly unfortunate because this nonbinding resolution does nothing to increase the accountability of the Iraqi government or provide for our troops or even propose a new course in Iraq.

We all agree that this administration has made mistakes in Iraq. Most harmful, I believe, has been the slow pace of training Iraq troops and security forces to take responsibility for their own country. Early lapses in this area are a principal reason why our troops remain in Iraq today.

But the administration has taken action to accelerate this training and better prepare Iraqi forces. So now it is time for the Iraqi government to demonstrate that it has the ability to confront the problems facing their country, both politically and militarily. That is why it is so important that we hold the Iraqi government accountable for what they say they are going to do and require them to take the lead in securing their Nation. The Iraqi government and the Iraqi people must recognize that they, not American troops, are responsible for the future of their country.

With that being said, we must continue to support our troops and commanders on the ground by giving them the resources they need to be successful. It would be a tragic mistake to cut off funding or limit support for our troops fighting against terrorists abroad. We also must be very careful about the message we send to our allies and our enemies and, most importantly, to our troops in the field who have performed with great courage.

The bipartisan Iraq Study Group has stated that it could support a shorter redeployment or surge of American combat forces to stabilize Baghdad or to speed up the training and equipping mission, if the U.S. commander in Iraq determines that such steps would be effective, and that is a quote from the Iraq Study Group report. Well, General Petraeus says that it can be effective.

Clearly, the path forward must include military and political strategic benchmarks so that we are in a position to measure the progress and commitment of the Iraqi government, but we must also be willing to give our troops, who have sacrificed so much for our Nation, the opportunity and the resources to be successful and provide the short-term support needed to achieve increased stability in Iraq.

There are serious consequences to our national security if we fail in Iraq. Cutting off funding, limiting military options or pushing for immediate withdrawal will only make our future more dangerous. It is time to stop the politics, stop the games, stop the finger pointing, and do what is best for America. Let us put partisanship aside and discuss concrete plans on how we can defeat radical terrorists and protect our Nation from those who mean us great harm.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time is remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROSS). The Democratic side has 9 minutes remaining. The gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) has 13 minutes remaining.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 2 of House Resolution 157 and as the designee of the majority leader, I demand that the time for debate be enlarged by 1 hour, equally divided and controlled by the leaders or their designees.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, that will be the order.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ROTHMAN), a member of the Defense appropriations subcommittee.

Mr. ROTHMAN. I thank the gentlelady.

Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues in expressing my deepest appreciation and gratitude to the men and women of our Armed Forces, to the families of those who have died, who have been wounded or are presently in harm's way.

My prayers and all of my efforts as a United States Congressman are devoted to ensuring the well-being and support of our military, as they fight to protect our Nation, to honoring their memories, and to helping them when they return to our country.

Mr. Speaker, after we deposed Saddam Hussein and removed him from power, it became clear to most Americans and most people around the world that so much of what our President had told us about Iraq was not true. There were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Saddam had no intention of sending Iraqi agents to slaughter Americans on our shores, and Saddam had precious little, if any, contact with foreign terrorists or anyone else who wanted to do harm to America.

Mr. Speaker, now after nearly 4 years and the death of more than 3,100 American servicemen and -women, after more than 23,000 American men and women have been wounded, and after the United States has spent almost one-half a trillion U.S. taxpayer dollars in Iraq, I believe we have met our moral obligation to the people of Iraq.

We have given the Iraqi people an opportunity over nearly 4 years to decide whether they will live together with themselves in peace, neighbor to neighbor, Iraqi, Sunni, Shia and Kurd.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, the Iraqi people have not yet decided they want to live together with one another in Iraq in peace.

Our having our United States brave young men and women standing there, being shot at, being blown up is not encouraging the Iraqis to live together in peace. Not only are our troops dying and being wounded, but 80 percent of the Iraqi people say they want us to leave their country immediately.

Mr. Speaker, President Bush implies that al Qaeda will take over Iraq if we leave. In my opinion that is nonsense. Today, you have less than 1,500 al Qaeda in Iraq. Iraq has a population of 25 million people. Today, you have not only Iraqi Shiites killing al Qaeda Sunnis, you have Iraqi Sunnis killing al Qaeda Sunnis. They don't like foreigners in Iraq, whether they be Sunnis, and especially if they are al Qaeda or Americans.

Mr. Speaker, the only hope that our enemies have to destroy the United States is to have us remain bogged down in the swamp of the Iraqi civil war. Are we smart enough to pull ourselves out of that swamp of the Iraqi civil war? Or are we going to continue to allow our Nation to have our soldiers bled, our resources taken away,

our equipment destroyed, taking our attention away from the other military threats and realities in this very hostile world?

I believe that the United States' vital national interests will only be served if we withdraw all of our troops out of Iraq as quickly as possible for the safety of our troops being uppermost in our minds. Then we can leave several thousand in the region just in case. We can, more importantly, encourage the regional players, through diplomacy, to come together to help the Iraqis decide to live in peace.

Mr. Speaker, leaving Iraq's civil war will serve America's vital national interests by allowing us to rebuild what is now a depleted U.S. Army and U.S. Marines, a military that is not fully up to its strategic requirements to deal with all the possible threats in the world.

We need to refocus on Afghanistan and the resurgence of the Taliban. We need to be prepared militarily for the potential threats from North Korea, Iran and, yes, even the People's Republic of China.

It is also important that we take these resources that we have been spending in Iraq not only to rebuild our military but to spend the money here at home. There is al Qaeda in 60 Nations in the world. They have pledged to come to America and harm us; yet we have spent more money in Iraq since 9/11 than we have spent on our homeland security needs.

Believe it or not, Mr. Speaker, that is the truth and that has to change.

Mr. Speaker, I will be voting for this resolution. Iran and Syria and Saudi Arabia have an interest in stabilizing Iraq. They will not permit the destruction of that country. They are afraid of refugees coming into their countries and destabilizing their Nation.

We need to vote for this resolution and withdraw from Iraq.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am so honored to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE), the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia.

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I have listened to this debate all week, and I must say I admire the seriousness and the civility of most, if not all, of those who have come to this floor in this historic week to address the issue and express themselves on this resolution. But I rise respectfully to urge my colleagues in both parties to vote ''no'' on this no-confidence resolution.

I support the President's call for a surge of 21,500 forces in Baghdad because the President has not just asked for more troops for more troops' sake. Despite what has been said again and again on this floor, Mr. Speaker, this is a new strategy. It involves new tactics and new rules of engagement on the ground.

This surge of forces in Baghdad, designed to quell violence in that capital city and enable a political solution to take hold, was part and parcel of the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group, which said, as Americans could see for themselves on page 74 of the Iraq Study Group, and as Chairman Lee Hamilton of Indiana said before the Foreign Affairs Committee, the Iraq Study Group concluded that a temporary surge, and they used the word ''surge,'' a temporary surge of forces in Baghdad would be acceptable to them to quell violence.

But while I must tell you that many of my colleagues have no confidence in the President's new way forward in Iraq, I say with respect, I have no confidence in the ability of Congress to conduct war. It was Napoleon Bonaparte who said hundreds of years ago, ''I would rather face 20 brilliant generals than one mediocre one.''

I would assure you today, Mr. Speaker, that our enemies would rather face 435 commanders in chief rather than one.

Our forefathers rejected war by committee when they enshrined the power to conduct war exclusively in Article II of the Constitution of the United States. In Article I, where this House finds its home, is the power to declare war. It is the power to appropriate funding and to set essentially military rules of conduct by statute. But the ability and the conduct of the war of the Commander in Chief is exclusively vested in the President of the United States, in that document upon which we all swear our oath of allegiance.

So I stand with our Commander in Chief, but also in a very profound sense, Mr. Speaker, I stand with the Constitution.

Vote ''no'' on this resolution and embrace our Constitution as written.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY), a chief deputy whip.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague, the gentlewoman from California, and I rise to thank our young men and women in our armed services and their families, those who have understood the sacrifices that they have made on behalf of our great Nation.

But Mr. Speaker, I also rise to speak out in strong opposition to President Bush's misguided escalation of troops in the Iraq War and to commend the Democratic leadership of this House for holding a real debate on our involvement in Iraq.

Since January 4, when Speaker PELOSI took the gavel, the Democratic majority has delivered on its pledge of oversight and accountability of this war in Iraq, and Democrats have changed the direction of the discussion and have changed this war to lead us to the ultimate goal of all Americans, that is, to bring our troops home.

For too long, Congress has taken a backseat on the President's handling of this war, but this majority has held more hearings on Iraq than the Republican-controlled Congress did since this war began.

□ 1115

This debate is about not about trying to embarrass our President for political purposes. We are debating the escalation because the American people have demanded a change in direction. The President has failed to recognize the will of the people and many of the top military and foreign policy thinkers around the country who view this escalation with little hope of success.

Our constituents spoke with their voices loudly on Election Day, and they have been even more vocal since about the dissatisfaction with the way this war has been managed. Many in this country want to see a deescalation of America's forces, not the increase the President has proposed.

The President and his advisors created this problem, and it is now on the Congress to find a way to disengage Iraq without causing the country and the region to be engulfed in a further outbreak of violence.

In the last week, we have seen some of the most horrific bombings that cost the lives of hundreds of Iraqis and the downing of several U.S. helicopters. Over 3,000 of our young American men and women have lost their lives; tens and thousands have been physically and mentally maimed; and hundreds of Iraqi citizens, the vast majority of them trying to live normal lives, have been killed or injured.

This was not how this war was to be conducted.

Four years ago, when this President came to the Congress for authorization to invade Iraq, he stated that Iraq posed a clear and present danger. He talked about how invading Iraq was part of the greater war on terror and how, if Saddam Hussein was not toppled, he would attack our allies and maybe even on our own soil.

After seeing the death and destruction al Qaeda did to my city on 9/11 and to our Nation, I wanted to trust our President and all the President's men and women. When I sat across the table in the Roosevelt Room in the White House from Condoleezza Rice and then-CIA-Director George Tenet, I thought I could trust them. Because of them and the false intelligence they gave, I voted for authorization of this war.

As the only Member of this Congress to lose a relative on 9/11 and as someone who has lost 125 constituents to the attacks of the Twin Towers, I do believe that America must always act to defeat threats before those threats act against us.

As they say, in life, there are no do-overs; and if I could turn back time, I am sure that most of the Members of this House and most of my colleagues in this House would never have given this President this authority to wage this war in Iraq.

This war has cost us a fortune from our national treasury, a fortune in American lives lost and ruined, and a fortune in our ability as a Congress to trust our Commander in Chief and our President.

Today, we have an opportunity to stand as a group and to say what our constituents want us to say, to say what the Army generals want us to say, to say what many of them, those men and women in our Armed Services in uniform on the front line want us to say: ''Mr. President, adding more troops is not the answer. Adding more troops to fight what has become a civil war is not the answer.''

The answer is we need to start to begin to bring our troops home, reducing our presence in Iraq, and create the conditions for the Iraqi people themselves to stand up and secure their own country.

The Iraq Study Group set out a plan that many of us support, but the President continues to believe that history will judge him favorably.

As the Iraqi government attempts to clamp down on the Shi'a and Sunni militias, it has become abundantly clear these forces are not as strong as we have been led to believe, those being the Iraqi government's forces. I believe we need to look strongly on redeploying our troops in Iraq along the border and in the Kurdish north, removing American citizens from harm's way in Baghdad and Anbar Province, and forcing the Iraqis, both politically and militarily, to secure these areas. U.S. troops should only be used in an advisory role, not in direct combat.

Mr. Speaker, I have more to submit for the RECORD, but I want to send our young men and women home as soon as possible and an end to putting them in harm's way.

Only when the violence stops should the U.S. in small numbers work with Iraqi and multinational forces in keeping the peace, building the military infrastructure and securing long term stability.

Right now, with the exception of Great Britain and a few other countries we are doing all the work, taking all the risk, and losing our best and our brightest while the Iraqis lay waste to their country.

It is time for us to get back to our roots and be the beacon of freedom and democracy that we are.

We need to increase our conversations with the moderate Arab states and get them invested before Iraq, and possibly the whole region, is at war.

The focus should be making sure that countries like Iran and Saudi Arabia are not funding Sunni and Shia extremists, respectively.

Diplomacy is not the end all fix, but it is a start.

Whether or not my colleagues want to refer to the President's plan as a surge or escalation, I see it as a target on the backs of our armed forces.

This resolution clearly states that the House does not support the escalation, but we will not abandon the safety of our troops by cutting off the supplies they need for force protection.

I do not support this escalation.

Instead of bringing our troops home President Bush has decided to put even more of our overburdened arm forces in an increasingly sectarian bloodbath.

Our country has been asking for answers to why our men and women of the armed forces continue to die in Iraq and we have not received any answers.

Until these answers are forthcoming, I will not support the President's escalation and I wholeheartedly support this resolution.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to yield 3 minutes to my Florida colleague, Mr. STEARNS, a senior member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. I thank my distinguished colleague, the ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

And I want to have the opportunity to speak. I have spoken earlier on this debate, but I thought I would bring some simple common sense to my colleagues that perhaps was best brought forward by David Broder in the Washington Post. Now, David Broder obviously is more sympathetic to the Democratic point of view than they are to the Republicans, but I think he makes three points which I will also echo in my conversation today.

Basically, we are at the end of the debate, but we are all moving towards a decision most of us already have decided, but I have some simple common sense that I would bring to the attention of my colleagues.

When General Petraeus was unanimously supported by the Senate, it was with the idea that he would bring his new thoughts, his new strategy to this plan in Iraq. So don't you think, as members of this body, we should give General Petraeus an opportunity to implement his plan and not immediately come forward with a resolution that says that it is a disapproving of the decision to deploy more troops to Iraq?

When we deployed more troops for the Iraqi elections, why didn't you complain then? That happened twice before. We went up to almost 160,000. When we deployed more troops to ratify the Iraqi constitution, why didn't you complain back then? That went up to almost 160,000.

So now you are coming against a simple new strategy with the best we have in America who actually has written the manual on how to do it. You are not even willing to give him a chance. No breathing space. This nonbinding resolution shows your motives, which are to eventually reduce all funding for Iraq.

My third point is, you are so willing to do this, you are not even willing to look at what could happen with this new strategy. Let's say it works. Are you still going to offer these resolutions to cut off funds even though this strategy works and General Petraeus is successful? No matter what, you seem hell bent on reducing funds for Iraq. Yet we didn't hear any time before when we increased the surge for the Iraqi elections or for the ratification of the Iraqi constitution.

You know, in a way, Bush went to your retreat with a willingness to listen to your ideas. He is showing bipartisanship. In fact, he has a quote here which I think illustrates what the American people are saying. ''What really matters,'' quote, ''is what happens on the ground. I can talk all day long, but what really matters to the American people is to see progress.''

So he realizes also that he must show progress. And we are asking for this new strategy to have a chance, and we owe it to them.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my friend, the gentlewoman from New York, the chairwoman of the Small Business Committee, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ.

(Ms. VELÁZQUEZ asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today, first and foremost, to praise the courage, performance, and commitment of our troops stationed in Iraq and elsewhere. We are immensely grateful for their sacrifices.

Because of this war in Iraq, today the lives of the 135,000 military families are disrupted, and 125,000 civilian contractor families are divided. Nearly 4,000 U.S. soldiers and civilian contractors have already given their lives. We have lost over 140 young New York military men and women in Iraq.

I voted against this war from day one. It was a mistake then, and it is a mistake today. This week, we have a chance to act. Escalation is wrong, and we must take it upon ourselves to make things right by seeking a political solution to this war.

This administration's flawed foreign policy has damaged our relationship with our allies. The public opposes this war, Iraqis oppose this war, the world opposes this war, and this Congress should speak loudly against this war, too.

Our military has been stretched to the brink of breakdown. Our actions in Iraq have set back the war on terror and made problems in the Middle East much worse.

This war has distracted us from our responsibilities at home, too. Poverty is raging. Millions have lost their jobs and health insurance. Families struggle to pay for the cost of transportation, energy, and housing. Yet we choose to spend $8 billion of hard-earned money every month in Iraq, not at home.

While the cost of the war escalates, our most important social programs for our kids, the elderly, and the poor get slashed to pay for it. We have dug a deep hole of debt to finance this war in Iraq, and we will ask the children of working families to pay off that debt.

These priorities are misplaced. We should be investing in our children, not borrowing against their future.

Our young men and women return from Iraq with all sorts of health problems, both physical and psychological. The trauma of this war will affect the lives of our veterans forever. This resolution expresses our commitment to supporting our veterans' needs. We must honor the sacrifices that our veterans have made for this Nation. We must provide for them from the moment they get home to their families.

I believe this war is more wrong today than ever before. We must stand forcefully for what is right, for our troops, for the victims of this war, and for the priorities we are neglecting at home.

Let this body send the world a powerful message that the United States is changing course in Iraq. We must end this war.

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3½ minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY).

Mr. GINGREY. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I rise for the second time during this 36-hour marathon to strongly oppose this, I almost want to say, meaningless resolution, Mr. Speaker. But make no mistake about it, this is not a meaningless resolution. The consequences of failure in Iraq are drastic, and let me just read to you what some of those are.

Number one, collapse of a democratic Iraqi government, likely, very likely leading to mass killings and genocide in the nation.

Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups would use this defeat to boost recruitment. They would use Iraq as a staging ground for deadly attacks paid for with Iraqi oil revenue.

Iran and Syria would exert tremendous influence over the region. You think they are bad actors now, you just wait until this scenario plays out. And, indeed, and they have said that Israel would be pushed into the sea.

Mr. Speaker, the real Democratic plan is coming later. And if you don't believe me, I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle just read a recent article this week in Roll Call. I am not going to stand up here and read it to the Members. You can read it.

But the Progressive Caucus of the House Democratic Conference, the Out of Iraq Caucus of the House Democratic Conference, led by Ms. WOOLSEY and Ms. WATERS, basically say that this is just the first step. They say that in this op ed article. This resolution is not meaningless. It is the first step, my colleagues, toward cutting off funding for the troops and pulling the rug out from under them.

What does this say then to our brave fighting men and women who are trying to defend this country? We have heard over and over again from the other side that, ''Look, we can't afford this war anymore. It is costing too much in lives and money. We are making too big a commitment there, and we need to bring our troops home because some other conflict may break out in this world.''

Well, I say, Mr. Speaker, to my colleagues. What is more important than the current war? What indeed are we going to save our troops for? Working the rope lines at 4th of July parades, helping senior citizens cross the street? We have got to stop this and stop it now.

And listen to what the terrorists themselves say about the message that that would send. And this is a quote, Mr. Speaker, from bin Laden himself: ''Hostility toward America is a religious duty, and I am confident that Muslims will be able to end the legend of the so-called superpower that is America.''

His top deputy, bin Laden's deputy Zawahiri, says, ''The Jihad in Iraq requires several incremental goals. The first stage: Expel the Americans from Iraq.''

Make no mistake about this. What we are doing with this resolution is not a salute to GI Joe, it is a capitulation to Jihadist Joe.

□ 1130

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to yield 5 minutes to my friend from California, the gentleman who is also the chairman of the Education and Labor Committee, Mr. MILLER.

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank him for all of his hard work in struggling on this issue and our troops and force strength, Mr. Speaker.

But I rise in strong support of this bipartisan resolution regarding the Iraq war. I rise in strong support to this resolution to say to the President, no more. I rise in strong support of this resolution to say to the President, your policy is wrong. Yes, you have tried the surge before, and the surge has not brought peace to Iraq. It has not brought an end to the insurgency. It has not brought an end to the sectarian war that is going on in that country every day.

Yes, this is the fourth time that the President tried this policy, and it has not worked in any of those times. When we pass this bipartisan resolution, the President should pause. Because, at that moment, the President will not have the support of the United States House of Representatives; and, at that moment, the President will not have the superintendent of the people of the United States.

The President better think long and hard about he really believes that he should commit these troops, and continue to commit these troops, without the authority of the people, without the authority of this Congress.

Mr. Speaker, Members of the House, American men and women have been fighting in Iraq, and they will soon begin their fifth year. In 5 years, they have done all that we have asked them. But what we have asked them to do cannot be accomplished by the military.

We have known for some time that Iraq now requires a political solution, and it requires the Iraqi government, the Iraqi people, the Iraqi society and the communities to take hold of their country and to decide whether they want a future of continued sectarian violence or whether they want an orderly society. They must make that decision.

The President has had it wrong for many, many months, for many years. He has continued to say that, as the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down. Mr. President, you have it wrong. As we begin to stand down, they will begin to stand up.

The fact that our military troops are on the streets of Baghdad and Anwar Province and elsewhere enables people to continue a level of violence that randomly and wantonly takes the lives of men, women and children, innocent bystanders, for almost no good reason at all, no good reason at all. It allows that to continue because each knows, if it gets out of control, the American troops will ride to the rescue, the helicopters will come, and the missiles will fly. We are the enablers of the continuation of this violence.

Once they have to take responsibility for their actions, once we leave, this is no longer an insurgency. This is crime on crime, Iraqi against Iraqi. Somebody has got to take the responsibility for that, and that will not be us. We will not be able to bring it to an end. The Iraqi government will be.

The time has come for our troops to leave. The time has come for us to understand that we cannot cure what is wrong in Iraq.

But for these troops that are there and for the troops that are being sent in spite of the will of the American people and the will of the Congress, we ought to understand that they should be fully equipped. We should not repeat the history of this administration in this deployment where men and women were sent into the theater without proper vehicle armor, without proper body armor, without proper interpreters and without proper training.

Many Members have come to this floor for many hours now and said, what is the message you are sending to your troops?

What was the message the Congress is sending?

What was the message this Congress sent to the troops when the President allowed them to go to war without enough troops to secure the peace?

What was the message this Congress sent when it allowed the troops to go to combat without proper vehicle armor?

What was the message that the Congress sent when it allowed our troops to go into combat without proper protective armor?

What was the message this Congress sent to the troops when it allowed this President to continue this failed course with no adjustment over the past 4 years?

And what was the message that we sent to the troops when it allowed the President to effectively draft American volunteers by continuing their tours, shortening their time at home, shortening their time with their families and sending them back without proper training, shortened training and without proper equipment?

We cannot do that to the troops. The message of this resolution is we are not going to do that. We are not going to do that. We will make a pledge to you that we will not let you fight and die forever with no plan to get you out, with no exit plan for you, with no change in the policy that has led tragically to so many deaths and so many wounded.

That is what this resolution is about. That is the message we must send to the troops, and that is the message we must send to the Iraqi people, that they must take responsibility.

This surge is not an election-day surge. This isn't a constitutional-day surge. This is a surge for the purpose, this is an escalation for the purposes of door-to-door combat, street by street, block by block, house by house.

Yet today we see General Schoomaker saying in the paper that these troops that are getting engaged in this up-close battle in the midst of the Iraqi people will not have enough interpreters. They will not have civil affairs soldiers. They will not have enough translators. So now we are putting them again where they are at greatest risk, and this Congress is agreeing to go forward and repeat history and put them at risk when it is not necessary.

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG).

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, this is a serious matter. We have been discussing this now for days here in the House, but I want to tell you that I am opposed to this resolution, because it doesn't do anything.

I want to see our troops home, and I want to see our troops safe. I would venture to say that, with the exception of, maybe, Mr. MURTHA, I have seen and visited more wounded troops, soldiers and Marines at our military hospitals than anybody in this Chamber; and I don't want them to be in harm's way any longer.

The problem is, I have strong recollections of September 11; and even before September 11, I remember the bombing of the USS *Cole* where our military, our sailors were killed and wounded. I remember the bombings of the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. I remember the bombings of the Khobar Towers, where American airmen were housed in Saudi Arabia. I remember the bombing of the Marine barracks in Lebanon. I remember the hostages taken by terrorists and held for 444 days in Iran.

I remember all of that, but what I remember, that I will never, ever get out of my mind, is September 11, being on the highway immediately next to the Pentagon when the airplane hit the Pentagon and killed many of our friends and colleagues.

I remember going to Ground Zero just a few days after September 11 to deliver satellite telephones to the police and the firefighters because their existing communications didn't work due to all of the confusion, because of the disruption to the communications lines.

I remember the smoke was still rising, the dust was still flying.

I remember the American people demanded that something be done. They were tired of us being subjected to terrorist attacks, Americans being killed, and nothing being done about it.

The American people demanded that something be done, and they demanded through our Congress that something be done. The President was under this pressure and demanded that something be done. Congress debated then and two-thirds of the Members who were here at the time voted to give the President legal, lawful authority to do whatever had to be done.

This Congress should be prepared to do whatever has to be done to eliminate the terrorist threat. I don't care whether it is in Iraq, whether it is in Afghanistan, whether it is in Somalia, whether it is in Mogadishu, wherever it is, we have got to protect Americans from the threat of terrorism and from terrorist attacks; and we need to support our troops who are out there on the front line making sure that we at home are being protected.

Now these soldiers have been promised by the Commander in Chief that they are going to have some reinforcements, that they are going to have some help to fight this fight, the aggressive fight that is now finally taking place. The Maliki government was finally pressured to allow us to attack the targets that were real targets, to allow us to attack whether they were politically harmful to the Maliki government or not.

What about the soldiers in the field who were expecting that they would get some reinforcements and that maybe, with those reinforcements, they might get an extra night's sleep?

What about the soldier who had hoped that reinforcements would allow him or her to sit down to a hot lunch, rather than having to grab an MRE and eat that MRE on the run?

What about the soldiers in the field who hoped that reinforcements would allow them to find time to read their mail or send a letter to their loved ones back home?

Mr. Speaker, this is a serious issue. If this House is serious about Congress bringing home our troops, then do it right. This resolution doesn't bring any troops home. It doesn't provide any safety or security for our troops. It doesn't provide anything to help with the mission in the global war on terror.

If you want to do it right, bring a resolution out here to the floor that does it right, that brings them home, that stops whatever it is that we are doing there in Iraq.

But, if you know anything about what our military troops are doing, you know that once you get into a battle, once you get into a fight, it is easy to get into a war. You can almost slip into it without recognizing you are getting into it. But once you are in the fight, getting out is not easy.

Once you are in the battle, you have several options. You win or you lose or you surrender or you retreat or you negotiate. Who do we negotiate with? Negotiating would be nice if we could end this by negotiations. Who do you negotiate with? You can't even find Bin Laden, if, in fact, he is alive.

The problem here is, once you get into the fight, which we did with the support of the American people and with the support of this Congress, once you get into the fight, it is just not that easy to get out of it unless you win or you lose. Winning is better than losing.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON).

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, today is, indeed, a day for thoughtfulness and courage in this House. As we debate the future of our involvement in Iraq, we must not forget that our troops are engaged in armed conflict a half a world away. It is their future and their sacrifice which necessitated this debate today.

Now is the time when this hallowed institution must dig deeply within its own conscience and rise above the politics and the platitudes which have plagued us for far too long. The American people and our troops demand and expect no less of us. Yet no simple solutions face us.

Let's look first at the decisions we have made.

We were advised that the conflict in Iraq would require more troops, a longer engagement, and an exit strategy. We did not heed that advice, and now we face an escalating insurgency and civil war.

We were told the cost was $50 billion. We were wrong. It cost more than $380 billion and climbing fast, and we have not been good stewards of the taxpayer money, as there has been much corruption and waste in our spending.

We were told of eminent success in Afghanistan, and we pulled out our troops in order to provide an earlier surge in Iraq. We were wrong, and we have seen a rise in violence in both countries.

We must break this pattern. We can ill afford any further misjudgments, because it is our obligation in this deliberative body to consider every option available.

We stand here today to engage in the first substantive discussion of the policies we need to implement in order to succeed in Iraq and bring our troops home. It is abundantly clear that Iraq has been and remains deeply embedded in the conscience of the American people. As this world watches, we must demonstrate from the well of this House that democracy flourishes only when honest and open debate occurs.

In this difficult decision, I believe this body has two primary obligations to the American people: one, to fully support our troops with resources they need in order to accomplish the missions they are assigned; and, two, to ensure full accountability for the vital resources that we have sent to Iraq. This House has neglected both of these obligations for too long, and it is time for us to exercise our responsibilities on behalf of our troops, the American people, and the world.

I stand here today in opposition to the proposed troop surge. We all agree that cutting off funding for our troops currently serving in Iraq is an untenable option that will send the wrong message to our partners and our enemies alike.

□ 1145

I will never vote to leave our troops stranded. But the question facing us now is, how can we vote to put upwards of 20,000 additional troops in harm's way without adequate resources and without a clear and detailed plan?

Because I stand in support of our troops, I cannot support this proposed surge. It is clear that the burden of our Nation's current struggle continues to rest with the brave men and women in our armed services.

It is no longer fair to our troops to rubber-stamp this war. I want them to know that we were deliberative in our decision. I fear this surge will not by itself be sufficient today. It is time for Members of both parties to listen to the experts for whose opinion we have asked, yet have ignored: our military leaders past and present, the bipartisan members of the Iraq Study Group, and soldiers returning from Iraq.

It is time for a strategic change in course in Iraq, one including diplomacy and education and an honest reconstruction effort. These actions partnered with the actions of the military will show our dedication to improving the lives of all Iraqis in making their nation one of peace, freedom, and democracy.

I am not here today to criticize the President or to engage in partisan grandstanding. This war is not a partisan issue. I have no doubt that one day the actions of our Nation will help bring peace and democracy to the Middle East. However, the strategy we are here to debate today remains flawed. Too many questions remain unanswered. While my loyalty to and my confidence in our troops remains steadfast, this Congress and this Nation must today seek a new direction.

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield 7 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from the State of Washington (Mr. REICHERT).

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I support the troops wholeheartedly and without reservation, but I cannot support a resolution that simply opposes a new strategy without offering an alternative plan to win. There is too much at stake.

Many of you know that I was a cop in the Seattle area for 33 years. I was the sheriff for 8 years. And as the sheriff I had an opportunity to attend a remarkable ceremony. Every year a group of naturalized American citizens gathered to remember the circumstances of their arrival in the United States.

The group is comprised of police officers from Vietnam, men that fought side by the side with our American soldiers. These Vietnamese officers assumed the greatest risks, risking their lives and endangering their families, to join the United States in their fight for freedom.

When the United States pulled out of Vietnam, there were dire consequences for these brave men who risked everything to fight for the United States. The officers were rounded up. Some were imprisoned for 15 years or more and some were executed.

Those who managed to flee and escape death made their way to the United States. They left everything in Vietnam, and made new lives in the United States. And they were able to enjoy the freedoms that they had fought for, but not in the country that they had hoped for.

Let me just take a moment to set the stage for this ceremony. As the sheriff, I sat down at a round table with many of these Vietnamese soldiers and police officers. They came in their uniforms that they brought along with them, those that were able to escape, those that spent 15 to 17 years in a prison camp where they were beaten, where they were tortured, where they lost their freedom. They lost their dignity, but they never gave up hope.

When they came here to the United States of America and they come together on this evening to celebrate their freedom, and the American flag is brought into that room, those men stand at attention and they salute. But you know what else they do? They cry. When the American flag is brought in, they cry because they lost their freedom. But now they know what it is like to have it back. It is a dramatic scene.

If we leave too soon in Iraq, what happened to these Vietnamese officers could certainly happen to those Iraqi soldiers who bravely fought side by side with our troops today. I don't use this example as a way of comparing this conflict with Vietnam, as some have done. I believe that the two wars are very different. I use it because it could happen again.

I never want to attend an event where former Iraqi soldiers are attending a similar ceremony. The fact is that we are engaged in a global war with people intent on killing us, killing Americans. And regardless of how we got into Iraq, Iraq is now the central front of this war.

I understand that there are many who think we should not have entered Iraq. We now know there was faulty intelligence that led us into Iraq and to make that decision. But the war is upon us nonetheless. I am elected to deal with what is happening now.

The consequences of declaring an end to the war in Iraq without victory would be felt for decades. Our enemies around the world would be emboldened. Iran and al Qaeda would declare victory. Our allies in Iraq would certainly face bloodshed and our allies around the world would question our resolve to help protect them.

Our troops are clear about their dedication to their mission; they want to succeed. American soldiers dutifully responded when we asked them to go to Iraq and oust a dictator, establish an infrastructure, and train the Iraqis so that they are able to protect themselves.

Now we must do what the troops have asked of us. They have given us their service, and in too many cases they have given us their lives. We must give them the opportunity for victory.

Our current strategy in Iraq is failing. And yet failure is not an option, not only for the United States' security, but also for the security of the Iraqi soldiers and police officers that still fight today, side by side with our troops.

In November the American people told us that they wanted a new strategy, not because they wanted to lose, but because they want to win. And now we have a new strategy before us. Is this new plan going to work? I don't know. No one in this body that will vote on this resolution, this nonbinding resolution, knows whether or not this plan will work.

But what I do know is that we first must find a way to achieve victory. And simply saying ''no'' to a plan without offering an alternative won't work, and it sends a terrible message to our enemies and to our soldiers. This is an historic war. America is engaged in a war for our freedom on a scale that we have never experienced before.

I understand the dissension, the questions, and the uncertainty. I understand the cost is high and the way is unclear. As a cop, I have lost partners, I have lost friends in the line of duty. I know the pain that causes. I understand the loss. It is sad. It is tragic, and you never forget. But we must remain focused, ladies and gentlemen. Please don't let those sacrifices be in vain.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this resolution and let us send a message to our enemies and our troops alike, we will always support our young men and women who put their lives on the line for freedom and

that we will give them what it takes to succeed in the missions that we have given them.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HILL).

(Mr. HILL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, our brave men and women in Iraq have answered every call, accomplished every task, won every battle. Our brave men and women in Iraq have fought valiantly. They have executed their mission with quiet dignity and with honor that is worthy of our praise.

In looking back at all that our military has done, there has been no task that these brave men and women have not accomplished. They have risen to every occasion. However, we are not here today just to applaud our troops' performance. We are here today to ask if the surge direction that the President is taking us is the right direction for these brave troops. Is it the right direction for our country, and is it the right direction for the people of Iraq? The answer is unequivocally ''no.''

For the last 4 years of this conflict, the President has relied on the judgment of his military to execute this war and to follow their advice. Now at this critical hour, he has chosen to ignore their expertise and advice. The Joint Chiefs have unanimously disagreed with the surge.

General James Conway, commander of the Marine Corps, is quoted as saying, ''We do not believe that just adding numbers for the sake of adding numbers, just thickening the mix, is necessarily the way to go.''

General John Abizaid has met with every divisional commander and asked, ''If we were to bring more American troops now, does it add considerably to our ability to achieve success?'' They all said ''no.''

General Colin Powell has said the surge will not work. General Wesley Clark, Ambassador Holbrooke, Oliver North, Michael Vicker, Lawrence Corb, Richard Haas, have all said the surge will not work. And the list goes on and on and on.

Why does the President, Mr. Speaker, choose to ignore expert after expert, soldier after soldier, who say the surge will not work? Even General Petraeus has said, and I quote, ''The way ahead will be neither quick nor easy, and undoubtedly there will be tough days. We have a determined, adaptive barbaric enemy. He will try to wait us out. Any such endeavor is a test of wills and there are no guarantees.''

Mr. Speaker, former Secretary of State James Baker has said, ''There is no magic bullet to solve the problem of Iraq. No single answer. No quick fix.'' From this microphone over the last 2 days, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have tried to frame this debate about success and failure in Iraq.

That debate is for another day. Today and tomorrow, the debate is about the wisdom or the lack of wisdom for the surge. The President and the members of his party today need to listen to the experts who they have relied upon in the past. To do otherwise, casts doubts about who the President is listening to.

Mr. Speaker, I firmly believe that this surge in the troops is the wrong policy at the wrong time, in the wrong war. The actions that need to be taken to help the Iraqi people and ultimately bring our brave men and women home safely is not as simple as rushing more troops to the front lines.

Mr. Speaker, a while ago I heard my good friend and colleague from Indiana speak about how the Iraq Study Group actually said that a surge is something that probably is necessary.

But there is more to the story than just a military surge. They also recommended that there has to be economic surge, and diplomatic surges, not just military. I talked to one of the Iraq study members just yesterday, who told me that a military surge by itself will not work.

The military has done all it can do, and they have done it very well. Now is the time to move in a different direction, Mr. Speaker. Vote for this resolution. Vote ''no'' to the surge.

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. SULLIVAN).

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to this pretend, fake, disingenuous, cruel-to-the-troops resolution. It is impossible, despite what the Democrats have claimed, to both support the troops and not support the increase in troops necessary to win the war.

With this nonbinding, fake, pretend resolution, Democrats maintain they support the troops but at the same time disapprove of their mission. This confusing message simply lends encouragement to the Iraqi insurgents and terrorists to believe that every roadside bomb brings them closer to their goal of a terrorist state in the heart of the Mideast.

□ 1200

The simple fact is the deployment of troops to secure Baghdad has already begun. In fact, soldiers of the 82nd Airborne Division, who were deployed after President Bush's call for a temporary increase in troops, are already in Iraq doing critical work with the Iraqi Security Forces.

The passage of this misguided, pretend resolution does nothing except demoralize these brave men and women in uniform and invigorate those who wish America great harm.

The consequences of failure in Iraq could not be greater. The outcome in Iraq will directly affect America's efforts in the global war on terrorism for many generations. A victory for the Islamic militants, such as the al Qaeda members who are embedded in the Anbar Province in Iraq and the Iranians in Iraq who are provoking sectarian violence, would embolden the enemy to expand the reach of their efforts. Retreat would result in instability in the region, encourage radical Islamic terrorists and rogue regimes to expand into the region, and give terrorists a sanctuary from which to launch attacks against the U.S. and the West.

The bipartisan Iraqi Study Group, a bipartisan group, recognized the need of a troop surge to secure Iraq. To this end, I submit page 27 through 29 and page 73 of the Iraqi Study Group report for the RECORD on this issue to highlight the grave humanitarian consequences of a withdrawal of the U.S. forces from Iraq.

I am tired of hearing Democrats constantly criticize our plans for Iraq, yet they do not have a plan of their own. It is a shame that they have chosen to play politics with the men and women in uniform in Iraq. Democrats now have the responsibility to govern, but they lack both a plan for success in Iraq and the political will to advance a bill that cuts off funds for our troops.

They say that the problems in Iraq can only be solved by a political solution. While this is true to some extent, you cannot solve the problems in Iraq diplomatically and politically without first providing security to the Iraqi people. Security must go hand in hand with the political solution.

Democrats need to understand that their political choices and rhetoric hurt our troops and morale and give comfort, great comfort, to our enemy.

We also agree that this is a time for Iraqis to step forward and end sectarian violence and build a responsible government. Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki has promised the American people that in this new campaign Iraqi troops will be the ones knocking down doors, arresting insurgents and patrolling streets, with U.S. troops in a supporting role. We cannot give up at a critical point in Iraq's fledgling democracy.

Failure in Iraq is not an option. If we do not win in Iraq, we leave it up to our future generations to tackle the problems of Islamic terrorism in an unstable region. There is no short-term solution in Iraq because there is not a short-term problem.

Today, our brave men and women in Iraq are rising to the challenge to secure Baghdad. I encourage my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this ill-timed resolution.

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The United Kingdom has dedicated an extraordinary amount of resources to Iraq and has made great sacrifices. In addition to 7,200 troops, the United Kingdom has a substantial diplomatic presence, particularly in Basra and the Iraqi southeast. The United Kingdom has been an active and key player at every stage of Iraq's political development. U.K. officials told us that they remain committed to working for stability in Iraq, and will reduce their commitment of troops and resources in response to the situation on the ground.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The United States has made a massive commitment to the future of Iraq in both

blood and treasure. As of December 2006, nearly 2,900 Americans have lost their lives serving in Iraq. Another 21,000 Americans have been wounded, many severely.

To date, the United States has spent roughly $400 billion on the Iraq War, and costs are running about $8 billion per month. In addition, the United States must expect significant ''tail costs'' to come. Caring for veterans and replacing lost equipment will run into the hundreds of billions of dollars. Estimates run as high as $2 trillion for the final cost of the U.S. involvement in Iraq.

Despite a massive effort, stability in Iraq remains elusive and the situation is deteriorating. The Iraqi government cannot now govern, sustain, and defend itself without the support of the United States. Iraqis have not been convinced that they must take responsibility for their own future. Iraq's neighbors and much of the international community have not been persuaded to play an active and constructive role in supporting Iraq. The ability of the United States to shape outcomes is diminishing. Time is running out.

B. Consequences of Continued Decline in Iraq

If the situation in Iraq continues to deteriorate, the consequences could be severe for Iraq, the United States, the region, and the world.

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Continuing violence could lead toward greater chaos, and inflict greater suffering upon the Iraqi people. A collapse of Iraq's government and economy would further cripple a country already unable to meet its people's needs. Iraq's security forces could split along sectarian lines. A humanitarian catastrophe could follow as more refugees are forced to relocate across the country and the region. Ethnic cleansing could escalate. The Iraqi people could be subjected to another strongman who flexes the political and military muscle required to impose order amid anarchy. Freedoms could be lost.

Other countries in the region fear significant violence crossing their borders. Chaos in Iraq could lead those countries to intervene to protect their own interests, thereby perhaps sparking a broader regional war. Turkey could send troops into northern Iraq to prevent Kurdistan from declaring independence. Iran could send in troops to restore stability in southern Iraq and perhaps gain control of oil fields. The regional influence of Iran could rise at a time when that country is on a path to producing nuclear weapons.

Ambassadors from neighboring countries told us that they fear the distinct possibility of Sunni-Shia clashes across the Islamic world. Many expressed a fear of Shia insurrections—perhaps fomented by Iran—in Sunni-ruled states. Such a broader sectarian conflict could open a Pandora's box of problems—including the radicalization of populations, mass movements of populations, and regime changes—that might take decades to play out. If the instability in Iraq spreads to the other Gulf States, a drop in oil production and exports could lead to a sharp increase in the price of oil and thus could harm the global economy.

Terrorism could grow. As one Iraqi official told us, ''Al Qaeda is now a franchise in Iraq, like McDonald's.'' Left unchecked, al Qaeda in Iraq could continue to incite violence between Sunnis and Shia. A chaotic Iraq could provide a still stronger base of operations for terrorists who seek to act regionally or even globally. Al Qaeda will portray any failure by the United States in Iraq as a significant victory that will be featured prominently as they recruit for their cause in the region and around the world. Ayman al-Zawahiri, deputy to Osama bin Laden, has declared Iraq a focus for al Qaeda: they will seek to expel the Americans and then spread ''the jihad wave to the secular countries neighboring Iraq.'' A senior European official told us that failure in Iraq could incite terrorist attacks within his country.

The global standing of the United States could suffer if Iraq descends further into chaos. Iraq is a major test of, and strain on, U.S. military, diplomatic, and financial capacities. Perceived failure there could diminish America's credibility and influence in a region that is the center of the Islamic world and vital to the world's energy supply. This loss would reduce America's global influence at a time when pressing issues in North Korea, Iran, and elsewhere demand our full attention and strong U.S. leadership of international alliances. And the longer that U.S. political and military resources are tied down in Iraq, the more the chances for American failure in Afghanistan increase.

Continued problems in Iraq could lead to greater polarization within the United States. Sixty-six percent of Americans disapprove of the government's handling of the war, and more than 60 percent feel that there is no clear plan for moving forward. The November elections were largely viewed as a referendum on the progress in Iraq. Arguments about continuing to provide security and assistance to Iraq will fall on deaf ears if Americans become disillusioned with the government that the United States invested so much to create. U.S. foreign policy cannot be successfully sustained without the broad support of the American people.

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Continued problems in Iraq could also lead to greater Iraqi opposition to the United States. Recent polling indicates that only 36 percent of Iraqis feel their country is heading in the right direction, and 79 percent of Iraqis have a ''mostly negative'' view of the influence that the United States has in their country. Sixty-one percent of Iraqis approve of attacks on U.S.-led forces. If Iraqis continue to perceive Americans as representing an occupying force, the United States could become its own worst enemy in a land it liberated from tyranny.

These and other predictions of dire consequences in Iraq and the region are by no means a certainty. Iraq has taken several positive steps since Saddam Hussein was overthrown: Iraqis restored full sovereignty, conducted open national elections, drafted a permanent constitution, ratified that constitution, and elected a new government pursuant to that constitution. Iraqis may become so sobered by the prospect of an unfolding civil war and intervention by their regional neighbors that they take the steps necessary to avert catastrophe. But at the moment, such a scenario seems implausible because the Iraqi people and their leaders have been slow to demonstrate the capacity or will to act.

C. Some Alternative Courses in Iraq

Because of the gravity of the situation in Iraq and of its consequences for Iraq, the United States, the region, and the world, the Iraq Study Group has carefully considered the full range of alternative approaches for moving forward. We recognize that there is no perfect solution and that all that have been suggested have flaws. The following are some of the more notable possibilities that we have considered.

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THE WAY FORWARD—A NEW APPROACH

Deter even more destructive interference in Iraq by Syria and Iran.

Because of the importance of Iraq to our regional security goals and to our ongoing fight against al Qaeda, we considered proposals to make a substantial increase (100,000 to 200,000) in the number of U.S. troops in Iraq. We rejected this course because we do not believe that the needed levels are available for a sustained deployment. Further, adding more American troops could conceivably worsen those aspects of the security problem that are fed by the view that the U.S. presence is intended to be a long-term ''occupation.'' We could, however, support a short-term redeployment or surge of American combat forces to stabilize Baghdad, or to speed up the training and equipping mission, if the U.S. commander in Iraq determines that such steps would be effective.

We also rejected the immediate withdrawal of our troops, because we believe that so much is at stake.

We believe that our recommended actions will give the Iraqi Army the support it needs to have a reasonable chance to take responsibility for Iraq's security. Given the ongoing deterioration in the security situation, it is urgent to move as quickly as possible to have that security role taken over by Iraqi security forces.

The United States should not make an open-ended commitment to keep large numbers of American troops deployed in Iraq for three compelling reasons.

First, and most importantly, the United States faces other security dangers in the world, and a continuing Iraqi commitment of American ground forces at present levels will leave no reserve available to meet other contingencies. On September . . .

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to now yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MILLER).

Mr. MILLER of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, like most Members of Congress, I have visited our men and women in uniform in Iraq. I have visited our wounded in the hospital at Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany and at the hospital in Balad Air Base in Iraq; and I have offered my condolences to grieving families who have lost loved ones in Iraq. I respect and appreciate our men and women in uniform in Iraq. They have served nobly, and they deserve our prayers.

Mr. Speaker, they have done their duty, and now we must do our duty. Our duty to the Constitution, our duty to our country, our duty to our men and women in uniform is to look with clear eyes at the facts and to exercise independent judgment.

For 4 years, this Congress has failed in that duty. For 4 years, this Congress has passed one resolution after another, offering uncritical support for the President's policies in Iraq.

In June, Congress passed a resolution finding that we were well along the path to a sovereign, free, secure and united Iraq and the Iraqi Security Forces were operating independently of our forces and were increasingly leading the fight to secure Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, that is what Republicans did when they were in the majority. They played make believe.

Americans knew better then, and we certainly know better down. The Iraqi Study Group report, just a couple of months ago, described the situation in Iraq as grave and deteriorating. The most recent National Intelligence Estimate, just a week ago, described the

situation in even starker terms, ''The violence is now feeding on itself, and it is too complex to be called simply a civil war.'' The estimate concluded that all of the likely outcomes are grim.

For 4 years, patriotic Americans, Democrats and Republicans alike, have anguished over events in Iraq and have given deep and prayerful thought to alternatives, but the Bush Administration dismissed and insulted dissenters and often made fierce attempts to discredit them.

Not even General Eric Shinseki, the Army Chief of Staff, or James Baker, Secretary of State for the first President Bush, was spared; and the Bush administration has treated criticism by Members of Congress as meddling, as sticking our nose in their war.

House Democrats have offered plan after plan to alter our course in Iraq, and House Republicans have greeted every plan with strident attack.

Let's consider the new plan that President Bush has proposed.

The force initially committed to Iraq was well short of what General Shinseki said would be required to secure the country. When I visited Iraq 3 years ago, the presence of our forces in Baghdad may not have been enough to secure order, but it was more than enough to remind every Iraqi every day that there was a foreign army on their soil.

When I visited Iraq a year and a half ago, our military forces in Baghdad were less noticeable. Our briefing officer explained that we had deliberately reduced our footprint to lessen the resentment of Iraqis so that Iraqis would come into daily contact with Iraqi security forces, not our men and women. But the violence only increased.

We tried twice last year to reduce the violence by increasing Iraqi and American forces in Baghdad. The Iraqi forces didn't show up, and twice the effort failed, and violence has continued to increase.

Now we are trying it again and calling it a new plan: Less troops, more troops, less troops, more troops. House Republicans are playing make believe again to call that a new plan.

The apocalyptic violence in Iraq will not be solved militarily. Congressman DAVID PRICE and I introduced a resolution setting forth a comprehensive plan which Mr. PRICE described here the other day. We need to engage Iraq's neighbors through regional diplomacy to provide economic assistance, conditioned on a genuine attempt at national reconciliation, and to begin a phased withdrawal of our troops. Our plan includes many of the suggestions of the Iraq Study Group.

The Iraq Study Group report was right: No path is certain of success. And after 4 years of failed policy, all of our options are grim. But the resolution we will vote on shortly is a first step toward doing our duty by looking realistically at events in Iraq and by forcing us to consider what our options really are.

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, can you advise us as to how much time is remaining on both sides.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROSS). The gentleman from New York has 16½ minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Florida has 6 minutes remaining.

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas, Judge POE.

Mr. POE. I want to thank the gentleman from New York for yielding time.

Mr. Speaker, the narrow issue is: More troops to the front, or not? Many here say ''no more troops,'' but what are the consequences for the troops on the ground without more aid? What will happen in and around Baghdad where those troops are supposed to be sent? Their mission there will be more difficult without more troops.

Does this Congress want to tell our troops on the ground, do your job with less, even though we have it in our power to send you aid?

Mr. Speaker, 171 years ago this month, a somewhat similar call for aid was made; and it, too, was refused.

In an old, beat-up Spanish mission in central Texas, Bexar, Texas, to be exact, 187 men from every State in the United States, 13 foreign countries, including Mexico, found themselves in a precarious situation. They were behind the walls facing an enemy. They needed help.

Texas politicians, even so-called military experts, had it within their power to send more troops. And for all the similar reasons that are mentioned here, including the troops shouldn't even be in the mission and the plan was a bad idea from its inception, this plan is not working, your troops there should even leave, similar reasons we hear today, no help was sent.

The place, Mr. Speaker, was the Alamo, and the time was February 24, 1836. And behind the cold, damp walls of the Alamo, by candlelight, a 27-year-old lawyer, commander by the name of William Barrett Travis, wrote this letter. I read it today:

''To the people of Texas and all Americans in the world, fellow citizens and compatriots, I am besieged by a thousand or more of the enemy under Santa Anna. I have sustained a continual bombardment and cannon fire for over 24 hours, but I have not lost a man.

''The flag still waves proudly over the north wall. The enemy has demanded surrender at its discretion. Otherwise, this fort will be put to the sword. I have answered that demand with a cannon shot. I shall never surrender or retreat.

''I call upon you, in the name of liberty and patriotism and everything dear to the American character, to come to my aid with all dispatch. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself for as long as possible, die like a soldier who never forgets what is due his honor and that of his country. Victory or death.''

William Barrett Travis, Commander of the Alamo.

Mr. Speaker, we know what happened at the Alamo. Those 187 men died because no help was sent. Later, Texans did provide troops and rallied and won independence from Mexico. But the answer then, as it has been in many wars in the past, is the answer now: More troops are necessary. We need to finish what we started. We need to do what it takes.

Now, Baghdad will be no Alamo. We cannot lose in Baghdad. But this body has it in its power to prevent a victory in Baghdad and Iraq.

So, Mr. Speaker, heed the warnings of the past, heed the history, and send aid with all dispatch.

And that's just the way it is.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 2 of House Resolution 157, and as the designee of the majority leader, I demand that the time for debate be enlarged by 1 hour, equally divided and controlled by the leaders or their designees.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, that will be the order.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, before we respond to the President's call for an additional 20,000 troops in Iraq, we must put his call in the context of the history of the war, beginning with the discussion of what the current 130,000 troops are doing there now.

The original reasons we were provided with the rationale for going to war, that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction, that Iraqi leaders were connected with the 9/11 attacks, and that Iraq posed an imminent threat to the United States, all turned out not to be true. Saddam Hussein was captured and recently hanged, al-Zarqawi is dead, and Iraq held democratic elections over a year ago, and yet we are still in Iraq.

Throughout the war, the President has attempted to associate our presence in Iraq with a so-called war on terrorism. The truth is that our presence in Iraq has actually increased our risk to terrorism.

Furthermore, the term ''war on terrorism'' is a rhetorical term without any relationship to reality. Terrorism is not an enemy. It is a tactic. The enemy is al Qaeda. We attacked Afghanistan because al Qaeda was there, not in Iraq.

The President is now saying he is laying out a new mission in Iraq, thereby clearly acknowledging that, whatever the old mission was, it was not working. But there is still no clearly defined end goal and no clearly defined explanation of how failure or success can be measured.

If our mission now is to stabilize Baghdad, many military experts have already said that an additional force of 20,000 troops is woefully insufficient to

accomplish that goal. The fact is that the administration has already increased troop levels on several occasions during this war. None of the previous surges in troop levels have had any lasting effect on the war, and there is no credible evidence to believe that this surge will be any different.

And how can we have confidence in predictions of success? Before our invasion in Iraq, Secretary Rumsfeld predicted that the war in Iraq would last ''6 days, 6 weeks. I doubt 6 months.'' Vice President CHENEY predicted we would be greeted as liberators.

Almost 4 years ago, the President stood before a sign that said ''Mission Accomplished'' and proclaimed major combat operations in Iraq have ended.

□ 1215

A year and a half ago Vice President CHENEY said the Iraqis were ''in the last throes'' of the insurgency. And yet here we are discussing an increase, not a decrease, in troop levels.

At the outset of this war, the administration predicted that the cost of the war would be so minuscule that it advised the House Committee on the Budget not even to include the cost of the war in the Federal budget. The administration official who suggested that the cost of the war might exceed $100 billion was fired. To date we have appropriated nearly $400 billion, and the President has already formally requested another $200 billion more, with no end in sight.

Over 3,100 courageous Americans and countless Iraqis have already lost their lives. How many more will die if this strategy falls as far from the predicted result as the original length of time and cost estimates of the war?

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, as part of developing a mission and strategy, it is imperative that we ask where these additional troops are going to come from. Many will undoubtedly come from the National Guard and Reserves, but they have already been in Iraq for longer-than-average deployments and many have already completed multiple tours of duty. Other troops must be redeployed from other assignments; so we must ask what moving these troops will mean to our global national security.

Last November the American people sent a powerful message. They want a change in Iraq, not more of the same. They expect an honest explanation of why we entered Iraq in the first place, what the present situation is, what goal do we expect to achieve, and what the strategy will be to accomplish it. Only then can we intelligently discuss the troop levels necessary to accomplish that goal. Unfortunately, all we have gotten from this administration is essentially ''Don't worry, be happy, success is around the corner; and if you don't believe that, then you are not patriotic and you are not supporting the troops.''

For my colleagues who say that failure is not an option, I ask what will happen if the President's so-called ''New Way Forward'' fails, as many experts predict it will? Are we then required to further escalate the war, further strain our military, sending thousands more of our troops to Iraq? How many more of our young men and women must die before the administration acknowledges what was in the National Intelligence Estimate? And I quote, ''The term 'civil war' accurately describes key elements of the Iraqi conflict.' ''

Mr. Speaker, although the resolution before us is technically nonbinding, it gives the House an opportunity to call upon the President to work cooperatively with Congress to develop an effective strategy to bring our troops home. The American people and our courageous men and women on the front lines deserve a clearly articulated and sensible approach to ending the war. This resolution puts the House on record as saying that an escalation of military forces is a step in the wrong direction.

I therefore urge my colleagues to support the resolution.

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to yield 5 minutes to the good gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING).

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I very much thank the senior and esteemed leader, Mr. KING from New York, for yielding to me.

I want to start a point here, Mr. Speaker, that I would ask all Members to focus on to understand where we really sit in history, in this course of history. If you would go back to the most successful military known in history for the longest period of time, spanning centuries, it was the Roman legions. And the Romans had a statement called ''nosce hostem,'' which, of course, is Latin for ''know thine enemy.'' We need to do that here in this Congress. We are part of this effort, of course. Know thine enemy. Von Clausewitz wrote the book on war, his treatise on war, that everyone goes to because he boiled it down to understandable principles, certainly ''know thine enemy,'' but his point was the object of war is to destroy the enemy's will and ability to conduct war.

Now, if you know your enemy and you are going to destroy their will and ability to conduct war, you wouldn't just go after their ability, you would go after their will as well. So that has been true throughout history. And if you were charged with the task of defeating the preeminent world's Superpower in, say, about the year 1963 under President Kennedy, ''How do you defeat undefeated America?'' was the question that was presented to the Vietnamese.

Enter General Vo Nguyen Giap. He was the general that orchestrated the Vietnamese effort throughout the war in Vietnam. He certainly understood history. He understood the Roman legions. He understood nosce hostem. He also understood that you had to defeat the will and the ability of the United States if you were going to defeat them. He knew that he couldn't defeat our ability. He had to attack our will. And that is what happened.

And he wrote the book. This is the primer, ''How Do You Defeat the United States of America?'' by General Vo Nguyen Giap. How We Won the War is the title of it. And in the primer he said, ''The beginning was when the United States failed to succeed in a complete victory in Korea, then we knew the will of the United States was weakened. On page 18 he talks about how they went after the will of the United States through public opinion, how they supported it and encouraged the antiwar activists because they knew they couldn't win militarily. So their front on the war that had the greatest chance for success was with the will of the American people. Here is the primer.

Our enemies read this primer, Mr. Speaker. They understand this. And one of our enemies over there is Moqtada al-Sadr, who laid it out for us when he said on June 11, 2004, and I saw this on al-Jazeera TV when I was in Kuwait, ''If we continue attacking Americans, they will leave Iraq the same way that they left Vietnam, the same way that they left Lebanon, the same way that they left Mogadishu.''

Mr. Speaker, that is the message that his people heard. That is the message we should hear. I have heard it. I have put it on this floor many times. A couple nights ago I put Moqtada al-Sadr down here on the floor. In the night he went off to Iran to join up with the people who have been supporting him. He understands this.

I will tell you this. If this resolution passes and if Mr. MURTHA and the people who are working with him are successful in a slow bleed of our resources, then what you will see, Mr. Speaker, is you will see Osama bin Laden say, If we keep attacking America they will leave Afghanistan the same way they left Vietnam, Lebanon, Mogadishu, and Iraq. That is what is coming. That is what is being perpetrated by the rhetoric here on this floor. That is what is being staged in appropriations bills that we will certainly see coming after this resolution.

The destiny of America is put at risk, Mr. Speaker, and this says to all of our enemies it is easy to take on the United States if you can just get Congress to lose their will, if you can get them to lose their spine.

So I would then simply close with the reiteration of a request made from a major from Kentucky whom I met with in my last trip over there in Iraq. He loves his kids and his cows and he loves God and I know he speaks the truth. He said, ''We have everything we need. So when you pray for us, pray for the American people. Pray they understand the threat and pray they do not lose their resolve. We will not lose ours.''

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I now yield 5 minutes to my friend and

colleague, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE).

(Mr. INSLEE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, America will hear 435 separate ideas about Iraq, but I want to note one great shining light about our country. The American people are absolutely unified, no matter what they think about the policy in Iraq, of holding American warriors and our sons and daughters close to our hearts. This is a unified position across this country, and it is a bright light for America.

Now, I have heard some people have suggested that soldiers who fall in Iraq will have fallen in vain. That is wrong. Any American who falls in the course of the conduct of American wars, they do not fall in vain. They fall into our arms, and they fall into our hearts, and there they will always remain. And we are unified on this principle. And when I go to a memorial service for a young man from Redmond, Washington next Monday, I will carry the unified American prayers and hearts of the 650,000 people I represent.

Now we are in a difficult situation in Iraq and none of us have a silver bullet, and none of us have a magic wand. And it seems to me that when we are in dark times, we should go back to fundamental American character to find a way forward.

There are three parts of the American character we should think about here: first, the character of the American mission in Iraq; second, the character of American common sense; and, third, the character of American democracy.

What is the character of our mission in Iraq? President Bush, when he started this war, said we have three missions:

Eliminate WMD. Mission accomplished. They were never there.

Second, eliminate any terrorist that attacked us on 9/11. Mission accomplished. They were never there.

Third, eliminate Saddam Hussein as a threat. Mission accomplished. He is no longer a threat to anyone who walks the face of the Earth.

Our proud men and women have fulfilled the three mandates of missions set forth by George Bush. And now we have one moral mission to complete, and that is the moral responsibility to give the Iraqis a reasonable chance to form a government. We have done that after 4 years; and our investment of 3,000-plus lives and hundreds of billions of dollars of American money has fulfilled that moral obligation in spades.

Second, what is the American character of common sense? Why did General Abizaid, when he asked all the divisional commanders whether this escalation would help and every single one of them say no, why is that? It is because they have common sense.

I was on a walk a couple of months ago, and I met an old high school friend. His son was serving in Baghdad, and I asked him what he thought about Iraq. And he said, We have no common sense in our policy. He said, the fundamental problem in Iraq was that the Shiites were not agreeing with the Sunnis principally over oil revenues. And my son is serving in Baghdad today as a security blanket because the Iraqi politicians will not make the compromises necessary to form a government.

That has to end. It is American common sense to understand the real enemy in Baghdad is sectarian intransigence. The real enemy in Baghdad is their failure to compromise. And the best weapon we have is a dose of reality to the Iraqi people of all sectarian faiths. You have to get a grip on your country because you will very shortly have your own fate in your own hands. The best weapon we have in Iraq is to tell the rest of the immediate region that they must become responsible for their own neighborhoods. That is the weapon of reality we should use.

And, third, what is the character of American democracy? George Bush said that he was the decider. That is wrong. The decider is the American people. And the American people had a message to George Bush that there has to be a change in Iraq policy. And he is not listening to the generals, he is not listening to the bipartisan commission, and he is not listening to the American people.

Congress has a responsibility coequal with the President under Article I of the Constitution to declare war, to raise and support armies, to make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces. It is time for Congress to stand up on our hind legs and take away the keys from the man who has driven our foreign policy into a ditch. It is time to restore the American mission to where it belongs, to American common sense where it belongs, and to American democracy where it belongs.

Support this resolution. Prevent this escalation in Iraq.

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS), who has made 15 visits to Iraq.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. And I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for conducting this debate.

This debate has been constructive. I appreciate the thoughtful comments made on both sides. Speaking for the second time, I realize it may be tempting for some to support this resolution to somehow express our strong dissatisfaction with how the administration has conducted the war and to separate ourselves from an unpopular President.

I do not believe, however, support of what is truly a ''stay the course,'' ''status quo resolution'' will be a constructive outcome of the debate. It sends the wrong message to our troops, to the Iraqis, to our allies throughout the world, and, in particular, to our enemies.

Is it the American way to attack another country, disassemble its entire security forces—military, border patrol and police—and then leave before this broken country is capable to rebuild its security forces and stand on its own? The shame of this possibility haunts me.

□ 1230

And how can this resolution possibly help our troops on the battlefield who are there already who still have to carry out their mission?

We, the Congress, are in effect telling our troops, we support you, but we do not want you to have the reinforcements you need to carry out your mission, and we do not trust the judgment of your new commanding officer, General David Petraeus. How destructive is that?

Our troops deserve to know we have a plan to win. If we do not have a plan to win, we have a plan to leave. The resolution before the House neither helps us succeed nor gives us guidance on how to leave.

It is so counterproductive for 535 Members of the House of Representatives and the Senate to micro-manage the war.

It is the responsibility of the administration to conduct the war effort. It is Congress' responsibility to conduct tough oversight, holding the administration accountable for the implementation of the war.

Having chaired 14 hearings on the operations in Iraq and been to Iraq 15 times to conduct on-the-ground oversight, I will continue to ask the administration the difficult questions and provide my observations and recommendations.

Regretfully, too few Members of Congress have fully considered the consequence of leaving Iraq prematurely. The Iraq Study Group warned, ''If the situation in Iraq continues to deteriorate, the consequence could be severe for Iraq, the United States, the region and the world.''

The ultimate goal for me is to bring our troops home without leaving Iraq in chaos. This is achievable if Republicans and Democrats, the White House and Congress, agree on a bipartisan solution as outlined by this Study Group.

Officially endorsing the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group and acting on them is the best way to make this happen.

The only way I think we should leave Iraq is the same way we got into Iraq, together.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentlewoman from Indiana (Ms. CARSON).

Ms. CARSON. I certainly appreciate very much the gentleman yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, as you would guess, I am an American, a very proud American. If I had selected my place of birth, I would have chosen the United States of America. It is just full of

promise, full of democracy, full of patriotism.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to add my voice to the chorus of those who have said enough is enough. The President has had the chance to plead a case for victory in Iraq, but he has never clearly told us how or when we are going to get to this turning point and when we will be able to bring our soldiers home.

Twenty-three thousand troops injured, over 3,100 dead and not enough armor to ensure that our healthy troops remain that way. I did not vote for the war, and I don't bemoan the fact that I did not. But I did say then, as I say now, that our soldiers did not have enough armor nor equipment, and they did not have enough benefits at the time, and this Congress has turned some of that around.

When we have soldiers on foreign soil depending on the kindness of strangers for the donation of armor and helmets because their President has failed to provide them with the life-saving tools after placing them in harm's way, we know something is not right. We have stretched ourselves too thin and used the awesome power of our military might in the wrong way.

Mr. Speaker, our priorities are not straight. We have sent children into harm's way, and if the President had his way, we would send more recklessly into battle in Iraq without a clear exit plan or understanding of their roles.

In Indiana alone, we have seen 76 Hoosiers lost to this and 511 whose lives were forever altered by injuries sustained in this war. Unfortunately, however, President Bush's interest in supporting our troops ends the moment they become veterans. Because, as he asks for more troops, he has cut the funding for the Veterans Administration to help them return to civilian life healthy and prepare for what lies ahead.

On May 1, 2003, the President announced, ''Mission accomplished.'' At that time, we had lost 139. Yet over 3,000 have now died, and the mission still has not been accomplished. We will not know the mission has been accomplished until we have set the goals and benchmarks that allow us to place Iraqis in a position of being self-governing and allow our troops to come home.

In short, I love our troops. I love them dearly. I love our veterans, and I love our country. It is time to begin to bring our loved ones home from overseas and not send more into the hostile battlefields in downtown Baghdad.

We often sing a song in church that goes, we are soldiers in the army. We have to fight before we die. We have to hold up the bloodstained banner. We have to hold it up until we die.

Let us not beat around the bush, so to speak. Our military presence in Iraq cannot diminish the violence there. It will only add to it. We have lost a lot of our support, a lot of our friendship with other nations because of our reckless behavior in Iraq. So to stay there, our military presence will increase violence there and bring on more around the world.

They have suicide bombs; we have a suicide policy. And those who started this madness, not being the young Americans they sent to be slaughtered, strutted their vicarious, which is to say artificial, heroism.

This bloody blunder was conceived in childish computer war-game fantasy and executed in unconstitutionality, borrowing billions from foreigners to borrow trouble from other foreigners, putting this land we love into international hock and its prestige into an international hodge-podge.

There are a lot of bad-guy dictators in this world, some of whom are friends of this administration and one of whom was a friend of this administration's forbearers. That one was Saddam Hussein. But John Adams tells us, "America does not go abroad in search of monsters to destroy . . ."

When you realize you're making a mistake, sanity calls for stopping it.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE).

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, this vote and the debate that we are having is about politics and providing some political cover. It does nothing to help our soldiers win.

Remember, it is a nonbinding resolution. What does that mean? It means that we could talk, as my mother used to say, until the cows come home. It has absolutely no effect. It has no power, no teeth and absolutely no effect.

To be more specific, there is not one single mention in the Democrat resolution of how we will send more body armor for the troops, not a single mention of new tools to detect IED explosives, not one word dedicated to up-armored Humvees.

Mr. Speaker, there is not one mention of the method to fund the health care needs of the veterans who come home. Not one mention. And this is important to remember: It has absolutely no mention of sending one soldier, let alone the 20,000 additional who are going over there or our fine young men and women who are already there, when they are going to come home one day sooner.

In my district, Floridians have seen through this nonbinding resolution. The headline of the Orlando Sentinel calls it an ''empty measure.'' It says, ''The pointless House resolution on Iraq fails to set goals.'' The editorial goes on to say that the resolution ''isn't thoughtful policy; it's political cover.'' It is not just me saying it. This is certainly not a conservative newspaper, the Orlando Sentinel.

My constituents know over the past few days we have debated a resolution with no teeth, no enforcement, delivered in a way that has no guts, no character and provides no leadership.

Need to hear more? The Veterans of Foreign Wars said that, ''Other generations have learned the hard way when military decisions are second-guessed by opinion polls or overruled by politicians.''

The VFW and the American Legion know what happens when politicians play politics with war. Our veterans' message to Democrats is to support the surge and give our soldiers a chance to win. That is really what they want. They want to win.

In closing, I must echo the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars with the words that ring in the hearts of veterans everywhere: Give our sons and daughters in this fight the chance to win. That, Mr. Speaker, is exactly what they are asking for.

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I now yield 5 minutes to my esteemed friend and colleague, the gentlelady from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD).

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. I thank the distinguished gentleman for yielding the time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that we are having this open discussion and this debate on Iraq, but let me first make my position very clear: I did not vote on this war. After 9/11, when the President urged military action against Osama bin Laden, I, like all other Members, was fully supportive of that position and voted to send our troops to Afghanistan. Despite the heroic efforts of our Armed Forces, Osama bin Laden, the mastermind of America's darkest hour, has yet to be brought to justice.

While the search for bin Laden has not been completely abandoned, President Bush turned his attention away from our most deadly adversary and devoted our military resources into invading Iraq. The search for bin Laden was neglected for a search for weapons that were never found and perhaps may have never existed.

One thing is very clear here, Mr. Speaker: All Members of this Congress support our troops. Many of us have been with families who have lost a loved one. Many of us have gone to visit them. And on Memorial Day I give special recognition to those whom I have lost in my district in the State of California. Also, I have a special community pride, where I give the names of all of those who gave the ultimate sacrifice. So let it be very clear that the Members of this Congress support our troops.

Now, while the war has hindered our search for Osama bin Laden, it is shocking and regrettable that Iraq is more of a breeding ground for terrorism than it was before we invaded in March of 2003.

So many Americans, in my district and throughout the Nation, have fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters who are being placed in harm's way by being deployed two or more times to Iraq. Transfixed and horrified, we watch an escalation in violence that has all the characteristics of a civil war. We recognize that on November 7 the American people asked for a new

direction. But they also asked for the truth as we know it.

We know that there is too much rhetoric surrounding this issue. But the truth is, first, the President's proposal for an escalation or resurgence is a flawed strategy that will put more than 21,500 more Americans in harm's way. In fact, this escalation leaves Americans and Iraqis in a perpetual state of war, a condition that is not sustainable or supportable.

□ 1245

Secondly, Iraq's problems are best solved by Iraqis. While a number of American troops will be needed to continue training operations of Iraqi forces, it will only be successful if those living in Iraq, the Sunnis, Shias and Kurds alike, fully embrace democratic principles and work together to make their nation secure.

Thirdly, I support the principal recommendations of the Iraq Study Group, that we engage Iraq's neighbors such as Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria and others, in problem-solving. The President's plan should emphasize diplomacy. There is no Commander in Chief that I know of that does not, and did not, during a war engage in diplomacy. That is the answer, not military force. This type of position that the President is going, this is a brute force that will not deter the insurgency. Any viable solution must contain a diplomatic element.

Mr. Speaker, the House has taken 4 days to debate the war because clearly we need a sensible resolution to this quagmire. Democrats have borne much criticism for bringing this resolution to the floor, but it is fair to remind our Republican detractors that they also brought nonbinding resolutions to the floor. What it is, is to really send a message to the American people that we are moving in the wrong direction. Stay the course is not the course to take. The resolution we are considering today is entirely straightforward, and the premise is simple: Do you or do you not support the President's escalation?

The resolution before us marks the first time this Chamber will vote whether or not to disagree with the President's war plans. I hope that everyone who recognizes that this ''stay the course'' is not the issue, that we vote for H. Con. Res. 63. It is an important step.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will advise of the time remaining. The gentleman from New York has 31½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from California has 16 minutes remaining. The Chair will try to even out the time.

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING).

(Mr. HENSARLING asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HENSARLING. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, various news organizations have now confirmed what the Democrats really have in mind with this nonbinding resolution, and that is, choke off funding for the troops.

Though they haven't really said it on this House floor, they have said it to their political base, moveon.org, and I hold the transcript in my hand. Let's listen to the words of our colleague, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURTHA) who, as we all know, controls our military spending panel.

''They won't be able to continue. They won't be able to do the deployment. They won't have the equipment, they don't have the training and they won't be able to do the work. There's no question in my mind.''

He was further quoted as saying, ''We have to be careful people don't think this is the vote.''

Last evening, CBS News noted that our colleague's proposal ''is a way to get at the same goal without holding a vote to cut funding.'' Again, Mr. Speaker, that goal is to cut funding of the troops. The goal is to accept defeat.

Now, I know the author of this proposal has served his Nation with great courage and great honor, but I for one fail to see the courage and the honor in this proposal.

The Politico Magazine has called this proposal the ''Slow Bleed Strategy.'' The slow bleed strategy. I wonder who it is who is doing the bleeding.

Mr. Speaker, how does anybody look one of our brave soldiers in the eye and tell them, I don't believe in your mission. I don't believe you can succeed and I have the power to bring you home; I have the power to bring you home today but I am not willing to do it because, if I did, I would have to take responsibility and I am concerned about political ramifications.

Mr. Speaker, if my Democrat colleagues truly want to cut off funding for the troops and withdraw from Iraq, then let them vote on it today. Let them show the courage of their convictions and vote on it today. We cannot accept this slow bleed strategy.

Mr. Speaker, I know that fighting this war is costly. It is costly in terms of blood. It is costly in terms of money. Like many other of my colleagues, I have met with the mothers who have lost sons in Iraq. Their plight is profound; it is sad. But Mr. Speaker, I never, never, never want to meet with the mothers whose children might perish in the next 9/11 if we accept defeat in Iraq.

Iraq must be seen in the context of this larger war we are having with radical Islam. The battle lines are drawn, and whether we like it or not, they are drawn in Iraq. Don't take my word for it. Listen to Osama bin Laden. ''The epicenter of these wars is Baghdad. Success in Baghdad will be success for the United States. Failure in Iraq is the failure of the United States. Their defeat in Iraq will mean defeat in all their wars.''

We have to soberly reflect on the enemy that we are facing. Listen to the number two in al Qaeda, al-Zawahiri. ''Al Qaeda has the right to kill 4 million Americans, 2 million of them children.'' As the father of a 4-year-old and a 3-year-old, I find that to be a chilling statement.

Listen to Hassan Abbassi, Revolutionary Guard's intelligence adviser to the Iranian President. ''We have a strategy drawn up for the destruction of Anglo-Saxon civilization.''

This is the enemy we face, and we face him foremost in Iraq. If we leave Iraq before subduing him, he will follow us to America, make no mistake about it, and the consequences are immense. Read the National Intelligence Estimate. Read the report of the Iraq Study Group.

Iraq has the potential to become what Afghanistan once was under the Taliban, and that is, a breeding ground and a safe haven for the recruitment, training, financing and sanctuary of radical Islamists bent upon attacking our Nation and attacking our families. There will be no greater event to empower the radical Islamists in our defeat in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, it doesn't have to be this way. We are Americans. We can meet this threat. We can work together. Vote against this resolution. Let's support our troops. Let's protect our Nation and our children from this threat.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In an attempt to try to equalize the time, I recognize the gentleman from New York.

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I will be happy to work with the Speaker on this, and I recognize the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN) for 8 minutes.

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, the manner of our withdrawal from Iraq will dramatically affect the credibility of American foreign policy. Our actions must not lead to anti-Semites masquerading as the President of Iran with the misimpression that his thirst for nuclear weapons can ever end with the realization of his dream of nuclear holocaust, this time engulfing the Jewish national homeland. In the larger geopolitical context, like it or not, credibility is the currency of a global Superpower.

The argument has been made on this floor that our engagement in Iraq has had the effect of diverting our attention from other threats to our security interests such as a nuclear North Korea or the military buildup of China or even a resurgent Russia.

The recent glimmer of hope from the multiparty talks with the hermit kingdom demonstrates that it is possible for our Nation to, yes, walk and chew gum at the same time. The war in Iraq has not come at the cost of disengagement. However, perhaps more importantly, we cannot avoid the fact that

the manner in which we turn control over their country to the Iraqis will send a message across the globe to friend and foe alike of whether we are a reliable ally and a predictable adversary.

It is simply not possible for us to divorce our role in the world from our credibility as a Nation. The stakes are great for Iraq, but they are just as great, if not greater, for those of us in the United States, for those of us presently in the United States and for our children and our grandchildren.

Although everyone including the President has acknowledged the fact that things have not gone as planned in Iraq, this should not lead us to overlook the fact that the Iraqi people have chosen their Nation's leadership in democratic elections, three in a row, with more and more people participating, larger percentages of the population participating, in numbers and percentages that frankly would embarrass our country when you look at the turnout we have for elections. Sometimes we explain the low turnout in our elections because of bad weather. Their bad weather was not the question. It was the threat of death if they participated in elections, and yet they went forward to do so.

They ratified a Constitution that represents a dramatic departure from the rule of one of the most repressive regimes of the globe, and we sort of slide by that and say, well, we got rid of Saddam Hussein, but look at the mess those people are in over there. It is a difficult proposition. This President warned us after 9/11 it would be a difficult proposition; it would take fortitude; it would take persistence; it would take resolve.

At the same time, however, it is this very hope of democracy that has led those extremists who fear such a prospect to lash out in a wave of violence. In this regard, we must not fall prey to the error of failing to hold those responsible for violence accountable for their murderous actions.

The idea that we are somehow responsible for violence in Iraq is both preposterous and the crassest form of moral ignorance. Those who commit the murders, those who drill holes in people's brains, screw fellow human beings to walls and consider decapitation a form of religious expression, they are the ones who are responsible for the atrocities and massive human rights violations concerning the people of Iraq.

Charles Krauthammer aptly captures such moral illogic with the query of whether the police in America are somehow responsible and have on their hands the blood of the 16,000 murders they failed to prevent last year.

The tragic irony of such logic is that it suggests that those who murder in order to manipulate the Western media and public opinion by the spectacle of mangled bodies and blood-stained streets should be able to realize their aim of driving us away from the scene of their crime. We must not reward these thugs by giving them what they want. We are in Iraq to protect the Iraqi people, and the blame for the violence should be placed where it belongs.

As Prime Minister Blair so eloquently stated the proposition: ''Here is where we have to change radically our mindset. At present, when we are shown pictures of carnage in Iraq, much of our own opinion sees that as a failure, as a reason for leaving. Surely,'' Prime Minister Blair says, ''it is a reason for persevering and succeeding. What is the purpose of the terrorism in Iraq? It is to destroy the prospect of democratic progress. In doing so, they hope to deal us a mortal blow. They know victory for them in Iraq is defeat not just for Iraqi democracy but for democratic values everywhere.''

The challenges before us relate to the formulation of policy, but this should not be considered in a vacuum. The most important asset of the United States in Iraq is the quality of the men and women of our Armed Forces. It is in this regard that the person in charge of the responsibility of implementing our new policy, General David Petraeus, is well-suited to perform such a task.

In addition to his experience in the area around Mosul, he is the coauthor of the recently released Military Field Manual on Counterinsurgency Doctrine. History provides us with examples where military commanders have been brought into a theater of operations in order to turn around what seemed at the time less than promising, as illustrated by the appointments of General Grant, or even General Patton, to name just two examples.

If there ever was a need for such leadership in Iraq it is now. General Petraeus is a critical component to our prospects for progress.

□ 1300

And I know everybody says they support General Petraeus, they support our troops. But it does seem odd that when the other body confirmed General Petraeus unanimously, they followed it up by suggesting what he was going about was a fool's errand. And I know everybody here supports our troops, but listen to what you are saying. On the one hand you say, ''Godspeed, General Petraeus,'' and on the other hand you say, ''You are doomed to failure.''

The need to meet the challenge of stabilizing Iraq, primarily in Baghdad and Anbar Province, is essential to the orderly withdrawal of American forces. Any precipitous action which fails to accommodate this concern would likely have untold consequences for innocents within Iraq, the broader Middle East, and ultimately the security of the American people.

Again, however, it must be emphasized that the long-term success or failure of democracy in Iraq rests with the Iraqis themselves. As Faoud Ajami of Johns Hopkins University has pointed out, we have given the gift of freedom to the Iraqi people, which, by nature, entails the conclusion that their future is in their own hands.

This new strategy, and I stress it is a new strategy, recognizes that our remaining days in Iraq must be dedicated to making this transition to a new political order possible, not just getting out, but getting out as we succeed in our effort to establish a stable democracy in Iraq.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to yield 5 minutes to my good friend and distinguished colleague from Arkansas, Congressman MARION BERRY.

Mr. BERRY. I thank the gentleman from California.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage everyone to keep in your hearts and minds, certainly in your prayers, our men and women in uniform and their families, especially those on the battlefield today; and to reach out to them and their families, and let them know that you understand and appreciate the sacrifice and commitment that they make out of the goodness of their heart.

Our Kansans have done their part to protect our freedom, contributing heavily to the war efforts since the conflict began. Our State alone has roughly 1,500 soldiers currently overseas, we have deployed 15,000 since September 11, 2001; 45 of our Kansans have paid the ultimate price, and 350 more have been seriously wounded. Congress cannot forget the sacrifice of these men and women. We will continue to support our Nation's servicemembers and provide them with every resource that they need.

After listening to President Bush's recent proposal to escalate troop levels in Iraq, I am even more concerned with his failure to recognize the severity of this conflict and what it really means.

Recent short-term troop escalation proposals in Iraq have not stopped the violence from getting worse. President Bush has said nothing to convince me, or almost no one else, that his latest strategy will result in success.

Our military forces deserve a policy commensurate with the sacrifices that they have been asked to make and have made. Regrettably, the President has not provided that policy or plan. Our leaders need to think long term and make strong commitments to diplomacy with all of the other countries in the region and the world community. Our credibility as a Nation must be restored.

As the Iraq Study Group concluded, this is an international conflict that cannot be solved by U.S. military strategies alone. Furthermore, President Bush's proposals will create additional strain on our military readiness, as well as our military personnel and their families.

There is already a shortage of military equipment that jeopardizes the safety of our men and women in uniform. We cannot and should not send more troops overseas without providing the equipment and support they

need to safely and effectively accomplish the mission that is charged to them.

I oppose this escalation, and I urge my colleagues to do the same. God bless the men and women in uniform.

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the balance of time on each side be enlarged by 36 minutes.

I think I have the authority to do that under the rule; it has been done in consultation with the minority leader.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. ESHOO). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

Mr. CARTER. Madam Speaker, at this time I would like to recognize Mr. KING from New York, the ranking member of Homeland Security, for 7 minutes.

Mr. KING of New York. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to this resolution and in strong support of our troops and their mission.

This resolution is wrong in every respect. It is wrong constitutionally. Never before in our history has Congress attempted to control or restrict battlefield decisions. It is wrong as a matter of policy, and it will come back to haunt us for years to come.

Madam Speaker, wars must not be waged according to opinion polls or applause meters. For instance, just look at the battle of Iwo Jima, an island in the Pacific where in less than 6 weeks, more than twice as many Americans were killed as have been killed throughout the entire Iraq war, and yet Congress didn't jump in to question the policies of the President.

And look at the Korean War. There was no declaration of war. The United States and the overwhelming majority of coalition troops in the field, 36,000 Americans were killed and another 8,000 were missing. More than 70 percent of the American people opposed President Truman and his handling of the war. Yet today, President Truman is honored as one of our greatest Presidents, and the Korean War is looked upon as a key turning point in our struggle against communism.

Madam Speaker, Iraq cannot be looked upon or looked at in a vacuum. This war in Iraq is an absolutely essential component of the war against Islamic terrorism which must be fought in many places throughout the world, including right here at home.

As a Member of Congress who lost upwards of 150 friends, neighbors, and constituents on September 11, 2001, I have seen firsthand how evil this enemy can be. And al Qaeda itself has said that Iraq is a major battleground in this war.

Madam Speaker, we cannot allow ourselves to do anything which would undermine our troops who are the frontline soldiers in this war against Islamic terrorism.

I know that the resolution expresses support for the troops, but talk is cheap and actions have consequences. You cannot support the troops if you are undermining their mission and challenging their commander in the field. And that is what this resolution does.

Speaker after speaker in support of the resolution has said that the new policy in Iraq will not work. But General Petraeus, who is the author of this policy and who has just been unanimously confirmed by the Senate, has said this policy can work and that his troops can carry it out. By opposing this new policy, the supporters of the resolution are clearly undermining a new commander in Iraq at such a vital time in the conduct of this war.

As the national commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars said earlier this week, ''When military decisions are second-guessed by opinion polls or overruled by politicians, it is the common soldier and their families who pay the price. The VFW is very concerned with the tone and timing of this debate. We need to send the message to our troops that America wants them to succeed in Iraq by giving the buildup a chance to succeed.''

Madam Speaker, what makes this worse is that we know today's resolution is only the first step to prevent General Petraeus and his troops from carrying out their mission. The Democratic leadership has admitted, indeed proudly acknowledged, that it is their goal to impose as many conditions as they can to prevent General Petraeus from getting the troops and the reinforcements he needs to win this war.

Madam Speaker, never in our history have the Speaker of the House or the House Appropriations Committee attempted to superimpose their policies on troop training or troop leave, and override the Commander in Chief and the commander in the field.

Madam Speaker, this is not the time for sunshine soldiers or summertime patriots. It is time for Members of this body to show at least a small percentage of the courage shown every day by our troops in Iraq.

If you want to cut off the funding for our troops who will be in the line of fire, don't be cute, don't try to sneak it through the back door. Have the guts to do it directly.

Madam Speaker, this debate is not about this President or this Congress or the next election. It is about our survival as a Nation and our survival as a civilization. Vote for our troops and against this misguided and dangerous resolution.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to yield 10 minutes to my friend and colleague and neighbor from California, the esteemed Speaker of the House of Representatives (Ms. PELOSI).

Ms. PELOSI. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and for his exceptional leadership in the national security of our country.

My colleagues, for 3 days and nights, more than 350 Members of Congress have come to the floor to speak their conscience about the war in Iraq and the President's escalation proposal. I commend my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for the tenor, for the most part, and the substance of their remarks.

There is one proposition on which we can all agree: Our troops have performed excellently in Iraq. They have done everything asked of them. And as the resolution states, Congress and the American people will continue to support and protect the members of the United States Armed Forces who are serving or who have served bravely and honorably in Iraq. We owe our troops a debt of gratitude for their patriotism, for their courage, and for the sacrifices they are willing to make.

As a sign of our respect for them, particularly those who have lost their lives in the war, and for their families, I request that we observe a moment of silence.

Thank you.

We owe our troops a course of action in Iraq that is worthy of their sacrifice. Today, we set the stage for a new direction on Iraq by passing a resolution with fewer than 100 words which supports our troops and disapproves of the President's escalation proposal. Instead, Democrats have proposed a different course of action to the President.

□ 1315

Over and over again we have suggested a different plan.

One year ago, Senator HARRY REID and I stood with House and Senate Democrats to propose our agenda for real security, to project our power and our values, to protect the American people. Consistent with our real security agenda, Democrats have sent the President four letters, starting in July, and the most recent one the end of January, urging him to adopt a strategy for success, containing these elements: change of mission, redeployment of troops, building a political consensus, engaging in diplomacy, reform of reconstruction and a refocus in the war on terror.

In terms of changing the mission, U.S. forces in Iraq must be transitioned from combat to training of Iraqi forces, real counterterrorism activities, force protection and logistics. A shift in mission will allow the number of U.S. troops in Iraq to be reduced, diminishing their presence in the daily lives of Iraqis and minimizing the chance of these troops being caught in the crossfire between rival Iraqi factions. Ending the emphasis on a combat mission will allow the phased redeployment of our forces from Iraq beginning within the next 4 to 6 months.

Declining troop levels will require fewer bases, and none of them will need to be permanent, consistent with legislation introduced and passed by this House by Congresswoman BARBARA LEE and also introduced by Congressman DAVID PRICE.

A smaller military presence in Iraq will also relieve some of the strain on

our troops, their families, and our military equipment. Success in Iraq requires more than military force, and that really is what this debate is about today.

General Peter Chiarelli, a three-star General, until recently the Commander of the Multinational Corps Iraq, observed in December, and I quote, ''We need to get out of thinking that this is solely a military conflict where we must simply apply more U.S. or coalition or Iraqi forces against an enemy that we can destroy. All our Nation's strengths—diplomatic, economic, political—must be leveraged to help the Iraqis find their way through this process.''

Unfortunately, there has been no sustained and effective effort to engage Iraq's neighbors diplomatically. Iraq's neighbors have the greatest stake in Iraq's stability and the role it will play in the region. Leaders of those countries are best able to help Iraqi leaders improve security by reducing ethnic tensions. To this end, an international contact group should be established to support a political settlement in Iraq and preserve Iraq's sovereignty.

Senator REID and I also wrote to the President that an international conference should be convened to broaden support for the reconstruction effort that is essential if Iraqis are going to be put to work building their country's future.

On the subject of reconstruction, there has been little effective reconstruction in Iraq because of mismanagement and disappearances of funds. That is why we propose that, in order for the reconstruction of Iraq to attract international support, it must be conducted according to practices which are honest, transparent, and accountable.

Reconstruction must be guided by the kind of process set forth in legislation introduced by Congressman PATRICK MURPHY and the Blue Dog Coalition. The United States should take the lead on accountability in reconstruction. Politically, there has been no sustained and effective effort to engage rival Iraqi factions.

The U.S. must insist that Iraqi leaders make the political compromises needed for a broad-based and sustainable political settlement that will produce an inclusive political system in Iraq. A good beginning would be to press Iraqi leaders to amend the Constitution to achieve a fair sharing of power and resources. That was promised at the time of the referendum over 1 year ago.

The resulting political consensus will allow Iraqi security forces to challenge the militias on behalf of the nation and to disarm them.

Proponents of the President's escalation are equating the war on terror to the war in Iraq. As our esteemed chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Congressman IKE SKELTON of Missouri, a great patriot, has observed, ''Two conflicts. Two wars. And the two should not be confused. There are those who attempt to fuzz the two conflicts together as 'the war on terror,' but the wars are truly separate and distinct,'' Chairman SKELTON stated.

The war in Iraq continues to detract from our ability to fight against the war on international terrorism effectively. We need to finish the job started more than 5 years ago in Afghanistan against al Qaeda and the Taliban and address other conditions around the world in which the appeal of terrorism breeds.

The longer it takes us to resolve the situation in Iraq, the longer resources and attention will continue to be diverted from the war on terrorism. Our ability to respond to the escalating conflict in Afghanistan and other potential crises in the world is constrained severely by the deterioration in military readiness to levels not seen since the Vietnam era.

There we have the six elements that we talked about: change of mission, redeployment of troops, building of political consensus, engaging in diplomacy, reform of reconstruction, and a refocus on the war on terror. By placing so much emphasis, instead, on dealing with the problems in Iraq militarily and not enough emphasis on sustained political and diplomatic engagements, the President's escalation plan repeats past mistakes.

The stakes in Iraq are too high to recycle proposals that have little prospect for success. The bipartisan resolution today may be nonbinding, but it will send a strong message to the President. We here in Congress are committed to protecting and supporting our troops.

The passage of this legislation will signal a change in direction in Iraq that will end the fighting and bring our troops home safely and soon. Our troops are working together to secure our Nation, and we in this House must work together to secure our Nation as well and to do so in a way that honors their sacrifice.

I urge my colleagues to support our troops and a new direction in Iraq by voting ''aye'' on the bipartisan Skelton-Lantos-Jones resolution.

Mr. CARTER. Madam Speaker, at this time, I would like to yield 6 minutes to Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, a prominent feature of this debate has been two sharply contrasting visions of the future. One vision sees no hope for us in Iraq and counsels that we withdraw, just give up. By contrast, the other mission focuses on success. We understand what accepting defeat means for Iraq.

We understand what accepting defeat means for Iraq, the region and our Nation's security interest. We support modifications and strategy to address the enemy's changing tactics, and we are committed to destroying the enemy before the enemy can destroy us. This success policy is rooted in the fabric of the American character, in our belief in the ability of our troops to achieve success in Iraq and Afghanistan and on all the fronts on this global war against Islamic militant jihadists.

The resolution at the center of this debate, Madam Speaker, lacks hope. It accepts defeat. It opposes reinforcements for our troops on the battlefield, reinforcements that strengthens their capacity to confront the enemy and succeed in their mission.

General Petraeus said that he cannot accomplish his mission without the deployment of additional U.S. forces. This resolution, however, announces that Congress will deny the commander in Iraq the means he says he needs to win. This resolution seeks to transform this House into 435 generals.

What is the next step in the strategy, Madam Speaker, after the crippling of our war effort? We know from statements and bills that have been introduced that plans will mandate the nature and the timing of a withdrawal by placing limitations on the funding of our efforts. A vote for this resolution then is a vote to proceed toward defunding of our troops.

Some believe that the impact of these decisions is confined to Iraq, but Iraq is only one front in the global war against radical Islamic jihadists. This is a war without boundaries. This is a war that poses the greatest challenge to our generation.

I will quote al-Zawahiri in his own words. He describes this fight in this way:

'' . . . Afghanistan and Iraq are the two most important fields for confronting the contemporary Crusader war. Therefore, the Muslim nation should support the mujahidin in these two countries with all its power.''

Those are al-Zawahiri's own words. He talks about the war in Iraq as being central. He added that Iraq ''is the gateway to the liberation of Palestine and the restoration of the Islamic Caliphate.''

Iran's leader has echoed similar views. He stated, we will soon experience a world without the United States; and he goes on to state, we must prepare ourselves to rule the world.

The enemy understands what is at stake. We must, also.

Once the retreat has started, where will it stop? Afghanistan? The Persian Gulf? The entire Middle East? Once we have abandoned our allies in Iraq, why should anyone in the world believe when we say that we draw a line in the sand and say that we will never abandon them.

Lawrence Haas, a former communications director for Vice President Gore, stated recently, '' . . . our enemies anticipate that Iraq will be the latest chapter in the book of American defeatism. Our withdrawal will embolden them to push ahead, confident that we

lack the stomach for confrontation, that our commitments mean nothing, that they can win simply by outlasting us.''

A withdrawal in this generational fight will ensure that what is to come will be even worse. While urging a withdrawal, some state that they support the troops. But as leaders of the American Legion and the Veterans for Foreign Wars have stated, you cannot separate the warrior from the war.

My stepson, Douglas Lehtinen, and his wife, Lindsay, proudly served as Marine pilots in Iraq. Lindsay will soon leave for a tour in Afghanistan. Far from seeing their mission as hopeless, far from urging withdrawal, they and their fellow service men and women are committed to victory. They are so confident in that success that they are willing to risk their lives to secure it.

□ 1330

They would tell you that victory can never be ensured but that we can make defeat inevitable by giving our consent. The hopelessness from which this resolution springs is alien to our American spirit and it runs contrary to our history. What Thomas Paine said over two centuries ago stands still today: These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will in this crisis shrink from the service of their country. But he that stands by it now deserve the love and the thanks of every man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered. Yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph.

If you like the status quo in Iraq, Madam Speaker, then you vote ''yes'' on this resolution. If you favor a mission of success in defeating the Islamic militant jihadists who are our enemies, then please vote ''no'' on this resolution.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my good friend and our distinguished colleague from California (Ms. MATSUI).

Ms. MATSUI. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Madam Speaker, I am hopeful today. Finally, 4 years into a very controversial war, Congress will begin to fulfill its constitutional responsibility as Representatives of the people. This week, every Member of the House of Representatives has had an opportunity to express their views on the war in Iraq. And today, every Member will cast their vote for or against the President's escalation of the war. This is only right.

For my part, I believe the President's proposed escalation would be a tragic mistake. Our need for a change of direction could not be more clear. But rather than change direction, the President proposes that we continue down our current disastrous path, only at a faster pace and with more human life placed in harm's way.

We should be bringing troops home, not sending more there. We should be ending this war, not escalating it. Considering this resolution is only the first step of many Congress will need to take to force a change in direction, but as Thomas Jefferson once said, honesty is the first chapter of the book of wisdom. Congress writes that chapter with this resolution, but it is only the first chapter.

Sadly, the burden created by the lack of honesty and wisdom this administration has brought to this conflict is shouldered by our brave men and women in uniform. Two years ago, I spoke with a group of women in Sacramento whose husbands were serving in the National Guard in Iraq.

One woman told me she had to buy her husband a Kevlar vest and a canteen before he deployed to Iraq, something all too many families were doing for their loved ones because the military was not providing it. A short time later, the administration assured the public that the issue had been addressed. And yet just this week we heard reports that the Army lacks armored Humvees and other equipment necessary for the troop increase the President is implementing; once again, a failure in vision and planning, and once again, our troops pay the price.

Escalation of this conflict will further increase the strain on a military that is already stretched to the breaking point. Every Member of this Chamber knows this. Earlier this month, I spoke with a friend and reservist in Sacramento named Richard Beach. Richard shipped out to Iraq 4 years ago as a chaplain in the Army Reserves. He is home now. But he still keeps in touch with his old unit. Richard shared with me a note he sent to some of his fellow members of the 114th.

He wrote, ''I remember 4 years ago we were getting ready for our trip to Fort Lewis and then on to Iraq. I hope as the fourth anniversary of the war comes up, you are all in good health and living life to the fullest. I, too, pray that soon this war will end and we will stop sending our soldiers off to war.''

Four years later, he reports that many of the same soldiers and their families are making the same sacrifice. But that is a heartbreaking reality here. Implementing the President's policy will mean that members of his regiment along with so many others will have to endure more and more of the back-to-back deployments to Iraq.

The notion of shared sacrifice is something that helped make this country great. Americans are strong believers in shared sacrifice. But all too often in this war, only our troops and their families share the sacrifice. That is too much to ask on behalf of policies that have not worked.

The administration offers us scant reason to believe this troop increase will work when it has tried and failed with several previous troop increases. This proposal offers us nothing but more of the same.

Our brave men and women in uniform have done everything that has been asked of them. It is our political leadership that has failed. There is a saying, It takes two people to speak the truth: one to speak it and one to hear it. I hope the administration will choose to hear the truth and I hope that we pass this resolution today.

Mr. CARTER. Madam Speaker, I yield 7 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA), the ranking member on the Intelligence Committee.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Madam Speaker, this debate is about whether or not America is a great Nation that will lead in the face of difficulty. We have come up short. This resolution falls short. It is small and not worthy of this House. Why small? Let me begin with a threat that some either don't understand or refuse to acknowledge.

This resolution does not address the fact that the current threat is not just the single front in Iraq, but rather the larger threat of militant Islamic jihadists who hate us enough to want to kill. These militant Islamic jihadists are a fringe element of Islam who have very specific ideas and goals about how to revive Islam, return Muslims to world power, and how to deal with their enemies.

They are committed to a violent overthrow of existing international systems and to their replacement by an all-encompassing Islamic state called the caliphate. In explaining his approach to creating the caliphate, centered in Iraq, al-Qaeda's number two leader, Zawahari, outlined a four-stage plan:

Stage 1, expel the Americans from Iraq in defeat.

Stage 2, create an Islamic religious government in Iraq, developing and supporting it until it achieves a level of a caliphate.

Stage 3, extend the jihad wave to secular countries neighboring Iraq.

Stage 4, clash with Israel, because Israel was established only to challenge any new Islamic entity.

I think you get the picture.

Let me also be clear. This jihad is about them, their God, and their religion, it is not about us. These militant jihadists believe that the modern world has forsaken the pure religious life and that only with a caliphate can they return to ''pure life.''

It is this narrow ideology that poses the direct and real threat to us. It is this ideology that threatens not only us, but also includes the belief that killing other Muslims is justified to achieve their radical goals. Here is the true threat to America and the world, this militant Islamic jihad, a jihad that attacks around the globe, including the United States and Iraq. The resolution we debate today does not address this global problem, this threat to peace and stability. Iraq is not the problem, it is only one front in this larger war.

The second point. This resolution omits specifically all of the men and women of the Armed forces who are defending our freedoms in other theaters

such as Kuwait, Afghanistan and Bosnia. It says, by not saying, that this Congress may not support troops who will be sent to Iraq.

Is this intentional? Is this part of the plan to choke off funding for our troops? I also take great umbrage that this resolution omits and completely slights the incredible contributions to this Nation's security of our dedicated men and women in the Intelligence Community, many serving in Iraq, who provide our combat troops with the information vital to their security.

Is this the first step in cutting off their funding, too, returning to the Clinton administration's policies of the 1990s that decimated our intelligence capabilities?

Finally, Madam Speaker, I need to address the issue of the consequences of failure. What happens if Iraq collapses due to a sudden withdrawal of U.S. troops? Our enemies have made it clear that they will fill the void. Surely America is wary of the conflict in Iraq, but the difficulty of this conflict does not justify giving into their strategy; yes, their strategy. They believe that they are winning by wearing America down. Will we quit? Do we understand the consequences?

Make no mistake, this resolution is a dangerous and naive first step to cutting funding to our troops in an unwise withdrawal from the region. Iraq is not a faraway place where the United States has no interest and where we can pull our troops out of without paying a price in the global war against militant Islam.

This debate is not about Iraq, it is about us, us as a Nation of people who will do the right thing. The fundamental question is, Do we have the resolve that will be necessary to defeat radical militant Islamic jihadists that contain bad actors such as Iran, and will we stand and fight for the future of our kids and their kids?

We have faced similar threats before. In 1945 my parents were liberated by Canadians and American troops in the Netherlands. They never forgot the sacrifices that were made by brave soldiers and by a great Nation, a Nation on a great mission.

America did it for them, but it also did it for itself. America recognized that the threat was a direct threat to America and the world. We then led a global effort to victory. Today we face a very different but, again, a very real threat: radical militant Islam. The challenge to this Congress is to rise to the occasion, to help lead America and to help lead the world to victory.

This petty resolution falls far short of that noble and worthy calling. Vote ''no.'' We can and we must do better.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I yield for the purpose of making a unanimous-consent request to my friend from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT).

(Mr. HOLT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution.

Madam Speaker, this week during the debate on H. Con. Res. 63, I spoke of the men and women of our Armed Forces and the sacrifices they have made for our country. I noted that I had visited them in theater, at Walter Reed, and with their families in New Jersey. As I said, the quality of these men and women, and their earnest wish to serve their country, makes this situation in Iraq all the more tragic. I am sure I was quite clear regarding my sentiments, but it would appear that some in this House chose to mischaracterize my remarks.

The gentleman from California, Mr. HUNTER, said that I "referred to our wounded folks in Walter Reed as tragic." I want the gentleman to know I said no such thing, and I will ask him to be accurate if he chooses to quote me again.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 5 minutes to my good friend and our distinguished collegue from West Virginia, Congressman MOLLOHAN.

Mr. MOLLOHAN. I thank the gentleman.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the resolution opposing the President's decision to escalate this war. My position on the Iraq war is uncomplicated. I voted against the initial war resolution back in 2002, mostly because I never believed the President made a compelling argument that Iraq posed the sort of substantive threat to the United States that would justify war, and the considerable human, political, and financial costs that it would bring.

□ 1345

I thought it was a bad decision at the time, and I think it is a bad decision today.

In my limited time this afternoon, I would like to comment on a couple of refrains that we keep hearing. The first is the President's repeated criticism that those who support this resolution are prejudging a plan that hasn't even been ''given a chance to work.'' He makes that charge with a tone of wonderment, as though somehow it weren't our duty to anticipate the consequences of different courses of action and to avoid the bad ones before embracing them. If more of us had prejudged his 2002 decision, taking us to war before it was ''given a chance to work,'' we wouldn't be having this debate today.

The difference between today and 2002 is that a majority of this House and this Congress are no longer willing to give the President the benefit of the doubt he enjoyed 5 years ago. We are no longer willing to suspend judgment and trust the decider. That should surprise precisely no one.

For 4 years we have been asked to trust this administration, to trust, as the Vice President emphatically declared, that they knew where the weapons of mass destruction are; to trust that the Iraqis would welcome us as liberators; to trust that we had a large enough invasion force to stabilize the country; to trust that the Shi'a would find common cause with the Sunni and the Kurd in a united Iraq; to trust that Iraq's oil reserves would pay for its reconstruction; to trust that Iraq would serve as a beacon of democratic ideals throughout the Middle East; to trust that those early signs of a growing insurgency were nothing more than the ''last throes of a few dead-enders.''

And now the President asks us not to prejudge his plan to put another 21,000 Americans in harm's way. He asks us to trust him yet again. With respect and humility, Madam Speaker, I ask him, how can we? And how can he even ask it of us? Paraphrasing the President, fool me once, shame on you. Fool me five times, shame on me.

And another criticism of this measure that we have heard repeated over and over this week is that, as a nonbinding resolution, its passage and this debate is meaningless.

Madam Speaker, this resolution is far from meaningless. If need be, Congress will end this war with binding legislation. As even the President acknowledged, we retain the power of the purse, and we have ample opportunity to exercise that power.

But just as wars should be started with a united government, so, too, should wars be ended with a united government. And that is the meaningfulness of this resolution. It is the last chance to draw this government back together on Iraq. It is the last call for us to work together, Democratic and Republican, legislative and executive, on ending this war. It is the last call for the President to come back to the people.

He may ignore that call. He may dismiss this resolution and this debate as meaningless. He may dismiss the voice of the people expressed through 439 newly elected Representatives as meaningless. But if he does, Madam Speaker, he forces us to move forward without him. I hope that doesn't happen.

I urge my colleagues to vote for this resolution, and I urge the President to listen to this debate and to join with us.

Mr. CARTER. Madam Speaker, at this time, I would yield 5 minutes to Mr. HUNTER of California, ranking member of the Armed Services Committee.

Mr. HUNTER. I thank my friend for yielding.

This is, indeed, a sad time in our country. Five years ago we came to this floor united. We joined in sending our troops off in this war against terror.

You know, Madam Speaker, for the first number of strikes that were delivered by Muslim extremists in this war, the terrorists chose the battlefields. They chose a battlefield as a Marine barracks in Beirut. And Mr. SKELTON and I were there, he shortly after the explosion that killed our Marines, I shortly before that explosion. They chose the Khobar Towers, they chose the embassies in Africa, they chose the USS *Cole*, and then they chose New

York, Washington, DC, and Pennsylvania. We chose the next two battlefields, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Our Democrat colleagues say that Iraq was the wrong battlefield, and I have heard resonating through the floor over the last 4 days statements that they were tricked, hornswoggled, fooled about Saddam Hussein.

From my side of the argument as to whether or not Saddam Hussein was a dangerous terrorist, I will simply offer all the statements by every Democrat leader in America during the 1990s, when there was no Bush administration to, in the words of my Democrat colleagues, ''trick them.'' I will offer their statements about Saddam Hussein.

Madam Speaker, we have expanded in the last 60 years. We have been in the business of expanding freedom. We understood after World War II that if we didn't change the world, the world would change us. And that lesson was relearned after 9/11.

No one would argue that it is not in our interest to have a Japan on the other side of the Pacific, where we stood up a free government, where we have a free nation, or that it is not in our interest to have a free El Salvador in our own hemisphere, or that it is not in our interest to have those dozens of nations that were behind the Berlin Wall that are now free and working for freedom. Many of them are partners in Iraq. We understand that.

And now we are trying to expand freedom in a different part of the world, a very dangerous part of the world. And we are undertaking the same three-point strategy that we have had for 60 years: Number one, you stand up a free government; number two, you stand up a military capable of protecting that free government; and, number three, the Americans leave.

And we can build on this Baghdad plan, which is right now in the execution phase, this plan of having two or three Iraqi battalions out front, with an American backup battalion to mentor them, and we can rotate every one of the 129 Iraqi battalions through this type of a combat rotation, stand them up, give them battlefield experience, and then the Americans can leave.

Now, Madam Speaker, I have heard it said throughout this debate that there was somehow a smooth road not taken. And let me just say, that is not true. There are no smooth roads in the Middle East. There are no smooth roads to standing up new governments, especially in communities and states where people have been trained to live under dictatorships.

And for those who say if we had just kept Saddam Hussein's army in place, with it is 11,000 Sunni generals, everything would have been fine and we would have had a peaceful situation in Iraq right now, that is nonsense. And for those who said if we had had 200,000 or 300,000 troops, the Shiites and Sunnis would have forgotten their ancient rivalries, that is also nonsense.

What are the facts, the reality, our Democrat friends say we have to be realists here, is this is a tough, difficult road. We are on the second stage right now. Most importantly, Madam Speaker, our troops are in the field already on this plan that is now being retroactively disavowed by the Democratic leadership.

You know, it was in June, I think it was 2130 hours, June 6, 1944, when the first elements of the first aircraft of the Pathfinder companies went out in front of the 82nd Airborne over Normandy, and they shortly were followed by hundreds of airplanes with American paratroopers. The 82nd Airborne going into Normandy had the full support and prayers of everybody in the United States Congress.

Today, you have got an 82nd Airborne Second Brigade now operating under this plan in Baghdad already there in Baghdad. Now, is this going to be the day, I would ask my colleagues, when some trooper from the 82nd Airborne writes on the concrete wall next to his position in Baghdad, ''This is where I stood when the United States House of Representatives led by the Democrat leadership rejected my mission''? I hope that doesn't happen, Madam Speaker.

Vote ''no'' on this resolution.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, may I inquire how much time each side has.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. ESHOO). The gentleman from California has 29½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Texas has 32 minutes remaining.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, we reserve the balance of our time.

Mr. CARTER. Madam Speaker, at this time, I would like to yield 5 minutes to Mr. MCCOTTER from Michigan, the chairman of the Republican Policy Committee.

Mr. MCCOTTER. Madam Speaker, President Lincoln warned, ''A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. It will become all one thing or all the other.''

Today, our House is divided; tomorrow, it will become all one thing or all the other. What are the possibilities?

In our divided House, one side believes we must win in Iraq to avoid a catastrophe; another side assumes we can lose in Iraq without consequence.

One side believes we must support our troops in harm's way and continue their funding; another side claims we can support our troops in harm's way and cut their funding.

One side assumes we must defeat al Qaeda in Iraq; another side asserts we can retreat from al Qaeda in Iraq.

And one side believes the American people voted to change course in Iraq to win; another side feels the American people voted to change course in Iraq to lose.

Shortly, we will see how divided we are. One side will vote to support the President's plan to win in Iraq by reinforcing our troops, and then pray to God we are right; one side will vote against the President's plan. And in this question rests the answer to the future of our divided House.

My friends, many of you are about to put yourselves in a precarious position, for no one knows what the future holds. While we may feel sure of our decisions in the evanescent present, the unfathomable vagaries of fate have yet to fully play upon the stage of human history. As a result, many supporters of this resolution made an ominous omission while urging its adoption: In denouncing the President's plan, too few of you have openly hoped our troops' new mission would win the day and prove you wrong.

Being your colleague, I know you share this hope in your hearts. But your fellow Americans in fields abroad and constituencies at home must now wonder, will you cut our troops funding to prove yourselves right?

Sooner than you imagine, this nonbinding resolution will instigate binding legislation to commence a ''slow bleed'' of funding cuts while our troops battle against the enemy. Again, because I serve beside you every day, I know you abhor the thought of American soldiers being harmed by such an abject betrayal of their trust during combat, but it is upon this crucible of conscience you will be judged by all. And when the time comes to confront the consequences of today's expediency, I pray you make the right decision. If, however, you make the wrong decision, you will not only betray our citizen soldiers' trust, you will disastrously unite this House in a callow contentment with our own liberty and a calloused apathy to others' enslavement.

Could there be any more dishonorable epitaph for our free Republic's revolutionary experiment in democracy? True, some allege I exaggerate the danger, but they have turned a blind eye to the epitaphs of liberty etched above the ruins of nations once gloried, now dead: the Athenian city-state, the Roman Republic, the Weimar Republic.

Thus, even as we today divide in our own House, we remain compelled to unite behind the cause of our free Republic in this dangerous age of globalization, wherein humanity's destiny is daily entwined across the disparate reaches of Earth.

Our cause is this: Our world cannot permanently endure half slave and half free. It will become all one thing or all the other, as it has before in the darkest ages of human existence.

My friends, at this crossroads of our Republic, we must heed the better angels of our nature. We must unite our divided House behind the self-evident truth that all human beings are endowed by their Creator, with the inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

We must extend freedom to the Iraqis and, in so doing, enhance the liberty of ourselves and all free peoples and inspire our fellow human beings caged in

tyranny's embrace. And emulating our nation's greatest generations, we must let hope to flow from God's heart to our humble hands so we may, where He allows, emancipate humanity into a new birth of freedom for ourselves and generations unborn.

Madam Speaker, we must reject this resolution, unite behind our heroic troops and, God willing, win our country and humanity's mortal struggle to be free.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I am delighted to yield 5 minutes to my good friend from Mississippi, the distinguished chairman of our Homeland Security Committee, Congressman THOMPSON.

□ 1400

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, 3 months ago the American people sent a resounding message for change. They voted for a new direction in Congress and new direction for the war in Iraq.

In solemn tribute to the sacrifices of the men and women of the Armed Forces in Mississippi's Second Congressional District who have served in Iraq and who have paid the ultimate sacrifice, I would like to recognize some of Mississippi's Second District heroes:

Staff Sergeant Kenneth Bradley. Hometown: Utica, Mississippi; 39 years old; died May 28, 2003, in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Larry K. Brown. Hometown: Jackson, Mississippi; 22 years old; died April 5, 2003, in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Rapheal S. Davis. Hometown: Tutwiler, Mississippi; 24 years of age; died December 2, 2003, in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Captain Kermit O. Evans. Hollandale, Mississippi; 31 years old; died December 3, 2006, in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Joshua S. Ladd. Port Gibson, Mississippi; 20 years old; died May 1, 2004, in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Master Sergeant Brian McAnulty. Hometown: Vicksburg, Mississippi; 39 years of age; died December 11, 2006, in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Staff Sergeant John McGee. Cary, Mississippi; age 36 years; died May 2, 2005, in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Staff Sergeant Joe Wilson. Crystal Springs, Mississippi; 30 years of age; November 2, 2003, in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Madam Speaker, the Department of Defense reports that as of February 15, 2007, 3,126 U.S. military servicemembers have died as a result of their service in Iraq. More than 25,000 have been wounded.

This bipartisan resolution before us today asks Members a straightforward question: Do you approve of the President's announced proposal on January 10, 2007, to deploy more than 20,000 additional United States combat troops to Iraq?

There is no question that the way forward in Iraq is one of our greatest challenges. The open debate offered here today allows us all an opportunity to express our sentiments on the administration's proposal. The sacrifices, dedication, and patriotism of our elite military and their families deserve no less.

I oppose the President's proposal. Until the President is willing to sit down with Congress and provide accurate data on what is really going on in this war, I cannot in good conscience support putting more men in harm's way.

This administration used bad intelligence to justify the rationale for war, and I fear that they are using bad judgment here today in their call for sending 25,000 more troops into harm's way.

The administration keeps calling this proposal a troop surge. Let us call it what it is. The proposal is a troop increase. Rather than a troop surge, what we need from this administration is a truth surge. The incompetence and misinformation that has gotten us into this mess is not the competence it will take to get us out.

The President and this administration must remain faithful and truthful to Congress and the American people by openly discussing appropriate measures to resolve the situation in Iraq that is worsening daily. The President must allow Congress to do what it was formed to do under the Constitution. His decision to continue in this direction is not democratic and, therefore, does not demonstrate the best example of what we are fighting for in Iraq. We must not allow the President to escalate the Iraq War without specific congressional approval.

Madam Speaker, we must send the President a message he cannot ignore. We must pass the Skelton-Lantos-Jones resolution.

Mr. CARTER. Madam Speaker, at this time I would like to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CANTOR), the deputy whip of the minority.

Mr. CANTOR. Madam Speaker, just 2 days ago, on February 14, Osama bin Laden's deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, posted a speech on an Islamist Web site where he blessed jihad fighters in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Somalia and urged the mujahadeen all over world to remain steadfast since complete victory was near. He made special mention of those in the Islamic jihadist media and thanked them for their blessed efforts which cause the Crusaders to lose sleep.

There is no doubt about it, Madam Speaker. We are fighting against an enemy that uses every weapon at its disposal to inflict casualties upon our soldiers in the field. This enemy seeks not just victory in Iraq but the reestablishment of a greater Islamic caliphate that would threaten the security of America and freedom-loving people throughout the world.

Today, this House will vote on a nonbinding resolution that disapproves of a surge in Iraq, a resolution that discourages our troops yet fails to satisfy the antiwar movement of America's left.

The resolution will likely pass today with near unanimous support of my friends on the other side of the aisle. Yet, Madam Speaker, I am troubled by their seeming unwillingness to accept the real consequences of this outcome. This from the party of John F. Kennedy, who so inspired our Nation when he said in his inaugural address: ''Let every Nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe in order to ensure the survival and the success of liberty.''

Madam Speaker, we have come a long way since our Nation's 35th President spoke those words 46 years ago.

This debate arrives at an historic time in our Nation's history, not because of the resolution we are considering today but because the results of our efforts in Iraq will have a true impact on the lives of our soldiers and the security of all of us for generations to come.

Recently, I received a letter from one of my constituents who expressed some very real concerns about the Democrats' view of the war in Iraq. He writes: ''I am a servicemember that has served in Iraq, training Iraqis. I have 19 years of service. I spent 6 years in the Virginia Army National Guard, and I am entering my 13th year of active Federal service.

''Pulling out of Iraq doesn't send the right message to those we are fighting,'' he said. ''Not enough is being said about what the U.S. will do if we withdraw and what will happen in the midst of a power vacuum . . . ''

The soldier went on to say: ''I personally served in the streets of Baghdad in 2006, and I would have felt better serving, thinking that both houses of Congress gave me their full support.''

Madam Speaker, what we debate in this House, how we conduct ourselves, does have real consequences. Some of our country's bravest are on the battlefield and on the streets of Baghdad as we speak.

We have seen throughout our history what happens when our resolve is weak. In 1993 this country halfheartedly supported the commitment of troops to subdue the violent warlords of Somalia. The precipitous withdrawal in the face of casualties left a chaotic nation to this day that harbors terrorists and is a feeding ground for instability.

The lessons of history must not be forgotten as we face a determined enemy of Islamic terrorists who are waging a war upon freedom.

Madam Speaker, the American people want us to fight and win in Iraq and bring our troops home. Our soldiers seek nothing more than the support they require to perform their mission and the knowledge that the American people believe that their sacrifice is necessary and noble.

Contrary to some of those on the other side of the aisle who have stood here in this well believing and saying

that this debate is a breath of fresh air, our enemies will be the only ones satisfied by this debate. They will have received all the political rhetoric they require to convince their followers that complete victory is at hand. One can only imagine with horror how many Islamic radicals will be inspired to continue the fight after this House resolves that it supports our troops but not the mission we ask them to perform.

To those who support this resolution and oppose any effort to achieve victory in Iraq, I challenge you to be true to your convictions and bring a binding resolution to the floor to cut off funds for our troops, because that is really what this is all about.

Madam Speaker, I oppose this resolution and urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' and send a message worth hearing to America, our soldiers, and our enemies.

Mr. CARTER. Madam Speaker, at this time I would like to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. PUTNAM).

Mr. PUTNAM. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

While this resolution may be nonbinding, we will all be bound by its consequences: the immediate and long-lasting consequences, those here and in the combat zone.

Democrats continue to put forward an inherently contradictory message with dire consequences, on one hand offering rhetorical support for the troops and on the other, advancing a slow-bleed strategy that methodically constricts those troops' ability to succeed.

From the testimonials we have heard, it is clear our troops believe their mission is winnable. And the message they are routinely delivering to us could not be more clear. They want a chance to get the job done.

Ladies and gentlemen, our troops are not speaking off of a slickly produced focus group-tested set of talking points. They are vocalizing the overwhelming sentiments that exist on the front lines. We do a disservice to the very troops we claim to support when we advance a slow-bleed strategy that cuts off their lifeline of support.

We don't support them when we choke off the funding they need to succeed. We don't support them when we erect political roadblocks designed to deny them the equipment that they need to carry out their mission. We don't support them when we tie their hands behind their back. And we certainly don't support our troops when we attach strings to the funding needed to ensure that when they need help, it is on the way.

Yesterday the chairman of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee unveiled this dangerous slow-bleed doctrine on a Web site, movecongress.org, that is directly affiliated with some of the most extreme elements of the antiwar left. This is a political machine designed to elect and defeat politicians by using our troops as pawns, and now they seek to deprive those same troops of the resources they need to succeed in their mission. According to news reports, these groups are prepared to spend $8.5 million on a national ad campaign to target lawmakers who did not adhere to their extremist, defeatist views.

This resolution is not an earnest expression of congressional sentiment. It is phase one of the far left's plan to elect more of their own. And all of this is for what? To send a message or settle a score with our Commander in Chief? To raise campaign cash?

It turns out our worse fears are true; that this resolution is, in fact, a first, dangerous step to cutting off the funds our troops so desperately need. The remarks of the Defense Appropriations chairman, the remarks of the Speaker with major national reporters lending support to the slow-bleed doctrine; and next week senior House leaders will convene to map out their strategy for maximizing their ability to defund the troops while minimizing the political fallout.

Before you cast your vote today, you should see this resolution for what it is: phase one of a political campaign to strip our troops of the funds they need.

□ 1415

Right now, in some cave in Iraq or Afghanistan, information is being located on a hard drive that talks about a plan for a new attack in America. Right now, somewhere in the Middle East, teenage boys are being groomed to be human bombs to further the aims of these Islamic extremists. Right now, money is being transferred across a global finance network to fund the attacks here on our soil or on other allies' soil who believe in the types of freedom and open society we enjoy, in Madrid, in London, in Hamburg, in New York, in Washington.

Regardless of how many Republicans cross the aisle and vote with the Democrats or how many Democrats cross the aisle and vote with the Republicans, tomorrow morning the terrorists will still wake up with hate on their hearts, plotting the next scheme to bring down our economy, to bring down our system of government, to bring down the lives of innocents.

As recently as last August, as if we didn't learn from the events of 9/11, as recently as last August, there was still an attempt to blow up 10 more airliners using baby food as the means for bringing on the explosive device.

Resolutions like this do nothing to stop that type of hate. They only send the wrong signals to the men and women on the front lines for all of us.

Mr. CARTER. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the minority whip.

Mr. BLUNT. I thank the gentleman for the time.

Madam Speaker, I rise again today, as I did at the beginning of this debate, to urge a ''no'' vote on this nonbinding resolution. We have spent the week discussing the situation in Iraq and trying to find out what the resolution may really mean.

As I said at the start of this debate, it is hard to imagine a less qualified group prepared to determine tactics on the ground than 535 Members of Congress, or 535 members of anything else; how many troops to deploy, where to deploy them, which car to stop. Where does it end?

There is a disagreement on how we should fight this war on Islamic totalitarianism, but this fight is the challenge of our generation.

Madam Speaker, many of my friends on the other side of the aisle supported this mission at the beginning. Now they are ready to give up in the middle of the fight.

Those who join me in opposing this nonbinding resolution have been saying all week, while this resolution will have no impact because it is nonbinding, it is still the first step toward cutting funding for our troops.

Yesterday, we were told that this is the first step toward pulling the rug out from under our troops in the field.

This week, one of the veterans on our side of the aisle was accused of being dishonest in her representation when she said that this resolution we will vote on today did not support those who are deploying. But the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. MURTHA, said just yesterday, during the unveiling of his strategy to pull the rug out from under our troops, ''They won't be able to continue. They won't be able to do the deployment. They won't have the equipment. They don't have the training, and they won't be able to do the work.''

He also said, ''I think, first of all, we have to be careful that people don't think this is the vote. The real vote will come on the legislation we are putting together. This nonbinding legislation is just an opinion.''

I would say this resolution says just enough not to say anything at all. We have already heard the Democrats calling the debate this week the ''bark before the bite.'' Their so-called slow-bleed approach is the bite that will surely hurt those fighting under America's flag overseas.

This nonbinding resolution is the first step in an all-too-binding spiral toward defeat in a fight that we cannot afford to lose.

I am not pleased to vote ''no'' today, but I will vote ''no,'' knowing that the ''no'' vote is the right vote.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, as we come to the end of this debate, I want to commend every participant on both sides for conveying powerfully and eloquently their deeply held views.

I started this debate in the firm belief that escalation is a flawed idea. After listening carefully for the past 4 days to all of my colleagues, I am more convinced than ever that escalation is a flawed idea.

Escalation is not only the wrong policy for the United States, it is also the

wrong policy for Iraq. If Iraq is to succeed as a stable and prosperous state, it must learn to take responsibility. It must learn to make difficult decisions. It must amend its constitution in the interests of Iraqi reconciliation. It must devise an equitable law for sharing its oil and gas revenues. And it must take primary responsibility for its own security.

Unless we de-escalate, Iraq will never step up to the plate. But that is not the only reason we must de-escalate. Unless we do so, our great Nation will be unable to fulfill its many far-flung global responsibilities. Unless we de-escalate, we will simply lack the resources for critical tasks here at home and overseas.

All of us, Madam Speaker, are passionately committed to supporting and defending our troops. In the coming weeks, my fellow Democrats and I will bring forth specific proposals to enhance this Nation's support and defense of our brave troops.

Madam Speaker, the American people are not well-served by the surge and our present course in Iraq. This omelet cannot be unscrambled. There have been far too many mistakes made to undo the damage.

For the sake of Iraq, for the sake of our own national interests and for the sake of our incomparable troops, de-escalation must begin, and it must begin now.

I strongly support the resolution and urge all of my colleagues to do so.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CARTER. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. ROGERS).

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I rise today to support our troops and our Nation. It is really that simple.

We in Congress have an obligation and duty to debate the many different issues facing the country. Our words and our actions traditionally make their way to our constituents' living rooms and the national news, but now, with communications being what they are, to our troops in the field through the Internet.

Our words are the guiding principles by which the voters ultimately make their decision on who they want representing them here, and this week obviously is no exception.

Our words will carry on for many months to come. Our constituents are listening, as there is no issue more sobering or more somber than this one.

Over the last 4 days, though, I have been struck not so much by the rhetoric on display here but the effects this debate will have on the morale of our troops. Our words have carried much further than those living rooms this past week. This debate will inevitably make its way to our troops there in Iraq standing watch in some remote outpost, training Iraqi security forces.

This debate will inevitably make its way to the parents of our troops, their spouses, their children. These children will remember parts of this debate and will grow up learning just how much their country supported their parents during these trying times.

The talk also goes to the enemy, who is watching and listening to us in the caves, on the battlefield, the terrorist cells wherever they may be. They monitor what we are saying to learn of our resolve. So even if we just talk, we ought to be very careful what we say. The world is watching and listening.

And since we have the power to fund our military, I want to talk briefly. We have one Commander in Chief. The President's premise for going to war in both Afghanistan and Iraq has always been to go on the offensive. It is hard to prove a negative, but it is obvious we have not had one terrorist attack in the U.S. since 9/11. That is not all because of our decision to go to war in Iraq, but it is one of the reasons.

Everybody ought to know by now the basic mindset of the terrorist jihadists. They are attracted to volatile parts of the Middle East, where broken regimes make it okay to practice hatred and violence. They are looking for safe sanctuary that provides secrecy, communications capabilities and a basic infrastructure with which to concoct their next scheme. They plan and plot and wait to pounce in various hot spots around the world, just as they have done in Kenya, Tanzania, the USS *Cole*, Bali, Madrid, London. It is a low-grade world war.

If we finish this job, Iraq might be a place where people are more concerned with getting to work and raising a family than one where terrorists can plan attacks and sectarian violence is rampant. It won't be perfect.

And let's be honest about what is called sectarian violence. Where did that come from? A lot of it from terrorist organizations, al Qaeda foremost. It is provoked and prodded along because our enemies know it will test our resolve. Listen to the tapes of Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahari. They talk about it all the time.

What they want for themselves is for the U.S. to give up. They call us a paper tiger, a country that gives up when support wanes or when the going gets difficult. In their view, after we give up, they will claim victory and turn Iraq into a terrorist factory of training camps, weapons making and surveillance operations, all designed for the express purpose of waging the next attack in the U.S. or otherwise advancing this low-grade world war.

The President knows this, and we need to end this war. He has taken the input of others and readjusted our strategy and, as we speak, is readjusting our tactics. The Iraqis must take charge of their own security.

Our military is pressing for action, action from our own troops to quell the violence and action to get the Iraqi security forces trained, equipped and ready to act.

I hope to bring the Kentucky troops home, but not until the work is done. Oppose the resolution.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, this is a bipartisan resolution, and I am pleased to yield 5½ minutes to my friend, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES).

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I am grateful to Chairman SKELTON and Chairman LANTOS for giving me the opportunity and the privilege to be part of this resolution, first of all, to thank our men and women in uniform for their service and, secondly, to question whether the sending of 20,000-plus troops to be policemen in Baghdad is the right thing or the wrong thing to do.

I think this has been a great debate, no matter which side of the aisle you have been on or which position you have had.

Madam Speaker, I want to say again, as I did 2 days ago, I know we cannot live in the past, but I will tell you, my heart has ached ever since I went to a Marine's funeral in April of 2003.

Michael Bitz died a sergeant, a sergeant who left a wife and three children, twins that were born 2 weeks after he was deployed. He never saw them. At the funeral, the wife read the last letter word for word. She cried, and I cried too, by God.

Then I started questioning. The intelligence given to the Congress and the American people, was it verified? Was it true? Then I started speaking out and asking for those who were on the inside, and I am going to read this to you today very quickly.

□ 1430

General Gregory Newbold, Marine general, and as far as I am concerned, he is a hero because he gave up a third star because he could not sit there and see the manipulation of the intelligence to send our troops to Iraq, and I quote very quickly from an article that he wrote for Time magazine, April 9, 2006.

''Two senior military officers are known to have challenged Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld on the planning of the Iraq War. Army General Eric Shinseki publicly dissented and found himself marginalized. Marine Lieutenant Greg Newbold, the Pentagon's top operations officer, voiced his objections internally and then retired, in part out of opposition to the war.''

I further read from his writing to Time magazine. ''From 2000 until October 2002, I was a Marine Corps lieutenant general and director of operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. After 9/11, I was a witness and therefore a party to the actions that led us to the invasion of Iraq, an unnecessary war. Inside the military family, I made no secret of my view that the zealots' rationale for war made no sense. And I think I was outspoken enough to make those senior to me uncomfortable. But I now regret that I did not more openly challenge those who were determined to invade a country whose actions were peripheral to the real threat, al Qaeda. I

retired from the military 4 months before the invasion, in part because of my opposition to those who had used 9/11's tragedy to hijack our security policy.''

He further stated, ''To be sure, the Bush administration and senior military officials are not alone in their culpability. Members of Congress, from both parties, defaulted in fulfilling their constitutional responsibility for oversight.''

These are not my words. They are the words of two-star Marine General Gregory Newbold who gave up the third star because he could not stay and see what was happening to our military and to this country.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to be part of this resolution. Debate has never hurt anyone. In fact, at the Armed Services meeting 2 weeks ago, a question was asked, either by my side or your side, Would this demoralize the troops? And General Pace and Secretary of Defense Gates said, no, it will not; they are smart, they understand. This is what freedom is all about is debate, disagreement, and discussion.

Madam Speaker, our troops have done a magnificent job, and they cannot afford to continue to be policemen in a civil war. It is not fair and makes no sense at all.

Seventy percent of the American people are opposed to this surge, and Madam Speaker, I want to read Retired Army Lieutenant General J. Garner, the first U.S. official in charge of postwar Baghdad. Madam Speaker, he said, ''I don't know that the Iraqi Government has ever demonstrated ability to lead the country, and we shouldn't be surprised. You'll never find, in my lifetime, one man that all the Iraqis will coalesce around. Iraqis are too divided among sectarian, ethnic, and tribal loyalties, and their loyalties are regional, not national.''

Let's pass this resolution, and God bless our men and women in uniform.

Mr. CARTER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), the minority leader.

Mr. BOEHNER. Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Texas for yielding and thank him and all of you for, once again, to have an opportunity to come and speak on the floor on this resolution.

The resolution before us is nonbinding, but it is the first step down a very treacherous path, a path that, if followed, will endanger Americans for generations to come.

Iraq is the central front in a global war between the United States of America and radical Islamic terrorists, a war that began long before the horrific events of 9/11, a war the American people did not seek and did not start.

It is mind-boggling to consider how fanatically committed our enemies are to destroying America, even at the cost of destroying themselves in the process. Our enemies recruit young people, fill them with hate and rage, and then send them on suicide missions to kill innocent victims. We face an enemy that loves death more than it loves life.

As Americans, we cherish freedom and democracy. Ours is a way of life. Theirs is a way of death, of murder, of suicide.

The global reach of radical Islam stretches from North Africa, through the Middle East, to South Asia, to Indonesia and to the Philippines.

The other side wants Americans to believe that the war in Iraq is different from the war on terror. They even say that we are not fighting al Qaeda in Iraq, ignoring the fact that al Qaeda has made it the central front in their war against America.

According to the experts, and according to their own words, radical Islamic terrorists will never stop fighting until much of the world is under Islamic law.

In 2004, Osama bin Laden said the following about the conflict in Iraq: ''The whole world is watching this war and the two adversaries; the Islamic Nation . . . and the United States and its allies on the other. It is either victory and glory or misery and humiliation.''

And our enemies are watching this debate, and through the Arab media we know what they are saying.

Recently, the second-in-command of al Qaeda issued a warning to moderate Muslims in Iraq and Afghanistan who are working and dying to build peace and security, and he said this: ''These traitors in Iraq and Afghanistan must face their inevitable fate, and face up to the inescapable facts. America is about to depart and abandon them, just as it abandoned their like in Vietnam.''

The consequences of failure in Iraq would be catastrophic for America and the world.

Last month, General Petraeus spoke of the very real possibility of Iraq's neighbors taking sides in sectarian violence.

Failing in Iraq would jeopardize Israel and greatly benefit Iran, a nation governed by a fanatic and actively building nuclear weapons.

The battle we fight in Iraq is the biggest part of our global war, and if we leave, the fight will, in fact, follow us home. And what we will leave behind is chaos, the same kind of chaos we left behind in Vietnam, the same kind of chaos we left behind in Lebanon, and the same kind of chaos that we left behind in Somalia.

Who does not believe that we will not see chaos in Iraq, destabilizing the Middle East and jeopardizing the very safety and security of the American people?

As Americans, we are fortunate in so many ways. We have so many blessings, including a great and proud history to inspire us. Earlier this week, I talked about President Lincoln and the challenges he faced during some of America's darkest days. During the Revolution, America faced down what was then the most powerful empire in the world, with a rag-tag army. We survived a Civil War that would have permanently divided any other Nation.

After a crippling depression in the 1930s, we defeated Japanese imperialism and Hitler in Germany. We then defeated the Soviet Union and their communist empire in a test of wills that lasted for a generation.

The greatness of America is exemplified in a simple short letter about duty and sacrifice. The letter was written by Marine Staff Sergeant Daniel Clay, the husband of my former staffer, Lisa Bell Clay.

Sergeant Clay was one of 10 Marines who were killed in Fallujah a little over a year ago, and he left behind this letter to his family in case he did not come home.

In it, he said, ''What we have done in Iraq is worth any sacrifice. Why? Because it was our duty.'' He says, ''That sounds simple. But all of us have a duty. Duty is defined as a God-given task. Without duty, life is worthless.''

Our troops are not the only Americans who have a God-given task. If a noncommissioned officer can understand his duty, then certainly Members of Congress can understand theirs.

Congress has a duty to protect the American people now so that the next generation can enjoy prosperity and freedom.

Congress also has a duty to the men and women in uniform when we send them into harm's way, a duty to provide them with the full support and resources they need to accomplish their mission and return home safely.

My friends on the other side have described this nonbinding resolution as their first step. It is a first step. It is the first step in a plan to cut off funding and reinforcements for American troops in harm's way.

The next step is to micromanage the war through the budget process. To quote the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURTHA), who said yesterday, ''They won't be able to continue. They won't be able to do the deployment. They won't have the equipment, they don't have the training and they won't be able to do the work.''

Mr. Speaker, at this very moment American troops are fighting radical Islamic terrorists thousands of miles away, and it is unthinkable that the United States Congress would move to discredit their mission, cut off their reinforcements and deny them the resources they need to succeed and return home safely.

The American people will not support a strategy that involves pulling the rug out from under American troops in the combat zone by cutting off their reinforcements and forcing them to face an enemy without our full support.

This resolution is nonbinding, but it is the first step toward a tragic, unthinkable goal.

Four years ago, this body agreed that fighting this war was a worthy cause. There have been setbacks where Members on both sides of the aisle are rightly dissatisfied with the results. But this is war. We face a sophisticated, determined enemy who wants to annihilate our way of life.

We have a duty to stand and fight against those who seek to destroy America and the freedom that defines us. Our troops are committed to fighting and winning this global war. We owe them our unfailing support.

I urge my colleagues to stand with the marines, the soldiers, the sailors and the airmen and vote down this resolution. I urge my colleagues to think about our duty, our duty to support our troops, our duty to protect the American people, and our duty to leave for our kids and their kids a safe, free, and secure America. Our soldiers are dying around the world to protect us, upholding their duty. Do we have the courage to uphold our duty?

Vote ''no'' on this resolution.

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor and privilege to yield 7 minutes to an American hero, a hero of the State of Texas, a pilot in Vietnam, one of the longest serving prisoners of war of the Vietnam era and a personal hero of mine, Mr. SAM JOHNSON.

□ 1445

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. You know, as he said, I flew 62 combat missions in the Korean War and 25 in Vietnam before being shot down. I had the privilege of serving in the United States Air Force for 29 years, attending the prestigious National War College, commanding two air bases, among other things.

I mention these stories because I view the debate on the floor not just as a U.S. Congressman elected to serve the good people of the Third District in Texas, but also through the lens of a lifelong fighter pilot, student of war, a combat warrior, a leader of men, and a prisoner of war.

Ironically, this week marks the anniversary that I started a new life and my freedom from prison in Hanoi. I spent early 7 years as that prisoner of war, more than half of that time in solitary confinement. I flew out of Hanoi on February 12, 1973, with other long-held prisoners of war, weighing just 140 pounds. And tomorrow, 34 years ago, I had my homecoming to Texas, a truly unspeakable blessing of freedom.

While in solitary confinement, my captures kept me in leg stocks, like the pilgrims, for 72 days. As you can imagine, they had to carry me out of the stocks because I couldn't walk.

The following day they put me in leg irons for 2½ years. That is when you have a tight metal cuff around each ankle with a foot-long bar connecting the legs. I still have very little feeling in my right arm and right hand, and my body has never been the same since my nearly 2,500 days of captivity. But I will never let my physical woes hold me back. Instead, I try to see the silver lining.

I say that because, in some ways, I am living a dream, a hope that I had for the future. From April 16, 1966, to February 12, 1973, I prayed that I would return home to the loving embrace of my wife, Shirley, and my three kids, Bob, Jenny, and Beverly. My fellow POWs and I clung to the hope of when, not if, we returned home. We would spend hours tapping on the adjoining cement walls about what we would do when we got home to America. We pledged to quit griping about the way the government was running the war in Vietnam and do something about it. We decided we would run for office and try to make America a better place for all of us.

So, little did I know back in my rat-infested 3-by-8 dark, filthy cell that, 34 years after my departure from hell on earth, I would spend the anniversary of my release pleading for a House panel to back my measure to support and fully fund our troops in harm's way; and, that just days later I would be on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives, surrounded by distinguished veterans, urging Congress to support our troops to the hilt.

We POWs were still in Vietnam when Washington cut the funding for Vietnam. I know what it does to morale and mission success. Words cannot fully describe the horrendous damage of the anti-American efforts against the war back home to the guys on the ground. Our captors would blare nasty recordings over the loudspeaker of Americans protesting back home, tales of Americans spitting on Vietnam veterans when they came home, and worse. I don't think we should ever, ever let that happen again. The pain inflicted by your country's indifference is tenfold that inflicted by your ruthless captors.

Our troops and their families want, need, and deserve the full support of this country and the Congress. Moms and dads watching the news need to know that the Congress will not leave their sons and daughters in harm's way without support.

Since the President announced his new plan for Iraq last month, there has been steady progress. He changed the rules of engagement, removed political protection. There are reports we wounded the number two of al Qaeda and killed his deputy. And, yes, al Qaeda operates in Iraq. It is alleged that top radical jihadist, al-Sadr, has fled Iraq maybe to Iran, and Iraq has closed its borders with Iran and Syria.

The President has changed course, has offered a new plan. We are making progress. We must seize the opportunity to move forward, not stifle future success. Debating nonbinding resolutions aimed at earning political points only destroys morale, stymies success, and emboldens the enemy.

The grim reality is that this House measure is the first step to cutting funding of the troops. Just ask JOHN MURTHA about his slow-bleed plan that hamstrings our troops in harm's way.

Now it is time to stand up for my friends who did not make it home and those who fought and died in Iraq already, so I can keep my promise that when we got home we would quit griping about the war and do something positive about it.

We must not allow this Congress to leave these troops like the Congress left us. Today, let my body serve as a brutal reminder that we must not repeat the mistakes of the past. Instead, learn from them. We must not cut funding for our troops. We must stick by them. We must support them all the way. And, to our troops, we must remain always faithful. God bless you all. I salute you and this Congress.

Mr. CARTER. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to share this body and this floor with the remarkable gentleman from Texas. I applaud him for his patriotism, his courage, and commitment to America.

Madam Speaker, we have had a long debate on this resolution. I have listened to critics, and I find it quite interesting that the criticism is focused almost exclusively on what this resolution doesn't say, rather than what it does.

Let me review, if I may. The resolution says two simple things: We support the troops completely, wholeheartedly, now and in the future; and we disapprove of the White House's plan to deploy more than 20,000 additional combat troops to Iraq.

That is what we are voting on today, and nothing said on this floor or in this Chamber will change the fact that that is what is before us.

I oppose the President's plan because it will embroil our troops even more deeply in a sectarian conflict. Some call this conflict a civil war, some call this more complicated than a civil war, and, either way, it is a conflict we cannot resolve and which ultimately cannot be resolved militarily.

The President's plan to deploy more troops is simply not the answer. It cannot fix the three irretrievable mistakes made in 2003 when the administration insisted on de-Baathification, dissolving the Iraqi army, and shutting down the state-run industries, throwing hundreds of thousands of Iraqis out of work and creating untold numbers of insurgents.

The President's plan hastily put together is insufficient in a number of ways:

It is insufficient in the requirements for progress it places on the Iraqi political system, the true center of gravity in this whole conflict.

It is insufficient in the support it provides to our combat forces both in terms of equipment as well as support forces.

And it is insufficient in the amount of training time it allows for deploying units.

As a result, under the President's plan, U.S. military forces will be less ready to go into during and after this troop increase; and, sadly, they could be stretched to the point of breaking. To the point of breaking.

Now, finally, I oppose the White House's plan because it will heighten the already unacceptable level of strategic risk currently facing our Nation,

strategic risk that exists because our military is overcommited in Iraq and is ill-equipped and ill-positioned to respond to emerging crises elsewhere in the world. And this worries me, it worries me deeply.

I have been privileged to serve here in Congress slightly over 30 years, and over that time 12 significant military contingencies have occurred in which our military have been involved. Each of them occurred in an unexpected place and at an unexpected time. It will happen again. Right now, we are not prepared as we should be for an unforeseen military threat. That worries me.

Unfortunately, it is the magnificent, wonderful, courageous men and women of our military who will pay the price for that failure.

Madam Speaker, we must send the White House a message that cannot be ignored; and that is why we are here today. I urge that we pass the Skelton-Lantos-Jones resolution.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Madam Speaker, despite my belief in the inadequacies of the President's new strategy, to vote for the resolution with the troops already deployed is a step I cannot take. I am unwilling to—after the fact—say to them, I oppose your mission.

My vote should not be interpreted as approval of the administration's conduct of this war. I have had the opportunity to meet General David Petraeus, the new commander of the U.S. forces in Iraq. I believe he is one of the most capable military commanders America has available for this mission. General Petraeus has indicated there is a chance for success and that he will report to the American people in 6 months as to whether or not the President's plan is working.

Let us give the new leaders and the new strategy this short period of time to see if stability can be achieved—an investment necessary to ensure the lives lost and families damaged thus far have not sacrificed in vain.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Madam Speaker, given my tensure in the House of Representatives, I have seen more than my fair share of good and bad legislation come to the House floor. In addressing the nonbinding House Continuing Resolution 63, I would like to take a step back and call this bill what it is, it is a façade, and a political maneuver. If we are going to spend four days discussing a piece of legislation, if we are going to vote on something, we should vote on funding. Our power in Congress is the power of the purse. If the Democrats have an action item, we should get to the point; let us vote on funding the war in Iraq, and stop making pointless partisan political arguments.

However, all of my colleagues are aware that a vote to stop funding for the war will not pass, as the Republicans will not support it and many Democrats would oppose such legislation as well. This is true because we all have American resolve, meaning we will work together as a country to finish what we began.

American resolve does not quit when a situation gets messy, we do not tuck our tail between our legs and run away scared. My colleagues and I are also aware that our legislative agenda does not exist in a bubble; that there are many factors at play. If we do not have the intestinal fortitude in Iraq, how will we be viewed by other countries like Iran?

It is vital to our prosperity that the United States maintains her impenetrable stance in the international community. If the United States is seen as a Paper Tiger there will be many deep, far reaching implications; one of them being Iran's nuclear missile program, which threatens the safety of the world.

In addressing the real threat posed by Iran, Ambassador Gregory Schulte has explained that,

"The pursuit of nuclear weapons by the leadership in Tehran threatens Iran's neighbors and threatens the wider world community. In the Middle East, Iran's influence is rising. The fall of the Taliban and Saddam, increased revenues from the high price of oil, the electoral victory of Hamas, and the perceived success of Hezbollah in attacking Israel all extend Iran's shadow.

He also stated that:

"A nuclear-armed Iran could embolden its leaders to advance their ambitions even more aggressively across the Middle East. Even without detonating a single nuclear weapon, the mere possession of an atomic arsenal could encourage Iran's leaders to employ their conventional forces and step up terrorism to advance their regional ambitions. Iran, with Syria, is allowing terrorists and insurgents to use its territory to move in and out of Iraq and is helping to train and arm militants who are killing coalition forces and innocent civilians."

In today's news, it was reported that Iraq had to shut down its border with Syria and Iran. U.S. officials have long suspected Syria of allowing foreign fighters to cross its long, porous border into Iraq, and this past weekend evidence was presented of Iranian-manufactured weapons being smuggled into Iraq. We will be paving the way for Iran and Syria to be the victors if we do not allow our troops the full force of our assistance in Congress.

I would like to be the bearer of a positive aspect of our work in Iraq, highlighting some major accomplishments achieved by our leaders and troops. Here is the positive side of the story that is rarely brought to light or reported on in the mainstream media:

Free Elections are transforming Iraq. In 2005, Iraq held two parliamentary elections and a constitutional referendum, with turnout increasing each time cumulating in 76 percent of registered voters participating in the December 2005 elections.

Economic recovery is picking up. The International Monetary Fund estimates GDP grew by 2.6 percent in 2005, and is expected to grow by 10.4 percent in 2006, adjusted for inflation.

A stable currency, introduced in October 2003, has allowed the Central Bank of Iraq to manage inflation; the IMF estimates inflation was 32 percent in 2004 and remained stable at this level in 2005.

Iraq is rejoining the international community. It is on the road to WTO accession, and received both an IMF credit facility and its first World Bank loan in 30 years.

Debt relief agreements are helping Iraq with its economic outlook; Iraq has secured an agreement to forgive at least 80 percent of its Saddam-era debt.

Foreign and domestic banks are opening new offices.

The stock market established in April 2004 currently lists nearly 90 companies.

Iraq had virtually no cell phone subscribers in 2003. Today, there are more than 5 million cell phone subscribers, and an estimated 2,000 Internet cafes.

Seventy-seven percent of Iraqi businessmen anticipate growth in the national economy over the next 2 years, in a recent nationwide poll, and 69 percent are "optimistic" about Iraq's future.

In conclusion, we must stand behind our troops, military commanders, and our Commander in Chief. We need to finish the job and secure areas in Baghdad and the Anbar Province. We must secure the situation on the ground so Iraq can establish the rule of law. We must provide this secure environment so social and economic development can take place.

Finally, we must protect the population and critical infrastructure. These are fundamental elements of counter insurgency strategy. These fundamental elements simply have not been able to take hold due to the amount of insurgents in the area and their ability to overturn our previous work.

I beg of my colleagues to refuse to allow our troops to become a casualty of partisan rhetoric. If we want to win the war, then we have one option. Support them. Support the mission. Support the military intelligence officers focused on this victory. Refuse to quit, refuse to weaken, and allow the counter insurgency this chance to succeed.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Madam Speaker, today is a day that we will look back on and know that fundamental decisions regarding our Nation's history were made.

The discussions that we are engaged in will go a long way in determining our future in the ongoing global war on terror and Iraq's role in that fight. When this vote is cast on the nonbinding, Democratic resolution, we will be sending a message to the world. The only question remaining is what message will we send?

Will we say that America remains steadfast against the rising tide of hate and intolerance offered by militant Islamists? Will we say that we don't have the stomach to finish the fight against terrorists who actively seek to kill us and destroy our way of life?

The war in Iraq has become such a flashpoint that we struggle to separate the politics of the situation from the reality. The politics attacks the intelligence that led us to war, questions our Nation's elected leadership, and condemns the decisions made along the way. It leads to the resolution that we now have before us. The reality recognizes that we are at war now and our troops are putting their lives on the line each and every day. It says that if this is a fight that we believe in, a fight against global terrorism, we must do everything possible to support the men and women who are carrying it out on our behalf and never giving a hint to the contrary.

Unfortunately we are at a point today where some have forgotten exactly who and what we are fighting.

Prior to 9/11, we failed to understand the hate of people like Osama bin Laden and what could result from it despite all evidence to the contrary. In 1979, 66 American diplomats were held hostage in Iran for 444 days; in 1983, 241 Marines were killed in Beirut when their barracks was attacked; militant Islamic terrorists bombed the World Trade Center in 1993; 225 people were killed in attacks

on U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998; and, in 2000, 17 American sailors were killed when al-Qaeda attacked the U.S.S. *Cole*.

Today we are at a historic crossroads: we either boldly tackle the issue of militant Islam that exists on the Iraqi front and is part of this world-wide struggle, applying the lessons we have learned from the years leading up to 9/11, or we approach the issue as we naively demonstrated before 9/11 and expect more attacks and more American deaths.

The war in Iraq has gone on longer than any of us would have wished. We've seen too many funerals for too many sons and daughters, husbands and wives. To all those who have lost a friend or loved one, our hearts go out to you.

It should be noted that mistakes have been made, of that there can be no doubt. We must know without question what led us to this point, and that time will come. But now is not that time. Not while we still have American service men and women in harm's way. History will play its part, teaching us our mistakes and urging us not to repeat them. But we don't have the luxury of waiting on history to pass its judgment.

Without resolve, it is certain we will fail in Iraq and there will be far-reaching consequences for our Nation, the region and ultimately the world. Since September 11, there have been major terrorist attacks in Karachi, Bali, Moscow, Casablanca, Riyadh, Istanbul, Madrid, London and Amman. If we allow the terrorists present in Iraq to win, we can expect more of the same. We can expect to see another Afghanistan—a puppet government established to support and back the aims of their terrorist masters. This is totally unacceptable.

Victory in Iraq is our only option. It is the only path through which we can hope for peace. Without victory, our terrorist enemies gain confidence in their opposition to the United States and their ability to defeat us militarily. We embolden them and offer them the opportunity to further their attacks against American men, women and children.

The resolution that we are debating will send a message to the world. What will that message be? My fervent hope and prayer is that it will be a message of resolve, a message of strength, a message of victory.

Now is the time to support our troops in the field unequivocally and vote against this nonbinding resolution. We don't want anyone to construe our action here today as not fully supporting our men and women who serve us in Iraq.

Mr. INGLIS of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I wish to address three questions here on the floor today: Where are we? Where do we want to be? How do we get there?

First, where are we? We're in phase 3 of a conflict in Iraq. In Phase 1 we overran Iraq in response to an American national security threat. We won.

Then came Phase 2. We were forwardly deployed; the terrorists brought the fight to us; we busted up terrorist networks; America was protected from further attacks. We won.

Now comes Phase 3. At best, Iraq is engulfed in a sectarian killing spree. At worst, Iraq has descended into a civil war.

So where are we? We're thankful for the incredible work of our military in winning Phase 1 and 2. We're aware—and I think all of us are aware—that only the Iraqi people can win Phase 3. We're united in imploring the Iraqi people to choose order over chaos; pluralism over theocracy; and freedom over authoritarianism. As we had the help of the French, the Iraqis have had the help the United States.

But just as it was only American patriots who could decide the future of our country, only Iraqi patriots can decide the future of their country. It is a neo-con mistake to charge our war fighters with building an Iraqi national consensus. Iraqis must decide for themselves if they want to live in a unified, peaceful and pluralistic Iraq. No amount of American military might can compel that result.

So where are we? Thankful for success in the outcomes that we could control; aware of the outcomes that we cannot control.

Where do we want to be? We want the Iraqis to take responsibility for their own country. The President is wisely pressing them to do so. We want the Iraqi leadership to make some key political decisions that could bring reconciliation. We want them to divide up the oil fairly, to allow banned Baathists back into positions of public trust and to develop a working model of pluralism.

We want the Iraqi leadership to know that they don't have forever, that they should settle these reconciliation questions quickly. We want them to know that we are not content to provide an overall security umbrella for their country while they dispatch death squads to kill their enemies and improve their sectarian positions. We want them to know that we're reaching for the button that would lower that umbrella. And we want to avoid the error of nation building.

The job of the U.S. military is to crush, kill and destroy the enemies of the United States. They are not nation builders; they are warriors. And they do their jobs very, very well. As commanded, our military entered Iraq to destroy what we understandably believed were threats to our national security.

We were successful in destroying those threats and thereafter in interrupting terrorist networks. Those were outcomes that we could control.

Now we are rightly asked for inputs that we can control but we are faced with outcomes that only the Iraqi people can control. It is right to evaluate the quality of our forces' inputs, but wrong to hold them accountable for outcomes beyond their control. Diplomats, statesmen, peacemakers and everyday Iraqis must work with us to develop a path to progress—a path that has milestones along the way and which has rewards for meeting those milestones and consequences for failure. Our military must help plan the path because they are the most stable and trustworthy institution on the ground in Iraq and because they are experts at planning and logistics.

Since our military is in control of the ''planning'' input, they will rightly be evaluated on the basis of the quality of that planning. Because they are the most trained and capable force in the world, our military must also continue to provide protection for the decision-makers as they plan the path to progress. The quality of that protection is an input that will rightly be evaluated.

Because they are experts at discipline and structure, our military must help define the agreed-upon milestones, the rewards for meeting those milestones and the consequences for missing them. The quality of those inputs will rightly be evaluated.

Because they are capable, our military must provide strength for the first steps on the path. The quality of that strength and the capabilities with which it is delivered will rightly be evaluated.

Having well supplied those inputs, the American military will leave Iraq successful—in Phase 1, 2 and 3. If the Iraqi people follow the path to progress to a peaceful, pluralist and unified Iraq, they will have been successful. The path may lead to something less.

Any lesser outcome is the responsibility of the Iraqi people. So we want a path to progress, and we hope for the blessings of liberty for Iraq.

Now. how do we get there? The President has ordered an increase in troop strength in Iraq. He thinks a surge in troops will give breathing room for the development of a path to progress.

I'm concerned that a surge will have the opposite effect—that it will give breathing room to the death squads, that our service men and women will be caught in the crossfire and that the surge will end right where it began. In fact, that's what happened in Baghdad in August and September of 2006.

I'm concerned that a surge sends a conflicting message. On the one hand we're telling them, ''You don't have forever; you've got to make progress in solving these political questions; you've got to stop legging up on your enemies; it's your country.'' By surging, we may be saying, ''Not to worry, we're increasing the size of that American security umbrella; there's no urgency; we're here to stay; in fact, more of us are coming.''

I want all Iraqi factions and leaders of factions to worry. I want them to see us reaching for the button that would bring that umbrella down. I want them to imagine the click of that button and the feel of the wind from the descending umbrella.

The resolution before us isn't written the way I would have written it, but it's the resolution before us. Resolutions are the way that Congress discharges its constitutional responsibility to communicate with the President. This resolution says, ''We disapprove of the surge.''

Parties on both sides have added additional and conflicting meaning to those words. In the end, I just have to vote on the basis of the words. That's why I'm going to vote in favor of the resolution and express my concern about the effectiveness of the surge.

Unlike many others who will vote for this resolution, I will not follow it with a vote to cut off funding. Nor will I follow it with a vote to withdraw immediately. Both of those actions would be mistaken.

Some will say that I am too impatient and insistent for decisions from the Iraqi leadership. It's true that it took us nearly 100 years to figure out that slavery was antithetical to freedom. It took us even longer to figure out that women should have the right to vote.

But as I had the opportunity to say to one of Prime Minister Maliki's advisors in Baghdad in August, it is our right as Iraq's protector and our obligation to our servicemen and women to insist on a timetable for these decisions. I've only been to Iraq twice. Both times I found that the hardest thing was leaving.

While there, surrounded by America's best, I had the sense that I was at ground zero of mission and purpose. The Americans serving in Iraq are the most impressive people in the

world. Everyone of them is a volunteer. Everyone of them, everyone of their predecessors and everyone of their non-deployed comrades has offered his or her life in preservation of our lives.

America's best deserve our best—our clearest thinking, our freshest analysis, our steadfast devotion. Forget the political consequences; protect no one's ''legacy;'' don't worry about ''saving face;'' make sound decisions; take decisive action. Tell them what their mission is. Discharge the Constitutional responsibility of the Congress. Give them a clear description of the inputs we expect from them. Evaluate them on the quality of those inputs but don't hold them accountable for outcomes they cannot control.

Ask them to do accomplishable things. Don't ask them to do the impossible.

No amount of force can cause someone to choose freedom, and freedom cannot be given—it must be earned. We have provided the conditions under which freedom can take root. Iraqis must nurture the seed and water it with their own sweat and blood.

If they do so, Iraq will enjoy the blessings of liberty. If they don't, our military will nevertheless have been successful.

Mr. MACK. Madam Speaker. I rise today to express my strong support for our country's troops as they defend our freedoms and protect our national security.

Today we are debating a non-binding resolution that threatens to undermine the morale of the very troops who are at the tip of the spear defending our shores. This resolution does a disservice to the very troops some in this body are pledging to support by voting for this today.

President George W. Bush has proposed sending additional troops to Iraq to give those currently in the field the necessary manpower and resources to win the war. In addition, the President has put in place a new leadership team and a new strategy in Iraq.

While we all know that mistakes have been made in the war in Iraq, I am inclined to support the President's new plan. But make no mistake: there must be new benchmarks, clearly defined goals, and we need to see real results soon.

Some in this body are using this resolution today as a first step to defund the troops in the field. Madam Speaker, choking off the funding for American troops serving in harm's way will do nothing more than embolden our enemies and ensure defeat.

Throughout our nation's history, millions of men and women have served the United States in times of crisis and need in the armed services. These men and women—and the soldiers currently in the theater of combat—have made sacrifices that must not ever be forgotten.

Madam Speaker, instead of debating non-binding resolutions that threaten to undermine morale and embolden our enemies, we should be helping our troops by making sure they have the support and resources they need to defend our country by fighting our enemies overseas. Madam Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to reject this political gimmick and vote against this resolution.

Mr. REHBERG. Madam Speaker, as an elected representative of our brave men and women serving in harm's way, every vote regarding war is a solemn matter.

Debate about the war in Iraq is necessary, required, and many important points were brought up over the more than forty hours of discussion.

No doubt about it, there have been setbacks in Iraq. And mistakes have been made on the ground and here in Washington. It's safe to say that all of us—the President, the Congress, and the American people wish we could have achieved stability in the region sooner.

However, I believe it's necessary to separate the resolution being debated in the House from the real issue. The real issue is that a failed state in Iraq would present a serious threat to the United States' national security interests, could allow terrorists to further establish safe-havens in Iraq, and could create regional and global unrest for many years to come. This is a threat we must not pass on to our children and grandchildren. September 11th showed us that terrorists can reach our soil and kill innocent Americans. We must fight this war on our terms, but on their turf.

This non-binding resolution, H. Con. Res. 63, is nothing more than an opinion about a strategy.

While opinions are interesting, solutions are necessary.

So I say to those who want to support this non-binding resolution: If you disagree with the strategy—put forward a plan; if you disagree with the tactics—put forward an alternative; if you disagree with the mission—put forward a solution.''

A non-binding resolution means non-leadership; a non-binding resolution means non-accountability. A non-binding resolution is not a plan for victory.

This week, Congress has spent a lot of time debating one of the most important issues facing this body. Unfortunately, this legislation limited a true debate on the alternatives and direction we can take.

A real resolution on Iraq needs to include real benchmarks and real guidelines, not simply a vote of no confidence.

There are those of us who are willing to disagree with the President at the strategic, tactical or project level, and a true solution would be for Congress to debate the McCain-lieberman proposal. This bipartisan alternative not only reaffirms Congressional support for our troops, but provides military, political, and social benchmarks for the Iraqi government. This approach lays the groundwork for not only victory, but also brings our troops home as soon as possible.

We owe it to our troops and their families to provide the necessary oversight to ensure any new strategy is successful, while at the same time giving our troops confidence that Congress will not cut off their funding to settle policy disputes while they are separated from their families by distance and danger. I continue to stand, ready, willing and able to contribute to that oversight.

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution, and I am in complete opposition to President's plan to send an additional 21,000 Americans into Iraq.

This ill conceived plan will only make a war that never should have started much, much worse. The generals don't want this surge. Our allies oppose it. 60 percent of the American people think it is a terrible idea and, the enemy is using it to boost recruitment. There is no conceivable reason for this surge. Yet, President Bush is pushing ahead with it.

I opposed the original Iraq war resolution because I didn't see the connection between Al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein, the evidence of an immediate threat from Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, or even compelling evidence of the existence of WMD. But, we went in anyway. We rushed off, unprepared, into a needless war that has killed thousands and scarred 10's of thousands of Americans and hundreds of thousands of innocent Iraqis.

Now, here we go again. It is time for this administration to end its policy of ready, fire, aim. It is time to begin a policy of ready, aim, fire. I urge all of my colleagues to listen to the American public, to our troops and to our friends around the world. Vote yes on this resolution.

Mrs. BONO. Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition to House Concurrent Resolution 63, the non-binding Iraq War Policy resolution.

We are being asked today to vote on a non-binding resolution that stands as nothing more than a political statement on an issue that greatly transcends the politics of the Nation's capital. The importance of ensuring our troops have the supplies and equipment they require for battle is clear. Unfortunately, we haven't been able to use valuable time during this legislative week to address true tangible needs that exist for those with enough courage to stand up for the freedoms our country affords.

The importance of a stable and secure Iraq should not be underestimated, given the responsibility to assist the Iraqi people to further their personal freedoms. Sadaam Hussein's brutal dictatorship is one that cannot be soon forgotten. Those who share his world view of oppressing fundamental human rights must know that we Americans will continue to support policies that will protect all citizens from these radical and militant Islamic terrorist cells. This battle is only one front on the larger war on terror, and today's non-binding resolution does nothing to achieve more stability in the international community.

To me, supporting this resolution only serves the purely political purpose of second-guessing a decision already made to move forward by the Commander in Chief. Those voting in favor of this resolution appear only to have a hunger to score meaningless political points, while lacking an appetite for pursuing the larger goals of keeping our brave soldiers equipped as they strive to ensure the safety of our country and citizens abroad.

I would like to make clear that I have grave reservations regarding the current situation in Iraq. For too long, circumstances have limited our ability to reduce the sectarian violence plaguing this region, especially in Baghdad. It is critical that we see a greater commitment from the Iraqi government and the citizens of Iraq to help quell the insurgency. I question whether or not this increased level of force will accomplish the desired goal but I also respect the need to explore all options to stabilize the situation in this troubled country. My hope is that General Petraeus, given his extensive direct experience in training our troops on the ground, will have a strong sense of what can be achieved on the ground given the challenges of the future.

My vote today is not an open-ended endorsement of the policy in Iraq. Rather, I will continue to monitor closely the situation and encourage continued Congressional oversight of the war. Today's debate displays the different views that we hold on this matter, but we should be unified in our support of those

who are moving forward to complete the mission at hand. Recognizing that continued difficulties lie ahead, we should again not be voting on a resolution that will achieve a political end, rather we should be looking for ways to help those soldiers who continue to carry out this mission or have returned from battle.

Our vote today is one that will be remembered as either for or against a decision already made by the Commander in Chief. In the short term, though, we should remember this nonbinding resolution serves no practical purpose in our larger fight against the war on terror.

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition to this two-sentence non-binding resolution which demoralizes our troops in the field while providing aid to our enemy during a time of on-going conflict. These brave men and women deserve the full support of their government, not second-guessing from politicians in Washington, DC. Instead of discussions regarding appropriate funding levels to support our troops, the Democratic majority has chosen to rebuke the conduct of the war while it is still occurring. This is reckless and ill-advised.

This resolution encourages our enemies to continue provoking our fighting men and women. America's enemies around the world are closely watching what we say and do today. By passing this non-binding resolution, Members of Congress are sending a vote of no confidence to our troops in the field and a message of surrender to our enemies.

I strongly believe it is not the place of politicians in Washington to devise military tactics and strategy. Congress must not tie the hands of our military commanders in the field. You cannot fight a war by committee, thousands of miles away. The responsibility of conducting America's military strategy and the tactics of our armed forces should be left to our military commanders on the ground.

The plan to increase the number of additional troops to the mission in Iraq should be given a chance to succeed. These 20,000 additional soldiers will assist the Iraqi government in its new, Iraqi-inspired security plan. As Prime Minister Maliki said, ''This is 100 percent an Iraqi plan under an Iraqi Command.''

The majority of U.S. forces will be deployed to Baghdad to assist in maintaining control of areas cleared of terrorists and insurgents. As our military commanders in the field have repeatedly told us, part of the problem in securing Baghdad comes from the fact that many of the insurgents lie in wait until American troops move to another area only to emerge and retake precious territory gained by hard battle. By having additional troops in the field, the Iraqis will have a better chance to capture all of the insurgents, including those who stay hidden, waiting to attack again.

Our commanders on the ground have given this plan a green light, and I will defer to them to make military decisions. We should keep in mind our top commander in Iraq, Lt. Gen. David Petraeus, has warned against passing this very type of resolution. Our troops have said they want the chance to finish the mission that has been started.

Our troops do not want Congress to conduct this war. As one soldier posted to a blog on February 5, 2007, ''Proposing to legislate the conduct of this long war looks worse than cut and run. It feels like the betrayal of the families who bear the burdens.''

Congress should not tell our soldiers how to conduct a war any more than Congress should tell a lawyer how to argue a case or a doctor how to perform a surgery. Congress's place is to support our troops by providing the funding they need to finish the mission that was started. If my colleagues are so strongly opposed to the mission in Iraq, they can vote to cut the funding of our soldiers in harm's way.

We must recognize the War on Terror requires perseverance and patience. American patience, however, is not infinite. The lack of visible progress in Iraq is deeply troubling. The Iraqi conflict has a crucial role in the war against al Qaeda. American troops are stemming the tide of a worsening situation. Failure in Iraq is simply not an option. It is important we in Congress demonstrate quickly our ability to win in Iraq before the situation gets worse.

This may well represent the Administration's last chance to demonstrate sustainable progress is securing the country. It is equally important; however, that Iraqis take ownership for their own country. Our troops, in whatever number, are not there permanently. The Iraqis must take an active role in shaping their country's future. Americans took control of America after the American Revolution; the Iraqis must do the same. The Iraqis must be made to recognize the need for Iraqis to control the future of their nation. Iraq's future should not be determined by Americans, only the Iraqis can and should do that.

In closing, I believe in and support our American troops. They have made tremendous progress in Iraq and should be commended for the actions towards making Iraq a country for the Iraqis. Since the declaration of the Global War on Terror, our brave men and women have worked hard to stem the tide of a worsening situation. Because of them, elections have been held in both Afghanistan and Iraq; the terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi has been killed, former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein was captured, tried and executed, and more than three-quarters of al Qaeda's known leaders and associates have been detained or killed.

At the same time, Iraqis must assume responsibility for their country. Americans will not stay in Iraq forever; Iraqis must assume control of their country. We must recognize the War on Terror requires perseverance and patience. American patience, however, is not infinite. The Iraqi conflict has a crucial role in the war against al Qaeda and American troops are stemming the tide of a worsening situation. However, I believe the Iraqi people must take an active role in shaping their country's future. Iraq's future should not be determined by Americans, only the Iraqis can and should do that.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Madam Speaker, I have listened to some of the debate on this resolution. I have been disappointed by the misleading talking points and faulty analysis that have been repeatedly used by those who support the President's escalation of the war in Iraq.

Many speakers have tied Iraq to the broader war against al-Qaeda. These are two distinct wars. Iraq had not declared war on the U.S. Al-Qaeda had. Iraq did not attack the U.S. Al-Qaeda did. Iraq did not harbor al-Qaeda leaders. The Taliban in Afghanistan did. By shifting military and intelligence resources out of Afghanistan before the Taliban and al-Qaeda were wiped out the administration has actually undermined the important war against al-Qaeda. The administration's blunders mean the U.S. is at risk of losing two wars at once: Afghanistan and Iraq. The war in Afghanistan is salvageable and winnable. The war in Iraq will not be won by military means alone. Vigorous diplomatic efforts within the Gulf region, in addition to a political realignment within Iraq will be necessary .

U.S. intelligence agencies, including military intelligence agencies, have refuted the claim that the conflict in Iraq is driven by al-Qaeda. It is not. The violence is driven by a civil war, primarily between Iraqi Sunnis and Shias. The recent National Intelligence Estimate should definitively put that issue to rest.

Even the President has recognized that al Qaeda is not the driving force for violence in Iraq. In a speech on December 12, 2005, the President made important distinctions between the insurgent elements in Iraq. He mentioned ''rejectionists,'' which are mostly Sunnis who miss the privileged status they enjoyed under Saddam Hussein. He mentioned ''Saddamists'', who are former regime elements who want to return to power. Again, they are Sunni. And, he mentioned foreign terrorists affiliated with or inspired by al Qaeda, which even the President acknowledged was the ''smallest'' element of the insurgency. The one huge element he left out was nationalist Shias, such as those influenced by radical cleric Moqtada al-Sadr.

The President and his allies justify the continuing U.S. presence in Iraq by claiming that if we don't fight there, we'll have to fight here at home. However, the Iraqi Sunni rejectionists, Saddamists, and nationalist Shias, who combined make up the vast bulk of the insurgents and militias committing violence in Iraq, have no interest and no capability to attack the U.S. homeland. They just want U.S. military forces out of their own country. U.S. forces are a target of convenience in their escalating civil conflict. It is deceitful to argue that if we don't fight there, we will fight them in the streets of the United States.

The war in Iraq is not a part of the war against al Qaeda. And, in fact the war in Iraq is undermining our fight against al Qaeda.

Some in this debate have made the ridiculous argument that if the U.S. leaves Iraq that somehow Osama bin Laden will take control and establish a safe haven for terrorists to attack the U.S. There is no chance that the Shias and Kurds, who represent around 80 percent of the population in Iraq, will allow Sunni foreign terrorist elements like al-Qaeda to take over the country. Even many Sunnis have grown tired of foreign terrorists operating in Iraq, with several Sunni tribes fighting al Qaeda operatives.

Iran and al Qaeda are the primary beneficiaries of the U.S. invasion of Iraq and the two entities that most want the U.S. to stay there. With respect to Iran, the U.S. removed a threatening neighbor of Iran's and helped put in power a fellow Shiite regime, in addition to tying down the U.S. military and sowing international discord that has limited our options in confronting Iran's nuclear program. With respect to al Qaeda, U.S. intelligence agencies have noted that Iraq is serving as a training ground for terrorists and a recruiting poster that is swelling the ranks of terrorist organizations and inspiring attacks around the world.

It is past time to end the open-ended commitment the President has made in Iraq. As long as the U.S. military remains stuck with the President's pledge of open-ended support, Iraqi politicians and security forces will use the U.S. presence as a crutch. They will continue to fail to take the necessary steps to solve their differences, establish an effective and inclusive government, end sectarian violence, and create the foundation for a secure and prosperous society.

Democracy and stability cannot be imposed on unwilling parties. As New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman said on Meet the Press, a stable, pluralistic democracy in Iraq is everyone's second choice except ours. The Shias want power for themselves. The Sunnis want power. And the Kurds want power and independence. What they don't want to do is share that power. The President's stay-the-course, more-of-the-same, status quo policy provides no incentive for the parties to reach the political compromises that are necessary.

Negotiating a timeline for bringing home U.S. troops with responsible parties in the Iraqi government would also boost the Iraqi government's legitimacy and claim to self-rule, and force the Iraqi government to take responsibility for itself and its citizens. Negotiating a withdrawal time line and strategy with the Iraqi government could, more than possibly anything else, improve the standing of the Iraqi government in the eyes of its own people, a significant achievement in a region in which the standing of rulers and governments is generally low.

As the Iraqi National Security Advisor, Mowaffak al-Rabaie wrote in the Washington Post on June 20, 2006, the removal of U.S. troops from Iraq, ''will help the Iraqis who now see foreign troops as occupiers rather than the liberators they were meant to be. It will remove psychological barriers and the reason that many Iraqis joined the so-called resistance in the first place.'' He went on to write, ''Moreover, the removal of foreign troops will legitimize Iraq's government in the eyes of its people . . . the drawdown of foreign troops will strengthen our fledgling government to last the full four years it is supposed to.''

Being confronted with the reality of a U.S. withdrawal should force the Iraqi factions to reach the political compromises necessary to move their country forward. If not, there is no reason to prolong the U.S. involvement in Iraq if we want a stable country more than the Iraqi people and their elected leaders do. The U.S. cannot force Sunnis, Shias, and Kurds to make peace or to act for the common good. They have been in conflict for 1,400 years. Nor should the U.S. military be forced to remain in Iraq essentially as an army for one side of a civil war. Supporters of escalating the war may pretend that they're doing it for the Iraqis, but large majorities of both Sunnis and Shias approve of attacks against U.S. troops and want us to bring them home.

The President believes that the U.S. needs to escalate the war in Iraq by sending more than 20,000 additional troops to Iraq. I think that is a mistake. It will not bring stability to Iraq, and I oppose it. That is why I will vote for the resolution on the floor this week.

The administration blunders in Iraq are well-known. They went in with too few troops against the advice of military leaders like General Shinseki. They disbanded the Iraqi army. They failed to understand the ethnic tensions and power bases in Iraq. They purged the Iraqi government of the bureaucratic experience necessary to have a functioning government, among others.

I do not believe there is any level of U.S. troops that could stabilize Iraq at this point and resolve the underlying ages old sectarian conflicts. The time when more troops might have made a lasting difference has come and gone. There might be a small, temporary reduction in the chaos in Iraq, but the escalation will not solve the deep and underlying political conflicts that are preventing a long-term resolution to the violence.

The administration already increased the number of U.S. troops in Baghdad last summer in Operation Together Forward and has increased the number of troops throughout Iraq at other times as well, yet the violence against our troops and Iraqi security forces and civilians continues to increase. Short-term improvements in security in the wake of U.S. troop increases have always given way to the long-term trend of increased violence and a growing civil war.

Based on historical analysis, counterinsurgency experts, including General Petraeus, who is now the top U.S. General in Iraq but also recently rewrote the Army's counterinsurgency manual, estimate it takes around 20 U.S. troops per 1,000 inhabitants to successfully fight a counterinsurgency. To achieve that ratio in Baghdad alone would require 120,000 troops. Even with the increase proposed by the President, the U.S. would only have a third of that at best. For all of Iraq, it would require 500,000 troops. General Shinseki's original estimate that it would take several hundred thousands troops to invade and stabilize Iraq was based on this counterinsurgency literature. After the escalation we'll only have around 160,000.

The bottom line is that a proposal to increase U.S. troop levels in Baghdad or Iraq more generally by more than 20,000 is not a serious effort to restore stability to Iraq. As General John Abizaid, then the head of all U.S. forces in the Middle East, testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on November 15, 2006, ''I met with every divisional commander, General Casey, the corps commander, General Dempsey, we all talked together. And I said, in your professional opinion, if we were to bring in more American Troops now, does it add considerably to our ability to achieve success in Iraq? And they all said no. And the reason is because we want the Iraqis to do more. It is easy for the Iraqis to rely upon us to do this work. I believe that more American forces prevent the Iraqis from doing more, from taking more responsibility for their own future.'' Essentially, the President is proposing to put more lives at risk with virtually no chance of changing the dynamic in Iraq.

A better strategy for Iraq is to announce a timeline negotiated with the Iraqi government for bringing our troops home over the next 6 months to a year. The administration has always set timelines for political developments in Iraq—for elections, for the drafting of the constitution etc. The administration argued such timelines were necessary to focus the energy of Iraq's leaders and to force compromises. We need to do the same on the military side.

In the interim, I have also proposed that U.S. troops be removed from front line combat positions in Iraqi cities and towns, turning over daily security patrols, interactions with citizens, and any offensive security actions to the Iraqis themselves.

The training and equipping of Iraqi security forces should be accelerated and the sectarian balance must be improved.

The U.S. must renounce any U.S. interest in constructing permanent U.S. military bases in Iraq.

It is also important to accelerate reconstruction spending and grant the bulk of reconstruction contracts to local companies employing Iraqis rather than multinational corporations, whom have proven inefficient, inflexible, sometimes fraudulent and have even imported workers rather than employing Iraqis.

The U.S. embassy in Baghdad should also be reduced to normal size and authority rather than establishing one of the largest embassies in the world.

And, the U.S. must engage in robust diplomacy with all factions in Iraq, except the foreign terrorists and domestic al Qaeda elements, and work with Iraq's neighbors in an effort to bring about political reconciliation among Sunnis, Shias, and Kurds.

Our troops have done all that has been asked of them in Iraq. Saddam Hussein is dead. His allies are on the run or in prison. The threat from WMDs in Iraq is nonexistent. Arguably, the war that Congress authorized has been won. Our troops should come home. Congress did not authorize U.S. troops to referee a civil war in Iraq.

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Speaker, I would like to submit for the RECORD an Editorial from the Wall Street Journal regarding the Iraq Resolution, H. Con. Res. 63.

[From the Wall Street Journal, Feb. 15, 2007]

AWAITING THE DISHONOR ROLL

Congress has rarely been distinguished by its moral courage. But even grading on a curve, we can only describe this week's House debate on a vote of no-confidence in the mission in Iraq as one of the most shameful moments in the institution's history.

On present course, the Members will vote on Friday to approve a resolution that does nothing to remove American troops from harm's way in Iraq but that will do substantial damage to their morale and that of their Iraqi allies while emboldening the enemy. The only real question is how many Republicans will also participate in this disgrace in the mistaken belief that their votes will put some distance between themselves and the war most of them voted to authorize in 2002.

The motion at issue is plainly dishonest, in that exquisitely Congressional way of trying to have it both ways. (We reprint the text nearby.) The resolution purports to ''support'' the troops even as it disapproves of their mission. It praises their ''bravery,'' while opposing the additional forces that both President Bush and General David Petreaus, the new commanding general in Iraq, say are vital to accomplishing that mission. And it claims to want to ''protect'' the troops even as its practical impact will be to encourage Iraqi insurgents to believe that every roadside bomb brings them closer to their goal.

As for how ''the troops'' themselves feel, we refer readers to Richard Engel's recent story on NBC News quoting Specialist Tyler Johnson in Iraq: ''People are dying here. You know what I'm saying. . . You may [say] 'oh we support the troops.' So you're not supporting what they do. What they's [sic] here

to sweat for, what we bleed for and we die for.'' Added another soldier: ''If they don't think we're doing a good job, everything we've done here is all in vain.'' In other words, the troops themselves realize that the first part of the resolution is empty posturing, while the second is deeply immoral.

All the more so because if Congress feels so strongly about the troops, it arguably has the power to start removing them from harm's way by voting to cut off the funds they need to operate in Iraq. But that would make Congress responsible for what followed—whether those consequences are Americans killed in retreat, or ethnic cleansing in Baghdad, or the toppling of the elected Maliki government by radical Shiite or military forces. The one result Congress fears above all is being accountable.

We aren't prone to quoting the young John Kerry, but this week's vote reminds us of the comment the antiwar veteran told another cut-and-run Congress in the early 1970s: ''How do you ask a man to be the last man to die for a mistake?'' The difference this time is that Speaker Nancy Pelosi and John Murtha expect men and women to keep dying for something they say is a mistake but also don't have the poiitical courage to help end.

Instead, they'll pass this ''non-binding resolution,'' to be followed soon by attempts at micromanagement that would make the war all but impossible to prosecute—and once again without taking responsibility. Mr. Murtha is already broadcasting his strategy, which the new Politico Web site described yesterday as ''a slow-bleed strategy designed to gradually limit the administration's options.''

In concert with antiwar groups, the story reported, Mr. Murtha's ''goal is crafted to circumvent the biggest political vulnerability of the antiwar movement—the accusation that it is willing to abandon troops in the field.'' So instead of cutting off funds, Mr. Murtha will ''slow-bleed'' the troops with ''readiness'' restrictions or limits on National Guard forces that will make them all but impossible to deploy. These will be attached to appropriations bills that will also purport to ''support the troops.''

''There's a D-Day coming in here, and it's going to start with the supplemental and finish with the '08 [defense] budget,'' Congressman Neil Abercrombie (D., Hawaii) told the Web site. He must mean D-Day as in Dunkirk.

All of this is something that House Republicans should keep in mind as they consider whether to follow this retreat. The GOP leadership has been stalwart, even eloquent, this week in opposing the resolution. But some Republicans figure they can use this vote to distance themselves from Mr. Bush and the war while not doing any real harm. They should understand that the Democratic willingness to follow the Murtha ''slow-bleed'' strategy will depend in part on how many Republicans follow them in this vote. The Democrats are themselves divided on how to proceed, and they want a big GOP vote to give them political cover. However ''non-binding,'' this is a vote that Republican partisans will long remember.

History is likely to remember the roll as well. A newly confirmed commander is about to lead 20,000 American soldiers on a dangerous and difficult mission to secure Baghdad, risking their lives for their country. And the message their elected Representatives will send them off to battle with is a vote declaring their inevitable defeat.

Mr. TIAHRT. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the brave men and women in our military. Thank you, and thank you to the families who have made so many sacrifices.

Today we are taking the first step towards defeat. No one likes where we are today, but our goal should be success, not to accept the defeat the Democrats are leading us towards.

I am very disappointed that the new Democrat leadership will not allow a true debate on what should be our focus today: what can we do to help achieve success in Iraq, and what metrics should we use to measure that success. That is the debate we should be having on the floor this week. Our military, our children, our fellow citizens, and the people of Iraq deserve nothing less.

Instead, this Democrat leadership is telling the brave men and women who serve in our military that their efforts have not been good enough and that they do not think they deserve the tools to fight this war.

We've been safe in the United States since September 11, 2001. But that is only because the Bush Administration and Congress and our brave troops took the fight to the terrorists. But it is by no means over. The United States remains a Nation at war. It's hard for Americans who do not have loved ones in the military to remember that sometimes.

We are not safe simply because we have not seen an attack on U.S. soil since September 11, 2001. We are safer today because of the professionals of the worldwide network of intelligence, military and law enforcement officials who continue to pressure and strike al-Qaeda and its followers.

September 11, 2001 showed us the danger of Islamic terrorism. It also taught us that we can't wait for them to come to us. We have to go to the root cause of terrorism and sever the root.

We are blessed with an outstanding military that has taken the battle to the enemy. It is very important that we take the fight to them in places where fortunately every American carries a gun—rather than on the streets of New York, Washington or Wichita, KS. And make no mistake, Iraq is where the terrorists have to come to fight.

Our most important duty as Members of Congress is to protect our Nation from ever experiencing the lesson of 9/11 again. For that reason, we must continue to focus on improving our national security, our homeland security and our intelligence systems. Today's resolution does the opposite and sends the exact message the enemy wants to hear.

Our enemy is not going away. The war in Iraq is a tough one, as is the overall Global War on Terror, GWOT. That is what the terrorist have promised in their letter, written by Ayman al-Zawahiri.

Just because it is tough does not mean that it is not worthwhile. The Democrat approach is dangerous and naive. We cannot put our heads back in the sands. Our enemies are ready to strike. Leaving Iraq will not mean the end to our troubles or to our enemy's plans.

Ayman al-Zawahiri, Osama bin Laden's chief deputy, has stated again and again that Iraq is the centerpiece of Al Qaeda's strategy to establish dominance in the Middle East and beyond. A July 9, 2005 letter from al-Zawahiri listed al Qaeda's objectives in Iraq. Let me remind my colleagues on the other side of the aisle what those objectives are:

1. Expel Americans from Iraq.
2. Establish an al Qaeda ''emirate'' in Iraq.
3. Extend a jihad from Iraq to secular states neighboring Iraq.
4. Clash with Israel.

Senator FEINGOLD and many other Democrats can't wait to pull out of Iraq and have introduced legislation to that effect. While I would like nothing more than to see our men and women home safely, I know that pulling out now would be a disaster for U.S. security and would only mean that those men and women would have to go back to the Middle East to fight a stronger, recharged enemy. Because the enemy knows that all he has to do is make life difficult for a couple of years and the United States will back down in retreat.

In this resolution, where is the Democrat plan for success, where is their plan to fight terrorism? What is the Democrat plan to stop al Qaeda from turning Iraq into a base of operations for worldwide terrorism if we leave? What is the plan to deal with Iran, who has already targeted the Shia majority, when they fund allies against Israel, America, you and me? These are the questions the American people need answers to.

Unfortunately, we have seen how the Democrats respond to terrorism, to those whose stated goal is to kill Americans and destroy our Nation. Their response is to ignore the problem and hope it goes away. September 11, 2001 was not the first time this enemy attacked us—there were numerous attacks preceding that horrible day—the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993, the 1998 bombing of our embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, and the bombing of the USS *Cole* in 2000. Our enemies are looking for signs that we will resume that attitude of ignorance. Today my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are telling our enemies that the United States does not have the wherewithal to fight the Global War on Terror. In fact, today's resolution will carry no weight—except with our enemies.

Let me put this war in perspective. On June 6th, 1944, General Dwight David Eisenhower sent 156,000 allied troops ashore in Normandy in the D-Day invasion. That is about 7,000 more troops than we will have in Iraq after the surge.

Now, Eisenhower was coming off of three pretty rough years in North Africa. The campaign there displayed the serious shortcomings in the Allies' ability to diplomatically engage the Vichy French, establish and maintain lines of communication and hold terrain in key locations. The Allied Forces were forced to retreat from engagements with the Germans in battles like the Kasserine Pass.

What if Congress, after assessing the difficulties in the North Africa Campaign, called on President Roosevelt to tie Eisenhower's hands? What if they asked Ike to pare back the D-Day landing party because it was just too risky?

We didn't have that problem because in 1944 Congress, like President Roosevelt, knew that we were fighting to secure the future of the world. After reading this resolution, I am convinced that the Democrats have yet to grasp the importance of today's struggle.

What will happen if we pull out now? What will the Middle East look like?

Iraq will become utter chaos, violence will only increase and terrorists will have an unchallenged base of operations. It is likely that Shia extremists would dominate Iraq. Iran is eager for this to happen so that it can control Iraq. This is extremely worrisome. President Bush was correct when he labeled Iran one of the axes of evil. We know that Iran is gaining

the capabilities to become a nuclear power. Iran is also collaborating with many radical Islamist groups, including Hezbollah and Hamas. With Iraq also under its thumb if the U.S. pulls out, this could cause a regional war that threatens Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Israel. It is hard to see how the U.S. could avoid being drawn into such a conflict. This would put our troops in an even graver situation than they are today, with less hope for success. It also will reverberate through our economy at home, with skyrocketing oil prices.

The Democrats need to understand the reverberations of defeat.

House Republicans take our role in Iraq seriously, and we want to see success. Our leadership has called on the Speaker to appoint a bipartisan select oversight committee to monitor and implement the effectiveness of the President's new strategy. Instead of taking this responsible suggestion, what is their response? Spending a week on a do-nothing resolution to embarrass the President and encourage our enemies. Even in the majority, they are still more comfortable with being the party of ''no'' rather than the party that governs.

Republicans on the other hand have a plan, because we know that success in Iraq means a safer, more secure America. We have proposed strategic benchmarks to measure our effectiveness. We are prepared to work with the Democrats to construct a plan for success in Iraq. The Democrat leadership will not allow us to present our plan this week because they do not wish to see success in Iraq, they want to pull out despite its effects on Iraq and the United States. We need to support our military, our new Secretary of Defense, and our Commander-in-Chief as they work to achieve success in Iraq and the Global War on Terror.

I leave you with a question a constituent asked me recently: If the Democrats get their wish and we pull out of Iraq without attempting to achieve victory, what happens the next day? Unfortunately, we know that answer because our enemies have made it clear: they bring the fight to the United States.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Madam Speaker, I thank you for the time to debate the very important issue of the war in Iraq. The resolution we are debating today is technically non-binding—however, we must not discount the influence of the words of this body. I am here today to reiterate to the American people that the war in Iraq, as a part of the larger Global War on Terror, is absolutely vital to the security of our great nation as well as the rest of the free world.

It is true, we were led into this war with poor intelligence; yet intelligence that every major fact-finding and data-gathering agency in the world believed to be true. Nevertheless, spreading freedom to the Muslim world is our best long-term strategy in the Global War on Terror.

Four years after the invasion of Iraq, our brave military men and women are still actively engaged in combat, and their actions have not gone without great achievement—the Iraqi people participated in their first true democratic election, they have established a representative government, elected a parliament and written an Iraqi constitution. These great accomplishments should not be brushed off as mere side notes, because to do so would diminish the achievements of the Iraqi people and the tremendous courage of our soldiers; some of whom have bravely given their lives for the chance an Iraqi citizen would be able to vote and live free from fear.

The establishment of a democracy in the Middle East is fundamental to winning the Global War on Terror. The United States is in our 231st year of a democratic government, and as I am sure many of my colleagues will agree—we haven't exactly perfected it yet. The Iraqi people are barely in their second year of a democratic government. The Iraqi government needs time to grow their citizens' confidence in the institution of democracy and become a stabilizing force in the region. We must help them achieve this.

We are fighting an enemy who does not believe in democracy, freedom, or the inherent value of human life. These radical Islamic terrorists see a democratic Iraqi government as a direct threat to the mayhem and havoc they seek to impose on the free world. To retreat from Iraq—to wave a white flag in submission to these terrorists, would only worsen the instability we now see in the region, and embolden terrorists around the world.

When the United Sates ridded Iraq of Saddam Hussein, we committed ourselves to assisting the new Iraqi government become self-sustainable. The President has consulted his commanders in Iraq, who have heard from the soldiers on the ground. The result of these hours of consultation has led the President to ask for an increase in troops so we may finish the job we set out to do. I ask my colleagues to trust the military commanders, and allow our courageous military do their job. I ask my colleagues to not support this resolution.

Mr. SIMPSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today not because I want to take part in this debate, but because I am ashamed that this Congress is engaging in it at all.

I've heard a lot of posturing so far this week. I've heard a lot of hyperbole and a lot of revisionist history. I've also heard some things that just don't mesh with reality. I don't think that everything my colleagues say is completely honest. So for a moment, let's be honest—because that is the least we owe to our constituents and to the men and women who are fighting this war.

I am willing to admit that if Congress knew in 2002 what it knows today it might not have voted to authorize the war. Knowing that Saddam Hussein apparently did not have weapons of mass destruction, Congress might have preferred to contain him, perhaps bomb him, strengthen international sanctions, and work with our allies in the region to undermine his regime.

But we can't go back to 2002 and redo that vote. We have to deal with the situation that is currently before us. And what is before us right now is a Congressional resolution that undermines our troops while they are in the middle of fighting a war that Congress sent them to fight. I do not understand why my colleagues on the other side of the aisle don't see that.

For just a moment, I want to ask my colleagues to put themselves in the positions of the thousands of soldiers on the ground in Iraq. What would you think if you learned that the very people who sent you to fight this war are now saying that they don't support what you are doing? On the ground in Iraq, there are two things that keep you going: the thought of returning home to your family and the knowledge that you are doing something to protect your nation from terrorism. But if Congressional Democrats have their way today, they will take away from our soldiers the support of their Congress and of their country. What a terrible message to send to these brave soldiers.

For just a moment, put yourself in the shoes of the terrorists. What would you think when you heard the U.S. Congress is voting against the war? You would think you were winning. You would be encouraged by the news. You would think that everything Osama Bin Laden had said about Americans had been true all along. You would think that Americans cannot stand bloodshed and will cower from the fight. You would think that they don't have the stomach for a long-term battle and if the terrorists just hold on, the United States will eventually leave with its tails between its legs. What a terrible message to send at the exact moment that we are preparing to send more troops into battle.

At some point, my colleagues across the aisle have to let go of the fact that their newfound opposition to the War in Iraq is popular in their districts and act in the best interests for the future of our Nation. This resolution isn't a diversion, a side-show, or even a shot across the bow. It is a dangerous message to send.

I don't say any of this lightly and I don't say it for political reasons. I say it because I mean it. In 2006, I was the only Republican to vote against the rule when my party tried to embarrass Mr. MURTHA. Then, I thought that my party was playing games with the war and I refused to support that effort. Today, I think that the other party is playing games with the war and I refuse to have any part of this.

I would rather we consider a motion to pull all of our troops out of Iraq immediately than vote on this Democrat resolution that undermines our troops while at the same time puts them in harm's way. This resolution is the worst of all worlds.

My final thought today is that it is clear to many of us that this resolution is simply a Democratic attempt to embarrass President Bush. My friends across the aisle know they can not impeach him. They know they can not change the fact that many of them voted for the War in Iraq. And most of them recognize the dangers of voting to defund the war. So instead, they are trying to embarrass the President.

I say fine, embarrass the President. Send him a message that you are now in charge. Remind him that voters demanded change last November. Do whatever you need to do, but don't undermine our troops in the process. Leave them out of your plans for payback because they did nothing to attract your anger or frustration.

Madam Speaker, what we are doing today is wrong. We're better than this. We're smarter than this. We're above using the war, and our troops, for political gain. What the Democrats are doing with this resolution is not just intellectually dishonest, it is morally bankrupt.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Madam Speaker, five and a half years ago, our Nation was attacked by terrorists opposed to freedom and individual liberty. Our President vowed to keep Americans safe by taking the fight to the terrorists, and holding the regimes that support them accountable. We are currently engaged in that fight. Like any war this size, mistakes have been made, but we must continue to progress.

The consequences of failure in Iraq would be dire. Allowing al-Qaeda the opportunity to gain a safe hold would be dangerous to Americans. Leaving before the Iraqi government can defend itself would only lead to further destabilization, and open the door to outside influence from countries such as Iran, which has called for the downfall of our society and for the destruction of Israel, our ally in the Middle East.

With violence headlining the nation's nightly news, at times we forget that successes have been achieved. Through successful elections which achieved a 70 percent turnout, we know that the citizens of Iraq have rejected the brutal rule of Saddam Hussein, and strive for peace and prosperity. But violence supported by al-Qaeda, the remnants of Saddam Hussein's government, and armed militias, have created difficult conditions for diplomacy.

Our President, working with a wide range of involved professionals, has created a new strategy to ensure progress in Iraq. James Baker and Lee Hamilton, the leaders of the Iraq Study Group, have called for support of the President's plan. General Petraeus supports the President's plan. But Democrat leaders are bringing a non-binding resolution to the floor, denouncing the President's objectives.

This resolution, without any power of law or policy objective, is merely political gamesmanship, and it is dangerous to Americans and our troops in harm's way. We are in the midst of an ongoing military operation; our soldiers are engaging al-Qaeda and violent insurgents. We have set objectives, but Democrat leaders want us to vote on a resolution that sets us up for failure and attempts to retroactively impede a military operation that is currently underway. General Petraeus has stated this will only embolden the enemy, and I agree.

Many Democrats have stated this is only the first step toward cutting the funding for our troops in Iraq, and forcing a withdrawal before stability has been achieved. But the majority offers no plan to achieve stability. Without any other alternative, withdrawal can only lead to defeat.

Our troops should have every confidence their government will ensure they have the necessary supplies and funding to achieve their mission. Military leaders should be able to move forward with their directives without fear that Congress is working to tie their hands. Yet this objective has been the stated one of the majority: to precipitate a withdrawal by slowly cutting off funding to our soldiers. I believe this is the wrong approach to supporting our troops currently involved in the military operation.

This resolution does nothing to win the war, and by not allowing amendments or other measures to be considered, true debate is being restricted. It is my hope, for the safety of our troops and for the good of the Nation, that all members of the House may reject this political maneuver and truly stand behind those men and women called to duty by our Commander in Chief.

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Madam Speaker, due to my recovery from a medical procedure, I regret that I am unable to participate in the debate on the resolution that is before the House of Representatives today. The Iraq War Resolution offered by the Democratic majority is nothing more than a political exercise, and does nothing to support our troops or help solve the issues that we are facing in Iraq. The resolution offers no solutions or recommendations, but instead criticizes an action that is already underway. As ranking member of the Subcommittee on Military Readiness in the House Armed Services Committee, I am open to supporting legislation that actually presents solutions to stabilizing Iraq. Unfortunately, this resolution does not provide anything other than criticism, and I would have opposed this resolution if I had been in Washington, DC for the vote.

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this resolution.

Four years ago, President Bush plunged our Nation into a misguided, pre-emptive war with Iraq. I voted against authorizing it then—and I have come to the floor today to affirm my strong opposition to this irresponsible war.

Unfortunately, after 4 years of failed strategies by this administration, the President is now poised to confound his tragic blunder, and ignore the will of the American people, by attempting to increase our presence in Iraq. And that is why this resolution is so important. Because it sends a strong statement. A statement that the vast majority of the country supports. And that is: escalating our presence in Iraq will not lead to success in the region, and more blank checks will not make America more secure.

Madam Speaker, our brave men and women in the military have done all that is asked of them over the course of the last 4 years. They are heroes who represent the finest our country has to offer—and they should be treated accordingly. But, from day one, this administration has spent more time planning its attacks on those who offered legitimate criticisms of the war and its tactics, than it has on planning for a stable and peaceful reconstruction of the region. And the results have been devastating and unworthy of our brave men and women serving in harm's way.

Enough is enough. Troop surges have not worked in the past, and there is no evidence that the same failed policies will work today. In fact, former Secretary of State Colin Powell said in December, ''I am not persuaded that another surge of troops into Baghdad for the purposes of suppressing this communitarian violence, this civil war, will work.'' Yet, this administration continues to ignore the guidance of military experts, the Iraq Study Group, diplomats, decorated war heroes and former senior White House officials of both parties.

And rather than being open to debate and discussion with these experts, this Administration has routinely attacked their character and questioned their patriotism. Many of these individuals have bled on the battlefield. But to this administration, and its swift boat strategists, they are treated merely as political pawns. It is truly shameful.

Because of this Administration's hubris, we have seen troops without proper equipment, without basic body armor, without vehicles equipped to deal with roadside bombs and without the appropriate veteran's services when they return home.

Because of their ignorance, we have seen giant banners saying, Mission Accomplished, when today Iraq has spiraled into a bloody, religious civil war.

Because of their arrogance, we were told that we were going to be treated as liberators, not as occupiers.

And because of their incompetence, we were told that future oil revenues would more than cover the cost of the reconstruction.

They could not have been more wrong. The cost of the war continues to grow at an outrageous rate. To date, we have spent approximately $379 billion on this war, with estimates from some experts saying that the total long-term cost could exceed $1 trillion.

Think about that for a minute: $379 billion spent, more than $8 billion a month. That is enough to fully fund Head Start—100 times over. To give virtually every student in America a computer. Pay for prescription drug coverage for virtually every senior in our Nation. Offer summer jobs to every teen in our country. Put hundreds of thousands of additional police officers on the streets. Provide millions of scholarships to public universities for deserving students. And pay the salaries of millions of public school teachers.

But what do we have to show for that $379 billion—a country plagued with hardened religious sectarian violence.

Madam Speaker, it is time to stop this charade. It is time for the truth. It is time for the administration to really level with the American people.

Resurrecting and rehashing failed policies of the past is not the answer.

Real action is needed. Leadership is needed. Courage is needed. And that is why we are engaged in this debate—to stand up to the deception and the dishonesty.

We are here today to begin to set our strategy back on the right course. To protect our soldiers. And to ensure that we can win the real war on terror.

Madam Speaker, we are here today as patriots because we love our country. We are here because we support our troops. And we are here because we want our troops to be able to come home to their families and loved ones.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, I urge a ''yes'' vote on this important resolution.

Mr. MARCHANT. Madam Speaker, I stand before you today, offering a candid reflection of the tasks before us. As someone entrusted to be a leader in this great nation, I find myself humbled by the decisions we make and the traditions of this institution. In times of hardship, America has often looked to the House of Representatives, the ''people's house,'' as a place for deliberation and decision. Many great leaders have preceded our place in this Chamber, and many more will undoubtedly follow. By design we find ourselves here again today, in the footprints of those who stood so firm against the winds of adversity. It was in this very room that President Franklin Roosevelt so famously addressed the Nation after the tragic events surrounding Pearl Harbor had unfolded; and Members of Congress were faced with the daunting effort of placing our nation in a second world war.

America was forged long ago as a beacon of democracy, shining bright onto the shores of the world. Ever since our bold proclamation to others that we would shelter ''your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breath free,'' we have called on this body to answer the question: How tired, how poor, how yearning must the oppressed be to warrant our assistance? And so we find ourselves here today, paused at an intersection on the road of democracy. Will we turn back and embolden those that oppress the free and murder

the innocent? After careful consideration, I must vote against this resolution and choose instead to follow the path blazed by those who pledged our commitment to freedom.

On September 11, we were forced to witness the consequences of a decade of inaction against a determined enemy. Osama bin Laden and other radical Islamists, have declared war on every American, for no other reason than we practice freedom and democracy. Beginning in the 1970s, radical Islamists began targeting America with a steady campaign of terror. Although the images of that tragic September day remain seared in our minds, it forced us to awaken from our long period of denial and realize the true determination of our enemy. The war in Afghanistan and subsequent invasion of Iraq have discouraged any major terrorist attack from occurring on our soil in the last 5 years. Our enemy is patient, calculating, and determined. However, by supporting Iraq's efforts to become a free and Democratic society, we have forced the terrorists to focus their resources in the Middle East and away from American soil.

The only impact this resolution will have: is embolden our enemy and convince them of our weakness. The overall commanding officer in Iraq, General David Petraeus, recently agreed that a resolution such as this would only ''give the enemy some encouragement.'' Although I will continue to be an advocate of free speech, we must remain aware of our speech's impact. One can only imagine the result here at home if we formalize a resolution of no confidence in this body.

As a member of this body, I have made clear my support for the war in Iraq and our fighting men and women. I stand behind our military and appreciate the importance of our mission, but am also aware that some mistakes have been made along the way. War is unpredictable and we can do no better than by putting our armed forces in the capable hands of our military leaders. We owe it to the generations of Iraqi's murdered under the reign of Saddam, and our brave country men and women who have paid the ultimate sacrifice, to move forward with our mission.

The decision to commit our military to harm's way, is the toughest made of any leader. Some of my colleagues in Congress will argue that we cannot afford to vote in approval of the job our military men and women have done in Iraq. After looking at the facts, I say we can't afford not to. This non-binding resolution being offered by Democrats, is little more than a political sound bite. Although I have respect for many of my colleagues across the aisle, I urge them to consider the negative effect this resolution will have.

It should be clear to all that have listened to this debate, that this resolution is the first step by the majority party in their quest to cut off funding for our troops in Iraq. This is not fair to our soldiers on the ground and it dishonors the fallen and injured heroes that have so bravely served this Nation.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Madam Speaker, ''this is a dangerously wrong-headed strategy that will drive America deeper into an unwinnable swamp at a great cost. And if it's carried out it represents the most dangerous foreign policy blunder in this country since Vietnam.''

This assessment the Bush escalation policy was made by the Republican Senator from Nebraska, CHUCK HAGEL—a decorated Vietnam veteran who originally supported the invasion of Iraq.

And I concur with his observation. But his conclusion should come as no surprise. After all, this administration's Iraq policy has been a series of mistakes and bad choices from the beginning.

The Bush/Cheney team was obsessed with Iraq. In fact, according to former Secretary of the Treasury Paul O'Neill, their very first National Security Council meeting focused on Saddam and Iraq. Just days after President Bush was inaugurated. And a map, noting Iraqi oilfields and potential bidders for oil contracts, was presented for review. That was in February 2001. Months before 9/11.

We all remember that awful day in September 2001. When America was attacked by al Qaeda. Not Iraq. But by al Qaeda. Nevertheless, almost immediately, plans for attacking Iraq were initiated. With the Vice President as its most vigorous advocate. Secretary Powell is reported to have observed that the Vice President had ''the fever''—war fever.

Former counterterrorism czar Dick Clarke has described how, even as the smoke was still rising from 9/11, the administration began looking for ways to use it to attack Iraq.

The American people were told that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction. That he was a clear and imminent threat. That he was an ally of al Qaeda. That if we did not invade Iraq, there could be mushroom clouds over American cities.

None of that was true. To the contrary, there was plenty evidence that the secular Baathists of Saddam Hussein's regime and the religious fanatics of Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda were rivals. In fact bin Laden had publicly condemned Saddam as an apostate who had corrupted Islam and repressed Muslims. There was little evidence that Saddam's regime possessed nuclear or biological weapons, or—even if it did—that it would share such materials with an uncontrollable group of apocalyptic terrorists like al Qaeda.

But the administration did not listen to those who knew what they were talking about. Professionals like Greg Thielmann, the Director of the strategic, proliferation and military issues office in the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research. He told me personally that in his professional opinion, after years of studying the issue, Saddam did not have a nuclear weapons program.

Instead, the administration relied on the likes of Ahmed Chalabi. An embezzler who had been convicted in Jordan of bank fraud. Who is alleged to have provided Iran with information about U.S. troop movements. And who is presumably still under investigation by the FBI.

Chalabi provided so-called ''defectors'' from Iraq who—surprise, surprise—said exactly what the Administration wanted to hear. The most notorious was codenamed ''Curveball''—how appropriate—and was the source of the now-discredited claim about a mobile bioweapons program. The German intelligence agency warned that the man did not live in Iraq and described him as an ''out of control'' and mentally unstable alcoholic. It later turned out that he was the brother of one of Chalabi's top aides. But he was one of the primary sources for Secretary Powell's statement at the United Nations that convinced many to support the war.

Furthermore, in the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq, the administration told the American people that it would be easy. That we would be greeted as liberators. That Iraq would pay for its own reconstruction. And that peace and democracy would flourish.

None of that was true. The American people were sold a bill of goods. But those of us who raised doubts were ignored. Some even questioned our patriotism.

But the responsibility for this mess is not the President's alone. It is shared by the preceding two Congresses, which abdicated their constitutional responsibility to oversee and review the conduct of the war and the occupation. We will never know if serious oversight and insisting on answers over the past 4 years would have made a difference.

But we do know that thousands of Americans and Iraqis have died. Billions of American and Iraqi taxpayer dollars have been wasted. The Middle East is on the verge of a war that could devastate the region and the global economy. And terrorist groups are multiplying because of Iraq. Some confuse the war on Iraq with the war on terror. But that could not be further from reality.

The fact is that the war in Iraq has severely damaged our efforts to fight al Qaeda and terrorism. That's not just my judgment: that's the consensus judgment of U.S. intelligence agencies. In April 2006, they prepared a National Intelligence Estimate. It represents the consensus judgment of the entire U.S. intelligence community. Here's what it said:

> The Iraq conflict has become the ''cause celebre'' for jihadists, breeding a deep resentment of U.S. involvement in the Muslim world and cultivating supporters for the global jihadist movement.

Meanwhile, the war in Iraq has done nothing to stop al Qaeda and its affiliates from launching attacks around the world. I refer you to a Dear Colleague letter sent by two of our Republican colleagues which clearly describes that reality. It includes a list of attacks that plainly demonstrates that terrorism is global in nature. While we are stuck in the sands of Iraq, radical Islamists are launching major assaults everywhere. Because this Administration, as a result of its bungled misadventure in Iraq, has hurt our efforts against terrorism.

Remember, we were attacked on September 11, not by Iraq, but by al Qaeda. Which was based in Afghanistan. And we responded, with worldwide support, by going to war against al Qaeda and liberating Afghanistan from al Qaeda's allies, the Taliban. But then what happened? The administration took its eye off the ball. And invaded Iraq. It's as if we had responded to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor by invading Mexico. Even though we had not yet defeated al Qaeda, the administration pulled intelligence and Special Forces assets from Afghanistan in order to prepare for the invasion of Iraq. Now we are in danger of losing Afghanistan to al Qaeda and their Taliban allies.

Enough. As Senator HAGEL said, this is ''Alice in Wonderland . . . it is folly.'' And the American people know it. It's time to get back to fighting the terrorists. It's time to concentrate on victory in the war on terror.

Oppose the escalation. Support the resolution.

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise today to address the President's plan to deploy an additional 21,500 American troops in Iraq. I oppose this course of action and feel that contributing more troops to this war is not in the best interest of our country.

One only needs to look back on the timeline of events in Iraq to realize how much we have given that country. From the deposing of Saddam Hussein and his ruthless heirs, to the drafting of a constitution and free elections, the United States has fulfilled its role in liberating Iraq. However, the sacrifices our country has made must be met by an even stronger commitment by Iraq's leaders to face the challenges of a fledgling democracy and ensure the safety and freedom of its own people.

Our troops have served with tremendous bravery during this nearly 4 year endeavor. The resolution we are discussing today contains a pledge that Congress will "continue to support and protect" our courageous men and women who are serving or who have served in Iraq. This is a promise we must keep and I will work with like-minded colleagues to ensure that the members of the United States Armed Forces continue to have the resources they need while they are in harms way and after they return home.

However, I am in disagreement with the President on sending 21,500 more troops to Iraq because the time has passed for the leaders and citizens of Iraq to ascend and defend their country. The people of this country sent a message to the Congress a few months ago and my constituents have made it increasingly clear to me that they do not support the escalation of U.S. troop involvement amidst the seemingly endless sectarian strife inside Iraq.

Therefore, I rise in support of this resolution.

□ 1500

The SPEAKER. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 157, the concurrent resolution is considered read and the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the concurrent resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 246, nays 182, not voting 6, as follows:

[Roll No. 99]

YEAS—246

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Allen
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Baldwin
Barrow
Bean
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boyd (FL)
Boyda (KS)
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown, Corrine
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson
Castle
Castor
Chandler
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Cohen
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Cramer
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis, Lincoln
Davis, Tom
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Donnelly
Doyle
Duncan
Edwards
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emanuel
Engel
English (PA)
Eshoo
Etheridge
Farr
Fattah
Filner
Frank (MA)
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gonzalez
Gordon
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Herseth
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hodes
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kucinich
Lampson
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
LaTourette
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lynch
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Markey
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum (MN)
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Michaud
Millender-McDonald
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murtha
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Petri
Pomeroy
Price (NC)
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Reyes
Rodriguez
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sestak
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shuler
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stupak
Sutton
Tanner
Tauscher
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Towns
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Wexler
Wilson (OH)
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth

NAYS—182

Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Bachmann
Bachus
Baker
Barrett (SC)
Bartlett (MD)
Barton (TX)
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono
Boozman
Brady (TX)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Buyer
Calvert
Camp (MI)
Campbell (CA)
Cannon
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Chabot
Cole (OK)
Conaway
Crenshaw
Cubin
Culberson
Davis (KY)
Davis, David
Deal (GA)
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Doolittle
Drake
Dreier
Ehlers
Emerson
Everett
Fallin
Feeney
Ferguson
Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Goode
Goodlatte
Granger
Graves
Hall (TX)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Hobson
Hoekstra
Hulshof
Hunter
Issa
Jindal
Johnson, Sam
Jordan
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Lamborn
Latham
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
Marshall
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul (TX)
McCotter
McCrery
McHenry
McHugh
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Moran (KS)
Murphy, Tim
Musgrave
Myrick
Neugebauer
Nunes
Pearce
Pence
Peterson (PA)
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Porter
Price (GA)
Pryce (OH)
Putnam
Radanovich
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reynolds
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Sali
Saxton
Schmidt
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shays
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Souder
Stearns
Sullivan
Tancredo
Taylor
Terry
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Turner
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Wamp
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—6

Baird
Boustany
Davis, Jo Ann
Hastert
LoBiondo
Nadler

□ 1522

So the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated against:

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 99, H. Con. Res. 63, I was unable to vote due to medical reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay."

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed bills and a concurrent resolution of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 188. An act to revise the short title of the Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006.

S. 487. An act to amend the National Organ Transplant Act to clarify that kidney paired donations shall not be considered to involve the transfer of a human organ for valuable consideration.

S. Con. Res. 12. Concurrent resolution supporting the goals and ideals of a National Medal of Honor Day to mark the significance and importance of the Medal of Honor and to celebrate and honor the recipients of the Medal of Honor on the anniversary of the first award of that medal in 1863.

PROVIDING FOR AN ADJOURNMENT OR RECESS OF THE TWO HOUSES

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I offer a privileged concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 67) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the concurrent resolution, as follows:

H. CON. RES. 67

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That when the House adjourns on the legislative day of Friday, February 16, 2007, or Saturday, February 17, 2007, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand adjourned until 2 p.m. on Tuesday, February 27, 2007, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs