Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I will have an opportunity to talk about the war resolution, but this morning I would like to just talk for a second about energy independence.

Several weeks ago we heard the President announce part of his agenda for making America more energy independent. But the real question is, how do we get there? The President laid out a plan to place new draconian fuel-efficiency standards on our domestic automakers, which I believe is the wrong approach to energy independence.

It is the wrong approach because it would force our domestic automakers to invest in old technology and to stifle very exciting new technologies. Our domestic auto industry is nearing innovative breakthroughs, such as the usage of alternative fuels, new battery technology, and advanced hybrid vehicles.

I believe it is in our national interest to provide Federal support to advance the auto technologies of the future to help achieve energy savings. Both General Motors and Ford recently unveiled advanced plug-in hybrids that use a lithium ion battery. Helping that technology become commercially viable will advance our efforts to conserve energy by light years and to create great new jobs here in America.

If my colleagues want true energy independence and a thriving domestic auto industry, we must focus on the technology of the future.

IRAQ RESOLUTION

(Ms. CASTOR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, over the last 2 days Republicans who support the President's troop escalation plan have had two main message points. The first is that the resolution opposing the President's plan is nonbinding and meaningless, and the second is that the resolution will be the ''end of civilization,'' to borrow a term from a columnist. They cannot have it both ways.

What we are doing over these 3 days of debate is having a real discussion about changing the course of the war in Iraq. For those who support the Bush-Cheney escalation, this debate serves as a prime opportunity to explain why they think this escalation will work when four other surges have not worked.

It is a shame that some have ignored the merits of the resolution and focused on political calculation. In fact, several Republicans sent out a letter saying this debate should not even be about the Iraq war today. If we let Democrats force us into a debate on the surge or the current situation in Iraq, we lose.

Far from it, Mr. Speaker. No one will lose by having a debate. In fact, our great democracy benefits and the American people win by knowing that we are charting a new direction.

IRAQ RESOLUTION

(Ms. CLARKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. CLARKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because I am very supportive of our troops around the globe and in particular those who are in harm's way in Iraq. I wholeheartedly support H. Con. Res. 63.

Mr. Speaker, in the President's January 29, 2002, State of the Union address, in regards to protecting America, responding to terrorist threats and capturing Osama bin Laden, he said, this is a regime that agreed to international inspections, then kicked out our inspectors. This is a regime that has something to hide from the civilized world.

States like these and their terrorist allies constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred.

Secretary Rice, after being named Secretary to succeed Colin Powell, warned 6 months before the invasion in Iraq that Saddam Hussein could deploy a nuclear weapon, saying that the administration did not want a smoking gun. We want to know as New Yorkers, when will we find Osama bin Laden

IRAQ RESOLUTION

(Mr. MEEKS of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, as the November election clearly showed, Iraq is the number one issue weighing on Americans' minds. A vast majority of people across the Nation strongly disagree with the President's plan to send nearly 21,500 additional troops into Iraq, and a bipartisan majority in this Congress has also voiced its opposition to this measure.

This week here in the people's House, we will have an opportunity to express our opinions on the troop escalation, and then we will have to vote whether or not we support the President's plan. The American people want a debate. And while there is one going on in this House, the Senate Republican leadership continues to block debate in the Senate.

One has to wonder what Senate Republican leaders are so worried about. After all, Republican Senators, like JOHN WARNER and CHUCK HAGEL, joined with Democrats to propose their own resolution opposing the troop escalation.

Are Senate Republican leaders really willing to stifle the voices of their own Republican colleagues so that they can continue to protect the Bush administration? It is time for real debate. It is time for a new direction on this war.

IRAQ RESOLUTION

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, the debate taking place here in the House this week is long overdue. We are approaching our fifth year of this war. This is the first time Congress is debating the strategy President Bush wants to implement in Iraq. Congress can no longer stand on the sidelines, and the President has to know that to escalate the war in Iraq is not acceptable.

The President hopes this troop escalation plan will help secure Baghdad and reduce the sectarian violence that is ripping the country apart. But there is no evidence to support those hopes. In fact, on four different occasions, the President increased troop levels in Iraq, and every time these plans failed to calm the violence in Iraq.

Additional troops are not going to make a difference because there simply is not a military solution to the war in Iraq. The devastating sectarian violence is going to continue. But our troops should no longer be asked to serve as referees in a battle between religious sects that have been fighting for centuries.

IRAQ WAR RESOLUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HOLDEN). 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 Wednesday, February 14, 2007, time for debate on the concurrent resolution on that day had expired.

Pursuant to the resolution, it is now in order for a further period of debate on the concurrent resolution.

The gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MCCOTTER) each will control 6 hours.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished majority whip, the Honorable JAMES CLYBURN of South Carolina.

Mr. CLYBURN. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, the debate we join today is essentially over the matter of sending 20,000 more American troops into Iraq. Over the past 2 days, some deeply felt sentiments have been expressed in this Hall by some patriotic and honorable Americans from all walks of life and on both sides of the aisle.

□ 1030

And I respect and appreciate the intensity of those feelings.

If this were the only issue, if the matter were only a matter of troop strength and numbers, then the issue would lend itself to military and strategic solutions and we would not be having this debate.

That is not the real issue, however. That is not the reason that every Member of this Congress is being granted the opportunity to speak on this issue. No, my fellow Members of Congress, the real issue we are addressing today is not that simple. The real issue goes to the very heart of our American democracy.

Last November the American people voted for a change in leadership. They did so overwhelmingly because they want a new direction in Iraq. The American people also voted for a new Congress, because they had lost faith in the old one. As a Congress, we had lost our footing, and as a result, our Nation lost its way on the international stage.

I believe that last November's call for a new direction in Iraq is also rooted in our lost faith in those who are leading that nation.

We were stung when Iraqi Prime Minister al-Maliki seemed to offer amnesty to Iraqi insurgents that killed Americans.

We have been robbed by the disappearance of billions of dollars sent to Iraq in good faith to help build the country.

We have been deceived by the promise of trained Iraqi police forces who should be prepared to provide law and order for their country, but instead ally themselves with insurgents.

I traveled with some of you to Iraq last Memorial Day, and enjoyed what I thought was one of the best meetings of the trip with the Iraqi Speaker of the Council of Representatives. The optimism I felt following that meeting was destroyed when, just days after our return home, I heard the Iraqi Speaker denigrating American efforts in his country.

We in the new leadership of Congress do not stand here as defeatists and not as opponents of this Nation's best interest. Only fools could reach that kind of conclusion from this discussion. We stand here today to say there is a victory to be achieved, but it is not a military conquest.

The victory we seek is earned through the restoration of America's role as peacemaker, not warmonger. It begins with the restoration of this Congress, as the deliberative arbiter and representative of the best interest of the American people. It begins with the understanding and acceptance of this Congress as a full partner in the future of this activity.

Many of us have seen firsthand and witnessed firsthand the realities of our presence in Iraq. Many of us have informed ourselves as fully as possible on the complexity of the problems we face. Many of us have agonized over the dangers and hazards which lie ahead, no matter which direction we take. We do not take these steps lightly.

Now we stand ready to create new paths to new victories. We stand ready to initiate the kind of victories, which will restore America's respect around the world and self-confidence here at home.

We cannot achieve this by military might, but by diplomacy. The need for a stable Iraq is not just an American interest, it is a regional and global concern.

Iraq's neighbors must be brought to the table. American troops must disengage from the Red Zone and redeploy to the outskirts of Iraq where they can remain at the ready and not serve as targets for insurgents.

The best way for the Iraqi Government to gain the trust of the American people is for them to step up and take control of their country's security.

We say today that the victories we seek are real victories, permanent victories, victories of a Nation which still believes that the voice of the people is our final and best judgment.

With this debate, we are taking steps to regain our footing as a Congress and chart a new way forward on the international stage.

I am hopeful this debate will not only be heard, but will be accepted as the moment at which America turned its face toward a triumph of enormous proportions, a triumph for peace and a triumph for democracy everywhere

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

Mr. Speaker, he was conscientious, committed to peace and momentarily praised. His laurels burned in the bombings. His valorous and vain efforts had but hastened upon his people.

Yet, in eulogizing this ''English worthy,'' Sir Winston Churchill, an ardent opponent of the deceased's policy of appeasement, unexpectedly struck a conciliatory chord toward the late Neville Chamberlain:

''It is not given to human beings, happily for them, for otherwise life would be intolerable, to foresee or to predict to any large extent the unfolding course of events. In one phase, men seem to have been right, in another they seem to have been wrong. Then again, a few years later when the perspective of time is lengthened, all stands in a different setting. There is a new proportion. There is another scale of values. History, with its flickering lamp, stumbles along the trail of the past, trying to reconstruct its scenes, to revive its echoes, and kindle with pale gleams the passion of former days. What is the worth of all this? The only guide to a man is his conscience; the only shield to his memory is the rectitude and sincerity of his actions. It is very imprudent to walk through life without this shield, because we are so often mocked by the failure of our hopes and the upsetting our calculations; but with this shield, however the fates may play, we march always in the ranks of honor.''

Mr. Speaker, while not serving in this Chamber during the debates on the resolution authorizing the President of the United States to use martial force to remove Iraq's Baathist regime for numerous just causes, including its refusal to honor its Gulf War cease-fire and United Nations' resolutions, during my time as a temporary custodian of my constituents' office, I have striven to ensure our Nation's victory in the battles for Iraq, Afghanistan, and in the overarching war on terror. In doing so for 3 years, I have four times traveled to Iraq and once to Afghanistan to meet with our troops; visited wounded citizen soldiers, eulogized our fallen, and consoled their grieving families. As a witness to their courage, sacrifice and suffering, I have been morally compelled to support every appropriation for our military and civilian personnel in harm's way, oppose every policy injurious to our country's common cause of victory; advance my own ideas on how to secure our victory, including the introduction of bipartisan, though ultimately unaccepted, legislation to establish concerted congressional oversight over the course of this conflict; and refused to condone a resolution by my Republican peers which failed to meet its duty; and, immediately afterwards, introduced a resolution of my own in order to fulfill my duty to our soldiers, my constituents, and our country.

As a staunch supporter of our Nation's mission in Iraq, Afghanistan, and throughout the world, I did so in the belief that it is morally imperative for every sovereign American citizen and their congressional servants to ensure our valiant troops victoriously come home to their loved ones' arms. Were I to do otherwise and lapse in my moral duty, I would not only be violating our troops and my constituents' trust, I would be violating the dictates of my conscience.

It is equally true, of course, how within this House other Members' dictates of conscience have led them to a decidedly different, though equally constant course of action. To these Members and their fellow citizens who have done so to date, I share the sentiments Sir Winston held for Neville Chamberlain: You are ''An American Worthy,'' who ''however the fates may play, will ''march always in the ranks of honor.'' Yet, because the resolution thrust before us is a craven exposition of political expediency in a time of national crisis, today many may stray from the ranks of honor.

This resolution is ''nonbinding,'' which means the resolution has no force of law to compel future legislative acts in compliance with its dictates. In sum, then, this resolution legally changes nothing. Americans' money will still unabatedly facilitate our troops' continued deployment into harm's way, despite the United States Congress collectively condemning the President's announced troop reinforcement plan. This impotent resolution is injurious in the eyes of its opponents because it will undermine the morale

of our troops, their families, and our fellow citizens even as it heartens and emboldens our enemies; and this impotent resolution is injurious because it will not stop what many of its supporters purport will be a loss of life in a lost cause. By neither stopping the war nor speeding our victory and by calculatedly doing nothing in this time of national crisis, this resolution is immoral.

This immorality is manifest in how the resolution guilefully attempts to insinuate the United States Congress can simultaneously support our troops and oppose their mission. During a time of war, if an act is not i our national interest, such as the President's plan is deemed to be in this resolution, the act is injurious to the national interest. At best, the act will expend resources, most tragically claim lives without furthering the cause of victory. Better than anyone, our troops understand this. Therefore, this Congress does not support our troops when it proclaims they are risking their lives in a doomed mission injurious to America.

Yet, if Congress persists in this insanity, the Members must meet their responsibility to enumerate the reasons they disapprove of the President's plan and, in point of fact, the mission upon which our troops have already embarked. But this resolution does not provide any rationale for its conclusion. Thus, rather than deserving our collective concurrence, this resolution deserves our universal condemnation.

To this, some supporters will object and allege two defenses for this resolution's fatal omission. Do not these supporters' floor remarks provide the rationales sufficient to sustain this resolution? No. If floor remarks alone are sufficient to sustain the resolution's conclusions, then floor remarks alone would be sufficient to derogate the President's plan and, ergo, vitiate any necessity for a written resolution. Conversely, if it is imperative for the plan's detractors to express their opposition in a written resolution, it is also imperative to express their reasons in writing. Alas, such logic pales before some Members' impulsive muse of the moment.

Let us, then, move to some of the resolution's supporters' second, far more distressing defense: ''A vote of disapproval on the President's plan will set the stage for additional Iraq legislation which will be coming to the House floor.'' As no one who participated in the crafting of this covert legislative agenda has deigned to inform the American people as to its aims, one wonders if it will cut off funding for our troops in harm's way or cut off critical reconstruction funding in the supplemental appropriations bill, thus toppling an unheralded but essential pillar of the President's new victory strategy and proving the perspicacity of the present resolution. While we wonder and worry, according to newspaper reports there is a strategy to make this rumored legislative plan palatable to the public. This strategy's tactics, which its instigators are more than happy to relate to the media, are reputed to include a coordinated multimillion-dollar TV campaign by leftist special-interest pressure groups. No doubt somewhere beyond this ephemeral stream of time there lurks a jealous Clement Vallandigham. But, in fairness, let us disdain a priori speculation, and instead examine a previous resolution to glean the potentialities of the present resolution's supporters' secret legislative plan. The following passages are excerpted from a previous resolution which, albeit more forthrightly, also opposes the Commander in Chief's decisions:

''*Resolved*, That this convention does explicitly declare, as the sense of the American people, that after 4 years of failure . . . by the experiment of war, during which, under the pretense of a military necessity of war-power higher than the Constitution, the Constitution itself has been disregarded in every part, and public liberty and private right alike trodden down, and the material prosperity of the country essentially impaired, justice, humanity, liberty, and the public welfare demand that immediate efforts be made for cessation of hostilities . . . to the end that, at the earliest practicable moment, peace be restored.''

This previous resolution too expresses its support for our troops in harm's way:

''*Resolved*, That the sympathy of the Democratic Party is heartily and earnestly extended to the soldiery of our Army and sailors of our Navy who are and have been in the field and on the sea under the flag of our country, and in the events of its attaining power, they will receive all the care, protection, and regard that brave soldiers and sailors of the Republic have so nobly earned.''

This previous resolution is the Democratic Party platform of 1864.

If the past is prologue, let us be firm in a fair request: If the resolution's supporters possess a victory strategy, or otherwise, for Iraq, these public servants must immediately reveal it to the sovereign citizens of the United States. If these stealth strategists refuse, they will incur the American people's inference this legislative plan assumes and will hasten our Nation's defeat in Iraq. How else could one explain these individuals' already having a legislative plan and an accompanying media plan premised upon our troop reinforcement failure, and doing so regardless of potential American victories on the ground or the advice of our military commanders? Perhaps while they demur from revealing it, these anonymous commander in chiefs will dubiously coin their legislative plan an ''exit strategy.''

□ 1045

It is an irrelevant distinction. Right now the enemy is actively seeking to murder more American and Iraqi soldiers and civilians. So right now and for the immediate future, an exit from Iraq is a defeat in Iraq. Whatever one pretends to the contrary, one will never convince our enemies otherwise.

Yes, it is all too human to wish the world were different; all too human to rationalize away one's misguided actions. Being composed of frail, fallible human beings, even great assemblies such as this have succumbed to the temptation. We must not.

Writing well before Churchill's magnanimous eulogy of Chamberlain and, to the contrary, warning the British people's representatives how history was pitiless, George Dangerfield coldly assessed his national leaders' mismanagement of state affairs during the pre-Great War years of 1910 to 1914: ''Along that row of distinguished and original faces there would pass from time to time, as lightly as a shadow upon the waters, an alarming, an alien spirit, a spirit dangerous and indefinite, the Spirit of Whimsy . . . In the hush of crisis, in the tumult of abuse, or when the stuffy air of the Commons seemed almost to glitter with the shining, salt ripples of sarcasm, there it played, airy, remote, and irresponsible.''

Is an inchoate angst over history's final verdict the reason some supporters of this resolution have taken to this floor, though not in this resolution itself, and verbally professed three key defenses of their decision? One defense is they were misled into supporting an Iraqi regime change because of the false claim it did or might possess weapons of mass destruction. Mercifully, let us stipulate these elected officials performed their due diligence on the matter and, especially for our Democratic colleagues so situated, they did not overly trust the some many of them had accused of stealing a Presidential election.

Again, there were numerous justifiable reasons for authorizing the President of the United States to militarily execute a regime change in Iraq. As those reasons are written in that resolution, I will not dwell upon them, for they do not constitute the crux of the matter, which is this: the war aim of regime change was a success. It is the post-war failure of Iraqi reconstruction breeding our present perils.

Thus even if a Member of Congress can be excused for authorizing force on the basis of being ''misled,'' the Member of Congress cannot be excused for failing to demand adequate post-war reconstruction planning, nor for a 3-year failure to demand constructive changes to an inadequate post-war reconstruction plan.

Dovetailing with this defense, some of the resolution's supporters now claim their initial ardor for the regime change was a mistake because this administration has botched Iraqi reconstruction beyond salvaging and the fledgling democracy is now in a state of civil war. This argument has the

merit of being partially correct, for despite the hard-learned lessons of our Nation's former successes in doing so, this administration utterly failed to comprehend and implement the fundamental principles of reconstructing a defeated, belligerent nation. Importantly, this does not preclude reconstructing Iraq now.

While rife with sectarian violence, much of it instigated and perpetuated from external elements, Iraq is not in a civil war. Relative calm exists in most of the beleaguered nation's provinces, and if one dares to look, there are the agonizingly slow but significant signs of incremental progress in the establishment of order. This progression will be expedited by the administration's new plan, which finally incorporates the two fundamental principles of Iraqi or any reconstruction plan, one, a liberal democratic society evolves upward from its traditional roots of order, not from a centralized bureaucratic government downward; and, two, a nation's transformational evolution into a liberal democracy must contemporaneously provide transactional benefits to its citizens. These fundamental principles will be implemented through critical initiatives, such as provincial reconstruction teams, an accord on oil revenue allocations, and a national reconciliation process, amongst others.

But to earn the support of terrorized Iraqis, security must first be established so they may commence securing the blessings of liberty. This is why the troop reinforcement is required and why the twin pillars of troop reinforcement and grass-roots reconstruction can achieve a joint American and Iraqi victory over the enemies of liberty.

The ineluctable fact of our victory is it must be won with the help of Iraqis, which is disconcerting to many of this resolution's supporters who believe the Iraqis are unwilling to fight for their freedom and are incapable of perpetuating once it is secured. This argument often intersects with the charge our mission in Iraq has been untenably shifted from effectuating a regime change to erecting a model democracy; and for the above reasons, they think this is impossible. This deplorable argument is antithetical to the self-evident truths written into our own Declaration of Independence, though, sadly, it is not without precedent. Once more, let us reference another resolution, this one opposing a military mission creeping toward a decidedly different goal:

''Resolved: that the emancipation proclamation of the President of the United States is as unwarranted in military as in civil law; a gigantic usurpation, at once converting the war, professedly commenced by the administration for the vindication of the authority of the Constitution, into a crusade for the sudden, unconditional and violent liberation of 3 million Negro slaves; a result which would not only be a total subversion of the Federal Union, but a revolution in the social organization of the Southern States, the immediate and remote, the present and far-reaching consequences of which to both races cannot be contemplated without the most dismal foreboding of horror and dismay. The proclamation invites servile insurrection as an element in this emancipation crusade, a means of warfare, th inhumanity and diabolism of which are without example in civilized warfare, and which we denounce, and which the civilized world will denounce as an uneffaceable disgrace to the American people.''

So much for the prognostications of the ''Peace Democrat'' controlled Illinois legislature's 1863 resolution. Thankfully, by the grace of God and the sanguine sacrifice of the American people, it was this Illinois legislature, not our African American brothers and sisters and our Nation's great emancipator, who are to be denounced by the civilized world for all eternity.

What of our legislative body? Now resurrects the specter of our own judgment, which hovers above and shadows us as we seek to ensure we are not forever weighed in the balance and found wonting. It is as it should be, as it must be, for notwithstanding its nonbinding nature, even after this resolution's disposition, our duty demands we make moral decisions affecting our Nation's victory or defeat, and our fellow citizens' lives or deaths. Is this not why, even while bearing malice towards none of them, in defending his own war plan, our own maligned President warned his opponents history is a harsh mistress:

''Is it doubted, then, that the plan I propose, if adopted, would shorten the war and thus lessen its expenditure of money and of blood? Is it doubted that it would restore the national authority and national prosperity and perpetuate both indefinitely? Is it doubted that we here, Congress and Executive, can secure its adoption? Will not the good people respond to a united and earnest appeal from us? Can we, can they, by any other means, so certainly or so speedily, assure these vital objects? We can succeed only by concert. It is not 'Can any of us imagine better?' but 'Can we all do better?' Objection whatsoever is possible. Still the question recurs 'Can we do better?' The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty and we must rise to the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew, act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves and then we shall save our country.

''Fellow citizens, we cannot escape history. We of this Congress and this administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance or insignificance can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation. We say we are for the Union. The world will not forget that we say this. We know how to save the Union. The world knows we do know how to save it. We, even we here, hold the power and bear the responsibility. In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free, honorable alike in what we give and what we preserve. We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best hope of Earth. Other means may succeed; this could not fail. The way is plain, peaceful, generous, just, a way which, if followed, the world will forever applaud, and God must forever bless.''

My friends, history harkens your honorable hearts to reconsider supporting this immoral resolution. If one believes all human beings are equally God's children, whether they be free or yearning to breathe free, one cannot, after a cruel sip of hope, condemn 20 million of God's equally beloved children to a saturnalia of slaughter. If one supports our troops, one cannot deride their cause as injurious to our country. If one seeks our victory in the war on terror, one cannot advocate a retreat and defeat in the face of our enemy.

My friends, through the fog of war, our fiery trial illumes and creeps ever nearer along the trail. Rather than curse the darkness and dread the echoes of history's verdict, let us acquit ourselves with lasting honor by leading our searching Nation through these trying, transformational times and into a transcendent, triumphal tomorrow. Let us earn the esteem of the latest and later generations of all free people by reaffirming our revolutionary Republic cherishes the self-evident truth that all human beings yearn to breathe free. Let us, in our Nation's finest traditions and truest character, remove the Iraqi people's bonds of oppression and replace them with bonds of brotherhood amongst our free, sovereign, and secure peoples.

Let us, in the face of terror, march always in the ranks of honor and courageously and selflessly secure the Iraqi people's blessings of liberty and, in so doing, secure our own blessings of liberty for unnamed generations of American children.

Mr. Speaker, fully cognizant of my moral duty to our troops, my constituents, my country, and my Creator, I cannot in good conscience support this resolution, which is injurious to the cause of our Nation's victory and in consequence is patiently immoral. Therefore, I urge this resolution's rejection and pray God graces, guards, and guides the steps of all who bear the burden of our decisions made on behalf of the majestic American people.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, let me just say that from my understanding, we are a separate but equal branch of government. The Executive does its thing; we do ours. And part of our responsibility is to debate, investigate and evaluate what the President says and not simply rubber-stamp what he says. So we are doing our job and what the American people elect us to do

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to now yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois, the chief deputy whip, the Honorable JAN SCHAKOWSKY.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of my constituents in Illinois to say, as strongly as possible for myself and for them, that we reject President Bush's decision to deploy more than 20,000 additional United States combat troops to Iraq.

Tragically, the President and his administration are dealing with an Iraq that exists only in their imagination. Bob Herbert said it well in Monday's New York Times: ''We need to stop pretending that there is something sane about continued U.S. involvement in this ruinous war. We keep sending troops into the combat zone, and they keep sinking ever deeper into the ancient Middle East sand. To keep sending young people off to die in a war that everybody knows is pointless is criminal.''

Each time that the Bush administration has proclaimed that we must stay the course because the war has just reached a turning point, that turn has led to a dead end.

May 2003, President Bush declared ''Mission Accomplished.'' By the end of 2003, 486 of our troops were dead and 2,408 were wounded. And yet we stayed the course in Iraq.

In June 2004, President Bush said, ''We're handing over authority to a sovereign Iraqi Government . . . a turning point will come in less than 2 weeks.''

By the end of 2004, 1,334 of our troops were killed and 10,408 were wounded. And yet we stayed the course in Iraq.

In June 2005, Vice President CHENEY said, ''I think they are in the last throes, if you will, of the insurgency.'' And in December 2005, President Bush said '' . . . the year 2005 will be recorded as a turning point in the history of Iraq, the history of the Middle East, and the history of freedom.''

By the end of 2005, 2,180 of our troops were killed and 16,354 were wounded. And yet we stayed the course in Iraq.

In May 2006, President Bush called the formation of a new Iraqi Government ''a turning point.'' By the end of 2006, 3,001 of our troops were killed and 22,736 were wounded. And yet we stayed the course in Iraq.

And just last month, Vice President CHENEY proclaimed, ''Well, I think if you look at what's transpired in Iraq . . . we have, in fact, made enormous progress.'' And President Bush told us that his new strategy to escalate the war in Iraq ''will change America's course in Iraq and help us succeed in the fight against terror.''

Since those remarks made just days ago, more than 120 troops are dead, and yet once again we are being asked to stay the course in Iraq.

My colleagues across the aisle want to characterize this troop increase, the fourth escalation, as a new direction. But the American people know better. They recognize ''stay the course'' when they see it, and they are saying no. And the administration continues the charade that if you don't support this war and this escalation, then you don't support the troops.

Shame on them. It is they who have failed to serve the troops who have served us so well. From day one our troops were sent into the war theater without the proper equipment to maximize their safety. Families have bake sales to buy their loved ones better vests and helmets. Just last month the Pentagon's Inspector General found that the Defense Department hasn't been able to properly equip the troops it already has with enough guns and ammunition to ''effectively complete their missions.'' That is a quote. Soldiers are short body armor, armored vehicles, and communication equipment. Imagine this war is costing $12 million every hour, 24/7 for 4 years, nearly half a trillion dollars, and our soldiers don't have enough body armor, ammunition, communications equipment?

□ 1100

If our troops aren't the priority, who is? Halliburton, Blackwater, other corporate chums of the President? Don't lecture us about caring for the troops.

The Executive Director of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America recently said of our returning soldiers and marines, ''And when they come home, there aren't nearly enough transitional care services, job placement, transitional housing. It is just not there.'' Twelve million dollars an hour to wage this war, and our veterans are returning home without the proper care they need?

Our support for the troops compels us to oppose this war and this escalation. Of the terrible options the President has left us after 4 years, the absolute worst is to continue to send our young men and women in uniform to die in the meat grinder that is Iraq and to put them in the cross-hairs of a civil war.

Speaker PELOSI has said that our goal is to end this war. We can begin right here, right now, by passing this resolution.

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 5 minutes to the honorable gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN), the mover and shaker on the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I thank my colleague from New York.

Mr. Speaker, next month we will mark the fourth anniversary of the President's decision to launch a war of choice against Iraq. Many of us came to the floor of this House in the weeks before the invasion to urge the President to take a different course. The White House ignored those appeals for restraint. The President's mantra was, and these are his words, ''Bring it on.''

For almost 4 years after the invasion, the President had a rubber-stamp Congress right here that never seriously questioned his misguided policies in Iraq. It was the ''see no problems, hear no problems, conduct no oversight'' Congress.

When the President stood below the banner ''Mission Accomplished'' aboard the USS *Abraham Lincoln* in May 2003, the rubber-stamp Congress believed the slogan, rather than the facts on the ground.

When Vice President CHENEY declared that the insurgency was in ''its final throes'' back in May 2005, the Republican Congress accepted that verdict without question.

When the President unveiled his so-called ''Plan For Victory'' at the Naval Academy in November 2005, the old Congress dutifully parroted the talking points sent down from the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue.

The days of the rubber-stamp Congress are now over. This Congress will no longer serve as the mouthpiece for the White House. This Congress is finally standing up to do its job as a separate and coequal branch of government.

Mr. Speaker, the message from the last election was clear. The American people have an uncanny ability to cut through the slogans and get to the heart of the matter. They understood clearly that more of the same in Iraq was not working. And the American people understand what both General Casey and General Abizaid have told us: that the escalation of more troops in Iraq is not the answer; that it will make matters worse, not better.

Increasing the number of American troops in Iraq will put off the day when the Iraqis, the Shia, the Sunnis and the Kurds, must make the difficult compromises necessary to achieve political and national reconciliation. Putting more American forces in the middle of a bloody sectarian civil war will only lead to further violence and more American and more Iraqi casualties. It is time for the Iraqis to assume more responsibility, not less.

The Bush administration has been wrong about this war from the beginning and it is wrong with respect to its proposed course of action now. The recommendations of the bipartisan, independent Baker-Hamilton Commission provide for the responsible redeployment of our forces and represents the best way forward in Iraq.

And to those who would suggest that having this debate will undermine our troops, I say shame on you. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Peter Pace put that canard to rest just last week when he said, ''There is no doubt in my mind that the dialogue here in Washington strengthens our democracy. Period.''

Our men and women fighting in Iraq understand the strength and vibrancy of this democracy, and they understand that it is our duty in this Congress to exercise our best judgment for America's national security. What has harmed our national security is not the

debate in Iraq, but the lack of serious oversight over the Bush administration's decisions and conduct.

What emboldens our enemies is not the exercise of our democracy, but misguided policies that have weakened our national security.

Our national security is weakened when our credibility around the world is undermined by false claims regarding weapons of mass destruction. Our national security is weakened when the chaos in Iraq allows Iran to greatly expand its influence in the region. Our national security is weakened when America's diminished standing in the world has eroded our ability to influence the actions of others. Our national security is weakened because we have diverted our attention away from completing the mission against the architects of 9/11, against Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda and the terrorist network that continues to operate along the Afghan-Pakistan border.

We must change course. We must strengthen our national security position, not compound the errors we have already made. That is what this resolution is all about. We hope the President will join us in that effort. Let's chart a new direction now together.

Mr. McCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE).

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. I thank the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the debate over the last 2 days, really dozens and dozens of speeches, and, frankly, speeches of exceptionally high quality on both sides of the issue. I have listened particularly to the speakers who were here in 2002 when the momentous decision to go to war was actually made. Those who were opposed, I have admired because in their opposition in October of 2002 they were taking an unpopular position, but clearly one that they believed in, and I think they deserve our respect for that, even if I don't agree with that particular point of view.

Second, I have watched those who voted in favor of that tough decision, and I have watched as they have stuck to that decision because they believe the stakes are so important for the United States. They have done so even when public opinion has turned against their position. And I admire that.

Frankly, I have watched speakers who have changed their position, who were first for the war and now are opposed to it. It is easy to deride people in that position. But, quite frankly, I have watched them, and they are anguished in their opinions and their conclusions; they are sensitive, obviously, to the easy and cheap criticism of opportunism. And I particularly admire those, frankly, in my own party who have broken with their President and their party over a position that they believe in deeply. I don't agree with them, but I admire them.

What I don't admire is the Democratic leadership that has brought us a resolution which is divisive without being decisive. It orders no action. I have spoken on that at length before, and I am not going to go into it now. I want to instead focus on the issues at stake.

Like all of those elected in 2002, 2004, 2006, I was not part of the initial decision to go to war, and, frankly, I often think how fortunate I was to have been spared that responsibility. But, of course, none of us on this floor ever truly escapes responsibility.

My attitude toward this conflict reflects that of my district and, frankly, that of my father, who was a career noncommissioned officer in the United States Army. I recall once when he was talking about war, he summed it up pretty simply: When you are in it, win it.

That is what I have tried to do with my vote, my voice, my energy, since I have been elected to represent my district. I have done so because, frankly, in some areas I have seen progress. Removing Saddam Hussein from power was a good thing and I am proud that that was accomplished, and it would not have been accomplished without the valor and the professionalism of American men and women in arms.

I am pleased to have seen a Constitution formed in Iraq that is the envy of the Arab world.

I am proud to have seen three elections take place, all of which had increasingly high participation and had, frankly, higher percentages than vote in our own elections.

I was hopeful when I saw a coalition government formed that had Kurds, that had Sunnis, that had Shia, that had other elements in the Iraqi population.

I have been impressed with Iraqi forces that do stand and fight. And let's make no mistake about it: Most of the fighting and dying militarily is being done by Iraqis and they deserve our respect for that.

And, frankly, I think like all Americans, I was enormously relieved when I see actors like the late al-Zarqawi, people who would kill Americans anywhere, anytime, who are not from Iraq, being sought out with the help of Iraqis and killed far away from our shores. That is important, and that is something we should acknowledge.

I have also supported the war because I feared the consequences of defeat in Iraq. And, believe me, there are consequences to losing the war. These are real.

If we are not successful in Iraq, we will have an emboldened enemy. Not just the terrorists that we deal with, they are bad enough, but also the states that use terrorism as a tool of diplomacy. States like Iran, states like Syria, will draw comfort.

We will have demoralized friends in the region and around the world that wonder whether or not they can really count on us once we make a commitment.

We will see the death of an infant democracy, never a good thing for the lovers of freedom.

We will see a sectarian bloodbath in Iraq that will result in the death of tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of Iraqis.

And we will see a destabilized region in which the United States has vital interests and to which our own security is intimately tied.

I acknowledge that things have not gone in Iraq as I, certainly, and I think everybody, regardless of their position on the issue, would have hoped. There is no question that we underestimated what was required, not to defeat Saddam, frankly, that was done brilliantly, but to secure Iraq.

We have underestimated the persistence of and the difficulty the outside players would create for us. We underestimated how anxious people inside Iraq would be to settle old scores instead of to look ahead. And we have underestimated the impact of the divided loyalties of Iraqis themselves, where so often we see sect against sect, ethnicity against ethnicity, tribe against tribe.

But these difficulties and mistakes, regrettable as they are, do not change the consequences of losing in Iraq, for the region, for Iraqis, and, most importantly, for ourselves.

At this critical point, the President has offered a plan to avert defeat, and, if the Iraqis are up to the task, to turn the tide. It has an American military component, and that is what this resolution deals with.

But contrary to what I have heard on the floor, it is not a major escalation in forces. It is not an effort to allow the Iraqis to avoid the fighting. Nor is it an effort to win militarily. It is an effort to buy the time needed to create an environment in Iraq that will allow Iraqis to succeed politically. It will allow them to begin to push toward the reconciliation process and review the de-Baathification program. It will allow them to share power with one another. It will allow provisional elections to take place. It will allow oil revenue to be distributed more equitably. It will allow Iraqi units the time to train, stand up and continue to fight and fight more professionally and proficiently than they have.

The U.S. force is indispensable in achieving these measures, but it will not be and it is not intended to be decisive. What will win or lose in Iraq ultimately are Iraqi politicians: Can they put their differences aside? Iraqi soldiers: Can they fight for their country instead of against one another? And the Iraqi people: Can they put aside the differences and demand better leadership than they have received thus far from their own people.

Some will say this is a hopeless task, but our military leaders and our troops in the field don't tell us that. General Petraeus, a man whom all sides acknowledge is not only professional, capable, but is dedicated and a great patriot, tells us he thinks this is an achievable mission if he has the forces he needs to succeed. The average soldiers that I talked to from my district

and other units also tell me they believe this is doable. But they want us in Congress and in this country to have the political resolve to match their personal courage.

History teaches us that freedom is a powerful force. We should trust it. And it also teaches us sometimes it needs outside help. All of us as Americans are justly proud of the American Revolution. We often forget it took a French fleet, French army and Dutch money to finally finish the job.

Mr. Speaker, because I believe the consequences of losing in Iraq are horrible for Iraqis, for Americans, and for the cause of liberty and our friends around the world; because I think that we, the Iraqis and the Americans together, can still win; because I believe that defeat has catastrophic consequences for the United States, I urge the rejection of this resolution and support the cause that our fighting men and women are so nobly advancing in Iraq.

□ 1115

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 5½ minutes to the Chair of the Steering Committee, the Honorable ROSA DELAURO.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, this week the Congress finally takes up its obligation to change course in Iraq. We have arrived at a new moment. Few responsibilities are more solemn for a Member of this body than one in which he or she is obligated to register a vote of no confidence in their President in a time of war.

Under different circumstances, I think most Americans would want to give their President the benefit of the doubt on matters of war, that they would want to trust the President's judgment to do what is right for our country, for our national security interests, and for our troops and their families who never leave our prayers.

It is a measure of how desperate matters have become in Iraq that the Congress considers this resolution of disapproval. Today, we find ourselves embroiled in a war that is not winnable, a religious war that is inconsistent with our original mission there, a war the American people no longer support.

And with 3,100 American lives lost, sectarian violence threatening to spill over into the entire Middle East, and no prospect for a stable, constitutional democracy in Iraq in sight, today we consider this war for not what we wish it were but for what it has so clearly and tragically become, a mistake of historic proportions.

As such, I will support this resolution opposing the escalation of this conflict. And with this debate, the Congress takes up its constitutional responsibilities with a sense of urgency and accountability that the public so desperately seeks from us. For too long the Congress has asked too few questions and been all too willing to put politics and ideology before our Nation's security.

To be sure, matters of war are the most serious that I will deliberate over in the United States Congress. Indeed, such a vote was my first in the Congress in 1991. But with this moment, Congress now has the opportunity to take the country into a new phase of this war. To me, nothing matters more than getting this right.

Four years ago, I voted against authorizing the President to go to war because, as I said on this House floor, I believed taking unilateral action against Iraq would ''weaken our moral authority, our military effectiveness and our ability to keep events under control afterwards.''

Today, 1 month into the new Congress, and for the first time since the previous majority rushed to authorize this war in October of 2002, every Member of this institution, Democrat or Republican, will face a different choice. With the situation so clearly out of control, Members can trust President Bush one more time as he escalates the conflict in Iraq, or they can support a change in direction that begins to redeploy our troops out of Iraq, that uses our military in the right way, to make our country safer and raise America's standing so that we have both allies and moral authority to address our threats.

To be sure, of all the concerns we take to the floor with, it is the deteriorating welfare of our troops that is most alarming. Of course, every American takes comfort in the heroism and the determination that our soldiers have shown. They have performed magnificently, but they have been charged with an impossible mission that undermines their incalculable sacrifice and has strained our military in countless ways, from manpower to morale.

As the father of one marine whose son has been deployed for the second time to Iraq wrote to me, ''You forget what it is like to actually sleep through the night without waking up to the horrible thought that you might not ever see your son again.''

Mr. Speaker, we all know our troops will do anything their country asks of them, but let us not ask them to escalate an unwinnable war.

Today, virtually everyone agrees we need a new strategy, everyone, that is, except for the President who continues to pursue an objective the consensus judgment of our Nation's intelligence agencies says has no chance of success. Indeed, in proposing an escalation of the current strategy, the President rejects conclusions drawn by the National Intelligence Estimate, the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, his own generals and, perhaps most importantly, the American people. In so doing, he sends what could be as many as 170,000 troops into a civil war that is being waged along sectarian fault lines that have existed for more than 1,300 years.

Such a policy will not only make matters worse, in my view and that of the Iraq Study Group. It will also postpone Iraqis taking responsibility and postpone diplomatic efforts that we so urgently need to reach a political settlement in Iraq and avoid an all-out civil war that spills into the entire Middle East.

Mr. Speaker, I am not willing to stand here in the well of the House of Representatives and not move to change our policy in Iraq. There are too many lives at stake, our security at stake. I support the conclusions and recommendations of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, but I have crossed the Rubicon on this war. I support phased redeployment over the next year and will seek every opportunity to mandate such a change in law. But that begins with stopping this escalation

Mr. Speaker, I harbor no illusions about the President's willingness to hear this message from the Congress. Before long, it may be necessary to mandate reductions in troop levels. But the President must understand that the public and the Congress do not support his policies in Iraq—that if we can even hope to achieve a stable Iraq, a peaceful Middle East and a more secure America, our strategy must change. That is what this vote of no confidence is about. That is our obligation—let us honor it.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I will make a statement later, but right now I would like to introduce Congressman GEOFF DAVIS from the State of Kentucky who was in the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and served this Nation as an assault helicopter flight commander in the 82nd Airborne Division, which is where I went through jump school, too, and I think he is well qualified to discuss this issue.

I would like to recognize the gentleman for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of our troops and dedicated civilian professionals, and to my former comrades and friends now serving, and against the Democrat resolution disapproving of reinforcing our troops in combat.

This week, Congress has spent its time debating a futile, nonbinding resolution when, in reality, we should be debating policy initiatives that will help our troops in their mission and lead to stability. I believe that in fighting the war in Iraq that there is room for an open and honest debate about the best way to advance the compelling national security interests of this Nation. Honest debate, respectful disagreement, and constructive dialogue are components of our great Republic; and it is important to honor the process that our institution provides.

Furthermore, this measure seeks to debate whether we support an operational decision that, in reality, should be made by the commanders on the ground, not by politicians in Congress. What are we going to be debating next week, Mr. Speaker? Which block in Baghdad? Which precinct to target? This nonbinding resolution serves no purpose other than pacifying the Democrats' political base and lowering

morale in our military. At least one Democrat has likened this type of resolution to a child stomping in the corner.

The troops will be doing their job by completing the mission that they have been given, and we in Congress need to do ours. Our troops who are fighting abroad do not get to debate the validity of their mission. Their enemies are real, and they are fighting day in and day out to protect our country, the Iraqi people and themselves.

This resolution does not help make progress in Iraq. It does not provide a new approach in Iraq and does not make our Nation or our troops more secure. That is what we need to be doing, not wasting our time debating a measure that can dishearten and demoralize our citizens faithfully serving in theater while encouraging and emboldening the adversaries of stability.

We have seen the aggression of this faceless and cowardly enemy in the bombing of Pan Am 103 in 1988, in al Qaeda's attack on the USS *Cole* in 2000, and the tragic events of September 11. This enemy is driven by hate and seeks to do Americans harm.

Over the course of time, it has become evident that we are involved in a long-term struggle with Islamic extremism to preserve our freedom and the freedom of the world. Every day, our men and women in uniform and our civilian professionals risk their lives to protect our freedom. From providing security to building an economy, we are strengthening the security of our country and the international community.

We have not had a terrorist attack on our soil in over 5 years because of our vigilance in pursuing the security of our Nation at home and abroad. Success in Iraq is our only option for continued national security and the preservation of freedom.

I have had the opportunity to speak to hundreds and hundreds of men and women in uniform whose experience spans all ranks, all services, and all units. Consistently, they share an optimistic and sober message about the importance of continuing the struggle to defeat Islamic extremists. A resolution like this blurs the many successes in the war they have had against the extremists.

The messages of our troops do not come without an understanding of the reality and the resources that we must commit to this mission. Fighting the terrorists will require a strong commitment, and the road to victory will be long. Our partners in Iraq have stated their commitment to the mission, and we must stand behind them.

At the same time, the Iraqis must continue to assume responsibility for their success as a nation and that our commitment is not open-ended. Success in countering an insurgency largely happens outside of the realm of combat. Security is only one aspect.

We must work on establishing frameworks within Iraq that can keep the water running and the electricity on, which will in turn allow people to go to work and children to return to school. Returning normal life to Iraqis is important, but it should not be the sole responsibility of our troops who are providing security and stability. We need to strengthen the involvement of the international community in this endeavor as we empower and engage the Iraqis.

I strongly believe that if we are to fully support our troops that we must listen to what they are saying. And when the troops are saying that they are committed to their mission then, I believe, we should listen. I remain a committed supporter of our troops, and I thank them for their service.

Soon, Congress will vote on the Department of Defense's supplemental budget; and in it, the Pentagon is requesting $5.6 billion for troop reinforcement. This will be the real test of commitment, not this meaningless resolution. A ''yes'' vote on that funding supports the troop reinforcement being debated here today, and a ''no'' vote will delete funding for this important mission. This will not only show people where Congress stands, but give accountability to our actions here in Congress with the force of law behind it.

I support our troops and our civilian professionals, and I intend to keep my commitment to my many friends on active duty and to vote to provide them the funding for their mission when the time comes.

To my former comrades and friends in the 101st Airborne Division and 82nd Airborne Division, thank you for answering the call again and know that I stand with you.

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I think we all owe a great debt of gratitude to the Speaker of this House and to the Democratic leadership for allowing us the opportunity to have every Member come to the floor of the people's House to talk about Iraq and whether or not they agree with the President's escalation. I think that is what this House is about, and one of the Members of that leadership who we do owe that gratitude to is the Vice Chair of the Democratic Caucus, and I am pleased to yield 5½ minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut, the Honorable JOHN LARSON.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Thank you, Mr. MEEKS, and also let me thank my colleagues across the aisle for the solemnity of the debate that has taken place over these last several days. I think it is so important to the constituents that we are sworn to serve, and they deserve to hear the voices that reside within the people's Chamber.

This debate, in so many ways, is an echo chamber for what Americans already know. They have found their voice and expressed it in several manners and several forms, most notably in last November's election, where they called for a new direction for this country, not the staying of the course that it is currently on.

It is long overdue then that the Congress find its voice as well. Past is prologue, and we must go back to June of 2002 when the President enunciated the Bush doctrine, the doctrine of preemption and unilateralism that has placed us in this situation that we have today in Iraq.

He was warned, most notably by people like Scowcroft, Eagleberger, Baker, and Colin Powell about the folly of this effort. It was not KENNEDY or Berg or even LARSON or other people that spoke out as eloquently as those former members of Bush the Elder's Cabinet.

I traveled with JACK MURTHA in the buildup to the war, and we met with our ambassador in Saudi Arabia, Robert Jordan, who I said to him, Ambassador, you have a gathering storm here in Saudi Arabia, with all the tensions in the Middle East. And he said, Congressman, you are from New England. Gathering storm, he said? What we have here is the making of a perfect storm.

□ 1130

And if we unilaterally invade and attack this toothless tiger, Saddam Hussein, we will unwittingly accomplish what bin Laden failed to do: we will create a united Islamic jihad against the United States.

Professor Gram Ellison wrote that ''this occupation has diverted essential resources from the fight against al Qaeda, allowed the Taliban to regroup on Afghanistan, fostered neglect of the Iranian nuclear threat, undermined alliances critical to preventing terrorism, devastated America's standing with every country in Europe and destroyed it in the Muslim world.''

Instead of following the wisdom of Scowcroft and Eagleberger and Baker, Powell, this administration embraced Ahmed Chalabi with all the hubris and arrogance of staying the course.

And so we find our troops today in the midst of civil war, in the midst of sectarian, religious, and tribal conflicts that are more about settling old scores that seek revenge over the centuries than about creating a democracy. And it is into that caldron that we wish to send more troops, more troops that 87 percent of the Iraqi public says they want a time line for us to be out of there, and over 50 percent of them think that it is okay to kill Americans.

Our troops need leadership that is worthy of their sacrifice. It is important that this Congress on both sides of the aisle, as it has done, understands the difference between the war and the warriors.

I conduct hearings back in my district; I listen to what my constituents have to say. And, most earnestly, to those parents, those men and women who come to these hearings and talk about their children in harm's way: Carol Tripp of Bristol said it best, a woman with three of her sons and her

husband stationed in Iraq, who hasn't shared a holiday dinner with their entire family since 2001.

I define success by being able to look into their eyes and tell them that the best path forward is the safe, secure, and strategic redeployment of our troops so that our Army can regroup and restore itself and proceed after the people who took the towers down in systematic fashion to go after al Qaeda and continue to regroup.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

You know, it is an honor to be here today joined by Members of Congress who have served this Nation nobly both in the Armed Forces and today as statesmen and -women in the United States House of Representatives.

You know, there are lots of ways people can serve this country. Dedicating time to the Armed Forces, the greatest military in the world, can be some of the most fulfilling time in one's life. I know, because I spent 29 years in the United States Air Force; got called up from my ROTC class at SMU and flew 62 combat missions in Korea in a plane I named after my wife, ''Shirley's Texas Tornado.''

In 1965, I left for my first tour in Vietnam, working for General Westmoreland in the headquarters. In 1966 I returned again. And while flying my 25th mission, I was shot down, landed in the middle of a division of North Vietnamese soldiers.

What followed for the next 2,494 days can only be described as hell on Earth, or as my friend and fellow POW, Jeremiah Denton did, blinked the letters of one word in Morse Code into a movie camera as a desperate plea for help. The letters made up the word ''torture.'' Of my nearly 7 years in captivity, I spent more than half of that time in solitary confinement.

As you can imagine, the North Vietnamese would say and do anything to break our will. The physical torture is not fit for describing as some of it is too graphic and too gory. There were many times that I would pray to God that I would pass out and slip into unconsciousness just to escape the pain if I couldn't escape the beatings.

Yet, what also scarred me for life was the emotional torture that the North Vietnamese broadcast to taunt us and break our wills. They constantly blared anti-American messages from back home over the loud speakers. The enemy knows that any anti-American murmur can be used as a weapon. And the same holds true today.

The enemy wants our men and women in uniform to think that their Congress doesn't care about them, that they are going to cut the funding and abandon them and their mission. They want Congress to cave to the wishes of those who advocate a cut-and-run attitude. And we should not allow that to happen.

We must learn from our mistakes. We cannot leave a job undone like we left in Korea, like we left in Vietnam, like we left in Somalia.

Osama bin Laden said that ''in Somalia, the United States pulled out, trailing disappointment, defeat, and failure behind it.''

And we didn't blink an eye when the radicals bombed the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia killing 20 and injuring 372; or after the Kenya embassy bombings that killed 213 people and injured 5,000; or that same day at the Tanzania embassy bombing killing 11 people and injuring 68. On October 12, 2000 the USS *Cole* bombing killed 17 and injured 39. And we all know how they tried to bring down the World Trade Towers and didn't stop until they completed the job September 11.

All of these tragedies of terrorism happened without a United States response.

We can't waver in our fight for freedom. We cannot abandon the bedrock of democracy; they are the brave and selfless men and women of our United States Armed Forces. We will stand up with them. We must stand up with them. And I will stand up with them in Congress, because they stand up for our freedom every minute of every day. They are the reason we call America the land of the free and the home of the brave. And I salute them.

Now, today I have the distinct privilege of managing time during this debate. Each person joining me is a shining example of duty, honor, country. And I know folks across America will learn a lot from hearing about their stories and hearing why they know firsthand freedom is not free.

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 5 minutes to the Chair of the Homeland Security Subcommittee on Intelligence, Information Sharing, and Terrorism, the gentlelady from California, the Honorable JANE HARMAN

Ms. HARMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Speaker and I thank the gentleman for yielding, and commend our leadership for organizing this very thoughtful and sober 3-day debate on a very serious issue.

Mr. Speaker, as Co-chair of the Blue Dog National Security Working Group, I rise to oppose the surge and to support tough and smart security strategies, including those outlined in H. Res. 97, authored by the Blue Dogs, to end war profiteering, put future war costs on budget, and adopt a Truman Committee to make those who have engaged in fraud and abuse in Iraq accountable for their actions.

As we conduct this historic debate, however, I am mindful that, eight time zones away, crouched in a tank somewhere in Baghdad, a 19-year-old private is doing his best to restore order to a city descending into all-out civil war. We owe this soldier, his mates, and their families so much. They volunteered to put their lives on the line to keep this country safe.

We in this Chamber also want to keep this country safe, but we do not share those day-to-day risks. Only a handful here have relatives in Iraq living the life of the soldier I described.

Mr. Speaker, as we have sadly learned, the intelligence that took us to war was wrong. Some of the most inaccurate claims—that an operational relationship existed between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein, that vast WMD stockpiles existed with their locations pinpointed—were presented by the administration as fact, even though the Intelligence Community had discredited them. That was shameful.

Most intelligence agencies around the world thought, however, that Saddam Hussein had WMD and the intention to use it against his people and U.S. interests. They believed it, and so did I. But they were wrong, and so was I.

The actions taken 4 years ago in Iraq created a failed state. We took out its government and occupied the country, unsuccessfully. About one year later, millions of Iraqis courageously elected a government, but that government barely functions, and we continue to occupy Iraq militarily.

Mr. Speaker, there are no good military options left in Iraq.

To the soldier currently in harm's way, I say, ''You are a hero. You are doing your best to follow orders and to serve your country.'' But I also say, ''We have given you a mission impossible, and that mission must change.''

We have a moral obligation to leave Iraq in better shape than we found it, and that will not be achieved by surging 21,500 more troops into Baghdad. The surge will not work, and I oppose it.

But abandoning Iraq is not a viable alternative. We must invest in strategies to contain and ultimately reduce violence there in order to create stability in Iraq and in the region. That must now be our focus.

The Iraq Study Group made important recommendations to do this, including changing the military mission in Iraq; tying future U.S. support to measurable progress on national reconciliation; security and governance; and aggressive diplomatic outreach to Iraq's neighbors—including Syria and Iran. But this administration rejected them.

Two weeks ago, a Saban Center report by Daniel Byman and Ken Pollack carefully assessed options to contain the spillover from an Iraqi civil war. They include not trying to pick winners between the Sunnis and Shia; pulling back from population centers; providing support for Iraq's neighbors; and laying down ''red lines'' to Iran. All of these ideas have merit.

Further good ideas come from David Schaeffer, a former U.S. ambassador-at-large for war crimes issues, to put the Iraqi Government on an ''atrocity watch'' and warn its leaders that they can be prosecuted for war crimes if ethnic cleansing occurs.

Mr. Speaker, the Bush administration has made calamitous mistakes in

prosecuting this war. The surge, I fear, is yet another one. With this resolution, Congress starts action to force a change in strategy and to bring that soldier in downtown Baghdad and his comrades home safely—and soon

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5½ minutes to the Representative from Virginia, THELMA DRAKE, who represents Norfolk and America's Navy.

Mrs. DRAKE. Thank you, Congressman JOHNSON, for your service to our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, the past few years have been increasingly difficult ones for the American people, for our military families, and, most importantly, for our servicemembers in harm's way.

Our troops have done everything that has been asked of them, and more. Their sacrifices are unimaginable to many of us here on this floor. Through it all, the only thing that they have asked is for our support through our words, through our prayers, and, most importantly, through our actions.

During my two visits to Iraq, the question that I encountered from servicemembers was, What are they saying back home? They watch C–SPAN, and I know with certainty that they are watching us right now.

The resolution that we are discussing today is nonbinding and, therefore, merely symbolic within the Beltway. The driving force behind it has more to do with the situation in Washington than it does the situation in Baghdad. Yet, half a world away this resolution will have demoralizing effects for those men and women who we have asked to go into battle.

It is important for the American people watching this debate to know that this plan is currently under way.

The Second Brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division moved into Baghdad nearly a month ago.

□ 1145

The Fourth Brigade of the First Infantry Division is deploying this month, with three more brigades set to arrive soon. That means that we are not here today to discuss whether or not the troops will go, we are discussing what message the troops will hear from us when they get there.

Like many of my colleagues, I am concerned about the current situation in Iraq. Last April, I witnessed the election of the Iraqi Prime Minister. Since that time, the Iraqis have failed to make acceptable progress, stabilizing their nation, and strengthening their democratic institutions.

Many of us have concerns about the plan. Will Prime Minister Maliki live up to the commitments that he made in November? Does this plan get the most out of the 21 trained and equipped Iraqi battalions deployed outside of Baghdad? These are reasonable questions, and ones I believe that are within the scope of Congress to discuss and resolve.

I appreciate debate, and the American people appreciate debate. But it is important to remember that the American people have sent us here to solve problems. Unfortunately, this resolution makes no attempt to solve the problems in Iraq.

If Congress believes that the President's plan can be improved on, then Congress has the responsibility to work with the Commander in Chief to ensure that the Iraqis are meeting stringent benchmarks and are living up to their commitments. This resolution is best defined by what it lacks. This resolution fails to include the proposal for a bipartisan panel tasked with outlining rigorous benchmarks and making sure they are met so that our troops may return home in victory.

This resolution fails to specifically protect the funding that our troops need to execute the mission. This resolution fails to condemn the terrorists and insurgents who target both our troops and Iraqis, and, most importantly, it fails to reiterate that victory should always be the goal.

We were told this week would provide an opportunity for every Member to go on the record, yet the majority has not allowed a Republican alternative that would protect funding for the troops. How do the American people know where their Representatives in Washington stand on funding for our troops when the majority will not allow that to be?

The American people are anxious, but they want progress, not defeat. They want to see their elected officials working together to ensure success on behalf of our troops. Simply inserting a sentence, saying you support the troops, is not enough when your actions say otherwise. The consequences of retreat would be dire. This is understood by our allies as well as our regional partners who have spoken up against withdrawal.

According to the Iraq National Intelligence Estimate, it would result in an immediate increase in sectarian violence and genocide and has the potential to destabilize the entire region. For decades, the instability in the Middle East has repeatedly resulted in the deaths of American citizens and servicemembers, in places as far apart as Beirut and Yemen, New York City, and the Pentagon.

A retreat at this point in time could, down the road, necessitate our troops returning to an Iraq that is much more dangerous than the one they left. I truly believe that the United States has the most formidable military in the world, not solely because of our technological and tactical advantages, but because our men and women in uniform fight in the name of a free and Democratic people. They fight on behalf of freedom for all, knowing they have the full support and confidence of the American people.

When we take that support away, we strip our troops of the greatest weapon in the fight against tyranny. I ask my colleagues not to vote for this resolution, but to once again work together.

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, the American people are indeed looking at this debate. They want to know where their Members stand, simply whether they support the troops and their position with the President and his escalation, and we had the opportunity for every Member to speak out on that. That is what this House is all about. We are doing our jobs. It is just the first step in many steps

As a result, the American people also, I am sure, will want to hear the distinguished gentleman from the State of Pennsylvania, the Honorable MIKE DOYLE, who is the vice chair of the Telecommunications and Internet Subcommittee of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PASTOR). The gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DOYLE. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, as someone who has opposed this misguided version from the war on terror from the very beginning, I believe it is way past time for our country to take stock of where we have been, where we are, and where we are going in Iraq. I think it is important to remember how we got there.

President Bush told Congress and the American people that Saddam had weapons of mass destruction and was an imminent threat to the United States; that Saddam had ties to al Qaeda and the 9/11 attackers; that the invasion, occupation, and reconstruction would cost us nothing; that Iraqi oil revenues would cover all the costs.

So where are we today? We know that Saddam had no weapons of mass destruction and that he posed no imminent threat to the United States. We know Saddam had no operational relationship with al Qaeda. Eighty percent of the Iraqi people want us to leave their country. The invasion, occupation, and reconstruction of Iraq will cost us at least half a trillion dollars, not to mention the cost in human lives and international goodwill.

More than 3,000 American soldiers are dead, more than 20,000 American soldiers are wounded. The burden of the Iraq war is being borne exclusively by our children and grandchildren who will bear the debt, and the families of our military personnel, who, at best, experience long separations and terrible worry, and, at worst, lose a beloved family member forever.

The invasion and occupation of Iraq has alienated our allies, has called our credibility into question around the world. It has soured Middle Eastern attitudes about the United States and Western democracy. Finally, the invasion of Iraq got us into a long-term bloody occupation of a country with no significant connection to the war on terror and diverted critical military and intelligence resources from the fight against al Qaeda.

The recently released National Intelligence Estimate concluded that there is little prospect for political reconciliation in Iraq at this time. So, what

should the United States do? What does victory in Iraq mean at this point? Most of us would see victory as any kind of political settlement that ended the violence, but the American people need to hear the truth, and the truth is, there is no happy ending for Iraq as long as our presence allows the Maliki government to avoid making the political compromises necessary for peace in Iraq.

Now, the President has proposed a significant increase in the numbers of U.S. troops serving in Iraq. I believe that Congress should oppose this escalation. I don't believe it has any real chance of producing a political solution in the war in Iraq or even curbing the violence in Baghdad.

I am not alone in this belief.

General Colin Powell, General George Casey, General John Abizaid, General Joseph Hoar, General Barry McCaffrey, Major General Don Sheppard and General James Conway all question this escalation.

Now, many supporters of the President's Iraq policy ask what those of us who oppose this military escalation would support instead. This Member of Congress believes that the United States should begin an immediate orderly redeployment of our troops out of Iraq with the goal of completing that redeployment by the end of the year.

We should lead and enlist the participation of all neighboring countries in a massive diplomatic surge to help contain the civil war already underway, and that diplomatic surge should include all the countries in the region, including Iran and Syria. The only way to bring stability to that region is through a regional effort.

Our troops have performed with courage, compassion, and professionalism. They did everything that was asked of them. Their work in Iraq is done. We gave the Iraqis their freedom. It is up to them to decide what they will do with it.

It is time for the Iraqis to take responsibility for their own security. It is time for Iraqis to decide if Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds wish to share resources, share power, and coexist peacefully as one country.

America cannot force them to do this, no matter how long we stay there. Only the Iraqi people can decide this.

Mr. Speaker, it is time. The American people have known for quite a while it is time, and I believe this week that finally the United States Congress will take the first step to bringing our troops home by adopting this resolution

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from New Mexico, who was a pilot in the United States Air Force, serving in the Philippines, received a Distinguished Flying Cross and an Air Medal before returning to the United States.

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

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this stay-the-course resolution, because it is, indeed, a stay the course. It says, blithely, that we support the troops, the troops are in Iraq, they are fighting. We support the fight.

We do not, on the other hand, support an escalation, which would be another course of action, nor do we present the other alternative that says bring them home. We can bring them home, increase or stay the course, and so this stay-the-course resolution is one that is very curious indeed today.

The last two speakers that I have heard say that there is no good military action left. That is a credible viewpoint. It is one that is expressed, and yet I ask my friends why did you not have the courage to simply say, if there are no goodwill alternatives left for the military, then bring them home. That is fair and adequate.

I have also heard that it is a misguided conflict. I have also heard that our soldiers' work is done. If their work is done, please have the courage to bring them home.

I want to speak today on behalf of our soldiers, the soldiers of today. I will do it while remembering the soldiers of yesterday. Through no fault of my own, I served in the Air Force during the Vietnam conflict. I say through no fault of my own, because I was not a volunteer. I got there because I drew a very low draft number. As time has proved, it was going to be the only lottery that I am going to win, but that lottery gave me a free pilot's certificate and sent me to Vietnam to fly in 1971, 1972 and parts of 1973.

I was in Vietnam during the time that Jane Fonda made her trip to the North, giving aid and comfort to the enemy. I was in Vietnam during the time that there were demonstrations in the streets back home. I was there during the time that our soldiers were cursed at and spit on. Today, as I beat around the back dusty roads of New Mexico, I encounter those same soldiers that I encountered back then. For those soldiers who are my age, who are on walkers, life has been difficult.

There is a common greeting for soldiers of that era. It is welcome home, brother, or welcome home, sister, because they were never thanked for their duty and they were never welcomed home with parades with yellow ribbons. We were snuck back into the country.

I have brought a couple of photos to help us remember, to remember the people who were trying to get out of Saigon, not just Americans, but those people who had sided with us. They are crawling up the ladder trying to get into the helicopter. The helicopters proceeded out to carriers, then the helicopters were pushed off the side of the carriers. This is the way we left Vietnam.

I bring this up because I am beginning to see the same thing today. My colleague yesterday spoke of this resolution and mentioned that the resolution was vague, where people of very different beliefs could believe that it represented them. If you support the war, you believe that it supports your position. If you are opposed, you will somehow believe that this is the one step that is going to stop us.

Yet it really does nothing, the vague language, that clever language points out, this is not a time for cleverness, it is a time for decision, because I will be a constant voice for our soldiers. I read and I hear the comments today.

I read when Chrissie Hynde says, ''Let's get rid of all the economic (expletive) this country represents! Bring it on. I hope the Muslims win!''

I hear from the left, William Arkin, ''Those soldiers should be grateful that the American public . . . do still offer their support to them, and their respect . . .

''So we pay the soldiers a decent wage, take care of their families, provide them with housing and medical care and vast social support systems and ship obscene amenities into the war zone for them, we support them in every possible way, and their attitude is that we should in addition roll over and play dead.''

□ 1200

Our friends on the other side of the aisle, I do not discount their intent, but I know what they are trying to do. They are doing the same thing that was done in Vietnam: they are trying to feed that hungry tiger that lives on the left, that hates the American way of life, that hates the American military, that will do anything to discredit, disrespect, and discount the service of our soldiers.

My friends, you will not be able to appease the left with this toothless resolution that you are presenting. You know that your own Members, some of your Members, have called for defunding; but defunding is going to allow the exit that looks like this, and it is going to allow the mass catastrophe, the mass killings that are going to occur, and that is all part of the problem.

But before you allow your friends, who would never vote for me, who disrespect our soldiers so much, before you empower them and before you encourage them, I would recommend that you think carefully about just cleanly bringing our soldiers home.

If you are going to do nothing in the resolution, you have an obligation to do no harm. This resolution does no harm. This resolution empowers our enemy, encourages our enemy, and encourages people who are going to disrespect our soldiers. I recommend a vote against the resolution.

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I know of no one in this House, whether you be to the left or to the right, who does not believe in our troops and our soldiers, who does not respect them and honor them. In fact, I think that by having every Member have the opportunity to speak on this

floor to talk about their patriotism is exactly what is supposed to happen in the people's House.

With that, I am proud to yield 5½ minutes to a man who was one of the leaders in opposition to giving the President the authority to unilaterally go into Iraq, a man who is steady and effective on the Ways and Means Committee, the gentleman from Texas, the Honorable LLOYD DOGGETT

Mr. DOGGETT. I thank the gentleman.

This debate is late, very late, thousands of deaths too late. This escalation scheme is an unmitigated disaster.

President Bush seems determined to continue to make the same old mistakes, just make them a little bit bigger; defying sound military judgement; defying the Iraq Study Group; defying the wishes of our allies and the Iraqis themselves; and, most particularly, defying the will of the American people.

This President continues to pursue a go-it-alone strategy in Iraq. Like most every problem that he has created, and there are many, he seeks only to pass it along to his successor, who we will elect next year—pass along in this case what is no doubt the most colossal foreign policy failure in American history.

The administration's top budget official told me in a hearing just last week that ''the best minds in the Pentagon'' see no need to fund this escalation, which has not yet really begun, for more than another seven months. In truth, our military has been so overstretched that it cannot sustain a prolonged escalation, even when it unfairly recalls inadequately supplied troops for a second, third, and fourth tour of duty. Little wonder that the Secretary of Defense, Mr. Gates, admitted last week that he is already looking for another plan after this escalation falls short.

This week, this House, we say ''stop the increase.'' And next, we must begin the decrease with a phased withdrawal from Iraq. We should not act precipitously, but we must move very expeditiously to extract our troops from the crossfire of the warring factions in this civil war quagmire.

To our troops, whose courage we honor today in this very resolution, we say to you, those of who you who are out there on the front lines today, we will do everything we can to protect you; but we will also be working as hard as we can to bring you home safely to your families sooner rather than later.

There is a better way to show support for our troops than just sending more of them to be killed. There is a better way than continuing to give this President a blank check for war funding. Unless we move forward to place firm limitations on the appropriations, we will leave this war-making President constrained only by DICK CHENEY's imagination.

The words of our adversaries in this debate have often been very short, but their true conflict is not really with us; it is with reality. They are in a losing war with the truth. Iraq has never been the central front in the war on terrorism. Like the alleged connection between 9/11 and Iraq, like the claim that Saddam's nuclear mushroom cloud was looming just over the horizon, this charge is but another falsehood foisted off on the gullible.

The central front on the war on terrorism was largely abandoned by President Bush in his ideological rush to invade Iraq. Vital resources and expertise that were needed to capture Osama bin Laden and the terrorists who caused 9/11 were cut in Afghanistan when President Bush ran into Iraq. The real war on terrorism suffered a major setback from which today it has still never recovered. That is the only ''cut and run'' that now endangers our families. Nor does this debate in the people's House embolden the enemies of democracy when we exercise democracy here in America.

To me, the terrorists seem mighty emboldened with their daily death and destruction that they wreaked across the Middle East long before anyone ever conceived this resolution. Frankly, it is the administration that is the terrorists' top recruiter.

As we predicted at the outset, this war is creating new generations of terrorists who view it as a war against all Islam. We cannot kill our enemies fast enough with the current policies creating more of them every day.

And now this President is stoking the flames of war with Iran. Ironically, that is the only country in the world to have directly benefited from his attacking Iraq. Widening the war to Iran with the macho slogan that ''boys go to Baghdad, but real men go to Tehran'' risks an even wider, even more destabling debacle that can eventually involve our families in a third world war.

Having failed entirely to learn any lessons from Vietnam, this administration seems to already have forgotten our experience in Iraq. Some here who profess to be conservative have been very liberal with billions of misspent taxpayers' dollars and very liberal with the blood of others in the sand of Iraq.

President Bush was absolutely correct when he personally declared his war in Iraq to be a ''catastrophic success.'' He has certainly been successful at creating one catastrophe after another in Iraq.

Our Nation is great enough with sufficient resources and creativity to change course, but each day we delay we sink further into a quagmire from which fewer and fewer choices remain. We must step back from the abyss

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield now 5 minutes to a longstanding member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and presently a member of the Ways and Means Committee, the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY).

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, almost 4 years ago our brave men and women in uniform defeated the armed forces of a brutal tyrant, and he has been brought to justice.

In the years since Saddam's fall, our troops have won thousands of battles, taken numerable objectives, built schools and utility systems, and provided all types of humanitarian relief in countless villages, towns, and cities ravaged by sectarian violence. But now our fighting men and women are thrust into a civil war that pits religious and ethnic factions against each other. Lurking amid Iraq's civilian population, they mercilessly kill their fellow Iraqis.

These fanatical killers plant thousands of explosive devices and crouch in thousands of ambush positions to attack our troops, who seek to replace senseless sectarian violence with a measure of stability so that the dysfunctional and deceitful Maliki government can survive. To fight and die in the middle of an Iraqi civil war fueled by centuries-old religious hatred is not why we sent our troops into harm's way.

Our troops have stepped up for 4 years. They have paid the price in blood. Now is the time for Iraqi authorities to step up. If they are ever to do so, it will be only after they understand that it will be their blood, not the blood of young Americans, that will be shed to stop the horrific sectarian violence that is tearing Iraq apart.

Throwing 20,000 additional Americans into the carnage of a Sunni-Shiite civil war can only allow the Iraqi Government to continue to shirk its responsibility for the security of its own people, as they continue to use our troops to eliminate their adversaries rather than sitting down and negotiating with them to share power and oil revenue.

After the election, the President said he heard the concerns of the American people and he promised a new plan for victory, but what he has proposed is merely a continuation of the same failed policy. Sending 20,000 more American troops to Iraq will do nothing to further the cause of victory. It will only prolong the agony.

Our mission in Iraq remains dependent on a viable Iraqi Government with both the ability and the will to confront the extremists that are tearing that country apart. The Maliki government has demonstrated neither the ability nor the will to take the action necessary to bring an end to this sectarian bloodshed.

The Members of his government at the highest levels and Maliki's strongest supporters are using their office to aid the insurgents and are directly involved in the sectarian violence gripping and destroying Iraq and killing our troops.

At a time when we should be doing everything we can to promote diplomacy in the Middle East, our attention to resources have instead been focused

on a civil war in Iraq which threatens to envelop the surrounding nations and further inflame the region.

The effect of this open-ended conflict on our military preparedness cannot be overstated. We have zero active duty or Reserve brigades in the United States that are combat-ready. One quarter of our troops deployed in Iraq are National Guard and Reserves. Our Guard units are stretched so thin, only 30 percent of their essential equipment remains. These units are the ones we depend on in case of domestic emergency. By further extending our commitment in Iraq, we are compromising our safety here at home.

In my home State of Nevada, one-third of our Guardsmen have served in Iraq, and with this surge they will face the possibility of further tours and extended time away from their families.

I commend our troops for their bravery in carrying out their mission. They have not let us down; we have let them down. We cannot ask them to continue their sacrifice while we wait for the Iraqi Government to step up.

I remain opposed to a fixed timetable for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq, and I realize the grave consequences we face if our mission fails. But that does not mean that I will give a blank check to the President for a surge when he has not given us a clear understanding of why such an increase is needed or how it will help us succeed.

President Bush has yet to put forth a strategy that outlines where we are going, how we are going to get there, how long is it going to take, how much is it going to cost, and at what sacrifice to the American people. He must define the meaning of victory before it is too late. ''Mission accomplished.'' ''Bring them on.'' ''Stay the course.'' And ''we will stand down when the Iraqis stand up.'' Our campaign slogan is not ''thoughtful strategies for victory.''

The President has failed to make the case for sending 20,000 more U.S. troops into a civil war with an open-ended mission and a bull's-eye on their back. I say yes and thank you to our troops, and I say no to the surge. I ask my colleagues to join me in doing the same for the good of our families, our military and our Nation.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Mr. PAUL GILLMOR, who is a United States Air Force veteran. And he was a judge advocate, so he knows some of the legal problems involved in this thing. I would like to yield him 5 minutes.

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

Mr. GILLMOR. I thank the gentleman from Texas, who is a real American hero, for yielding me the time.

□ 1215

Mr. Speaker, the resolution we are considering does not do a single thing to help our troops or to achieve the goals of America, our allies or the Iraqi people.

Congress is spending an entire week on a nonbinding resolution that, even if it passes, will not change the course of action in Iraq. Our time could have been spent much better debating real issues, such as how to most effectively win the war that terrorists are waging on us.

Now, personally, I am skeptical that an increase of 20,000 troops will make the difference and that it will stabilize Baghdad and Iraq. But, for me, the question is, to whom should we listen regarding operational decisions in Iraq? Should we listen to the recommendations of the U.S. military or to the politicians in Washington?

And as an Air Force veteran, I think we should accept the recommendations of our military. And in that respect, 2 weeks ago the General in command of ground forces in Baghdad said, and I quote, ''By bringing more troops in, it provides us the opportunity to work with them, to provide more time to defeat this threat, which is both an al Qaeda threat as well as sectarian violence.''

I have visited in Germany in the medical facilities with our wounded troops from Iraq. A member of my family served a year in a combat zone in Baghdad, and I am incredibly proud of our men and women in the military. They are talented. They are dedicated. They are professional and they are the best in the world. And we owe them a tremendous debt of gratitude.

Now, even though it is nonbinding, there is, I think, a large omission in this resolution. While it does compliment the actions of our military men and women, nowhere does it commit to continue providing funding for troops in the field. And at a time when some in this town are talking about cutting off funding for our troops, I think we should commit to providing full funding for our Armed Forces as long as they are in the field.

Now, there is no guarantee that this troop buildup will be successful, or that the Iraqis will succeed in finally taking over the security situation in a responsible way. But what we do know is, at this point there is not a better plan proposed which has a chance of victory. And we also know that failure in Iraq threatens the security of the United States, the security of the Middle East, and, in fact, the whole world.

Early last year I had the privilege of leading a delegation to Asia, where we met with the Prime Ministers of India, of Thailand and Singapore. And those are all countries that are now and have been under terrorist attack. All of them agreed with the need to cooperate for security purposes, and with the importance of winning the war against terrorism in Iraq because of the consequences of not winning would have on the rest of the world.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution has two purposes. First, it rejects the only plan which has been suggested by military leaders with a chance of success in Iraq. Second, it begins this Congress down a path which ends with cutting off funding for our troops and abandoning our foreign policy because of failed congressional fortitude. I am opposed to the resolution and opposed to our micromanaging of the war on terror.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to a member of the Ways and Means Committee, as well as the Judiciary Committee, the distinguished gentleman from Alabama, ARTUR DAVIS.

Mr. DAVIS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, approximately 24 hours from now, this House will bring this debate to a conclusion and it will vote. And the vote, based on everything we expect, will be an overwhelming one. It will include people from the left of this House, the right of this House, it will include people from both political parties. It will include people who supported this war and who believed in it 5 years ago, and it will include those who have questioned it from its inception.

And there is a reason for this consensus, Mr. Speaker. There is broad agreement on several things in this House. There is broad agreement that we have been caught in the cross-hairs of a civil war between two sets of radical Islamist fundamentalists, neither of which shares our values.

There is broad agreement in this House that the human and material cost of this effort has gone too high, and there is broad agreement in this House that the moral obligation is not to put 21,000 more soldiers into harm's way; but to do the opposite, to begin the process of pulling our men and women out of this cauldron that is now Iraq.

And there is broad agreement on one other point, Mr. Speaker. It is this: that the President of the United States is wrong to say that it doesn't matter to him what this Congress thinks, or what this country thinks.

I am reminded, Mr. Speaker, I am one of the younger Members of this House, I was in college a little more recently than some of my colleagues.

I had a very esteemed professor back in the 1980s named Richard Newstadt who wrote about the American Presidency for a number of years. And one night he invited all the freshmen in the class to come over and to have a dialogue with him about the future of the Presidency. And a number of us said to him, Mr. Newstadt, what do you fear about the Presidency of the United States? And it is interesting what he said, and it is relevant today. He said, I don't fear that someone corrupt will become President one day. I don't fear that someone incompetent will become President. There are too many guardrails built in the system. The process is too exacting for that to happen. But what I fear, he said, is that one day someone will come in that office who is absolutely convinced he is right about something on which he is absolutely

wrong. And he said this: that if the country is frightened enough, if we are in enough danger, that enough people may think that what is rigid is what is strong.

Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Speaker, several of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have said that this resolution carries no weight, no legal or moral force. I will tell you the weight that this carries, my friends. Twenty-four hours from now, 65 percent of the Members of this Chamber will send a signal to the American people that we have heard their voices. That is a powerful thing when I think of all the people in this country who sent a clear signal, last November 7, that they were not heard.

And I end with this point. A number of my colleagues in this debate, our adversaries in this debate have said that there is a group in Washington. There is a group of people on the left. Some of you have said there is a group on the other side of the aisle who want to defund, or who don't somehow have the strength, the fiber, to support our troops.

I remind you, my friends, your disagreement is not with the Democratic Caucus. It is not even with the 50 or so in your ranks who will vote for this resolution. It is a disagreement with the 65 percent of this country. It is a disagreement with the people in my very conservative State of Alabama, 60 percent of whom now think this war is wrong and who say to me, Mr. DAVIS, why on Earth have we taken sides in a battle between radical Islamic fundamentalists? Why is a blood feud between Shiia and Sunni worth the spilling of American blood?

They are the ones you are saying are wrong. They are the ones you are saying lack strength.

So, Mr. Speaker, I simply end by thanking my colleagues who had the good judgment to be right about the futility of this war from the outset, by thanking the colleagues who were wrong 5 years ago and are right today, and by asking one last thing.

The President of the United States, who brags that he has watched none of this debate, if he could only hear just one plea from debate, that he listen to some fact, some evidence, because, Mr. Speaker, this is the problem that we face with this President. No set of facts, no set of truths can tell him that he is wrong. Tomorrow this Chamber will tell him so

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 5 minutes to DAVE CAMP, a fellow Member of Congress from Michigan, and a fellow member of the Ways and Means Committee, one of the ranking members.

Mr. CAMP of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the distinguished gentleman for yielding, and I want to thank him also for his distinguished service in the United States Congress, the United States Air Force, seven of those as a prisoner of war.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to this nonbinding resolution. And I share with my colleagues, our servicemen and women and their families, the wish that this war was over and won. It is not, and the resolution before us today does nothing to resolve this conflict, does nothing to reduce the loss of American life, does nothing to stabilize Iraq and does nothing to advance our security.

I would like to use my time today to relate some of the comments that I have received from my constituents in the Fourth District of Michigan. From Big Rapids: ''The Congressmen and women who are opposed to these plans should come up with better solutions! Don't penalize our military men and women by making politics a part of their safety and well-being!''

From my hometown of Midland: ''Please stop playing politics with our lives and the lives of young people who are defending our country.''

From Alma: ''I am sick of the partisan politics. We went into Iraq united, but we have let politics divide us. It is time to realize some things are bigger than the political parties!''

Friends, we may often disagree. But the facts are, regardless of how it began, and irrespective of the benefit of hindsight, we are at war and Iraq is the central battleground.

Islamic extremists are waging a jihad against us, and they are struggling to make Iraq a base camp. Our focus must be on winning; and, disturbingly, I see no mention of winning, succeeding, or victory in this resolution. That in itself is telling of just how the other side perceives this conflict: not in terms of defeating an enemy of America, but in terms of defeating a political foe.

Our troops deserve better. The American people demand more from their leaders.

Again, in the words of one of my constituents from Bannister: ''I hope Congress is tough enough to do what works, not just what is politically correct. We need to move carefully and deliberately, showing a united front, or we are again going to be the victims of some outrageous terrorist attack.''

Sadly, the new majority does not seem to understand what so many Americans readily grasp. ''If you support the troops, you must support the mission or you send the wrong message to the enemy,'' as it was so aptly put by a constituent from Ashley.

From Farwell: ''Congress needs to get behind the President and help, not hurt, the morale of the soldiers that are fighting. They believe in their mission!''

And I believe in them, which is why I cannot and will not support this resolution.

As I conclude my remarks, I want to leave you with two comments. The first is from Traverse City: ''We should all pull together and get the job done.''

And the second, from an airman from Corunna: ''Thank you for the much needed support of me and my fellow airmen.''

I hope that once we dispose of this nonbinding resolution, our focus turns to supporting our servicemen and women, making America more secure and achieving the victory our military personnel are putting their lives on the line for.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield 5 minutes to the chairman of the Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee, the distinguished gentleman from Indiana, Representative PETER VISCLOSKY.

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this resolution and express my profound disapproval of President Bush's decision to increase our troop levels in Iraq.

Late last year the President had an opportunity to create a new strategy. The voice of the American people was heard at this past election. The voice of the Iraq Study Group gave the President a bipartisan plan to draw down our troops. New leadership at the Pentagon also could have been a voice of change of strategy. But President Bush did not listen to any of these voices. He decided to escalate our troop levels in Iraq. No time frame, no measurable benchmarks, no end.

Mr. Speaker, if President Bush chooses an erroneous path, then it is our constitutional responsibility to show the way.

I have the deepest respect and gratitude for our women and men in uniform. I honor their commitment, their courage and their sacrifice.

□ 1230

Our troops have done everything we have asked them to do. They overwhelmed the old Iraqi Government and captured Saddam Hussein. They provided security while Iraq formed its provisional government, approved a constitution, and elected a permanent government.

Nine individuals from the First Congressional District of Indiana have already given their lives and made the supreme sacrifice for our Nation. These brave men and women will always be remembered: Sergeant Jeanette Winters; Specialist Gregory Sanders; Sergeant Duane Rios; Specialist Roy Buckley; Private First Class John Amos, II; Private Luis Perez; Private First Class Nathan Stahl; Corporal Bryan Wilson; Private First Class Steven Sirko; Specialist Nicholas Idalski; Specialist Adam Harting; and Staff Sergeant Jonathan Rojas.

I am so proud of the dedication and service of the people of my State in the United States military. We owe them a commitment equal to their courage. We owe them the courage to act on our conviction.

With the passage of 4 years and the loss of over 3,000 brave Americans and countless others who have been permanently injured, I regret to recall that we were told we needed to invade Iraq because Saddam Hussein possessed materials for weapons of mass destruction. None could be found. I regret that

the President felt compelled to justify the invasion by claiming a connection between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein when the 9/11 Commission found this was simply not true.

Our situation in Iraq has redirected our Nation from its true mission. The war in Iraq has diverted our attention from the global war on terror. We need to reconstitute our Armed Forces. We also need a strategic redeployment of our forces that will give us the ability to focus our efforts directly on the global terror networks that target innocent people around the world.

I voted against the authorization of the Iraq invasion in 2003. There was no plan or exit strategy then, and there are clearly no good options now. Yet the Iraq Study Group provided a bipartisan perspective on some changes in strategy. They called for a drawdown of troops and for intensive diplomatic efforts to resolve the sectarian violence there. We need to listen to their recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, it is not too late to change our strategy, and the first step along the new way is to prevent the President's escalation of this war. It is time to obligate the Iraqi Government to assume the full burden and consequences of governing their country. We need to listen to the majority of the American people. We need to listen to reasoned voices such as the Iraq Study Group. The time to pursue a new course is now. I support our troops, and that is why I support this resolution.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 5½ minutes to the great Congressman from the State of Minnesota, an ex-Marine, JOHN KLINE.

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I will overlook the ''ex-Marine'' slight. Never an ex-Marine; always a Marine.

It is a tremendous honor for me today to even be on the same floor as this great American here. We heard earlier today the hardship of some of our servicemen and -women missing a holiday with their families, and I know in my 25 years in the Marines I missed a number of those. But there is nobody who has missed more holidays with his family than this great American next to me.

We have heard a lot of speeches during this so-called debate. I am not sure how much real debate there is, but certainly a lot of speeches. Some of them have been very eloquent. I think of Mr. MCHUGH the other night giving one of the best speeches I have ever heard on the floor of this House. Some of them have been partisan. Some of them have been shrill. Some persuasive; some not. We have heard a number of opinions expressed, and it reminds me a week or so ago we had a hearing in the Armed Services Committee and we had three experts, Ph.D.s all of them, experts in the field of international relations and military operations.

One of them, the former Secretary of Defense under President Clinton, and it turns out that at the end of the hearing, each of the three of them had a different idea about what we ought to do. None of them supported what the President had been doing. One of them sort of supported what the President was doing. But each of them had different ideas. They had an opinion, arguably an informed opinion, but an opinion nevertheless.

And on this floor we have heard more opinions. We have heard people say, I don't agree with this; I think this is a bad idea; or I think this is a good idea. We have heard some people say I have a better idea; or I am a member of a caucus who has a better idea; or I propose this; or I think that. And it kind of reminds me why it is a very bad idea to conduct a war by committee. But I fully acknowledge that people are allowed to have opinions and certainly every Member of this body can have an opinion.

I remember the principal author of this resolution before us, the distinguished chairman of the Armed Services Committee, stood up on the other side of the aisle here on the first day of this debate and he said, ''Everybody is entitled to their own opinions but not to their own facts.'' So I would just like to take a little bit of my remaining time here to talk about some of the claims and some of the facts that have been brought forward in this debate.

One of the proponents said the new plan ''ignores the recommendations of the military commanders on the ground.'' How many times have we heard that in these two days? Well, what is the truth? General Petraeus, the new commander of the multinational force in Iraq, confirmed by the Senate with no dissenting votes, said: ''If we are to carry out the multinational force-Iraq mission in accordance with the new strategy, the additional forces that have been directed to move to Iraq will be essential . . . '' He said that last month.

General Odierno, a new U.S. commander, Corps commander, says: ''This is about Iraqis taking charge of their own security. In order for them to do that, we have to buy them time to continue to train and for the government to become more legitimate to the eyes of the Iraqi people. They are doing that by moving forward. By bringing more troops in, it provides us the opportunity to work with them, to provide more time, and defeat this threat, which is both al Qaeda threat as well as sectarian violence.''

Even General Casey last month said he thought we needed more troops.

Another claim has been by one of our colleagues: ''Prime Minister al-Maliki has indicated in virtually every way he can that he too opposes the surge.'' And yet on January 13, Prime Minister Maliki said: ''The strategic plan announced by U.S. President George W. Bush represents the common vision and mutual understanding between the Iraqi Government and the U.S. Administration''?

I have more examples here, but one that we have heard over and over and over again in various forms was stated by one of our colleagues yesterday saying: ''Our President, again, is ignoring . . . members of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group who opposed this escalation.''

This is the book. I commend it to every American.

I would like to quote now from my dear, dear long-time friend and hunting partner, the former Secretary of State, James A. Baker III, who said on January 30 of this year: ''This is the language and all of the language of the report with respect to a surge: '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.' The only two conditions are 'short term' and 'the commander in Iraq determines it would be effective.' ''

Both of these conditions have been met.

There have been many claims of fact which I have some counterarguments with.

I would just say to all of my colleagues that I would concur with Chairman SKELTON that we are entitled to our own opinion. We can certainly express it. But we are not, in fact, entitled to our own facts. So let's stick to the facts.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield at this time 5 minutes to the distinguished chairman of the Science Committee, Representative BART GORDON of Tennessee.

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. I thank my friend for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, as I have watched this healthy debate over the last 2 days, I keep thinking about an e-mail that I received from a lady in Springfield, Tennessee. You would never accuse this woman of not supporting the troops because her husband was a soldier serving in Iraq. He was a month from returning home to his wife and his two daughters, but he was ordered to stay in Iraq for another 6 months because our troops are spread so thin. He hasn't been home since October of 2005. These are the words that she wrote to me: ''Mr. Gordon, we need to help other countries, but there are already 3,000 families in America whose lives will never be the same. I want, need, and would love to see my husband again.''

Mr. Speaker, this lady supports the troops. I support the troops in Iraq, and I believe everyone in this Chamber supports our troops. They perform their missions with bravery and honor, and I commend them for the job they are doing. But I am unconvinced that deploying more troops and spending more money is the right strategy. And I am not the only one. General Colin Powell said in December: ''I am not persuaded that another surge of troops into Baghdad for purposes of suppressing this civil war will work.''

General George Casey, the former commander of U.S. forces in Iraq, said last month: ''It's always been my view that a heavy and sustained American military presence was not going to solve the problem in Iraq . . . ''

In December it was reported that the Joint Chiefs of Staff unanimously disagreed with the concept of troop escalation.

General Colin Powell, General George Casey, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, these are men who support the troops. Yet these American generals, the Iraqi Study Group, and the Iraqi Prime Minister have all opposed this troop surge.

We have had four other surges since we first went to Iraq. None produced a lasting change on the ground. In October more combat troops were sent into Baghdad to fight the growing violence there. Unfortunately, the sectarian violence has only grown worse. Many have endured great sacrifices in the 4 years this war has been waged. More than 3,000 Americans have lost their lives; 23,000 more have been wounded. We have spent more than $350 billion with many billions more to go. We have been in Iraq longer than we were involved in World War II. And there is no end in sight.

For 1,300 years Sunnis have been fighting Shias. Now is the time for the Iraqis to take more responsibility for securing the peace in their own nation. No one has offered any evidence that 20,000 more American troops would change the direction of a 4-year-old war or 1,300 years of history.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is now my pleasure to yield for the purpose of making a unanimous-consent request to the distinguished Congresswoman from the U.S. territory of Guam, MADELEINE BORDALLO.

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

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 63.

I rise today to acknowledge and honor the service and sacrifice made by military and civilian personnel who have served and who are serving today in Iraq, Afghanistan, on the Horn of Africa, and elsewhere around the world in defense of the national security of the United States. These individuals, and their families who support them from home, are to be commended for their dedication to our country.

I represent the island of Guam. Sons and daughters of Guam, and those from our neighboring islands in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Micronesia, Palau, and the Marshalls, serve proudly in the United States Armed Forces. These individuals serve at a critical point in our country's history and we are grateful for their dedication to their mission and their commitment to ensuring our freedom.

I have been able to visit on eight occasions with our servicemembers deployed in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Horn of Africa to see first hand their living conditions, learn about their missions, and gain a better understanding of the challenges that confront them. All of us on Guam are immensely proud of our men and women from Guam who serve our Nation. I have heard their stories and have been humbled by their struggles, their heartbreaking loss, and their inspiring instances of achievement. I have come away from each of these visits with profound gratitude for their sacrifices and their professionalism.

Serving in defense of the United States does not come without heartache and sacrifice. Eighteen servicemembers from Guam and our neighboring islands in the Pacific, Saipan, Pohnpei, and Palau, are among the more than 3,000 reported by the Department of Defense to have made the ultimate sacrifice in the Global War on Terror. Our island communities united to mourn the passing of each one of our sons and daughters, as we mourn the loss of all servicemembers. We will continue to provide support to grieving families who suffer the burden of these losses. Every American owes a debt of gratitude—albeit an un-payable one—to our fallen and injured servicemembers and their families.

The year 2007 also will be witness to more tours of duty in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa for our active duty, Guard and Reserve servicemen and women. For some it will be their second, third, and fourth tours of duty in those theaters of operations. This is a lot to ask even of the world's finest fighting men and women. They serve proudly and their morale remains high and their fighting spirits remain strong. God bless their families and friends who remain behind supportive and proud of their loved ones.

We owe our servicemembers and their families our best efforts toward helping our Armed Forces achieve an expeditious and honorable completion to Operation Iraqi Freedom. This should be a primary goal for all of us. But the situation in Iraq will not yield a solution easily. Nevertheless, the President, in consultation with this Congress, must endeavor to find one. And it is for this reason that I introduced H.R. 744, the Iraq Policy Revitalization and Congressional Oversight Enhancement Act. H.R. 744 also would aim to revitalize U.S.-Iraq policy; would require the President to provide to Congress a plan that addresses the whole of the challenge in Iraq; would improve congressional oversight of Operation Iraqi Freedom and events in Iraq; would seek to increase the commitment made by the international community to the stability and security of Iraq; and would ultimately, help bring our troops home in an honorable, expeditious manner without sacrificing their mission.

The Iraq Study Group, co-chaired by former Secretary of State James Baker and former Congressman Lee Hamilton, concluded that many of the challenges in Iraq are of an international nature, and they become more so—not less so—as each day passes. As a result, it is becoming increasingly important to view United States policy toward Iraq as a part of and not isolated from United States policy toward the region as a whole. It also is becoming increasingly important for countries in the region and the international community to become more fully engaged in the effort to stabilize Iraq. The Iraq Study Group recommended that we support efforts to promote a multilateral agreement between the United States, Coalition countries, regional states, and multilateral organizations. A multilateral agreement will help bring renewed focus to and enhanced international cooperation toward resolving Iraq's problems. A multilateral agreement will help reaffirm the existence of a united front against elements that seek to destabilize Iraq, and thus bring added pressure to bear on those actors. Lastly, a multilateral agreement would provide for the formation of a forum in which current and future regional security, political, and economic issues regarding Iraq's continued development can be discussed and addressed. The establishment and maintenance of conciliatory relations between Iraq, its neighbors, regional states and the international community is essential to stabilizing Iraq internally.

As the debate today on H. Con. Res. 63 continues, I take this opportunity to call attention to H.R. 744 and the various other legislative proposals that have been brought forth by members of this body to help us bring Operation Iraqi Freedom to a conclusion. In the weeks ahead I hope that this body will seriously consider these measures. It is very difficult to consider the merits of the President's decision to deploy additional troops to Iraq at this time without having received from the Administration a comprehensive plan that clearly communicates to the Congress and the American people exactly what is necessary to complete the mission of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to yield 3 minutes to Representative JOHN SHIMKUS from Illinois. He is an ex-Army Academy graduate and served in the United States Army and still is in the Reserves.

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, these are real e-mails from veterans, active duty members, and National Guard and Reservists:

''John, my son, a Marine gunny sergeant embedded with the Iraqi Army around Rimadi, called a few weeks ago. I asked him if he knew about the President's plan for more troops. He hadn't heard about it, but his only comment to me was 'We can use them.' Please support the President and the troops. It may be our last, best chance to win this thing. Winning is the imperative. Semper Fi.''

And another: ''We have to let our generals be generals and wage this war as only they are trained to do and have hope that the announced troop buildup will be the final key that is needed by the Iraqis to build a secure, united country.''

□ 1245

We have to hope that it is not too late for the U.S. to make a difference in Iraq.''

Another: ''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.''

Still another: ''My fellow Guardsmen are ready. We will do whatever is asked of us. Please ensure that the resources, funds and equipment continue to flow. Supporting the troops means giving us the means to do our job.''

And another: ''We also need to stay in Iraq and put forth the necessary will and resources that will allow our strategy to succeed.''

And another: ''Moreover, our troops need more open rules of engagement to do their job effectively.''

Another e-mail: ''Elections have consequences, and for our recent election the consequences have been a major setback in the war on terror and a greater threat to terrorist attack at home.''

Still another: ''Like Vietnam, our enemies view us as not having the stomach to fight a protracted war. If we withdraw, however, the credibility of the U.S., our military, and our assurances would be lost for years, probably decades.''

Another: ''The overwhelming response among officers is we must stay and finish what we have started. Many of these officers have built strong relationships with local Iraqi and Afghan citizens who want to raise their family in peace.''

Another: ''We do in fact have many more Iraqi Army and National Police units moving into Baghdad and many are effectively partnering with U.S. units.''

Another: ''They did pass their budget for 2007 last week,'' sooner than the U.S. Congress, incidentally, ''and have made some progress with other legislation, which indicates they can work some political compromises.''

I will end with this: ''I would hope that your colleagues would be able to continue to support what we are doing, because it honestly does have a reasonable chance at success.''

These are real communications with real soldiers, Active Duty, in Iraq, National Guardsmen, reservists, and veterans throughout our country who say there is no substitute for victory. We have to win this campaign. It is in our national security interest to support moderate Arab states.

John, my son, a Marine Gunny Sgt. imbedded with the Iraqi army around Rimadi, called a few weeks ago. I asked him if he knew about the President's plan for more troops. He hadn't heard about it, but his only comment to me was: "We can use them!" Please support the President and the Troops. Maybe our last, best chance to win this thing. Winning is the imperative. Semper Fi!

We have to let our generals be generals and wage this war as only they are trained to do, and have hope that the announced troop buildup will be the final 3 key that's needed by the Iraqis to build a secure and united country.

We have to have hope that it's not too late for the U.S. to make a difference in Iraq.

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.

The main effort is really the political reconciliation and the security of the population is the key precondition to that. The language and some action from the Iraqi government and Army leaders have been good in the past several weeks. The next several months will be critical—probably decisive—and I believe there is reason to be realistically hopeful.

I believe that what we are doing in Iraq and Afghanistan supports the NSS. What I have heard in the debate is that we no longer have a security interest in Iraq. What part of out NSS is to support moderate Muslim governments? Another part of the NSS addresses humanitarian rights, to include rights of women.

My fellow Guardsmen are ready. We will do whatever is asked of us. Please, ensure that the resources, funds and equipment, continue to flow. Supporting the troops means giving us the means to do our jobs.

We have not had a failed Iraq policy—we have just had overly optimistic expectations of how fast the Iraqis would be able to establish a stable government and a unified country that functions in a manner to our satisfaction. Ironically, we want the Iraqis to pursue a unity government and national reconciliation, but we don't do that ourselves. The partisanship that we are seeing here in the U.S. is no different that the partisanship that we are seeing in Iraq.

We also need to stay in Iraq and put forth the necessary will and resources that will allow our strategy to succeed. Imagine a Super Bowl football team quitting the game in the third quarter simply because they were behind. The premise is so absurd it is inconceivable so too would be our quitting a war to protect our way of life simply because battlefield conditions are not going perfectly.

Moreover, our troops need more open rules of engagement to do their job effectively. This is war, and they are soldiers, not police officers. The U.S. and Iraqi governments must expect civilian casualties and collateral damage. It's unavoidable. The irony in this matter is that most Iraqi people would welcome the increase security.

Elections have consequences. And for our recent election, the consequences have been a major set back in the war on terror and a greater threat to terrorist attack at home.

Like Vietnam, our enemies view us as not having the stomach to fight a protracted war. If we withdraw, however, the credibility of the U.S., our military, and our assurances would be lost for years, probably decades.

The Iraqis are watching all of this, and they can see which way the wind is blowing. They know if we leave either the Sunni insurgency or the Iranians would likely come in, and their newly gained freedoms would be lost. This reality shapes the thoughts and actions of all Iraqi officials, from Prime Minister al-Maliki, down to the police officers on the street.

Many Americans are in denial about the threat from radical Islam. Unfortunately, it may take another 9/11 before they wake up. God help us if one of our cities gets nuked when that happens.

The overwhelming response among officers is that we must stay and finish what we started. Many of these officers have built strong relationships with local Iraqi and Afghan citizens who want to raise their families in peace. They feel we have given our word as a country that we will stand by them. I agree with this sentiment.

Lincoln/Sherman figured out that to truly defeat the south, he had to march to Savannah to convince the locals that it was not worth continued conflict. WWII had similar actions for resolution like Hiroshima. While these were waged against conventional forces, Congress must understand that the current conflict is more than between insurgents and U.S./Coalition forces.

If we do not have the will to do this hard work, we need to get out now. We cannot continue to try to get the job done with the minimum force. If anything we should send more than we think we need. Our focus on being liberators has caused us to misjudge what is needed. You cannot liberate until you have gained control. We never got there and must do so now.

Speaking of which, my two cents. The most basic job of government is to protect its citizens. If the Surge is properly designed to do that, then it is a good idea. I say give it a chance, even though it should have been that way to begin with. From my experiences in Desert Storm '91, I firmly believe that most people, Middles Easterners included, just want to protect their family, practice their religion, and have an opportunity to prosper.

We have to be able to go after all the killers regardless of who or where they are. The Iraqi follow-on forces then have to maintain the peace, not bring in their individual hatreds to the power vacuum. Helping them secure their borders from fighters through Jordan and Syria and equipment from Iran is also critical (Navy and Air Force tasks with limited ground support?). Getting the "Rule of Law" established will eventually replace the need for "Self Protection" (Militias).

The biggest hurdle is at home. If the media continues its selective reporting (failures only), then even if its an unqualified success on the ground, it will be perceived as a loss at home due to its depiction on TV and Press reports. Tying Iraqis to a yardstick measuring success or failure seems to be a good idea.

Press the Senate not to pass the latest Resolution limiting support—it is just a grand standing event for presidential hopefuls.

We do in fact have many more Iraqi Army and National Police units moving into Baghdad and many are effectively partnering with U.S. units.

They did pass their budget for 2007 last week (sooner than the U.S. Congress, incidentally) and have made some progress with other legislation, which indicates they can work some political compromises.

Everyone is forced to telescope political, economic, and security reforms that would normally take 7–10 years into 7–10 months.

So the question that you are debating is whether or not $100 billions (less than 0.8% GDP) and tragically, probably 700–900 U.S. soldiers' lives is worth a 50% chance of preventing a national security crisis that will set back U.S. policy for decades.

If you are the parent or spouse of one of those soldiers who may die, it is GD probably not worth it. But if you are a national leader, I would hope that your colleagues would be able to continue to support what we are doing because it honestly does have a reasonable chance of success.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), the vice chairman of the Rules Committee.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from New York for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I oppose the escalation of U.S. forces in Iraq and I strongly oppose this war. We had no basis or justification or right to invade Iraq. It was a mistake. There are no easy answers or solutions before us. No matter what option we pursue, there is no

nice, neat, happy ending. Sometimes you can't fix mistakes.

Hopefully we can make this awful situation less awful. This war should never have happened. That is not just my opinion, it is the opinion of many of the top military leaders in our country. The war has diminished our standing in the world. It has been used as a recruiting tool by the very terrorists we say we want to defeat. It has cost us hundreds of billions of dollars. And, most significantly, we have sacrificed the precious lives of so many of our brave servicemen and women, and thousands more have returned home severely wounded.

Now, I have listened as many of my colleagues have come to the floor and said we must follow our leader and be quiet. Some have even suggested that those of us who support this resolution and want this war to end are doing a disservice to our troops.

Mr. Speaker, for 4 long years, Congress has done absolutely nothing in the face of mistake after mistake after mistake in Iraq. None of us in this Chamber have to wake up tomorrow in Baghdad or Fallujah or Tikrit. None of us have to wake up each morning and go on patrol in Anbar Province. None of us in this Chamber are in harm's way. But we are all responsible, all of us, just like the President, for assigning tens of thousands of our bravest young men and women for being referees in a sectarian civil war.

If we truly want to protect our troops, if we truly are concerned with their safety and well-being, then bring them home and reunite them with their families.

Newsweek columnist Anna Quindlen put it this way: ''There is no better way to support those fighting in Iraq than to guarantee that no more of them die in the service of political miscalculation.''

Mr. Speaker, the American people are way ahead of the politicians in Washington. Citizens of all political persuasions are sick and tired of the political spin and political posturing. Our focus should not be about saving face. Instead, it should be about saving lives.

The people of this country have been misled, they have been deceived, and they have been lied to. Increasingly, people do not trust their government to tell the truth on the war. Mr. Speaker, I don't trust my government to tell me the truth about this war.

There is no military victory to be had. The only hope is a political solution.

The Iraqi Government and the Iraqi people have the power and the ability to move in a different direction, a direction that seeks to calm sectarian violence and heal sectarian divides, respect the rights of all citizens and uphold the rule of law that applies to everyone equally. But they have to choose that path themselves. Regrettably, I have little confidence that the current Iraqi Government will make such a choice. I hope I am wrong.

Mr. Speaker, it is essential to change the dynamic inside Iraq, and to do that it is essential that we dramatically change our policy. That means we must end the U.S. occupation and begin an all-out diplomatic effort to promote reconciliation and an end to the violence. That means we should begin the immediate, safe and orderly withdrawal of our troops from Iraq. That means we should provide protection and political asylum to those in Iraq who have assisted us and who may be in danger because of it. That also means that the United States must demonstrate the maturity and the common sense to talk to political leaders and to countries we don't like, including Syria and Iran.

None of this will be pleasant, none of this will be easy and there are no guarantees that it will work. But I am sure of one thing: What we are doing now is failing. What we are doing now is not healing the divisions in Iraq and is not serving the best national security interests of the United States. Our own intelligence agencies have reported to us that this war is creating more terrorists.

No one in this House enjoys this discussion. Some, I know, wish that somehow this issue would go away. But, Mr. Speaker, it won't. So no matter how uncomfortable this debate is for some of my colleagues, it is long overdue.

The message that Congress will hopefully send tomorrow by passing this resolution is one that the American people want us to send and one that the President needs to hear.

President Lyndon Johnson once remarked, ''It is easy to get into a war, but hard as hell to get out of one.'' The choices before us in the next weeks and months will not be easy. Indeed, it will be difficult, even painful, to extricate ourselves from this war. But it is the right thing to do.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution which strongly supports our troops and opposes this escalation

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I just would like to correct something. We are not occupying Iraq. We are helping the Iraqi government, who has complete control over there trying to win this battle.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to our new representative from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN).

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

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution. There are many flaws in this resolution. One of the most serious is that while it gives lip-service to a desire to support and protect the troops, it turns around and disapproves of the plan that is best calculated by the commanders on the ground to bring order to Baghdad.

This surge is the best way, in the opinion of the commanders, to clamp down on the insurgency, to protect our troops and ultimately to lead to victory. I don't see how you can claim to protect and support the troops while taking away the best option for victory.

That brings up another serious flaw in this resolution: It has no positive alternative. The resolution seems to say that we should go on as before, which I thought my colleagues across the aisle said was unacceptable.

Yet another serious flaw is that Members of Congress, who are many thousands of miles away from the battlefield, are substituting their judgment for that of the commanders in the field. This is foolish and arrogant. This gives rise to a constitutional conflict as well. The Constitution gives the President the power of Commander in Chief. President Bush, who was reelected by a vote of the entire American people just 2 years ago, has the duty and authority to conduct the war in Iraq.

Congress has the power to declare war and to fund or to not fund war, but does not have the power to conduct a war. This constitutional division of powers is vital, because, among other things, a clear chain of command is better calculated to lead to victory with the least possible loss of life. War by committee, on the other hand, does not best serve the interests of our country or our troops.

Because this resolution is so deeply flawed, it will send bad messages if it is passed. It will send a message to our enemies that we are weak and unable to complete a difficult task. It will send a message to our allies that we are undependable. It will send a message to the families and loved ones of our fallen soldiers and marines, to our brave men and women who have been disabled and to the troops in the field, that their sacrifice is in vain because their mission is not worth our commitment. These messages will be destructive, and I urge my colleagues not to go down this road.

If America does abandon Iraq, which many of my colleagues across the aisle want to be the ultimate outcome, destruction will spread across the entire Middle East and will be more likely to come to our own shores.

I know that the struggle against terrorism is difficult, but we cannot give up. Yes, we must learn as we go, and, yes, we must adapt to changing circumstances. But we must not think that retreat will bring relief. We and the entire world will pay a terrible price if we go down that road. This resolution is the first step down that road. I urge the defeat of this resolution.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOLDEN), the vice chairman of the Agriculture Committee and the chairman of the Subcommittee on Conservation, Credit, Energy and Research.

Mr. HOLDEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 63. I

also rise in strong support of the brave men and women who have served or are serving in Iraq and around the world.

I represent thousands of men and women on Active Duty and in the National Guard and in the Reserves. I have visited our wounded and injured troops at both Walter Reed and Landstuhl Regional Center in Germany. My commitment to our brave men and women is unwavering. However, I disagree with deploying more than 20,000 more U.S. combat troops to Iraq.

The President has consistently said that the size of the force would be determined by military leaders on the ground. Yet the two previous leading commanders on the ground do not support the addition of more troops. General George Casey, the former commander of the Multinational Force in Iraq and current chief of staff of the Army, advocated transferring security duties to Iraqi soldiers.

General Casey said, ''The longer we and the U.S. forces continue to bear the main burden of Iraq's security, it lengthens the time that the Government of Iraq has to make the hard decisions about reconciliation and dealing with the militias.'' He goes on to say, ''And the other thing is that they continue to blame us for all of Iraq's problems, which at face are their problems. It has always been my view that a heavy and sustained American military presence was not going to solve the problems in Iraq in the long run.''

Additionally, General John P. Abizaid, the former commander of U.S. Central Command in the Middle East, has said that he did not believe that adding more American troops right now is the solution to the problem, and also advocated transferring responsibility to the Iraqis.

General Abizaid said, ''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.''

During the course of the war, I visited Iraq twice, in 2003 and 2005. While I was there, the main goal, other than achieving victory, was developing Iraq's infrastructure. Yet after 4 years and hundreds of billions of dollars, we have not had much success in improving infrastructure and still face serious problems. Oil production is one-half of the prewar level, while conditions of basic services, such as water, power and sewage, are below that. In Baghdad, electricity levels are at an all-time low. And while we have spent billions of dollars on these problems, $9 billion is lost and unaccounted for.

□ 1300

That is why I also rise today in support of the Blue Dog resolution which provides cost accountability for Operation Iraqi Freedom. This resolution will directly address the infrastructure and security failures in Iraq. More specifically, the resolution requires the Department of Defense Inspector General and the Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction to report to Congress every 90 days with:

One, a detailed accounting of how military and reconstruction funds in Iraq have been spent;

Two, a detailed accounting of the types and terms of contracts awarded on behalf of the United States;

Three, a description of efforts to obtain support and assistance from other countries toward the rehabilitation of Iraq; and, finally,

Four, an assessment of what additional funding is needed to complete military operations and reconstruction efforts in Iraq, including a plan for the security of Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, our troops have done their job and performed with great courage and honor. The solution in Iraq can no longer be resolved militarily. We must win both politically and diplomatically. We must ask Iraq's six neighbors to use influence that is consistent with our own objectives, and we must convince them that stability in the region is in their best interests.

In closing, I want to offer my utmost gratitude and appreciation for our troops. Our thoughts are with these brave men and women and also with their families as we pray for them to return safely.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Washington (Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS).

Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we continue here on the House floor another chapter in the long and healthy debate on promoting freedom and democracy around the world, while maintaining the security of our country, of our cities, of our homes and our families.

The resolution before us today appropriately begins with the reaffirmation of our vigorous, unwavering commitment to the brave men and women now serving our country in uniform. We pledge to give them every tool they need to fulfill their assigned missions while providing the maximum protection possible. Additionally, we pledge their families every means of support when their loved ones are overseas and when they return home.

My district in eastern Washington is the proud home to Fairchild Air Force Base that houses the 92nd Air Refueling Wing. These men and women have been an important part of fighting the global war on terror. Our community, like every community around the country, supports our men and women in uniform. Together, we have celebrated victory; and, together, we have mourned losses.

We unanimously stand by our troops because, almost 5 years ago, this Congress asked them to step forward to protect our country and win the fight against terrorism.

On October 10, 2002, before many of us were here, including myself, 296 Members of this body, including 81 Democrats, passed a bipartisan bill authorizing the use of military force in Iraq. The next day, 77 Members of the Senate approved a motion authorizing the same use of force.

What Congress realized then was the importance to the security of our own country of a free and stable Iraq and a peaceful and secure Middle East. Five years ago, Congress was at a crossroads and made a very difficult decision. Today, young girls in Iraq can now attend school, democratic elections have been held, a fledgling government is in place, and Saddam Hussein, a murderer of over 300,000 Iraqis, is no longer a threat to his own people or to our national security. In Iraq, we have acknowledged victories and successes.

In the past year, we all recognize the condition in Iraq has grown more grave. I know a lot has changed since I visited nearly a year ago. Al Qaeda operatives, Sunni death squads and Shia militias, propped up by the reckless dictatorship of Iran, have fueled violence and threatened the hopes and dreams of the Iraqi people.

So Congress is once again at a crossroads. The reality of the circumstances in Iraq require a winning strategy. The information provided by our reformed intelligence community sends a clear warning in the National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq: ''Unless efforts to reverse these conditions show measurable progress, the situation will continue to deteriorate.'' The solution cannot be in leaving things as they are. The NIE continues: ''Coalition capabilities remain an essential stabilizing element in Iraq.''

There are three courses of action: leave things as they are; we know this is not sufficient. Draw down Armed Forces in Iraq; this will only lead to deadly indiscriminate violence, costing the lives of hundreds of thousands of innocent people. Or respond by giving our commanders in Iraq the resources and the mission options needed for success.

All of us here support our men and women in uniform. We must continue to empower them to defeat the enemies of freedom in Iraq.

Congress is now in the midst of making a decision that will contribute to the future security of our great country or begin the process of chipping away at the core of this resolve. Supporting our troops by not supporting the war is not an option. Victory is the only real choice. The consequences of failure are unacceptable.

Abandoning Iraq would embolden the militants. It would create a humanitarian crisis impacting millions. Instability in the Middle East will create more violence and leave the U.S. vulnerable to future attacks.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this resolution.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the chairman of the Financial Services Subcommittee on Capital Markets, Insurance and Government-Sponsored Enterprises, the distinguished gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KANJORSKI).

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join the overwhelming majority of American people, the Congress and many top U.S. military commanders to voice my opposition to President Bush's ill-conceived plan to send more American troops into the middle of an ongoing civil war in Iraq. The President's plan, which has been attempted before on four separate occasions and failed, is simultaneously too little and too much. 21,500 troops is too little to make a difference in a city of 6 million who are unwilling to see beyond their sectarian differences, and too much burden to place on an American military already stretched to the breaking point.

Mr. Speaker, in October 2002, I voted in favor of the legislation to allow President Bush to defend the national security of our country against the stated threats posed by Saddam Hussein. In large part, I based my decision on the information I learned in several classified briefings with high-level administration officials about the capabilities of the Iraqis to deliver weapons of mass destruction to the United States.

These officials pointed to an imminent threat posed by Saddam Hussein and his potential use of unmanned aerial vehicles to deliver weapons of mass destruction to our shores. Of course, we now know that these weapons, as well as the Bush administration's claims regarding Saddam's ties to al Qaeda, were fictional. The consequences of our action, however, are quite real.

To date, the Iraq war has come at a terrible cost to the United States. More than 3,100 servicemembers have been killed and greater than 23,400 have been wounded. My home State of Pennsylvania has lost 149 soldiers and over 1,000 have been wounded. Moreover, the United States has spent almost $380 billion to date, with hundreds of billions of dollars more requested by the Bush administration.

The war in Iraq has also diverted much-needed resources away from fighting the war on terrorism and eradicating al Qaeda. The focus on Iraq and away from the real threat of al Qaeda has resulted in an increasing number of deadly attacks launched by Taliban and al Qaeda forces in and around Afghanistan.

On Tuesday, The Washington Post reported that NATO's top commander, General John Craddock, does not have enough forces for the anticipated spring offensive by the Taliban. The general warned that ''failure to send reinforcements was weakening the mission and jeopardizing the lives of soldiers fighting'' in Afghanistan.

More than 135,000 troops are currently serving in Iraq. Many have completed their second or even their third tour of duty. Multiple tours of duty for the National Guard and Reserve members have created hardships for many families in my district and throughout the United States. Currently, these brave American forces are caught in the middle of a religious dispute that began in the 7th century between rival Muslim factions. These underlying sectarian hostilities have come to the fore in Iraq and have grown into a full-blown civil war.

Bringing stability to Iraq cannot be achieved through an escalation of our military involvement in that country. Rather, Shiites and Sunnis must decide for themselves to forge a political solution to this crisis in which the interests of all Iraqis are represented. Nevertheless, President Bush is ignoring the advice of his top generals, the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, the majority of Congress, and, most of all, the American people by announcing his intention to send an additional 21,500 American troops into harm's way to continue pursuing a flawed policy.

Mr. Speaker, I oppose this escalation of our troop presence in Iraq. The time for more troops was 4 years ago when General Shinseki presciently warned of the need for hundreds of thousands of military personnel to stabilize postwar Iraq. But the President, the Vice President, and the former Secretary of Defense believed they could fight this war on the cheap, with too few troops, too little armor, and too little help. They were wrong, and now it is too late.

Mr. Speaker, from my perspective, the resolution before us today has been long overdue. The American people have called on this Congress to express their disapproval of this war of choice in Iraq and this President's prosecution of it. To that end, I will support this resolution and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3½ minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY).

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, national security should be the highest priority of the U.S. Congress. I talk to my constituents in western North Carolina a lot about the situation in Iraq. We understand the challenges. I think the American people understand the challenges of this war. But we also know the consequences of quitting are too dire and too dangerous.

We know that leaving an unstable Iraq endangers Israel, other Western democracies, as well as our own national interests and our constituents here in the United States.

The President put forward a plan that he and his generals believe will lead to a safe, secure, and stabilized Iraq. Let me repeat that: he put forward a plan, a plan of action and a plan for success.

The Democrats, in response, put forward a nonbinding resolution. Now, this is Washington-speak for legislation that does not have the force of law. Now, the disturbing thing is not that it is a nonbinding resolution; but the message that this legislative tool sends, it sends not only to our American people, not only to the troops in the field, but our allies around the world, and it also emboldens our enemies.

This resolution says that this time the Democrats are not prepared to offer a new direction, a plan or a solution for the challenges we face in Iraq. I offer this bit of wisdom to the Democrats: you must be the change you want to see.

If the Democrats are serious about developing a new plan, then the right thing to do is submit it. That is a true test of leadership, to submit solutions, solutions; and in order to effect change, you have to put forward ideas for that change.

I ask the American people to imagine what it would be like if their Representatives used this time to hammer out ideas and positive solutions. That is the American ingenuity that we should focus on as a Congress. This is the American way.

The Democrats say this debate is to send a message to the President. Well, I will tell you, I think he has heard you loud and clear.

But let me give you a message from the battlefield from a friend of mine in Iraq. He says the argument over what got us to this point is a diversion. The problem set is the present. The terrorists and would-be terrorists that have flowed into Iraq will not stand at the border and wave us good-bye and good luck. They understand our politics, our systems, and our weaknesses.

□ 1315

They believe that it is a war of endurance, and that we have shown historically and repeatedly that we don't have the national will for prolonged engagement.

Unfortunately the political grandstanding has endorsed their belief and ensures the terrorists' continued bloody engagement until November 2008.

The bottom line, we need reinforcements to set the conditions for success, and we need political support for the endurance to continue this fight. That is from my friend in the battlefield.

And I say to my colleagues, the American people need better than this. We need a plan of action for results and success in Iraq.

And I say, ''Madam Speaker, you have made your points. Now where is your plan?''

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Energy and Air Quality, the distinguished gentleman from Virginia, RICK BOUCHER.

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

Mr. BOUCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the resolution, and I hope that its adoption by the House will send yet another powerful message that a change in the direction of our Iraq policy is required.

Sending an additional 21,000 troops into Baghdad only serves to put more American forces in harm's way. The troop increase will not bring long-term stability, it will not halt the sectarian strife which has plunged Iraq into a civil war, it will do nothing to speed the day when U.S. forces can hand over the mission to the Iraqis and come home. But there is a better way.

Our Virginia colleague FRANK WOLF originated the formation of the commission that was chaired by former Secretary of State James Baker and by Lee Hamilton, who for years, with distinction, chaired the Foreign Relations Committee in this House. I commend Congressman WOLF for his foresight and for the public service that he provided to our Nation when he originated the formation of the Baker-Hamilton Commission. That commission was bipartisan. It was composed of our most experienced foreign policy experts, spanning administrations of both Republican and Democratic Presidencies. Its recommendations were unanimously presented by the members of the Commission. They embody the collective wisdom of these highly experienced Americans for the best course that our Nation can take for a new and more promising direction in Iraq.

At the core of their proposals was a bold recommendation: that the United States begin a dialogue with Iraq's neighboring countries about a way to achieve regional stability and, most particularly, stability in Iraq.

Iran, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia all have influence with the various warring factions in Iraq. Iran and Syria in particular have a strong interest in a more normal relationship with the United States. All of these countries have a long-term interest in a stable Iraq. The Baker-Hamilton Commission's direction for a U.S.-led negotiation among these nations is the only real option we have left in order to achieve under United States guidance a peaceful Iraq. President Bush has rejected this recommendation. He has acted, in my view, very unwisely.

More United States troops are not the answer. Blind faith in the Iraqi Prime Minister with his ties to the Shia militia leader, al-Sadr, is not the answer. A military solution standing alone is not the answer. The only path to success lies in diplomacy and accepting the wise counsel of the Baker-Hamilton Commission.

Finally, the administration decided to try real diplomacy in North Korea, and it is working. It is also the only hope we have for stability in Iraq.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, at this time we would like to allow 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida, TOM FEENEY.

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

Mr. FEENEY. Mr. Speaker, first I want to thank the genuine American hero from Texas, Mr. JOHNSON, for leading us this afternoon.

I supported the use of military force to remove Saddam Hussein's regime because it was in America's interests. Afterwards, it should have been up to the Iraqi people, and not Americans, to determine their fate and how they govern themselves. President Bush has stated: The survival of our liberty depends on its expansion throughout the world and America must actively construct those institutions. Which, to me, seems like a Wilsonian view of America's role in the world.

In 2000, Candidate Bush rejected nation-building. A view held by the Founding Fathers who believed the exceptional calling of the American people was not to shape the world in our image, but to be a light that lightens the world. I prefer Candidate Bush's position.

Having said that, I cannot support Representative SKELTON's resolution. Nothing better illustrates America's democratic institutions than this body having a full and open debate about this topic.

I hope the Commander in Chief will recognize the desires and concerns of the American people as expressed today through their elected Representatives. But America has only one, and not 535 commanders in chief. We cannot micromanage the conduct of a war. Representative SKELTON's resolution sends horribly mixed signals to our troops who must solely focus on carrying out their assigned and dangerous mission.

Once a decision has been made and mission assigned, this body should support the troops and their one and only Commander in Chief, as Representative JOHNSON's resolution, had it been heard, would have been done.

Critics of tactics who resort to a congressional resolution tell our servicemen and women and their families, intentionally or not, that their mission is futile. When we undermine hope, we undermine resolve, and we reduce the likelihood of success.

As Senator LIEBERMAN has stated, a resolution would, in quotes, ''give the enemy some encouragement, some clear expression that the American people are divided.'' Or, as Army Sergeant Daniel Dobson expressed, ''There is no honor in retreat, and there is no honor in what the Democrats have proposed.''

Instead, the responsible thing for this Democratic-led Congress would have been to propose a new way forward, new tactics, new strategies, not just in Iraq but in the entire war on terror. Speaker Rayburn, a Democratic Speaker, once famously remarked, ''Any jackass can kick down a barn, but it takes a carpenter to build one.'' There are no carpenters at work with this resolution.

God bless our troops. God bless their Commander in Chief. God bless America.

Shortly after I entered Congress in 2003, America used military force to remove the Saddam Hussein regime. I supported that action because it was in America's interest.

The Hussein regime repeatedly defied the terms that ended the 1991 Gulf War—the transparent and verifiable dismantlement of the capability to produce weapons of mass destruction. Previously, that regime had used such weapons and wielded the potential of such weapons against its enemies. Rather than resorting to openness to demonstrate good faith compliance with its promises, the regime relied on Soviet-style deception and defiance.

In the face of such opaqueness, why are we surprised that the intelligence agencies of the United States and its Allies veered to a worst-case scenario? After all, the perceived ''missile gap'' that fueled the arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union stemmed from Soviet deception about its actual nuclear weapon capabilities. The fault lies with those who deceive and not those searching for the truth.

The perceived threat extended beyond the Middle East and raised the specter of arming terrorists dedicated to harming the United States and the West. To those who scoff at this notion, I remind them about the dangers posed by ''loose nukes'' and how the West works everyday to counter this threat.

Furthermore, this brutal regime repeatedly attacked its neighbors—threatening the stability of America's allies and interests in this region.

So with some sturdy allies, America took action. The Hussein regime was toppled. Others took notice. Libya surrendered its weapons of mass destruction capabilities to the U.S. including materials related to its nuclear weapons program and ballistic missile capabilities.

Today's U.S. military is the finest in world history.

America can defeat any contemporary enemy by itself. But, we cannot win the peace alone. We need help—not just from loyal friends like the British, Poles, and Australians. To win a peace, we need less reliable allies like France, Germany, and Spain to help. And we need support, or at least not hostile opposition, from former adversaries we are trying to befriend, like Russia and China. In this case, we have had too little help to win the peace.

And instead of focusing on establishing a free and stable Iraq, America strayed from the wisdom of its Founding Fathers who warned us of the hazards of trying to shape the world in our image. As John Quincy Adams noted in his 1821 Fourth of July Speech:

''America does not go abroad in search of monsters to destroy.'' To do so would involve the United States ''beyond the power of extrication, in all wars of interest and intrigue, of individual avarice, envy, and ambition. . . . She might become the dictatress of the world. She would be no longer the ruler of her own spirit.''

The Founding Fathers believed that the exceptional calling of the American people was not to shape the world in our image but to be a light to lighten the world. Our exercise and preservation of liberty served as an example to other peoples. In today's world, we can see how our culture and international trade influence other peoples. But a critical difference

exists between being an example and trying to impose a set of beliefs.

The historian Walter McDougall describes this original tradition as follows:

. . . the leaders . . . did not interpret [American] Exceptionalism to mean that U.S. diplomacy ought to be pacifist, rigidly scrupulous, or devoted to the export of domestic ideals. Rather, they saw foreign policy as an instrument for the preservation and expansion of American freedom, and warned that crusades would belie our ideals, violate our true interests, and sully our freedom.

Accordingly, I support using American military might to defend our interests as needed including preemptive strikes to those who would do us harm.

But we strayed from this tradition by undertaking a mission to hold Iraq together, build a nation based on Western liberal democracy, and then spread that way of life throughout the Middle East. This Administration labels this effort ''transformational democracy.'' But it really is what Walter McDougall calls ''Global Meliorism,'' that assumes:

The American model is universally valid, that morality enjoins the United States to help others emulate it, and that the success of the American experiment itself ultimately depends on other nations escaping from dearth and oppression.

Nothing is further from the conservative tradition. Conservatives understand that free societies and peoples take centuries to evolve. America traces its roots back to the Magna Carta. If you want to illustrate the shortcomings of social engineering and the illusive goal of remaking foreign societies, take these 792 years of hard earned experience and impose it on a nation cobbled together by the British after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and on a people who identify more with a tribal than a national identity.

Conservatives take a realistic assessment of human nature—including as George Will has noted ''the limits of power to subdue an unruly world.'' This sobriety contrasts with the idealistic dream of engineering the world—a dream with roots in Woodrow Wilson's visions for a post-World War I world. As George Clemenceau remarked after Wilson's 1917 Peace Without Victory speech:

Never before has any political assembly heard so fine a sermon on what human beings might be capable of accomplishing if only they weren't human.

President Bush has stated that the survival of our liberty depends on its expansion throughout the world and America must actively construct those institutions. In 2000, Candidate Bush rejected nation building. I prefer Candidate Bush.

It is up to the Iraqi people—and not us—to determine their fate and how they govern themselves. That is why in 2003 I proposed that the Administration loan and not grant $20 billion for Iraqi infrastructure. We weren't rebuilding things we destroyed during the war. Rather, we were attempting to build an infrastructure degraded and neglected by the Hussein regime. I wanted the Iraqi people from oil proceeds—and not Americans—to build, fund, and protect their assets. As T.E. Lawrence noted in an earlier era:

Do not try to do too much with your own hands. Better the Arabs do it tolerably that you do it perfectly: It is their war, and you are to help them, not to win it for them. Actually, also under the very odd conditions of Arabia, your practical work will not be as good, perhaps, as you think it is.

Having said that, I cannot support Representative SKELTON's resolution. Nothing better illustrates America's democratic institutions than for this body to have a full and open debate about this war. We are a strong and outspoken people. This Chamber has witnessed similar debates at crucial times in our past. I hope the Commander in Chief will recognize the desires and concerns of the American people as expressed through their elected representatives.

But America has only one and not 535 Commanders in Chief. We cannot micromanage the conduct of a war. Representative SKELTON's resolution cannot bring good. Rather, it sends horribly mixed signals to our troops who must solely focus on carrying out their assigned and dangerous mission. Once a decision has been made and a mission assigned, this body should support the troops and their one Commander in Chief as Representative SAM JOHNSON's resolution would. We should deny the enemy encouragement and provide resolve to our servicemen and women.

Critics of tactics who resort to a Congressional Resolution tell our servicemen and women and their families—intentionally or not—that their mission is futile. When we undermine hope, we undermine resolve and reduce the likelihood of success. As Senator LIEBERMAN has stated: such a resolution would ''give the enemy some encouragement, some clear expression that the American people are divided.'' Or as Army Sergeant Daniel Dobson expressed:

Most service members would tell you the same thing: There is no honor in retreat . . . and there is no honor in what the Democrats have proposed. It stings me to the core to think that Americans would rather sell their honor than fight for a cause. Those of us who fight for [peace] know all too well that peace has a very bloody price tag.

Instead, the responsible thing for this Democratic Congress would be to propose a new way forward, new tactics, and new strategies—not just in Iraq but in the war on terror. Speaker Sam Rayburn famously remarked: ''Any jackass can kick a barn down, but it takes a carpenter to build one.'' No carpenters are at work with this resolution.

God bless our troops. God bless their Commander in Chief. And God bless America.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5½ minutes to the distinguished chairman of the Science and Technology Committee, and Science Education, the gentleman from Washington, Representative BRIAN BAIRD.

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

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, every Member of this Congress, every Member is absolutely committed to the security of our families, our communities, and this Nation. And every Member is absolutely committed to supporting our troops and our veterans.

The real question today is not whether we are committed to security or whether or not we support the troops; the real question is how we believe that security is best achieved. On that, there is legitimate disagreement which is, or should be, what this debate is about. To have this debate is not only a right but a responsibility of the elected Representatives in a Republic such as ours. Indeed, it is to defend that very right that our young men and women are serving not only in Iraq but around the world.

None of us here today need to be reminded about the threat of terrorism from floor speeches or from Presidential homilies. But let us not forget that the terrorists of 9/11 did not originate in Iraq, they came from Afghanistan. And, with only one exception, every Member of this body, Democrat and Republican alike, voted to prosecute the war against the terrorists in Afghanistan, bring al Qaeda to justice, and topple the Taliban.

We were united then, along with virtually the entire world, and the fight was right. Iraq, however, is different. The focus on Iraq has distracted and detracted from the mission in Afghanistan and the real battle against terrorists. The President and the rest of the administration took this Nation into an unnecessary and ill-conceived war based on false threats and with a deeply flawed plan.

Before this war, I and many of our other colleagues asked the administration some fundamental questions: How many troops will this take? How many lives will be sacrificed? How long will we be there? What will it cost financially? How will we pay for it? And how will this impact our security profile elsewhere in the world?

The fact is, this administration has never answered any of those questions fully or honestly. Never. Either they know the answers and refuse to say them, which is duplicitous; or, they do not know the answers, which is incompetent. Sadly, it appears a little of both is operating.

I voted against this war from the outset, and believe to this day it was the right vote. But once we were committed and engaged, I, along with most of my colleagues, voted to continue to support our troops, to try to achieve success in our mission, and do our best to help the Iraqis rebuild their country. We fervently hoped and continue to hope the mission would succeed; but now, several years later, more than 3,000 lives later, U.S. lives alone, and nearly $1 trillion later, as we consider the President's latest proposal, we must ask again, ''Mr. President, how many lives? How long will we be there? How much will this cost? And how will you pay for it? And what does it do to the rest of our security position?''

We still have no answers to those questions. And lacking such answers, which are fundamental to the security of this country and the safety of our troops, I must vote ''yes'' on this resolution and ''no'' on expansion.

My colleagues, it is irresponsible to allow a Commander in Chief who has not been honest or accurate from the outset to continue sacrificing the lives, the bodies, and the families of our

troops in a mission that lacks a clear end point or a successful strategy. It is dangerous to permit a Commander in Chief to jeopardize our Nation's security by letting our military equipment, readiness, and troop morale continue to decline, and it is shortsighted and unwise to leave our National Guard and Reserve unprepared and underequipped to respond to challenges overseas or at home. It is strategically unsound to concentrate so much of our intelligence resources in one nation. It is unsustainable for our economy to keep pouring billions of dollars every week into this ill-conceived plan, and to pile debt upon our children with no strategy for paying it back. It is a breach of trust to not fund the needs of our veterans when they return home. And it is immoral to leave our soldiers dying and bleeding in the midst of a centuries-old religious conflict that is not of our making and is not of our power or responsibility to resolve.

In written comments, I describe what I believe is a better course. Some of our friends have said there are no plans. I have offered a plan, and I urge you to look at it.

But before I conclude, I must also respond to those who suggest that if we don't give unquestioning support to this administration regardless of what they ask for, regardless of history, and regardless of the evidence on the ground, that we are empowering the terrorists or undermining our troops. I believe the evidence suggests, from this war, that while there may be differences of opinion about policy, this Congress and the American people have and will continue to support our troops. It is a sign of strength of our very form of government, which is, after all, what we are hoping to promote in Iraq and elsewhere in the world that we should have this debate.

Our allies and adversaries understand that if we turn the course of a failed policy and the President has not been honest with us, that is not cutting and running; that is wisdom, it is courage, and it is honesty. That is what this resolution is about. That is what we owe the soldiers who have already given their lives, and that is what we owe the families and that is what we owe the future of this Nation.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield now to the chairman of our Republican Study Committee, Mr. JEB HENSARLING from Texas, 5½ minutes.

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

Mr. HENSARLING. First, I want to thank my dear friend, and a genuine American hero, for yielding time to me today.

Mr. Speaker, speaker after speaker on the other side of the aisle have come to the floor to speak against the past decision to go into Iraq. They criticize past lapses of intelligence, they criticize past actions, they criticize past setbacks. They want to live in the past.

Regardless of whose war this was in the past, today it is an American war. And the Democratic majority must decide do they support the mission, or do they not support the mission?

Now, certainly we are all disappointed that we have not achieved the success that we would have desired by now. And I myself do not know if the new strategy will prove successful. I think it can be successful. I hope it will be successful. And I know it is a strategy that has been recommended by the Iraqi Study Group and our new battlefield commander.

So until such a time as somebody comes to me with a more compelling strategy, or until somebody convinces me that somehow my Nation and my family will be more secure by our premature withdrawal from Iraq and subsequent implosion, I feel I must support this new strategy. I will support this new strategy. Defeat is not an option.

What are the options, Mr. Speaker? Clearly, many. Many, if not most, of my Democrat colleagues want to cut off funding for our troops and withdraw from Iraq. This is well known. And I respect their views when they are heartfelt. But since Democrats control a majority in both houses of Congress, why are we voting on a nonbinding withdrawal resolution?

□ 1330

That is why this is a sad day. Somewhere over in Baghdad right now is a marine sergeant who is tired, he is resolute, he has dirt on his face. But you know what? He volunteered, he loves America, he loves his freedom. He has a picture in his wallet. His parents are praying for him. He is thinking about his wife.

Who, who in this body, what Member can go to that marine and say, you know what? I don't believe in your mission. I don't believe you can succeed. I don't believe you can win, and I am going to oppose reinforcements. Guess what? I have the power to bring you home, but I am just not willing to do it. Because if I do it now everyone will know it, and I have to take responsibility, and I am just not willing to do that.

Mr. Speaker, if you believe in something, stand up for it. Where is the courage? Where is the conviction in a nonbinding resolution?

Mr. Speaker, we all know that fighting this war is costly. Like many Members of this body, I have met with the mothers of the fallen soldiers. Their burden and sacrifice is profound. But I never, never, never want to meet with the mothers whose children may perish in the next 9/11 if we accept defeat in Iraq.

Iraq must be seen in the larger context of the war with radical Islam, and whether we like it or not, the battle lines are drawn in Iraq. Don't take my word for it, listen to what the jihadists have to say. 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 must soberly reflect on the challenge that we face. Listen to al-Zawahiri, who is number two in command. ''Al Qaeda has the right to kill 4 million Americans, 2 million of them children.''

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.''

Listen to Iraqi Ayatollah Ahmad Husseini. ''Even if this means using biological, chemical and bacterial weapons, we will conquer the world.''

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 doubt about it, the consequences in Iraq are immense. Don't take my word for it. Read the report of the Iraq Study Group. Read the National Intelligence Estimate. Read the work of the Middle East scholars at the American Enterprise Institute, Heritage Foundation, Brookings Institute.

If we do not pursue success, Iraq will become what Afghanistan once was. It will be a breeding ground, a safe haven for the recruitment, training, financing and sanctuary of radical Islamists bent upon attacking our Nation and our families. We cannot wish it away, we cannot hope it away, we cannot dream it away. There will be no greater event to empower radical Islam than 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. Support our troops. Protect our Nation and our children from this threat.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see so many people on the other side of the aisle have discovered the report of the Iraq Study Group.

It is now my pleasure to yield 5½ minutes to a senior member of the Ways and Means and Agriculture Committees, the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. POMEROY).

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, yesterday morning I had an experience I will never forget. In the snow, in the slush and the ice, I joined the family of Major Alan Johnson as his body was laid to rest at Arlington Cemetery. He had lost his life in an IED explosion in Iraq just 2 weeks before.

On behalf of the people of North Dakota, I expressed to the extent I could our profound condolences for the family's loss. The major's grieving widow stared into my eyes and said, ''Do what you can for our troops over there.''

This is not just a plea and a prayer of the families of our soldiers, it is the demand of the American people. I believe each and every one of us here shares an intense commitment to our soldiers that comes right from the bottom of

our heart. This debate is revealing a sharp difference between us in how to proceed in Iraq.

But there are no differences when it comes to all we share about the valor our soldiers have displayed in service to our country. I have seen it personally in the four trips I have been to Iraq. I have seen soldiers in full battle gear, in 133 degree heat, doing their absolute best to perform their mission. I have seen North Dakota National Guard soldiers charged with training up Iraqi soldiers through an impossible, absolute, language barrier.

I have seen other soldiers just back from the life-threatening business of finding and detonating these explosive devices, saving American lives while keeping essential roads open. Like most of you, I have mourned and prayed with shattered families whose sons and daughters have lost their lives in selfless service to our country and all we care about.

So I cannot get Tori Johnson's fervent request out of my mind, take care of our soldiers over there. Honestly, there is nothing I care more about as a Member of this House.

So, how do we respond? We take care of our soldiers over there by making certain they have the equipment they need as they undertake this most difficult and dangerous mission. We take care of our soldiers over there by making certain their deployments are only for acceptable periods and at acceptable intervals, with enough time at home in between to heal, to rest and to train. But beyond these things, we take care of our soldiers over there when we as a Congress make certain the mission they have been sent to perform has a reasonable chance of success.

In a war where so many tragic mistakes have been made, this Congress must not sit quietly by while additional plans are cooked up in Washington, whose only certainty is to accelerate the loss of American lives, compound the already severe strain on our military capability and accelerate the burn rack of taxpayer dollars spent in Iraq.

For these reasons, this resolution is a very important opening statement for this Congress to make in Iraq in 97 words. It states our support for our soldiers, while opposing the President's plan to escalate the number of troops we send into the middle of the Shia-Sunni violence taking place in Baghdad.

On one of my trips to Iraq, a soldier said to me, ''We can stand up an Iraqi Army, but we cannot create a country for this army to defend.'' This simple truth goes right to the heart of the issue and exposes the flaw of the President's plan.

Without the commitment between the warring parties in Iraq to stop the killing and create a political agreement upon which a national government can exist, 20,000 more U.S. soldiers are not likely to bring about a lasting peace. Our soldiers are disciplined and determined. They have superbly performed everything that has been asked of them.

However, the United States alone cannot create a democracy in Iraq. Only the Iraqi people can achieve that.

A broad group of experts, including the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, former Secretary of State Colin Powell, the former senior military commander in the region, General John Abizaid, have all rejected the strategy of escalating U.S. troop numbers as a means of bringing the factions of Iraq together.

The bottom line is that this troop escalation will increase the terrible cost of this endeavor, more lives lost, more young men and women maimed forever, more tens of billions spent, all without improving our prospects for an acceptable outcome.

Under these circumstances, I will vote to oppose this escalation of troops. It is part of what I believe we must do. Under these circumstances, I will oppose this escalation of troops. It is part of what I believe we must do to support our soldiers over there and the American interests they have put their lives on the line to defend.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to yield 4½ minutes to Mr. GARRETT from New Jersey.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, the authors of this resolution say that we should provide our troops with all the resources they need, whether it be armor, bullets and Humvees. That is, all the resources they need, except two; and I would argue they are the two most critically important ones: manpower and the support of our national leaders.

This Democratic resolution can be summed up in three simple words, to ''stay the course.'' The irony here is inescapable. Just months ago the very same supporters of this resolution derided the Pentagon and the White House for proposing to stay the course, but today they bring exactly that same strategy to life in their resolution.

This resolution doesn't propose a new course of action. It doesn't have the courage of its author's rhetoric, convictions, to change the course of the war. It simply states that this Congress will not support the new approach proposed by our new commander and the Iraq Study Group.

General Petraeus, the chief architect of this new plan, was confirmed unanimously by the Senate, and yet many in that body and this body are adamantly opposed to this very strategy he now seeks to implement. So it begs the question: If the general is the right man for the job, then why is his plan now not appropriate?

They claim to support the troops but seek to undercut their new leader's strategy. How can we support the troops when we insist that their orders are faulty? We cannot praise the general out of one side of our mouth while mocking him out of the other.

We have heard it said that this resolution calls for a new direction in Iraq. But I defy those who say this, to say what that new direction is. It is certainly not apparent in this resolution. This resolution is only an empty opposition to the Commander in Chief's plan to deploy the Armed Forces as the generals on the field see fit.

This two-sentence resolution, sense of Congress, is not a new plan for victory. In fact, it is not even a new plan for bringing the troops home now, but to leave them in the field with undermanpower. It is little more than a gift to our enemies who have been patiently awaiting the American naysayers to erode the American confidence in our mission.

Our enemies do not lack morale, and we fuel their exuberance with this drive for success every time they hear us speculate on withdrawal. Our enemies are fighting us, against us and our servicemen and our allies, with the belief that each headline brings them closer to victory.

Our brave men and women in uniform are up to the task. But they need our support, not empty proposals that doubt their ability to secure the peace.

Millions of peaceful Iraqis are struggling to rebuild their Nation after the cruel reign of Saddam. They want an opportunity to build a better future for their children, and they ask for our help to secure that peace.

Will we now stand aside while al Qaeda and Iran support factions that would enslave them once again? You know, it was Franklin Delano Roosevelt who knew the repercussions of failing to support those nations that are struggling for liberty, when he said, and I quote: ''Enduring peace cannot be bought at the cost of other people's freedom.''

FDR also declared that we are committed to full support of all those resolute people everywhere who are resisting aggression and are thereby keeping war away from our hemisphere. We cannot have peace in Iraq by handing over those who have worked to build a Nation based on freedom and justice and peace, turn it over to those violent brethren who seek only destruction of those principles. Make no mistake about it: If we stay the course, as this resolution would have us do, it will not be long before this war returns to our shores

I would like to end with the words of two individuals. The paths they have traveled to now and the paths they desire to take in the future could not be any more different. But, they are equally strong in the passion they bring to their beliefs. And, their words should be instructive to us in this debate.

First are the words of Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq. He says: "We have drunk blood in the past, and we find no blood sweeter than that of the Christians. Know that offense is the best form of defense, and be careful not to lay down your weapons before the war is over." While we quibble over words here on the floor of the House of Representatives, our enemies speak

with frightening clarity of conviction. Can there be any doubt that this resolution solidifies the resolve of the jihadists he leads and inspires?

In stark contrast are the words of one of my constituents, Ron Griffin, who 45 months ago lost his son, Kyle, an Airborne Infantryman serving in Iraq. "We never felt lost or alone for we were literally carried through our sorrow by the resolute, soothing and comforting hands of countless human beings whom I only hope can truly understand how they made life worth living. . . . What I see [now] is a people pummeled into acquiescence. The loss of these wondrous warriors is of itself a weight that is almost unbearable to struggle under, but when accompanied by the din of negativity it becomes to most people a burden."

Can there be any doubt that this resolution does nothing more than add to the din of negativity of which Mr. Griffin speaks?

I have faith that we can stand strong. I oppose this empty resolution to stay the course. I stand up for an America that is just and free and a friend to those who seek liberty and peace.

□ 1345

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I now yield 5 minutes to the Chair of the Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water and Power, the distinguished gentlelady from California, Representative GRACE NAPOLITANO.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues in total opposition to the President's plan, a plan that escalates the number of our young men and women, American troops, being sent to Iraq. But what are we talking about? What are the words in this resolution? It says, Resolved by the House of Representatives that, one, 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; and, secondly, Congress disapproves of the decision of President George W. Bush announced on January 10, 2007, to deploy more than 20,000 additional United States combat troops to Iraq. That is what we speak to.

I did not vote for the war resolution, and I do not believe that sending more young Americans to Iraq and putting their lives at risk will change the situation. Since the beginning of the Iraq conflict, our valiant men and women in uniform have not received the adequate training nor the proper life-protection equipment required to ensure their safety. I visited one of the armories where 2 years after the Iraq war had started. They were still making the doors for the Humvees to protect them from those bombs that were killing and maiming our men and women.

The President's proposal to put more troops in harm's way, into the middle of a civil war, whether you like it or not, it may be local, but it is a civil war, where neither side backs our continued occupation, further endangers our troops.

My constituents are not in favor of the escalation by a margin of 50 to 1. We have had phone calls, e-mails, messages. They want our young men and women back. They do not want to escalate it any more. Families have suffered enough already. There is no justification for causing more pain and adding to the suffering of the mothers and of the fathers and of the husbands and the wives and the sons and the daughters and other loved ones. We speak of the soldiers who have lost their lives in Iraq in this war. We speak not of the thousands of injured and the suffering they and their families are being put through. The consequences of the war in Iraq extend far beyond the awful tally of the 3,100 killed and the 23,000 wounded.

The Nation's economic consequences of the escalation are profound. Point one: every portion of our budget has been cut and continues to be cut except for defense spending. The worst budget cuts are taking funding away from our veterans, the very men and women who put their lives on the line in Iraq and in other wars. We regularly receive letters and phone calls, e-mails, from constituents who ask me to fund vital, successful, necessary programs for their communities; but we cannot support our communities with the funds they truly need as they are instead being diverted to a war we did not seek. Vital social services, critical to the well-being of the people of my district and certainly of all other districts, are again being cut.

Other consequences of the war are the social consequences. These soldiers fortunate enough to return home alive and in good physical health suffer long-term mental health problems, Mr. Speaker, as a direct consequence of their deployment, not one, not two, but possibly three and more deployments in Iraq.

Yet our services to them and their families not only are sadly lacking and underfunded; they are being cut. We have not enough money to be able to deal with the devastation in the minds of not only these men and women but their families to be able to deal with the consequences when they return home and try to regain a normal life.

Families are being torn apart more so by this war than any other war. There are suicides. There is divorce. There is homelessness now. Their children are forced to grow up without their father or their mother. Parents are losing children. No mother should have to bury a son or a daughter.

I urge the President to work with Iraq's neighbors and the international community to ensure other countries' commitments to Iraq's security situation, the training of Iraqi troops and police, and, of course, financial support. Escalation is certainly not the answer and I cannot and will not support such a policy.

I certainly want to say thank you to our brave men and women in uniform for your bravery and your service. Our prayers are with you and your families

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, at this point I would like to yield 5 minutes to Mr. TODD AKIN from Missouri.

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Speaker, we rise today to discuss this resolution that is in two parts before us. The first part says that we support our troops. The second part says that we are not going to send them reinforcements. This seems to be kind of a curious proposition, almost a nonsensical proposition. How do you say you support and then say, but we don't want to send them any reinforcing troops? Certainly we say that we want to give them body armor, we want to give them up-armored Humvees, we want to send them tanks; but the most important thing that you need sometimes as troops is some other troops to support you. So we are saying, oh, we want support, but we don't want to support you.

Picture Davy Crockett at the Alamo. He has his back to the wall. Santa Ana has got thousands of troops. So he gets his BlackBerry out. He checks with Congress. Congress says, Hey, Davy, we really support you but we're not going to send you any troops. That doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me.

Now, as I said, this resolution has two parts. It says, We support you but we're not really going to send any troops over.

The third part is what concerns me the most. As Congressmen, we have the responsibility to listen, to pay attention. If somebody has a better idea, that is just fine. Send your better idea forward. We are ready to be taught or to learn. If there is a better way to approach Iraq and the situation there, good. But this proposal has no positive suggestion whatsoever. It just says we support and we don't support. All that does is to encourage our enemies. And without any positive recommendation, this can only be viewed as something which strengthens our opponents' hands. They say, Goody, we've got the Americans all confused. They're saying support and don't support at the same time, with no positive recommendations whatsoever.

Now, I have heard people say that this is a civil war. It is not really a civil war yet. If we pull all the troops out immediately, it will turn into a civil war, no doubt about that. But what we do have is, we do know this, that the terrorists have been involved in setting one group of people against another. They blow up a holy place of the Shias and the Shias start fighting the Sunnis. And so, yes, they have sparked a whole lot of unrest, particularly in Baghdad. It is not a civil war yet. But do we think that the terrorists aren't going to do the same thing in other countries where you have the one leadership with a majority of people in the other tribe.

So I don't think it is much of an escape to say, oh, well, this is a civil war. What it is, it is a war against terrorists. Regardless of how you want to speculate what might happen if we leave all of a sudden, at least I would respect the Democrats more if you

would just simply say, we need to cut and run, or we need to stay where we are. But don't just leave a blank piece of paper and say we support and don't support. It doesn't make any sense. All it does is help the enemy.

It seems to me that we need to as Americans one more time as we have in the past take a good, serious gut check. I have a chance to speak to American audiences everywhere and lots of little kids and I always ask the same question. I ask the question, If you were to take America that you love and condense it down as to what do you really believe about this country, what is the heart and core of America? The answer that I almost always get is the word ''freedom.''

But freedom needs a little bit more definition. The Tiananmen Square Chinese students wanted freedom and they greased the tank treads with their bodies. But they didn't get freedom. Just because you want freedom doesn't mean you can have it.

So what is the heart of what we believe as Americans? Well, I will tell you. The first time we went to war we stated that and we had quite an argument and discussion about it. And it was put in the Declaration of Independence: We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these is life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. And the job of government is to protect those basic, fundamental, God-given rights. That is what they believed and they had to decide: Are we going to fight the British or not? Those are the things that I taught to my children.

This is a picture of the Marine Club with my 9-year-old son standing here, saluting the flag as it is going up. We taught him that there are some things in this world that are worth dying for and that one of those things is the fact that God gives us basic inalienable rights. That little Marine Club kid has grown up.

There he is in Fallujah in 2005. That is the cache of terrorist weapons that they found in Fallujah. He has grown up. He understands the risk to his life. He almost died in Fallujah. He believes, as I do, that there are some things in this world that are worth defending. This is not a war about a civil war. This is head to head with terrorists.

And is it surprising that we find ourselves fighting terrorists? Terrorists believe, we blow up innocent people to make a political statement. We believe that the right to life comes from God, that it is an inalienable right. The terrorists terrorize people to compel you to take your liberty away and we believe that liberty is a gift that comes from God. We are going head to head with people that have always been the enemies of America, and I am concerned that if we do not stand up and show that we not only think that it is a nice idea in our Declaration but it is a conviction that we will defend with our lives, that we will be fighting the terrorists here.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the chairman of the Small Business Subcommittee on Regulation, Health Care and Trade, the distinguished gentleman from Texas, CHARLIE GONZALEZ.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, I would like to establish a ground rule for all my colleagues, and that is, regardless of how you vote on this resolution, no one will question your patriotism. If we can just start with that benchmark, I think we will have a higher degree of debate and in good faith.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution is about duty and responsibility, the duty and responsibility that Congress owes to our men and women in uniform. Our first duty is to make wise and educated choices in identifying a threat, the necessity of action and the legitimacy of the goal before committing or continuing to commit more of our troops to the war.

When considering this resolution, which reflects that an escalation of the war is unwarranted and is not in the best interests of our Nation and our troops, each of us must ask one fundamental question: Is escalating and continuing the war in Iraq worth fighting and dying for? Because that, in the final analysis, is what we decide. We seek an answer to this question, but we must be ever mindful that the courage and bravery of our troops is never questioned. Our soldiers' valor and commitment are not diminished by the errors in judgment made by their civilian leaders. The question is whether the mission in Iraq is worth their sacrifice. As we move forward with this decision, we must recognize the lessons of history, or we are doomed to repeat its grave mistakes.

□ 1400

For example, ''The public has been led into a trap from which it will be hard to escape with dignity and honor. They have been tricked into it by a steady withholding of information. The Baghdad communiques are belated, insincere, and incomplete. Things have been far worse than we have been told, our administration more bloody and inefficient than any that public knows. We are, today, not far from a disaster.''

Now, the parallels are uncanny, and you are wondering who may have said that. The quote was 86 years ago, and it was a communication from T.E. Lawrence, better known as Lawrence of Arabia, in August of 1920, from Baghdad.

Continuing. ''The situation in Iraq is grave and deteriorating. In addition, there is significant underreporting of violence in Iraq. The standard for recording attacks acts as a filter to keep events out of reports and databases.'' More Lawrence of Arabia? More 1920? No. 2006, the Iraq Study Group report.

Let me continue. 1992, General Colin Powell. ''The Gulf War was a limited objective war. If it had not been, we would be ruling Baghdad today, at unpardonable expense in terms of money, lives lost, and regional relationships.''

Now, a year earlier there was an observation, ''Once you got Baghdad, it's not clear what you do with it. It's not clear what kind of government you would put in place of the one that is there now, Saddam Hussein. Is it going to be a Shia regime, a Sunni regime, or a Kurdish regime? Or one that tilts towards the Baathists, or one that tilts towards the Islamic fundamentalists? How much credibility is that government going to have if it is set up by the United States military when it is there? How long does the United States military have to stay to protect the people that sign on for that government? And what happens to it once you leave?'' That was 1991, spoken by then-Secretary of Defense and current Vice President of the United States, Dick Cheney.

We remain a good and great Nation, but we have done all the good in Iraq that we are going to do. An escalation only delays the day that the Iraqis assume the responsibility of setting aside their sectarian differences and embrace the promise of democracy that we have delivered to them. We cannot do this for them, whether we send in 20,000 or 200,000 more troops. And we cannot ignore the lessons of history, the views of military experts and the will of the American people.

It is time for our troops to start coming home. And it is time for the Iraqis to start building a home. Vote ''yes'' on this resolution.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, for the purpose of unanimous consent, I recognize the gentleman from Arizona.

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

Mr. PASTOR. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the resolution.

Madam Speaker, I am proud that under our Speaker's leadership, Congress today is voicing the will of the American people in opposition to the Administration's deployment of more U.S. military personnel to Iraq. Voters made it clear in November that they do not support the administration's current strategy. It is time that Congress act to bring U.S. policy in line with reality.

I opposed the initial resolution authorizing the President to invade Iraq, because I felt that the administration had failed to exhaust diplomatic remedies and allow the U.N. weapons inspectors to finish their job. Since the invasion, however, I have supported funding the war effort to ensure that our troops on the ground have the equipment and support that they needed. But increasing troop levels and failing to question the President's policy is a disservice to our courageous men and women in uniform. We cannot keep asking them to put their lives on the line every day for objectives that have become increasingly unclear.

The President declared ''mission accomplished'' in May 2003, and in a sense he was right. Saddam Hussein and Iraqi weapons of mass destruction are no longer a threat to our nation. The Iraqi people have held free elections and drafted a constitution. The violence we see in Iraq today is based in sectarian conflict—it has become a civil war. The outcome depends not on the American will to stay in the fight, but on the will of the Iraqi people to forge their own future. We cannot do it for them.

Troop surges in the past have not worked. No number of American troops in Iraq can fix what is essentially a political problem. The only surge I support is a surge of diplomacy. It is time to bring our brave young men and women home from Iraq. Their job there is done, and their skills and dedication can be better used on the real fronts of the war on terrorism, both domestic and abroad.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, at this time I would like to yield 3½ minutes to my colleague from Michigan, TIM WALBERG.

Mr. WALBERG. Madam Speaker, throughout our Nation's rich history, we have reached moments where we arrive at what President Ronald Reagan described as a time for choosing. Today is such a day.

This week, the House is asking ourselves a simple question: Will we choose to go forward with the resolve and determination needed to win the war on terror by supporting our brave troops, or will we retreat and wait for the fight to return to American soil?

It was Winston Churchill who once said, ''Never believe any war will be smooth or easy or that anyone who embarks on a strange voyage can measure the tides and hurricanes he will encounter.''

With this in mind, I acknowledge that the war in Iraq is not going as well as we all had hoped or wanted. Mistakes have been made. Thousands of precious lives have been lost, and there are likely more tough times to come.

My wife and I pray for the men and women in uniform and grieve for every loss of life and injuries inflicted on these heroes who proudly serve our Nation. I, as much as anyone else speaking today, want this war to be over. But this resolution essentially tells these soldiers to give up because the cause they have nobly served is no longer worth the courage and vigor necessary, and protecting the American people and keeping terrorists off American soil are no longer national priorities.

As Americans we are reluctant warriors, but throughout history, when our troops have been in harm's way, America has supported them and made certain our troops have the necessary resources to accomplish their mission.

In a cynical way, this resolution says America has already lost and the leaders of our country no longer believe our troops can achieve victory. It tells other nations that we are unreliable as an ally, and they can no longer count on us in times of distress.

My son proudly served in the Army. And during this time of service, I got to know many of his peers in uniform. I am not prepared to say to these men and women, nor to the young man fallen in battle, that I will go to right after this speech at Walter Reed Hospital, that I support you but I don't support the mission you serve, and the blood you shed on the battlefield was in vain.

I am not prepared to call for a precipitous withdrawal from Iraq that will leave the Nation ripe for terrorism and ultimately bring the war on terror back to American soil.

My neighbors in south central Michigan and across the country deserve to be protected from enemies of freedom. And they ought to have a Congress that doesn't shirk its responsibilities to soldiers and sailors and airmen sent into harm's way to ensure this war is fought off American soil.

So we come to this time of choosing today. Are we willing to abandon our troops as they implement the new strategy based on quantifiable goals and measurable results? I hope not.

I challenge my colleagues to honor America's brave men and women serving in the name of freedom and oppose this resolution of retreat.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I now yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts, a member of the Financial Services, Oversight and Government Reform Committees, and chair of the House Task Force on Anti-Terrorism Funding, Mr. LYNCH.

Mr. LYNCH. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 63, which opposes the President's plan to escalate the war in Iraq. I do so because I am in total agreement with Generals Casey and Abizaid, who have said that what is needed in Iraq is a political solution and not a military one, and that additional troops are not recommended.

I have had a chance to travel to Iraq five times now, and based on my own observations in places like Fallujah and Tikrit and Al Qaim out on the Syrian border, I firmly believe that it is the Iraqi people who must ultimately decide whether they are committed to building a better life for their children through democracy, or whether they are more committed to an all-or-nothing sectarian conflict between Sunni and Shia.

Madam Speaker, I believe that packing more troops into the narrow streets of Baghdad would be a disaster. As our daily briefings indicate, the dominant conflict now on the ground in Iraq is no longer Coalition forces against al Qaeda and supporters of the Baathist regime. As the daily body counts of tortured and executed Iraqis indicate, the prevailing conflict on the ground in Iraq now is a brutal civil war between the Sunni and Shia militias, with our troops in the middle.

In fact, in a recent hearing here in Washington, it was entitled, ''Iraq: What Will it Take to Achieve National Reconciliation?''

Basically, as this hearing pointed out, the key mission that we have given to our troops is to somehow now reconcile the differences between Sunni and Shia in Iraq. Just to be clear on this, Madam Speaker, the Sunni and Shia have been in frequent conflict since the year 632 A.D., following the death of the prophet Mohammed. That is what we have asked our troops to do, in essence, to convince the Iraqis now to stop killing each other and to embrace democracy instead.

The President has now asked our brave sons and daughters to take up a police action or essentially a civil affairs action, going door to door in Baghdad. The mission in Iraq has changed.

I have to wonder, how many votes would the President and Vice President have gotten initially if they had been honest and said, We want to send our sons and/or daughters to Iraq in order to reconcile the differences between the Sunni and the Shia who have been fighting for almost 1,400 years. Not many, I think. But that is where we now find ourselves and our troops. While the mission in Iraq has changed, the President is staying the course. What's more, he has decided to push even harder in the wrong direction.

Now is the time that the American people have fairly asked, What will Congress do? Many of my colleagues believe that this resolution doesn't go far enough; and in honesty, I tend to agree with that assessment. But I do believe that this resolution presents a solid and meaningful step in the right direction.

There will be a further debate in coming weeks on the funding on how to best protect our troops while transitioning to Iraqi control in Iraq, and we will have more opportunity to do that.

Lastly, I would like to address the argument that the continuing war in Iraq is necessary for fighting the global war on terrorism. As I have said before, I have been to Iraq five times now. One of the questions that I have repeatedly asked our people on the ground is, How much of this fight in Iraq is part of the global war on terror? How much of it is involving foreign fighters in al Qaeda? Unanimously, they have recommended that it is about 10 percent of the fight in Iraq.

So 90 percent of our cost, 90 percent of our sacrifice, is in a matter that has nothing to do with the global war on terror. In fact, the Defense Department now says that the Mahdi Army, the main Shia militia, has replaced al Qaeda as the most dangerous force in the increasing violence there.

If we are truly committed to the global war on terror, I might point out we have a situation in southeast Afghanistan and in Waziristan, where the

Taliban, who actually did support al Qaeda and who actually did involve themselves in the attacks on September 11, are building support.

While we spend $350 billion in Iraq, Pakistan has meanwhile allowed a safe haven to be established for the Taliban. If we are indeed committed to protecting America and the global war on terror, I would suggest that there are smarter and better ways to do that.

Yes, the American people are waiting for this Congress to take a stand. It is time to step up. I ask my colleagues to support this resolution. It is the first step in eventually bringing the troops home safely

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. BALDWIN). The Chair must remind all Members that it is not in order to engage in personalities toward the President or the Vice President

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, at this time I would like to yield 4 minutes to Mrs. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO of West Virginia.

Mrs. CAPITO. I would like to thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding me time.

Madam Speaker, I rise today realizing the seriousness of this resolution and the importance of the debate on the war in Iraq.

As we continue this debate, I hope that all of us remember we have serious disagreements about what this resolution says or intends to do, but that we cannot and should not besmirch one another's opinions and the right to that opinion and belief.

I would also like to say how proud I am to be an American, to realize the bounty of our Nation, to appreciate the strength of our forefathers, and to stand in awe of our democracy.

As the daughter of a World War II Purple Heart veteran, I have a great understanding of the sacrifices that have been made in the past to allow us to live freely. I understand and fullly appreciate the men and women who have so bravely put themselves on the frontline to protect our country.

I have thought a great deal about what I want to say today and how I want to say it. When the President announced his plan for a troop surge last month, I expressed my disagreement. And as we debate this resolution today, I still harbor those grave concerns. While I have voiced a disagreement over tactics on how to achieve success in Iraq, the fact remains that I have not backed away from my belief that success in Iraq is vital, and that leaving Iraq prematurely would be disastrous for our Nation's security and the stability of the Middle East.

And let me stress that I will never back away from my commitment to the men and women who serve in our military, and I will not support anything that I believe endangers their safety while they serve in harm's way to protect our country.

So I rise today in opposition to this resolution. My opposition lies not in what this resolution says, but what it intends to do; and that is, to lay the foundation to begin cutting funding for our troops as they fight the radical jihadists who want to destroy our Nation. My fear is not based on wild assumptions or partisan politics, but what leaders are already saying they are planning to do.

The passage of this resolution has been called a baseline. And the Speaker of the House has called it a first step. And then she added that approval of this resolution will set the stage for additional Iraq legislation which is set to come before the House.

□ 1415

Leaders have been tight lipped about the pending legislation. But we have learned that what they want to do is set the stage for legislation that will fence off and limit funding by tying the hands of our commanders on the ground, by presenting benchmarks that will be written so that certainly those funds cannot be spent. To be sure, such actions would restrict funds and tie the hands of our commanders in Iraq. I cannot and will not support any effort to systematically disassemble our greater effort, to defend our liberties and our way of life, and to provide our enemies with a breath of hope that we have lost our will.

Let me be very clear to my constituents and the men and women in uniform. I will never vote to cut funding for our troops, nor will I allow my vote on a symbolic resolution, one that has the force of politics and not the force of law, to be used as a baseline or a first step towards cutting funding for our troops.

I will assertively maintain my support for the troops in my words and my vote, and I will continue to analyze how I can best help achieve success in Iraq so that we may begin to bring our men and women home.

In that spirit I plan to vote against this resolution.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I now yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL), a classmate of mine and distinguished member of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. ENGEL for yielding.

Last Saturday in my hometown of Springfield, Massachusetts, I spent the day welcoming back 150 brave American soldiers from the 181st Engineer Battalion of the National Guard who just completed a year-long deployment in Iraq. Their mission was to provide security for their fellow servicemembers and to protect military facilities. This group included members who possessed the Bronze Star, the Combat Action Badge, and the Purple Heart. Every Member of this House and Senate has participated in ceremonies similar to this across the country. We might have our differences about the war, but we find common ground in our steadfast support for these soldiers both in Iraq, on their way to Iraq, and around the world. And that is one of the reasons I intend to vote in favor of this bipartisan resolution today.

There is a reason that the framers of our constitutional system chose in Article I to establish that Congress is the first branch of the government, to oversee the Executive. One of the reasons that we are here today is because the majority at the time never asked a question of the Administration. Everything the Administration said, the Republican majority at that time in Congress went along with.

I am mindful of the thousands of soldiers who have died, more than 3,200. I am mindful of the 21,000 today who have been wounded. I am mindful of those who continue to serve our country bravely and honorably, and that the burden of this war has fallen on these troops and their families. There has been very little sacrifice asked of the American people.

But those who have sacrificed deserve a frank and honest debate about President Bush's policy. This is the debate we should have had 4 years ago.

You cannot edit history. We know today there were no weapons of mass destruction. There was no enriched uranium from Niger. There was no connection to al Qaeda. We were not welcomed as liberators in war. And 3½ years later, the mission has not been accomplished.

Madam Speaker, like the vast majority of the American people, I agree that the war in Iraq is going badly and getting worse. I attach great significance to the National Intelligence Estimate. The overall security situation in Iraq has deteriorated, as they have said, with 2006 being one of the deadliest years to date. The war has increased Islamic radicalism around the world and has helped to destabilize the entire Middle East. By any objective standard, Iraq has descended into something worse than a civil war, as noted by the Iraq Study Group, and our American troops are caught in the middle. And let us call it for what it is: a civil war.

Yet President Bush, nearly 3 years after declaring an end to major combat operations in Iraq, is sending another 20,000 American troops into battle. And Vice President CHENEY, in the face of insurmountable evidence, continues to declare that Iraq is a success.

As we debate this resolution today, it is clear that support for the war is at a tipping point. Our intelligence community, speaking collectively in the recent NIE, they believe that the future of Iraq is grim. And, most significantly, our distinguished military commanders believe it is time for a new direction. General Powell, General Zinni, General Batiste, General Gregory Newbold, and others have all expressed concern about the future of Iraq. These are individuals who were involved in the planning and execution of the war; and, obviously, they do not like what they see.

Even former director of the National Security Agency under President Reagan, retired Lieutenant General William Odom, acknowledged on Sunday that ''the President's policy in Iraq is based on illusions, not realities.''

I do not believe that public opinion alone should shape public policy, but no one should underestimate the intelligence of the American people. They are convinced that ''stay the course,'' as President Bush has suggested, has not succeeded.

Every Member of Congress wants our soldiers to succeed in Iraq. No elected representative in this institution would ever seek to undermine our servicemen and women. But the facts are clear. The war in Iraq is the most important issue facing America today, and our constituents are entitled to know where their representatives stand on the way forward. That is why this debate, finally, is so important. Just as the debate in 2002 led us into the war with Iraq, perhaps this conversation with the American people that we are having today will begin the process of bringing our troops back home.

More than 4 years ago, I came to the floor of the House with deep reservations about granting President Bush unlimited powers to authorize this invasion of a sovereign country. It is the best vote of opposition that I have offered in my 19 years in this House of Representatives

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, at this time I would like to yield 4½ minutes to the gentleman from Ohio, Mr. JIM JORDAN.

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank him for his amazing service to our country.

Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution. There have been many good arguments made as to why this resolution is not in the best interest of our military, not in the best interest of our country. But I want to focus on one point, and that is just how real and how serious the threat of terrorism is, because that is what this struggle in Iraq is really about. And I am just going to read the list of terrorist attacks against Americans, and we have heard this list before, but I think it is important to refocus on this:

In 1979, 66 American hostages were taken in Iran. In 1983, 241 Marines were killed in Beirut. In 1988, 189 Americans were killed in the PanAm bombing. In 1993 in the first World Trade Center bombing, we lost six Americans. In 1996, 19 servicemembers were killed in the Khobar Towers bombing. In 2000, 17 American sailors lost their lives in the USS *Cole*. And, of course, in 2001, that date we all remember, 9/11, 2,973 Americans lost their lives in the World Trade Center bombing, in the Pentagon, and in Pennsylvania.

When you think about the actions of these terrorists and how real and dangerous they are, I am reminded of last summer when the Pope made a statement in a speech about the radical element, small but radical element, within the Islamic faith and the violence associated with that element. And the reaction to the Pope's statement about violence among this radical, but small, element, the reaction to his statement about violence was violence. It was the destruction of churches, the destruction of buildings. It was the taking of a life of an innocent nun in Italy. That is what we are up against.

This Democratic resolution puts us on a path towards leaving Iraq before victory is attained. It puts us on a path that will cut funds to our brave men and women already in battle. It puts us on a path that is wrong for America. And, most importantly, I think, it puts us on the wrong path that will most assuredly embolden the very people who are responsible for the terrorist acts I just listed.

If you remember, shortly after 9/11 the President gave a series of speeches where he outlined a policy. He said if you are a country that harbors terrorists, if you are a country that provides financing to terrorists, if you are a country that trains terrorists, if you are a country that is producing weapons that are going to harm vast numbers of people, if you are doing those things, we are going to put you on notice that we are not going to tolerate it.

And if you remember, it was amazing how quickly Moammar Kadafi in Libya found the Lord and saw the light and how quickly he was willing to say, I am going to work now with the United States. He understood that when America says something, we mean it. If we just do what this Democratic resolutions puts us on the path to do, I am afraid of the message it sends to the Kadafis around the world and what that can mean for the future safety of Americans and for our military.

This is a great country. We have been able to overcome whatever challenges have presented themselves to us throughout our history. And it is important that we have the same resolve as we approach this challenge.

I am just a freshman Member of the Congress; and just a few weeks ago it was put on display about what is so great about America, as we said, in this Chamber during the State of the Union address. And during that speech, the President pointed up to the gallery, and he highlighted some great Americans, some American heroes. And the one that stuck out in my mind, and many of you may remember this, was Wesley Autrey, the subway man. And I thought it was so amazing to see what this man had done and how that contrasts with the actions of the terrorists. Wesley Autrey in the subway, willing to jump in front of a train on the track to save a complete stranger simply because he was a fellow human being. Contrast that action with the action of the terrorist who will jump into that same subway, blow himself up to kill as many innocent people as he can.

What is great about this country is the respect we place on human life, the preciousness and sacredness that Americans have for human life. That is the difference between us and the terrorists. That is why it is so important to confront these folks wherever they choose to fight us. Right now that place is Iraq. That is why this resolution is bad.

Ladies and gentlemen, we should not pass a resolution in which politicians second guess our military leaders in the field. We should not pass a resolution that will embolden our enemy. And, most importantly, we should not waver in our commitment to protect human life and to confront the evil that is among us.

I urge a ''no'' vote on the resolution

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I now yield 5 minutes to my sister's Congressman, a gentleman who worked hard to become a member of the Ways and Means Committee, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL).

Mr. PASCRELL. Madam Speaker, the Wall Street Journal accused us of trying to micromanage this war. Well, this President has not listened to the generals. He hasn't listened to the American people. And he hasn't listened to the Iraqi people. He has micromanaged this failure.

Four and a half years ago, Madam Speaker, on this floor I stood in this Chamber, along with 295 of my colleagues, to support the resolution authorizing the President to attack Iraq. I regret that vote deeply. And I told my constituents in my district 1½ years ago that I made a mistake. Down the street they make no mistakes. They are infallible.

I did so because the premise on which we authorized this war was false, the military plan for victory has been weak, and more than 5 years later, this war has made our Nation less safe.

We stand ready to vote on a different resolution that could take a significant step towards remedying the historic mistake we made in October of 2002. The troop escalation advocated by President Bush will only widen our involvement in this conflict and put more brave American troops in the middle of a vicious civil war. Voting in favor of the President's escalation plan is an historic error, and I stress the historic nature of this debate because I am a firm believer that history is telling of the future.

The history of this war shows that this President cannot form the right policy for victory. He should have sent additional troops in 2003 when the generals asked him to do that, when it was possible to restore order in Baghdad, instead of now in 2007 when violence reigns supreme.

The history of Iraq shows it has been wracked by sectarian and ethnic division long before it was even a state, a fact conveniently ignored by this President and his supporters on their march to Baghdad.

Remember, Iran and Syria and others are possibly fighting a proxy war by

supplying insurgents against an unpopular foreign occupier, the same role that we played in helping the Afghans to fight the Soviets 20 years ago; and we know how that conflict turned out.

In history I see the lessons, Madam Speaker. As I speak today, in 280 B.C. when King Pyrrhus of Greece defeated the Romans during the Pyrrhic War, his army suffered irreplaceable casualties in battle. And when he was congratulated on his victory, he replied: ''Another such victory like that over the Romans and we are undone.''

We have heard the word ''success'' and we have heard the word ''victory'' so many times that they are now as pyrrhic, empty, fleeting, hollow.

□ 1430

The lesson is clear. The President's escalation plan offers an illusion, when only the real hope is that it offers a Pyrrhic victory at best.

Our Armed Forces have been used, abused, refused and accused. They have been overstretched. They were ill-equipped from the very beginning. Don't tell us we don't support the troops, when you did not give what they deserved in the field of battle. Our military readiness to fight the ongoing war on terror is now in serious doubt because of this war. Don't question our patriotism. Don't question our support or the American people's. Listen.

By the way, Madam Speaker, have we asked the Iraqis what they feel? Well, 80 percent of them want us out. Don't they count? Can't we ask and listen to at least the very people whose country we occupy, this sovereign nation? This is unbelievable. It is illusionary at best. And what will we say to these Iraqi people? I want to hear the answer from the other side. What is your answer for them when they say, Don't stay here, and certainly don't escalate. I ask the loyal opposition to our resolution to tell the American people how much do the intentions of the Iraqi people really matter to you?

The epicenter of our fight against terror is on the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Many of us have been there. Many of us have gone there. You have forgotten that part of the world, which many did not even know on September 11, 2001, where Afghanistan was in the first place.

The clear message we send to the Iraqi people and the American people is that we will bring freedom to Iraq, even if it takes the blood of every Iraqi and the lives of more American soldiers. That is not good enough. That is not acceptable.

You have heard the statistics from speaker after speaker. Previous escalations in this war have not worked. Why will this one work? Our ill-fated presence in Iraq is being used as a propaganda tool for the enemy, al Quaeda, and other terrorists worldwide.

In the years since 9/11, more terrorists have been created through this President's policies than were captured or killed. There weren't any terrorists in Iraq in 2003, but there are now.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to Mr. PETER ROSKAM from Illinois.

Mr. ROSKAM. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, we are here to debate a House Concurrent Resolution, and the root verb of ''resolution'' is resolute. I just want to challenge the House today to consider the resolution of our enemies. I would like to read three quotes to you.

Resolved, by Osama bin Laden. The whole world is watching this war, and the two adversaries, the Islamic nation on the one hand and the United States and its allies on the other. It is either victory and glory or misery and humiliation.

Or how about this? Resolved, in the al Quaeda charter: There will be continuing enmity until everyone believes in Allah. We will not meet the enemy halfway, and there will be no room for dialogue with them.

Or how about this, and I am paraphrasing: Resolved, from Osama bin Ladens deputy, who said that the plan is to extend the jihad wave; to expel the Americans from Iraq and extend the jihad wave to secular countries neighboring Iraq, clash with Israel and establish an Islamic authority.

Is there anyone among us who doubts the resolve and clarity with which our opponents are speaking? I don't.

I think what is lacking today in our conversation is the consequences of failure. The previous speaker used the words ''victory'' and ''success.'' He had a very low view of them, and I understand his characterization of those words. He said we have heard those words before. That is what the gentleman from New Jersey said.

But, do you know what? We will hear the word ''failure'' when it is used in the context of this challenge that is before us.

There is no question that there has been great difficulty that has gone before us in this fight. There is no question that there have been great mistakes that have been made, and I am wholeheartedly in favor of us acting as a coequal branch of government and calling for benchmarks and demarcation and holding the administration accountable for its decisions.

But if we fail in this, if we pull out, if we retreat, if we yield, what will happen? Is there anybody really who thinks that Iran, for example, will be less provocative? Is there anybody who thinks that al Quaeda will be less provocative?

If we fail, extremism in this world, will it be ascendant or will it be descendant?

Madam Speaker, I close with a simple question, and that is, we need to ask, What is it about this resolution that will do one of two things? Does this encourage our troops, or does this discourage our enemies? I would suggest that this resolution, while it is serious, oh, it is very serious, it is not substantive. This is the ultimate expression of legislative passive aggression. It offers no substantive alternative.

Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition, and ask my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my dear friend in the adjoining district, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY), the Chair of the Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee.

Mrs. LOWEY. Madam Speaker, a violent civil war is raging in Iraq, with atrocities against innocent civilians mounting every day. Our troops, our brave troops, are caught in the crossfire, dying and being maimed driving on local roads, patrolling neighborhoods and moving about by helicopter. What is their mission today? What is the strategic objective of the escalation proposed by the President?

President Bush's plan to deploy 20,000 additional U.S. combat troops to Iraq is not a new strategy, and nothing I have seen or heard has convinced me that this escalation will make a positive difference in Iraq or hasten the safe return of U.S. troops. In fact, General Abizaid said that ''more American forces prevent the Iraqis from taking responsibility for their own future.''

Four previous troop surges between December 2003 and October 2006 have not made a dent in the level of violence nor in the number of U.S. casualties. We have spent nearly $500 billion in Iraq and Afghanistan, and yet inexplicably our troops still do not have the protection they need. Throughout this war, many in Congress have addressed the lack of equipment and protection for our troops. Now, military leaders are saying there are not enough armor kits and vehicles to protect these additional five brigades the President plans to send to Iraq. It is unacceptable to send more soldiers to Iraq, but it is unconscionable to send them without proper armaments or an explanation from the administration about how our troops will be protected.

Madam Speaker, 3,132 Americans in uniform have died and 23,417 have been wounded since the start of the war in Iraq. I visited our wounded soldiers at Walter Reed, Bethesda Naval Hospital, and, most recently, at Landstuhl Military Hospital in Germany during my visit to Iraq with the Speaker.

I stood at the bedside of a 23-year old severely wounded soldier, a soldier who was holding the hand of his 21-year old brother, currently serving in Iraq, and the hand of his father, who had also served in the Armed Forces, a soldier who will likely never come home. These families are making the ultimate sacrifice for our family. I am humbled by their commitment, their professionalism and dedication. We have a responsibility to our Armed

Forces, our citizens, and the constituents who have elected us to bring them home as quickly and safely as possible.

I am convinced that the thorough analysis and conclusions of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group are correct. Iraqi leaders must take responsibility for the country's security and government and we must engage the international community to work towards stability in the region. There is no military solution to the crisis in Iraq, and we cannot send more brave men and women to police a civil war.

As I have said many times before, there are no good solutions to the quagmire in Iraq. This war was ill-conceived, poorly planned and incompetently executed. The best military minds must now focus their efforts on the safe and responsible redeployment of our troops rather than on this escalation. I cannot support sending more of our brave men and women in uniform on a last-ditch, misguided mission.

We best support our troops, my colleagues, and our national interests, by adopting this resolution, and by expressing clearly on behalf of the American people our firm determination to change course in Iraq.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Idaho, Bill Sali.

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

Mr. SALI. Madam Speaker, before I begin, I would first like to thank you for reminding the body of the need for decorum in our remarks

Madam Speaker, several points. First is, it is stunning to me that this body will consume over 36 hours of floor debate on a nonbinding resolution. This should be on the consent calendar. Irrespective of one's position on the war in Iraq, all taxpayers are right to be incensed at such waste in this Congress.

This legislation will not have the effect of law, will neither inspire nor impede military action in Iraq or elsewhere, will not encourage our troops on the ground nor foster victory over America's enemies that practice terror. It will have one effect: poking the President of the United States in the eye, diminishing his credibility among the international community and eroding his ability to lead here at home. It will also have the very genuine result of undermining and demoralizing our soldiers that are now in harm's way.

Second, equally stunning is the apparent preoccupation with demeaning President Bush while ignoring those who are our real enemies. Our enemies are not in the White House or the Defense Department. They are not people like David Petraeus or his staff. They are not the vast majority of Muslims throughout the world, who, like us, want simply to live peaceful and secure lives.

America's enemies are radical Islamists, less than 1 percent of all Muslims, whose faith requires that a pure Islamic state be established and that violence is the instrument by which to establish it. Their faith requires terrorist acts against the West and all Muslims who stand in the way of that agenda. That is why Osama bin Laden can say that he and his followers are ''in love with death.'' Indiscriminate slaughter is, for these sick people, merely a tool in their arsenal of moral barbarity.

That is why his second-in-command has declared that Iraq and Afghanistan are ''the two most crucial fields'' in their war. That is why al Qaeda in Iraq has declared an Islamic state in Iraq's Anbar Province.

Third, how do America's enemies view us? For one thing, they fear George W. Bush and our military. That is why Libya's Mu'ammar Qadhafi 3 years ago surrendered his nuclear materials to the U.S. That is why Moqtada al-Sadr, Iraq's most powerful militia leader, just made a beeline for Iran; not for a sunny vacation from long, tiresome days of planning suicide bombings, but because he feared for his life.

□ 1445

But America's enemies view Congress quite differently. They see us as divided, irresolute, unwilling to face honestly their concerted plan for our destruction. Hence, this nonbinding resolution.

In light of this reality, I would ask my friends across the aisle, what is your binding plan for defeating America's enemies? America, our allies and our enemies are still waiting for your binding plan.

More than 3,000 Americans have died upholding the hope of defeating America's real enemies and bringing freedom to Iraq. We must not allow their deaths to become a pretext for the abandonment of that hope of victory or abandoning the Iraqi people. But rather, they must serve as the inspiration of a renewed commitment to hope of victory and security for Iraq. We owe to their heroism and sacrifice nothing less than one thing, victory over America's enemies in Iraq.

America is the last best hope of man on Earth. A victory in Iraq is our last best hope of defeat of America's most dangerous enemies and also the freedom and security in the Middle East. We must not fail.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 5½ minutes.

Madam Speaker, I am going to come here and speak from the heart. I do not want to read a speech because I think it is important to speak from the heart. I am not here to point fingers. I am not here to chastise anyone. I am not here to talk about what might have been.

I support our soldiers. I support the war against terror, but I rise in support of this resolution which is Congress' responsibility. We have to look, Madam Speaker, at the current situation in Iraq as it is, not as we might wish it to be, but as it is.

Several years ago, I voted to give the President the authority to go to war in Iraq based on what we were told then. I must say that I regret that vote.

I regret it not only because no weapons of mass destruction were found or that there was no connection between al Qaeda and Iraq at that time, even though we were told there was. There was obviously faulty intelligence. We will never quite know if we were misled or if our intelligence was bad. But one thing is very, very clear to me, that this war has been mishandled from the beginning.

The President is now talking about a surge of sending 21,500 more troops to Iraq. When we first went into Iraq, I am a big believer if you are going to do something, you do it right or you do not do it at all. We were told by General Shinseki that there were not enough troops in Iraq, not enough troops at that time several years ago to be able to protect the borders, to protect insurgents from coming in, to protect people that would do us ill from coming in.

And his statements were dismissed. Not only were his statements dismissed, but then he was dismissed; and now here it is 3 or 4 years later, we are being told that the solution is to send more troops again. It is obvious to me that this is too little too late.

The war in Iraq has morphed into a civil war. It is obvious to anybody who looks at the situation that the Shia and the Sunni are fighting each other, and our brave men and women are caught right in the middle of it. Eighty percent of the people of Iraq on both sides do not want us there, and more and more our people are becoming sitting ducks.

I grieve for the more than 3,200 brave Americans who have died and the countless thousands more who have been injured; but it is one thing, Madam Speaker, to die in fighting for the freedom of your country, defending your country. It is quite another to die in a senseless civil war that more and more we see we cannot control nor probably should we attempt to anymore.

From the minute we came into Iraq, unfortunately, not only did we have no troops, there was mistake after mistake. We fired the Ba'ath Party people. So we had people who were angry at us to begin with. We have not been able to give the Iraqis what we said we would give them. They find that their way of life is worse now than ever before. We were not greeted as liberators, but we were greeted as occupiers.

And when we look at what we supposedly are there to protect, we look at the leader of Iraq, Mr. Maliki. He is propped up by the al-Sadr brigade, viciously anti-American, viciously killing Iraqis. He cannot go after them. They are the base of his support, and we are to believe that somehow he is a great patriot and is fighting for democracy in Iraq.

We talk about al Qaeda. Al Qaeda is certainly a threat. I am a New Yorker.

I will never ever forget September 11, 2001. And we have to go after al Qaeda and we have to fight terrorism, but I believe that the war in Iraq has now become a distraction against the war on terror.

So by staying in Iraq, are we fighting the war on terror, or are we making it more difficult? A troop surge will not work. There are other priorities that we have. Our young people are sitting ducks. This is more and more like Vietnam. You cannot leave and you cannot stay.

We support our troops. This surge will not work. Congress needs to send this message to the President and to Iraq and to the world.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER).

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I am proud to be yielded time from a true American hero.

If at any time while I am in the Congress and I am asked to vote to authorize war, I will ask myself two fundamental questions, two caveats to such action. Number one, what are the United States' vital interests? How are our vital interests being advanced? Number two, what is the mission and how is the mission being defined?

I was not in the Congress when the vote to give the President the authority to go to war in Iraq was taken, but as I remember the debate during that vote, it was heavily predicated on the fact that we thought that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, and the mission seemed to be principally defined as finding WMDs. It is clear that he had them at one time because he used them on his own people.

However, since we have gone into Iraq, whether it is because they have transited the country or they were destroyed, or whatever the reason, we have not found them.

Then the mission was defined as toppling the oppressor, the butcher of Baghdad, Saddam Hussein. And we have done so. We let the Iraqi courts exercise their due diligence in a court of law, and he is dead now. Good riddance, and hanging was too good for him.

Then we defined the mission as providing a stable framework that would allow the Iraqis to build a democracy because we can all agree that having a democracy in an Arab country in the Middle East would be optimal for the entire world. They have had their elections. They have adopted a Constitution, and they have elected leadership that is in place.

Again, I ask about the United States' vital interests and how we are defining the mission because, Madam Speaker, the mission needs to be understood. It is important that those of us in Congress can understand it, of course. It is important that the American people can understand it. But most importantly, the brave men and women who wear the uniform and are in theater risking their lives and their limbs need to be able to understand the mission.

President Bush has said that the mission is to achieve stability in Iraq, to train the Iraqi forces so that they will be able to stand up so that we will be able to stand down. He says that the so-called surge is a necessary thing to do.

As a member of the Armed Services Committee, I have listened to the testimony from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of Defense as well, about how this surge will work, and in my mind, a surge is a quick, overwhelming show of force. However, as it has been explained to me, this action will have two of a total of five brigades begin to deploy to Baghdad and the Anbar province and then gradually the other three brigades will be deployed as an assessment can be made on how the first two are doing.

I will note that I have read that General Schoomaker, Army Chief of Staff, has said in a closed door hearing that he thought the surge had a 50–50 chance of success.

Madam Speaker, our troops have done everything that we have asked them to do and more, and you cannot blame America for the Iraqis' failure to stop killing one another in a religious frenzy.

I am a product of the Vietnam era. My husband was an Air Force pilot in Vietnam. My county has the largest chapter of Vietnam veterans in the entire Nation, and although I have resisted making any analogy from Iraq to Vietnam, I will make this one personal observation.

From the very beginning of the Iraq conflict, we should have allowed our troops to go in and use overwhelming force; but we were told, no, that we had enough. Those that suggested otherwise were dismissed, and so they micromanaged from the White House, and now I think they are doing the same with this surge. Our troops can win, but they are being held back. They are being micromanaged by our politicians. We are not letting them win, and this is the lesson that I learned from Vietnam.

In Vietnam, we used a graduated response. We held back our troops. We did not use overwhelming force, and after many died, we left the field and I cannot believe in my lifetime that once again we are repeating this mistake.

I support the troops and I support victory. I recognize how incredibly complex this situation is. I recognize that having our troops leave will probably result in a loss of human life that will be horrifying. I recognize that leaving will probably encourage the neighbors to move in to protect their own interests, and I recognize that the war on terror will follow us if we leave.

Yet, recognizing all of this, since the Iraqis will, for whatever reason, not stand up to ensure their own freedom, how can we ask Americans and for how long to continue to do so for them? Either use overwhelming force to win, or get out and do not continue to ask our troops to fight with one hand behind their backs.

Mistakes have been made, as they always are in war; but another lesson that I learned from Vietnam is that the only thing worse than micromanaging a war from the White House is micromanaging it from here in Congress. And this is a time when every Member in this House needs to dig down deep and vote their conscience, knowing that sending the right message to the administration has the very real consequence of sending the wrong message to the troops who so bravely and professionally fight for freedom and liberty and democracy.

Vote ''no'' on this resolution.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I yield 5½ minutes to my fellow New Yorker (Mr. BISHOP).

(Mr. BISHOP of New York asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution which is a clear and concise response on behalf of the majority of Americans who share our opposition to the President's misguided plan to escalate the presence of U.S. troops in Iraq.

We can all agree upon and indeed must take this opportunity once again to affirm that our support for the brave men and women of the United States Armed Forces is steadfast and unyielding.

As this resolution declares, our first priority must continue to be protecting the brave men and women in uniform who have served this Nation honorably and valiantly. The decision to invade Iraq is the single most devastating and misguided foreign policy decision our Nation has ever made, and the process of protecting our Nation from compounding this tragic error must begin this week under new leadership with a clear vision and a plan that finally acknowledges that we can no longer stay the course in Iraq.

□ 1500

After nearly 4 years of war, the sacrifice of more than 3,100 brave servicemen and -women, tens of thousands more injured, and over $600 billion spent on the war to date, President Bush's ''mission accomplished'' declaration certainly rings hollow.

We must not forget whose war and misguided strategy failed us, and we must ask who the President is listening to beyond the small circle of advisers who were the architects of this fiasco in the first place.

The only strategy this administration has proposed is to stay the course, augmented by four earlier surges, along with the most recent plan to deploy the additional 21,500 U.S. troops, likely to escalate further to 40,000 to 60,000 more troops before the year's end. This latest policy is stay the course writ large.

The President's plan operates under the assumption that somehow, despite

all the evidence to the contrary, there is a military path to success if only more forces are on the ground. Not only is this logic flawed, it flies in the face of the wisdom of his top generals in the field, such as the former commander of the U.S. Central Command, John Abizaid, who told the Senate Armed Services Committee that ''more American troops right now is not the solution to the problem.''

I agree. We cannot afford to inject more of America's best and bravest into the chaos, particularly without the armor and training to protect them. Shortchanging our heroes in the face of a relentless insurgency is unworthy of this Nation. If we can't supply our troops with what they need, how can we possibly contemplate an escalation?

Without a reduction to the violence against U.S. troops, without stability in the region, and without evidence of a correlation between the raging violence and the number of U.S. troops and the number of trained Iraqi troops, now is the time to reduce the U.S. combat presence in Iraq, not expand it.

The Republican mantra has been that the Democrats don't have a plan for Iraq other than cut and run, an assertion that is simply false. We do have a comprehensive plan for Iraq that includes implementing the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group, a regional conference to engage Iraq's neighbors diplomatically, and seeking political solutions to the escalating turmoil in the region. But again I would ask, what evidence is there to suggest that this President will listen to anyone's plan other than his own?

This is simply not an insurgency that needs to be crushed. Confirmed by the President's most recent National Intelligence Estimate, Iraq is in a state of civil war, and thus political solutions are needed to address the real problem. Although al Qaeda remains active in Iraq, they have been surpassed by ethnic violence, the primary source of conflict and the most immediate threat to stability in Iraq.

Proponents of the war claim that those opposed to the surge aren't supporting the troops. I would ask them how we are supporting our troops while keeping them in a country where 70 percent of Iraqis believe it is acceptable to attack U.S. troops, where 78 percent believe that our troops provoke more violence than they prevent, where three-quarters of them would feel safer if American forces left Iraq.

By staying the course in Iraq, we are putting our troops in a situation that has no positive outcome. Aren't the lives of our troops more valuable than saving political face and trying to prove a point?

And while it is well known that the claims of weapons of mass destruction were based on faulty intelligence and there was no connection between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda, why are we committing our troops and resources towards refereeing a civil war in Iraq, thereby diverting resources required to win the global war on terror rather than fighting al Qaeda in Afghanistan, tracking down Osama bin Laden, and preventing another terrorist attack against America?

The President's earlier NIE made it very clear last September that the war in Iraq has become a primary recruitment vehicle for violent Islamic extremists, motivating a global jihadist movement and a new generation of potential terrorists around the world whose numbers may be increasing faster than the United States and our allies can reduce the threat.

Opposition to this surge does not mean a lack of support for our troops; rather, it affirms what the American people made clear last November, that our policy in Iraq is not working and that we need a new direction. I will vote for this resolution, and I will continue to join with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to bring our involvement in this misguided tragedy to an end

The NIE also indicates that, rather than contributing to eventual victory in the global counter-terrorism struggle, the situation in Iraq has diminished America's position, What additional evidence does the President need to prove that his policies in Iraq are only making matters worse for Iraqis and making the world decidedly less safe for America?

And to those who would argue that this resolution sends a signal to our enemies that we are weak and divided, you are wrong. This debate proves why democracy works, unites us, makes us stronger, more resolute, and why these strengths—that our enemies envy and seek to overcome—will ensure that we ultimately prevail over them.

Opposition to this surge does not mean a lack of support for our troops. Rather, it affirms what the American people made clear last November—that our policy in Iraq is not working and we need a new direction.

I will vote for this resolution, and I will continue to join with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to bring our involvement in this misguided tragedy to an end. Voicing opposition to this war, to this President's policies, and to more of the same is our solemn responsibility, consistent with the objectives of this resolution, the hopes of the American people, and the mission of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the Majority leadership and the distinguished chairmen of the Armed Services and International Relations Committees for their hard work and making this debate a priority of this Congress.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, at this time I would like to yield 5 minutes to my friend from Virginia, VIRGIL GOODE.

Mr. GOODE. Madam Speaker, it is an honor to receive time from someone who served our Nation in the finest way and who knows firsthand how hurtful a resolution such as this can be to those in theater.

We are in the middle of a 4-day marathon here. While I cannot say that I agree with all of the actions of the President in dealing with Iraq, I will not be supporting H. Con. Res. 63. The eyes of the world are upon this House, and there will be commentary from the Middle East to the streets of small-town America about what we do here over this 4-day period, even though this resolution does not carry the weight of law.

When the commentary begins in the Middle East, in no way do I want to comfort and encourage the radical Muslims who want to destroy our country and who want to wipe the so-called infidels like myself and many of you from the face of the Earth. In no way do I want to aid and assist the Islamic jihadists who want the green flag of the crescent and star to wave over the Capitol of the United States and over the White House of this country. I fear that radical Muslims who want to control the Middle East and ultimately the world would love to see ''In God We Trust'' stricken from our money and replaced with ''In Mohammed We Trust.''

I am not sure that reinforcing the existing troops by 20,000 will save us from the jihadists, and I am not sure it will prevent chaos in Iraq. I do hope that these additional forces will stabilize Baghdad and will lead to democracy and a tolerance of divergent views and religions in Iraq. Unfortunately, the history of that region does not bode well for such conclusions.

In my view, the United States by removing Saddam Hussein has provided a great opportunity for Iraq to be a showcase for tolerance and understanding. Perhaps one day Iraq may want to adopt something like the first amendment of our country. That may only be an optimistic hope.

I hope my fears and the fears of others about chaos and calamity prove false. If the Shiite and Sunni controversy escalates and the situation worsens, we could be faced with a clamor to admit thousands and perhaps millions into this country. I call on the President and our Secretary of State to not allow a mass immigration into this country with the dangers and pitfalls that it could bring to our safety and security. The terrorists would surely enter into this country in such a way as the 9/11 terrorists swam around in a sea of illegal immigration before we were struck on September 11.

Let us vote ''no'' and let us forestall, if not prevent, calamity.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I now yield 5 minutes to one of our freshmen, Representative JASON ALTMIRE of Pennsylvania, surely a rising star.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Madam Speaker, in the lead-up to the war in Iraq, the President offered the American people many reasons why we should enter into this conflict. We were told unequivocally that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction and posed an imminent threat to the United States. We have since learned that pre-war intelligence was completely inaccurate.

We were told that proceeds from Iraq's oil reserves would pay for the cost of the war. Instead, the American people have paid for the cost of the

war. So far, $400 billion, with an additional supplemental request of $100 billion pending.

We were told that we would be greeted as liberators. Nothing could be further from the truth. More than 3,000 American troops have been killed, more than 23,000 injured, and violence in Iraq continues to escalate. There are over 900 weekly attacks on U.S. troops.

These predictions were in the past, but they are instructive as we consider the President's current predictions on how to achieve success in Iraq.

The American people have expressed their clear frustration with the conduct of the war. The bipartisan Iraq Study Group offered a comprehensive strategy to successfully move combat forces out of Iraq. High-level military leaders, including General John Abizaid, have expressed opposition to an escalation of troops. But the President continues to ignore public opinion, rejects sound advice, and stubbornly adhere to his failed go-it-alone policies.

He says he wants a bipartisanship study; but when his results are not to his liking, he dismisses it. He says he wants to hear from his advisers; but when they disagree with them, he dismisses them. He says he wants to hear from his generals on the ground; but when they tell him what he doesn't want to hear, they are reassigned.

The fact is, Madam Speaker, the President's plan to escalate the war in Iraq is not a new policy, just more of the same failed policy.

The solution in Iraq requires the Iraqis themselves to reach a political solution and take responsibility for their own government. The continued open-ended commitment of U.S. forces only deters the Iraqis from making the appropriate political decisions, training security forces, and enacting the reforms necessary to achieve stability.

The Iraq war resolution before us today is simple and straight forward. Let me explain what it does and what it doesn't do.

First and foremost, this resolution expresses our continued support for our military men and women who are serving bravely and honorably. It also expresses the sense of Congress that we disapprove of the decision made by the President to send additional troops to Iraq.

So make no mistake, this resolution is in support of our troops. Anyone who says otherwise is simply wrong. No Member of this House, Republican or Democrat, wants anything less than victory in Iraq and to support our troops.

This resolution does not affect the funding levels to carry out the war. And on that point, let me be clear. As long as we have troops in the field of battle and brave Americans in harm's way, I will never vote to withhold their funding.

I support this resolution because we have the duty as representatives of the American people to continue to voice their opinion that, with his policy of escalation, the President is heading down the wrong path.

The best way forward is for the President to work with Congress, to change course, and adopt a responsible strategy that protects American interests in Iraq, around the region, and at home.

I urge every Member of this House on both sides of the aisle to heed the call for change and vote for this resolution.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, at this time I would like to yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Oklahoma, Mary Fallin.

Ms. FALLIN. Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by reviewing a little history. There have been a number of times in American history when wars didn't go as we had hoped or planned. That winter at Valley Forge was certainly difficult. During the War of 1812, the British occupied this very building, and the Civil War was far more costly and far longer than we hoped it would be.

In World War II, the North African campaign was something of a mess. And the bloody island campaigns of the South Pacific were not something we had foreseen.

In Korea and Vietnam, we brought limited force to bear, and we wound up settling for stalemate and ultimately defeat.

So some of our wars went well, but more often they look a lot simpler and cleaner in the history books than they really were in reality. And if there is one constant warning that runs throughout our history, it is this: Congress has a vital role to play in helping America win its wars. But it can also play a role that is unintended in losing them if it says or if it does the wrong thing at the wrong time. And that is what this resolution says and does, the wrong thing.

This is a nonbinding resolution, which is nothing more than a political game. But the war on terror is not a game. We have to consider what our enemies will read into this resolution. What if Congress during the Valley Forge winter had passed a resolution saying it is time to send our troops home, retire General Washington, and go ahead and pay the tax anyway? What if Congress in the spring of 1863 had looked at the results of Bull Run and said, We can't win this, it's a civil war. Forget the idealism about freeing the slaves.

What if Congress in 1942 or 1943 had told Franklin Roosevelt to pull out of North Africa and Italy and to give up those silly ideas of liberating France? What would our enemies have thought about America's lack of will? They would have assumed that we had lost our will to win, and they would have said America can't cut it.

□ 1515

Well, make no mistake, Iraq is just one battle in our overall war on terror. If this resolution passes, it is sending a very clear message of our weakness, and our enemies are watching today. Just listen to the words of Osama bin Laden. He said, The whole world is watching this war and the two adversaries, the Islamic Nation on the one hand, and the United States and its allies on the other. It is either victory or glory, or it is either misery or humiliation.

We cannot be the Nation of humiliation. The terrorists know what is at stake, and it is time that we show them that we know as well, and that failure is not an option for our Nation. We have to ask ourselves, what is at risk for the future of our Nation? Will our Nation be safer from radical Islamic terrorists if we pull out before the new Iraqi democracy becomes stable and an ally in the war on terror? Ask yourself, what Islamic terrorist leader has said that if America leaves Iraq that he will be satisfied and the terrorists will end their attack? Has not been said.

We must take extraordinary precautions to protect our Nation from those who would do us harm, and someday our children and our grandchildren will look back on this decision this week, and they will reflect on their lives, and the question we have to ask ourselves today is will our children live in a safer America?

I urge the rejection of this resolution.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, before I yield to my next speaker, I am told we are rapidly running out of time, and I will not be able to yield additional time to anyone beyond the 5 minutes.

I now have the pleasure of calling on another new star in this Congress, Representative BRUCE BRALEY of Iowa, for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Madam Speaker, I grew up surrounded by heroes. My father, Byard Braley, got permission from his mother at the age of 17 to enlist in the Marine Corps, and 1 year later found himself landing on Iwo Jima, the same day the flags were raised on Mount Suribachi. Thirty thousand marines and Japanese soldiers lost their lives in 1 month on an island the same size as my hometown of Brooklyn, Iowa.

My father saw one of his best friends vaporized by a shell burst, and we did not learn that fact until 15 years after he died.

The same night that my father landed on Iwo Jima, another marine from my hometown of Brooklyn slept under those flags as Japanese bombs flew overhead. Harold Keller was the real deal. He was the second marine to reach the summit of Mount Suribachi, and he single-handedly fought off a Japanese counterattack and rescued the people you see depicted in Flags of Our Fathers.

When he came home to my hometown, he repaired milking equipment for area farmers. My uncle Gordon Braley served in the merchant marine, guarding allied shipping lanes in the North Atlantic.

My Uncle Bert Braley served in the Army Air Corps, and my Uncle Lyle Nesselroad served in the Navy. My cousin, Dick Braley, was a Marine Corps artillery officer at a firebase in Vietnam.

These ordinary men taught me that patriotism is not something you claim by putting down others who disagree with your viewpoints. It is something you earn by the way you live your life, the respect you have for the institutions that make the United States a great beacon of liberty, freedom and justice.

When I return to my hometown of Waterloo, Iowa, I am still surrounded by heroes. These heroes belong to the battalion of the Ironman Battalion of the Iowa National Guard. They are approximately 560 fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters from Waterloo, Dubuque, Oelwein and everywhere in between.

One of them, Ray Zirkelbach, is missing his second consecutive year in the Iowa House of Representatives, because their latest tour was recently extended. A flag is draped over his desk in the House chamber.

These heroes are the reason why I stand here today in opposition to the President's plan to escalate the war in Iraq. On November 7, 2006, the voters of this country went to the polls and clearly stated that it is time for a new direction in Iraq.

Soon after, the bipartisan Iraq Study Group presented President Bush with a desperately needed blueprint for change. They recognized that the deteriorating crisis in Iraq couldn't be solved by military action. Instead, it required a political solution between warring factions for a stable democracy to evolve.

The Iraq Study Group recognized that ''stay the course'' was a failed strategy, and that three prior troop surges had done little to stem the growing violence. They knew that the Iraqis would never get serious about standing up for their own country until they were confronted with a timetable for redeploying our forces.

After I was sworn in as a Member of Congress on January 4, I hoped that President Bush would listen to the advice of this bipartisan group whose recommendations he welcomed.

I hoped that he would move to fulfill the promise of the Defense Authorization Act of 2006, when this Congress stated that 2006 would be a period of significant transition in Iraq, with the Iraqi Security Forces taking the lead for their own security, so we could begin a phased redeployment of U.S. forces from Iraq. Instead, the President ignored the recommendations of the study group and chose to escalate the war in Iraq without charting a new course.

To my friends on the other side of the aisle who disagree with the resolution we are debating today, by all means vote your conscience. I will be voting my conscience and joining well-known Republicans who agree that the escalation is a mistake:

People like Senator CHUCK HAGEL of my neighboring State of Nebraska, who called the President's escalation plan the most dangerous foreign policy blunder in this country since Vietnam, if it is carried out.

People like former Iowa Representative Jim Leach, who said that the President's policy in Iraq may go down as the greatest foreign policy blunder in U.S. history.

Well-respected military experts also oppose this escalation, including General Colin Powell, General George Casey and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The President truly stands alone with a strategy that his own generals, key Republicans, and the American people oppose. The time is long overdue for the people's House to reassert its rightful place in our constitutional system of checks and balances.

We have a duty to send a message that it is time for real change in Iraq, change characterized by accountability and redeployment of our troops. There will be no more blank checks. There will be tough questions in oversight, and I will work hard to make sure that this happens. I ask everyone to support the resolution

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlelady from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX).

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, a true patriot, Mr. JOHNSON.

Madam Speaker, I rise today not only in support of the brave men and women of the American Armed Forces, but also in support of the cause for which they fight. They heroically give of themselves every day to ensure the safety of our Nation and the freedom that we Americans enjoy.

Like my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, I want America's troops home as soon as possible, but disengaging at this time would invite the terrorists to follow us home. This resolution sends the wrong message and will have grave consequences. It will demoralize our troops and embolden our enemies. We are combating a global adversary who sees an enemy in any Nation that supports the ideals of freedom. In the interest of democracy, global safety and rural peace, victory in Iraq is absolutely crucial.

While some seem happy to complain about the war, they have offered nothing in the way of a solution to defeat the jihadists. It is fine to disagree, but your opinion holds little weight if you fail to offer a constructive alternative. Leadership takes strengths and courage to succeed in the face of adversity, although mistakes may be made along the way.

Many comments have been made by those who support this resolution, but one that deserves a response is the oft-repeated phrase that this is an impossible war to win. What a terrible attitude for Members of the United States Congress to have.

What if George Washington had succumbed to the critics of his day who said those things? What if Abraham Lincoln, FDR and President Truman had taken that attitude? Where would we be now? We are here today because people who came before us refused to listen to the naysayers and the defeatists.

The true leaders of this Nation have always focused on the possible and accomplished it. These people remind me of the attitude of the Carter administration in dealing with Iran.

Let me quote a recent article by Dinesh D'Souza. '' . . . they are willing to risk the country falling into the hands of Islamic radicals. Little do the people waging 'the war against the war' know that in exchange for a temporary political advantage, they are gravely endangering America's security and well-being, ultimately even their own.''

Let us band together as Americans, put aside political differences to show that we understand the need to defend freedom for the long and short terms. This is the decisive battle of our generation, and this is a defining moment of our time.

We cannot afford to lose and should vote ''no'' on this resolution

[From the American Legion Magazine, Feb. 2007]

HOW WE LOST IRAN—AND WHY WE CAN'T AFFORD ANOTHER LOSS IN IRAQ

(By Dinesh D'Souza)

There are four important Muslim countries in the Middle East: Iran, Iraq, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Islamic radicals control Iran, and have since the Khomeini revolution a quarter century ago. Now they have their sights on Iraq. If they get Iraq, we can be sure they will target Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Let's remember that this is a region upon which the United States will continue to be oil-dependent for the foreseeable future. If the Islamic radicals succeed, the American way of life will be seriously threatened.

To understand the high stakes in Iraq, it's helpful to understand what happened in Iran a generation ago. How did America ''lose'' Iran, and how can we avoid another debacle in Iraq? Islamic radicals have been around since the 1920s, but for decades they were outsiders even in the Muslim countries. One of their leading theoreticians, Sayyid Qutb, argued that radical Muslims could not just promulgate theories and have meetings; they must seek to realize the Islamic state ''in a concrete form.'' What was needed, he wrote, was ''to initiate the movement of Islamic revival in some Muslim country.'' Once the radicals controlled a major state, he suggested, they could then use it as a beachhead for launching the takeover of other Muslim countries. The ultimate objective was the unification of the Muslim community into a single Islamic nation, governed by Islamic holy law.

In 1979, Qutb's goal was achieved when the Ayatollah Khomeini seized power in Iran. Muslim scholar Hamid Algar terms the Khomeini revolution ''the most significant event in contemporary Islamic history.'' It was an event comparable to the French or the Russian revolutions. Virtually no one predicted it, yet it overturned the entire imperial structure and created a new order, even a new way of life. The mullahs restored the Islamic calendar, abolished Western languages

from the schools, instituted an Islamic curriculum, declared a new set of religious holidays, stopped men from wearing ties, required women to cover their heads, changed the banking system to outlaw usury or interest, abolished Western-style criminal and civil laws, and placed the entire society under sharia, or laws based on the Koran.

The importance of the Khomeini revolution is that it demonstrated the viability of the Islamic theocracy in the modern age. Before Khomeini, the prospect of a large Muslim nation being ruled by clergy according to 8th-century precepts would have seemed far-fetched, even preposterous. Khomeini showed it could be done, and his successors have shown that it can last. To this day, post-Khomeini Iran provides a viable model of what the Islamic radicals hope to achieve throughout the Muslim world. Khomeini also popularized the idea of the United States as a ''great Satan.'' Before Khomeini, no Muslim head of state had said this about America. Muslim leaders like Nasser might disagree with the United States, but they never identified it as the primary source of evil on the planet. During the Khomeini era, there were large demonstrations by frenzied Muslims who cursed the United States and burned its flag. For the first time, banners and posters began to appear all over Iran: DEATH TO AMERICA! THE GREAT SATAN WILL INCUR GOD'S PUNISHMENT! USA, GO TO HELL! AMERICA IS OUR NO. 1 ENEMY! These slogans have since become the mantra of Islamic radicalism. Khomeini was also the first Muslim leader in the modern era to advocate violence as a religious duty and to give special place to martyrdom. Since Khomeini, Islamic radicalism has continued to attract aspiring martyrs ready to confront the Great Satan. In this sense, the seeds of 9/11 were sown a quarter of a century ago when Khomeini and his followers captured the government in Tehran.

Khomeini's ascent to power was aided by the policies of Jimmy Carter and his allies on the political left. The Carter administration's own expert on Iran, Gary Sick, provides the details in his memoir ''All Fall Down,'' a riveting story that has been largely erased from our national memory. Carter won the presidency in 1976 by stressing his support for human rights. From the time he took office, the left contrasted Carter's rights doctrine with the Shah's practices. The left denounced the Shah as a vicious and corrupt dictator, highlighting and in some cases magnifying his misdeeds. Left-leaning officials such as Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, U.N. envoy Andrew Young and State Department human-rights officer Patricia Derian pressed Carter to sever America's longstanding alliance with the Shah. Eventually Carter came to agree with his advisers that he could not in good conscience support the Shah.

When the Shah moved to arrest mullahs who called for his overthrow, the United States and Europe denounced his actions. Former diplomat George Ball called on the U.S. government to curtail the Shah's exercise of power. Acceding to this pressure, Carter called for the release of political prisoners and warned the Shah not to use force against the demonstrators in the streets. When the Shah petitioned the Carter administration to purchase tear gas and riot-control gear, the human-rights office in the State Department held up the request. Some, like State Department official Henry Precht, urged the United States to prepare the way for the Shah to make a ''graceful exit'' from power. William Miller, chief of staff on the Senate Intelligence Committee, said the United States had nothing to fear from Khomeini since he would be a progressive force for human rights. U.S. Ambassador William Sullivan even compared Khomeini to Mahatma Gandhi, and Andrew Young termed the ayatollah a ''20th-century saint.''

As the resistance gained momentum and the Shah's position weakened, he looked to the U.S. government to help him. Sick reports that the Shah discovered he had many enemies, and few friends, in the Carter administration. Increasingly paranoid, he pleaded with the United States to help him stay in power. Carter refused. Deprived of his last hope, with the Persian rug pulled out from under him, the Shah decided to abdicate. The Carter administration encouraged him to do so, and the cultural left celebrated his departure. The result, of course, was Khomeini.

The Carter administration's role in the downfall of the Shah is one of America's great foreign-policy disasters of the 20th century. In trying to get rid of the bad guy, Carter got the worse guy. His failure, as former Democratic senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan once said, was the result of being ''unable to distinguish between America's friends and enemies.'' According to Moynihan, the Carter administration had essentially adopted ''the enemy's view of the world.'' Carter does not deserve sole discredit for these actions. This intellectual framework that shaped Carter's misguided strategy was supplied by the political left.

Of course, the primary force behind the Shah's fall was the fundamentalist movement led by Khomeini. But it is possible that the Shah, with U.S. support, could have defeated this resistance. Another option would have been for the United States to use its influence to press for democratic elections, an option unattractive both to the Shah and to the Islamic militants. Even after the Shah's departure, a U.S. force could have routed the Khomeini regime—an action that would have been fully justified given Iran's seizure of the U.S. embassy and the taking of American hostages. Determined at all costs to prevent these outcomes, the left sought not only to demonize the Shah but also to favorably portray Khomeini and his radical cohorts. In Sick's words, Khomeini became ''the instant darling of the Western media.'' The tone of American press coverage can be gleaned from Time's cover story on Feb. 12, 1979: ''Now that the country's cry for the Ayatollah's return has been answered, Iranians will surely insist that the revolution live up to its democratic aims. Khomeini believes that Iran should become a parliamentary democracy. Those who know the ayatollah expect that eventually he will settle in the holy city of Qom and resume a life of teaching and prayer.''

Immediately following Khomeini's seizure of power, political scientist Richard Falk wrote in the Feb. 16, 1979, New York Times, ''To suppose that Ayatollah Khomeini is dissembling seems almost beyond belief. He has been depicted in a manner calculated to frighten. The depiction of him as fanatical, reactionary and the bearer of crude prejudices seems certainly and happily false. His close advisers are uniformly composed of moderate, progressive individuals . . . who share a notable record of concern with human rights. What is distinctive about his vision is the concern with resisting oppression and promoting social justice. Many non-religious Iranians talk of this period as Islam's finest hour. Iran may yet provide us with a desperately needed model of humane governance for a Third World country.''

The naiveté of Falk's essay is of such magnitude as to be almost unbelievable. Falk should have known better, and I believe he did know better. Sick notes that in terms of the kind of regime he wanted to institute in Iran, ''Khomeini was remarkably candid in describing his objectives.'' As an expert on international relations, Falk was surely familiar with what Khomeini had been consistently saying for three decades. Along with Ramsey Clark, former attorney general in the Johnson administration, Falk met with Khomeini on his last day in Paris, before his triumphal return to Iran. Shortly after that meeting Clark conducted a press conference to champion Khomeini's cause. Falk, too, seems to have acted as a kind of unpaid public-relations agent for the ayatollah's regime.

Upon consolidating his power, Khomeini launched a bloody campaign of wiping out his political opposition and reversing the liberties extended by the Shah to student groups, women's groups and religious minorities. In one year, the Khomeini revolution killed more people than the Shah had executed during his entire quarter-century reign. Despite the fact that many progressive figures were imprisoned, tortured and executed,

Khomeini's actions produced a great yawn of indifference from America's cultural left. The same people who were shocked and outraged by the crimes of the Shah showed no comparable outrage at the greater crimes of Khomeini. They knew, as well as everyone else, that liberty would be largely extinguished in Iran, and they greeted this prospect with equanimity.

Even when radical students overran the U.S. Embassy in Tehran on Nov. 4, 1979, and took more than 60 American hostages, the left's sympathy was with the hostage-takers. During this period, three liberal clergymen—William Sloane Coffin of New York's Riverside Church, National Council of Churches executive director William Howard and Catholic Bishop Thomas Gumbleton—visited the hostages and looked with approval as they recorded anti-U.S. statements for use as Iranian propaganda. The U.S. religious leaders did not seem embarrassed to be used by the Iranian hostage-takers. Many of the allegations against the United States launched by the Iranian radicals corresponded exactly with the views of these liberal clergymen. Going beyond the expectations of the hostage-takers, Coffin even faulted his fellow Americans for ''self pity'' and urged them to hold hands with their captors and sing. In the hostage crisis, these clergymen quite consciously contributed to America's humiliation.

By aiding the Shah's ouster and with Khomeini's consolidation of power, the left collaborated in giving radical Islam its greatest victory in the modern era. Thanks in part to Jimmy Carter, Muslim radicals got what they had been seeking for a long time: control of a major Islamic state. Now, irony of ironies, Carter and some of the same people who lost Iran are back in the news, criticizing the Bush administration for what it is doing in Iraq. Some of their points may be valid, but once again, they are forgetting that when you try and get rid of something terrible, you should at least make sure that you don't get something even more terrible. Carter never understood that, and he still doesn't. Rather than dispensing advice, the 39th president should be offering the United States an apology.

Yes, what's going on in Iraq today is not pretty, but that could be said of just about any war. In trying to escape from a difficult situation, America should not put itself into an even more perilous situation. We should always keep in mind what's at stake in this conflict. Today in Iraq, the Islamic radicals are after their second big prize. Iraq is, in a sense, even more important to the radicals than Iran. The reason is that the Khomeini Revolution, despite its global aspirations,

proved to be very difficult to export. Iranians are Persian, and thus ethnically distinct from the Arabs who dominate the Middle East.

Even within Islam, Iranians belong to the Shia minority, while 80 percent of Muslims worldwide are Sunni. Consequently, Islamic radicals have been attempting for the better part of two decades now to carry the revolution beyond Iran, to bring a second Muslim state under radical control, and to establish a model for theocracy and terrorism that the Sunni majority in the Islamic world can emulate. So unlike in Vietnam, the United States faces an adversary that is not merely ideologically hostile, but one whose success would threaten our vital interests and our security, as well as our economic well-being.

Given this, the insouciance and even anticipation with which some of the Bush administration's critics propose prompt U.S. withdrawal from Iraq is remarkable. In a recent article in Harper's, former presidential candidate George McGovern proposed that the United States get out of Iraq, give up its bases there, apologize for having invaded in the first place, accept responsibility for any bloodbath that ensues, and offer to pay reparations to Iraq for its war crimes. This advice goes beyond recklessness. What do McGovern and his allies think is going to happen when U.S. troops leave? They seem eerily eager for the insurgents to topple the elected government and seize power.

Apparently their dislike for President Bush is great enough that they are willing to risk the country falling into the hands of Islamic radicals. Little do the people waging ''the war against the war'' know that, in exchange for a temporary political advantage, they are gravely endangering America's security and well-being, ultimately even their own.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure now to call on another one of our great new freshmen I have gotten to know, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LOEBSACK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Thank you, Mr. ENGEL, for yielding.

Madam Speaker, today with all my colleagues I stand here in support our brave men and women of the Armed Services, as well as their families. We should honor their great commitment and sacrifices without hesitation. I support this resolution because I believe the President's plan for escalation is the wrong approach to the conflicts in Iraq.

But this must not be the end of our efforts in Congress. For too long, Congress refused to stand up to the administration. Our actions today must mark the beginning of Congress' role, not the end. The time has come to tell President Bush enough is enough.

Last November, the American people spoke. They spoke loudly and clearly on a number of issues, but none more passionately and forcefully than the war in Iraq. The American people, long before this debate this week, decided that the misadventure in Iraq must end.

Our troops have performed valiantly in Iraq. In just a matter of a few weeks they removed from power a brutal dictator and began to provide the Iraqi people the opportunity to construct a new political order. Our troops have also contributed mightily to the reconstruction and development of the Iraqi economy and infrastructure.

But over the course of this conflict, the mission of our troops has been transformed, and now they find themselves in the middle of a civil war that involves not just two sides, but almost innumerable factions in conflict with one another.

What is worse is the continued presence of American troops in Iraq will likely only inflame the ongoing sectarian strife and create more, if not fewer, enemies of America. The bottom line is that a continued presence of American troops will only exacerbate the multiple conflicts in Iraq.

As a member of the Readiness Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, I have additional concerns regarding President Bush's proposed escalation. I believe such an escalation will further strain the limited resources available to our military. Already we know our readiness levels for our troops not yet deployed are inadequate.

A further escalation of troop levels in Iraq will only exacerbate this problem and put more servicemen and women in harm's way without the proper training or equipment. Our troops were not trained to be peacemakers in situations such as today's Iraq. Some have argued that we need to increase the number of troops, so that we can engage in an action similar to what our forces did in Bosnia.

Madam Speaker, this is at best a false analogy. Iraq today is not Bosnia of 1995. Today's Iraq is in the early stages of a series of conflicts that may indeed intensify, but this will occur irrespective of whether we insert another 21,500 troops. We simply cannot solve the sectarian conflicts militarily. While it was the Bush administration who initiated hostile actions in March of 2003, I believe it is now necessary for the Iraqi people to step up and assume responsibility for their future.

What is also needed now more than ever is for this administration to reach out to our traditional allies and those in the region who have a significant stake in the future of Iraq. The Bush administration must do something that it has been woefully reluctant to do. It must admit that it made a major strategic and foreign policy mistake when it invaded Iraq in the first place. And I am willing to wager that such an admission would go a distance towards at least beginning to repair our relations with the rest of the world, and the improvement of our relations with our traditional allies beyond the British is a prerequisite to securing their help on Iraq.

Madam Speaker, I call on my colleagues to support this resolution today, as the beginning of this Chamber's efforts to protect our troops and bring our country's involvement in this war to an end.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, in closing, we have heard a lot of excellent presentation points today. I might just clarify the fact that the study group did recommend a surge in one part, and the President has eliminated the rules of engagement that we had laid on our troops over there, so we have a way to make this thing really happen.

I really want to know, if the Democrats insist they are supporting our troops, why they would not let me introduce my measure that mandates that Congress would support and fully fund the men and women in uniform.

I am positive that Democrats will attempt to cut funding as soon as the spending bills come up this spring, and maybe earlier, because there was a press conference earlier today that indicated exactly that.

□ 1530

I fear what that means for our troops on the ground, for their morale. The reality is that President Bush realized he needed to change the course in Iraq, and that is why he worked with folks on the ground in Iraq to hear fresh ideas and came up with a new plan.

The President wants change and that is why he changed the rules of engagement, enabling our guys to shoot at any suspected terrorists. The President wants change. That is why he removed political protections of all insurgents, so all of the bad guys could be brought to justice regardless of who they knew or who they worked for.

These ideas are huge breakthroughs and real solutions. These ideas represent fresh starts and new plans. What is the Democratic plan to move forward and win? They do not have one. Thirty-six hours of political grandstanding, nonbinding resolutions and petty posturing, they are not proposing solutions. They are not even encouraging new ideas. In fact, they stop them like when they squashed my amendment.

Many hope that the troop surge is the beginning of the end. We should all want that if it gets the job done. Yet the Democrats just say no. You know, the time will come when you can put the money behind these nonbinding resolutions. You better believe we will be watching and calling for those funding cuts loud and clear. America needs to know, cutting funds for our troops in harm's way is not a remedy. It is a ruse.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and yield the balance of my time to the next moderator, Mr. SAXTON.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I now yield to another one of our rising freshman stars, the gentleman from Maryland, Representative JOHN SARBANES, 5 minutes.

Mr. SARBANES. Madam Speaker, the resolution we are debating today is simple and direct. It declares strong support for our troops on the ground in Iraq and opposition to the President's decision to send an additional 21,000 men and women into harm's way. I wholeheartedly endorse the resolution and pray that the President will heed its call.

Most agree now that it was a mistake to invade Iraq. Hearings in the Senate and the House are stripping away the last thin veneers of justification for that fateful decision. They are offering compelling evidence that the administration sacrificed wisdom, judgment, and conscience in favor of shock and awe.

Many of us sense a similar impulse at work in this administration's dealings with Iran. Let us serve notice, this Congress will not allow the administration to pursue yet another ill-fated mission. Madam Speaker, bringing our troops home from Iraq is no longer a whispered prayer; it is now the clarion call of the American people.

One year ago those proposing a new direction in Iraq were labeled as unpatriotic and marginalized in the national discourse. But we have come a long way. Elections do matter. On November 7, the people in my district in Maryland and across the Nation sent a strong message.

The next day Secretary Rumsfeld resigned. Shortly thereafter the Iraq Study Group issued its report sharply criticizing the war. And in the next few days the United States House of Representatives will pass this resolution signaling stiff opposition to the administration's proposal for a troop surge in Iraq.

To those patriotic Americans who have been relentless in their call for an end to the war, know this: collective voice has been heard. In my home State of Maryland, nearly 400 men and woman have died or been wounded in Iraq.

Two days ago, one of my constituents reminded me that the war is no longer being measured in time, but in lives. To the families who have sacrificed so much and who have suffered the ultimate loss, do not fear for a moment that a change in our policy in Iraq, that the effort to stop the escalation and begin drawing down our troops in any way dilutes the value this country places on the service of your loved ones.

History will treat harshly those policymakers at the highest levels who let ideology trump sound and informed judgment. It will fairly criticize politicians who have exploited this war for partisan gain. But it will reserve only pride and lasting gratitude for the sacrifice of our men and women in uniform amidst this sad tale of bungled intelligence and ill-advised policy. They alone are untarnished.

Madam Speaker, I have never been to the war. Never kissed my wife and children goodbye, wondering whether I will ever see them again. Far from the harsh reality in Iraq, I am blessed with the sweet ebb and flow of life's daily routines.

But like many Americans who witness our soldiers dutifully pushing forward every day under impossible circumstances, I am ill at ease. I know that the current policy in Iraq will only lead to more pain for many families and for our country.

Madam Speaker, the American people are tired, they are tired of rhetoric, they are tired of promises to put politics and partisanship aside when all they see is bickering and recrimination. Let's give them hope. Let's send a powerful message contained in this resolution, but let's not stop there.

Let all of us, the President, the House, the Senate, have the decency and dignity of purpose to put differences aside and work every day, beginning this day, to bring our troops home to their families, to their communities, and to a Nation that stands humbled by their sacrifice

Mr. SAXTON. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE).

Mr. FLAKE. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the resolution before us. I wish I could do so with the type of certainty that seems to motivate many of my colleagues on the issue. But such resolute certainty escapes me. I do not have a military background. In fact, few of us debating this resolution do.

But each of us can find generals or former generals who will support virtually every option we wish to put on the table. In the end, as legislators, we are left with our own council. Hopefully, such council is informed by briefings, hearings, meetings, and visits to the region.

But we cannot and should not try to place ourselves in the position of Commander in Chief. Our system of government wisely gives that role to the Chief Executive.

This is not to say, however, that we should not be having this discussion. Some have said that simply debating this resolution emboldens our enemies. Perhaps they are right, but we would not suspend due process in this country because it might embolden criminals. It is a price we are willing to pay.

Likewise, debating the merits of war is what democratic nations do. My own thoughts on the situation in Iraq are as follows: I have little confidence that a surge in troop levels will change the situation in Iraq in any substantive fashion. It seems clear that the violence in Iraq is increasingly sectarian, and inserting more troops in this atmosphere is unlikely to improve matters very much.

Without a more sincere commitment to step up to the plate from the Iraqi Government, we are unlikely to make significant progress. But when all is said and done, we have a Commander in Chief whom we have authorized to go to war.

Inserting ourselves as legislators into the chain of command by passing a resolution, nonbinding though it may be, that questions the President's decision to conduct a mission that is clearly already under way strikes me as folly.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on the resolution.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to again introduce one of our freshman rising stars, STEVE KAGEN of Wisconsin. I yield 5 minutes to him.

Mr. KAGEN. Madam Speaker, my name is Dr. STEVE KAGEN. I am from Appleton, Wisconsin, and during the past 30 years I have cared for thousands of military veterans as their physician.

The resolution under consideration today and voted on tomorrow will answer these questions: What kind of Nation are we? In which direction shall we move? During these past several days we have all benefited from listening to hundreds of points of view from our elected representatives from every region of this great country on our ongoing involvement in Iraq.

During these past several months, I have been listening to the people who sent me here from northeast Wisconsin, people a lot like you, fiscally responsible and socially progressive, the citizens of northeast Wisconsin.

People in Wisconsin, like many elsewhere, voted for a positive change and a new direction. The new congressional class of 2006 has given us hope again. We are indeed not just in name but in spirit America's hope, and I am proud to be associated with these talented individuals.

I rise today in support of our troops and their families and to encourage all of you to support this resolution. For it is the first step in bringing an end to our costly involvement in a senseless civil war between the Sunni and Shiite people.

Like every American, I strongly support our troops, but I cannot support the President's poor judgment in promoting violence instead of diplomacy. The President has been wrong in every decision he has made in Iraq.

Indeed, on four separate occasions, prior escalations have failed. And his current plan makes no sense even to the generals who understand it most.

The reality is this, it was poor judgment that took us to war in the first place. It is time to take a different course. For the path we are on now is morally unacceptable. And here are the facts: more than 650,000 Iraq civilians dead; over 3,000 American heroes gone forever; over 20,000 of our troops maimed for life, many with scars we will never see, at an economic cost that may rise above $2 trillion.

Make no mistake, we must do whatever it takes to defend America and keep hostilities from our shores. But what we need now is a tough and smart national defense policy. It is time now to get the smart part right.

This resolution has been criticized on both sides. Some say it is not enough; some say it is too tough. But I am convinced it offers us the opportunity to ask these questions again: What kind of Nation are we, when a President takes us to war based on lies and deceptions, when our energy policy is decided behind closed doors, and when in our free elections not everyone's vote is counted?

What kind of Nation will we be when all of our manufacturing jobs are taken overseas, when workers lose their rights to effective collective bargaining, and when our government closes its eyes to global warming? What kind of Nation are we and in which direction shall we move? Let's begin now to work together and take a different path, a path where people come first ahead of political parties, ahead of profit and loss statements, ahead of politics of fear. When we put people ahead of political calculations, we will begin to see a different world. We will see that we must begin to solve our differences by means other than going to war. After all, war is our greatest human failure.

This is not an idealistic sentiment, a realistic assessment of the chronicle of horrors witnessed every day in Iraq, and even our own experiences here at home, in New York City, in Virginia, in Pennsylvania, in Oklahoma City.

We must teach our children and our leaders alike that in the end diplomacy defeats violence. We must begin to think differently in America as we establish a new direction for hope in the world and a new beginning for our American era. By working together we will build a better future for all of us, beginning right here and right now.

Like the new congressional class of 2006, America's hope, I strongly support our troops, but not the President's failed policy. I encourage all of my colleagues to join the class of 2006 and vote ''yes'' on this important resolution. Join us. Be part of America's hope.

Mr. SAXTON. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. NUNES).

Mr. NUNES. Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition to this intellectually dishonest resolution. I do so in order to challenge the majority party to put their legislating where their mouths have been. The endless criticism to the war in Iraq is clouded by political opportunism and has done little or nothing to improve our chances of victory.

We need an honest debate. We need answers from those who support this resolution. What is next? What is your plan? It should come as no surprise that the resolution we are debating today says very little. There are less than 100 words. And while the rhetoric has been flying during the debate, it seems to me that the new Democratic majority is hoping to avoid debate in which they might have to defend their plan in Iraq.

What we have here is nothing more than a political exercise, a nonbinding resolution, words with no meaning. Make no mistake, their opposition to the President's plan is political. There is no constructive criticism here. Read their resolution.

Iraq is the battleground, Madam Speaker, a key battleground against extremism, terrorism and the expansionist goals of our enemies.

□ 1545

If we fail, Iraq will be a hotbed of radical Islamic activity, a pivotal safe haven, a base from which to plan and fund attacks against us.

Madam Speaker, how is the danger associated with defeat in Iraq not clear? I ask my colleagues, what evidence do you need? Have you listened to the words of our enemies? Must we have more casualties in American cities before you accept the nature of this global threat? How quickly we forget, Madam Speaker.

I urge my colleagues to listen carefully to the words of Osama bin Laden. Last year, bin Laden said, ''Iraq is the focal point of the war on terror. The most important and serious issue today for the whole world is this Third World War. It is raging in Iraq. The world's millstone and pillar is in Baghdad, the capital of the caliphate.'' Another one, ''Jihad against America will continue. Jihad against America will continue economically and militarily. By the grace of Allah, America is in retreat. But more attacks are required.''

Madam Speaker, Osama bin Laden, as well as other Islamic extremists around the world, view the conflict in Iraq as the central battleground in their ideological struggle.

Make no mistake, we are at war, and it is about time that some of our members of our government figured it out.

Someday soon, the Representatives who are supporting this resolution will have to explain to the voters what they have done to make us safer at home and abroad. Since this resolution does nothing more than embolden our enemies, demoralize our troops, and send mixed messages to our allies, they will have a difficult task before them.

Today, unfortunately, we won't hear much about the Democrat plan for Iraq. We will, instead, hear a lot about failure and defeat. We might even hear a conspiracy theory or two. And, of course, we will hear a lot of political posturing.

But Madam Speaker, the American people deserve to know the truth. What happens next, Madam Speaker, to those who believe the President is wrong, to those who believe we rushed to war, to those who can't get beyond our national intelligence failures and, instead, persist on conspiracy theories? Tell us, what is next? What is your plan to protect the American people?

Madam Speaker, I demand answers from the authors of this resolution. The American people have a right to know. Is your plan to simply stand aside and allow an ideology of hate to consume the Middle East?

I implore my colleagues, if you won't heed the warnings of our military and intelligence organizations, listen to al Qaeda's own words. They are speaking directly to you.

This is from Deputy leader al-Zawahiri recently. ''I wish to talk to the Democrats in America. You aren't the ones who won the midterm elections, nor are the Republicans the ones who lost; rather, the Mujahadin are the ones who won and the American forces and their allies lost.''

I ask my colleagues, how can you offer this resolution, knowing the enemy we face? Do you really have nothing to offer the American people but this? Is this resolution the best effort of the new Democrat majority in response to our challenge in Iraq?

Madam Speaker, we should have an honest debate about Iraq. And my friends who are convinced that the war is wrong need to be accountable for failing to say what is right.

In closing, I want to say how proud I am of the men and women who are fighting for our freedom and security all over the world. They don't deserve what we are doing to them today. This resolution is a sham. It is nothing more than political grandstanding, and it is feeding the propaganda machine of our enemy.

I have been to Iraq. I have seen the efforts of our soldiers firsthand. They want to win. They have seen the face of the enemy and I can assure you they are committed to winning. If you are committed to winning, vote ''no'' on this resolution

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I now yield 5 minutes to Representative MIKE ARCURI of New York, another rising star from my home State.

Mr. ARCURI. Madam Speaker, Americans are outraged with the present course in Iraq. Here we are more than 4 years later with 3,100 of our brave men and women killed, fighting a war that has cost our Nation $370 billion.

It has become overwhelmingly clear that the current strategy to secure the peace of Iraq is failing. And yet the administration contends that sending more combat troops into Iraq is somehow a silver bullet that is going to quell the ongoing violence. I couldn't disagree more.

The resolution before us today establishes two overwhelmingly clear and concise principles that are supported by a large majority of Americans, and I am confident will garner a great deal of support for many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

First and foremost, we support our brave service men and women. They have done everything that has been asked of them, bravely and honorably; and for that, we in Congress and the people all over America will be forever grateful.

Second, and simply, we oppose sending additional troops into Iraq.

Madam Speaker, during this debate some of my colleagues have used the term ''victory'' in their remarks. Victory. But no one, not one of my colleagues in this Chamber, nor anyone in this administration, has yet to clearly define what victory in Iraq really means.

At one point we were told victory meant getting rid of weapons of mass destruction. Then, of course, we learned there were no weapons of mass destruction. When that didn't work, we

were told victory meant toppling a dictator, and that we would be greeted as heroes. We toppled the dictator, but of course we were never greeted as heroes. And yet, still no victory.

The administration then told us establishing elections would constitute victory. There have been several elections in Iraq, yet still no victory. And all the while, the casualties have continued to rise.

Earlier this week, I had an opportunity, for the first time, to visit with wounded soldiers recovering at Walter Reed Army Medical Hospital. Seeing firsthand the devastating injuries that some of our brave soldiers have endured has troubled me in a way that I have not known before. As an American who loves his country very much, and as a father of two teenagers, it became crystal clear to me right then and there what exactly victory in Iraq means. I think victory in Iraq means bringing as many of our troops home alive as possible, the way I would want to see my two children brought home, if they were in Iraq. That is what victory is about, is bringing as many Americans home alive as we possibly can.

Madam Speaker, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle had the better part of 3 years to use their position in the majority to change the course in Iraq. They did nothing. No resolutions; few, if any hearings; and no accountability. How many more American lives are worth risking to continue an ill-conceived and poorly planned strategy that is clearly not working?

The American people answered that question last November. They have had enough, enough political rhetoric, enough stay the course, and most importantly, enough of the loss of life.

Some of my colleagues are trying to mischaracterize this resolution. They say this resolution somehow demonstrates a failure to support our troops. That is ridiculous.

Let me be clear, perfectly clear. Everyone in this Chamber, Republicans and Democrats alike, support our brave men and women serving in the Armed Forces. Simply because we believe the best way to support our troops is to bring them home does not mean that we don't stand behind them. In fact, I think it means a greater commitment of support to them.

Madam Speaker, I was not elected to blindly follow along. I was not elected to accept the status quo, and I was not elected to be a rubber stamp. I was, however, elected to stand up when necessary and say no, I disagree. And that is exactly what we are doing here today, we are standing and saying we disagree.

The American people have run out of hope. They are tired of the failed policies of this administration. It is time for a new approach. It is time for a new strategy, and it is time for a new direction

Mr. SAXTON. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Roanoke, VA (Mr. GOODLATTE).

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to the nonbinding resolution being offered by the majority which, despite the rhetoric, amounts to nothing more than a vote to maintain the status quo in Iraq.

This resolution offers no change from the recent course of events in Iraq. It does not take into consideration the recommendations of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group. It does not require the Iraqi people and their elected leaders to step up and take responsibility for their own future. It certainly does not set any benchmark that must be met by the Iraqis. Most importantly, passage of this nonbinding resolution does not protect the funding of our troops in Iraq and, according to many Democrats, it is likely the first step in cutting off that funding altogether.

Madam Speaker, we have spent 3 days debating a resolution that does nothing more than serve as a vote of no confidence in the brave men and women who are fighting for freedom and democracy in Iraq. Not only is this resolution discouraging to our commanders and forces, it will fuel the efforts of our enemies who are determined to spread terror and suppress freedom.

Despite numerous attacks by terrorists on U.S. military and diplomatic targets throughout the 1990s, Americans on September 11, 2001 awoke to the painful realization that we are engaged in a long-term global war with terrorists, an international campaign to combat an ideology that spreads hate and destruction.

Iraq is now the central front in this global war. Success in bringing about a stable and democratic Iraq in the heart of the Middle East is a goal that I believe we all share.

While the difficulties cannot be minimized, neither can the consequences of failure and withdrawal. If we fail, the resources now devoted by terrorist organizations and nations sponsoring terrorism in Iraq will be turned to spreading terror around the globe including, again, on American soil. Do not embolden them with this resolution.

The United States and our allies, in fact, all freedom-loving peoples, need to support the popularly elected Iraqi Government in establishing control over their country and providing a stable environment for the Iraqi people and our troops as they assist in this process. Together, we have made significant progress, despite numerous obstacles.

Iraqis made history when they turned out in record numbers, despite increased violence, to vote in the first free elections in over 50 years. Millions of Iraqis waved their purple-tipped fingers with pride as they came out of the voting stations, a message to the world that they chose freedom.

The President is the Commander in Chief and has the authority to make decisions about the best way to accomplish our goals in Iraq. He has initiated changes to our course in Iraq.

However, today we will not be voting for change. We will not be voting for a comprehensive review of our strategy in Iraq. It is too bad that when we all have concerns about how best to achieve success in Iraq, the Democratic leadership has brought this polarizing and political resolution to the floor to divide us, rather than unite us, on the most serious question facing the country today.

For this reason, I urge my colleagues to vote against this nonbinding resolution, which lacks any substance. I remind my colleagues that a ''no'' vote on this resolution is certainly not a rubber stamp for the President's troop surge.

While I continue to support the mission in Iraq, I think it is clear that the administration's efforts to achieve the mission have not been flawless. But a vote against this resolution is a clear vote to support our commanders and troops and all those who have lost their lives spreading freedom to the people of Iraq.

I believe that more should be done to press the now established Iraqi Government and U.S.-trained Iraqi military to take the lead. I believe more can be done on the diplomatic front to engage the countries of the Middle East to help.

But unfortunately, no such resolution offering concrete evidence has been allowed, and this hollow process has resulted in a hollow resolution.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''no.''

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 5 minutes to a great new member of our Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. ALBIO SIRES of New Jersey.

Mr. SIRES. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of this resolution on behalf of the 32,000 men and women from my State of New Jersey, and all the other servicemen and women that have been deployed since 9/11. I am so proud of their sacrifice and service to our Nation, and I will continue and always support them. After all, I am standing in front of you as a product of the sacrifices our soldiers have made in the name of liberty and freedom throughout the history of this country.

I also rise on behalf of my constituents, the people of New Jersey, and the people of this Nation whose tax dollars are paying for this war in Iraq. Since the beginning of the war, $379 billion has been appropriated. Another $235 billion is slated for the upcoming supplemental appropriations. We are currently spending $8 billion a month in Iraq, and the American people are footing the bill.

All this money could have been used to declare war on some of our domestic problems here at home such as poverty, improving our schools, ensuring access to health care and investing in affordable housing. This money could have been used to invest in our children, our family, our veterans, and especially our elderly. But it wasn't.

Instead, American taxpayers have also committed more than $38 billion

to Iraq reconstruction. About 33 percent of this money is targeted for infrastructure projects like roads, sanitation, water, electric power and oil production. However, I am concerned that only 25 percent of the Iraqi population has access to drinkable water.

□ 1600

I am concerned that of the 136 sanitation and water projects, only 49 are said to be completed. I am concerned that the residents of Baghdad only have 4½ hours of electricity per day. And I am concerned that the current oil production in Iraq is half of what it was prior to the war.

Since the reconstruction project started, the Coalition Provisional Authority can't account for almost $9 billion of the taxpayers' money. Every year, $4 billion has been lost because of lack of oversight.

There have also been many problems with poor project and quality management. For example, the Baghdad Police College cost $75 million, and it was built without the proper plumbing for waste water. It has become a health and a structural hazard. The Basrah Children's Hospital is running $48 million over budget and is a year behind schedule. And after spending $186 million, Parsons has only 6 of the 150 planned health care centers completed and only 14 more will be finished. The list goes on and on.

Madam Speaker, the Iraqi Government says $100 billion is needed over the next 4 years to rebuild the country's infrastructure. Madam Speaker, the Iraqi Government seems to think they have open access to U.S. dollars. The Iraqi Government and the Iraqi people must take responsibility and help rebuild their country. Our support is not open-ended, and neither are our tax dollars.

Madam Speaker, I support this resolution and this debate because our troops and our constituents can no longer afford to have this Congress support the administration's failed Iraqi policies. They failed to give us the necessary oversight for Iraq reconstruction efforts, they failed to listen to the advice of the military commanders, they failed to listen to the American people, and, as a result, they failed to provide a plan to success in Iraq.

Mr. SAXTON. Madam Speaker, I would like to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from York, PA (Mr. PLATTS).

Mr. PLATTS. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I want to first take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude and deep respect for our troops and civilians serving in harm's way. I have had the privilege of visiting our troops in Iraq on four occasions and Afghanistan twice, and they and their families are truly the heroes in America.

I rise today in opposition to this resolution, a resolution that seeks to maintain the status quo, in essence, to stay the course, a scenario that everyone agrees is unacceptable. This resolution offers no alternative strategy.

As we consider the challenges in Iraq, we need to remember and learn from the lessons of Afghanistan. In the 1980s, we supported the people of Afghanistan in defeating the Soviets, helping throw the Soviets out of that country. In 1989, when that happened, what did we do? We walked away. We did not finish the job. We did not help the people of Afghanistan to stand up a secure and stable government. Instead, we walked away. Who filled the vacuum? The Taliban, and ultimately al Qaeda, a safe haven for them to plan attacks against America and its interests.

In 1989, I imagine that few Americans believed that what went on in the mountains of Afghanistan would impact the lives of Americans here at home. On September 11, 2001, in a tragic fashion we learned that that was the case, that what went on in Afghanistan mattered here at home. We cannot afford to make the same mistake now in Iraq, to allow Iraq to become a safe haven for al Qaeda and other enemies of our Nation and our citizens.

The Iraq Study Group offered a comprehensive approach to the challenges of Iraq. It included political, diplomatic, and military options. As part of the military proposal, it dismissed increasing our troop levels by 100,000 to 200,000 troops, saying it was not feasible and would lend to the argument of an occupation.

However, the Iraq Study Group did support more limited troop reinforcements. And I quote from the Iraq Study Group report: ''We could, however, support a short-term deployment or a surge of American combat forces to stabilize Baghdad or to speed up the training and equipping mission if the United States commander in Iraq determined that such steps would be effective.''

The report goes on to dismiss the idea of an immediate withdrawal. Well, our commander in Iraq today, General Petraeus, an individual confirmed unanimously by the United States Senate, is on record supporting the need for these additional reinforcements.

Ultimately, the key to long-term success in Iraq is the Iraqi people themselves. They need to show the ability and the will to stand up and secure their emerging democracy. Having liberated Iraq from a regime of terror and torture, our role today is to assist the Iraqis in achieving a stable and secure nation. This reinforcement effort is part of that effort, along with regional diplomatic efforts and internal Iraqi political reconciliation efforts. We are now in the role of helping the Iraqis help themselves. We cannot forget the lessons of Afghanistan and walk away.

I urge a ''no'' vote

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, it is now my pleasure to yield 5 minutes to another great new freshman, Representative ZACK SPACE of Ohio.

Mr. SPACE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share with you my belief that we, as a people, are at a crossroads unlike any in our history. We have seen our manufacturing-based economy assaulted by the forces of globalization, the challenges of the ensuing revolution and energy production squarely upon us, and we are at the dawning of a new understanding, the fragileness of our environment. All of these things are, in their own right, seminal concerns of a profound scale, but in spite of the gravity and import of these issues, there is perhaps no more compelling matter before us than that of the war in Iraq.

My colleagues on both sides of the aisle are distressed by the tragic turns that this war has taken. I do not, at this moment, nor do my colleagues, I presume, wish to draw upon the motivations or lack of candor exhibited by our President in letting slip the dogs of war. But I do long for leadership, leadership seasoned and honest enough to admit when a mistake has been made, leadership that has a vision for the future, leadership able to meld the inherent wisdom of man with the realities of the modern world.

Under our form of government, it is the President who is singularly endowed with this leadership; yet at this critical historical moment, our call for leadership and inspiration has been unmet. As a result, Mr. Speaker, I today voice my opposition to the President's plan to deploy additional troops to Iraq.

The crisis that Iraq has become will not be resolved merely with more, more, more, more troops, more tours and deployment extensions, more injuries, more deaths. Simply providing more without a blueprint is not enough. Without a clear plan and a clear objective, a troop increase will not help our Iraq policy. In fact, it will only deepen the disaster that Iraq has become.

I do not utter these thoughts lightly. I share these sentiments, knowing that all of the people that I represent will not necessarily agree with me. I fear that my remarks will be misconstrued as reflecting something less than a full commitment to the brave men and women who have served or are serving their country in uniform, or to those heroes who have given their very lives for this cause.

Let there be no mistake, Mr. Speaker, I have at the very heart of my motivation for these remarks a sincere appreciation for the sacrifice of our brothers and sisters who have been dispatched to fight this war. They, and their families by extension, have been called into action under trying circumstances, and I am profoundly moved by their sense of courage and dedication to country. In fact, it is my admiration and respect for our brave warriors that motivate my decision to express my dissatisfaction with the President's plan to subject more of them to the ravages of war.

To date, over 3,000 Americans have fallen in this war. All of them loved

their country enough to place themselves in harm's way in her defense. All of them left behind their families, who will never stop grieving. All of them have been deprived of the pleasures and privileges of a full life, just as we who remain have been deprived of the contributions to our society that each would have given.

Fifteen young men from Ohio's district have died in this war, all of them were loved dearly. They are fathers, sons, brothers, and husbands. Ohio's 18th is exclusively rural in makeup, dotted by one small town and village after another. Our people are decent, hardworking, and imbued with a strong sense of personal responsibility. Our community is close knit and supportive. The death of each one of these brave soldiers was met with a deep sense of communal grief.

This resolution stresses a message that many believed in. We support our troops, we support their commitment to and sacrifice for our Nation, we support their families and those of the fallen in their silent and eternal heartache. We cannot fully understand their pain, but perhaps we can learn from it.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot support a troop surge without real answers as to how it will bring success in Iraq. I cannot support escalation without regard to diplomacy, without regard to the political realities of the region, and without regard to the underlying dynamics of this conflict.

There is an unspoken pledge between a soldier of war and the mechanisms of power. That warrior unquestioningly serves, defends and, if need be, dies. In consideration, he expects his government to only place him in harm's way when need be, and only through a painstakingly thought-out plan for victory.

Our troops have fulfilled their pledge to our country. It is time that our country fulfill its pledge to our troops.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HELLER).

Mr. HELLER of Nevada. Thank you for the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the issue before us, the war in Iraq.

In this past year, the American people clearly demanded change. I am new to this body, but I know Nevadans wanted me to help institute changes in the direction of this country.

As we debate this resolution, I really have to wonder if we have heard the American people. This resolution brought forth by the majority says two conflicting things: we are opposed to the war in Iraq, but we are for staying the course. These two positions are irreconcilable.

As I watch this debate, I have not seen any proposals for change. What we are debating today is the same as what has been debated in the past. We stand here in this body controlled by a new majority who campaigned on instituting change, claimed to be the party of change, and has control of the gavel in both Houses of Congress. Instead of offering a path to victory, they are playing politics.

My question is, what does this vote actually accomplish? Does it implement new ideas to win the war in Iraq? Will our country be safer because of this resolution? Does it enable our troops to fight more effectively by giving them the supplies that they need? The answer to these questions is a simple ''no.''

As a newly elected Member, I came here to find solutions to our country's problems. To that end, I am supporting legislation to institute benchmarks. I am supporting legislation that will make our troops and their needs fully funded. I support diplomacy and making the Iraqi Government more accountable.

The message that I want to send on our troop is, I am with you, and you can count on me.

□ 1615

Because, really, we are counting on them.

Mr. Speaker, why can't we be for something today, an actual alternative, instead of debating a nonbinding resolution that tells our soldiers we don't support your mission? Our enemies believe America is weak and their propaganda says the United States is losing the war against terrorism.

Osama bin Laden's deputy and terrorist network have stated that Iraq is the central front in their fight against American and Western ideals. Iraq is the central front to push their radical ideology of hate and intolerance. These are the real bad guys. These are the people we should be focusing our attention on, not tearing down our leaders, commanders and brave soldiers in the field. The reality is the terrorists are determined to kill Americans, wherever we may be. Therefore, we must take the fight to them.

The fact is, this resolution only strengthens our enemies and does nothing to solve or address any of the national security issues facing our country. The stakes are high in Iraq. Nothing less than our very safety and survival is at issue. Nothing less than the lives of the courageous members of our armed services are on the line. It is critical that we have a real debate on the issues and address these points.

Let's, instead, together look for a new way forward, for a path to victory and for the best way to support our brave men and women overseas who are fighting to keep us safe. Let's instead focus on what we need to win this vital conflict, not a meaningless resolution, which is what we are offered here today.

To paraphrase the late Charlie Norwood, a decorated war veteran, ''The choice before us today is clear: either America or al Qaeda.''

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to a great new Member, the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. HODES).

Mr. HODES. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today to voice support for our troops, without reservation, and to oppose the administration's proposed escalation in Iraq.

We are at a turning point in American history. This Congress will shortly vote on a bold, clear resolution, repudiating the administration's failed policy in Iraq, a fiasco which has weakened our security, threatened our military readiness, cost thousands of lives and wasted billions of dollars.

I was elected to Congress from the great State of New Hampshire, promising return of congressional accountability and oversight. For the past 6 years, while Congress was under Republican control, only 12 hearings were held on the Iraq war, but in the past 6 weeks this Congress has held 52 hearings.

The evidence is clear that the American people and Congress were misled into the war in Iraq. No weapons of mass destruction, no links between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda, no imminent threat to our national security. Our resources, effort and attention were recklessly diverted from the war in Afghanistan, which I supported, and which continues to require our vigilance and commitment.

This administration has now lost its credibility with the American people and with the world. To succeed in the Middle East, we must regain our moral compass and embrace a new direction in Iraq. The administration's stubborn arrogance and incompetence has magnified the chaos in Iraq.

Our brave troops have done everything asked of them, but the administration's failures in planning postconflict reconstruction and its shocking incompetence in management have opened the Pandora's box of sectarian violence and civil war.

Escalation has been tried before and it has failed before. The administration claims this escalation is different. The administration says there are benchmarks for the Iraqis, but what I have concluded from our hearings and briefings is that no firm benchmarks for the Iraqis have been set.

Clearly, the administration intends to escalate, whether or not the Iraqis step up. And today it is reported that they plan to send our troops off to Iraq without up-armored Humvees. This is deja vu all over again, a lack of planning, combined with a lack of candor.

Relying on a military force alone as a strategy continues the administration's one-legged-stool approach to foreign policy. Absent an Iraqi Government committed to forging a political solution to the country's woes and absent the infrastructure for jobs and reconstruction programs, the one-legged stool cannot stand. We have already lost billions in U.S. and Iraqi dollars to fraud, waste and abuse.

Baghdad is a city of some 7 million people. In a city that size, an injection

of 20,000 troops is too little too late. The administration talks of victory in Iraq. The word is meant to stir our patriotic fervor. But in this matter, it has, unfortunately, a sad and hollow ring.

As a result of the administration's ineptitude, we are left making the best out of a bad situation. We owe it to our troops, the American people, and the Iraqis to act wisely and strategically. The administration talks tough. We must be tough, smart and fearless. That means a new direction in Iraq.

Our first order should be to address the missing second leg of the stool. Replace the military surge with a diplomatic surge, convene a high-level team of special envoys, send them to the region, and send them there until the job is done.

The third leg of the stool is economic. We need a real economic reconstruction program, but only on strict conditions that the Iraqi Government step up to quell the violence and engage in reconciliation and oil revenue-sharing.

It is past time to remove our troops from the middle of this civil war, redeploy them strategically in the region to give pause to our foes and send the troops we need to Afghanistan where they can support the government and deal with the resurgent Taliban. Dealing with Iran is, of course, challenging; but harsh rhetoric and saber-rattling are counterproductive in the complex, destabilized Middle East.

The true test of leadership is facing reality and having the good judgment and wisdom to adapt to the reality. By passing this resolution, we are sending the administration an unambiguous message: No more blank checks. We have had enough. It is time to face the reality in Iraq and develop a responsible and comprehensive strategy to protect American security in the region.

Much has been asked of this country in the past, and the future will inevitably require sacrifice, but it does not require sending 20,000 more American troops to Iraq. It does not require an escalation of this war. I urge my colleagues to support the resolution, and I oppose the administration's escalation of the war in Iraq.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlelady from Cape Girardeau, Missouri (Mrs. EMERSON).

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, it literally breaks my heart to be here today. Young Americans from my district have gone to Iraq and we have lost some of our best, brightest soldiers. One of the finest men I ever met, who I had the privilege of appointing to West Point, lost his life in Iraq just last September. I feel responsible in part. We all are, in part.

Very little has been asked of most Americans in this war, but too much has been asked of a very few.

If anything comes from this debate, Mr. Speaker, I hope it is a consensus for our responsibilities in this conflict. This House is about different points of view, speech and debate, in an institution that belongs to the people.

Our Nation is protected by the bravest of the brave, who leave their homes and families to stand guard on foreign shores. Some of them are the first in their families to wear the uniform of our country. Others have done so for generations.

These young men and women hold dear connections to every town in America. We are wrapping the fallen in our flag. They deserve the best planning, the clearest execution, the utmost care in their deployments, and heroes' welcomes when they return.

But it is not enough to give them parades. It is not enough to give amputees the best VA care. Nor is it enough to bury them well. We cannot allow their service to be undermined.

Congress and the administration have been locked in a struggle to show the proper support very nearly from the beginning of this war. Personnel armor, communications equipment, vehicle kits, the things these Americans need, not for comfort but to preserve their lives amid danger, have in some cases been supplied by soldiers' families and others because the Department of Defense, which received $500 billion last year, has run out. Supply-chain issues abound. Training has been incomplete or insufficient for the new demands on our troops. I still cannot discern a clear articulation of the mission of these men and women in the field. I loathe revisiting these failures, but responsible representation demands we do so.

Every American knows that America cannot do the work of Iraq's natural allies. We cannot supplant Iraq's neighbors who depend on the nation's viability for their own stability. We can be many things in Iraq, but we cannot be all things to Iraq.

We can make good on our commitment to American troops serving in Iraq, and here is how: We can offer them the support of a robust American Diplomatic Corps to do jobs our soldiers should not have to do and to avoid conflicts and enemies they should not have to engage.

We can secure funds for Iraq that guarantee our soldiers have the gear and training they need to stay safe, and that means more than writing the taxpayers' check. That means diligent, scrutinizing oversight of how our money is spent.

We can assure that the deployment of American troops is deliberate in every way.

We can offset the engagement of American troops far from home with the engagement of Iraqi troops in their own cities and towns. We can speed this transition by immediately securing Iraq's borders, by providing aggressive training to Iraqi units and by lending our expertise to building Iraqi institutions in addition to building the Iraqi army. We can do these things, and we must.

We can do much more than debate a nonbinding resolution, one that allows politics to creep into the question of support for our troops at a time when our support must be complete and it must be unquestioned.

The liberation of Iraq means more than words and more than weapons. Liberation needs diplomacy, libraries, schools and economic stability, steady work and clean water, safe streets, as well as safe passage. The measures of this progress must be widely known and the planners of this war must be completely accountable.

Every day we do not define the terms of progress, we lay a grave transgression at the feet of the mothers of the fallen, of the brothers of the killed, of the soldiers who were just far enough away from the IED that, when it exploded, they lost their limbs but not their lives.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot lend my support to this resolution. It sets too poor a precedent in this Congress when our standards for action must be high. Words cannot replace deeds in support of our American troops.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I can't tell you how much pleasure it gives me to introduce our next speaker, who represents a district adjacent to mine. I am so delighted to have him in Congress, and I know his constituents are as well.

I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. HALL).

Mr. HALL of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, I stand with the other members of my freshman class to support this important resolution. My election and those of my fellow freshman colleagues were an unmistakable signal from the American people. They believe the President's path in Iraq is wrong and they want new voices to produce change.

Mr. Speaker, I am one of those voices, and today I rise to speak with the American people to oppose the President's escalation.

The United States requires a new path in Iraq, a path that will deploy our troops out of Iraq; a path that will force the Iraqi Government to plan for its own defense; a path that will engage countries throughout the region and around the world to help stabilize and protect Iraq; and a path that will allow the United States military to rebuild and refocus on the important mission of destroying al Qaeda and defending America from the threat of international terrorism.

Sadly, the escalation proposed by the President does none of these things. The President's plan continues down the same path we have traveled for the last 4 years. These years have taught us that U.S. military power alone is not sufficient to stabilize Iraq, yet it is the only tool this President employs.

From the outset, this administration has been wrong. The administration led us into a war with flawed intelligence. That is one wrong. The administration

went to war without a plan to win the peace. Two wrongs. This administration chose to protect Iraqi oil fields before securing the ammunition dumps throughout the country. Three wrongs. This administration sent our troops into harm's way without enough body armor or armored vehicles. Four wrongs. This administration gave no-bid contracts to its friends and political allies. That is five wrongs.

□ 1630

Years ago now, President Bush stood on the deck of the USS *Abraham Lincoln* before a banner declaring mission accomplished and said, ''Major combat operations in Iraq have ended.'' That is six wrongs.

Now, this administration wants us to blindly place our faith and the lives of 20,000 more of our troops in an Iraqi Government that has failed to meet every security obligation it has pledged. Sadly, once again, this President is wrong, and no amount of wrongs is going to make the President's policy towards Iraq right.

It is time for a new kind of escalation on the diplomatic front. A stable Iraq is in the United States' interests and in the interests of Iraq's neighbors. However, the President has done next to nothing to gain the assistance of regional partners.

Inside Iraq, the government must meet its promises to reach out beyond its base of support and unite the Iraqi people. Sending more troops into Iraq does nothing to push the Iraqi Government towards greater self-reliance. At a time when it is incumbent upon the Iraqi Government to step up and do more, why should we give them the opportunity to do less?

This resolution is an important first step that voices loud and clear the message America sent last November, and it puts the President on notice that the Congress will no longer stand by and allow him to recklessly endanger American lives and security. If the President refuses to change course, this Congress will be forced to act.

We will no longer allow him to send underequipped and underprepared units into combat. We will demand appropriate accounting standards and no longer allow billions of taxpayer dollars to disappear unaccounted for into the rabbit hole of Iraq. And we must not let our National Guard continue to be decimated by repeated and extended activation.

I recently met a young man from my district who has been accepted at West Point and who will soon serve as a future leader in the United States Army. I want to ensure that when he graduates from West Point and accepts his commission, the Army he joins will not be decimated by the mistakes in Iraq.

I also want to talk about the veterans of this war and the unique challenges they will face. I am proud and honored to be on the Veterans' Affairs Committee. I am proud that one of my first votes in Congress was to provide an increase in VA health care funding.

Currently, there is a backlog of nearly 600,000 pending veterans claims at the VA. We must reduce this number so that all veterans can be better served. We must provide funding to better diagnose and treat post-traumatic stress disorder. I am appalled that during this time of war the administration would cut funding for research on prosthetic technologies that will let our wounded veterans lead more normal lives.

My district is the home of West Point Military Academy and, as such, has a unique perspective on the war. The leaders that emerge from the halls of that institution are an invaluable resource for our Nation. Sadly, we have lost over 50 West Point graduates in Iraq and others in the services and throughout my district.

My brother-in-law is a lieutenant colonel who works at West Point. My nephew is a cadet. The courage, devotion and conscientiousness of the men and women of the United States Military Academy embody the best of America.

In the words of the sheriff of Putnam County, a retired brigadier general, one should never send our Armed Forces to do a job which is not militarily achievable.

I support this resolution

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG).

(Mr. YOUNG of Alaska asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I have listened to this debate on both sides of the aisle for the last 2 days, the third day in fact, and probably will listen to it tomorrow.

I rise in opposition to H. Con. Res. 63, and I would like to make a quote: ''Congressmen who willfully take actions during wartime that damage morale and undermine the military are saboteurs and should be arrested, exiled or hanged,'' Abraham Lincoln, who had the same problem this President had with a very unpopular war. The same problem with people trying to redirect the Commander in Chief; the same problem, if they had been successful, we would not have had the freedom of the people in this country.

What I say today is for my daughters, my Joanie, my Dawn; my grandkids, Wyatt, Guy, James Duffy, Katie, Jessie, Don, Niky, Dougy and Don, Eric and all the rest of them I missed and I apologize, because what we are about to do tomorrow in voting for this resolution is beginning a slippery slope down the slide of not being able to provide the freedom and the position in this world this country has done for the last 90 years, beginning in 1916, 1917, in World War I, which my father fought in; in World War II, where five of my cousins were shot numerous times for freedom of the people and freedom of this country; and, yes, the Korean War, the time in which I was drafted.

Fortunately or unfortunately, I did not serve, but my colleagues did. Each time we went there to make freedom, never once did the Congress in that role undermine the military or the Commander in Chief.

Then we came to Vietnam, and we began to fight a war by the media, a war without allowing the troops to do the job they should have done, and in fact, we lost that war. And immediately after withdrawing, we saw what happened. Khymer Rouge killed 2 million people. People forget that. Two million heads were laying around, lolling around Cambodia. And then we had Grenada, which was very short and very sweet, and of the course, the Gulf War was 110 days. And now we come to the Afghanistan war and the Iraq war.

I suggest to you this resolution will undermine and cause a morale disruption to our troops. Nowhere can you be in the field and understand the Congress of the United States now is not going to support them when they say they do, when they say they are going to cut their funding in the future.

It is a slippery slope down this slide of not being the leaders of this Nation for freedom, and this is what I thought this country is about, freedom for each individual in this world and in our country. And to have this occur tomorrow on the 16th is a disservice to the future generations, the generations of Americans who will not have the opportunity to be in the greatest country in the world because of the action of this Congress.

I urge a very, very strong ''no'' on H. Con. Res. 63.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, it is now my privilege to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. CARNEY).

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Speaker, I stand today as a proud veteran in support of this bipartisan resolution which states that Congress and the American people support our men and women in uniform, but do not support deploying over 21,000 additional troops to Iraq.

I fear that President Bush's plan to increase troop levels is a mistake. Sending more troops will not reduce the violence. Indeed, in the past 2 years, we have had three surges to Iraq, only to see dramatic increases in violence. Why would we think a fourth surge will be different?

Mr. Speaker, 21,000 troop is far less than a half measure of what is truly needed to secure Iraq, but the unfortunate reality is that we no longer have the troops available to do the job properly. Indeed, the Army's strategic reserve is used up. They told us so. We are now less able to respond in other trouble spots around the globe because of this failed policy.

Why are we not matching our military surge with a diplomatic surge? Why are we not engaging every nation in the region to end this civil war?

A superpower at war uses all means at its disposal to win, including diplomacy. Diplomacy is the only way for us to succeed now, and I urge the administration to launch a diplomatic offensive in the region.

Our enemies are encouraged and emboldened by the successes that they have enjoyed already. We do not need to send 21,000 troops additional to reinforce this. Instead, we should be changing our focus. Rather than sending more American troops into combat, we should be training Iraqis to handle the job for themselves. For every Iraqi battalion we train, we need to bring an American battalion home.

My district in northeastern and central Pennsylvania has many of its bravest men and women in harm's way. I am very proud of them, so are their families and their communities. Our district, sadly, has lost 22 men in this war, brave troops who paid the ultimate sacrifice for their country. I rise today to honor them and also to stand up for the troops currently in combat.

The stories I hear from soldiers who return home leave me concerned that the administration has not done enough to protect them. One of my own former students, a member of a Pennsylvania National Guard unit, told me how his unit had to scrounge through Iraqi junkyards for scrap metal to weld on to their trucks for more protection.

Junkyards? Scrap metal? Where is the outrage that this administration has not given the troops the protection that they need? Where is the outrage that our fine men and women, whose job it is to protect our Nation, are scrounging through foreign junkyards for that protection?

The troops have won the war, but the administration has failed to secure the peace. We must now pursue policies worthy of our troops and their sacrifices.

Mr. Speaker, I came to Congress to serve and protect my country. That is why I rise in support of this resolution.

In the Navy, when we run a ship aground, we change the course. It is now time to change the course in Iraq, not needlessly send more American troops in harm's way.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Mobile, Alabama (Mr. BONNER).

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues and certainly the people from my home in south Alabama know, I do not often come to this floor, either to hear my own voice or to offer some prophetic words of wisdom on whatever the topic of the day happens to be.

My father often taught me that you learn a lot more from listening than you do from talking. So in many ways, that is what I have been doing the past few days, listening to my colleagues and thinking about the consequences of the words that we are debating.

After a lot of listening to a lot of words, however, I find myself compelled to come and say in the most direct way I know that I am opposed to this nonbinding resolution. Let me say that again for that is, after all, what we are talking about. This is a nonbinding resolution. It is nothing more than a few words on a piece of paper, and yet they are powerful words that have the potential of being demoralizing and possibly even destructive.

Make no mistake that the resolution we are debating today does not have the force of law behind it. So for those of you who are watching at home, let us be clear. At a time when the President recognizes that the situation in Iraq is unacceptable and it is clear that we need to change our strategy, this resolution will not stop the deployment of a single soldier or marine to Iraq, nor will it bring a single soldier or marine home to their families or loved ones.

More importantly, this resolution does not offer any alternative strategy. Nothing. Zip. It is silent with regard to our country's ongoing efforts in fighting the global war on terror. Instead, it is simply and unfortunately a method by which the House Democratic majority is seeking to send a message to the President of the United States.

But let us not kid ourselves. The words spoken in this Chamber this week will travel much farther than the distance between this building, the Capitol, and where the President lives, the White House. In reality, these words will travel far beyond our shores, across the globe to the 140,000 men and women who are currently deployed in Iraq and engaged in but one part, admittedly an important part, of the global war on terror and the Islamic militant extremists we are fighting.

I know we have heard Democrat after Democrat and a few Republicans, to be fair, come to this floor and say, we support our troops and we support this resolution; but with all due respect, I find it totally inconsistent to say you support our troops and at the same time you support this resolution.

How can we really expect our soldiers to have the will to succeed when this body as a whole does not have the resolve to stand by them and their mission? Do we think our troops do not listen to what is being said here in Washington and around the country? During my visits to Iraq, I found just the opposite to be the case.

So while the underlying message of this resolution is intended for the President, it is only logical to ask who else might be listening. What about the families of these soldiers who are anxiously awaiting their safe return home. Make no mistake, they will hear this message loud and clear.

And then there is the very real chance that the families of the thousands of Alabama National Guard members who have been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the families of all active and Reserve forces, will read the glaring subtext of this resolution and hear the people's House signaling that we will not be able to prevail in Iraq, the cause is lost, and their loved one's sacrifice is for naught.

□ 1645

Unfortunately, the words of this resolution will also travel to the ears of our enemies. And what could be better news for our enemies than that America is divided, an America that does not have the will to succeed.

On this topic, let's look to the man who knows the enemy in Iraq better than anyone, General David Petraeus. You remember General Petraeus; he just received an overwhelming vote of confidence when he was unanimously confirmed by the United States Senate to command our forces in Iraq. At his confirmation hearing, General Petraeus was asked if a congressional resolution disapproving the deployment of additional troops would encourage the enemy. His response was direct and unequivocal. ''That is correct, sir.''

Let me say that again. General Petraeus, our commander in the ground on Iraq, believes that a resolution disapproving the deployment of additional troops, which is what we are debating today, will encourage our enemy.

He went on to say that this is a test of wills, and at the end of the day a commander in such an endeavor would obviously like the enemy to feel that there is no hope. But instead of saying there is no hope to the enemy, we are saying there is no hope to the American soldier and the American people.

Let's not forget that our words as well as our actions do have consequences. Vote ''no'' on this resolution.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, it is now my privilege to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KLEIN).

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I stand here today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 63 which opposes the President's decision to deploy 21,000 additional U.S. combat troops to Iraq.

I am also here to specifically honor the Broward County Veterans Council, who recently adopted a resolution concerning the war in Iraq. The Broward County Veterans Council represents a host of veterans groups throughout Broward County, Florida, including the Broward chapters of the American Legion, AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans, Fleet Reserve, Gold Star Mothers, Italian American Veterans, Jewish War Veterans, Marine Corps League, Navy League Council, The Order of the Purple Heart, The Paralyzed Veterans Association, Reserved Officers Association, Retired Officers Association, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Vietnam Veterans of America, and World War I Barracks.

The Broward County Veterans Council led by its Chairman, Bill Kling, adopted this resolution unanimously on January 16, 2007. And the spirit of this resolution is as follows:

Whereas, the President of the United States has put forth a plan to the American people and to Congress which calls for an escalation of 20,000 or more of our troops going to Iraq to combat the insurrection in Baghdad and the Anbar province; and

Whereas, the majority in Congress has put forth several plans that do not include an escalation of combat troops; and

Whereas, the American people have made it clear they want a new direction in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

Whereas, the administration's attempts to escalate the war previously by sending additional troops to Iraq have unfortunately failed to stop the bloodshed between the Sunnis and the Shia;

Therefore, the Broward County Veterans Council believes that the best plan is to bring troops home in a phased redeployment so that we may get them out of harm's way.

Veterans groups, along with families across my district, are very concerned about the direction this war has taken and are demanding a change in strategy.

To President Bush their message is loud and clear: This war has been mismanaged, the strategies for success have failed; our national and personal security interests, most importantly, are not being enhanced and in fact may be undermined. And, therefore, they overwhelmingly oppose President Bush's plan to send more troops to Iraq.

Traveling through my district, people in South Florida are demanding that Congress ask the tough questions concerning our policy in Iraq. Well, we have asked these tough questions, and I along with many of my fellow Members of this House, both Democrats and Republicans, have come to the same conclusion: The President's plan to increase troops is wrong.

The administration has based this plan in part on the readiness of the Iraqi Security Forces to stand up and take control. I have heard nothing from our military experts that would indicate that the Iraqi troops are anywhere near prepared to bring order to this troubled country.

General Colin Powell recently told the associated press, and I quote, ''I am not persuaded that another surge of troops in Baghdad, for the purposes of suppressing this violence, this civil war, will work.''

And four-star General Barry McCaffrey called the President's surge plan last month, ''a fool's errand.''

These are some of the experts we should be listening to.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you, as the civil war in Iraq spirals out of control, as Iraqi Security Forces continue to be ill-prepared, and as we continue to alienate our allies around the world, what warrants this administration to continue on the same path in Iraq and add more troops? So far, nothing.

We have no business sending over 21,000 additional troops in the middle of a growing civil war. We have no business sending over 21,000 additional troops when, as it is, our military is already stretched too thin. And because our military is already dangerously pushed to the limit, we have put ourselves in the precarious position of dealing with real threats like Iran, while at the same time protecting our allies like Israel and some other Middle Eastern friends.

For these reasons, I am advocating for a plan, as others are, devised by our military experts that supports a phased withdrawal of our troops. But while our brave men and women in uniform are serving, it is critical that we provide them nothing less than the best protection and support. We have more than a responsibility to support our troops; we have a solemn obligation, and that obligation extends to asking the tough questions and getting our policy right.

In honor of the Broward County Veterans Council and the veterans living in Palm Beach County, in recognition of their heroism and commitment to our country, I support this resolution

Mr. Speaker, I stand here today in support of H.R. 63, which opposes the President's decision to deploy 21,000 additional U.S. combat troops to Iraq.

I am also here today to specifically honor the Broward County Veterans Council, who recently adopted a resolution concerning the war in Iraq.

The Broward County Veterans Council represents a host of veteran groups throughout Broward County, FL, including the Broward chapters of the American Legion, Am Vets, the Disabled American Veterans, the Fleet Reserve, the Gold Star Mothers, the Italian American Veterans, the Jewish War Veterans, the Marine Corps League, the Navy League Council, the Order of the Purple Heart, the Paralyzed Veterans Association, the Reserve Officers Association, the Retired Officers Association, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Vietnam Veterans of America, and the World War I Barracks.

The Broward County Veterans Council, led by its chairman, Bill Kling, adopted this resolution unanimously on January 16, 2007.

The spirit of their resolution is as follows:

Whereas the President of the United States has put forth a plan to the American people and to Congress which calls for an escalation of 20,000 or more of our troops going out to Iraq to combat the insurrection in Baghdad and the Anbar province; and

Whereas, the majority in Congress has put forth several plans that do not include escalation of combat troops; and

Whereas, the American people have made it clear they want a new direction in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

Whereas, the administration's multiple attempts to escalate the war by sending additional troops to Iraq have unfortunately, failed to stop the bloodshed between the Sunnis and the Shiites.

Therefore, the Broward County Veterans Council believes that the best plan is to bring our troops home, in a phased redeployment, so that we may get them out of harm's way.

Veterans groups, along with families across my district, are very concerned about the direction this war has taken and are demanding a change in strategy.

To President Bush, their message is loud and clear: This war has been mismanaged, and the strategies for success have failed; our national and personal security interests are not being enhanced and in fact, may be undermined. Therefore, they overwhelmingly oppose President Bush's plan to send more troops to Iraq.

Traveling through my district, people in south Florida are demanding that Congress ask the tough questions concerning our policy in Iraq.

Well, we have asked those tough questions and I, along with many of my fellow Members of Congress, both Democrats and Republicans, have come to the same conclusion: The President's plan to increase troops in Iraq is wrong.

This administration has based this plan in part on the readiness of the Iraq security forces to stand up and take control. I have heard nothing from our military experts that would indicate that the Iraqi troops are anywhere near prepared to bring order to this troubled country.

GEN Colin Powell recently told the Associated Press: ''I am not persuaded that another surge of troops in Baghdad for the purposes of suppressing this communitarian violence, this civil war, will work.''

And four-star GEN Barry McCaffrey called the President's surge plan last month ''a fools errand.''

These are the experts we should be listening to.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you—as a civil war in Iraq spirals out of control, as Iraqi security forces continue to be ill-prepared and as we continue to alienate our allies across the world—What warrants this administration to continue on the same path in Iraq and add more troops?

So far, nothing

We have no business sending over 21,000 additional troops into the middle of a growing civil war.

We have no business sending over 21,000 additional troops to Iraq when as it is, our military is already stretched too thin.

And because our military is already dangerously pushed to the limit, we have put ourselves in a precarious position dealing with real threats like Iran, while at the same time, protecting our allies like Israel and other Middle East countries.

For these reasons, I am advocating for a plan, devised by our military experts, that supports a phased withdrawl of our troops.

But while our brave men and women in uniform are serving, it is critical that we provide them nothing less than the best protection and support. We have more than a responsibility to support our troops—we have a solemn obligation. And that obligation extends to asking the tough questions and getting our policy right.

In honor of the Broward County Veterans Council and the veterans living in Palm Beach County, in recognition of their heroism and commitment to our country, I support this resolution.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Jacksonville, Florida (Mr. CRENSHAW).

Mr. CRENSHAW. I thank the gentleman for the time, and I rise today in strong opposition to this resolution which says Congress disapproves of a war plan.

There are a lot of reasons to disapprove of this resolution, one of which is I believe that war should not be waged from the floor of this House. That is why we have one Commander

in Chief, that is why we have military leaders on the ground. They are in charge of conducting the war. And they have said we have made a mistake and we need a new direction, we need a new plan. And they have proposed that plan, and it is broad and it is comprehensive. It involves political considerations, it involves economic situations, diplomatic considerations, and, yes, it entails additional troops to go to Iraq. Yes, additional troops.

But it is a plan. And you can be skeptical and you can say it may be too little, it may be too late. Maybe it is a good plan but it won't be executed properly. But it is going to give us hope and it is going to give the Iraqi people hope. And, if anything, we ought to be here today trying to make that plan better, not debating a resolution that is nonbinding, that is symbolic, that means nothing, that says nothing, that does nothing. In fact, it has no useful purpose whatsoever, unless maybe it is to undermine the President or perhaps to demoralize our troops by saying to them, ''We have a new mission for you to undertake. Go to Iraq and try to execute this mission. But, by the way, the United States Congress doesn't believe in the mission, and we think it is doomed to failure.'' You tell me that that is not going to have a negative impact on our American soldiers.

Now, I know there are people in this Chamber that think the plan is doomed from the very beginning. You don't think it will work. And if that is your belief, you ought to do more than introduce a symbolic resolution and then stand here and pound the podium and hem and haw and make speeches and leap in front of the television cameras. You ought to do something that really means something. You ought to propose a resolution that says we believe it was doomed from the very beginning and we are going to do everything we possibly can to stop this plan. That is what you should do.

And if you don't think the plan is going to work, if you think it is doomed to failure, and you don't have a viable alternative strategy and you don't want to find a viable alternative strategy for winning, then you ought to go even further and you ought to stand up and say, ''We admit defeat. It didn't work. We are not going to fund the war altogether anymore. We are going to withdraw.''

I will tell you one thing, the plan is there. It may not be perfect and, quite frankly, it may not work. I have got reservations myself. But it is there, and every American, Democrats and Republicans alike, ought to hope that this plan succeeds because it may very well be our last best chance to prevent a catastrophic failure in Iraq. And if that happens, the disastrous effect won't just be felt in Iraq, won't just be felt by the people of the Middle East, but quite possibly will be felt by all Americans alike.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, it is now my pleasure to yield 5 minutes to a valued member of the Armed Services Committee, the gentlewoman from Kansas (Mrs. BOYDA).

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the most critical issue this Congress, indeed our Nation, is facing. The U.S. military is the best fighting force in the world, and it is vitally important that we keep it that way. I am concerned that the President's planned escalation is too little, too late, and it will further deplete our military's readiness.

My life changed in the late spring of 2002 when my husband Steve casually said he thought we would be at war with Iraq by Christmas. And I said certainly that wouldn't be the case; the terrorists were from Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia. Certainly we will continue to hunt down Osama bin Laden and bring him to justice. We wouldn't take resources away from fighting the terrorists in Afghanistan. But that isn't what happened.

That fall, every time I heard that we were going to be greeted as liberators in Iraq, I cringed. We were going into the most unstable part of the world, a region that has been at war for centuries, and we were going in with dangerously naive plans. We were going after a hornet's nest with a baseball bat.

As the mother of two and stepmother of five, I felt my family's very safety was being threatened by this diversion of resources. Like a mother bear who senses, no, who knows that her cubs are being threatened, I could not remain silent.

Diverting resources from Afghanistan and invading Iraq may be one of the most dangerous decisions this country has ever made. Our Nation's civilian leadership took their eye off the ball. Instead of securing more resources to hunt down Osama bin Laden, instead of engaging in diplomacy, they put resources into what has become a civil war and have depleted our Nation's strategic readiness.

Please, please understand me. Our military has not failed. What has failed is our civilian leadership. Our military and their families have repeatedly stepped up and done what our Nation has asked of them. And now, Mr. Speaker, President Bush proposes to send more than 20,000 more troops to this civil war. He asks us to trust him with our soldiers' lives, even after trust has been broken time and time again.

Not only is the goal of this escalation unclear, but its effect would be to redirect precious military resources instead of preparing for potential future conflicts. In a recent hearing of the House Armed Services Committee, I asked General Peter Pace whether he was satisfied with the readiness levels of our troops. His response? ''No, ma'am, I'm not.'' General Peter Schoomaker and General Steven Blum have echoed his concerns.

America lives in an unstable world; we face threats from a nuclear-armed North Korea, from a belligerent Iran, and from the al Qaeda terrorists who considered September 11 as only the first act in their sinister play. In these dangerous times we are not safer if we devote so many of our resources to a civil war in Iraq. And I as a mother, I cannot support this escalation. It is withdrawing precious resources from a fighting force that is already stretched too thin.

America's strategic readiness is not a political question; it is a question of national security, and it is a critical question about the safety of all our families.

The U.S. military is the best fighting force in the world, and it is vitally important that we keep it that way.

Mr. Speaker, as a mother, stepmother, wife, citizen, and, yes, as a U.S. Congresswoman, I cannot support further escalation of the war in Iraq.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to note that one of the previous speakers talked about veterans who support this resolution. As a matter of fact, yesterday I was able to announce that the national commander of the VFW said that he opposed this resolution or had grave concerns about it, and I have just been notified that the national commander of the American Legion, Paul A. Moran, announced strong support for the President's new initiative, which includes deploying 21,500 troops. And, in so doing, he said these words:

> We will not separate the war from the warrior. Debating the new strategy is an American way, but let this be a warning that precipitous action by the Congress could lower troop morale and hinder the mission.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Bloomfield Township, Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG).

□ 1700

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make a statement that mistakes have been made in Iraq. The status quo is not acceptable. We need to chart a new course. But we also need to acknowledge that some positive things have happened in Iraq, thanks to the courage and dedication of our troops. These accomplishments often get just lost in all the politics that surround this debate.

Toppling one of the most brutal dictators in history was a good thing. Saddam Hussein's regime was responsible for the senseless murder of thousands of innocent Iraqi citizens. Under his rule, most Iraqis lived in fear of the day Hussein or one of his cronies would come for their mother, their father, their sister or brother.

Hussein was also a direct threat to our friend and ally, Israel. He was a menace, and it is good that he is gone. Furthermore, turning Iraq's sovereignty over to the Iraqis and providing assistance as they forged a democratically elected government is a big deal. Fostering democracy in the

heart of the Middle East was important and was also a very historic moment.

As we debate the current strategy in Iraq, let us not forget that our soldiers have provided a tremendous opportunity to the Iraqi people. They have provided an opportunity for them to grab the benefits of freedom. Now it is up to the Iraqis to seize it.

Before us today, we have a nonbinding resolution that doesn't even mention the accomplishments I just spoke of. We can all agree that the war has taken a wrong turn, but instead of debating nonbinding resolutions that have no bearing on whether additional troops go to Iraq, we should work together to find a solution that results in our soldiers coming home in victory, not defeat.

Mr. Speaker, I have offered my conditional support for the President's plan for additional troops in Iraq. My support is conditional, not carte blanche. I want to see the benchmarks met and progress made within the next 90 to 120 days. It is time for the Iraqis to step up to the plate and assume responsibility for the security of their nation.

If the Iraqis do not step up to this challenge in the coming months, then it will be time to reevaluate. The resolution before us doesn't even speak to these issues. It does nothing in the way of bringing out or bringing our troops home quickly and in victory. It is just pure politics.

I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to work together with the President to ensure a quick return of our troops. We all know that Congress is not going to cut funding for President Bush's new Iraq plan. If we know this to be true, why are we wasting our time on nonbinding resolutions that lead us nowhere?

Let's put our troops first. Let's end the political gamesmanship, and let's work together to find a solution in Iraq. That is what the American people want, and that is what our soldiers and their families deserve.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege now to yield 5 minutes to the gentlelady from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO).

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of this resolution. The Iraq war has lasted longer than U.S. involvement in World War II and has cost the Nation hundreds of billions of dollars. We have lost over 3,000 of our finest men and women. Thousands more have been maimed and too many lives have been shattered.

As Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman TOM LANTOS said, this ''resolution will establish the first marker,'' the first step toward ending this nightmare.

The war in Iraq is the moral issue of the day, and like all great moral issues, there are heartfelt disagreements on both sides of the aisle. But every second, minute, and hour that passes, lives are being lost in Iraq and devastation continues with no end in sight.

We owe it to all the brave men and women who have already sacrificed so much, over 3,000 of them who have made the ultimate sacrifice, to steer our country on a course that will bring our troops home safely, take care of them and their families when they return and end this war.

Despite 4 years and deadly losses, according to Foreign Policy Magazine's recent survey of over 100 top national security experts, 86 percent say the world is more dangerous for the U.S., and, most troubling, 87 percent believe that the war in Iraq has had a negative impact on the war on terror. Other surveys have reached similar conclusions.

Yet the President now wants another $235 billion for Iraq and Afghanistan to add to the $427 billion for the war already approved. In this debate, we should listen in particular to the words of Americans who actually served in the war. I am honored to serve in this Congress with new Members JOE SESTAK of Pennsylvania, TIM WALZ of Minnesota, and PATRICK MURPHY, also of Pennsylvania, all veterans of the Iraq war. Their eloquent and strong voices of firsthand experience add immeasurably to this debate.

There are also people like Captain Lisa Blackman, a clinical psychologist who cared for soldiers in Qatar. As we become increasingly aware of the thousands of soldiers to emerge from firefights or attacks physically unscathed but with substantial emotional damage, Captain Blackman's experience in regularly tending to these soldiers provides further troubling insights into this devastating war.

In a message chronicled in the book Operation Homecoming, Dr. Blackburn wrote of how her patients responded to questions she asked them about their symptoms. She didn't get the expected reactions. They were unexpressive. But when she asked them, ''Have you ever been in combat?'' they became unglued and burst into tears.

As she described it, ''[W]hen I say burst, I mean splatter, tears running . . . sobbing for minutes on end, unable to speak, flat-out grief . . . '' She observed, ''No one ever feels like they are doing enough. If you are in a safe location, you feel guilty that your friends are getting shot at and you aren't. If you are getting shot at, you feel guilty if your buddy gets hit and you don't. If you get shot at but don't die, you feel guilty that you lived, and more guilty if you get to go home and your friends have to stay behind. I have not seen one person out here who didn't [check off] 'increased guilt' on our intake form.''

Indeed, every soldier who saw combat or the results of combat has likely suffered hidden but disturbing psychological harm to some extent. In spite of this, the Veterans Administration has been deprived of the critical funds necessary for the rehabilitation of these brave troops. The President, who continues to send more and more troops into the war on the one hand, has sought to reduce spending for medical services for these same troops on the other. His budget reduces spending for VA over the next 3 years.

Our troops are not the only ones suffering from the policies of this administration. All Americans who now oppose the war 2–1 are impacted by the massive cuts in or complete elimination of important social, health, education and environmental programs.

The cost of this war keeps going up, adding to our national debt. The interest on our debt alone is more than we devote to the education of our children, care of our veterans, and for the administration of justice combined. This body must go on record in united and solid opposition to the escalation of the war and in complete support of our soldiers and veterans. We must be resolute in our efforts to bring an end to this quagmire.

As Speaker PELOSI said, ''Friday's vote will signal whether the House has heard the American people. No more blank checks for President Bush on Iraq.'

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes at this time to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. REGULA).

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

Mr. REGULA. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, like many Americans I am frustrated and dissatisfied with the situation in Iraq. I did not take my vote lightly when Congress authorized the President to use force. Every day I think about the patriotism and sacrifice of our brave men and women who are serving courageously in harm's way.

Mistakes and the complexity of events along the way have led us to the place we are today. Sectarian violence has increased, and Iraq is mired in a civil war, making it difficult for the new government to take hold.

While our role in this conflict has become a divisive issue, there is no denying the significant consequences Iraq's future will have for national and international security and stability.

So I must ask, how do we move forward in a way that honors the commitment and tremendous sacrifices our Nation and its troops have made? We can do so neither by cutting off funding for the troops nor by providing the President with a blank check.

Instead of political posturing, we must insist on a surge in diplomacy. I believe we need to follow closely the recommendations made by the bipartisan Iraq Study Group to bring about the best possible outcome. The Iraq Study Group report states, and I quote:

The United States should immediately launch a new diplomatic offensive to build an international consensus for stability in Iraq and the region.

This diplomatic effort should include every country that has an interest in avoiding a chaotic Iraq, including all of Iraq's neighbors. Given the ability of Iran and Syria to influence events

within Iraq, the United States should try to engage them constructively.

By doing so, it would help marginalize extremists and terrorists, promote U.S. values and interests, and improve America's global image. States included within the diplomatic offensives can play a major role in reinforcing national reconciliation efforts between Iraq, Iraqi Sunnis and Shia. Such reinforcement would contribute substantially to legitimatizing of the political process in Iraq.

Iraq's leaders may not be able to come together unless they receive the necessary signals and support from abroad. This backing will not materialize of its own accord, and it must be encouraged urgently by the United States. We should make it clear to the Iraqi leadership that the additional troops are solely for the purpose of achieving stability, and that this deployment is a precursor to our leading the future of this Nation to the Iraqi people. And I would emphasize this is the important process.

Troop increases alone will not solve the fundamental cause of violence in Iraq if its government is not committed to a national reconciliation process.

However, as we lead a surge in diplomacy, and the Iraqi Government accelerates its efforts at national reconciliation, the Iraq Study Group report makes clear, and I quote, ''The United States should significantly increase the number of U.S. military personnel, including combat troops, embedded in and supporting Iraqi Army units. As these actions proceed, we could begin to move combat forces out of Iraq.''

Denying additional troops, as requested by our military leadership, could put our troops that are there at greater risk and delay their return to their loved ones. I hear from my constituents who want our troops home immediately and from those who want us to remain there so we don't have to fight the terrorists on our own soil.

What I do know is that the challenges in Iraq are complex, and the consequences of immediate withdrawal would be devastating. The Iraq Study Group report goes on to say ''The global standing of the United States could be diminished.'' Our Nation has sacrificed far too much to allow our credibility and values to be weakened.

I cannot, in good faith, support this nonbinding resolution. We also support the troops, and we all want to bring the troops home as quickly as possible.

Let us instead urge the President to increase diplomatic efforts and to follow the recommendations made by the bipartisan Iraq Study Group to work on many fronts to solve the challenges in Iraq.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, as an Army veteran myself, I know that the backbone of our Army is its noncommissioned officers. Now it is my privilege to yield 5 minutes to a former noncommissioned officer who retired after over 2 decades of service in the Army, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ).

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Thank you to my colleague

Mr. Speaker, no debate in this House is longer overdue. This debate has been going on for nearly 4 years in houses, in grocery stores, in workplaces, in houses of worship all across America. No greater responsibility rests with us, the people's Representatives, than debating the decisions involved in waging a war. The decision to send our brave men and women into combat is not the end of our responsibility, it is the beginning. This body has a sacred duty to protect this Nation, our citizens, and especially those we send into combat in our name.

Constant vigilance, questioning, and adjustments to courses of action are our number one priority, and this newly elected Congress intends to do just that.

□ 1715

Some have said that this debate sends a message to our enemies. I would agree. The message our enemies are hearing this week is that democracy in America is alive and well. The message that our enemy is hearing this week is that this Nation will not live in fear of its own shadow and blindly give away those precious liberties that make this the greatest Nation the world has ever known.

The message our enemy is hearing this week is this Nation is able and willing to adjust our tactics to focus on the true threats to our security, which come from al Qaeda, and the Taliban in Afghanistan, and by securing our ports and borders.

The message they are hearing is that this Nation is no longer willing to wage a war based on political ideology and failed policy. We will wage it on facts and reality. Many of my colleagues have spoken of the need to support our troops. You will get no debate from me nor any other American. By implying that some do not support the troops based on nothing more than political posturing is cynical and divisive.

For more than two decades, I served with soldiers, airmen, marines, and not once did I ever see these brave men and women as anything other than patriots. I never saw them as a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent or a Libertarian; nor did they see me as anything but a fellow soldier.

The issue that we are debating this week is the execution of this war and the failure of this administration to provide a realistic plan for success. From the start of this war up to this recent plan to send more Americans into Baghdad, this administration has miscalculated, poorly planned, shifted blame and failed to couple our military policies with diplomatic, economic and long-range strategic planning that would have given the soldiers a chance to succeed.

Had the previous Congress done its constitutional duty of oversight and accountability, there is a strong likelihood we would be in much better shape today. Even as foreign policy experts, military experts, the Congress and the American public show an overwhelming desire to change course and oppose this escalation, this administration ignores all evidence and stumbles on. This debate marks the new beginning of this Congress's acceptance of our duty to provide the oversight and bring about policy changes based in reality and facts and long-range security needs of this Nation.

I have taken two oaths in my life. The first one was as a young man of 17 when I swore my allegiance to the Armed Forces of this country. The second was a month ago when I became a United States Congressman. In both cases I solemnly swore my allegiance to protect and defend the U.S. Constitution.

I swore alliance to no man. I swore no alliance to a political ideology. I swore only to uphold the laws of this great land and protect with my life, if necessary, the liberties and freedoms we so dearly cherish. This debate today is exactly about that oath.

Previous Congresses gave this President the authority to conduct this war in Iraq, which is right, but not the authority to disregard the expert advice, not the authority to take civil liberties from American citizens, and not the authority to disregard our constitutional right in this body as a coequal branch of government.

I, like all Americans, wish nothing more than this President had made good decisions and that the situation in Iraq were better. Unfortunately, wishful thinking does not make good foreign policy. But, fortunately, the genius of the Founders of this Nation are on display right now. This Congress, by taking this first step of oversight and accountability, and passing this resolution, will begin to right the ship of state and take this country on a path that will lead to greater security and begin to return our brave men and women back to their families.

A few short months ago, I was teaching high school. Call me optimistic and naive, but I do not see where casting a vote in this sacred room is anything but binding. Call me naive again when I hear this is nothing but words on paper. How does that differ from the U.S. Constitution?

Yesterday, I had the opportunity to visit with two soldiers from my old unit, the proud 34th Red Bull Division. Those two young men are out at Walter Reed Army Hospital. Both John and Tony are being fitted with their prosthetic limbs for the other ones they left behind in Iraq.

We spoke of everything from how they were injured, to football, to how to get ready to ski again. I do not know and I do not care about their political ideology. I only care that this Nation honors its commitment by providing everything possible to these brave Americans. Today is the day that

I tell Tony and John, we will always support you. We will provide true security to this Nation

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER), former chairman of the Armed Services Committee, now the ranking member of the Armed Services Committee.

Mr. HUNTER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I just want to say to my colleague who just spoke that I saw also two young men in Walter Reed a couple of days ago, and I would recommend that he talk with them also if he thinks that everybody that is over there supports this resolution.

I would also say to my friend that if you think that the message that is going to go across thousands of Web sites and communications the day after this vote is taken on terrorist Web sites is, our message is that democracy is alive and well in the United States, I am willing to take a bet on that. I do not think you will see that. I think you will see something else.

You will see the message that they think that this resolution, if it is passed, is the first note of retreat in the war against terror by the United States. That is what you will see and I will be happy to take a bet on that one.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I heard just a couple of hours ago, as many of us have, that the Democratic leadership of the House intends to use management policies in the Department of Defense over the next year or so to keep either troops or supplies from moving to the battlefield.

Now, using management policies that will prohibit people from moving in the Marines or the United States Army if they haven't spent enough time back in CONUS before they go, I can say this to you, that is a very, very dangerous policy.

Our ability to project power around the world and to deter people who wish us ill is the ability to move men and equipment very quickly around the world. And any type of an inhibition of that capability is going to be extremely dangerous to the United States. And I will fight with every fiber of my being any attempt by this Congress through management policies by the Democratic leadership, through management policies of DOD to keep either reinforcement or supplies from reaching our troops around the world.

I will simply say once more, I said when we started this debate yesterday, that this resolution will be looked at by America's friends, by America's enemies, and I think also by America's troops; and I think they will interpret it, no matter the good faith of people in this Chamber, they will interpret it as the first notes of retreat in the war against terror, just as they interpreted actions by the Spanish Government after the domestic strike in Spain and the terrorist hit in Spain and in other countries.

They will look at what we have done, and I will be happy to stand with any of my colleagues and analyze those messages as they come off the terrorist boards after this vote is taken. This resolution, if it passes tomorrow, and it probably will, will be taken as the first note of retreat in the war against terror.

Any attempt by the Democrat leadership to cut off supplies or reinforcement by management policies in DOD, personnel policies, will be interpreted as the second note of retreat in the war against terror, and I for one will oppose them very strongly

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, let me reassure my friend I have heard nothing at all about the statement he just made. Those are the kinds of statements, frankly, that confuse people.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. YARMUTH).

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, 4 years ago I was just like most other Americans, trying to evaluate the President's plan to invade Iraq. Unlike most Americans, I was writing a newspaper column and was expected to take a public position on such a national policy. But like most Americans, I was unburdened by the classified and faulty intelligence provided to Members of Congress.

I concluded and wrote that the claims made to justify the American invasion of Iraq were baseless, that there were no weapons of mass destruction, that Iraq posed no immediate threat to the United States, that Saddam Hussein was not in any way connected to the 9/11 attacks, and finally that Iraq was not a safe harbor for al Qaeda.

I also concluded and wrote that we were rushing into Iraq with no idea of what we would do after the Iraqi regime fell, and also that we had no plan for getting out. The point of all of this reminiscing is not to show that I was so smart, nor is it to say that I told you so.

Four years later, as our men and women are still dying in Iraq, the American people know everything there is to know about the situation there. We know as much if not more than the President of the United States. And our ideas about the conflict are just as valid.

That is why this resolution is so important and this debate so significant. Tomorrow we will be voting on what may be only a nonbinding resolution, but it is a resounding and unequivocal expression of the National will. This is not simply a group of Congressmen and women explaining their votes. It is the echo of an overwhelming majority of Americans who are demanding a new direction in Iraq.

It is the sound of scores of people like me who were sent here by citizens to turn the ship of state around. During this momentous debate, we have heard from some on the other side of the aisle that this resolution and the discussion we are having somehow undermine our national interest.

I believe they are selling this institution short. We are displaying for the world what a government of the people, by the people and for the people truly looks like. What we are doing here this week speaks far more clearly and loudly than our bullets and our rockets and even our dollars. When the United States Government so clearly and dramatically reflects the will of its citizens, we may not shock the world, but we make it watch in awe.

James Madison wrote that the role of Congress is to expand and refine the public view. He accurately perceived that on most issues Americans assume that their representatives will consider their opinions and work out the details. In the present situation, I believe the American people are shouting at us that it is time to get our men and women out of harm's way in Iraq.

I will cast my vote not simply to oppose the President's escalation, but as a statement that this Congress will no longer abdicate its responsibility to expand and refine the public view.

Mr. Speaker, today I am as confident about my position as I was 4 years ago. I am confident because I have listened to those who oppose this resolution. I hear only disingenuous rhetoric. The other side accuses us of trying to micromanage the Iraqi conflict, then says we should have our own plan.

They say that we are dishonoring our fallen heroes, but then offer no strategy for honoring them other than to simply send more brave soldiers in their place. They continue to talk about victory and defeat, while virtually everyone agrees that we could never identify or define either.

They say this resolution is an empty political gesture, and then say it is tantamount to surrender. What they do not give us, and more importantly what the President of the United States has not given us, are any reasons to believe that we are succeeding in Iraq, that the current plans increase the odds of our success, that we are any closer to eliminating the threat of terrorism, or finally that the United States is enhancing its image around the world as the beacon of freedom.

We who support this resolution honor and respect our troops. We care deeply about the international reputation of our country. We are unequivocally committed to our Nation's security, and we desperately want America to succeed. By supporting this resolution, we undeniably succeed, because we honor our Nation and its citizens who have entrusted us with the simple, but grave, responsibility to listen to them.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI).

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, I plan to vote for this resolution, but to surge or not to surge, that is the wrong question. Just saying ''no'' is simple obstructionism. What we need is a new way forward to replace the old way that is not getting us anywhere. It has become clear that trying to establish a

multiethnic Iraqi democracy, while laudable, simply cannot be accomplished by non-Iraqis.

The fact is, Iraq has never been a unified country with enough common interest to foster the give and take of democracy. During the First World War, Britain seized the Mesopotamian region from the collapsing Ottoman Empire. Iraq was created out of three separate provinces to keep the Turks out while allowing the British access to the local oil.

Captain Arnold Wilson, the British civil commissioner in Baghdad, argued that the creation of the new state was a recipe for disaster. He warned that the deep differences among the three main communities, the Sunni, Shia and Kurds, ensured the new country could only be run by what he called the antithesis of democratic government.

□ 1730

After a rebellion in 1920, which resulted in the deaths of some 2,000 British soldiers and 8,000 Iraqis, the British, through the leadership of Secretary of War Winston Churchill, largely extricated themselves by choosing a Sunni to be king and strongman.

In light of this history, we should seriously consider that we have two basic options:

First, choose a faction to stabilize and rule the country through force, much as all of Iraq's previous regimes did, and that is hardly an attractive option.

Or, second, bring about a partition of the country, to form a loose confederation where the Shias, the Sunnis and the Kurds can each govern themselves while leaving the others alone.

Our enterprise in Iraq has been carried out with the best of intentions, and our men and women in the Armed Forces have performed with great heroism, skill, and honor. But we have to accept reality. We have a responsibility to help stabilize the situation, and doing so is in our national interest.

But I don't think it is fair to ask our sons and daughters to be policemen in a civil war. Sadly, it seems that most Iraqis do not embrace democratic government unless it is dominated exclusively by their own individual groups.

The Sunnis, the Shia and the Kurds are willing and able to establish law and order within their own ethnically homogenous areas. The efforts to push out other areas currently underway in Iraq are deplorable, but it is surely not unexpected given Iraq's history and desperate situation.

The sectarian militias have popular support because they have easily understood plans to establish security within their spheres for their own people. Instead of fighting the militias, we need to co-opt them. We need to help acceptable local tribal leaders, government leaders and religious authorities establish authority over their areas.

We also need to seek the positive involvement of Iraq's neighbors. Some of them may be meddling, or may be tempted to meddle, but at the end of the day, instability in Iraq means instability for everybody in the region.

Let's set about the task of helping Iraq's three main groups to regroup and stabilize their own territories so that we can withdraw to our bases and ultimately get out all together.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, it is now my privilege to yield 5 minutes to the gentlelady from Ohio, Representative Betty Sutton.

Ms. SUTTON. Mr. Speaker, throughout the course of history, when our Nation has faced its most significant debates over matters of war, there comes a time when voices of pundits and politicians must drop away and allow the voices of the people to be heard.

Our troops are brave and capable. They have fought heroically and this resolution makes it unequivocally clear that those of us who feel it incumbent to oppose the President's escalation nonetheless support our troops. All of us, and all Americans, support our troops.

But Congress also has an oversight responsibility to ensure that they are provided a mission based on a realistic assessment and an achievable goal before we ask them to risk life and limb to implement it.

The President has asked Congress to support his escalation plan to send another 20,000 troops to Iraq.

This war is now almost 4 years long. Congress has not spoken as loudly and as clearly as its responsibility requires. As the Representative of the 13th District of Ohio, I cannot sit silent. I oppose the President's plan for escalation and I fully support this resolution.

The President's own military commanders have advised against this course of action, and in November, my constituents and the American people voted for a change of direction in Iraq. Escalation is directly contradictory to that call for change. It takes us further down the wrong path, deeper and deeper, with a policy that asks our military to perform a nonmilitary mission of creating a unified government in Iraq.

But unity in Iraq has to be determined by the people who live there. It is neither fair nor just to ask our troops to fix a sectarian civil war.

Our Nation has paid a high price: the lives of 3,000 American troops lost; $379 billion spent, with another $8 billion every month of this war.

These lives cannot be retrieved; 139 brave men and women from Ohio have been killed, 14 from my district. I have a responsibility to every one of those casualties and to every one that might lie ahead, to represent their voices, especially those that can no longer be heard.

In early August 2005, Lance Corporal Edward ''Augie'' Schroeder II was killed in Iraq. Augie and 13 other young lives from Northeast Ohio were lost that day. In January 2006, Augie's father, Paul Schroeder, shared his thoughts and feelings in a letter to the Washington Post entitled, ''A Life Wasted.'' He said, ''Since August we have witnessed growing opposition to the Iraq war, but it is often whispered, hands covering mouths as if it is too dangerous to speak too loudly. Others discuss the never-ending cycle of death in places like Haditha in academic and sometimes clinical fashion, as in 'the increasing lethality of improvised explosive devices.' ''

Wiping the clinical talk away, Paul Schroeder went on to share the painful reality that he and his family face, a reality that cannot be understood when sanitized by clinical terms. He said, ''Listen to the kinds of things that most Americans don't have to experience: The day Augie's unit returned from Iraq to Camp Lejeune we received a book of his notebooks, DVDs and clothes from his locker in Iraq. The day his unit returned home to waiting families, we received the second urn of ashes. This lad of promise, of easy charm and readiness to help, whose highest high was saving someone, using CPR as a First Aid squad volunteer, came home in one coffin and two urns. We buried him in three places that he loved, a fitting irony, I suppose, but just as rough each time.''

Mr. Speaker, the growing opposition to the war in Iraq must not be whispered, hands covering mouths as if it is too dangerous to speak too loudly. Accountability and oversight require more. This resolution rings loud and clear. We support our troops and we oppose the President's plan to escalate in Iraq.

Will the President hear our collective voice? If he does not, it will not be because we sat silent

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield at this time 5 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS)

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise, reluctantly, in opposition to this resolution. I say ''reluctantly'' because I had hoped to be able to vote in favor of something positive, a fresh perspective, a new idea, a new pathway to success, anything to encourage and foster a positive outcome in the Iraq conflict. But this resolution offers none of these things. It is a simple, almost meaningless, nonbinding statement of disapproval that provides no constructive resolve on this daunting, yet critical mission.

My opposition is both procedural and substantive. I am extremely disappointed that we only have this one simplistic, inadequate statement before us for consideration. No alternatives, no other ideas, no solutions. The situation in Iraq is complicated, and the American people deserve far more from Congress than a resolution that essentially calls for the status quo.

The resolution opposes the troop surge called for by the Commander in Chief, but fails to offer or even allow for consideration of any alternatives aimed at achieving success in Iraq, nor does it offer an alternative aimed at a reduction of troops.

There are other ideas out there worthy of consideration and discussion, yet we are not debating those, including those suggested by the bipartisan Iraq Study Group. For example, the study group concluded that there is no single action that the military can take that, by itself, can bring about success in Iraq. I agree with that assessment. Regardless of a troop surge, I believe a positive outcome in Iraq requires regional cooperation and positive engagement with all of Iraq's neighboring states.

A case can be made for a troop surge, but even more, we need a surge in diplomacy to create an environment conducive for a lasting peace throughout the Middle East. The history of the region is too diverse, too complex, and too tumultuous to expect progress without an integrated diplomatic effort and multinational support. Of course, this simple resolution before us offers no perspective on these matters.

In a few weeks, this body will have the opportunity to vote on funding for ongoing operations in Iraq. Forget today's resolution; the vote on the supplemental funding bill is where the real debate will occur, and the policies will be laid forth. Make no mistake, a cutoff of funds and a premature withdrawal of troops from Iraq will produce even greater sectarian violence, further deterioration of security conditions, and would foment a terrorist breeding ground for radical Islamists. We, the Members of Congress, must give our troops the resources they need to carry out their critical mission to a successful conclusion.

In closing, let me say that we all unequivocally support the troops who are serving and who have served in Iraq, and we all deeply appreciate their efforts to carry out their duties. Every day I think about the 3,000-plus American troops who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan, and I pray for their families, as well as for our troops that are there now. I think about the thousands more who have been injured, and the tens of thousands of innocent Iraqi citizens who have been killed or injured as a result of this conflict. We must do all we can to ensure that those casualties were not suffered in vain. Above all, we must seek to end this conflict and stop the casualties.

Simply put, the resolution we are debating offers no path to success, and that is why I oppose it.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 2 of House Resolution 157, I demand an additional hour of debate on the concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOUCHER). Thirty minutes of debate will be added on the concurrent resolution to each side.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns on this legislative day, it adjourn to meet at 8 a.m. tomorrow.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, continuing on my unanimous consent, I would tell the Members that we do not intend to have any 1-minutes tomorrow, so that we will begin debate at 8 a.m. on this resolution.

Debate, of course, will conclude tonight at 1 a.m. so that the staff can get at least some sleep; not much, but some. And we will have continuing communications with the minority with reference to the balance of the schedule for Friday.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I now yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MAHONEY).

Mr. MAHONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I normally rise to speak on behalf of the people of Florida's 16th Congressional District. Today I rise to begin a conversation not only with my colleagues, but with my constituents.

This week, this legislative body, the people's House, is engaged in a great debate over the President's decision to stay the course in Iraq by escalating the number of troops. I have, over the past few days, heard many arguments as to the wisdom of the President's decision to do so. But the one message that all who have spoken agree with, Democratic or Republican, liberal or conservative, is that our brave men and women in uniform have done a magnificent job fighting in Iraq and around the world to protect our lives, our culture, and our country.

□ 1745

I have heard my colleagues argue that the mere act of debating the President's decision to escalate the war sends the wrong message to our troops and the wrong message to our enemies. To these colleagues I say do not underestimate the power of democracy, the power of freedom of speech, the very powers we are fighting to give the people of Iraq. Debate sends the message of strength, resolve, and commitment. This debate is about finding the best way for America to win the war on terror.

I agree with the President that the world is a dangerous place and we need to take the war to the terrorists and those who support terror. But I disagree with the President that by sending more troops to police a civil war in Iraq, America is any closer to winning the war on terror. I come to this conclusion as a result of consultations with our military leaders, our diplomats, and those in the White House responsible for executing the President's policies. I come to this conclusion from talking to our men and women in uniform who have served with distinction.

Democracy can only happen when a people want it. We have seen time and again that a people who yearn for democracy will break the yoke of tyranny and liberate themselves from their oppressors. America has invested lives of over 3,000 of its best young men and women, sustained over 20,000 casualties, and spent nearly $400 billion on the Iraq war. We have rid the Iraqi people of a cruel tyrant and have given them the opportunity to live in a democracy. American men and women securing a street corner in Sadr City will not change the hearts of the Sunni or Shia. Additional troops will not secure democracy. Only the men and women of Iraq can do that. Now is the time for the Iraqi people to stand and demand democracy.

It is time for America to move forward in our fight against terror. It is time to focus on eliminating terrorists in Iraq, Afghanistan, or wherever they are harbored. It is time to bring Osama bin Laden to justice for the crimes he perpetrated on 9/11.

We need to gather our strength and send a clear message to our enemies that their continued efforts to support terror and engage in activity against America or her allies will result in certain and swift justice.

This President needs to do what his father did in the first gulf war and what President Clinton did in the Balkans, and that is to demonstrate leadership by engaging in diplomacy. This President needs to listen to the sage advice of the Baker-Hamilton Commission and use America's power and prestige to bring the world together in support of the Iraqi people. The world needs to know that America will provide a democratic Iraq, and those who support her, with political, economic, and military support.

I want my friends in Stuart, Okeechobee, Sebring, LaBelle, and Punta Gorda to know that I am here today because democracy requires us to speak up and speak out and you deserve to have a voice in this debate. In speaking out, I am supporting our President by letting him know that we are committed to winning the war on terror, but that we will not support his strategy to increase escalation of the troops in Iraq and that America will not quit until we have vanquished all who use terror to achieve political gain.

We want the Iraqi people to know that this is their moment to grasp democracy; and should they choose to do so, the American people will continue to support them and their efforts to build a better life for their children.

Tomorrow, my colleagues and I will take the important first step in showing the President that we support our troops, but do not support his plan to invest more American lives to mediate a civil war.

Make no mistake, this vote is binding, as it binds me and my colleagues to our constituents by forcing us to take a stand.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT).

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to this nonbinding resolution. I

cannot support it for it neither supports our troops nor offers an alternative plan. It is symbolic, it is partisan, it is cynical, and it is meaningless.

The leadership of this body is taking the easy route: criticize the other guy's plan but don't offer your own. Call up your own nonbinding resolution, but don't allow votes on resolutions that actually have substance. Position yourselves for the next elections but not for the next wave of terrorism attacks. Win the White House, but lose the war on terror.

There is no doubt that the voters spoke in the last election. They are not happy with the war. Few, if any of us, are satisfied with the progress made in Iraq. I know I am not. Neither are my constituents. Their patience and that of all Americans has run thin.

For too long we pursued an open-ended commitment without well-defined goals and clear benchmarks for success. We also pursued a strategy that placed too heavy a burden on our troops and too light an expectation of the Iraqi Government. But I want to remind my colleagues that the voters will speak again if we don't get this right. And I say ''we'' because it is all of us. If we don't put aside the partisan positioning and work together for the good of this country, we all will lose more than just our seats in this body.

It is not enough to point the finger and say that the President is wrong, and wait for the returns to come in. It is not enough to disapprove and criticize and say It is not my job. He is the Commander in Chief. And it is not enough to turn around and through this resolution say you support troops that have been or are serving in Iraq, but not those who may go in as replacements, rotations, or as part of the new temporary deployment. This is why we should be using this opportunity, not to take a symbolic vote of no confidence in our Commander in Chief, but to discuss real options for the way forward in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I have been there several times. I have been to the red zone, visited the convention center where the Iraqi Parliament meets, and was there as Prime Minister Maliki presented his reconciliation plan. I met with our military commanders. I have listened to our soldiers who patrol the streets in Baghdad, and I have talked with democratically elected Iraqi leaders about their hopes for the future. The one thing that was very clear to me is that only the Iraqi Government can take the tough steps that will achieve reconciliation and an end to sectarian violence.

So now Prime Minister Maliki has stepped forward and asked our President for specific assistance in securing Baghdad. In response, President Bush's commanders have drawn up a plan. The President proposed a new commander on the ground, General Petraeus, who was confirmed by the other body in a bipartisan, unanimous vote of 81–0.

We urged the creation of a bipartisan Iraqi Study Group comprised of our country's most distinguished and seasoned experts and asked their advice. Among the key items they supported was a temporary surge in troop strength if called for by the commanders on the ground. ''As Baghdad goes, so goes Iraq,'' they pointed out.

These are all steps in the right direction. But what would approving this resolution signal to the world? That we tell the Iraqi people to take the tough steps, but then we deny them the support they need to do so? That we urge the creation of a bipartisan commission to give us guidance and then reject its advice? That we unanimously confirm a new general on the ground and then we deny him his plan? That we support our troops, but not their replacements?

These are not the messages that I want to send. We owe it to our troops and to those who have given their lives to give the Iraqis one last chance to show that they are willing to fight for and take responsibility for the future of their own country. But we have to exercise our constitutional powers and hold them to it, and we have to stop signaling that the best Congress can offer is a big, nonbinding ''no'' to someone else's plan.

So today I am cosponsoring legislation, H.R. 1062, that will do just that: hold the administration, and the Iraqi Government, accountable in achieving clear benchmarks. It requires the President to report to Congress every 30 days on the extent to which the government of Iraq is moving forward on more than a dozen fronts, from troop training and security to rebuilding, reconciliation, international cooperation, and enforcing the rule of law. It also requires progress reports on the implementation of strategies that will prevent Iraqi territory from becoming a safe haven for terrorist activities.

Most significantly, H.R. 1062 exercises the full constitutional powers of this body, not through a symbolic expression of discontent, but through vigorous oversight and true accountability.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1062 and reject the resolution before us.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to yield 5 minutes to a breath of fresh air from Arizona, my good friend Mr. HARRY MITCHELL.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I think it is safe to say that regardless of any differences of opinion over military strategy in Iraq, we all agree that the outcome in Iraq will affect our national security and the security and stability of the Middle East for generations to come.

I was not a Member of this distinguished body in October of 2002 when many of my colleagues were faced with the decision of whether to authorize the President to go to war in Iraq. But 4 years later, I was elected by the people of my district who asked me and this Congress to set a new course in Iraq because it is clear to them that the administration's course is not working.

That is not to say there has not been some success. Our troops have performed bravely and succeeded in their mission to end Saddam Hussein's brutal regime. The Iraqi people exercised their new-found right to vote, and those who murdered innocent Iraqis have been given fair trials and justice has been served.

But since the initial military victory, political, diplomatic, and economic failure has become widespread. Today, sectarian violence is at an all-time high, and American troops are now caught in the middle of a civil war.

Now the administration is engaging in a military escalation of the war. They tried this strategy before and it didn't work. It didn't work because we need more than a military strategy. We need political and economic solutions too. We need a strategy that employs all of the elements of national power to ultimately put the Iraqis in charge of their own security and stability.

So far a military strategy has not solved the problems we have in Iraq. So far a military strategy has not brought Sunnis and Shiites together to maintain a unified government and a peaceful political environment. We know that a military strategy alone cannot create commerce and jobs for the Iraqi people. A military strategy alone cannot rebuild the basic infrastructure that has been destroyed over the past 4 years. A military strategy must be combined with sufficient political, diplomatic, and economic components. But that is not happening here.

I disagree with many of my colleagues in this Chamber who support the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops. We have heard from too many generals, including those who have spoken out against this escalation, about the dangers of even more violence and instability in the Middle East if we simply withdraw. I do believe American troops have a role in Iraq, a supporting role. They should continue to train Iraqi soldiers, and their mission must ultimately be to put the Iraqis in charge of their own security and stability. But let me be clear: American troops have no place in the middle of a civil war.

This resolution reaffirms this body's support for the men and women of the United States military. Many of our troops have given their lives or suffered serious injury so that one day the people of Iraq may enjoy the same freedoms we have here in the United States. Their service and their sacrifice make me even more proud to be an American.

I hope and pray that we can have all of our brave men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan return safely to their families. But while they are in harm's way, we must honor their service by ensuring that the burden of success or failure is not left to them alone. We

have a responsibility to utilize every political, diplomatic, and economic tool at our disposal to ensure success in Iraq.

Mr. SAXTON. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, first of all, I want to thank my friend and colleague from New Jersey for yielding me time.

Madam Speaker, this nonbinding resolution is really a nonsensical political statement. It would deprive our troops of the reinforcements they desperately need. Let us trust their judgment and give them the reinforcements they want.

How would you feel if you were an American soldier in Iraq and Congress passed this resolution? It is like telling you to fight with one arm behind your back, and that is no way to defeat a terrorist.

It is our responsibility to assist our troops, not discourage them by ignoring their needs. This political resolution shortchanges our generals and their troops. Instead, we should support those who are sacrificing their lives to protect ours.

□ 1800

Our men and women in uniform desire only to serve their country with honor. Rather than deny them what they want, we should give them the resources they deserve.

Unfortunately, many terrorists hate our country, our citizens, our freedoms and our way of life. The global war on terror is fierce; this is no time to appear weak. London, Moscow, Madrid and six other cities around the world have suffered terrorist attacks since 9/11, but there is a reason no terrorist attack has occurred in America since 2001. It is not because some would second-guess our military; it is because our troops want to win, and we should give them that opportunity.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose this resolution and send the troops this message: We are here to help you.

Mr. REYES. Madam Speaker, it is now my privilege to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN).

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

Mr. LEVIN. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution before the House.

We need to send a clear bipartisan message to the White House. There is little support in this Congress for deepening our open-ended military commitment in Iraq by sending an additional 21,000 troops into this conflict.

The debate we are having today is about the future of our Nation's policy in Iraq, so my main focus will not be to catalog the litany of the administration's past grave mistakes and misstatements over the last 4 years. At the same time, as a lesson for the future, it is important to remember that the war in Iraq was the first application of the Bush Doctrine. This policy was unveiled by the President in his commencement speech at West Point in June 2002 and made policy a few months later in the administration's 2002 National Security Strategy.

The administration's doctrine stressed preemptive attack, U.S. military superiority, and U.S. unilateral action. This flawed policy has proven to be disastrous. It has destabilized Iraq, and threatens to undermine the stability of the entire region. It blinded the administration to the Pandora's box it was opening when it invaded Iraq in search of weapons of mass destruction that did not exist and 9/11 terrorists that were not there.

Far from strengthening U.S. security, this misguided doctrine has put our Nation's vital interests at greater risk. The elevation of unilateralism has helped erode our Nation's standing in the world. The released NIE Estimate for Iraq underscores just how flawed the administration's doctrine has been. Among the key judgment, I quote, ''Iraqi society's growing polarization, the persistent weakening of the security forces and of the state in general.'' And again I quote, ''Extremists continue to act as a very effective accelerator for what has become a self-sustaining intersectarian struggle between Shia and Sunnis.'' And now I quote again. ''The Intelligence Community judges that the term 'civil war' does not adequately capture the complexity of the conflict in Iraq.''

The judgments of the National Intelligence Estimate reinforce the view that a military solution in Iraq is not possible. The administration has attempted troop surges in the past. They haven't worked. Adding another 21,000 American troops will not put an end to violence and instability in Iraq. The only chance to do that is for Iraq's leaders and factions to come together and begin the difficult process of political compromise and reconciliation.

I believe that announcing the orderly redeployment of U.S. forces is the best way to put pressure on the factions in Iraq to come together and make these difficult choices.

This resolution is straightforward. It states clearly and unambiguously that Congress does not support the President's plan. It supports our military personnel but not a further military escalation.

Some have said it is not serious because it is nonbinding. Others have said the resolution emboldens our enemies and hurts the troops. How does it embolden our enemies or hurt the troops for this Congress to disapprove continuing a strategy that is not working?

The resolution we are debating today is nonbinding, but is not nonconsequential. I hope the administration will hear the clear bipartisan message we are sending and change course.

The question today before the House is whether or not we agree with the President's plan to send 21,000 additional troops to Iraq to referee a growing civil war. I do not agree with this escalation. I urge all my colleagues to join in calling on the President to change course in Iraq

Mr. HUNTER. Madam Speaker, I would yield 3 minutes to the gentlelady from Colorado (Mrs. MUSGRAVE).

Mrs. MUSGRAVE. I thank the gentleman for yielding time.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to this nonbinding resolution. This is not even an honest debate that we are holding here; we didn't have an open rule. This is the wrong resolution; it sends the wrong message to our troops, to our enemies and to our allies.

Today, like many Members of Congress do on a regular basis, I visited Walter Reed. While I was there today, I visited with a young man from my district. He had severe injuries. As I sat and talked to him, his empty eye socket teared. He had damage to his face. He had horrific damage to his arm that he used to protect his face. He was in a Humvee when an IED exploded, and he actually turned the Humvee towards the IED to protect the other men in the Humvee. His sacrifice is incredible.

I talked to another young man from Pennsylvania who had been on three tours in Iraq, and on his third tour, while training, he lost his hand.

I also spoke to a young man from Texas, only 20 years old; and this young man had severe injuries, specifically to his arm.

So we all know that the cost of war is very high. Many of us Members of Congress have also attended funerals and wept with mothers and fathers, families. People in my age group look at these young soldiers and they are the age of our kids. It touches our hearts, and we know the sacrifices that are made are incredible. These people need to feel the gratitude from the entire Nation, gratitude and respect. And I believe that this resolution, again, sends the wrong message.

What is not being considered adequately in this country is the cost of failure in Iraq. When we think about our enemies being emboldened, when we think about the vast resources that our enemies will have access to acquire biological and nuclear weapons, the horrific effects are just almost immeasurable.

As I think about this cost of failure in Iraq, and indeed, on the global war on terror, I think about how we Americans make an assumption. We assume, most of us, when we go to bed at night that when we wake up, tomorrow is going to be like today, that things are going to go on like they have gone on and we will have the liberties and the freedoms that we enjoy. But I would say this wonderful thing that we have in the United States of America, these freedoms and liberties, are very fragile. They are very fragile when we face radical jihadists that would murder us,

thinking that it will take them straight to paradise.

We have to fight this war on terror. We have to win in Iraq. I talked to a retired general yesterday, and I believe he said it all. He said, ''You're down there debating, aren't you? You're talking about the united-we-quit resolution.'' I believe that we have a choice: United we stand or united we quit, and our choice will echo down the halls of history.

Mr. REYES. Madam Speaker, now it is my privilege to yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON).

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Speaker, make no mistake about it, the change that took place in this body over the course of November 7 is directly related to this war in Iraq. And the presence of a number of people who are here now is directly related to the will of the American people to end this war, which never should have been started.

The fact is, the strategy to escalate the troops is not new, it has been tried at least four other times. It won't work this time, it didn't work those times. The thing to do now is to engage diplomatically and politically. That is what this situation calls for and that is the only thing that will bring success in this conflict at this time.

Support the troops? Of course. Of course, support the troops. Always we support the troops. But there comes a time when you cannot get the success that you seek at the barrel of a gun, you have to talk it out, you have to engage diplomatically, you have to engage politically. There is no substitute for that.

Support the troops, but bring them home. Support the troops, redeploy them, and allow the Iraqi people to seize and protect their country at this time.

I carry a message here today on behalf of people like Phil Steger and the Friends For a Nonviolent World, on behalf of Chapter 27 of Veterans For Peace, on behalf of every patriot who stands for peace, in the frigid cold, every Wednesday night on Lake Street Bridge in Minneapolis.

On behalf of the 3,100 Americans killed, including Minnesotans, I carry that message. On behalf of 24,000 scarred and wounded young Americans, including 372 Minnesotans, I carry the message. On behalf of the families and the loved ones of the damaged and deceased, I carry the message that the American soldier has done what has been asked, and it is time for politicians to step forward and do their job, which is to seek a political and diplomatic solution to this conflict, something that this latest escalation cannot do.

On behalf of the $8 billion we send to Iraq each month, hard-working American tax dollars that could be used to enrich the lives of the 86,000 uninsured children of Minnesota, or for nearly the 700,000 Minnesota Medicare patients, I carry the message that we need peace. We need to pursue it vigorously, unwaveringly, and urgently.

On behalf of the Americans who purposefully misled repeatedly, including the administration as related to these weapons of mass destruction where none existed, on behalf of the people who claim falsely of the collusion between 9/11 and Saddam Hussein where none existed, on behalf of the people who said that regime change would be welcomed with flowers instead of IEDs, I say stop the deception, start telling the truth.

On behalf of the people who say that the Iraqi oil revenues would pay for this war instead of draining the American Treasury of over $400 billion, I say stop the deception, start telling the truth.

On behalf of those Americans who told us, repeatedly, facts which got us into this war in the first place, and which they are trying to sustain us in this war now, I say stop the deception. Stop the killing. Stop the carnage. Support our troops, do not support this escalation. Send a clear signal to the President that this is the wrong way to go.

For 6 years now, while the deception has deepened, we were told to shut up, bite your tongues, you are not as patriotic as me, you don't love America as much as I do. None of that is true. We have to stop this polarizing language and really focus on the best way out of this.

Even people who support the escalation can't claim that we are going to be in Iraq forever. What is your plan for eventually getting out of this thing? We say let's start the withdrawal now, let's start the diplomatic solution now, let's start the political solution now.

I want to say, on behalf of those who really thirst for peace, who believe that peace really is the answer, that we need to look at the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., when he spoke out against the Vietnam War. He said, ''There comes a time when silence is betrayal.'' And so it is.

And so, in keeping in line with the legacy of Dr. King, I want to talk about peace today. To those people who believe in the principles of peace and that peaceful dissent that guided Dr. King, those people should know that for you to raise your voice on behalf of peace is a patriotic act, it is a good thing.

□ 1815

To those people who say they believe in peace and believe peace is the right way to go, let me wrap up my remarks by just reminding you that Marine General Peter Pace, somebody who knows a little bit about warfare, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, just last week said, There is no doubt in my mind that the dialogue here in Washington strengthens our democracy, period. He added, Potential enemies of the United States, they may take comfort in rancor, but they do not know anything about how democracy works. The fact is that peace is patriotic. Dissenting from an ill-fated policy of the President is the right thing to do. Indeed, it is our obligation.

So please continue to stand up for peace and never forget that peace is the answer, and peace is going to prevail.

Mr. HUNTER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 2 minutes just to give some information that my great friend, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES), commented on.

I made a comment a few minutes ago that I had understood that the Democrat leadership or a member of that leadership had stated that they would use DOD management policies to cut off the sending of either reinforcements or supplies to the warfighting theater and that I would oppose that very strongly.

My friend Mr. REYES expressed doubt that that had happened. He said he had not heard about it.

I just wanted to inform him I have the Reuters report here, and it quotes our colleague Mr. MURTHA: ''A leading congressional opponent of the war in Iraq on Thursday said his plans for placing conditions on how President George W. Bush can spend $93.4 billion in new combat funds would effectively stop an American troop buildup.'' This is quoting Mr. MURTHA.

Mr. MURTHA says: ''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.''

That is the statement upon which I based my remarks a few minutes ago. It appears that statement has been made.

Mr. REYES. Madam Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HUNTER. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. REYES. Did I hear you say that you spoke with Mr. MURTHA?

Mr. HUNTER. What is my friend's statement?

Mr. REYES. I would just say that many times, my good friend and I have discussed not to quote members of the media because most of the time they get it wrong. So I would wait until we talk to Mr. MURTHA.

Mr. HUNTER. Let me just say to my friend that I hope that this is a misquote; but, certainly, there was a press conference, and these are the quotes that are reported in the transcript by the press. So let us hope that that is not accurate. If it is not accurate, I will be very happy. If it is accurate, that will receive enormous opposition from this Member of Congress.

Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. WHITFIELD).

Mr. WHITFIELD. Madam Speaker, I believe that the American people welcome this debate on Iraq, certainly one of the most important issues facing the

American people, and I believe we will all benefit from open, constructive, and sincere debate.

It goes without saying that no one Member of Congress or political party has a clear-cut solution to the complex problems our Nation faces in Iraq.

I expect that every Member of Congress will share their thoughts on whether we should approve or disapprove this 100-word resolution; and like every other Member of Congress, I offer and convey my respect, gratitude and thanks for the exemplary service and heart-rendering sacrifice made by our young men and women in the military. As so many have said, they have performed in an exemplary way, and they have accomplished every task we have asked them to do.

I have had the great privilege of representing Ft. Campbell, home of the 101st Airborne Division and the 5th Special Forces group who have served many times in Iraq.

Throughout this debate many speakers have quoted generals and other experts who have disagreed emphatically with many aspects of the military decisions and strategic decisions about Iraq. We know there have been and continue to be strong disagreements among those who have been intimately involved in this issue.

We have as a Nation endured so much. As has been said, over 3,000 American soldiers have died, and 23,417 have been wounded during the past 4 years in Iraq.

While I understand the arguments of those who support this resolution, I would like to briefly explain why I believe we should vote against this resolution.

Neither President Bush, Speaker PELOSI or any Member of Congress will have as much opportunity to maximize the possibility of success in Iraq as our new military commander in Iraq, General David Petraeus. He is responsible, with the men and women serving, for implementing the increased security for Baghdad. He was confirmed for this new responsibility by a vote of 81–0 in the U.S. Senate on January 26, 2007, a mere 20 days ago.

At his confirmation hearing, among other statements, General Petraeus said, ''Some of the members of this committee have observed that there is no military solution to the problem of Iraq.'' And he said, ''They are correct.''

Ultimate success in Iraq will be determined by actions in the Iraqi political and economic arenas on central issues as governance, the amount of power devolved to the provinces, the distribution of oil revenue, national reconciliation, and resolution of sectarian differences.

And then he went on to say, and this is key, It is, however, exceedingly difficult for the Iraqi Government to come to grips with the tough issues it must resolve while mere survival is the primary concern of so many in Iraq's capital.

For this reason, military action to improve security, while not wholly sufficient to solve Iraq's problems, is certainly necessary, and that is why additional U.S. and Iraqi forces are needed in Baghdad. They do have a role.

General Petraeus and our military have been asked to implement this additional security. He was confirmed to do this, as I said, just 20 days ago. Are we going to turn our backs and abandon General Petraeus and his soldiers this early? Are we going to say ''no'' without an adequate opportunity for the new strategy to work?

In truth, no one can predict the impact of a failed Iraqi state on regional stability, the international economy, the global war on terror, American security, stability in the Middle East and the lives of the Iraqi people. Twenty days is simply not enough time.

I would also like to remind the Members that on page 23 of the Iraq Study Group it says quite clearly, ''We could support a short-term redeployment or surge of American combat forces to stabilize Baghdad,'' and that is what we are trying to do.

In my view, it is premature to vote ''yes'' on this resolution, only 20 days after confirming a new general to go to Iraq to provide additional security in Baghdad so that the Iraqi Government will have a reasonable opportunity to succeed

Mr. REYES. Madam Speaker, now it is my privilege to yield 5½ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ESHOO), a member of the Intelligence Committee.

Ms. ESHOO. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding to me, the distinguished chairman of the House Intelligence Committee.

Madam Speaker, it has been a long and painful 4-year journey for the people of our country since this administration acted preemptively and unilaterally to invade and occupy Iraq, policies which I believe then and I still believe today would not and could not stand because they simply are not in our national character.

We were told Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. None were found.

We were told there was yellow cake. It was a falsehood.

We were told that there were trailers containing the evidence of deadly chemicals.

We were told the mission was accomplished.

We endured national and international shame when the horrific pictures depicting Abu Ghraib appeared.

We learned that our troops were not sufficiently equipped.

We mourned with our constituents as the death toll of American troops mounted and continued to mount. Just think, 137 casualties in November of 2004, then the deadliest month overall. Today, over 3,000 precious U.S. lives have been lost, with thousands maimed and injured and God knows how many innocent Iraqi lives lost.

We witnessed the world community's total support on 9/11, and we have witnessed the diminishment of America's credibility around the world because of the Iraq war.

We have heard the President and the Vice President talk about victory and insurgency in its last throes.

We have learned of manipulated intelligence and endured a no-oversight Congress.

Preemptive war, unilateralism, invasion, occupation, no post-war plan, an insurgency born of our blunders, and arrogance instead of reality.

Meanwhile, military experts, Generals Abizaid, Odom, Powell, and distinguished civilian leaders have called for change, a new strategy, and the urgency of diplomatic and political engagement, all to no avail.

One of the central findings of the recent NIE, the National Intelligence Estimate, highlighted the lack of effective Iraqi leadership as a main component driving sectarian and communal violence.

The bipartisan Iraq Study Group, appointed by the President, reported the utter urgency of action by the administration.

Retired General William Odom, former director of the National Security Agency under President Reagan and member of the National Security Council under President Carter, wrote an op-ed in the Washington Post on February 11.

I would ask that it be made part of the RECORD

[From the Washington Post, Feb. 11, 2007]

VICTORY IS NOT AN OPTION

THE MISSION CAN'T BE ACCOMPLISHED—IT'S TIME FOR A NEW STRATEGY

(By William E. Odom)

The new National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq starkly delineates the gulf that separates President Bush's illusions from the realities of the war. Victory, as the president sees it, requires a stable liberal democracy in Iraq that is pro-American. The NIE describes a war that has no chance of producing that result. In this critical respect, the NIE, the consensus judgment of all the U.S. intelligence agencies, is a declaration of defeat.

Its gloomy implications—hedged, as intelligence agencies prefer, in rubbery language that cannot soften its impact—put the intelligence community and the American public on the same page. The public awakened to the reality of failure in Iraq last year and turned the Republicans out of control of Congress to wake it up. But a majority of its members are still asleep, or only half-awake to their new writ to end the war soon.

Perhaps this is not surprising. Americans do not warm to defeat or failure, and our politicians are famously reluctant to admit their own responsibility for anything resembling those un-American outcomes. So they beat around the bush, wringing hands and debating ''nonbinding resolutions'' that oppose the president's plan to increase the number of U.S. troops in Iraq.

For the moment, the collision of the public's clarity of mind, the president's relentless pursuit of defeat and Congress's anxiety has paralyzed us. We may be doomed to two more years of chasing the mirage of democracy in Iraq and possibly widening the war to Iran. But this is not inevitable. A Congress, or a president, prepared to quit the game of ''who gets the blame'' could begin to

alter American strategy in ways that will vastly improve the prospects of a more stable Middle East.

No task is more important to the well-being of the United States. We face great peril in that troubled region, and improving our prospects will be difficult. First of all, it will require, from Congress at least, public acknowledgment that the president's policy is based on illusions, not realities. There never has been any right way to invade and transform Iraq. Most Americans need no further convincing, but two truths ought to put the matter beyond question:

First, the assumption that the United States could create a liberal, constitutional democracy in Iraq defies just about everything known by professional students of the topic. Of the more than 40 democracies created since World War II, fewer than 10 can be considered truly ''constitutional''—meaning that their domestic order is protected by a broadly accepted rule of law, and has survived for at least a generation. None is a country with Arabic and Muslim political cultures. None has deep sectarian and ethnic fissures like those in Iraq.

Strangely, American political scientists whose business it is to know these things have been irresponsibly quiet. In the lead-up to the March 2003 invasion, neoconservative agitators shouted insults at anyone who dared to mention the many findings of academic research on how democracies evolve. They also ignored our own struggles over two centuries to create the democracy Americans enjoy today. Somehow Iraqis are now expected to create a constitutional order in a country with no conditions favoring it.

This is not to say that Arabs cannot become liberal democrats. When they immigrate to the United States, many do so quickly. But it is to say that Arab countries, as well as a large majority of all countries, find creating a stable constitutional democracy beyond their capacities.

Second, to expect any Iraqi leader who can hold his country together to be pro-American, or to share American goals, is to abandon common sense. It took the United States more than a century to get over its hostility toward British occupation. (In 1914, a majority of the public favored supporting Germany against Britain.) Every month of the U.S. occupation, polls have recorded Iraqis' rising animosity toward the United States. Even supporters of an American military presence say that it is acceptable temporarily and only to prevent either of the warring sides in Iraq from winning. Today the Iraqi government survives only because its senior members and their families live within the heavily guarded Green Zone, which houses the U.S. Embassy and military command.

As Congress awakens to these realities—and a few members have bravely pointed them out—will it act on them? Not necessarily. Too many lawmakers have fallen for the myths that are invoked to try to sell the president's new war aims. Let us consider the most pernicious of them.

(1) We must continue the war to prevent the terrible aftermath that will occur if our forces are withdrawn soon. Reflect on the double-think of this formulation. We are now fighting to prevent what our invasion made inevitable! Undoubtedly we will leave a mess—the mess we created, which has become worse each year we have remained. Lawmakers gravely proclaim their opposition to the war, but in the next breath express fear that quitting it will leave a blood bath, a civil war, a terrorist haven, a ''failed state,'' or some other horror. But this ''aftermath'' is already upon us; a prolonged U.S. occupation cannot prevent what already exists.

(2) We must continue the war to prevent Iran's influence from growing in Iraq. This is another absurd notion. One of the president's initial war aims, the creation of a democracy in Iraq, ensured increased Iranian influence, both in Iraq and the region. Electoral democracy, predictably, would put Shiite groups in power—groups supported by Iran since Saddam Hussein repressed them in 1991. Why are so many members of Congress swallowing the claim that prolonging the war is now supposed to prevent precisely what starting the war inexorably and predictably caused? Fear that Congress will confront this contradiction helps explain the administration and neocon drumbeat we now hear for expanding the war to Iran.

Here we see shades of the Nixon-Kissinger strategy in Vietnam: widen the war into Cambodia and Laos. Only this time, the adverse consequences would be far greater. Iran's ability to hurt U.S. forces in Iraq are not trivial. And the anti-American backlash in the region would be larger, and have more lasting consequences.

(3) We must prevent the emergence of a new haven for al-Qaeda in Iraq. But it was the U.S. invasion that opened Iraq's doors to al-Qaeda. The longer U.S. forces have remained there, the stronger al-Qaeda has become. Yet its strength within the Kurdish and Shiite areas is trivial. After a U.S. withdrawal, it will probably play a continuing role in helping the Sunni groups against the Shiites and the Kurds. Whether such foreign elements could remain or thrive in Iraq after the resolution of civil war is open to question. Meanwhile, continuing the war will not push al-Qaeda outside Iraq. On the contrary, the American presence is the glue that holds al-Qaeda there now.

(4) We must continue to fight in order to ''support the troops. ''This argument effectively paralyzes almost all members of Congress. Lawmakers proclaim in grave tones a litany of problems in Iraq sufficient to justify a rapid pullout. Then they reject that logical conclusion, insisting we cannot do so because we must support the troops. Has anybody asked the troops?

During their first tours, most may well have favored ''staying the course''—whatever that meant to them—but now in their second, third and fourth tours, many are changing their minds. We see evidence of that in the many news stories about unhappy troops being sent back to Iraq. Veterans groups are beginning to make public the case for bringing them home. Soldiers and officers in Iraq are speaking out critically to reporters on the ground.

But the strangest aspect of this rationale for continuing the war is the implication that the troops are somehow responsible for deciding to continue the president's course. That political and moral responsibility belongs to the president, not the troops. Did not President Harry S. Truman make it clear that ''the buck stops'' in the Oval Office? If the president keeps dodging it, where does it stop? With Congress?

Embracing the four myths gives Congress excuses not to exercise its power of the purse to end the war and open the way for a strategy that might actually bear fruit.

The first and most critical step is to recognize that fighting on now simply prolongs our losses and blocks the way to a new strategy. Getting out of Iraq is the pre-condition for creating new strategic options. Withdrawal will take away the conditions that allow our enemies in the region to enjoy our pain. It will awaken those European states reluctant to collaborate with us in Iraq and the region.

Second, we must recognize that the United States alone cannot stabilize the Middle East.

Third, we must acknowledge that most of our policies are actually destabilizing the region. Spreading democracy, using sticks to try to prevent nuclear proliferation, threatening ''regime change,'' using the hysterical rhetoric of the ''global war on terrorism''—all undermine the stability we so desperately need in the Middle East.

Fourth, we must redefine our purpose. It must be a stable region, not primarily a democratic Iraq. We must redirect our military operations so they enhance rather than undermine stability. We can write off the war as a ''tactical draw'' and make ''regional stability'' our measure of ''victory.'' That single step would dramatically realign the opposing forces in the region, where most states want stability. Even many in the angry mobs of young Arabs shouting profanities against the United States want predictable order, albeit on better social and economic terms than they now have.

Realigning our diplomacy and military capabilities to achieve order will hugely reduce the numbers of our enemies and gain us new and important allies. This cannot happen, however, until our forces are moving out of Iraq. Why should Iran negotiate to relieve our pain as long as we are increasing its influence in Iraq and beyond? Withdrawal will awaken most leaders in the region to their own need for U.S.-led diplomacy to stabilize their neighborhood.

If Bush truly wanted to rescue something of his historical legacy, he would seize the initiative to implement this kind of strategy. He would eventually be held up as a leader capable of reversing direction by turning an imminent, tragic defeat into strategic recovery.

If he stays on his present course, he will leave Congress the opportunity to earn the credit for such a turnaround. It is already too late to wait for some presidential candidate for 2008 to retrieve the situation. If Congress cannot act, it, too, will live in infamy.

He identified the shortcomings of the administration's Iraq policy and presented some of the clearest and most prescient thinking on the issue to date.

He places in stark relief what many of our colleagues refuse to accept, that the preemptive, unilateral course set by the President is not a strategy for success in Iraq.

He says: ''The first and most critical step is to recognize that fighting on now simply prolongs our losses and blocks the way to a new strategy. Getting out of Iraq is the precondition for creating new strategic options. Withdrawal will take away the conditions that allow our enemies in the region to enjoy our pain.

''Second,'' he says, ''we must recognize that the United States alone cannot stabilize the Middle East.

''Third, we must acknowledge that most of our policies are actually destabilizing the region. Spreading democracy, using sticks to try to prevent nuclear proliferation, threatening 'regime change,' using the hysterical rhetoric of the 'global war on terrorism' all undermine the stability we so desperately need in the Middle East.

''Fourth, we must redefine our purpose. It must be a stable region, not primarily a democratic Iraq. We must redirect our military operations so they enhance rather than undermine stability.''

So many experts, so many respected leaders, so many voices of patriots, and their critical analysis ignored.

Madam Speaker, in the preamble to our Constitution, three magnificent words lead the document: ''We, the people.'' The people of our Nation made the clearest and most important solemn judgment on Iraq in last November's election. They said, in overwhelming numbers, to change the direction of this war, to de-escalate, not escalate.

That is exactly what this debate is about. We pay tribute to and support our troops who honor our country with their service. We say, as the American people have said, enough is enough. I urge my colleagues to vote for this resolution.

□ 1830

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER).

Mr. HERGER. Madam Speaker, I hope we all can recognize the profound importance of our mission in Iraq. History surely will. The mission in Iraq will impact our national security for decades to come.

The United States seeks a region of stability and peace to create a more secure world for our children and grandchildren. Al Qaeda seeks a region of terror and bloodshed.

The President believes victory in Iraq is key to victory on the war on terror. Al Qaeda believes our defeat in Iraq is key to its vision of violent Islamic rule. Our security is clearly at risk.

Americans are frustrated by the current situation in Iraq. We have witnessed the removal of a historic dictator, yet our men and women in uniform remain at risk. We have witnessed historic democratic elections, yet those elected have not yet brought security. We have been told about the progress we have experienced in training Iraqi security forces, yet violence continues to rage.

With growing uneasiness, we have watched a back and forth tug of war between progress and setback, and we mourn the loss of every single brave American who has fallen during this mission.

Madam Speaker, I share this frustration and sorrow. Yet I believe we must not allow our frustrations to blind us to the need for victory over radical jihadists. This House must work together in addressing the challenges in Iraq, because the outcome will be closely linked to our own national security for years to come.

Regrettably, the resolution before us does nothing to enhance this security. It does not offer a solution to the challenges in Iraq. It does not recognize the magnitude of the failure. And it does not recognize the nature of our enemies. For these reasons I strongly oppose it.

Madam Speaker, we know terrorists friendly to bin Laden are among the enemy in Iraq. Even before the fall of Saddam's regime, the terrorist mastermind Zarqawi had sought refuge in Iraq. His network of terror grew rapidly. Bin Laden's top deputy applauded his actions and counseled him on achieving dominance in the region. Although Zarqawi himself can no longer do harm, al Qaeda in Iraq remains a threat to our security.

An American defeat in Iraq would embolden the terrorists like no event before, bolstering bin Laden's view that America is weak. Al Qaeda would enjoy more than just a morale boost; they would have a new operational base to plot attacks against Americans and train new recruits. An American defeat in Iraq would almost certainly bring forth a government that turns a blind eye towards terrorism. This, Madam Speaker, would be catastrophic to our national security.

An American defeat in Iraq would also generate unspeakable chaos in the Middle East. The dangerous regime in Iran is already seeking to capitalize on what it perceives as our weakness. Iran is well on its way to developing nuclear weapons, and its fanatical president has publicly said that he wishes to destroy America and Israel. Syria would also take advantage of a power vacuum in Iraq, further destabilizing the Middle East. What is good for hostile regimes like Iran and Syria can be devastating for America's security.

In closing, Iraq is a central front in the war on terrorism, and its future will greatly influence our future security. An American victory would foster stability in a volatile region and provide a resounding defeat for terror.

For these reasons, we must give the President's new plan in Iraq a chance to succeed. Our resolve must override our frustrations. Our support for the remarkable members of our Armed Forces must be unwavering. And our determination in fighting radical jihadists who want to kill us and our families must never run dry. Madam Speaker, that determination must never run dry

Mr. REYES. Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RUPPERSBERGER).

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. I thank you, Chairman REYES, of the Intelligence Committee.

Madam Speaker, this resolution before the House today is very clear: Congress and the American people support our troops who serve bravely in Iraq, and Congress disapproves of President Bush's decision to send an additional 20,000 troops to Iraq.

There is not a Member of this body who does not pray for our Nation's success in Iraq and in the global war on terror. Our brave servicemen and women have performed in Iraq with valor and honor. They have done everything that a grateful Nation has asked of them since the beginning of the war.

Whether you are for or against the war, we must support our troops. This resolution does that.

The only people sacrificing in this war are the troops and their families. Many military personnel have served two and three tours of duty. It has been difficult on their families here at home. More than 3,100 of our finest sons and daughters have given the ultimate sacrifice for their country. More than 25,000 troops have been wounded.

I do not believe we need new troops in Iraq. I believe we need a new strategy in Iraq. The current strategy is clearly not working.

We have increased the number of American troops in the past, and it has not done anything to calm the violence. In fact, in certain circumstances the violence has increased. Even General Abizaid, commander of U.S. forces in the Middle East has stated, ''More American forces prevent the Iraqis from doing more, from taking more responsibility for their own future.'' I completely agree with him.

I serve on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence; I have been to Iraq four times and have met with America's top generals, U.S. and Iraqi troops, and Iraqi elected officials. We must give the Iraqis more responsibility to take control of their own country. We must cut the apron strings and let the Iraqis patrol their own streets. American troops will guard the perimeter areas and back up the Iraqis in an emergency. I call this the Perimeter Plan.

Redeploying troops to perimeter areas, the Green Zone, and lowering the profile of American forces will break the dependency the Iraqi military has on U.S. forces.

The Iraqis will gain more confidence in their own ability to secure their own country, and we will begin bringing our men and women home.

It has been said by my friends on the other side of the aisle that the Democrats don't have a plan. That is not true. Other Members of our party have a plan and I have a plan. In fact, I shared the Perimeter Plan with the President and members of his Cabinet on two occasions at the White House. I also gave a copy of the Perimeter Plan to the Iraqi Study Group that reviewed it before issuing its recommendations that have been largely ignored by the President. This is not cut and run like some on the other side of the aisle would like you to believe. It is a way to force the Iraqis to take more control of their country, while also allowing the U.S. military to do what it does best.

We have some of the best operations forces, Marines and Rangers, and the best technology in the world. These forces can focus on backing up the Iraqi military.

As Thomas Payne insisted during the American Revolution: ''We need to let those who want independence test their will and try their soul.'' More American troops hinder the Iraqi democracy from testing its soul, and hurt the world in the global war on terror. More than $400 billion has been spent on this war by American taxpayers with little or no oversight by Congress. From the invasion of Iraq and the start of the

war, a Republican House and Republican Senate have given the President almost whatever he wanted both in money and strategic resources. The days of the blank check are over. The stakes are too high to allow this money and resources to be spent unchecked.

In the first 6 weeks of this new Congress, the Democrats have held 52 House and Senate hearings on Iraq. We are conducting oversight and holding the administration accountable.

Iraq was not a hotbed for terrorists before the war, but it is now. The country has become a magnet for those who want to harm Americans and Iraqis and disrupt a new democracy. Terrorists have used Iraq against us to recruit and spread their twisted ideology worldwide.

But the global war on terror is much more than Iraq. While we are spending much of our precious resources in Iraq, we are not focused on fighting terrorism worldwide. We are taking our eye off the ball. We must refocus our efforts on other parts of the Middle East, Asia, South America, Africa, and other parts of the world. Good intelligence is the best defense against terrorism. This takes resources. We must prioritize where we put our money. It is not about Republicans or Democrats. It is about all Americans and keeping this country safe for our children and our grandchildren.

Madam Speaker, this is a critical moment in the war in Iraq. More troops will not help Iraq. A new strategy will.

Democracy is rooted in independence and self-sustainment. By implementing the Perimeter Plan, we encourage the Iraqis to take control of their own country. This strategy will allow us to be successful in Iraq and win the war on terror. This is why we must vote for this resolution. I urge Members to support it

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. PORTER).

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, the Iraq war is the single greatest issue facing the American people today, and we must get the job done. Which is why I rise today in opposition to H. Con. Res. 63.

My prayers go out to Nevada's 26 families who have lost loved ones in this war and the other over-3,000 American citizens that have paid the ultimate sacrifice. I continue to pray for those who are in the war zone today around the world and for the families here at home.

Yes, a lot of mistakes have been made, but it is easy on Monday morning to look back and criticize. This war on terrorism is not in the textbooks. It is a war that must continually be reassessed, realigned, and restructured, because war is not perfect.

I want to bring the troops home just as soon as possible, as soon as the region is secured. There are no guarantees, but I believe the quickest way to bring our sons and daughters home is to send additional troops for a short period of time.

Madam Speaker, I oppose this resolution for three major reasons:

Number one, the impact on troops' morale.

Number two, there are no solutions today. This resolution sticks with staying the course.

And, number three, I believe this resolution puts us in the pathway of cutting off funds desperately needed for our troops.

First, on the morale: I have had the honor to be in the Middle East, in Southeast Asia, in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan on three occasions, I believe more times than anyone in our delegation from Nevada. I have looked in the eyes of these young men and women of all ages in the deserts of Iraq, in Bethesda, and in Walter Reed Army Hospital.

To a person, morale is at an all-time high. But what I do hear consistently from these folks is they are afraid that Washington has looked the other way. They don't want to be the last man killed, and they are afraid the funds are going to be reduced and cut off.

And, you know, I even disagree with Secretary Gates and his perspective, and certainly with the Democrats with their approach that this debate does not send the wrong message. I believe that you are wrong. It does.

I received this e-mail just this week from a soldier I spent Christmas Eve with in Baghdad this past Christmas. And he said, ''Congressman, every day we are burdened with stories in the media of the American people wanting to cut and run, with slanted coverage of atrocities and the argument that it is possible to support the troops but not the war. I disagree, Congressman. Someone that supports me by extension supports my efforts to accomplish my mission.''

Madam Speaker, I hope this Congress heeds his words.

Another young man from Nevada visited the Capitol last year, wanted a tour of the Capitol, is proud of his uniform, because he was a soldier serving in the Middle East. But he was afraid he would be scorned, not unlike our family and friends that were scorned when they returned from Vietnam.

Through this resolution we are going to continue to send the wrong message to those who humbly protect our Nation.

The second reason, there are no solutions in this resolution. My father taught me a long time ago that before you complain you need to have a solution to the problem.

□ 1845

The Democrats have not presented the American people with a solution, only a resolution that endorses stay the course, which, as we saw in November, is unacceptable to the American people. This is not about leadership. This is unacceptable. I am open for ideas and suggestions as we fight this war on terror, but we must, we must win this war.

The third reason, this resolution opens the door to cutting funds desperately needed by our troops. The Democrats have said it time and time again. They are talking about cutting funds for body armor, for food, for military equipment and supplies.

This resolution, and their assertion this resolution simultaneously offers support for soldiers but not the President's plan, is disingenuous. I am deeply concerned that this resolution merely opens the door for Congress to move forward cutting off funds for our troops. We have heard it this week, and simply had the Democrats allowed the Republicans to add one sentence that we would guarantee we would not reduce the funds, would have changed the whole outcome of this resolution.

Madam Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity, but this resolution is a resolution of hypocrisy. The American people spoke in November and said we must not stay the course. I cannot support this resolution, and I don't believe the American people do.

Mr. REYES. Madam Speaker, it is now my honor to yield 5 minutes to the gentlelady from California (Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD).

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Madam Speaker, I rise to support the resolution and to express my opposition to the President's plan to send additional troops to Iraq. While I rise as a Member of this House who opposed authorization of the Iraq war, I also rise as a member of the new Congressional majority, representing millions of Americans who voted for a new direction in Iraq, and I rise representing my own 34th congressional district of California, whose constituents overwhelmingly oppose this escalation.

Perhaps, most importantly, I rise as the proud stepmother of a U.S. Army serviceman who served in Iraq, and a proud wife of a marine who saw two tours of duty in Vietnam. While I will never personally experience war on the ground, I can speak from a wife and mother's perspective about what it means to have a loved one sent into harm's way.

Over 4 years ago, I spoke from that very perspective when I, with many of my colleagues, urged the President to exhaust all diplomatic efforts, give the U.N. weapons inspectors a chance to finish their job and, if necessary, establish a multilateral coalition force to confront Saddam before invading Iraq. These steps would have made it possible to say to my stepson and to all our Nation's sons and daughters, your country did everything in its power to keep you from harm's way.

Regrettably, the President did not do everything in his power to keep them from harm's way. We know now that decisions to invade Iraq were based on, at best, faulty intelligence, and, at worst, intelligence viewed to favor a

specific policy outcome. It is breathtaking now to consider how incomplete, simplistic, or just plain wrong our intelligence and projections were about the need to invade Iraq.

It is breathtaking to consider the cost to our Nation of this ill-conceived and mismanaged war in which billions of dollars have been spent without significant and appropriate oversight of the war effort, the occupation, or the plan for reconstruction and withdrawal from Iraq. Even more tragic is the huge price that has been paid in American and Iraqi lives and in our esteem around the world.

I share the commitment of my husband and stepson and that of all Americans to defend this Nation against all enemies. I believe, even as a peaceful Nation, we must be resolute in our determination to defend our country against hostile interests.

But the bar to war must be set high, and information on which we base our entry into war or escalate our involvement must be clear, compelling, and as unfiltered as possible. The President did not, in good faith, make the case to preemptively and unilaterally go to war in Iraq, and he has not made the case for this escalation. He has not explained to the American people why, after four failed escalations, this one will succeed. Even many of his generals and military advisors oppose this plan. To give approval to this administration, to continue its failed strategy, and put into jeopardy the lives of an additional 20,000 troops defies common sense.

Madam Speaker, we will all forever be grateful to the brave men and women in uniform who have done everything they have been asked to do valiantly and courageously.

Therefore, I continue to hope that the debate over this resolution will be absent the charges that we undermine their mission and their morale, for this is nonsense. There is not a Member in this body that does not respect and honor their service or support their efforts. Our message is to the Commander in Chief, not the brave troops who serve our Nation.

Four years ago, I asked myself whether we were doing everything in our power to keep our Nation's sons and daughters out of harm's way. Four years later, I stand here to oppose this escalation and ask that we begin the process of doing everything in our power to take our sons and daughters out of harm's way and bring them safely home

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5½ minutes to my colleague from New York (Mr. REYNOLDS).

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

Mr. REYNOLDS. I thank the gentlewoman from New Mexico.

Madam Speaker, we have heard many speeches this week talking about the honorable men and women of our Armed Forces. We all have constituents who have served bravely in Iraq and some have paid the ultimate price for this service, and we are forever grateful for that. We are grateful because these men and women put our freedoms and our country before themselves. It is this freedom that affords us the ability to undertake the debate on this shallow, shortsighted resolution.

If the purpose of this resolution is scoring political points and playing political games, then bravo to the Democratic majority, they have succeeded. But if the purpose of this resolution is for a new direction in Iraq that will secure victory and secure the second democracy in the Middle East, then this resolution comes up woefully short.

I am not prepared to look our soldiers and their families in their eyes and say I voted for this resolution, because while I support you, I do not support your mission.

We debate a resolution this week that represents a cavalier attitude about the mission our troops are carrying out, day in and day out, without fear, and without knowing whether some in the halls of this Congress still support them in this war on terror.

While we debate this resolution, let me be clear that, like my constituents, my patience is limited in Iraq. We must see more progress sooner rather than later. We must see the Iraqis play a larger role and take control of their country. The Iraqis need to recognize their failure to take control has consequences, the consequences of fulfilling bin Laden's wish to see Iraq become a new central base for terrorists, the consequences of destabilizing the Middle East and endangering Israel, our strongest democratic ally in the Middle East.

The consequence is of involving our enemies like Iran and other rogue states to develop weapons of mass destruction without the fear of repercussions. Ultimately in Iraq, it is Iraqis who will decide if democracy or tyranny rule the day, and whether they avoid the consequences of their failure.

But while my patience is limited, and I want to see progress, I will not play politics with our troops, which is what this resolution does.

Like Majority Leader HOYER said yesterday, no one should hide behind the troops. I agree, but equally important, Members of this body should not be hiding behind this resolution if their true aim is to cut off funding for our troops. Because while this resolution will indeed score a few political points for some debating in this Chamber today, this resolution also sends a message far beyond this Chamber.

Indeed, Madam Speaker, this nonbinding resolution, while lacking any bite in terms of strategy, and not changing anything on the ground in Baghdad, will send a message loud and clear to our troops: We are consigning your mission to failure before you even have a chance to execute it.

As I listened to SAM JOHNSON today, as he recounted the unspeakable damage antiwar efforts back home did to our soldiers in Vietnam, I wondered whether our brave men and women are listening to the taunts of America's enemies at this very moment as we debate not just this resolution but their mission. SAM JOHNSON is not alone in questioning the damage to the morale we may be doing to those fighting forces.

One of my constituents, a highly decorated Iraq war veteran, David Bellavia wrote, ''Each day . . . move(s) us closer to losing a winnable war and abandoning a worthy ally.''

Madam Speaker, for Congress to support this resolution gives encouragement to the jihadists and cuts the morale of our troops. In our global war on terror, we cannot show a lack of resolve because, as we know, after decades of attacks by these jihadists on our citizens, the World Trade Center in 1993, our embassies and the USS *Cole*, we know what a lack of resolve has meant. That lack of resolve hit us all when the jihadists attacked us again on the morning of September 11, 2001. That fateful Tuesday brought devastation to this country not seen since Pearl Harbor and, God willing, that we will never experience again.

The skies were thick with smoke, debris piled so high it brought to a standstill the city that never sleeps. Just days after the attacks, I stood at Ground Zero amidst the rubble, in anguish. I knew this was bigger than any political party, bigger than any one country. It is a global war on Islamic jihadism, and that war, as the jihadists have said, is now set in Iraq.

The question raised by this resolution is, will we yield? As Winston Churchill said, reflecting on the darkest days of the global war of his time, one that pitted the hopes of freedom against the ideology of hatred, ''Never give in—never, never, never, never, in nothing great or small, large or petty;

''Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy.''

Madam Speaker, in the daunting challenge of our time, we must not waver, and we must not yield.

Mr. REYES. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 6 minutes.

I rise to express my strong support for our Nation's military and for the resolution before the House today. I am a proud veteran. I know what it is like to say good-bye to loved ones and be gone for a year, or 13 months, as in my case when I served in Vietnam.

I voted against authorizing the use of force against Iraq because I did not believe that the evidence provided by the administration, particularly the intelligence data, were sufficient to justify putting our troops in harm's way. Combat should be the last option. I know; I have been there.

Over 3,000 American lives later, and tens of thousands suffering debilitating injuries, yet we are no closer to our

goal of a secure and stable Iraq, and the situation there continues to deteriorate.

Our military families are paying a high price. There were a couple of articles in today's paper that talked about our inability to find common ground.

Well, I disagree. I think we find common ground because we care about not just our troops, but their families, our military families.

Madam Speaker, I would like to submit for the RECORD an e-mail from Sergeant Matthew Baeza

Hello Sir, My name is SGT Matthew Baeza, currently I am deployed in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom '05–'07 with the C–84th ECB (H), out of Fort Richardson, AK. I am an El Paso native, and have not been too big in politics although I did my fair share of Democratic rallies with my father Luis Baeza when I was in high school. I have met you on several occasions through my father as well as when we met on the steps of the Senate when I was on a High School trip to DC in '99.

My concerns are brought forward wholehearted. They do not concern El Paso, but it does concern El Pasoans all over the country who serve in the military and who are deployed in the threatre of operations.

Many of us in the military believe in what we do and feel our mission here is warranted. The issues are not against our deployments but rather the length of our deployments.

You see, the ARMY is the only branch that will always deploy with a full 12 month rotation in deployments. Other branches have been cut to 6 months or even 3 months. I do realize there are certain elements in the other branches that serve a 12 month rotation like the ARMY.

The issue I have is that 12 months isn't that difficult to pull the first time. But into your second and third deployments (some soldiers serving 4 deployments back to back) it starts to break the backs of even the strongest of families. Children are seeking counseling as young as 3 or 4 years old due to the absence of their parents, and if a marriage survives, most end up seeking help from chaplains or marriage counselors. Is that how we want our Service Members and their families to live?

Out of a 5 year marriage, I will have been absent 3 years, and will only have known my son for 9 months, when I return days from his 3rd birthday. My marriage along with hundreds of other service members are quickly ending due to the amount of time absent from home.

I am not sure if surveys have been performed, but I can almost guarantee you the percentage of divorces have multiplied at an exponential rate. But yet talks of cutting down deployments have been in the works for year but no progress has been made.

The vast majority of Armed Services members are proud every day to put on our uniform and help others who cannot help themselves. But at what cost? At the cost of losing the ones we love. And at the end of it all we cannot place blame on our spouses, for they have been holding on longer than most could ever imagine.

Our spouses run multiple lives as my wife does. As a professional writer and reporter for the Anchorage Daily Newspaper, a mother, FRG (Family Readiness Group) Leader, and as a military spouse, my wife, she has a lot to deal with. Bills, care for our child, her work, and dealing with my calls home whether they be happy or sad. It is simply too much to ask from anyone.

My wife is as strong as they come, but with the last 3 years her patience has worn extremely thin. With us being away from home, many wives end up leaving their husbands searching for a better life, or long needed affection without a phone, or even to become their own person again. My wife told me something the other day that really hit me, ''No one knows who you are, they know Megan and Dominic, and the guy that keeps calling on the phone.''

That is who we have become to our families, just a voice on the phone. I am not asking to get out of this conflict. We are doing well here, plus if we leave, the friends I have lost here would have died in vain. I cannot have that on my conscience. We all realize the good we are accomplishing here, but we are losing our families over it.

We don't try to save the world, at least I don't, that is too much to ask of one person. But rather try for the ones closest to us. My son and my wife. But when they are gone, who is it for? Every day I am here I tell myself I do this for them, and others feel the same way.

I am not asking you to change the way things are, but rather voice your opinion and raise a flag for those of us that cannot. With your reputation you can influence others in helping us cut our deployments to shorter periods. We are not asking to leave Iraq or Afghanistan, but rather cut the time away from home. When you start stacking deployments on top of each other, families get broken, and when that happens, you get Service Members who cannot perform. Would could when your life is falling apart?

I hope you read this and understand where I am coming from, and realize I speak for a number of Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen, and Coast Guardsmen who have fallen into this horrible ordeal.

Thank you sir for your time.

MATTHEW BAEZA,
SGT, EN Supply Sergeant.

[From the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, Dec. 8, 2006]

A HERO, HOME AT LAST

(By Michelle Cuthrell)

After spending 24 hours a day for seven days a week for four weeks a month for 16 months of deployment learning how to wait, you'd think small increments of time like an hour and a half would just fly by.

But standing in that Alert Holding Area on Fort Wainwright Tuesday night, 90 minutes felt like an eternity.

I guess patience isn't exactly in large supply when you are anticipating the imminent return of your husband from Iraq.

Standing amid the other moms and dads and spouses and children who were also impatiently awaiting the arrival of loved ones, I found myself fidgety.

I picked up Connor and then put him back down every five minutes, and I must have readjusted the belt and buttons on my black and red welcome home dress at least 50 times.

Every moment felt like another extension and every minute felt like another deployment. I talked a million miles a minute, and I must have asked my friend at least 20 times if the soldiers had left Eielson Air Force Base yet to head to Fort Wainwright.

I detested the anticipation.

I had so many emotions built up inside from 16 months of missing my husband like crazy and was experiencing this physical longing stronger than anything else I'd ever known to just touch him, hug him and hold him.

Which is maybe why, when the Army band began to play and those three magic garage doors simultaneously began to open, I broke down into tears.

I cried as the nearly 200 soldiers disembarked the buses that transported them from Eielson as the crowd erupted in cheers and the families burst into applause. I wept as the soldiers made their formation on the far side of the room, and I sobbed as they marched across that hangar-like area to their place in front of us.

And when their commander released them to their families, I broke down.

Soldiers sprinted toward us, frantically searching for their families, and in the crowd, I just couldn't see my husband. He wasn't in the very front, he wasn't in the very back, he wasn't near his old commander, he wasn't near anyone else I knew.

I was starting to panic, when all of a sudden, two soldiers cleared my path of vision and for the first time, I spotted him. I literally lost my breath. My heart fluttered the way it did the first time I met my husband, and I felt just like that 18-year-old girl again as we made eye contact for the first time.

My heart dropped, and my husband beamed.

I've never run so fast with a child in my arms in my entire mommy life. I had tunnel vision as I trotted toward the man of my dreams and flung my one arm around his neck as he embraced the two of us with the biggest smile I've ever seen from a man in uniform.

He held us tight, told me through giant smiling teeth that he loved me and missed me, and then pulled away to look down at his son for the first time since he was 11 days old. And in an act that I'm positive must have been from God, Connor looked up at his daddy and smiled as if Matt had been a physical part of his life for all eight months.

I cried. Then I laughed. Then I smiled. Then I shed another tear.

We hugged, we kissed, we stared at the beautiful life we had created together.

And when it was all said and done and our run-leap-hug maneuver was complete, we walked out of that AHA, hand in hand, with our worlds once again connected and our love once again in tangible form.

There's no more counting down the days ''until they come home.''

My hero is home, and my life is once again complete.

I want to read the e-mail that I got from Sergeant Baeza, a soldier who is from El Paso, not assigned to El Paso, but is from El Paso:

''Hello, sir, my name is Sergeant Matthew Baeza. Currently I am deployed in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. I am an El Paso native, and I have not been too big on politics, although I did my fair share of Democratic rallies with my father, Luis Baeza, when I was in high school. I have met you on several occasions through my father, as well as when we met on the steps of the Senate when I was on a high school trip to D.C. in 1999.

''My concerns are brought forward wholehearted. They do not concern El Paso, but it does concern El Pasoens all over the country who serve in the military and who are deployed in the theatre of operations.

□ 1900

''Many of us in the military believe in what we do and feel our mission here is warranted. The issues are not against our deployments, but rather the length of our deployments. You see, the Army is the only branch that will always deploy with a full 12-month rotation in its deployments. Other

branches have been cut to 6 months or even 3 months. I do realize there are certain elements in other branches that serve a 12-month rotation like the Army. Nonetheless, the Army uses a 12-month rotation.

''The issue I have is that 12 months is not that difficult to pull the first time. But into your second and third deployments, some soldiers serving with me back to back four times, it starts to break the backs of even the strongest of families. Children are seeking counseling as young as 3- or 4-years-old due to the absence of their parents.

''And if a marriage survives, most end up seeking help from chaplains or marriage counselors. Is that how we want our servicemembers and their families to live? Out of a 5-year marriage, I will have been absent 3 years and will only have known my son for 9 months when I return in a few days for his third birthday.

''My marriage, along with hundreds of other servicemembers are quickly ending due to the amount of time absent from home. I am not sure if surveys have been performed, but I can almost guarantee you the percentage of divorces has multiplied at an exponential rate.

''But yet talks of cutting down deployments have been in the works for years, but no progress have we seen. The vast majority of armed services members are proud every day to put on our uniform and help others who cannot help themselves, but at what cost? At the cost of losing the ones we love, and at the end of it all we cannot place blame on our spouses. For they have been holding on longer than most could ever imagine. Our spouses run multiple lives, as my wife does. As a professional reporter for the local newspaper, a mother who is raising a family on her own, as a military spouse, as my wife, she has a lot to deal with. Bills, care for our child, her work, and dealing with my calls from home, whether they be happy or sad. It is simply too much to ask from any one person.

''My wife is as strong as they come, but with the last 3 years, her patience has worn extremely thin. With us being away from home, many wives end up leaving their husbands, searching for a better life, or long-needed affection without a phone, or even to become their own person again.

''My wife told me something the other day that really hit me.'' And he quotes his wife: '''No one knows who you are. They know Megan and they know Dominic, and the guy that keeps calling on the phone.' That is who we have become to our families, just a voice on the phone.

''I am not asking to get out of this conflict. We are doing well here. Plus the friends I have lost here would have died in vain. I cannot have that on my conscience. We are accomplishing here, but we are losing our families over it. We don't try to save the world, at least I don't. That is too much to ask of one person.

''But rather try for the ones closest to us, my son, and my wife, but when they are gone who is it for? Every day I am here I tell myself I do this for them. And others feel the same way. I am not asking you to change the way things are, but rather voice your opinion and raise the flag for those of us that cannot, with your reputation and your influence, in helping us cut our deployments to shorter periods.

''We are not asking to leave Iraq or Afghanistan, but rather to cut time away from home. When you start stacking deployments on top of each other, families get broken. When that happens you get servicemembers who cannot perform.

''At what cost when your life is falling apart?

''Signed, Sergeant Baeza.''

Madam Speaker, that is what we are doing to our military families. That is what this resolution is about. It is about having the Iraqis accept responsibility for their own country and for their own responsibility and taking care of themselves. That is why we are doing this

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, I yield 5½ minutes to my colleague from Texas (Mr. BRADY).

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Madam Speaker, watching television late last night I was reminded of the vivid contrast between Congress and the war on terror. On the one channel I watched Members of the House theatrically debating this nonbinding, that means pretend, resolution, while the other channel showed an American chopper hit by a rocket-propelled grenade and billowing black smoke, falling in the death spiral to the ground, killing all American soldiers aboard.

Tonight our soldiers face real bullets and real explosive devices; we debate a pretend resolution. I wish I could say this is merely a waste of time, but it is far more damaging than that. As Lincoln warned, a house divided itself cannot stand. Yet today our Congress stands divided for all the world to see. Our enemies are smiling and our soldiers are sick at heart.

Don't take my word for it. Let me read you an e-mail I received this week from a decorated Army soldier who served in the gulf war and again in Iraq on this war on terror.

He writes: ''The troops support the mission, support the President, and support the surge. We are moving the brigade out of here soon. I cannot be more adamant about the fact that partisan politics is hurting the mission and the morale. We want to win the war not the White House.''

I fear that some see that in the other order. The troops want to complete this mission. Congress wanted a change in the strategy, they got a change, now they don't want to support the change. That is exactly why Vietnam vets complained about politicians not allowing them to win. And this is not Vietnam all over again, but the politicians are making the same mistakes they did back then.

Let the generals run the war; you guys handle immigration. Well, listening to this debate, perhaps we should just turn the running of the war over to Congress. Unbeknownst to America, apparently the most brilliant, articulate military strategists have to be here in Congress. But a word of caution to my fellow MacArthurs and Pattons. It is easy to run a war when you are 6,000 miles from Baghdad and hold a microphone for a gun.

There can be only one Commander in Chief. The moment Congress begins interfering in battlefield decisions is the moment we are assured of losing this war and that moment is dangerously near.

I support this surge. If our military leaders and the Commander in Chief need these extra soldiers, I am behind them 110 percent. Am I certain the surge will work? No. But I am certain the consequences of failing in Iraq will ultimately cost us many more innocent lives and a much darker future, not just for Iraq but for my family and yours.

In Iraq and Afghanistan we are in a battle of wills. Should America retreat, should we withdraw prematurely, we will not only cement our reputation as a Nation that talks big and acts boldly, but at the first sign of difficulty shows no will, no backbone, no strength to keep our word.

The world saw our lack of will in Vietnam, they watched us run from Somalia, and today they see our backbone disintegrate over Iraq. They watched us for a quarter of a century, we wished away the terrorist attacks in Khobar, the USS *Cole*, and the first World Trade Center bombing.

Finally it hit home and already some in Congress are flying the white flag. Think. Nations like Iraq and Afghanistan who oppose terrorism are faced with a choice. They can live with terrorists among them or live in a free society with the protection and the backing of the world's greatest democracy. That is us. With their lives and the future on the line who will they choose? Is it not sad that today the world has just about decided that America will not keep its word, America cannot be counted on?

Terrorists know that while they can never hope to defeat our military on the battleground, they are assured if they just hold out, they can defeat us in Congress one opinion poll at a time. This is a test of wills, and whether we got here for the reason you agree with or not, it is a test. I believe we are here for the right reasons, and it is incredibly naive to believe that all of the terrorist organizations in the world were conveniently gathered in Afghanistan, like a Rotary Club.

We are wrong to pursue terrorist safe havens other than those that harbored al Qaeda on the some wobbly theory we should not pursue drug cartels other than the ones we believe smuggled in the drug that destroyed your child.

Due to technology and financing, terrorists are not limited to states and regions, and we have to pursue them. But whether or not you agree with how we got here, we are there in Iraq. And the nation of Iraq and our Nation have everything riding on the line. Eliminating Iraq as a safe haven for financing, training terrorist groups in the Middle East is a mission we must complete for our sake.

Thomas Edison once observed many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up. If we fail in Iraq, we sentence our children to a lifetime of fear, of fear of going to the mall safely, going to work each morning and returning home safely, the fear of going with friends to a sports stadium without being torn apart in an explosion.

If we believe the price of war is high, wait until we endure the price of terror here in America. Our soldiers are giving their blood, what are we giving them? A resolution.

Mr. SPRATT. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RODRIGUEZ).

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this bipartisan resolution that expresses disapproval of the President's escalation of troops in Iraq. In October of 2002, I stood on this floor in this House and voted against giving the President authority to wage war in Iraq. And I did so because I strongly believed that Congress should not abdicate its war powers and hand over to the President a blank check on the war.

I also recognized, having served on the Armed Services Committee and on the Terrorist Task Force prior to 9/11, that the evidence was not there. I may not agree with how this war has been handled, but I, along with everyone here and all of my colleagues on both sides, firmly stand by our troops. It is our servicemen and -women who are making a great sacrifice on the battlefield on behalf of all of us here in this Chamber and everyone across the United States.

And they, the troops, all deserve our unequivocal support. This war is creating a new generation of veterans and a new generation of needs for them. Today, over 25,000 both dead and wounded have been reported, while this body continues to appropriate billions of dollars to the administration for this war.

Let us remember our veterans and the cost to fulfill the promise that we have made to them for medical care. Today, the issue is not whether we were right or wrong to grant the President such broad authority in regards to this war in Iraq, but instead how he has exercised that power, what the results have been, and what his plans are for the future.

We have now entered the fifth year of this war. And I ask you, what progress have we made? What is our exit strategy? It is not a new question. It was a question that was raised from the very beginning when we went into this war, and when we raised it in the Armed Services Committee. This war and the reckless strategy behind it have cost us Americans some $532 billion, and over 3,100 American lives, as well as over 3,000 serious injuries.

It has resulted in increased sectarian violence and an uncertain future in Iraq. Madam Speaker, I think most of us here know that we need a new direction, and a new direction is justified. I can assure you that the American people want a new direction.

But what the President has offered to them is more of the same. The President is now asking for a massive escalation of over 20,000 troops. The escalation plan will not work, just like the previous troop surges that we have had have not worked. Madam Speaker, the American people have asked and have had enough. And with an up-and-down vote on this resolution, this Congress will not only send a message to the President regarding his misguided policy, but also send a message to the American people that their Congress is listening, it is here, and it is calling for a new direction.

I oppose this escalation plan because more troops in combat means more casualties and more loss of American lives. I have been to Walter Reed Medical Center, and I have seen our injured young men and women coming back from the battlefield. I have seen the sacrifice of what this war has done to our families and our loved ones.

Earlier this week, my office was visited by Mr. Jim Goodnow. He is a veteran from my district and an active member of the Veterans for Peace. Mr. Goodnow has traveled all over the country from his home base in Terlinqua, Texas, aboard his bus dubbed the Yellow Rose. He has been spreading the message of peace for many years.

Mr. Goodnow is not alone. And with this resolution we want to make it clear that this Congress and America and the American people have had enough. No more blank checks, no more violence, and no more escalation.

□ 1915

Madam Speaker, it is time that we stand by our country and stand up for our troops. I strongly urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan resolution.

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to my colleague from Texas (Mr. MCCAUL).

Mr. MCCAUL of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of our troops and in support of victory in Iraq.

It is hard to ignore the inconvenient truth that this ill-timed measure will aid the terrorists and depress the morale of our soldiers who are fighting to defeat them. It also sends a wrong message to our troops at exactly the wrong time. They are carrying out their mission, as I speak, while we here in the Congress are condemning them.

It amazes me that at the same time General Petraeus was confirmed by the Senate, this resolution was introduced condemning his counterinsurgency plan for victory.

Never in our history has this country sent a war leader into battle, while condemning the very mission that he and the Armed Forces will be leading.

Make no mistake, this resolution is the first step towards cutting off funding for our troops. As a consultant to the Iraq Study Group, I supported the findings that failure is not an option, and that a troop surge is necessary for security and stability. I also supported the recommendation that a political and diplomatic surge is essential for peace.

The time for evaluating the success or failure of this endeavor will come soon enough, but now is not the time to be sending a message to friend and foe alike that we no longer believe in the mission.

But many in this country and many in this Chamber insist it is in America's interest to surrender and retreat from our obligation to help Iraq build a stable democracy. They say that, knowing full well the consequences of an early American withdrawal.

And what are those consequences? Chaos, instability in the region, and, in al Qaeda's own words, a threat that America has never seen before.

Recently, the ambassadors from Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia told me that ''if the U.S. fails here, it will be catastrophic. We are in this together. They will come after us and then they will come after you.'' And then they will come after you.

Recently, after meeting with them, I had to say to myself, how will history then judge us; that when we stood at the brink, we chose retreat over advancement, surrender over victory, and defeatism for our children and for future generations?

Let us remember the words of President Kennedy, when he said: ''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, to assure the survival and success of liberty.''

Where is the party of President Kennedy today? This resolution sends a clear message across the Islamic jihad world that we will not bear any burden, that we will not oppose any foe, that we have lost our will, that they have won, and that they can come and they can get us.

I believe Abraham Lincoln summed it up best by saying that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion, that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain.

As Members of Congress, the most sobering job that we have is to comfort the families left behind in a time of

great loss and a time of war. I have stood by, like many of my colleagues, to honor those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice for freedom. We all stand here today indebted to those brave Americans and their families.

And because those heroes and those families cannot speak on the floor of the House, I would like to share some of their words here with you today. And these are the words of Janet Norwood, a constituent, a Gold Star Mother, whose son, Byron, was killed in Fallujah while serving in Iraq. And she said: In the past I have always had great hope for this country. But, for the first time, during the State of the Union address last month, I had real doubts. I had doubts about our winning this war on terrorism. She said, When President Bush used the word ''victory,'' only half of the room stood to applaud. My heart sank. It was obvious to me at that moment that party affiliation was more important to some than victory over evil and the sacrifice our son and other sons have made.

Well, to Janet and all the other Gold Star Mothers, I say, I couldn't agree more. And as Abraham Lincoln said, a house divided cannot stand.

September 11 changed our lives forever. But the war on terror started long before that. The year 1979 changed the world. When Iran took our embassy hostage, the seeds of Islamic jihad were spread all over the Middle East.

These seeds planted hatred and contempt for freedom in the souls of men like Osama bin Laden. In 1983, they murdered our marines in Beirut. In 1993, Ramzi Yousef and his al Qaeda associates bombed the World Trade Center. They were supposed to fall that day, but that day would come later.

They struck the Khobar Towers in 1996. They bombed our embassies in Africa. They defeated us in Somalia. And they deliberately attacked the USS *Cole*.

Each time we failed to respond. And then came September 11. It was as if the United States was a sleeping giant. And not until the bloodiest alarm of 9/11 did the giant finally awake. And America cannot afford to go back to sleep again.

''It is hard to ignore the inconvenient truth that this ill-timed measure will aid the terrorists and depress the morale of our soldiers who are fighting to defeat them.'' It also sends the wrong message to our troops at the wrong time. They are carrying out their mission as I speak, while we here in Congress are condemning it.

The time for evaluating the success or failure of this endeavor will come soon enough, but now is not the time to be sending a message to friend and foe alike that we no longer believe in this mission.

It amazes me that just as General Petraeus was confirmed by the Senate, this resolution was introduced condemning his counter-insurgency plan for victory.

''Never in our history has this country sent a war leader into battle while condemning the mission that he and the armed forces he will be leading have been asked to complete.''

Make no mistake; this resolution is the first step towards cutting off funding for our troops. As a consultant to the Iraq Study Group, I supported the findings that a troop surge is necessary for security and stability. I also supported the recommendation that a political and diplomatic surge is essential for victory.

But many in this country, and many in this chamber, insist it is in America's interest to surrender and retreat from our obligation to help Iraq build a stable democracy. They say that, knowing full well the consequences of an early American withdrawal.

And what are those consequences—

Chaos. Instability in the region. A threat that America has never seen before. A threat that we will not be able to blindly put our head in the sand and wish it to go away.

Al Qaeda has openly said that they consider Iraq the central front in the ''Third World War.'' Their goal is to create a Caliphate with Baghdad as its capital. Their plan is to then conquer the rest of the world and force all humanity to submit to Radical Islam.

The National Intelligence Estimate released last month stated, ''If Coalition forces were withdrawn rapidly . . . this almost certainly would lead to a significant increase in the scale and scope of sectarian conflict in Iraq.''

Our allies agree. The Ambassadors from Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia recently told me, ''If the U.S. fails it will be catastrophic. We are in this together . . . they will come after us and then they will come after you.''

How will history judge us then? That when we stood at the brink we chose retreat over advancement, surrender over victory, and defeatism for our children and for future generations.

Let us remember the words of President Kennedy when he said:

> 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 to assure the survival and the success of liberty.''

Where is the party of President Kennedy today? This resolution sends a clear message across the Islamic Jihad world—that we will not bear any burden—that we will not oppose any foe—that we have lost our will—that they have won—that they can come and get us.

We are better than that.

We are Americans—the same Americans who defeated the most powerful country in the world at the time to win our independence.

We are the same Americans who defeated Fascists in Japan, Germany and Italy.

We are the same Americans who defeated the scourge of the Soviet Union, liberating millions more.

Now we face yet another challenge—defeating the jihadists and an ideology of hate. But our colleagues on the other side of the aisle say ''We will support the War on Terror, except where the terrorists have chosen to fight it.''

Our previous struggles were not easy, they were hard and required great sacrifice. Yet all of these challenges were met, and victory was won, and the world is a better place because of it. This struggle is the same. If we give up now, we betray not just the Iraqi people, and not just our place in history, but those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice.

I believe Abraham Lincoln summed it up best by saying:

> . . . that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain . . .

As Members of Congress, the most sobering job we have is to comfort the families left behind in a time of great loss, in a time of war. I have stood by, like many of my colleagues, to honor those who have paid the ultimate price for freedom. We all stand here today indebted to those brave Americans and their families. They are true heroes.

Because those heroes and their families cannot speak on the Floor of the House, I would like to share some of their words today. These are the words of Janet Norwood, a constituent and Gold Star Mother, whose son Byron was killed serving in Iraq. She said:

> In the past, I have always had great hope for this country, but for the first time, during the State of the Union Address last month, I had real doubts about our winning this War on Terrorism. When President Bush used the word ''victory'' and only half of the room stood to applaud, my heart sank. It was obvious to me at that moment that party affiliation was more important to some than victory over evil and the sacrifice our son and others have made.

To Janet and all of the other Gold Star Mothers, I say, ''I couldn't agree more.'' As President Lincoln once said, ''A House Divided Cannot Stand.''

Mr. SPRATT. Madam Speaker, I yield five minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. TIERNEY).

Mr. TIERNEY. Madam Speaker, in just a few weeks, America will begin its fifth year in the Iraq conflict. In that time, 3,117 members of the United States military have died, and over 23,000 American soldiers have been injured. $532 billion has been appropriated by Congress or requested by the administration.

You only need to talk or read letters from many of the returning military personnel or their families to understand that the mission in Iraq is unclear and the goals remain undefined. Our men and women are not certain if they are fighting Sunnis or Shiites, and often it depends on where they are in order to determine the answer to that dilemma. In essence, our military personnel are in the midst of a civil war, the flames of which were fanned by centuries-old animosities.

This week Congress has been addressing a resolution that reiterates its support for the troops and states clearly its opposition to escalation.

The first point could easily go unspoken. After all, we are exercising the very freedom of speech and debate that our Constitution requires, the public demands, and our men and women in uniform serve to protect.

The second point of the resolution speaks to the clear determination, as evidenced on November 7, 2006, that America does not support the President's planned escalation of this conflict.

Three previous troop buildups have already proven unsuccessful. In the first, from November 2004 to January 2005, troop levels in Iraq increased by about 18,000 troops. They did that in advance of the Iraqi elections held on January of 2005, and the number of daily attacks by insurgents rose to 61 from 52 the previous month, an increase of 17 percent.

On the second troop buildup, from June 2005 to October 2005, troop levels increased by approximately 21,500, and the number of daily attacks by insurgents in October of 2005 rose to 90, from 70 just 2 months earlier, an increase of 29 percent.

And the third troop buildup occurred from May 2006 to November 1 of 2006 when U.S. troop levels in Iraq increased by approximately 17,500 troops, and the number of daily attacks by insurgents in October of 2006 rose to 180, from 100 just 4 months earlier, an increase this time of 80 percent.

Now the President says he want to change course, but once again he proposes to only stay the course as he seeks to send in more personnel, and we still wait for the Iraqi forces to stand up.

Madam Speaker, 132 of my colleagues and I exercised the correct judgment in October of 2002 when we voted against the war in Iraq. We recognized then that this administration's claims that Saddam Hussein posed an imminent and direct threat to the United States were hyped up and many rightly foresaw that an American occupation of Iraq would, as one colleague recently said, be of undetermined length, of undetermined cost and undetermined consequences.

Tragically, this administration was not deterred. It has been flat wrong on pretty much all of its pre-war and subsequent judgments with respect to Iraq, with its questionable use of intelligence, its failure to plan, and its failure for far too long to protect our troops once they were there.

We knew then what has become painfully obvious since, that rather than open a new front and destabilize a new area in Iraq, we should have secured Afghanistan and addressed terrorism at its source as it was embodied by Osama bin Laden and others. The proposed escalation is not the answer.

Why, after such a debacle and such a dismal record, would this administration even think to follow the advice of the same people that got us into this situation in the first place?

The proposed surge or escalation is as baseless as was going into Iraq in the first place.

The latest National Intelligence Estimate, even that part that is unclassified, which I would imagine or speculate certainly puts the administration's best foot forward, states that even if violence is diminished, Iraq's absence of unifying leaders makes a political reconciliation doubtful.

Not enough capable Iraqi troops are showing up to fight. Not enough armed vehicles are available to protect the new American deployments. The State Department cannot recruit enough civil officials to manage the latest push to turn up the electricity in Iraq or to help with reconstruction.

And so Congress must, and I think they are going to this week, pass a resolution that reiterates our support to our troops and opposes the escalation. That action, I sincerely hope, will be followed by action which will prohibit the use of Federal funds to increase the number of troops above the number existing in Iraq on January 9, 2007.

The large majority of Americans are waiting for action by this Congress to insist that we begin redeploying our troops from Iraq and complete that redeployment as quickly as possible in a measure done in months, not years.

In essence, this week's action should be the beginning of a relatively short process, culminating in the redeployment of American troops from Iraq, and energizing diplomatic efforts and international efforts to stabilize that nation and ensure its security, while it provides for a platform to redirect the necessary attention to the unfinished business of Afghanistan and focus, Madam Speaker, our efforts on terrorism, both short term and long term.

I urge my colleagues, Madam Speaker, to support this resolution and take what I expect will be the first step in charting a new course in Iraq.

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to my colleague from California (Mr. MCCARTHY).

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlelady for yielding and for her service to the country.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in a different position than the majority of this body. You see, I am one of the 54 newly elected Members of this Congress. We did not have the opportunity to debate and vote on the authority to use military force in Iraq.

Madam Speaker, I want to have an honest debate, not for political gain and not one that questions anyone's patriotism, because I believe everyone in this body wants to move this country in the right direction.

But I believe the right direction means that we move forward, not backwards. On this floor today is a nonbinding resolution that I believe moves us backwards. This resolution offers no hope to the American people. It offers no plan of action, no new strategy with the prospect of achieving success.

A lot has changed since last November's election. We have a new Defense Secretary, recommendation from the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, and a new general, General David Petraeus. He will lead our troops on the ground in Iraq.

We have a new plan, a new way forward that addresses the problem of security in Iraq through a strategy that requires more ground power. This reinforcement of troops is recommended by the study group, and we will also hold the Iraqi Government accountable to establish and preserve the peace.

Our Commander in Chief, the military commanders, and our troops believe we can still achieve stability in Iraq.

But this resolution would be the first step in gutting the very resources necessary to achieve success. This resolution offers nothing.

The Commander in Chief, the bipartisan study group, and General Petraeus offer a new way forward. This resolution offers the status quo. The status quo is a mandate to fail and begins the chain of events that lead to a precipitous withdrawal from Iraq and all the consequences that would inevitably follow.

And what would those consequences be?

Withdrawal makes the young Iraqi democracy vulnerable to takeover by extremist elements that hate America.

What would withdrawal mean for the stability in the Middle East?

What would generations of Iraqis believe, that Americans will quit before the job is done?

Who will fill the void of our strength, al Qaeda, Syria, or a country like Iran that threatens regional stability through an aggressive nuclear program, that supports terrorist groups like Hezbollah, and that possibly supplies weapons to insurgents killing our troops?

Withdrawal only strengthens terrorist groups fighting the United States and demoralizes our American troops.

I may be new to this House, but I recognize when a simple, nonbinding resolution has potential to do great damage to our Nation and to our men and women in the military.

I believe that, by voting for this resolution, the House will send a demoralizing message to our service men and women who are courageously implementing this strategy. By voting for this resolution, the House will strengthen our enemies and tell them that the end is near; that the Congress will continue to undermine our Commander in Chief, our military commanders, like General Petraeus and our troops, by cutting funding or demanding further retreats.

□ 1930

By voting for this resolution, the House will snuff out the hope of democracy that millions of Iraqi people have. By voting for this resolution, the House will begin a process that leads to the creation of a dangerous power vacuum in Iraq to be potentially filled by those who mean America great harm.

I ask the Members to join with me in voting ''no'' on this resolution.

Mr. SPRATT. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL).

(Mr. UDALL of New Mexico asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of this important resolution and with great hope that this debate and vote will signal an important step towards the end of the Iraq war, a war so ill-conceived, so ill-planned for, and so ill-executed that it has cost our Nation almost $400 billion, ignited a civil war, and further destabilized an already fragile Mideast region. Most importantly, this war has

resulted in the deaths of over 3,000 of our bravest military men and women. These men and women enlist in the Armed Forces trusting that their Commander in Chief will send them into harm's way only as a last resort and only with a clear plan for victory.

Madam Speaker, on both of these counts, the President has failed our soldiers.

It is time for us to redeploy our troops and redeploy them now. We have an opportunity to send a loud and resolute message to the President that his misguided judgment must cease, this war must now be subject to intense scrutiny and accountability by this Congress; and that he must heed the will of the American people, the overwhelming majority of whom now strongly disapprove of his handling of this war. Sadly, however, this President is tone-deaf when it comes to the most pressing issue of the day.

For the past 4 years, the President repeatedly stated that troop strength in Iraq would come from recommendations by generals on the ground. Yet by moving forward with his escalation plan, the President is ignoring solid military advice. General Abizaid, CENTCOM commander, stated: ''I do not believe that more American troops right now is the solution to the problem. I believe that the troop levels need to stay where they are.'' Additionally, according to various reports, General Casey repeated to the NSA Director his warnings that to send more troops to Iraq would be counterproductive. He believed it might make the Iraqi Government less likely to defend itself.

That concern was shared by the Iraq Study Group. In one of their recommendations they stated that the Iraqi Government must make substantial progress on national reconciliation, security, and governance. Without progress, we should reduce our political, military, and economic support for the Iraqi Government.

Tragically, the Iraqi Government has shown no progress on any of these fronts. We must not be a security blanket for an ineffectual government. But the President's escalation plan is exactly that, asking little of Iraq's Government while putting the lives of our soldiers squarely in the crosshairs of Sunni extremists and Shiite militias.

Many in the military leadership have stated that the solution to the Iraqi quagmire at this point must be 80 percent political and 20 percent military. This escalation plan is 100 percent military with no significant political breakthroughs either having been reached or even on the horizon. Rather than implement a rigorous diplomatic strategy, the administration has instead begun escalating the rhetoric with Iran, causing many people throughout the Nation and the world to fear another misguided military action.

Our soldiers have done everything that has been asked of them, and more. They have served bravely and honorably. They have trained Iraqi forces to the best of their abilities. But they cannot be asked to calm the sectarian violence ripping Iraq apart without leadership from Iraqi politicians. Yet the President is asking exactly that.

Last year, after visiting Iraq, I called for a phased redeployment by the end of 2006. That time has come and gone. Today I call on the President to finally listen to the American people. Today I call on the President to finally listen to the Congress. It is time to move our troops out of the middle of this civil war.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution and send a clear message to the President that the time for this war is over

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to my colleague from Florida (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART).

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, whether you are for or against the war in Iraq, whether you think the administration has done a good job or not, none of that, Madam Speaker, is the subject of this resolution. The issue that we are here debating now is whether or not we support the reinforcements that the Commander in Chief has sent to Iraq.

At the request of the commanders on the field, the Commander in Chief made the decision to send the requested reinforcements to Iraq. Many of them are already there, Madam Speaker. Those fine men and women have already been sent to Iraq.

The tragic effect of this resolution is to sabotage the morale of our troops and to broadcast to our enemies that Congress does not support our soldiers' mission.

Our Nation's troops are the bravest and most dedicated men and women on this Earth. They are risking their lives every single day to preserve our freedom and to ensure the safety of all Americans. They are not letting us down. We cannot let them down.

Again, Madam Speaker, the issue here is not whether you support or you oppose the war. It is whether you support our troops.

Every American, Madam Speaker, every American should agree that it is in our Nation's best interest to ensure that Iraq does not fall into the hands of terrorist groups or of a terrorist state like Iran. The consequences of that happening, the consequences of that happening, would be catastrophic for the region, for our allies in the area such as Israel, Afghanistan, Jordan, Egypt, and others, and for the United States of America. We cannot pretend, we cannot pretend, that this ill-timed resolution expresses anything other than a rejection of our troops' mission.

Our troops deserve much better than this. What our troops deserve, Madam Speaker, is our unwavering support. I refuse to let them down, and that is why I will be voting against this resolution.

Mr. SPRATT. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER).

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I rise in support of this resolution.

Let me just say, as Chair of the Veterans' Affairs Committee of this House of Representatives, no matter where we stand on this war, no matter where we vote on this resolution, we are going to make sure that the brave young men and women who come home get all the care and all the support they need from a grateful Nation. We will show what support of the troops means when they do come home.

Now, those who voted for the war back in 2002 are sometimes asked, Knowing then what you know now, how would you have voted?

Well, Madam Speaker, we knew then what we know now, and we know now what you are going to know a year or two from now.

Let me read to you what I said 4½ years ago when we had the debate on Iraq: ''I rise in opposition to this resolution to grant unilateral authority to the President. I cannot believe that the Members of this body are ceding our constitutional authority to this President. And they can give me all the fancy whereases and phrases and put all the fig leafs and write all the report language they want, but this is a blank check. This is a Gulf of Tonkin resolution. This is a violation not only of our Constitution but will lead to a violation of the U.N. charter.

''Wake up, my colleagues. Why would anyone vote to do that? That is not our constitutional responsibility. And when we vote on this resolution, will America be safer? No, I think America will be less safe. We will dilute the war against terrorism. The destabilization of the area will lead to the increased probability of terrorists getting nuclear weapons. Al Qaeda is probably cheering the passage of this resolution. Now is their chance to get more weapons.'' I said that then.

Then we talked about the imminent threat. You guys threw the imminent threat at us. What a lie. And what are you saying now? We are emboldening our enemies and demoralizing our troops. I heard the word ''sabotage.'' I heard the word ''retreat.''

I will tell you what demoralizes our troops, my colleagues. What demoralizes our troops will be the failure to provide adequate health care when they get home. What demoralizes our troops is the story of just a couple weeks ago when a young marine went to a VA hospital in Minnesota suffering from PTSD, and they said, You have got to go on a waiting list. And this young man committed suicide. That is what demoralizes our troops. That is what we have to prevent here, and that is what we are working on to do.

I said back in 2002: ''I have heard all my colleagues on the other side calling us appeasers, those who are going to vote against this resolution. We are

wishful thinkers. We have our eyes closed. We sit on our hands.'' And, of course, now we want to cut and run.

Well, I tell you, Madam Speaker, no one on this side is suggesting cutting and running. Making peace is hard work. Just ask Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Ask Gandhi. Ask Nelson Mandela. They didn't cut and run. They were peacemakers. And they changed the history of this world.

So let us not hear talk of retreat and sabotage and surrender. We want action for peace. We want it now, and we want the United States to be part of that action.

I said also in 2002, Madam Speaker: ''There is a whiff of Vietnam in the air. I had a constituent call me and say, 'You know, if you enjoyed Vietnam, you are really going to love Iraq.' The mail is running 10–1 against this war. Protests have already begun around the Nation and around the world.''

I said to the President then that ''you came to the office as a uniter, not a divider. Yet we have gone down the road to division in this Nation. You can see it. You can smell it. You can hear it. And we are going to get more.

''So let us not go further down that road, Mr. President. Rethink this policy. A country divided over war is not a country that is going to make any progress. Let us have a rethinking of this war.''

That is what I said in 2002. You guys didn't want to listen to us then. The President didn't want to listen to us then. You really should listen to us now and listen to the people of America who voted in 2006 to change this policy.

Let us respond to the American people. Let us vote against escalation. Let us begin to bring the troops home. Vote ''yes'' on this resolution.

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to my colleague from Pennsylvania (Mr. TIM MURPHY).

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I want the American men and women serving in Iraq to come home. I want this war to end. I want the violence to stop, the injuries to stop, the deaths to stop, and I also want terrorism to stop.

Over the last few weeks, many of my constituents told me these same feelings, their strong feelings in support of or against this resolution.

I hear your concerns. No one can doubt your love of your country. Like you, I am deeply concerned about the direction of this war. Like you, armed with the knowledge of the present, the strategies of the past were too often incomplete. The intelligence was misinterpreted or inadequate.

The comments made here today on this resolution will be listened to by Iraqis and al Qaeda and the soldiers in the field right now, the marines on the high seas headed that way, and the thousands who already are on the offensive. Here is my message to them: Arab countries have told us that if we left now the results would be catastrophic. I want those Arab countries to impress upon the Sunnis and the Shias the absolute need to work for peace now. I want the United States to actively engage in diplomatic efforts with all Arab nations. There is no more time for delay. I want the Iraqi military to step up and take over combat operations, to be the tip of the spear, and for our troops to shift our mission to training and support. I want to see the Iraqi Government stand strong where every group feels respected and protected and all feel they have a future of hope.

□ 1945

There is no time for delay.

I also want Republicans and Democrats to sit down together and discuss how to make these things come to fruition. I want us to review the recommendations of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, to talk about which recommendations are worthy of implementation. I want us to thoughtfully, carefully and responsibly discuss not only what action we should take in Iraq, but to weigh the full consequences of any action and to offer real ideas, real strategies and real solutions.

I want this Congress to support our soldiers, every one of them; to tell them we value them and pray for them and their families and will give them what they need to do their job. I want all of them to know that we will stand with them until the last one returns home. And I want them to know that policy comes before politics, and that no poll, no political plan, no political threat should ever undermine our allegiance to doing what is right for our soldiers and our Nation. I want them to know that their work, their risks, their fighting, has meaning and purpose, and must be immune to the politics of Washington.

I want the soldiers and airmen from the 171st, the 99th and the 911th in Pittsburgh, and all our National Guard and Reservists and active duty to come home. I want their families to be able to embrace them, their children to be tucked in at night by them and our towns to be able to show the affection of a grateful Nation. But while they are there, while they stand sentry with eyes on the horizon, ride in their convoys or walk on patrol, I want their minds on the critical task of that moment.

I spoke this week to the mother of a soldier who was just killed in Iraq, Russell Kurtz. A finer and a braver man you will not find. I asked her what she thought about this discussion of sending more troops to Iraq, and she said, ''I would rather have more troops there helping my son.''

Dom DeFranco, the Pennsylvania Commander of the VFW, wrote this letter to the editor of the Almanac Newspaper. I will submit the whole letter, but let me read this. He said, ''Even with their pride, honor and dedication motivating them patrol after patrol, bad morale can bring down even the toughest warrior. As a Vietnam veteran, trust me, it cuts deep. Regardless of where you stand on the current war on terror, troops get the message that they are wasting their time when politicians and citizens make headlines criticizing military action.''

Madam Speaker, I include the entire letter for the RECORD.

TO THE EDITOR: Men and women are risking their lives in the Middle East trying to restore peace to an oppressed population. Their military gear and encampment offer some protection, but the threat of life-changing physical and mental wounds is constant. So is the challenge to always be mission-ready, prepared to make life and death decisions in a split second. A grueling situation for sure.

However, even with their pride, honor and dedication motivating them patrol after patrol, bad morale—especially when fueled back home by demonstrations and political grandstanding—can bring down even the toughest warrior. As a Vietnam veteran, trust me—it cuts deep.

Regardless of where you stand on the current War on Terror (The Veterans of Foreign Wars does not take sides in debates about military action), troops get the message that they are wasting their time when politicians and citizens make headlines criticizing military action.

As the debate about the War on Terror continues, I urge citizens and politicians to stay focused on providing our troops with all of the combat equipment, supplies, and personnel they need to be the most effective fighting force possible. Democracy affords politicians and citizens effective ways to debate policies without sending morale busting messages from the home front. Life on the front lines is tough enough without taking incoming salvos of negativity from back home. They also need our emotional support.

Like you, I want our troops home as soon as possible. But as long as they are in harm's way, we should back them with the full resources of our nation—in material, personnel and supportive messages. Anything less will have a negative impact on their morale and possible their safety.

Madam Speaker, listen to this comment from the American Legion regarding their unanimous support for the current action in Iraq and the increase in troops and their caution or political rhetoric. They said, ''Veterans of the Vietnam were remember what it was like to fight without the support of the people back home. You couldn't separate the war from the warrior then, any more than we can today.''

While our soldiers are there, I will support them with everything they need in terms of armor and ammunition, bullets and bread, weapons and words.

I will continue to work for all of these things, but for this point in time, while our soldiers are on the battlefield, I want to be able to look them in the eye and say at your moment of need, I backed you up on the battlefield.

Mr. CLYBURN. Madam Speaker, pursuant to section 2 of House Resolution 157, and as the designee of the majority leader, I demand that the time for debate on the concurrent resolution be enlarged by 1 hour equally divided and

controlled by the leaders or their designees.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. DEGETTE). Under the rule, that will be the order.

Mr. SPRATT. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. OLVER).

Mr. OLVER. Madam Speaker, I support the resolution before us today. In clear and succinct language it says what I believe must be said regarding the war in Iraq that America is engaged in by the choice of President Bush.

I support our men and women on the front line with all the training, the body and vehicle armor and the equipment they need to be successful at the task that they have been given, and I support them as they return, whether safe and sound or scarred by grievous wounds. Almost 24,000 have been wounded, and many returned broken in body or spirit. Many have suffered permanently disabling wounds. Thousands of others, not physically wounded, suffer severe traumatic stress disorders. And all will need and must be given the care and rehabilitation they have been promised.

America mourns the loss of more than 3,000 of our soldiers since that fateful first day of May in 2003 when President George W. Bush triumphantly proclaimed ''Mission Accomplished.'' At no time in the 220 years since the founding of our Nation has America suffered such casualties during an occupation following war. This occupation has been spectacularly mismanaged, yet Americans are asked to suspend doubt and support an already used tactic, placing almost 20,000 additional troops on the ground around the clock, with our young men and women caught between the combatants in the civil war raging in Baghdad's urban streets and neighborhoods.

I oppose this escalation. It is 4 years too late and more than 100,000 troops too few. The tactic itself has been used repeatedly over the last 4 years, with dangerously counterproductive results. Each time this tactic has been used, it has left behind greater hatred for the occupation and the occupiers, as well as thousands of new recruits for the insurgency or al Qaeda. I believe that this escalation will be remembered for the deaths of many more American soldiers and Iraqi civilians.

President George W. Bush has repeatedly cited the 300,000 strong Iraqi army and police force which we have spent billions of dollars to train and equip. They should be pacifying their capital city. As dysfunctional as it is, the Iraqi government which we created must decide whether they want all-out civil war or a stable, unified Iraq, with oil revenues fairly distributed and with changes to their Constitution to assure the rights of 40 percent of the population who are not Shia Muslims. We cannot decide that for them.

The civil war will continue and our casualties will continue to mount until we disengage our forces from a direct military role, except to deny haven to al Qaeda. We must place responsibility directly on the Iraqi government.

At this very late date, virtually everyone agrees that peace and stability for Iraq cannot be secured militarily, but only politically. Our best chance for a positive outcome to this tragic and unnecessary war is outlined and unanimously recommended by the Iraq Study Group, led by former Secretary of State James Baker and former Congressman Lee Hamilton.

We should substitute a robust, multifaceted diplomatic campaign to discourage all of Iraq's neighbors from engagement in the growing civil war and to gain support and assistance for a stable, unified Iraq. That diplomatic campaign must involve major powers and regional groups like the European Union and the Arab league, along with all of Iraq's neighbors, without exception or precondition. The U.S. should always be willing to talk. In every way, talk is far less costly than war.

In a month, the war in Iraq will have gone on 4 years, well beyond our participation in World War II. It is time to begin bringing our troops home.

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to my colleague from Ohio (Mr. HOBSON).

Mr. HOBSON. Madam Speaker, I want to begin by saying that last night when I was watching the floor debate, my colleague from Connecticut, CHRIS SHAYS, gave one of the best speeches on where we are with regard to the war in Iraq. It was a comprehensive overview of the current situation, and I agree with his views on this debate, and I would like to associate myself with his comments. I hope that my colleagues and those who are following this debate will take a moment to read his remarks.

Like Mr. SHAYS, I rise in opposition to this resolution. This is the wrong resolution to be considering if we in Congress are supposed to be fulfilling our responsibility to provide oversight on how this war is to be conducted. Rather than debating the so-called surge, which is actually taking place, we should be debating how to put policy in place that will bring stability and ensure the security of the American people.

Admittedly, the administration has made mistakes in the execution of this war. Many of us, both Democrats and Republicans, have been telling them that from the beginning. Among a number of things that we have been saying has been that they had enough troops to win the war, but they didn't have enough troops to win the peace. But we can't correct those mistakes. What we can do now is to find a strategy on how best to go forward.

So the question becomes, what can we do now that gives the Iraqis the best chance to take control of their country, while also allowing our troops to return home with honor? We owe it to the parents and the families of the men and women who have fought and died in this war to not let their lives be lost in vain. That is the message that I have heard many times when I have met with those families in my district and one that many of my colleagues have also heard.

Last month, I went on a bipartisan congressional delegation trip to Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. While we met with the U.S. troops and commanders, we also had a chance to meet with the leaders of those countries, including the prime minister, al-Maliki. He told us that if his country had the command and control equipment and our backing, the Iraqis could begin to take over their own security in 3 to 6 months and that we could begin to redeploy up to 50,000 of our troops.

Madam Speaker, we need to make sure that Prime Minister Maliki has the tools and resources to do just that. Frankly, the American people would be better served if that were this debate, instead of this nonbinding resolution.

Our focus should be on fixing what needs to be fixed so that the Iraqi people can take control of their country's fate, like they did 2 years ago when they held their first free elections in 50 years.

This action will require several steps. For example, as several of my colleagues have already mentioned, the bipartisan Iraq Study Group supports a short term surge of American combat forces to stabilize Baghdad. This is being done. The group also recommended that there be more diplomatic outreach in the region to include countries like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Syria and even Iran, and this needs to be done by the administration.

Further, it is imperative that our U.S. troops begin to transition from a combat role to one focused on training, counterterrorism, force protection and controlling Iraq's borders.

My colleagues, the world is watching. Our friends, our enemies are watching and waiting to see what our next move will be. A retreat from Iraq would lead to even more instability in the region and create a haven for terrorist groups who despise freedom and our way of life.

What kind of message are we sending when we engage in debate that is essentially a political exercise, rather than one that is on substantive strategy on how to bring stability to the region?

Madam Speaker, we cannot accept defeat, but we must insist on making the changes necessary so that the Iraqi people can take the fate of their future in their own hands. There is a phrase that has often been repeated since the war began, and that is as Iraqi forces stand up, U.S. forces can begin to stand down. Defining a workable strategy to achieve that goal should have been the focus of this week's debate, rather than this nonbinding resolution that will not bring us a step closer to stabilizing Iraq and bringing our troops home or achieving stability in this region of the world.

Again, I urge my colleagues to oppose this resolution.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA).

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, I am here today to support the resolution.

Madam Speaker, I won't spend a lot of time assessing the blame and the responsibility for the quagmire that our Nation finds itself in in Iraq, but I do find it curious during this debate that the opponents of this resolution want us to believe that the history of the Iraq war begins today, that it has no past, that it has no consequences, just a doubtful future. This head-in-the-sand attitude, while politically expedient, denies reality and truth.

Rest assured that history will not be kind to the decisionmakers and the decider of this war, nor will it be kind to a Congress that looked the other way.

The resolution before us today is a first tentative step toward the removal of our troops from Iraq. The escalation proposed is another desperate act opposed by the American people and former military leaders.

The resolution does not demoralize our troops nor embolden the insurgents. To the contrary, this resolution offers hope to our troops that an end is in sight and that their elected representatives in this House are not passing on their authority regarding the most important issue confronting our Nation today.

I personally know families whose loved ones have been lost, badly injured or profoundly intangibly affected by this war. Our commitment should be to those families and veterans who need our full measure of support. Our gratitude should be measured in real resources for veterans, and not empty platitudes and political rhetoric expounded to justify an irreparable failure in Iraq.

□ 2000

The focus of this debate is not centered on our soldiers who are nobly doing their duty and following their orders. It is directed at those who set policy and who have produced a war without end, with no plan of success or exit, with no international strategy, who now turn to a desperate and doomed escalation that only reinforces the failure and the desperation of those policymakers.

Rest assured that the civil war in Iraq will not end with the influx of more American troops. I do believe this resolution should have teeth. We must send a message that binds all of us to real action, an unflinching message of opposition to the escalation and a message of support for our troops. Today marks a step in that direction.

And I wonder, how many ways can the American people tell this Congress to act to prevent more loss of our blood and treasure in the war in Iraq? Weren't the elections that just happened a strong message? Isn't the loss of confidence by the public in their elected officials a strong message? Isn't the sacrifice and valor of our men and women fighting this war deserving of the respect of this government? Don't we have a duty to those men and women to protect them, reunite them with their families immediately, and, above all, share the truth with them, that the question is no longer if we get out of Iraq, it's how and when.

The answer to that question for me and many other families is, the sooner the better. I could stand here and read poll after poll that talks about the public's overwhelming opposition to this war and even more overwhelming opposition to this escalation. But as I think about it, the most important poll for those of us who serve in Congress needs to be our conscience. The resolution before us is simple and direct. It speaks in a very clear way to the frustration we all feel about this misadventure in Iraq. And I said I would not belabor the question of who to blame, but it is important to address the obvious.

Remember weapons of mass destruction? None found.

Remember the links between Iraq and the attack on 9/11? It didn't exist.

All the misspent funds in Iraq, misappropriated dollars. That was ignored by the administration.

''Mission Accomplished.'' What a premature political hype that was.

And a strategy for Iraq. It doesn't exist.

Funds for education, health care, our cities and towns, investments in our people here in this country, that has all been spent in Iraq.

The litany of failures and untruths goes on and on. The lack of leadership by this administration requires, no, I think it demands that this Congress assert its constitutional duty to check and balance this administration by beginning with the important step of passing this resolution.

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 4 minutes to my colleague from Texas (Mr. HALL).

Mr. HALL of Texas. Madam Speaker, first and foremost, I stand and I hope we all stand in support of our troops. But I also rise today in opposition to H. Con. Res. 63. While I believe that we all share the same goal of winning this war on terror and bringing our brave young men and women home, I regret that this bill before us today absolutely will not lead to that goal. Nobody wants this war to end more than those fighting in it and we need now to do what it takes to bring our brave men and women home, but to bring them home in victory. If we don't achieve victory, the consequences are going to be disastrous for the progression of freedom all over the world, and instead of taking a step forward, we would be taking multiple steps backward.

So what is the point of this resolution? Is it going to block the troop surge? Absolutely not. Will it end the war? Not a chance. Will it help our chances of achieving victory? Absolutely not. This resolution will demoralize our troops who are sacrificing themselves for us today and tonight, and this resolution will give comfort to an enemy. This resolution puts politics before the lives of our brave soldiers and there is no way in the world that I can support it. The only chance we have for victory is to support the President's troop escalation. It's not a sure thing, but it's our best chance for victory. These added troops will help us secure Baghdad, stabilize the area, and accelerate the training necessary for the Iraqis to stand on their own. Only after these things happen can we leave Iraq the way we should and that is victorious.

I fully support our Commander in Chief, and I think he has much more information than I have or any other Member or combination of Members in regard to our war on terrorism, and particularly the war in Iraq. I think President Bush is a godly person, intelligent and educated, and cares for this country and cares for those who defend it. I will continue to support him as long as he holds the title of Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States of America. I heard the President loud and clear in his State of the Union address on January 23, 2007. What I gleaned from his speech is that he is asking for calendar year 2007 to complete the existing plan being implemented by General Petraeus and those who serve under him. And at such time, he fully expects the Iraqis to be in a position to defend their borders and protect their people, resulting in an executive order hopefully to bring the process of withdrawal of these American forces still defending our Nation, to bring them home.

This resolution will absolutely undermine the efforts of our troops in Iraq. I strongly oppose it.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. CAPUANO).

Mr. CAPUANO. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I don't have prepared remarks. I have been listening to this debate for the last couple of days, and everything that can be said on both sides has been said repeatedly. And thus far the only thoughtful argument I have heard to not vote for this resolution is that somehow it will demoralize the troops. That pretends that the troops live in a bubble and don't know what is going on and just never think. Everybody who has done any discussions or any polling of the troops know they already know that this war is over. It's not a military defeat. To put it that way is ridiculous. No one can defeat our military. It is absolutely undefeatable. It is a political defeat. We cannot win, which I am not even sure what that means, this war. This escalation will do nothing but delay the inevitable. America knows it.

To listen to the discussion I have heard in the last couple of days, all I can say to myself, if we had this attitude in the seventies, we would still be in Vietnam. For what? For what? We have done what we could do, and we may have to go back someday, and I may vote for it under the right circumstances. To never say never is ridiculous. We don't know where the cards are going to be played. We do know one thing: that today Iraq is engaged in a civil war. One of the leaders of that civil war isn't even in Iraq. He is in Iran. We are only delaying the inevitable at the cost of our young men and women. And I am not talking about money, because if this was the right war, a moral war, money wouldn't be the issue.

This war is over. We need to recognize that. We need to stop trying to play politics with it. Bring our troops home and prepare them for the next battle that we might all join in if it's the right place and the right time.

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to my colleague from Texas (Mr. BARTON).

(Mr. BARTON of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I attended the Charlie Norwood funeral today in Augusta, Georgia. He was a veteran of Vietnam. I think it is ironic that because he was a veteran, we saw at the beginning of the funeral the honor guard walk in carrying the flag of the United States Army and the flag of the United States and all the battle ribbons on that flag, that as 70 to 80 of the Members of this body were showing respect to Charlie and his family, we were having this debate on another war.

The resolution before us is a sham resolution. It is nonbinding. I have voted on resolutions of war and peace in my time in this Congress. I voted on the first gulf war resolution back in the early nineties when we thought that there might be tens of thousands of body bags coming back with our troops in them. I voted on the first resolution supporting our President in this war after 9/11. Remember 9/11? We had more American citizens killed in one day in the Twin Towers and in the Pentagon than we have had in all the years that our troops have been in Iraq and Afghanistan. That doesn't demean their sacrifice. I have attended three funerals in my hometown of young men who have been killed in the line of duty in this current war.

This nonbinding resolution tries to have it both ways. It says at the first, in part A, we support the troops and in part B, we don't support our President's decision, the Commander in Chief, to send these reinforcements. Well, if it's nonbinding, why have the debate? I think it's commendable that we are having this debate. I wish it would have had some meat on it. Let's put a real resolution on the floor. But the Republicans weren't offered an alternative, so we have to vote for or against a nonbinding resolution that has it both ways in the resolution. I don't think that is very becoming to this Congress.

But when the time comes, I am going to vote ''no'' because I believe as Thomas Jefferson believed, and if you go to his monument not too far from here and look up around the ceiling, Thomas Jefferson says, ''I have sworn upon the eternal altar of God unending opposition to all forms of tyranny over the mind of man.'' This Islamic terrorist campaign is a direct attack on our democracy. It is a direct attack on our tolerance. We need to support our President. We need to vote against this nonbinding resolution. And then if we want to have a real resolution, let's bring it to the floor and have that debate.

I rise today in opposition to H. Con. Res. 63. This nonbinding resolution serves only to degrade and demoralize the troops currently engaged in forward operations and those additional troops President Bush has called upon. This is not a call for a new direction in Iraq nor is this a call for a new course of action. This is a political distraction and a call to our enemies around the world by showing a lack of resolve and fostering the idea of uncertainty towards support and funding for the men and women of our Armed Forces.

Speaker PELOSI and her fellow Democrats have charged that the previous policy did not work, the new policy will not work, and yet amongst all this rhetoric my colleagues on the other side of the aisle do not have a constructive alternative to put forth. Instead they offer legislation that if enacted would fuel the call for setting timelines and the withdrawal of our troops. To leave before the job is finished would leave our country in a weaker position globally and leave the Middle East without any hope for democracy to ever take hold. The extremists that oppose us are against freedom and we are right to be engaged in the fight for democracy and tolerance. The stakes are high and our enemies know this. They are not going to quit, but if we pass this resolution it will be the first step in signaling that we will. It is right to support the President as he lays out his plan for securing Iraq and is in our national interest.

The necessary framework for democracy has been established and the labor of our brave troops has produced many measurable results. A constitution was written by the Iraqis resulting in democratic elections where nearly 12.5 million people braved the threat of violence to cast their votes. A fair criminal trial was held for Saddam Hussein, the country's former dictator, who denied that right to his own people. I urge my colleagues to let the Iraqis lead and give democracy a chance. Establishing a secure Iraq, a thriving democracy and a noticeable reduction in crime will pave the way for numerous infrastructure improvements.

Sustainable achievements in the reconstruction effort include the building of more than 5,000 schools, the training of more then 60,000 teachers, the training and equipping of 323,000 police and military forces, the vaccination of 98 percent of Iraqi children, the ability of more than 7 million people to access phone service, the repair of nearly all of Iraq's railway stations, the restoration of electricity output and oil production to near prewar levels and the increased availability of clean water and sanitation. The milestones that have been reached are a testament to why we should not abandon our presence in Iraq. Progress is being made and we must continue to support our troops and Iraq's democratic government.

The President's call for more troops is a decision not made in haste. It is made with careful consideration and thoughtful advice from his commanders both at home and in the field. The additional troops will work with Iraqis to solve serious challenges and to find ways to curb future outbreaks of violence. To achieve success in combating those serious challenges it is important that America stands with Iraq so they can defend their own soil, create a sound economy and govern themselves effectively. The President understands the consequences of failure in Iraq, something this resolution proves the Democrats do not comprehend.

I have been to the funerals of men and women from my district that lost their lives in this war. I have pinned medals on the chests of the brave men and women from my district who returned home safely. Visiting with families at home and troops in Iraq I have seen first hand the effects this war has on Americans. This resolution serves to discredit the memories of fallen soldiers, the efforts of those still fighting, and to embolden our enemies. If we remember, our enemies attacked us on September 11th and instead of living in fear and leaving ourselves open to more attacks we chose to take the fight to them. In the time since, there has not been another major terrorist attack on U.S. soil. That is a testament to the fight our men and women are waging to protect the freedoms we so richly enjoy. I remain committed to supporting our forces serving abroad and ensuring they have the funding they need to complete their mission.

Some of my colleagues misguidedly stand to dismiss our efforts in Iraq. I stand with the resolve of former President Thomas Jefferson who said, ''I have sworn upon the altar of God, eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man.'' We must not stand divided and turn our backs on those fighting for democracy where tyranny threatens to reign. We must be steadfast and support them in every way we can. We can not let the difficulty of the task diminish our support for the troops and the cause for which they are so diligently fighting. We must not let this frivolous resolution pass.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlelady from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Let me thank the distinguished gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I believe that each and every Member that has come to the floor tonight and over the last 2 days would never consider any of their remarks frivolous, nor would we characterize this debate as political. Unfortunately, in 2002, many of those same words were used to characterize a very needed debate and one that we had hoped that those who had the powers of decision would have listened to.

I remember standing in this same location and suggesting to my colleagues that I was proud to accept and to make as my choice life over death and peace over war. Through these years, members of the Progressive Caucus thoughtfully have gathered to reinforce the words that we offered during those days when even though the en masse lobbying and representation of mass destruction weapons, we knew that this was a war that would be ill-fated and misdirected. In fact, during that time, we had solutions. We asked for a continued use of political diplomacy and, as well, the continuation of utilizing the U.N. inspectors to determine if there were weapons of mass destruction.

□ 2015

But now we have come some 5 years and we hear the same refrain. And I know in the hearts of those who have spoken that they are sincere. But if we said nothing else but point to those who have fallen, let their faces represent the sacrifice of America. Those are the faces of those who are always willing to go into battle, and not one of us on the floor today will ever say anything untoward about the United States military through the years and decades and centuries, because they have never faltered in the Commander in Chief's direction to go to war.

But what has really failed in this Congress in its oversight and responsibility and, as well, the choices being made by the leadership that has sent them into war.

And so, as Abraham Lincoln has said, ''We wish to honor the soldiers and sailors everywhere who bravely bear this country's cause; honor also to the citizen who cares for his brother. We will never forget.''

But we now stand in opposition to the escalation and support of this resolution because we believe that the Nation must hear, but also the leaders who make the decisions must hear this is wrong and misdirected.

The troops have been magnificent. We have had 180,000 of them who have served in Iraq from Texas, we have had 200 or more who have been killed, including the 3,000-plus that have been killed across the Nation. They do have a military success.

But we know that the surges do not work. We know it was ill-fated from the beginning. There was no collaboration, very minimal, and now the collaboration has ended. What is needed now is the declaration of a military success, which is what I have expressed in H.R. 930. And now we must search for diplomatic and political reconciliation, a Special Envoy to Iraq that focuses specifically on bringing together the Sunnis, the Shiites and the Kurds. We know that surges have only generated more insurgents, they have only generated more violence, and it has not brought about the safety that is needed.

Of course, the response is that this escalation will bring some sort of security to Baghdad, and then we can sit down and have reconciliation. One more soldier generates one more violent act. So we know that the troop surges do not work. We also know that it strains the readiness.

We need a diplomatic surge. More importantly, we need not to go over the steps of Secretary McNamara who indicated in his words, as I said in the October 2002, Former Defense Secretary Robert McNamara said in his mea culpa on the Vietnam War: We were wrong, terribly wrong. And he hoped that the suffering, as he quoted one of the philosophers, he hoped that what we had experienced in the suffering of Vietnam would give us experience. Today this ongoing war in Iraq shows we have thrown away that experience.

We also throw away the Constitution, because this is not pursuant to Article I, section 8. This is not a declaration of war that we are in, and we therefore need to terminate the power of the President that had been given in 2002 to attack Iraq. This document has not been followed. And so H.R. 930 will terminate the authorization given in 2002, because for these lives lost already we don't want to participate in the foolishness of monies being spent recklessly, the lack of accountability, and a war that already can be claimed as a military victory by the United States military who can now come home with honor and dignity.

Let us stand again on this floor and claim that we support life over death and we support peace over war and we want our soldiers to return home in celebration and dignity in honor of these who now are fallen on the battlefield.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 63. I stand in strong support of our troops who have performed magnificently in battle and with a grace under pressure that is distinctively American. I stand with the American people, who have placed their trust in the President, the Vice President, and the former Secretary of Defense, each of whom abused the public trust and patience.

I stand with the American taxpayers who have paid nearly $400 billion to finance the misadventure in Iraq. I stand with the 3,019 fallen heroes who stand even taller in death because they gave the last full measure of devotion to their country. For these reasons, Madam Speaker, I stand fully, strongly, and unabashedly in opposition to the President's unilateral decision to escalate the war in Iraq by deploying more than 20,000 additional combat troops to Iraq, and at least that many more to provide logistical support.

I wish to make clear, Madam Speaker, that sending more combat troops into Iraq will not lead to success in Iraq. We cannot achieve success in Iraq unless we change strategy. But the President's proposed troop surge is not a change in strategy and it does not signal a new direction; it is simply more of the same. As our most recent great President, Bill Clinton, once said, ''if you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got.''

In proposing this latest troop surge, President Bush seeks to ''cry havoc and let slip the dogs of war.'' But even Henry V did not exhort his troops, his band of brothers, to go ''once more, into the breach'' for a fifth time. And neither should we.

Madam Speaker, instead of a surge in combat troops, the United States needs to launch a diplomatic surge for political and national reconciliation in Iraq. That is why I have introduced H.R. 930, the ''Military Success in Iraq and Diplomatic Surge for Political and National Reconciliation in Iraq Act of 2007.'' As I will discuss in greater detail later in my remarks, my legislation offers a far better chance of sustainable success in Iraq than does the President's escalation. And equally important, my legislation will go a long way toward ensuring that never again will the American people or the Congress be bamboozled into rubber-stamping an ill-advised, ill-planned, preemptive war.

Madam Speaker, I am privileged to represent the citizens of the 18 Congressional District in the great State of Texas. The sons and daughters of the Lone Star State have always answered the call to service. More than 280 Texans have been made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. More than 2,200 Texans have been wounded. Only California has suffered a greater number of dead and wounded. Today, Madam Speaker, there are more than 31,000 Texans serving in Iraq, which is 12,000 more than the next highest state. Since the war began in March 2003, more than 180,000 Texans have served in Iraq, some deployed two, even three, in some cases four times.

Madam Speaker, it is more than irresponsible not to oppose the President's plan to escalate the war in Iraq. It is unconscionable. In opposing the President's latest folly, we send a message that is both simple and profound: You cannot win the just War on Terror by launching an unjustified War in Iraq. That is one of the hard and bitter lessons we have learned during the 4 years course of the War in Iraq.

The misguided, mismanaged, and costly debacle that is the Iraq War was preemptively launched by President Bush in March 2003 despite the opposition of me and 125 of my colleagues in the House of Representatives. To date, the war in Iraq has lasted longer than America's involvement in World War II, the greatest conflict in all of human history.

But there is a difference. The Second World War ended in complete and total victory for the United States and its allies. But then again, in that conflict America was led by FDR, a great Commander-in-Chief, who had a plan to win the war and secure the peace, listened to his generals, and sent troops in sufficient numbers and sufficiently trained and equipped to do the job.

My friends, I say with sadness that we have not enjoyed that same quality of leadership throughout the conduct of the Iraq War. The results, not surprisingly, have been disastrous. To date, the war in Iraq has claimed the lives of 3,109 brave servicemen and women (115 in December and 39 in the first 13 days of this month). More than 23,400 Americans have been wounded, many suffering the most horrific injuries. American taxpayers have paid nearly $400 billion to sustain this misadventure.

The depth, breadth, and scope of the President's misguided, mismanaged, and misrepresented war in Iraq is utterly without precedent

in American history. It is a tragedy in a league all its own. But it was not unforeseeable or unavoidable. As the President's intention to launch a preemptive war against Iraq became known back in the fall of 2002, thoughtful members in the halls of Congress took to the floor, and concerned citizens in the countryside took to the streets to stop it. Patriots all, we registered our dissent. We acted not out of dislike of the President but out of love for our country and what it had represented to the world. As Robert Taft, ''Mr. Republican,'' as he was affectionately known, the late, great Senator from Ohio, stated two weeks after Pearl Harbor, ''Criticism in a time of war is essential to the maintenance of a democratic government.''

My friends, in light of the enormous losses of precious American blood and treasure, it is very small consolation to know that those of us who acted on the biblical injunction to speak truth to power have been proven right in our warnings about the disaster war in Iraq would produce.

We predicted before the war that ''the outcome after the conflict is actually going to be the hardest part, and it is far less certain.'' We made the point that it was essential for the Administration to develop ''a plan for rebuilding of the Iraqi government and society, if the worst comes to pass and armed conflict is necessary.'' We knew the Armed Forces of the United States is invincible on the battlefield and would decisively defeat Iraq's forces and remove Saddam Hussein. But like the proverbial dog chasing the car down the road, we questioned whether the President knew what to do after we caught it.''

We warned of the ''postwar challenges,'' particularly the fact that there was no history of democratic government in Iraq, and that its economy and infrastructure was in ruins after years of war and sanctions and that rebuilding Iraq would cost hundreds of billions of dollars that could be better at home securing the homeland and waging the real War on Terror. And we warned against sending American soldiers to war in Iraq without adequate protection against biological and unconventional weapons.

I am also reminded how General Eric Shinseki told the Senate Armed Services Committee in February 2003 that the Defense Department's estimate of troops needed for occupying Iraq is too low and that several hundred thousand soldiers would be needed. But instead of heeding the wise counsel of General Shinseki, the Bush administration cashiered him out of the Army.

Indeed, anyone who questioned the Bush Doctrine of preemptive war was ridiculed and marginalized as unpatriotic, weak, sympathetic to terrorists, and un-American: Anti-Terrorism Chief Richard Clarke, Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill, Council of Economic Advisors Chairman Laurence Lindsay, Joe Wilson, and congressional Democrats.

But four years later, people like us are now the majority. And we are united in raising our voices to proclaim: End the war and redeploy our troops out of Iraq.

Madam Speaker, it is instructive to review why the American people have turned against the war in Iraq.

The American people were told erroneously but repeatedly that the gravest threat facing America was Saddam Hussein and his regime. The Vice-President assured all who listened that he knew that Iraq and Al Qaeda had high-level contacts that went back a decade and that Iraq had trained Al Qaeda members in bomb making and deadly gases. He was wrong. What's more, the American people were led to believe that the regime in Baghdad had long-standing and continuing ties to terrorist organizations. Wrong again. President Bush even went so far as to say that you couldn't distinguish between Al Qaeda and Saddam when you talked about the war on terror. Of course, this claim turned out to be untrue as well.

That is not all, Madam Speaker. The campaign to persuade Americans that Iraq posed a clear, present, and mortal danger to us included the false claims that Iraq possessed ballistic missiles with a likely range of hundreds of miles—far enough to strike Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey, and other nations. It was also falsely represented to Americans that Iraq had a growing fleet of manned and unmanned aerial vehicles that could be used to disperse chemical or biological weapons across broad areas and that Iraq was exploring ways of using unmanned aerial vehicles to target the United States.

But the capstone of the administration's disinformation campaign was the claim that Saddam Hussein was actively pursuing nuclear weapons which could be used against America by Iraq, or by the terrorists to whom it was giving safe harbor. President Bush even went so far to announce to a world-wide audience in his 2003 State of the Union address that ''the British government has learned that Saddam Hussein had recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa.'' According to the President, facing such clear evidence of peril, we could not wait for ''the final proof that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud.'' We now know for sure that these claims were false. And covering up those false claims is one of the main reasons that Scooter Libby found himself in the predicament that led to his indictment by a grand jury and the on-going trial in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia.

Regarding the actual conduct of the looming hostilities, the Administration and its courtiers assured us that ''it would be a cakewalk'' and that American troops ''would be greeted as liberators.'' The Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, boldly claimed that ''the war could last six days, six weeks. I doubt six months.'' Vice-President CHENEY said, ''I think it will go relatively quickly . . . [in] weeks rather than months.'' There are many things one could say about these rose- colored scenarios peddled by the Administration nearly four long years ago. But there is one thing you cannot say and that is ''truer words were never spoken.''

Finally, Madam Speaker, let us not forget the wildly extravagant claims of this Administration regarding the cost of this war. The Director of the White House OMB was quoted as saying that ''Iraq will be an affordable endeavor that will not require sustained aid and will be in the range of $50 billion to $60 billion.'' At last count, Madam Speaker, the war has cost the taxpayers $379 billion. That a cost overrun of more than 600 percent.

To put the cost of the war in perspective, consider that we are spending more than $8 billion a month to sustain the war effort in Iraq. Could this money be put to better use? Well, consider the following:

For $33.1 billion, or 4 months in Iraq, we could have fully funded the Department of Homeland Security FY 2007 budget.

For $10 billion, just 5 weeks in Iraq, we could equip every commercial airliner with defenses against shoulder-fired missiles.

For $8.6 billion, just 30 days in Iraq, we could finance the shortage of international aid needed to rebuild Afghanistan.

For $5.2 billion, just three weeks in Iraq, we could finance the capital improvements needed to secure the nation's public transportation system, including trains, subways, and buses.

For the equivalent of 5 days in Iraq, just $1.5 billion, we could provide radiation detectors at every port in the United States.

For only $1.4 billion, the cost of another 5 days in Iraq, we could double the COPS (community police grants) program.

For the cost of a mere two days in Iraq, we could fund the $700 million needed to provide 100% screening of all air cargo.

For $350 million, 26 hours in Iraq, we could instead make emergency radio systems interoperable.

For the cost of 8½ hours in Iraq, $94 million, we could restore the cuts in Homeland Security funding to cities hit on September 11.

Madam Speaker, opponents of the resolution before us contend that it gives comfort to the enemy and undermines the President's strategy for success in Iraq. They claim it is our patriotic duty to avert our eyes to this Administration's nearly unbroken record of spectacular failure and incompetence and rally around the flag. But to paraphrase the old saw: fool me four times, shame on you; fool me a fifth time, shame on me. The truth is, Madam Speaker, this Congress—and the American people—has not been fickle or impatient. Rather, it has been understanding and generous to a fault, overlooking and excusing blunder after blunder committed by the White House and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). As Kenneth M. Pollack of the Brookings Institution, and a former senior member of the NSC, brilliantly describes in his essay, ''The Seven Deadly Sins Of Failure In Iraq: A Retrospective Analysis Of The Reconstruction,'' in Middle East Review of International Affairs (December 2006), our trust and patience has been repaid by a record of incompetence unmatched in the annals of American foreign policy.

The Bush administration disregarded the advice of experts on Iraq, on nation-building, and on military operations. It staged both the invasion and the reconstruction on the cheap. It did not learn from its mistakes and did not commit the resources necessary to accomplish its original lofty goals or later pedestrian objectives. It ignored intelligence that contradicted its own views.

It is clear now that the administration simply never believed in the necessity of a major reconstruction in Iraq. To exacerbate matters the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and the White House Office of the Vice President (OVP) worked together to ensure that the State Department was excluded from any meaningful involvement in the reconstruction of Iraq.

The administration's chief Iraq hawks shared a deeply naive view that the fall of Saddam and his top henchmen would have relatively little impact on the overall Iraqi governmental structure. They assumed that Iraq's bureaucracy would remain intact and would

therefore be capable of running the country and providing Iraqis with basic services. They likewise assumed that the Iraqi armed forces would largely remain cohesive and would surrender whole to U.S. forces. The result of all this was a fundamental lack of attention to realistic planning for the postwar environment.

As it was assumed that the Iraqis would be delighted to be liberated little thought was given to security requirements after Saddam's fall. The dearth of planning for the provision of security and basic services stemmed from the mistaken belief that Iraqi political institutions would remain largely intact and therefore able to handle those responsibilities.

But there were too few Coalition troops, which meant that long supply lines were vulnerable to attack by Iraqi irregulars, and the need to mask entire cities at times took so much combat power that it brought the entire offensive to a halt.

It was not long before these naive assumptions and inadequate planning conjoined to sow the seeds of the chaos we have witnessed in Iraq.

The lack of sufficient troops to secure the country led to the immediate outbreak of lawlessness resulting in massive looting and destruction dealt a stunning psychological blow to Iraqi confidence in the United States, from which the country has yet to recover. We removed Saddam Hussein's regime but we did not move to fill the military, political, and economic vacuum. The unintended consequence was the birth of a failing state, which provided the opportunity for the insurgency to flourish and prevented the development of governmental institutions capable of providing Iraqis with the most basic services such as clean water, sanitation, electricity, and a minimally functioning economy capable of generating basic employment.

Making matters worse, the administration arrogantly denied the United Nations overall authority for the reconstruction even though the U.N. had far more expertise and experience in nation building.

The looting and anarchy, the persistent insurgent attacks, the lack of real progress in restoring basic services, and the failure to find the promised weapons of mass destruction undercut the administration's claim that things were going well in Iraq and led it to make the next set of serious blunders, which was the disbanding of the Iraqi military and security services.

Madam Speaker, counterinsurgency experts will tell you that to pacify an occupied country it is essential to disarm, demobilize, and retrain (DDR) the local army. The idea behind a DDR program is to entice, cajole, or even coerce soldiers back to their own barracks or to other facilities where they can be fed, clothed, watched, retrained, and prevented from joining an insurgency movement, organized crime, or an outlaw militia.

By disbanding the military and security services without a DDR program, as many as one million Iraqi men were set at large with no money, no means to support their families, and no skills other than how to use a gun. Not surprisingly, many of these humiliated Sunni officers went home and joined the burgeoning Sunni insurgency.

The next major mistake made in the summer of 2003 was the decision to create an Iraqi Governing Council (IGC), which laid the foundation for many of Iraq's current political woes. Many of the IGC leaders were horribly corrupt, and they stole from the public treasury and encouraged their subordinates to do the same. The IGC set the tone for later Iraqi governments, particularly the transitional governments of Ayad Allawi and Ibrahim Jaafari that followed.

Finally, by insisting that all of the problems of the country were caused by the insurgency rather than recognizing the problems of the country were helping to fuel the insurgency, the Bush Administration set about concentrating its efforts in all the wrong places and on the wrong problems.

This explains why for nearly all of 2004 and 2005, our troops were disproportionately deployed in the Sunni triangle trying to catch and kill insurgents. Although our troops caught and killed insurgents by the hundreds and thousands, these missions were not significantly advancing our strategic objectives. Indeed, they had little long-term impact because insurgents are always willing to flee temporarily rather than fight a leviathan. Second, because so many coalition forces were playing "whack-a-mole" with insurgents in the sparsely populated areas of western Iraq, the rest of the country was left vulnerable to take over by militias.

Finally, Madam Speaker, a cruel irony is that because the Iraqi Government brought exiles and militia leaders into the government and gave them positions of power, it is now virtually impossible to get them out, and even more difficult to convince them to make compromises because the militia leaders have learned they can use their government positions to maintain and expand their personal power, at the expense both of their rivals who are not in the government and of the central government itself.

All of this was avoidable and the blame for the lack of foresight falls squarely on the White House and the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Madam Speaker, the American people spoke loudly and clearly last November when they tossed out the Rubber-Stamp Republican Congress. They voted for a New Direction in Iraq and for change in America. They voted to disentangle American troops from the carnage, chaos, and civil war in Iraq. They voted for accountability and oversight, which we Democrats have begun to deliver on; already the new majority has held 52 congressional hearings related to the Iraq War, investigating everything from the rampant waste, fraud, and abuse of Iraq reconstruction funding to troop readiness to the Iraq Study Group Report.

But President Bush is still not listening to America. He is acting as if nothing has changed. He is not offering a way out of Iraq, only a way forward that will take us deeper into the morass and quagmire.

The troop surge proposed by President Bush is not a new strategy for success in Iraq; it is just the same old repackaged policy of "stay the course." This troop surge—this escalation of the war—will not provide lasting security for Iraqis. It is not what the American people have asked for, nor what the American military needs. It will impose excessive and unwarranted burdens on military personnel and their families. It is opposed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It is opposed by an overwhelming majority of the American people. It is opposed by a majority in Congress.

The architects of the fiasco in Iraq would have us believe that "surging" at least 20,000 more soldiers into Baghdad and nearby Anbar province is a change in military strategy that America must embrace or face future terrorist attacks on American soil. Nothing could be further from the truth, as we learned last year when the "surge" idea first surfaced among neoconservatives.

The President's proposed troop surge is not new and, judging from history, we know it will not work. It will only succeed in putting more American troops in harm's way for no good reason and without any strategic advantage. The armed forces of the United States are not to be used to respond to 911 calls from governments like Iraq's that have done all they can to take responsibility for the security of their country and safety of their own people. The United States cannot do for Iraq what Iraqis are not willing to do for themselves.

Troop surges have been tried several times in the past. The success of these surges has, to put it charitably, been underwhelming. Let's briefly review the record:

1. Operation Together Forward, (June-October 2006): In June the Bush administration announced a new plan for securing Baghdad by increasing the presence of Iraqi Security Forces. That plan failed, so in July the White House announced that additional American troops would be sent into Baghdad. By October, a U.S. military spokesman, Gen. William Caldwell, acknowledged that the operation and troop increase was a failure and had "not met our overall expectations of sustaining a reduction in the levels of violence."

2. Elections and Constitutional Referendum (September-December 2005): In the fall of 2005 the Bush administration increased troop levels by 22,000, making a total of 160,000 American troops in Iraq around the constitutional referendum and parliamentary elections. While the elections went off without major violence these escalations had little long-term impact on quelling sectarian violence or attacks on American troops.

3. Constitutional Elections and Fallujah (November 2004-March 2005): As part of an effort to improve counterinsurgency operations after the Fallujah offensive in November 2004 and to increase security before the January 2005 constitutional elections U.S. forces were increased by 12,000 to 150,000. Again there was no long-term security impact.

4. Massive Troop Rotations (December 2003-April 2004): As part of a massive rotation of 250,000 troops in the winter and spring of 2004, troop levels in Iraq were raised from 122,000 to 137,000. Yet, the increase did nothing to prevent Muqtada al-Sadr's Najaf uprising and April of 2004 was the second deadliest month for American forces.

Madam Speaker, by more than 60 percent, Americans oppose increasing American troop levels in Iraq. So do many of the nation's leading and most knowledgeable military officers. In testimony before the Senate, Gen. John P. Abizaid, the former Commander of United States Central Command, stated: "I do not believe that more American troops right now is the solution to the problem. I believe that the troop levels need to stay where they are." General Abizaid's view is shared by Gen. Colin Powell, the former Secretary of State and former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, who has said "I am not persuaded that another surge of troops into Baghdad for the purposes of suppressing this communitarian violence, this civil war, will work." And Gen. Barry

McCaffrey (retired), who commanded the 24th Infantry Division during the first Gulf War, is even more blunt: ''It's a fool's errand . . . Our allies are leaving us . . . Make no mistake about that. Most will be gone by this summer.''

Even leading members of the Republican Party are skeptical of the President's latest ploy to salvage the mess he has made of Iraq. According to Sen. CHUCK HAGEL of Nebraska, the President's escalation plan ''represents the most dangerous foreign policy blunder in this country since Vietnam—if it's carried out. I will resist it.'' Senator HAGEL is joined in his skepticism by Senators OLYMPIA SNOWE, JOHN WARNER, SUSAN COLLINS, GORDON SMITH, NORM COLEMAN, GEORGE VOINOVICH, SAM BROWNBACK, ARLEN SPECTER, and a growing list of others.

Madam Speaker, although Americans are right to oppose the President's troop surge, stemming the chaos in Iraq will require more than opposition to military escalation. It requires us to make hard choices.

It is past time for a new direction that can lead to success in Iraq. We cannot wait any longer. Too many Americans and Iraqis are dying who could otherwise be saved.

Since the President still has not seen the light, we need to make him feel the heat. I believe the time has come to debate, adopt, and implement a plan for strategic redeployment. I am not talking about ''immediate withdrawal,'' ''cutting and running,'' or surrendering to terrorists. And I certainly am not talking about staying in Iraq forever or the foreseeable future.

I am talking about a paradigm shift. Rather than undertaking a misguided and futile surge in troops, the United States should surge diplomatically. The Armed Forces of the United States have performed magnificently. They won the war they were sent to fight. Their civilian leadership has not succeeded in winning the peace.

That is why I have introduced H.R. 930, which among other things creates a high-level Special Envoy to launch a new offensive on the diplomatic front. My legislation, the ''Military Success in Iraq and Diplomatic Surge for Political and National Reconciliation Act of 2007,'' implements twelve of the most important recommendations of the Iraq Study Group, headed by former Secretary of State James A. Baker and 911 Co-Chairman Lee Hamilton.

Among other things, H.R. 930, would require a diplomatic full-court press designed to engage all six of Iraq's neighbors—Iran, Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait—more constructively in stabilizing Iraq. These countries are already involved in a bilateral, self-interested and disorganized way.

While their interests and ours are not identical, none of these countries wants to live with an Iraq that, after our redeployment, becomes a failed state or a humanitarian catastrophe that could become a haven for terrorists or a hemorrhage of millions more refugees streaming into their countries.

Madam Speaker, when Congress authorized the president to use military force in Iraq in 2002, it departed from the wisdom of our forefathers. The Framers understood that while the military does the fighting, a nation goes to war. That is why they lodged the power to declare war in the Congress, the branch of government closest to the people. They knew that the decision to go to war was too important to be left to the whim of a single person, no matter how wise or well-informed he or she might be. But the AUMF passed by Congress was not a declaration of war but rather a blank check for the president to start and wage war in Iraq at a time, place, and manner of his choosing. It is time to rescind that blank check and return to first principles.

That is why H.R. 930 also includes another important legislative initiative, the ''Military Success in Iraq Act of 2007 (MSIA).'' This provision of my legislation is crafted to end the American military involvement in Iraq and redeploy American troops out of Iraq.

The MSIA declares that the objectives which led Congress to pass the 2002 AUMF have been achieved. It further declares that whenever the objectives set forth in an AUMF have been achieved, the AUMF expires automatically. Then it finds that Congress is the ultimate arbiter as to whether the objectives set forth in its AUMF have been achieved.

Because Congress now finds that the 2002 AUMF objectives have been achieved, my legislation provides that the authorization to use force conferred upon the President by the AUMF has now expired. My bill then makes clear that the President must obtain a new authorization to continue the use force in Iraq. Finally, my bill requires that if the Congress does not vote to reauthorize the use of force in Iraq by March 31, 2007, then all American armed forces in Iraq must be redeployed out of Iraq. Thus, under my legislation, an up-or-down vote must be held by the House and Senate to continue waging war in Iraq.

Madam Speaker, our domestic national security, in fact, rests on redeploying our military forces from Iraq in order to build a more secure Middle East and continue to fight against global terrorist networks elsewhere in the world. Strategic redeployment of our armed forces in order to rebuild our nation's fighting capabilities and renew our critical fight in Afghanistan against the Taliban and al-Qaeda is not just an alternative strategy. It's a strategic imperative.

My legislation requires the Congress to provide leadership on the most important issue of our day. That is what the American people want. That is what they voted for last November. That is what has been required all along.

And providing constructive leadership that will bring peace, enhance security, and save lives is the task to which I am now, and always have been, dedicated. That is why I strongly and proudly support our magnificent, heroic, and selfless service men and women. That is why I strongly support H. Con. Res 63 and squarely oppose the President's decision to escalate the war in Iraq. I urge all members to support the resolution before the House.

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to my colleague from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON).

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, the situation we are facing in Iraq right now is serious. The resolution we are debating here tonight, unfortunately, is not.

Everyone agrees the situation on the ground is unacceptable. To make it right, we need leadership, resources, and resolve. What we don't need is 36 hours of time trading speeches on a nonbinding measure, a measure that imparts no new policy, offers no new alternatives, and commands no real effect.

Most of the speeches I have heard this week are about the war. On that subject, there is plenty of room for disagreement. But the resolution before us isn't about the war, it is about a specific tactical question: the number of troops we need to deploy to finish the job.

I can't think of a group that is less qualified to make strategic and tactical decisions on the ground than 535 Members of Congress, sitting 6,000 miles away on Capitol Hill. Congress shouldn't be in the business of micromanaging war tactics.

Should we debate the war in Iraq? Certainly. Can we disagree about its goals and purpose? Absolutely. But decisions on the ground need to be determined by our military commanders on the scene, and not public opinion polls.

Of course, the other responsibility of Congress is, when it comes to wars, the power to fund them. As a member of the Appropriations Committee, I take that responsibility seriously. But if my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee and in the full House think the war is a lost cause, if they think that sending more troops to help secure Iraq is the wrong strategy, they shouldn't hesitate to cut off the funding for the operation. I wouldn't support that measure, but at least it would be a measure of genuine intent, not a two-paragraph statement on military tactics we have on the floor this week.

Mistakes have been made. But this is a mission that is consistent with our vital interest and worthy of our support. I don't believe President Bush has prosecuted this war flawlessly, and, frankly, I don't believe he has always particularly been well advised. But this strategy of reinforcement is not always supported by the President, it is supported by the military and the political leadership of Iraq.

People have to understand something. We are facing an enemy like no other we have faced before, an ideological enemy driven by hate, not reason; an enemy for whom there can be no rest until the freedoms and values that define our civilization are destroyed.

Victory is the only outcome that can be accepted. But the resolution we are debating on the floor this week was not written with ultimate victory in mind; it was written in expectation of defeat. And, unlike some of my colleagues, I am not willing to concede to defeat.

So many families have sacrificed so that we can be successful in Iraq, and they are willing to sacrifice even more. To cut support for them now would be unforgiveable.

You know, Mr. Speaker, watching the debate on the floor this week, my thoughts keep going back to the Loudon family who live in my district.

Their son Christopher, a member of his college ROTC program, was deployed to Iraq after graduation and came home this fall in a flag-draped coffin.

Their son Nicholas is a West Point graduate I nominated to the Academy, who served with his brother in Iraq, and he is heading back to Iraq this weekend for another tour of duty.

Their son Jonathan, their youngest, and another one of my Academy nominees, is going to West Point this fall. The Loudon family had great concern over whether to send their third and youngest son to West Point. In the end, they were swayed by their son's commitment to serve his country and their shared belief that his mission is one worth fighting for.

If the Loudons can remain strong and committed in the face of the most difficult circumstances any family can endure, why can't Congress?

I have gotten other calls from families in my district. One mother called this week to tell me that her son, a young man named Nathan Stone whom I nominated to West Point in 2001, is currently serving in south Baghdad, sweeping the city, going door to door, risking his life so the Iraqis can live their lives with a basic security. And do you know what he told his mother to relate to me? He told her that they are making a difference, they are seeing progress. They need help, they need these troops, and they will be excited when they get them.

If First Lieutenant Stone believes that these additional troops are vital to him completing his mission in Baghdad, that tells me a lot. And if the Loudons can send their youngest son to West Point knowing that he may some day be called into service himself, that tells me all I need to know.

Mr. Speaker, no one likes war. No one wants our troops to be in Iraq one minute longer than they have to be to ensure the mission is accomplished. Reasonable people may disagree on strategy, but this resolution is not about alternative viewpoints. There are no different courses offered, no suggestions, and no responsibility taken.

I stand with the Loudon family and Lieutenant Stone, and vote opposed to this resolution.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Madam Speaker, I yield 5½ minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO).

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentleman.

We are debating a simple, straightforward resolution. Clause 1 says, ''Congress and the American people will continue to support and protect the members of the United States Armed Forces who are serving or have served bravely and honorably in Iraq.''

Every Member of Congress, despite outrageous allegations from the Republican side of the aisle from some, fully supports our troops and wants them to have the best equipment available to accomplish this mission. The disagreement is over the strategy that determines their mission.

The Republicans don't want to have a debate over that strategy. They are trying to conflate support for the troops with support for the President's failed stay-the-course strategy dressed up with a little bit of escalation.

But as President Theodore Roosevelt said during World War I, standing by a President, whether right or wrong, is not only unpatriotic and servile, it is morally treasonable to the American public.

Supporting the troops doesn't require supporting the failed policies of this President and his administration. The Republicans don't want to debate the conduct of the war and the future strategy in Iraq. The former Republican chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, PETER HOEKSTRA, wrote a letter to his colleagues saying, ''This debate should not be about the surge or its details. This debate should not even be about the Iraq war to date, mistakes that have been made, or whether we can or cannot win militarily. If we let the Democrats force us into a debate on the surge or the current situation in Iraq, we lose.''

So change the subject. Make things up.

There is a massive propaganda effort on the part of many Republicans to distract and dissemble. They have trotted out the tired and thoroughly discredited catch phrase, ''If we don't fight them there, we will fight them here,'' invoking the specter of Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda. However, U.S. intelligence agencies, including military intelligence agencies, have refuted that claim that the conflict in Iraq is driven by al Qaeda. It is not. The violence is driven by a civil war primarily between the Iraqi Sunnis and Shias in a 1,400-year-old conflict, and our troops are caught in the middle of that civil war. The recent National Intelligence Estimate definitively put that issue to rest. The Iraqi Sunnis and Shias have no interest in or capability of attacking the United States.

Osama bin Laden, al Qaeda, and their Taliban allies are still alive and active on the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan, thanks to the Bush administration and the massive diversion of our troops and resources from Afghanistan to an unnecessary war in Iraq. We do need to reinforce our troops in Afghanistan in order to end, once and for all, the threat posed by al Qaeda and the Taliban leadership.

Our Nation and our troops were led into the war in Iraq by the distortion of intelligence, dissembling by the President, and senior members of the administration. It is time for the truth. The Bush administration has saddled our troops with a failed strategy in Iraq. It is that failed strategy that hurts our troops, not the words of those of us who have pointed out the obvious failures by this administration.

I don't believe there is a level of U.S. troops that could stabilize Iraq at this point and resolve these underlying ages-old sectarian conflicts.

The President remains optimistic. However, optimism is not a strategy. Staying the course and repeating the failures of the past is not a new strategy. Vice President DICK CHENEY, despite the grim National Intelligence Estimate acknowledging the civil war in Iraq, dismissed suggestions that Iraq is a disaster, saying, ''The reality on the ground is that we have made major progress.'' Vice President CHENEY.

Optimism, stay the course, and delusion and denial, those do not serve our troops well. We need a real change in strategy.

A better strategy is to announce a time line negotiated with the Iraqi Government to bring our troops home over the next 6 months to a year.

The administration has always set time lines for political developments in Iraq, for the elections, for the drafting of the constitution. The administration argued such time lines were necessary to focus the energy of Iraq's leaders and to force compromises. We need to do the same on the military side. Negotiating a time line for bringing home U.S. troops with responsible parties in the Iraqi Government would 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 timeline 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 where the standing of rulers and governments is low, and it could also abate the insurgencies of both Sunnis and Shias. Too many Iraqis view us as an occupying force. Large majorities of both Sunnis and Shia want U.S. troops to withdraw, and approve of attacks on our men and women in uniform.

□ 2030

The U.S. must engage, despite the reluctance of this administration, 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 is nonexistent. The war that has been authorized by Congress is won. The troops should come home. Congress should not authorize U.S. troops to referee a civil war in Iraq.

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to my colleague from Missouri (Mr. HULSHOF).

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

Mr. HULSHOF. Madam Speaker, on November 19 of 1863, President Abraham Lincoln rose on the platform at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, following a 2-hour oration by Edward Everett, and gave a brief but very eloquent discourse that has become a prominent

part of our country's heritage. At the dedication of the Gettysburg National Cemetery he acknowledged, ''The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is, for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced.''

Can we find some poignancy today in those simple words uttered 7 score and 4 years ago? What is the unfinished work that confronts this body politic, and more to the point, does this resolution promulgated unilaterally by the majority advance the cause for freedom for which 3,000 of our countrymen have given the last full measure of devotion?

For all of these rhetorical meanderings that have occurred lo these many hours, the responsibility for the current state of affairs in Iraq rests squarely with the majority of Members who serve in this Congress of the United States. Back on December 17, 1998, do you recall House Resolution 612 which declared in pertinent part, ''Resolved, by the House of Representatives that . . . the Congress reaffirms that it should be the policy of the United States to support efforts to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein from power' and to promote the emergence of a democratic government to replace that regime.'''

I note that the gentleman who just spoke, along with 400 other Members of the Congress, supported that resolution as the policy of the United States, and thereafter in October of 2002, Congress, both the House and the Senate, approved the resolution approving the use of force and military action necessary to effectuate that policy of regime change.

Now, deposing the former dictator, in relative terms, was the easy part, yanking him from his hiding place, a hole in the ground. He eventually stood trial in the dock as a common accused, was judged by his countrymen according to the rule of law, and held to account for the brutality of his many crimes.

A second policy objective, promoting a democratic government has been the harder path, but though difficult, is it no less important? As my friend and colleague, my classmate from New Mexico (Mrs. WILSON) so passionately and persuasively annunciated yesterday, America has vital national interests in Iraq.

Does anyone argue the contrary? Can we not all agree that we must deny al Qaeda sanctuary in Iraq? Do we not further agree that Iraq must not be the source of instability in the Middle Eastern region?

Well, if we can agree on these points, can the majority make a legitimate case that this resolution accomplishes either of those important interests? President Bush recently nominated General David Petraeus as the new Commander of Multinational Forces in Iraq. Widely known as a brilliant tactician in the area of counterinsurgency, General Petraeus was unanimously confirmed by the other body.

Today, however, the majority desires to deny this extremely capable commander the means to accomplish his objective. Isn't it incumbent upon us, as Lincoln urged, to remain dedicated to the task remaining before us? Haven't many in this body expressed frustration that the Iraqi Government has put limitations on the rules of engagement of our troops in our field, not allowing our military to hunt down the enemy because insurgents had escaped to a safe haven in a region deemed off-limits by the Iraqi Government?

Well, isn't the majority party doing exactly the same thing half a world away with this resolution? Isn't denying military additional reinforcements deemed necessary by our generals in the field hampering our last best chance for success?

Two nights ago I was moved by the quiet eloquence of the distinguished gentleman from New York (Mr. MCHUGH) when he made the simple yet ironic observation: At no time in our Nation's history has this House considered a public rebuke of a sitting Commander in Chief for the manner in which a war has been conducted that Congress itself has authorized.

On that score alone, I find this resolution breathtaking in its audacity. If I may be allowed to paraphrase the Great Emancipator, it is true, the world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but the world will never forget what we do here.

I urge rejection of this resolution.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR).

Mr. FARR. Thank you for yielding.

Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to see you in the Chair tonight.

I would like to thank the new leadership in the House tonight for the opportunity and the time to allow this body and the Members of this body to go on record about the President's war strategy.

Of course I would prefer that we were debating my bill, H.R. 413, which would rescind the authority that we gave the President to invade Iraq back in October of 2002. I voted against this war then, and I will continue to do so now.

We just cannot thank, though, our leadership. We have to thank the American people, the people that went to the polls in November, who voted for a change and a new direction for this country. You, our constituents, voted for this change, and now you are witnessing the historic debate on the President's policy in Iraq.

This resolution that we are voting on is very simple. It has two sections. The first section affirms our support for our troops who are serving and have served in Iraq.

The second section expresses disapproval over the deployment of 21,000 combat troops in Iraq. These two simple statements aren't legally binding. But they are binding promises to the American people who voted for us to change the direction. Promises are important. When soldiers and their families go to war, our government promises to support them, and that we should.

Just think, if we made the same promise to the school children when they go to school, that we would protect them from school violence and fully support their efforts to get an education, and that we should.

Just think, if we made that promise to provide health care for 47 million Americans who are without health insurance today, and that we should. The promise and the list of promises goes on and on, many unmet domestic needs that are not getting attention because of the war in Iraq.

Some say this resolution is meaningless. I disagree. It is a promise, and promises are important.

If we can support our troops and we can support the teachers who are educating their children, we can support the health care providers that are caring for their loved ones.

By voting for this resolution, we are making a promise to the American people to change United States' policy on the war. This resolution doesn't end the war, but it begins a new direction.

This is the first time that we have said ''enough is enough'' to the President. It is a good start. If we go on record in opposition to troop surge, we can express our disapproval to the country's addiction to oil and to the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer. We can express our disapproval of the policy that keeps homeless people on the streets, that keeps one in six American children living in poverty, and allows our skies and oceans to continue to be polluted.

So to the American people, I thank you. I thank you for getting involved, because when you do, politicians respond. You have empowered us to chart a new course for the war in Iraq, and I am proud to cast my vote for this resolution.

Today we are keeping our promise to the people, for what we do for our brave troops, we can do for all of God's children. Yes, Mr. President, we can tell you that you are wrong.

In closing, I think what this debate is about is to wake up the world. America is coming back. It is coming back with the most powerful force on Earth, the energized electorate. This resolution is a breath of fresh air in our Nation's Capitol. It is time to get out of Iraq, it is time to lead.

Thank you, Speaker PELOSI, for bringing us this far in just a few short weeks.

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to my colleague from Mississippi (Mr. PICKERING).

Mr. PICKERING. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution.

As we look back through our Nation's history, and we look back at all

the great chapters, there were moments, decisive, critical moments, where our Nation could have given up, or given in, could have withdrawn, could have surrendered, and those moments that make us most proud are those chapters in our history where we did not give up, retreat, surrender.

If we had a mission, we completed it. If we look to Lincoln's message at one of those turning and tipping points in our history at Gettysburg, when this Nation was in the midst of its bloodiest civil war, Lincoln said, We here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this Nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom.

We have a new Nation trying to grasp its first breath of freedom, to form a more perfect union of freedom and equality and democracy.

Lincoln's second inaugural address: With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness and the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the Nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

Today I took a couple on a tour of this great Capitol, and we walked into the Rotunda under the magnificent dome, the place where if you put the Statue of Liberty, it would still have room within that dome.

The dome was finished and constructed during our Civil War. Abraham Lincoln was questioned during that time, Shall we devote our time and our resources and the labor to the completion of the dome, or should that go to the war effort? And Lincoln said, No, that is a symbol of our union, and we will complete the work of the dome.

When Lee met Grant at Appomattox, it is said that Lee's first question to Grant was, Have they finished the dome yet? They had just finished it in the spring of 1865.

Today that dome defines and symbolizes the strength of our Nation and of our democracy. Many in the world probably thought during that time that we would never survive, and the real question for many of us today as a Nation at war that is spiraling in civil war, can that civil war end? Can a nation be unified? Could the hatred and the violence be stopped and then reconciliation bring unity?

There are many on the other side who believe that it is futile, that all civil wars will never end, that these ancient hatreds will not stop. But if we look to our recent history in Bosnia, there was a President of the other party who stood and said, We can intervene. We will give our military and our diplomatic resources to bring about an end to civil war.

He was successful, and history judges him well for that. To be honest, many on this side of the aisle did not stand in support of that President at that time. But our Nation remembers and are glad that we had a leader who intervened and brought stability to a critical region of the world, and new democracies emerged.

We started this effort together after 9/11. We all remember standing on the steps and singing ''God bless America.'' We can remember going to the cathedral, the National Cathedral, and praying for our guidance and for our unity. We authorized the war together. We adopted a policy of regime change together, overwhelmingly.

And now, 4 years later, when it is difficult and grave doubts rise, will we give up, or will we complete the work and finish the work in which we can be proud?

□ 2045

Lieutenant Joshua Trapp, who flies Apache helicopters in Iraq, deployed this spring after his marriage to Elizabeth of only 3 weeks. He now believes and hopes that he can complete his mission.

I rise today in Joshua Trapp's name, and all of those other Mississippians who have given their lives, that their life may not have been in vain, and that their mission may be supported in this body in this time and this place and that it is a chapter we in this place will remember as we age and grow old that we did not walk away, retreat, surrender, but we finished the mission.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Madam Speaker, I would just first observe that none of these soldiers who died in Iraq, no matter what happens from this point forward, died in vain. No soldier who dies fighting for his country and his comrades dies in vain, regardless of the politics. I hope we would all understand that.

Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY).

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, for almost 4 years the administration has been saying, just give us more time, just give us more money, our plan will bring peace. And now they are saying, we need more troops, 48,000 of them. But we have already had four troop increases since we went into Iraq and none of them have brought stability.

Tragically, this war has cost more than 3,100 American lives, 143 from my home State of New York, and thousands of Iraqi lives, as well as more than 20,000 injured American soldiers who will carry their wounds for the rest of their lives.

The bipartisan Hamilton-Baker Commission called for a different approach. They said: ''The situation in Iraq is grave and deteriorating.'' As Mr. Hamilton said: ''The current approach is not working. And the ability of the U.S. to influence events is diminishing.''

The commission called for greater use of diplomacy. And the commission's report stated clearly that we must not make an open-ended commitment to keep large numbers of American troops in Iraq. They warned that doing so would continue to stretch our troops too thin, hampering our abilities to simultaneously face other threats in the world.

It would severely affect America's army readiness, and it would not give the Iraqi Government the incentive needed to help bring security. If this assessment is so clearly in opposition to a long-term deployment in Iraq, why is the administration doing the exact opposite?

They are calling for a bigger commitment of troops, for more expenditure of lives and treasure with no end in sight. They speak of victory, but what is victory? Was it finding weapons of mass destruction? There were none. Was it a nuclear weapons program? There was not one. Was Iraq an imminent threat to our security? We were told it was, but in fact it was not.

They claimed that they would exhaust all options before taking military action. But they did not even wait for the weapons inspectors' final report. Was our goal to impose democracy on the entire Middle East? The war has inflamed and destabilized the region. Whatever their justification, they have embarked on a policy that is dragging America into the mire of another country's civil war.

In this civil war we don't know who's shooting. We just know that all sides are shooting at us. We also now know that there was no al Qaeda connection in Iraq before we invaded. The Pentagon's Inspector General has reported that Douglas Feith, the Pentagon's Under Secretary, cooked intelligence reports to make a case to go to war based on al Qaeda. It is tragically ironic that now by invading we have actually made Iraq fertile territory for al Qaeda recruitment.

Madam Speaker, on top of their rush to war and their insufficient planning, their mismanagement is legendary. They initially estimated that the war would cost 50 to $60 billion. But by the end of this year, Congress will have spent about half a trillion dollars, ten times the original estimate.

Last week, we had a hearing on $12 billion that was airlifted into the war zone and now $8.8 billion is unaccounted for, completely missing. Madam Speaker, how much mismanagement and misdirection can this country tolerate?

In November, Americans voted for a new direction for the war, a new direction for Congress. I rise in support of this new direction and against this escalation in Iraq.

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to my colleague from Ohio (Mr. TIBERI).

Mr. TIBERI. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution this evening.

The resolution we are debating this evening is a nonbinding resolution. It has no effect of law. It does nothing to change our direction in the war on terror. For those who oppose the war, this

resolution does nothing to end it. For those of us who would like to debate the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group, this does nothing.

For those of us who would like to continue to show our support for the funding of the troops, it does nothing. For all of the chest pounding from the majority about a new direction or redeployment, this does nothing. This resolution could pass 435–0 and it still would do nothing.

Madam Speaker, there has been no opportunity for a free exchange of proposals this evening that could be useful in moving us forward. In fact, just this morning, one of Ohio's largest newspapers, the Columbus Dispatch, said it best in their lead editorial: ''Empty gestures. Democrat's resolution on Bush's Iraq war policy is political posturing.''

That says it all. Madam Speaker, your party has the majority in the House and in the Senate. Yet we have tonight before us a resolution that does not do anything. If the majority wants to exercise real leadership, let's have a true debate. Let's make real decisions, tough decisions, that is for sure, but real decisions.

Madam Speaker, let me tell you about a young marine corporal in my district. His name is Matt. Matt represents the best and brightest in America. Matt had a scholarship to go to college. He turned it down. He enlisted in the United States Marine Corps after Iraq was liberated.

Matt was on his second tour of duty just last month when he was shot. He returned home a few weeks ago. Matt will receive a Purple Heart. Weeks before he was shot, Matt sent an e-mail back to his family and friends in Ohio. In it he says: ''We have done a lot of good in Iraq, but on the homefront we likely will not see that reported.'' Matt said he has watched his fellow marines' hearts grow heavy when they talk to their family and friends, and that this is a tough part of war and a tough part of fighting for freedom.

I spoke with Matt a few days ago as we began debate on this resolution. Matt asked me to oppose the resolution and give him and his fellow soldiers the tools and the support that they need to help Iraqis help themselves take control of their own country, and together fight and defeat radical extremists.

Matt supports the mission. Matt does not want to see his children and grandchildren going back to Iraq to handle what can and should be done now. Our constituents elected us to lead, Madam Speaker. Our brave servicemen and -women look to us for leadership. We must not disappoint them.

Matt, God bless you and your fellow troops for your great and wonderful service to our country. I will vote against this resolution, this nonbinding resolution tomorrow, and will do all I can to support you and your fellow soldiers in your mission to fight and defeat radical extremists who seek to destroy our way of life.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE), a senior member of the House Armed Services Committee.

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

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Madam Speaker, as chairman of the Armed Services Committee on Air and Land Forces, my overriding concern on every issue that comes before us is whether and how it supports our men and women in uniform.

Every decision about equipment, procurement, training, end strength or budget authorization must meet this test: Does it support our troops? The question before us today, increasing U.S. forces in Iraq by some 21,000 combat troops and somewhere between 3 and 28,000 support personnel fails this test in every respect.

Both the immediate and long-term effects of the war in Iraq on our Nation's military preparedness are evident and drastic. Extended deployments, premature redeployments, and sustained combat under unbelievably harsh conditions have taken a terrible toll on our forces and their equipment.

The results are an overstretched U.S. Army and Marine Corps with no fully mission-capable Reserve forces, and an urgent need for billions of dollars to repair or replace worn and damaged helicopters, tanks, other armored vehicles, including up-armored Humvees and other equipment.

I recently returned from an inspection of two of the Army's busiest repair depots in Corpus Christi, Texas, and Anniston, Alabama. What we saw there were skilled and dedicated employees working feverishly to make sure that our men and women in uniform, particularly those in Iraq and Afghanistan, have every piece of equipment they need to do their jobs and keep themselves safe from harm.

What we saw were the results of an administration's abject failure to mobilize this country's industrial base for this war of choice. Only now are we ramping up America's manufacturing capacity to fully support our troops at home and overseas.

Smugly self-righteous in its belief that U.S. troops would be targeted with nothing more lethal than rose petals, this administration has been complacent in leaving the burden of the war on the men and women of our Armed Forces, active, Reserve and National Guard. The impact of this attitude hit home for me in Corpus Christi when I read recently about the death in Iraq of a 48-year-old Army sergeant with five children.

Newspaper Columnist Dan Thomasson asked: What in the world was a 48-year-old man with five children doing in the military in Iraq? The answer is obvious, he was a member either of the National Guard or the Reserve. The Guard and Reserve are being used in a way never contemplated. Their repeated and sustained deployments turn lives upside down, sometimes permanently, and have a profound impact on families, businesses and whole communities.

Why have they been so misused? Because there is not anyone else. Because our active duty force is too small to sustain our engagement in Iraq and Afghanistan. To have acted to ensure the burden of this war would be more broadly shared, that the industrial sector would be mobilized, and the military equipment, supply and maintenance and repair systems put on a wartime footing would have been expensive and an admission of a reality the Bush administration did not want to confront.

The real and immediate concern is that forces now being deployed as part of this surge will not have the equipment they need when they get there. They will have to borrow it. We are not fully prepared to respond effectively.

The House then is considering an expression of support or opposition to another failure of leadership. Nearly 23 years ago, President Ronald Reagan's Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger, outlined in a speech entitled ''The Uses of Military Power,'' six tests that need to be applied whenever combat forces are contemplated.

One: never commit forces unless the particular situation is vital to our national interest or that of our allies. Two: if we are willing to commit the force or resources necessary to win, we should commit them all.

Three: we should have clearly defined political and military objectives. Four: the relationship between the objectives and forces, size, composition, disposition, must be continually reassessed and adjusted.

Five: we must have the support of the American people and their elected representatives in Congress. Six: the commitment of U.S. troops to combat should be a last resort. President Bush's policies have failed every one of then-Secretary Weinberger's tests.

What then are the consequences of this failure? Our troops are in peril. Our credibility is shattered and the lessons of the past are submerged in empty rhetoric and political dribble.

□ 2100

Make no mistake, we are engaged in a war of choice, a catastrophe conceived in ideological zeal, cloaked in misinformation and administered with breathtaking incompetence.

It is an outrage that we have not had a single policy in Iraq worthy of our men and women in uniform. This surge is yet another misstep in this tragic journey to disaster. We need to end it and end it now.

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 4½ minutes to my colleague from Minnesota (Mrs. BACHMANN).

Mrs. BACHMANN. Madam Speaker, the morning of September 11, 2001, I was a Minnesota State senator meeting

with a group of local educators at a Perkins Restaurant in Woodbury, Minnesota. Because you can't find a babysitter at 7 o'clock in the morning, I had my three daughters with me at the restaurant when I learned of the attacks. After that meeting, I dropped our girls off at school and then, together with millions of Americans, in horror I watched my television as the terror unfolded. Thousands of innocent Americans were targeted for death that morning by an evil regime of radical jihadists. Then came the challenge of explaining to our children the magnitude of the tragedy that had just befallen our Nation. As a mother, I can tell you it was one the most difficult conversations that I have ever had.

September 11 galvanized Americans. We knew without a doubt that we had an enemy, but America fought back, united. We were attacked on September 11, but the radical Islamic jihadists declared war on innocent Americans long before that morning and, chillingly, that war continues even today. Their brand of evil chooses to kill the greatest number of innocent civilians. They are a cruel enemy. They are unwavering in their resolve to seek the total annihilation of the United States of America and of our freedoms, and of our Western allies especially. They seek to destroy our friend, the State of Israel.

Today, Iraq is the central front in this war, and that is according to the radical Islamists themselves. Some in this Chamber may want to deny that fact. However, it is the jihadists who chose Iraq as the central front in the war on terror. It wasn't the United States. And we fight them on their turf. Al-Zawahiri has said many times that Iraq is one of the crucial fields in the Islamist war. The radical Islamists know that they cannot beat us with guns and with bullets alone. They can only beat us in one way, and that is if they crumple the resolve of America to fight and to win this war.

To American soldiers, I want to say to you specifically tonight, know that many of us here in the United States Congress support you and your mission. We pray for you. We love you. We appreciate you and your sacrifices on behalf of our freedoms. It is because of your bravery that we will defeat the radical jihadists. Surrender is not an option, not if our goal is the maintenance of freedom.

It is very telling, I think, that the resolution that we are debating this evening only states what those on the other side of the aisle oppose. After all these hours of debate, the American people have yet to hear a plan from the Democrats for victory in this war against terror.

I believe, and you, our troops, know that victory against the evil people who want to kill Americans transcends politics. Victory in this war means that no mother will have to explain to their children the death of thousands of innocent Americans.

American soldiers, please know that many of us in this Congress stand strong in our resolve to support you and our fight to preserve America's freedoms. On my watch, I pledge to you during this, my term in Congress, that I will stand for you, and I will vote to preserve America's freedom.

And I want to say to you this evening that it is American soldiers, Minnesotans, who are in the National Guard. It is members of the Minnesota National Guard who make up over 10 percent of this increase in troops. Minnesota is supplying over 10 percent of those troops.

I had the brigadier general of the Minnesota Guard in my office yesterday, and I asked him, What is the morale? What is the message that these troops want me to know? And he said, They want you to know that they stand ready to fight, and their morale is high.

I say thank you to the Minnesota National Guard. Thank you for your sacrifice. Thank you for your bravery. I will stand with you. Just as the Minnesotans who stood first in line in the battle to fight for our Union, it is Minnesota who is standing strong in this battle to fight. It is the battle of our time, the balance of our generation, and I stand with you.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN).

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, the great poet, Maya Angelou said, ''When I knew better, I did better.''

I am a member of the Progressive Caucus, proudly so, because I believe that we must always strive to do better to truly make progress.

A sign of intelligence and learning is to take the knowledge that we have acquired and adjust our goals accordingly. For some, it seems to be a badge of honor to stay the course, no matter what facts have come to light to contradict that course.

So what did some think they knew then, and what do we actually know now?

Some thought Iraq played a part in the attacks of 9/11. Now we know better.

Some thought that invading Iraq would not diminish our ability to continue our mission in Afghanistan, defeat the Taliban, and find Osama bin Laden, the mastermind of the terrorist attacks in America. Now we know better, but we still don't know where Osama bin Laden is.

Some thought that the intelligence used by the President to lead us to war was accurate. Now we know better.

Some thought that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, which could not be discovered by the U.N. peacekeepers. Now we know better.

Some thought that Saddam Hussein tried to purchase yellow cake uranium from Niger. Now we know better.

Some thought that we did not need the support of the free world to enter into war. Now we know better.

Some thought we would never send our troops into harm's way without proper equipment. Now we know better.

Some people thought the people of Iraq would welcome us with open arms, and that the war would be won swiftly. Now we know better.

Some thought on May 1, 2003, some 4 years ago, that the mission was accomplished. Our President told us so on an aircraft carrier in a photo-op. Now we know better.

Most importantly, we know that young Americans have heeded their country's call and have placed themselves in harm's way to serve America. There is nothing nobler than the sacrifice made by our men and women in uniform. But such sacrifice should never be secured through deception. Now we know better, and we must do better.

Early on, many of my colleagues in the Progressive Caucus did not believe all they were being told about the connection between 9/11 and the terrorists and Iraq. We were all very concerned that pursuing an invasion of Iraq would be an act of aggression unheard of in our Nation's history.

What makes America unique is we believe that our Nation is founded on the rule of law, and that is what has made our country great and why we have been respected all over the world.

Millions of Americans put faith in the administration. Many could not have imagined that such a disastrous course would be pursued without truth beyond the assurances that were given. But now we know.

We know we have lost the goodwill of many of our allies. We know we have no exit strategy. We know that more Americans will sacrifice their lives. We know that mothers, fathers, wives, husbands and children will weep. Children will be orphaned, and young people will spend their lives maimed. And for what?

We can choose enlightenment or we can choose blind ignorance. We can choose to wrap ourselves in the American flag and claim that anyone who demands answers about the reasons for sending our troops into harm's way is unpatriotic and does not support our troops.

We can choose to use the knowledge we now have, or we can cling irrationally to the President's failed policies that led us to war.

The Earth is not flat. The sun does not resolve around the Earth, and we did not go to war for the reasons we were told. I don't know what the real reasons were. Maybe we will never know. But we do know better now and, knowing better, we must do better.

That is why I support this resolution, why I support our troops, why I oppose the escalation, and why we must follow the recommendations of the Baker-Hamilton Commission and shift from the war zone to the diplomatic arena. We have gone from shock and awe to aw shucks.

And escalating this war by putting 20,000 Americans into the streets of Baghdad, ala Mogadishu, aka Blackhawk Down, is inviting a 21st century Pickett's Charge or a Charge of the Light Brigade.

May God save us if the President of the United States will not.

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to my colleague from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER).

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Madam Speaker, I rise tonight in strong opposition to this resolution and in strong support of our troops in the mission as they fight the global war on terror.

I am really disappointed in the hollow resolution that does not match the seriousness of this issue that we are debating. It appears politics, not the safety of our Nation, is leading the way.

Not long ago, several of my Democratic colleagues were arguing we need additional troops in Iraq. But now the President and the Iraqi Study Group say, send more troops, and now the Democrats are against it.

So when they say, now that they have the ability to and the responsibility to govern, the majority has no plan for success. In fact, the only plan is to cut funding for our troops on the ground in Iraq.

Statement after statement from Members on the other side of the aisle paint a very clear picture. This week's debate is merely paving the way for future cuts in funding for Iraq. The realities of the current global conflict demand a more responsible approach from this body.

We know that terrorist enemies are patient. They are calculating, and they intend on attacking us again. They have stated that Iraq is the central front for the global jihad, yet expelling America from Iraq is merely the first step in their strategy.

We also know that leaders of the terrorist organizations have ordered their followers to extend their jihad throughout the region and the world. So it is clear that the attacks on our country and the citizens will not stop if the troops pack up their bags and return from Iraq. The terrorists will follow us back to our America.

A long list of terror attacks took place long before 9/11 and long before we entered Iraq and overthrew Saddam Hussein.

I, like everyone else, want our troops to come home as soon as possible. However, with shortsighted political calculations made in this body that may cause us to lose that war, terrorist groups will only be encouraged to expand their efforts.

In addition to the terrorist groups who are watching this debate and our actions in Iraq, we also know that Iran will see that America is buckling to our political reactions to this issue. Not only does Iran stand to benefit from increased instability in the region, but seeing America retreat in the face of military obstacles will only embolden that rogue regime to question America's resolve.

While we can disagree on whether to send reinforcements, we must all agree that the consequences of losing the battle on the global war on terrorism is catastrophic and far-reaching.

America must not be a Nation where our school buses, our malls, our neighborhoods, become the battlefields for the war on terrorism. Therefore, we should be saying we will not retreat, we will not back down from this fight. We should stand 100 percent behind our troops and give them the tools and support necessary to get the job done. Our security depends on it.

Unfortunately, this resolution fails on each front. This resolution does not put forth a successful strategy for victory, and the resolution does not show our troops that they have our full support.

In fact, for the last 2 or 3 days, you have not heard one solution offered by the other side. You have not heard one solution offered of what happens if the President is right. This is too important of an issue for us to be backing down from and to be having silly political debates.

To the contrary, this resolution only serves to score political points and embarrass the Commander in Chief during a time of war. It does so while, at the same time, weakening the morale of our troops. Fighting and winning the war is serious business. It requires our President, our military leaders, our elected officials to make important decisions, tough decisions. Yet making tough decisions is what the American people expect their Representatives to do.

Therefore, I call on my colleagues to reject this resolution, end the political stunts, take seriously our responsibility to govern and to ensure the safety and the security of the American people.

This has been a rock fight. This is not a place for a rock fight. This is a place for serious deliberation to make sure that we keep America safe, both today and in the future.

I urge my colleagues to reject this resolution.

□ 2115

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Madam Speaker, I would just argue, first of all, I respect the gentleman from Texas, but I have only been here for an hour and 15 minutes and I have heard countless alternatives from many Democratic speakers. May not like those alternatives, may not think they are the best course, but it is wrong to say that the Democrats have not offered alternative courses of action in Iraq. They have offered a good many.

Madam Speaker, I yield 5½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR).

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

With this resolution, Congress puts the Bush administration on notice we take the first step toward a course correction in Iraq that the American people voted last November.

We also put the leaders of Iraq on notice that our troop strength there will be redeploying, not escalating.

This House cannot stand by and expect our courageous troops to win the war against terrorism militarily while the Commander in Chief loses it strategically and ideologically.

Some have said passage will make bin Laden smile. They are mistaken. He is already smiling due to the devolving chaos in Iraq. He is achieving exactly what he set out to do: forcing us to destroy a nation to save it, while embroiling our military in an unending Islamic civil war of attrition that produces more terrorism and anger toward America.

Our mission in Iraq is struggling, but it is not due to a shortage of supplies or a lack of will or poorly trained forces. To the contrary, we have the best military in the world, with every dollar appropriated by this very House.

Our mission is faltering because the President misjudged the field of battle. Our troops are poised against a borderless political movement determined to mobilize downtrodden people.

That idea emboldens its adherence to confront the largest military force in the world. That idea enlists the weak to confront the powerful. It pits puritanical religious followers against kingdoms, against the superrich, and against corrupt regimes they deem to be unfaithful. And in Iraq it propels Sunni against Shia.

Despite the heroic efforts of our troops, the paradox is that the war in Iraq cannot be won in Iraq. Indeed, the war in Iraq becomes counterproductive in winning the war of ideas across the region.

We cannot ask our troops to bear the burden of winning a ground war when the President's policies have lost the idea war.

We know the truth. There were no chemical labs, as pictured here, when Secretary Powell laid out the case against Iraq before the U.N. and said there were chemical labs in Iraq. There were no such chemical labs. There was no yellow cake uranium from Niger, and there were no weapons of mass destruction.

We cannot ask our troops to win military victory when the administration's reason for invasion were falsehoods and debased our Nation throughout the world.

The intelligence was not faulty. No one should be allowed to blame this on the Central Intelligence Agency. Our intelligence community, including the CIA, tried to tell President Bush and Vice President CHENEY, but they refused to listen.

Madam Speaker, though I voted for the NATO mission in Afghanistan, I spoke out strongly against the resolution authorizing President Bush to wage preemptive war against Iraq because I feared what would happen:

more terrorism, not less; more instability, not less.

Since that vote I have supported our troops at every turn and will continue to support them. And I do not regret my vote against the war in Iraq, and I do not apologize for my support of our troops. But now is the time to take the first step toward course correction to redeploy them more effectively.

The roots of terrorism did not spring from Iraq. Terrorism sprang from diplomatic and political failures in undemocratic states, from an Afghanistan that was let fester after the Soviet defeat. Terrorism springs from an Iran whose Shia majority our Nation has isolated for the last quarter century and tried to throttle for the prior quarter century.

Terrorism springs from Saudi families who pay to promote the most radical form of Islam in other nations to hold onto power in their homeland, one of the most undemocratic places on Earth. Terrorism springs from the unaddressed Israeli-Palestinian standoff. Terrorism springs from a Lebanon where the Shia majority has been underrepresented in the institutions of government.

Terrorism springs from a view, fair or not, that the United States allies with the rich but not the poor across the undemocratic Islamic world. How can America stand for democracy in Iraq but not in all of the oil kingdoms and theocracies to which this Nation has been unfortunately tethered for our entire adult lifetimes?

How can we ask our troops to bear the brunt of war in the most oil rich region of the world when we have refused to become energy independent here at home?

Madam Speaker, we cannot ask our troops to bear the burden of war when real diplomacy has been absent and political coalitions for victory are missing in action. In the end, war is the breakdown of diplomacy.

Now is the time for a course correction: redeloyment of U.S. forces, benchmarks to measure strategic achievements, diplomatic alternatives such as a soft partition of Iraq enforced by the world community to quell the rising Sunni-Shia-Kurd standoff.

Chances are the violence in Iraq could continue for years to come. The danger now is that our actions to date exacerbate it and encourage this violence to spill over into Jordan, Turkey, Bahrain, Kuwait, Lebanon, and even Saudi Arabia.

This resolution begins to resurrect America's reputation among the freedom-loving nations of world. America has always been a nation that believes in containment, not preemption. We have always known defense, not offense, is the best war strategy. We have always been strong enough to ferret out, wait out, outsmart, and counterweight the enemy.

3,117 U.S. dead; 23,000 injured; hundreds of thousands of Iraqis dead; the rejection of the world community. These facts should lead us to face a future of a new possibility.

This resolution opens that door. I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes.''

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5½ minutes to my colleague from Florida (Mr. MICA).

Mr. MICA. Madam Speaker, first let me say to those who question our going into Iraq, I voted to go into Iraq and I would vote the same way again. We have found 300,000 mass graves to date, and standing right at this podium, the Iraqi leader told us that Saddam Hussein slaughtered 1 million of his fellow citizens.

The question before us tonight, and what Congress is now considering, is a nonbinding resolution that makes two points. The first point is it praises our troops. The second point is it speaks against the President's decision to increase or surge our U.S. troop numbers in our current attempt to end the civil and terrorist conflict in Iraq.

Let me say at this point that I do not fault individual Members and their choice made tonight or tomorrow to support or oppose the arbitrary nonbinding resolution that is before us. I do, however, fault the failed Democrat leaders who crafted this resolution behind closed doors, written in the dark of night.

The people should know that this is not a true debate. In fact, this exercise is a 3-day politically hatched farce. In fact, this exercise is absent of any legitimate legislative process. It is also, in fact, vacant of the two options provided Congress under our Constitution: first, to declare war or, second, to appropriate funds for the conduct of war. In fact, this is a stealth resolution brought to the floor absolutely void of the democratic process; that our men and women are fighting, as we are here tonight, to preserve our freedoms at home and the rights at home and extend those rights to oppressed people abroad.

This is not Cuba. This isn't Venezuela. This is not North Korea or some Third World country. This is the Congress of the United States.

But let me congratulate the authors of what history will surely record as a very dark chapter in the conduct of the House leadership and the House of Representatives, leadership, in fact, entrusted to them by the American people.

Let me congratulate the authors on the clever wording of a resolution to praise our Armed Forces and at the same time undermine our Commander in Chief. Very clever.

I also want to congratulate the very clever timing of the floor discussion of this worthless measure that disregards the fact that American troops have already been deployed for this mission.

Congratulations are also in order for duping the public and the media into creating the illusion that Congress is really doing something about the conflict in Iraq.

And again congratulations on making people think that this is bipartisan support, that this is going to be bipartisan support for a resolution that, in fact, achieves nothing but the discrediting of a President of the United States in a time of war. So I also want to extend congratulations to the crafters of this illegitimately drafted nonbinding resolution. Your accomplishments will be lauded by Hamas, al Qaeda, touted by Al Jazeera, and highly praised by America and Bush haters throughout the world.

Ironically, I pulled this up. Google it yourself. This is tomorrow, 8:17 Mecca time, Al Jazeera: ''Democrats Attack Bush War Policy,'' and the lead quote is from Speaker PELOSI.

Again, congratulations on your achievement.

Fortunately, though, folks, throughout history great Presidents have ignored Congress and have not wavered. George Washington was nearly recalled by Congress in the darkest hours of the American Revolution. He fought on for nearly 8 years to gain our independence and freedom. Abraham Lincoln endured untold criticism in Congress in his fight to ensure freedom for those once enslaved. Ronald Reagan never flinched in his quest to bring down the Iron Curtain and free millions. And George Bush will be remembered for freeing Iraq, giving women and the oppressed the right to vote, for conducting free elections, helping Iraq adopt a constitution, and combating terrorism and extremists.

The 110th Congress, however, will go down in history for adopting a nonbinding resolution. Think about it.

Yes, we all want our troops home. We all want our children to live in a world of peace. And this resolution will not help us achieve either of those goals.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Madam Speaker, I now yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. JACKSON).

(Mr. JACKSON of Illinois asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise today in defense of our national security, in support of our troops, and in favor of this resolution.

This measure is a first and important step in preventing the President's ill-conceived escalation plan; reversing our present, perilous course; and ultimately bringing our brave troops home from Iraq.

Mr. President, when in a deep hole, stop digging.

But rather than searching for a way out, the President proposes to dig down deeper, plunging further into a dark abyss. Blinded by ideology and steeped in delusion, the administration's answer to the chaos in Iraq is to send an additional 21,500 troops into the middle of it.

I do not support the President's shortsighted, wrong-headed, reckless approach. And on behalf of the American people, this House must act now to stop the continuation of an ambiguous, constantly changing, open-ended engagement in Iraq.

During the last 4 years, our men and women in uniform have answered the call of duty. They have demonstrated true courage and bravery and honor. They have served our Nation valiantly, even as many civilian leaders have failed them.

I mourn the loss of 3,100 Americans who died, 95 of whom are from my home State of Illinois. I pray for the thousands who have been seriously wounded and permanently disabled. And I have voted again and again to ensure that our troops in Iraq had the body armor and the equipment that they need to protect their lives and discharge their duties.

Tragically, the war in Iraq is a case study in ''mission creep.'' And the fact is no amount of troops can successfully complete a mission that is unclear, that is ill-defined, that is muddled and mutable.

During the run-up to the first gulf war, then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, put forth eight criteria to be met for military action. Among the critical questions posed by the Powell doctrine were the following: Do we have a clear attainable objective? Is there a plausible exit strategy to avoid endless entanglement? Have the consequences of our actions been fully considered?

The answer to each question when applied to Iraq today is the same as it has been since the start of this war: no, no, and no.

□ 2130

With the help of its author, the Powell Doctrine was shredded to bits and the mission in Iraq is adrift.

Consider this: On September 12, 2002, President Bush challenged world leaders at the U.N. General Assembly session to confront the grave and gathering danger posed by Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. However, no weapons of mass destruction were found there.

Then President Bush shifted his justification, arguing that the war was about liberating Iraqis from a brutal dictator. But in December 2003, 4 years ago, Saddam Hussein was found and captured. He has since been tried and hanged for crimes against humanity.

After Saddam was taken into custody, President Bush claimed that the mission was to spread democracy throughout the Middle East. Yet Iraq has deteriorated into sectarian violence erupting into a bloody civil war.

Now, with the violence increasing, the President says our mission is to confront the terrorists in Iraq so we don't have to face them here at home. However, according to government intelligence, the war in Iraq has helped recruit more terrorists, not vanquish them.

Madam Speaker, now is not the time to close our eyes, cross our fingers and stay the course. We cannot continue to engage in the same action and expect a different result. We should not send more of our soldiers to the desert on a mission that shifts like the sands beneath their boots.

The President's plan attempts to impose a half-baked, unworkable military solution, when Iraq needs a political one. Rather than a military escalation, this situation in Iraq requires a diplomatic and political intensification. The American military must stand down, so the Iraqi people can stand up and seek a political settlement and assume responsibility for their own future. The Iraqi government must engage in negotiations and compromises that balance the power of provincial and central governments, share oil revenues and protect the rights of every Iraqi citizen.

The Iraq Study Group, co-chaired by James Baker and Lee Hamilton, released a report in December stating the same. They said the security situation cannot improve unless leaders act in support of national reconciliation. There is no action the American military can take by itself that can bring about success in Iraq.

As Democrats, we support our troops, but we don't support the Commander in Chief squandering billions of our tax dollars and recklessly putting our brave soldiers in the cross-hairs of someone else's civil war. I believe our domestic national security rests on redeploying our military forces from Iraq in order to build more consensus in the Middle East.

To conclude, Madam Speaker, I support this resolution opposing President Bush's failed policy of escalation. It is time to bring a responsible end to this war, to bring our troops home, and to bring them home right now.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. CAPPS). The Chair must remind Members that remarks in debate should be addressed to the Chair and not to the President.

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

Madam Speaker, I recall March 6, 2003. I came to this floor and spent an hour and outlined the 17 resolutions before the United Nations in which Saddam Hussein continued his open defiance. That is what was also discussed. So what is lost from this debate is Saddam Hussein's recalcitrance unto the world. As a veteran of the Gulf War, that was ended by a ceasefire, where Saddam Hussein did not uphold his end of that agreement.

To the last speaker, he spoke about the political and economic, but in order for an infancy government to be able to survive, you have to be able to establish its political apparatus, you have to be able to give it its economic goals and a means to achieve them, but you also need to establish security.

Therein lies the President's plan. He met with the leaders of Iraq and he got some concessions from Iraq. ''In fact, you will take the lead, you will work with your parliament, you will achieve these political and economic goals as we work together to establish your security.'' That is the plan.

The Democrats only want to focus on one small portion of the plan, which is called a surge, which is disrespectful to the plan. But it makes good politics, and that is what is disheartening to me.

Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. SCHMIDT).

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Madam Speaker, I rise tonight after another long day out of disappointment—disappointed that we are not having a real debate about how we win in Iraq. We have spent countless hours in what is little more than political theater.

This body is scheduled to meet 145 days this year. Just to open our doors, we spend over $8 million for each legislative day. This debate will cost some $30 million, yet it will yield nothing but a partisan vote on a nonbinding resolution after literally hundreds of speeches designed to do no more than charge up one's own political base.

I am deeply disappointed. The people expect more from us. They expect solutions, not grandstanding. They expect both parties to work together. There will be no victory when our votes are tallied. We will have every problem we began with, but be even further apart politically.

Tonight, I believe we embarrass ourselves before our brave men and women in uniform, before the American people and before our enemies.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, after Congress has successfully completed action on the first 100 hours, we now begin a critical 100 days for the future of our engagement in Iraq, United States policy in the Middle East and our struggle against violent fundamentalism. Between now and the Memorial Day recess, 100 days for Congress to reassert itself as a coequal branch of government, as envisioned by the framers of the Constitution, to change the course in Iraq.

This is a decisive moment. It is time for every one of us who would be a leader to lay our cards on the table. Each must be true to our own conscience and to the responsibility of office by letting the American people know honestly and directly what we stand for and what we would do in Iraq.

This resolution gives clear and concise voice to the desires of the American people. It expresses support for our troops and demands that we not place more of them at risk without a reason or a plan. And I strongly support it.

Along with this resolution, the Congress under Speaker PELOSI's Democratic leadership has already done more to provide oversight and accountability than Republicans over the last 5 years. We have held 50 hearings on the conduct of the war, fraud and failure in reconstruction efforts, and the outrage of our troops being sent into harm's way without the equipment they need. I applaud the efforts of our leadership

on the Appropriations Committee to end the practice of giving too much to the wrong people to do the wrong thing.

However, these are only the first steps. We should not only oppose escalation of the war, but we should pass legislation to bring the war to an end responsibly. Investigations must be followed by specific and personal accountability for crimes that have been permitted in the conduct of this war.

We should use the power of the purse to ensure that funds go specifically to keep our soldiers safe, rebuild badly damaged military readiness, undertake new diplomatic efforts and support the Iraqi people, not an open-ended occupation.

For the last 2 years, I have been working with concerned citizens in Oregon to develop a responsible plan to end the war and provide the best hope for a better future in Iraq. Last month, I introduced comprehensive legislation, the New Direction For Iraq, H.R. 663, as a model for the kind of legislation that Congress should enact, and I am confident will enact.

This legislation would bring the troops home, require a comprehensive diplomatic effort, redirect reconstruction assistance, promote international efforts to disarm militias, investigate and punish war profiteering and deal with the 2 million Iraqi refugees who have been forced to flee their country, people the administration has only recently been able to recognize.

A word about Iran. It is a complex puzzle, more difficult than any of us imagine and one that poses real challenges. But as the President marches us closer and closer to a major provocation, maybe a new war, whether intentionally or not, Congress should not let itself be steamrolled or lied to, as it was with Iraq; Congress must assert itself with real diplomacy and a real strategy.

It is also time that America lived up to our ideals. No more torture, kidnapping and unauthorized wiretaps; no more lying and unnecessary secrecy; not treating the Constitution as a suggestion or using false claims about national security to score political points against those of us who have been right about this war from the beginning.

We must start treating the public like a partner and recognize that they are far ahead of the President and the Republican leadership. I am just frustrated to hear false analogies to the dark days of World War II or to the Civil War. We are bogged down in somebody else's civil war, and we have been doing it longer than World War II or the Civil War, with no end in sight, until now.

They should join us in taking this conversation to coffee shops, churches, campuses and conference rooms, working with the American people.

Over the next 100 days, I will continue to fight for a comprehensive plan that I am confident will come forward. It is in the honor of Travis Bradach Nall, a constituent of mine who was killed in Iraq the very day the President taunted the insurgents to ''bring it on.''

For Travis and over 3,000 of his brave comrades who have given their lives, I urge support of this resolution as a critical first step to bringing this tragic war to a close.

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

Madam Speaker, I stand before you in opposition to this resolution. It champions a dismally irresponsible and dangerous course of action. On its face, the resolution merely addresses the troop surge, ignoring the President's plan in its totality, as I said earlier.

I will now address our efforts to move forward on the diplomatic and economic front. With regard to the establishment of government capacities, the establishment of the rule of law is a necessity, for to have Iraq address the national plan of reconciliation, to have them pass enabling legislation for the Constitution and amendment process, and to set provincial elections, is extremely important.

With regard to the economic piece, the concession whereby the Iraqi government will seek to have a quasi-Alaskan model with regard to the revenue sharing of its precious assets is extremely important, because you do not want the distribution of the oil proceeds to go to regional leaders. It will only empower them and then weaken the unity Federal Government.

With regard to the debt relief agreements, much has been negotiated, but the neighboring Gulf States need to step forward, and upcoming meetings are at hand.

The debate seems to be on the security piece. There are those saying well, let's just back out completely. They use words such as ''withdraw to the United States'' and ''redeploy.'' But is that a plan? I haven't heard any form of military plan. They say what, we will just turn it over to them? Wow.

As we listen to the neighboring leaders, they express caution of cataclysmic consequences. I fear how America will be defined by our friends. Do you reach out to a child as you are teaching it how to walk, let go of the hand and let them fall and say it is up to you, and leave them alone? You are going to have to find your way to the kitchen. Or do you go back and help them walk?

I am concerned about how cold and callous the new majority is to this new infant democratic government. But I guess even more disconcerting to me is the politics behind this resolution. While the majority tells the American public that change must occur, that we are going on the wrong course, this amendment basically opts for the status quo, the same status quo for which they have attacked the administration, which they campaigned against last fall.

They offer no solution, only acting as the critic, and being a critic is the easiest role in the world.

□ 2145

Just sit back and just bark at someone, yet offer no plan of resolution for stability within the region. What is the plan of success for them? Silence.

Let us also address the undemocratic process under which their resolution was brought to the floor here. We stand here and debate how best to bring democratic government to Iraq, yet this majority in Congress shows the leaders in Iraq how to be undemocratic and deny a Republican minority a chance to bring a substitute resolution. I find that quite ironic that this Capitol that is supposed to be the most democratic process in the world is now undemocratic.

I beg of my colleagues not to play politics with the safety and security of this Nation. I must remind this body and the American people the threat we face.

Iraq is a critical front in the larger global war on terror. We are entrenched in a fight against masters of intimidation, bound together by an extreme, perverted ideology which they claim is a legitimate interpretation of Islam.

Our enemies seek to establish regimes that rule according to a violent and intolerant distortion of the Islamic faith, that is, to deny all political and religious freedoms and aim to establish sanctuaries for violence and additional attacks. They have no centralized command structure or place to call home. Instead, they exploit local conflicts to build a culture of victimization. They mobilize resentful, disillusioned, and underemployed young men and women and have mastered technology to aid them in their bidding.

Abu Masab al-Zarqawi, the former leader of al Qaeda in Iraq, explicitly warned that the establishment of a democratic Iraq is the death of al Qaeda there. Think about that. The leader of al Qaeda in Iraq says to establish a democratic Iraq is the death of al Qaeda. Yet, what does the new majority want? Pull-out of our troops, weaken the stability of that country, to be overtaken then by al Qaeda, instead of strengthening the democratic government, ensuring that they have an economy political apparatus and have the security to prevail, which is the death of al Qaeda.

Our resolve should be to succeed in this struggle, and we must be stronger in our resolve than their resolve to inflict terror. At every step they are watching our move, waiting for us to falter, fail, drop our guard, or just walk away.

General John Abizaid, the former commander of U.S. CENTCOM, described well the ramifications of letting Iraq fall to terrorism in his testimony before the United States Senate: ''The enemy's vision of the future would create a region-wide zone that would look like Afghanistan under the Taliban. Music would be banned, women ostracized, basic liberties banished, and soccer stadiums used for

public executions. The people of the region do not want the future these extremists desire. The more we talk about this enemy, the more its bankrupt ideology will become known.''

This enemy uses suicide bombings, beheadings and other atrocities against the innocent citizens of the world to pursue its objectives. They are the enemy of freedom and wanting nothing more than to disrupt peaceful, civilized people everywhere. No one is safe from this hatred, and it is not restricted to the Middle East. Just ask those in London and Italy and other places around the world. This is a global threat. Iraq is not the limit of this beast's haven.

It is the challenge of our generation to destroy this enemy wherever it lurks. We cannot do it without the resolve, cunning, and above all vigilance. The price that we pay for freedom is eternal vigilance from those who seek to steal it away.

While we have not been attacked on our homeland since September 11, 2001, it is not for the lack of the terrorists' efforts. We have been fortunate to have spoiled and foiled several plots here in this country and around the globe. Yet, the fight is far from over. Chances are that today you feel safe in your neighborhood. You can walk to the store. You can play with your children at the local park or in your backyard without having the fear of being blown up by a roadside bomb or being shot by a sniper. You allow your children to go to the malls without fear of a suicide bomber.

It is that peace of mind, this feeling of safety that we are endowed as the elected leaders of this country to preserve at all costs.

I remind you that these extremists want to disrupt and destroy our every way of life. They are not equipped to do battle on a conventional battlefield. Instead, they look to disrupt our most basic freedoms, our securities and our institutions, public and private. The world is their battlefield. Their hope and their goal is to outlast our resolve.

It is our burden to bear, our generation's great challenge to defeat their hopes and objectives. We cannot cower and seek the sanctity of security in this challenge. You are not free when you cower. You have given in to the designs of the terrorists if you do.

This debate began with the Speaker asking whether or not this resolution will make our troops safer. The answer I believe is no. This resolution lacks courage. It lacks leadership and it lacks a forward way of thought. This resolution, to me, is pure political theater. The administration has given us a legitimate plan to work with, and the majority in this House has given us nothing but criticism and a path for an easy way out that virtually holds the door open for terrorists to destroy an infant democratic government and to open a way of access to the U.S. and our allies for terror.

I close with a thought from a past President who faced the trials of war in his lifetime. President Kennedy said, ''Let us resolve to be the masters, not the victims, of our history, controlling our own destiny without giving way to blind suspicions and emotions.''

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ).

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, I join my colleagues today to add my support to this resolution.

This resolution is straightforward and simple: we support our troops and oppose President Bush's plan to send more than 20,000 additional combat troops to Iraq.

I support this resolution because we need a new direction in our Iraq policy. This war has been going on for almost my entire service in this House, and during that time, I have heard one misrepresentation after another.

This war began on a flawed premise, that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and posed an imminent threat to the world. After months of fruitless searches, it became clear that there were no weapons of mass destruction; but 3 years after coming to that conclusion, we are still in Iraq.

Then we captured Saddam Hussein and more than 3 years later we are still in Iraq. We were told we needed to be there to fight the terrorists who attacked us, but we all knew that al Qaeda was based in Afghanistan, not in Iraq.

Vice President CHENEY said the insurgency was in its last throes; and 20 months later, our troops are still in combat in Iraq.

We were told we were in Iraq to establish democracy and freedom. Iraq now has a Constitution and an elected government, but over 1 year later we are still in Iraq.

It was 3 years, 9 months and 2 weeks ago that President Bush declared mission accomplished, but our troops are still in Iraq.

We in this House and the American public have been continuously misled about this war. Enough is enough. If I really believed that sending another 20,000 troops would end the war and bring stability to Iraq, I would support it. It would be worth the sacrifice. But the war in Iraq cannot be solved militarily because it is a political problem.

So when the President wants to send even more troops, we really need to take stock of what that means for our country and the lasting impact that it will have.

We all know the statistics: 3,124 American troops killed; over 20,000 wounded; and over $379 billion spent.

And I have seen the costs beyond the numbers, and I am sure my colleagues have as well.

Each visit that I have made to Walter Reed, every wounded veteran that I have met in my district and each condolence letter I write to the widow or the parent of a fallen soldier painfully reminds me of the great sacrifice we are asking from our men and women in uniform and their families.

There are also costs that we don't have numbers for, but they are worth considering. How many children will grow up without a parent because of this war? How many veterans' lives will be forever altered because of the injuries they have endured? How are we being perceived throughout the world, and has it made us more vulnerable to terrorism?

As we consider the President's decision to send yet more troops and to escalate the costs we are bearing, we need to ask ourselves whether the cost of sending more troops to fulfilled a flawed policy is justified. I don't think it is, and most Americans don't think it is either.

As far as I am concerned, this is a moral issue. We are not doing right by our troops and their families to continue sending them into harm's way without a winning strategy.

And we are not doing right for America. Our continued presence in Iraq is breeding new recruits for terror groups and eroding the readiness of our own Armed Forces.

We are increasingly vulnerable to defending our interests in other parts of the world, such as Afghanistan, where just yesterday The Washington Post reports that NATO lacks enough troops to fight the Taliban and al Qaeda.

It is time to change our tactics and bring an end to our current mission in Iraq. This resolution is not going to do that, but it is a first step in articulating to this President that staying the course is not working and it is not acceptable to the American people.

I urge all my colleagues to join me in voting ''yes'' on the resolution.

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

Thinking about this debate, I reflected back to when this House voted on the resolution to go to war and so thought I would better look up what I said, because I remembered something that was very serious to me and what was very curious was the years before 2001.

I had watched a lot of people vote against the defense bill. Yet coming off of September 11, there was this bravado about going to war, and I felt a sense of unease. So I thought I would go back and see what I said when I came to the floor on that day, and I would like to share it with everyone.

I said: ''I have seen great resolve uttered in this Chamber and the swaggering display of courage.

''I can share with my colleagues, as a veteran of the gulf war, that war may be glorious in verse or prose, but in reality it is not. We are about to send America's finest, and that means men and women will die. It will be a noble cause, but we must remember the resolve of this moment, because in war it is chaotic. Not everything is going to go right. We cannot be 400 and 500 generals between the House and the Senate.''

Now, I said that back on September 14, 2001, trying to caution all of my colleagues, many of whom had voted against defense bills, now rattling sabers, feeling this bravado of let us go to war.

Now I have to ask, was that a false bravado because now, as war has gotten chaotic and has gotten hard and difficult, now they cower, and I have great concern.

So I ended with: ''We cannot have the bravado of today and then run at the first sound of the guns.''

Please remember this day when it gets hard.

The gentleman I am about to yield to, the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS), was chairman of the Defense Appropriations Committee, and I remember him well because I had served as the chairman on the House Armed Services Committee at the time and served with Mr. SMITH, and when we came out after Oklahoma City, then-President Clinton, very concerned about terrorism, and we passed our first anti-terrorism bill here in the House and many people were like, wait a minute, that was a domestic act of terror.

No, President Clinton began to focus abroad, not only upon the Russian Mafia, but he was also focusing on Osama bin Laden and other terror. It can be debated whether or not he took great vigilance on that front or not, but let me post a real compliment to Mr. Clinton because he turned to Hugh Shelton.

General Shelton was at the time the commander of Special Operations. I was very upset coming out of the House conference on the anti-terrorism bill because JOE BIDEN and I were trying to bring the country to roving wiretaps, but the country was not ready for it. So then it was defeated.

I then get on the phone and call General Shelton and bring him up to Washington, D.C., and I asked him a simple question: What are the top ten unfunded requirements that you have given Special Operations, the missions that you have to do in the dark world to secure America but you don't have the resources to accomplish them?

□ 2200

He sat down and he detailed them. More importantly, as President Clinton then named him, appropriately and wisely, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, he worked then with JERRY LEWIS and prepared the force. So when America was hit on September 11 and we immediately sent those special operators into Afghanistan, they were prepared, they were equipped, they were trained to fight in the dark world and special operations, and JERRY LEWIS, his leadership, was responsible for that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California such time as he may consume.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for those very, very poignant remarks laying the foundation for all of us to understand just how serious this challenge is that we are about.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to oppose the resolution before us and urge those who are voting for it, or considering it, to carefully reconsider their decision.

Section 1 simply expresses all of our support for our troops who are fighting for our freedom and freedom in the world in Iraq.

All of us agree with that piece of the statement, and each of us has expressed our support and encouragement to our troops in our own way and our own time.

The second section challenges the President's, actually the Commander in Chief's, request for a surge in Iraq.

Much has been said about our going to Iraq because of the prospect of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of the madman Saddam Hussein. We presumed their presence, as most of the leaders of the world and most of the intelligence communities of the world so presumed. Not finding weapons of mass destruction does not set aside the importance of eliminating the force of Saddam Hussein from the face of the Earth.

It was my honor to lead one of the early trips to Iraq following the fall of Saddam. We were about to consider an $87 billion supplemental to help finance our presence in Iraq. I wanted to take a team of Members who would reflect much of the Congress, so that trip included conservatives and moderates and liberals. It also included within us Members who had voted to support going to war and those who had voted against it.

We visited most of Iraq, Mosul, Tikrit. We spent time in Baghdad. We visited the killing fields where over 500,000 bodies of Iraqis lie, Iraqis who were murdered by Saddam Hussein. We saw the golden palaces and visited the industrial sites suffering under Saddam Hussein's neglect. We saw the economic conditions, the handbasket conditions left by Saddam Hussein.

We stopped out of country on our way home to consider the fact that there was this supplemental appropriations before us when we returned, some $87 billion, discussing what we had experienced. And the experience had a tremendous effect upon all of our colleagues. It is properly summarized by the statement of one of our Members who said: ''You all know where I have been coming from. I voted against the war. But after we have seen what we have seen over this long stay in Iraq, I am afraid what I am about to do is going to be very, very unpopular at home but I don't know how we can do anything else. Sometimes,'' he said, ''you have to be ahead of your people; sometimes we are elected actually to lead.''

That was almost 4 years ago. And fast forward to today. Saddam Hussein is gone, he is dead, and he is buried. But the extremists jihadi Islamic terrorists remain and continue to impact the entire Middle East. That is why we must succeed in Iraq. That is why we cannot afford to withdraw troops now.

Watching our floor debate last night, my wife turned to me and said, ''They want us to redeploy or withdraw. They want us to retreat.'' She said, ''George Washington did not retreat when our country was in danger.'' She questioned why we find ourselves in this kind of circumstance today.

I was reminiscent of that early time in our history when our Nation was threatened. The French came to our rescue, our assistance, and indeed played a major role in our future Commander in Chief himself being successful.

Americans should never forget that. The Statue of Liberty stands on Ellis Island as a reminder of the French view of that young America, its potential, a land of hope where freedom could reign and opportunity indeed might abound. For that and many other reasons we love France, and the French people are our friends.

But France is not entirely the same country at this point in its history. She no longer provides such a leading light for the world. No longer is it presumed that the French language should be the language of the international world. Today, about 10 percent of the French population is Muslim. Much of that population is middle class and something less than a middle-class opportunity.

Within that group, there abounds the voice of Islamic extreme. There are those who advocate jihad and who would wipe France as we know it off the face of the Earth.

We should not consider withdrawing now, because a stable Iraq is vital to our national interests and is an important part of our ability to promote peace and economic opportunity in the entire world. It is a critical battleground in our war against terrorism.

If we succeed in Iraq, we will have taken a gigantic step towards stamping out the source of terrorism that exists in that part of the world. If we are not successful in Iraq, we will meet extremist Islamic activism elsewhere. 9/11 was only a part of a beginning. If we do not stop extreme Islamic jihadists in the Middle East, we will see it again, and most likely we will see it again here at home.

Review with me for a moment where we have been in Afghanistan and Iraq and where it may take us. Al Qaeda was nurtured and gained strength in Afghanistan. America had played a key role in forcing the former Soviet Union to cease its incursion in Afghanistan. The Islamic extremists who surround the likes of Osama bin Laden took advantage of the vacuum of Afghanistan, and used it as a training ground that would provide the terrorists an opportunity to spread their jihad around the world and spread terrorism with it.

America cannot allow the likes of Osama bin Laden to have places like

Afghanistan to serve as training grounds. It is in our vital interests to see that Iraq, for example, does not serve as a recruitment and training ground for the forces who oppose freedom and oppose our very way of life.

Make no mistake about it, there are forces in the Islamic world who do not believe we should exist. They may be relatively new or small in number, but there are those of Islamic jihadist extreme who are committed to the death of the nonbelievers. There are those on the extreme Imam fringe who teach hatred for the infidels in mosques all around the world.

We do not want to believe in such extremism as a country or a people, but the true believers want all of us to be dead, all Englishmen, all Germans, all French people, all Americans who are not committed to their belief. The heathens should be dead. How else would one be able to convince men, women, and children to strap themselves with bombs and kill the innocents by the thousands? If not death to all infidels, how else would a mother praise Allah as her young child explodes as a bomb in a crowded train station?

The war on terror goes well beyond Iraq. But make no mistake, that war will not be won by walking away from Iraq.

The President has called for a surge of just over 20,000 troops. That request does not flow from a naive presumption that maybe, just maybe the battle for Baghdad can be won by a few brave men.

The call for these troops is a change in strategy, a strategy that suggests that, with the leadership of such brave men committed to taking the Iraqis out front, can lead the way to a successful change in Baghdad, indeed, a change throughout Iraq; a strategy that the President would suggest involves clearing areas of Baghdad, clearing other areas throughout Iraq, stabilizing them, and then providing the real opportunity for democratic growth and change in Iraq.

A successful stabilization of Baghdad indeed is only the beginning point in Iraq. To me, this kind of change is the real hope for the people, not just of Iraq, but of the entire region. To me, that is the definition of success in Iraq.

If we are successful, we will have changed the face of the Middle East. A successful Iraq will send a great message to the likes of Iran, Syria, Yemen, and Indonesia.

The chance for a long-term peace and the chance for stability in the entire Middle East is the great strategic interest of the United States saving tens of thousands of lives are worth a great commitment by the world's only remaining superpower. The economic values that are to be gained from stabilizing the region are impossible to estimate, but they can be measured in multiple trillions of dollars.

But what happens if we walk away now? Also difficult to estimate, but here are but a few of the possibilities. And listen to the possibilities:

First, instability is replaced by a new kind of centralized authoritarian control potentially, perhaps an arbitrary government with Saddam-like controls. Shia would very likely be in charge, and force would be exercised in the name of stability.

Beyond that, Kurdistan in the offing; an insecure Kurdish population to the north would do all it could to provide for its own protection. The prospects of independent Kurdish region or state would create major tension between Turkey and Baghdad and that new region in northern Iraq. Beyond that, Sunni Iran would look upon the new direction of Iraq with great concern because of sectarian differences.

□ 2215

Fourth, the jihadist extremists of Islam would have increased sway in the entire region. The threat of terrorism all over the world would be a reality to those who would but look. Indeed, the prospects, to say the least, should be frightening to anybody who will but look.

Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Speaker, all of our country, please realize that this is not the time to walk away. This is the time for the only remaining superpower in the world, America, to lead on behalf of freedom, to lead on behalf of people who are looking for opportunity and change for the entire world.

Mr. BUYER, I very much appreciate your extending me this time.

Mr. BUYER. Reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman for his contribution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I guess the first thing I want to point out, and there are other arguments I want to make, but during Mr. LEWIS' comments, and I have a great deal of respect for the gentleman from California, he mentioned that, you know, George Washington never retreated. Well, as it happens, I just read a biography of Mr. Washington, and not to go puncturing holes in the midst of our great Nation, he retreated a fair amount, actually.

In fact, I don't know where we got this idea that the great leaders of our time only went forward. We have heard about President Kennedy and President Truman. At one time or another, they retreated from a fair number of battles. Now, sometimes that was a wise and tactical maneuver to win the larger war. Sometimes it was a mistake.

History judges, but I think it does sort of portray the thinking of the President that the only way is forward, regardless of the details. A little more thought, I think, might help us. I will return to that point at the end of my remarks.

But the first thing I want to say, I think this is by and large a very good debate on a very important issue facing our Nation. The only time I become troubled in this debate is when speakers on the other side say that this is just political, and that this resolution is irrelevant. What they are saying is that the opinion of the United States House of Representatives on the most important public policy issue facing our Nation today is irrelevant. The opinion of the people's House doesn't matter.

Now, that explains a lot for the last 4 years while the minority party was in the majority, when they did not question this President, when they did not express their opinion in a way that would move us in a more positive direction.

I feel very strongly that it is absolutely the responsibility of those of us in Congress who represent people, our constituents, to express our opinion. In a way we are expressing their opinion. That is what we are supposed to be here in the House, the most directly reflective voice of the people of this country.

So to say that this is irrelevant is just an absolute attack on the Constitution and the way this country is supposed to be set up. We must express our opinion on the most important issues of the day.

Then we come to the next issue, which is, you cannot question the Commander in Chief. He is the guy in charge, he knows more than the rest of us. You cannot question him. It undermines everything.

Let me say I express a certain amount of sympathy for the view that we should place faith in the Commander in Chief. That is a good part of the reason why I voted for this resolution 4 years ago. A little more than a year after 9/11, our President was saying to us, To prosecute the broader war on terror I need this authority. And I had my doubts, but, by and large, I want to be supportive of the Commander in Chief, recognizing the power he has.

But the question I have for the minority is for how long? How many mistakes does this President have to make before we don't have an obligation, not just a right, but an obligation to express our disapproval and try to get him to move in a different direction? Books have been written, more than I can count, about all of mistakes that this President has made in Iraq; books not written just by opponents of the war, many of them written by proponents, outraged that they took their idea, the President took their idea and made such a hash of it.

We have an obligation at some point to stand up and say, enough. Mr. Commander in Chief, I am sorry, but based on 4 years, we do not trust you enough to give you a blank check anymore. We have to express our opinion, and that is what this resolution does.

Let me also assure you, we want to win. We, on this side of the aisle, recognize everything that has been said on that side about the threat that al Qaeda and their followers present. We

will fight them anywhere, anytime, because we recognize that threat.

In fact, I believe that there is al Qaeda in Iraq, and we should fight them.

But what we are talking about specifically today, and Mr. BUYER mentioned the 21,000 troops, that is the aspect of the plan that we focused on, precisely because that is the aspect of the plan that is most wrong, that does the exact wrong thing, sending 21,000 U.S. troops to fight in a civil war that has been better described by some of my colleagues, so I won't go into it any further, that they cannot possibly sort out the bad gays from the good guys is the exact wrong thing to do.

Given that feeling, and I have personally thought about this a great deal, I met with the President on a couple of occasions as he outlined this plan. I talked with many soldiers who served, gotten many opinions on this, and have come to the honest conclusion that it is a mistake, that it undermines our ability to win that larger war against al Qaeda, which is the war we are fighting.

Given the fact that I feel that way, I would be betraying everything that I said I was going to do when I got elected if I didn't on the RECORD express that opinion. That is what this resolution does.

So I know this hope will go unfulfilled, but I would hope at a minimum that the minority can stop saying that the opinion of this House is irrelevant. If they feel that way, they should all just go home. All right, it matters. You may disagree with the opinion we are expressing. I urge you to vote ''no'' if you feel that way, but I don't feel that way.

I feel we need to tell the Commander in Chief that he has led us down one too many blind alleys. We disagree with him. We want him to change course, and that is the will of the people's House, being expressed by us. That is not just our right. It is our duty as Members of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, it has been nearly four years since the war in Iraq began—four-and-a-half since President Bush and his team in the White House started the effort to launch our nation on the path to this war. We learned a lot during that time frame, but two things stand out. First, the war effort has failed to achieve the outcome the President hoped for, instead creating problems he clearly felt would not come to pass. Even he admitted that he is dissatisfied with the way the war has gone. Second, at every step along the way, beginning with the way the President got us into the war, right up to the President's latest plan to once again increase the number of U.S. troops in Baghdad, President Bush and his administration made mistake after mistake—failing to an almost incomprehensible level to learn from past errors or to demonstrate even a modest level of competence in prosecuting this war. Countless books from all points on the political spectrum lay out in painful detail all the mistakes this administration made in Iraq.

It is way past time for this Congress to stand up and say enough. We disapprove of what President Bush is doing in Iraq.

But our friends on the other side of the aisle claim that such a statement is meaningless. This is an astounding assertion. The United States House of Representatives—the elected voice of the people of our Nation—stating clearly and on the record how they feel about the single most important policy issue of our time is meaningless? This opinion, expressed by the minority party, perhaps explains the utter lack of oversight and accountability that they employed when they were in charge—standing by and acting as mere cheerleaders for the President's actions in Iraq as he made mistake after mistake. The other side of the aisle at least has a consistent record of believing that the opinion of Congress, a body our Constitution set up as a coequal branch of government with the Executive, is meaningless.

As much as I disagree with this conclusion as to the proper role of Congress in expressing its opinion on the Iraq War, I do understand this initial reluctance to pressure President Bush to change course. In a time of war we all want to stand behind our Commander-in-Chief as a first option, and the powers of the presidency make it difficult for Congress to, in a clear-cut straightforward manner, direct the President in the conduct of war. But the President's record of mistakes in Iraq makes it clear we can no longer cling to this first option, and, difficulties notwithstanding, the cost of continuing down the same path the President has been pursuing in Iraq has reached the point where Congress must at least try to force a change in direction.

This effort should logically begin with a clear statement from the House that we disapprove of the way the President is conducting the war in Iraq. That is what this resolution does. With this vote members can no longer hide behind, ''on the one hand, but then again on the other'' statements. We can all mutter about things we don't like in Iraq, but an official on the record vote is required to make that disapproval clear. Do you support the way President Bush is conducting the war in Iraq? Yes or no.

And make no mistake about it the President's plan to increase the number of U.S troops in Baghdad represents no change in policy. It is stay the course, more of the same. In the last year we made large increases in the number of our troops in Baghdad twice already. Both times violence went up in the city, and as we have begun the current increase in troops that violence has once again increased. The lesson should be clear at this point—United States military might will not stop or even reduce the violence in that city.

Listening to the arguments against this resolution helps to understand why our President insists on making some of the same mistakes over and over again in Iraq. We are told that our fight in Iraq is a clear-cut battle against the same type of al Qaeda-backed extremists who attacked our Nation on 9/11 and that we are defending a worthy Iraqi government against these evil forces. If this were true, I would support whatever increase in troops was necessary to defeat that evil force.

But it is not even close to true—it is instead a dangerous attempt to paint a black and white picture on a situation that is far, far more complex. Baghdad is caught in a sectarian civil war. Both Shia and Sunni militias are battling each other as well as United States forces and the Iraqi government. It is a complex web of frequently changing alliances and interests that makes it impossible for our troops to separate good guys from bad guys. This is why our troops cannot stop or even reduce the violence. And the Maliki government we are being asked to support spends as much time acting like they are supporting the Shia side of the civil war as they do acting like they want to bring Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds together to form a stable Iraq.

Al Qaeda is in Iraq and we should continue to target them, but that effort will require a far, far smaller U.S. military presence than we have there today. Currently we are expending an enormous amount of resources in Iraq, most of which is going towards putting our forces in the middle of a chaotic civil war where our efforts do not advance and may even retard our fight against al Qaeda. That massive military commitment reduces our ability to pursue al Qaeda in the dozens of other nations where they have influence—most glaringly in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

This larger, more important fight is not solely or even primarily military. Diplomacy and other efforts to move disaffected Muslim populations away from joining al Qaeda are a huge part of our battle, and we need to enhance those efforts. But we can't, because we're hamstrung both by a lack of resources—financial and strategic—that are tied down in Iraq, and because our open-ended occupation of Iraq continues to undermine America's standing in the world.

Instead of sending more troops to Baghdad the United States policy in Iraq should be to instruct our military leaders there to put together plans to as quickly and responsibly as possible reduce the number of U.S. troops in Iraq. We need our troops to focus on al Qaeda and its supporters, not to be bogged down in a sectarian civil war that is only tangentially related to the larger fight against al Qaeda.

The first, critical step in this process of changing our policy in Iraq is this resolution. Congress must make its disapproval of the President's policy in Iraq clear and on the record.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN).

Mr. ALLEN. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I thank our Speaker and the majority leader for scheduling this long overdue debate on Iraq. For 4 years we have suffered from a Congress that was unwilling to lead, and content simply to follow on Iraq. The previous majority gave the President a blank check for the war and rubber-stamped the funding. They ignored oversight, avoided investigations, and stifled debate.

Today in Iraq, the price of this neglect is the loss of too many American lives caught in the crossfire of a sectarian civil war.

Now our new Democratic leaders and committee chairs are asserting Congress' constitutional responsibilities on war and peace. We are reclaiming a congressional role in foreign policy in order to bring a responsible end to the U.S. military involvement in Iraq. One step is this resolution, which sends a vital signal of disapproval of the President's escalation plan. Another is the

ambitious list of long overdue oversight hearings.

In the first 5 weeks of this Congress, we held more hearings on Iraq than the Republicans held in all of 2006. The next step, we should use the appropriations bills to shape policy in Iraq.

I strongly support the Skelton-Lantos resolution, which expresses support for the troops and disapproval of the President's escalation. Only a political solution, not a military one, will address the sectarian conflict in Iraq. Yet President Bush has rejected the wisdom of his military commanders, the Iraq Study Group, and many other experts by choosing to send more troops into a Sunni-Shia conflict that we cannot control.

Escalation, we know, is opposed by the majority of the American people. More telling, it is opposed by a majority of the Iraqi people. When the White House war plans diverge from the wishes of the people and leaders of Iraq, we must question the relevance of the mission. Our statement on the escalation is important, but our constituents also deserve to know our position on an exit strategy.

We cannot make needed investments in our future until we put our involvement in Iraq in the past. This war is straining our military and undermining our ability to deal with domestic challenges. We must force Iraqis to take responsibility for their own security by directing an orderly redeployment of the troops and promoting a political solution in Iraq with a focus on transition to Iraqi control.

Recent experience shows that the U.S. must impose deadlines with consequences so that Iraqi leaders will be compelled to take responsibility. An indefinite U.S. military experience in Iraq creates a climate of dependency that undermines the goal of having the Iraqi Government control internal security. It is not in our national interests to have U.S. troops placed between warring factions in a sectarian war.

To achieve this goal, I support H.R. 645, a bill introduced by Representative DAVID PRICE and Representative BRAD MILLER. The bill terminates, by December 31, 2007, the authorization for military operations in Iraq that passed, over my objection, in 2002. The original mission, eliminating weapons of mass destruction and ousting Saddam Hussein, is no longer operative.

If the President believes troops should remain in Iraq beyond 2007, he must come to Congress and justify a new mission, and Congress would have to vote to approve a new mission. H.R. 645 also requires the President to submit a plan and timetable for phasing out troop deployments by December 31, 2007. It prohibits funding for permanent U.S. bases in Iraq. It authorizes funding for employment, democracy, and governance programs in that country, and it creates a Special Envoy for Iraq regional security.

America's servicemen and women who have been sent to Iraq have served with skill, determination, and courage. We owe them and their families our gratitude and our unwavering support.

Like every Member of Congress, I have been to too many funerals not to understand the sacrifice of those who have served, and their families. Neither H. Con. Res. 63 nor H.R. 645 cuts our funding for armor and protective equipment still needed by troops in the war zone. Congress must take a long overdue leadership role in ending this war. This resolution is an important first step, and I urge all Members to support it.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Thank you, I just want to add, before reserving the balance of my time, I want to thank Mr. ALLEN for offering a very specific plan and to once again remind all of you who are watching the debate that to charge the Democrats don't have a plan simply isn't true. We have a large number of them. We are just trying to get the Commander in Chief to start paying attention to them.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

The mission here is to develop a country that can govern, sustain and defend itself, govern, sustain and defend. So under that, under govern, you have political. Under sustain, you have economic. And under defend, you have security.

So as I listened to my colleagues come to the floor and say it only requires a political solution, really? These are not inextricable. I also appeal for consistency. I just heard the last speaker talk about the necessity for national interests, so he said it is not in our national interests to be in Iraq.

Let's stop and think about that for a second. Let's be consistent. In the 1990s, Republicans operated under what was called the Weinberg Doctrine, that only commit U.S. ground troops if there is a national vital security interest. And that is how we kind of were guiding ourselves based off the Weinberg Doctrine. Then what happens? We have got Bosnia. We said oh, that is a European problem. Then the U.N. came in, the U.N. was ineffective.

President Clinton made a judgment, and he upset Republicans. He made a judgment that because of the atrocities in Bosnia, the ethnic cleansing that was occurring, that it took U.S. ground troops, a presence of them. Republicans at the time said there are not vital national interests at stake. Democrats then said, oh, that doesn't matter, this is a humanitarian cause.

Democrats said, it is okay to take U.S. troops, put them on the ground to stop the fighting for a humanitarian purpose. That is what Democrats said in the 1990s. Republicans were curious about all of this because it was against the Weinberg Doctrine. As a matter of fact, there were 315 votes. I brought a resolution to the floor, 315 Republicans; Democrats then said, oh, no, no, no, no. Don't put U.S. ground troops on the floor, and that was in the middle of the Dayton Peace Accords.

Bill Clinton was very upset with me. So the President brings me down to the White House and says, hey, work with me. So I said, I will, and we drafted benchmarks for the success of the civil implementation of the Dayton Accords. I worked with President Clinton.

Where do I hear you working for a solution in Iraq? Don't just be the critic. I ask of my colleagues, where is your consistency and your policies? If you are as consistent as you were for a Democratic President, it was a humanitarian cause in Bosnia, I don't hear you talking at all about the atrocities that occurred under Saddam Hussein.

□ 2230

The murders, the ethnic cleansing, a humanitarian cause, the effect it has not only upon the neighbors, the stability of the Middle East, but what about Israel? Do you want to turn your back on Israel?

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HODES). The gentleman's remarks should be directed to the Chair, rather than to others in the second person.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, do you want to turn your back on Israel? If that is what you are asking me, Mr. Speaker, do you want to turn your back on Israel?

I am stunned. I just ask for people to remain consistent, or if you change your beliefs, say that you change your beliefs, or if you don't want to say that you changed your beliefs, then we must assume that you changed your beliefs.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN).

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to ask my colleagues to vote against House Concurrent Resolution 63. I ask this despite the fact that I am very much in favor of the first part of the resolution before us. The first part says: Congress will and should 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. If the resolution stopped there, it would be great.

We would be sending a message that we unequivocally support our troops in Iraq, our troops who are preparing to go there, and General Petraeus is being confirmed to lead those troops.

But the resolution does not stop there. It goes on and by its words takes that support away. How do you support the troops without supporting the plans of those troops? General David Petraeus was confirmed just a scant 20 days ago with much praise and fanfare. He is probably one of the most respected men to ever wear the uniform.

Congress said to him, you are great, go get the job done. Now, less than a week after he took over in Baghdad, we are in the throes of the process which will essentially tell the general, sorry, we don't approve of the plan you created or are currently undertaking.

Most of those criticizing this plan offer no alternative, and I say most. Some have offered an alternative, but most of those criticizing this plan have offered no alternative.

Even the Iraq Study Group, a bipartisan commission of statesmen who have been heralded and quoted by the many who support this resolution, have indeed said that they support the short-term surge. This was later confirmed by Mr. Hamilton, the Democratic co-chair of the group when he appeared in front of the Foreign Affairs Committee of which I am a member.

I visited Iraq five times, the last with my friend from Indiana (Mr. BUYER). I met with the troops from my State and from others across America, thanking them for their service in combating radical Islam and the insurgency and liberating a people from tyranny.

I have sat down with the President and the Prime Minister of Iraq. I have told them that the Americans and the coalition forces would soon be leaving Iraq in the not-too-distant future. Their response has always been, we want you to leave but we need your help now until we can train our forces to provide our own security.

America will one day hand over responsibilities to the Iraqis, but it must be on terms which are beneficial to the interests of America, Iraq and the region, while not sacrificing the progress we have made or the security that we have earned. We must do right by the Iraqi people. We must do right by our troops in Iraq tonight, and we must do right by the men and women in uniform and their families who have served and sacrificed so much.

Our allies, countries in the region, in fact most of the world, agrees that if we pull out before the Iraqis are ready, it will create tremendous instability in the region, leading to the possibility of war and nuclear proliferation in the Arab states.

I had the opportunity to successfully play sports at a fairly high level. Whether it was on a Boys Club team, a high school team or a major college football team, nothing emboldened our team more or made us work harder to defeat the other team than when we saw dissension on the other team. We have an opportunity this week to send a strong message to our allies, the insurgents and most importantly the men and women in uniform who ironically are in combat tonight attempting to execute the plan that is being railed against on the House floor as we speak.

The message that we should send should be our will to not jeopardize the safety of those in Iraq by emboldening our enemies. We can show this by our will tonight of defeating this resolution.

The other thing I would like to say is that reference was made to Washington. And I also am reading a book on John Adams that is related, certainly. And Washington did at times have to pull back. He was facing the greatest army of the time.

But he did pull back. And Washington also was under tremendous pressure from Congress, under tremendous criticism. And I am certainly glad that Washington did not listen to that criticism, that he fought on. If he had not, we would probably be under British rule today.

Mr. BUYER. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, this past fall I had an opportunity to meet with 18 representatives of the European Union. The European Union is quick to say that we are not necessarily with you on Iraq. But boy, we are with you in Syria and standing tough on Iran.

Do you know what the message is? It is inextricable. You cannot pick and choose. The Middle East is so complex. So, Mr. Speaker, when you begged of me to address you the question, it is this: If we were to follow the Pelosi-Murtha plan, what happens to Israel if we leave a vacuum that is quickly filled by Islamic extremists in Iraq? Therein lies the question.

I believe we jeopardize the safety and security of a lone democracy called Israel, and we leave them to defend against a region filled with vipers who seek their annihilation.

Now, our friends who are also of Arab nations, they are partners in our coalition to help on the political and economic success of Iraq, and they are eager for us to also help Israel and the Palestinians resolve those differences. It is all inextricable.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, may I ask how much time remains on both sides.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from California has 1 hour and 10 minutes. The gentleman from Indiana has 1 hour and 19 minutes.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I just wanted to mention to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that it is concern for our allies in the region, it is concern for our friends there that we have chosen and speak to escalating our diplomatic efforts in the area that this resolution comes forward.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. PERLMUTTER).

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, it is good to see you in that chair, Mr. Speaker, because you and I, I think, are here because people in this country wanted a new direction. They had had enough. They wanted a change. And they want a new direction in how this country is being run. And if there is a single subject where they want a new direction, it is on Iraq.

Now, we have a resolution before us tonight that is a vote of confidence for our troops and a vote of no confidence for our President's policies in Iraq. First and foremost, I want to say that I support our troops and will fight to make sure they have the equipment they need and deserve. What they require on the battlefield they must have. What they need when they come home we must provide.

However, our troops are entitled to sound public policy with a realistic mission that strengthens America's national security interests. I am opposed to the President's proposed surge of sending 21,000 additional troops to Iraq. I was opposed to the invasion of Iraq, and I believe that we have taken our eyes off the necessary war in Afghanistan and against terrorism by the costly distraction of nation-building in Iraq.

We must be seeking Osama bin Laden. That is where our attention must be focused. But this surge is not a change in direction, but it is more of the same.

The President has not listened to the American people. He has not listened to the bipartisan Iraq Study Group or even to our senior officers such as Generals Powell, Abizaid, and Hoar.

Now, my opponent and I in this last election debated the issue of a surge. How my opponent knew that there would be a surge, that is beyond me. But he supported the escalation and I opposed it. And I still oppose this surge, because in my opinion it is too little too late.

The people of the Seventh Congressional District of Colorado spoke loud and clear. They questioned the President's policies in Iraq. Americans elected a new majority in Congress to act as a check and balance, and not a rubber stamp of the President's policies, especially those in Iraq.

It is time to turn over security to the Iraqi people, press forward with diplomatic efforts, create a multinational reconstruction effort and redeploy our troops from Iraq by the spring of 2008, as recommended by the Iraq Study Group.

It is time for Iraq to take responsibility for its future. Mr. Speaker, I urge the Congress and all of the Members to vote in favor of the resolution that is before us tonight.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR).

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution. While I believe that the President as the Commander in Chief has the inherent authority to manage the conduct of congressionally approved military action, I have serious concerns that a surge in the number of U.S. combat troops in Iraq is not the best course of action at this time.

The deployment of 21,500 additional combat troops to Iraq is not the answer. I agree with former Secretary of State Colin Powell when he stated: ''I am not persuaded that another surge of troops into Baghdad for the purposes of suppressing this communitarian violence, this civil war, will work.''

Secretary Powell is not alone in his belief. Generals Wesley Clark, Barry McCaffrey, John Abizaid, and James Conway have also made statements to this same effect.

I have traveled to Iraq and I have met with our military forces. And I believe our foremost commitment must be to their safety. I strongly believe that we must concentrate our efforts on preparing the Iraqi Government for the task of providing security to their own citizens. Our forces in Iraq should be primarily focused on training and supporting Iraq's own military and police.

We must continue working to shift the responsibility for security from the U.S. forces to those of the Iraqi Government. It is only through this path that we will ensure the safe and orderly return of our brave men and women.

Empowering the Iraqi people and the Iraqi Government must be our primary goal. I will continue fighting to ensure that our service men and women have every tool and every resource that they need to carry out their duties and return home safely.

We must all dedicate ourselves to ensuring that our brave men and women in uniform have all of the unconditional support and thanks. Their sacrifices and bravery must never be forgotten. We should also be mindful of those who have served and serve in our National Guard and Reserve units, and those that are not yet American citizens but who still serve our country with distinction.

Let us always remember the lives of more than 3,000 dedicated Americans who have lost their lives in this conflict, and the thousands and thousands of American soldiers that have been injured.

It is time to be bipartisan and move forward with a comprehensive plan for handing over responsibility to the Iraqi Government and stabilizing the region. Iraq must become the responsibility of the Iraqis. Let's surge forward only in the commitment to transfer responsibility for Iraq to the Iraqis.

Only together can we ensure the safe return of our brave and dedicated American troops.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 9 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE).

□ 2245

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, who is also the ranking member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee and obviously, very, very passionate and articulate on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents know that I vote my conscience. I voted against my party and our President when I thought that they were wrong. I have stood up to my leadership when my constituents knew Congress could do better.

But, Mr. Speaker, my vote on the resolution before us isn't about my party or about the President. Unfortunately, this vote and this debate is all about politics and providing some political cover. This vote does nothing to help our soldiers win. What I see here is this liberal leadership pandering to the vitriolic left wing of the Democrat Party.

How do I know this?

At the opening of this debate, Speaker PELOSI asked the only real relevant question: Will this resolution make our troops safer? In her remarks, and I have read and reread them, she didn't say how her resolution did that. I have pored over the remarks and the text of this resolution to find all the instances where the House will be giving greater resources to the troops, and it doesn't.

After I read all 60 words many, many times, I can tell you, not one single word in the resolution offers any more equipment, not any more diplomacy, or any more security for our troops.

And guess what?

It also does not bring one soldier home sooner. It doesn't demand the Iraqis take the lead in the fight. These omissions make it startlingly clear to me that the answer to Speaker PELOSI's questions, will this resolution make our troops safer, is absolutely no, it will not.

The Democrats have this resolution all wrong. To be more specific, there is not a single mention in this 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, and, Mr. Speaker, not one mention of the method to fund the health care needs of those veterans who will come home. Not one word.

I invite the Speaker to come back into the Chamber and tell this House where is the additional money to make our soldiers safer and our Army stronger, because if she can't show me the substance in these 60 words, then they are nothing but rhetoric, and this resolution cannot and will not help our troops.

This week the House is debating a useless resolution that's only purpose is to weaken and divide. The American people are not stupid. They can see through this charade for exactly what it is. It is a toothless effort to provide political cover for Democrats.

As a matter of fact, the Orlando Sentinel, certainly not a conservative newspaper, has said that this is an empty measure. It says the pointless House Resolution on Iraq fails to set goals. It goes on to say, The U.S. House launched a welcome debate this week on the Iraq war. It is too bad 3 days of points and counterpoints will end in a vote on a pointless resolution. This isn't thoughtless policy, it is political cover.

Believe me, the Orlando Sentinel is, by far, not a very conservative newspaper.

My constituents know that over these 3 days we have debated a resolution with no teeth, no enforcement, and it is delivered in a way that has no guts, no character and provides no leadership.

Mr. Speaker, if this debate were about policy, we would be talking about changing or creating law. If the Democrats believed what they were saying, this House would be debating spending and funding, not wasteful rhetoric. If my colleagues on the other side of the aisle were genuine, we would be talking about benchmarks for Iraq, the Iraqi Government, and strict guidelines for appropriations.

I have heard some on the other side of the aisle say that this debate is about preventing an escalation. Is the Democrat majority so powerless that it cannot stop a deployment?

Before I got elected, Congress authorized this war, and with the force of law, this Congress could stop it. Congress' concern should be for our troops, not the Presidential and political ambitions of the Democrat Party.

It is rare when I stand on the floor and say that the Senate actually got it right, but I must commend them for their more thoughtful and less politically attuned resolution, because their resolution states the long-term security interests of the United States are best served by an Iraq that can sustain, govern and defend itself and serve as an ally in the war against extremists. That statement acknowledges the battle that we are waging and the eventual victory that we must achieve in the Middle East.

The 60-word resolution before this Chamber makes no such statement or recognition and sets absolutely no benchmarks.

My sole concern is for our troops. The litmus test for my vote is whether or not this resolution makes our troops safer.

Mr. Speaker, I believe every Member of this House should ask themselves the following questions:

Will this resolution protect one of our soldiers?

Will this resolution make one piece of armor thicker?

Will these empty words make a single IED less lethal?

Will this resolution stop one sniper or one suicide bomber from attacking our troops in the field?

Sadly, the answer is no. This resolution is not being debated in a vacuum.

We must ask the question, Could this resolution encourage our adversaries?

Could this debate put one of our soldiers in further harm's way?

Might some Islamic terrorist believe that the more of our troops that they kill, the quicker the U.S. will withdraw our forces?

If the answer to these questions is even possibly ''maybe,'' then I cannot vote for this resolution. We should not risk encouraging those who would attack our troops just for the empty gesture of partisanship.

Let's call this for what it is. This resolution puts our troops at risk for the Presidential aspirations of some Members of the opposite party.

Many Members have noticed that on the 11th day of every month I wear this pin. This was given to me by firefighters. It is a depiction of firefighters

putting up our flag in New York City after it was attacked. This is why we have very brave young men and women out there fighting today.

I am not a blind supporter of the President's policies. And if we wanted to make this debate about policy, I would be there to work with them.

The President knows all well my strong reservations about some of the policies in Iraq. But, Mr. Speaker, it has not been a perfect war.

I stand here today to let our troops know that I will hold the President's feet to the fire to ensure that our soldiers have the tools for our victory. That is what our soldiers want.

In the South, we have a wonderful saying and it goes like this: ''Git 'er done.'' Our soldiers want to get it done and come home. And our President wants the same thing. And this Congress should also demand the exact same thing. Let's get out there and ''Git 'er done.''

[From the Orlando Sentinel, Feb. 14, 2007]

EMPTY MEASURE—OUR POSITION: THE POINTLESS HOUSE RESOLUTION ON IRAQ FAILS TO SET GOALS

The U.S. House launched a welcome debate this week on the Iraq war. It's too bad three days of points and counterpoints will end in a vote on a pointless resolution.

The non-binding measure simply declares that Congress supports U.S. troops, but disagrees with President George W. Bush's decision to send another 20,000 to Iraq. Members who vote for it can say they made clear their opposition to escalating an unpopular war, but didn't sell out the troops.

This isn't thoughtful policy; it's political cover.

In the Senate, a detailed resolution whose sponsors include Michigan Democrat Carl Levin and Virginia Republican John Warner, the chairman and former chairman, respectively, of the Armed Services Committee, is a more constructive response to the president's troop surge.

While the Senate resolution declares support for U.S. troops and opposition to the surge, it also points out ''the long-term security interests of the United States are best served by an Iraq that can sustain, govern, and defend itself, and serve as an ally in the war against extremists.'' It advocates reaching that goal by encouraging Iraq's leaders to make the political compromises critical to promote reconciliation and security.

The resolution places the responsibility for dealing with Iraq's civil war where it belongs, on Iraq's armed forces. But it acknowledges a role for U.S. forces in battling terrorists, and in training and supporting Iraqi forces.

The resolution echoes an assertion Mr. Bush made in announcing the surge: The U.S. commitment to Iraq is not ''open-ended.'' But the measure goes a step further by declaring U.S. help should depend on getting Iraq's government to agree formally to meet benchmarks. These include sending all the troops it has promised to Baghdad, fairly distributing the country's oil revenues among all its people, and letting the country's military operate without political interference.

Unfortunately, parliamentary maneuvering between Democrats and Republicans over the Levin-Warner measure and two other Iraq resolutions doomed a debate and vote last week in the Senate. The chamber's leaders need to work out a compromise that will allow a full discussion and roll call on all three resolutions.

We share the misgivings of many members of both parties in Congress about the president's latest war strategy. But with the troop surge under way, and Mr. Bush vowing to push ahead, it's better at this point for Congress to raise the pressure on Iraq's leaders to meet their obligations to reconcile and secure their country.

Mr. Bush insisted this week that he would not be closely following the House debate. A vote for the House resolution will be easy for him to dismiss. But a bipartisan endorsement of the Senate's constructive measure is more likely to get the attention of the president, as well as Iraq's leaders.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky, RON LEWIS.

Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, this debate is a sad moment in our Nation's history. If there was ever a time when Americans should be standing together, this is the time. This resolution does nothing but divide.

Throughout our country's illustrious history, we have been confronted with many challenges, but challenges met with unity of purpose, unflinching courage and unyielding resolve to be victorious against all odds.

This debate, disguised as a no-confidence vote against the President, is really about defeat, about surrender, about retreating from an enemy determined to destroy our very existence.

Mr. Speaker, the obvious truth of our situation is that we may run, but we can't hide. They know where we live.

Today, Americans all over this great land should stop for a moment and consider this national debate. They should ask themselves what this means to them personally, their families and their neighbors. Is it worth the expense and sacrifice of war now in order to establish a secure and lasting peace? Or should our Nation take momentary relief and retreat as we wait for our newly emboldened enemies to strike our homeland with even more fierce and deadly attacks?

Mr. Speaker, we must all realize that September 11, 2001 was not the end of the radical Islamic jihad against the United States. It was just the beginning. September 11 was a declaration of war. The fact is, we are not at war with Iraq. Iraq is an ally in our war against the radical Islamic jihadists. Iraq is only one among many battlegrounds where we are fighting jihadists who are committed to the destruction of Western civilization and replacing it with theocratic Taliban-style rule.

Mr. Speaker, if we cut and run, if we retreat from Iraq, we will forfeit our ability to lead the world against the enemies of peace. Iraq, in all likelihood, would fall to Iranian dominance and would become a launching pad for terror attacks against the United States and Israel. Islamic jihadists will be emboldened in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the greater Middle East. The world oil supply could be vulnerable to jihadist control, and nuclear armed missiles in Pakistan could turn into a hellish nightmare.

And Israel, Mr. Speaker, one of our closest and most faithful allies, could see its very existence perilously close to total annihilation. World War III could even be the final consequence of the misguided actions of this Congress if we retreat from Iraq. But sadly, Mr. Speaker, there are some in this Congress who are more concerned about the next election than the next generation.

So where are the FDRs, the Churchills, the Pattons, the MacArthurs, the Trumans, the John F. Kennedys, and the men and women of the Greatest Generation in this hour of our great peril? They are in Iraq and Afghanistan fighting for our safety and our security. But the self-centered generation, the politicians, the media types and the whiners and complainers are sitting in the safety of their homes complaining about the unpleasantries of war. This generation of the self-centered and indulgent, if successful in their defeatism, will condemn untold numbers to horrors never imagined by the most creative writers of horror fiction.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot, will not believe, as a Nation, that we have become so preoccupied with our own personal and political Quaedas that we have fallen asleep to the dangers before our Nation. The hour of decision is upon us. Will we rally from our slumber and awaken to reality? We are at war. Or will we close our eyes in self-deception and hide ourselves under the blanket of a cowardly resolution? Tomorrow we must choose. Will it be commitment over retreat, freedom over slavery, courage over fear, democracy over theocratic fascism, security over terror, life over death?

Mr. Speaker, our brave men and women serving in our Armed Forces have already chosen. They have willingly volunteered to put their lives on the line and, at this very moment, are fighting for all that we cherish. It is they who represent today's greatest generation.

Tomorrow we can honor these brave souls by choosing their values, by defeating this disgraceful resolution, or we can pass this vile legislation and have it recorded to our eternal shame.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I am now very happy to yield 5¼ minutes to my colleague from Maine, Mr. MICHAUD.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight in support of this resolution that expresses our unwavering support of our troops and our opposition to the escalation in Iraq. This is an extremely important debate and it is one that is long overdue.

We have lost over 3,100 brave Americans. Many more will return home with mental health and physical wounds that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

We have spent hundreds of billions of dollars. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis have lost their lives or fled their homes as their country has fallen into deeper civil war.

Regardless of one's opinion on how we got into Iraq, we are there, and the situation is deteriorating. So the simple question before us is, What is the best plan for the future?

The President has called for an escalation of troops; in other words, more of the same approach.

I oppose an escalation of U.S. troops in Iraq. I will not support funding for the President's plan or blank checks for an open-ended commitment.

□ 2300

We need a new plan, and escalation is not what the Iraq Study Group called for. It is not what our top generals have advised, and it is not what the American or Iraqi people want. When General John Abizaid, former top commander in Iraq, asked his commanders in the field if more U.S. troops would help, the unanimous answer was no. As he said: ''And the reason is because we want the Iraqis to do more. It's 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.''

U.S. forces cannot clear and hold neighborhoods in Baghdad indefinitely. We have tried so-called ''surges'' before, and they have not stopped the violence. And as with these previous surges, when we leave, the same problems will return, and perhaps even worse.

The reality is that United States military strength cannot solve the problems in Iraq nor should it. The future rests on the capability and the will of the Iraqi people. Our continued dominance only prevents Iraqis from taking control of their country and their destiny. The military mission of toppling Saddam Hussein is over. The political mission, the reconstruction mission, the nation-building that this administration said it would never do has all but failed.

But that is what we must now address, not our strength of arms but our strength of diplomacy and our power to rebuild.

Our new strategy should be to withdraw and redeploy our soldiers quickly while empowering the Iraqi security forces. We can help to rebuild and create economic opportunity, to train Iraqis and perform other assistance as asked, but we cannot remain the dominant force in Iraq.

It is time for Iraqis to take control of their own country. A stabilized, secure and free Iraq can only be achieved when Iraqis take full control. Until that time our forces will be stuck in the middle of an increasingly violent civil war and all the while Afghanistan sliding back into danger and violence and al Qaeda continues to plot while our attention is being diverted.

I have spoken with many people in Maine about this war. I have spoken with current military personnel, many who have served in Iraq, their families, veterans, and concerned citizens of all political stripes. Everyone agrees there is no simple solution to the challenges we face in Iraq and how to solve it.

There is one opinion that is unanimous. We all support our men and women in uniform. They, like the generations before them, are heroes. They heard their country's call and they did not hesitate to answer. I am glad this resolution makes that support clear. We owe it to our military personnel to provide them with the very best when they are in harm's way and when they come home.

I have heard from many Vietnam-era veterans who fear that our new veterans may face many of the hardships that they faced. This cannot happen. As a member of the Veterans Affairs' Committee, I am committed to addressing the mental health and physical needs of our returning heroes, and I know the American people are willing to do that as well. And as we discuss alternative strategies, it must be clear that we must do something that fully supports our military personnel.

This resolution is not about politics. This issue should unite all of us. This is about the future of Iraq, our strategy abroad, and our welfare for our troops.

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

I would ask the last speaker if he could remain for a moment. I have such great respect for my colleague, Mr. MICHAUD of Maine. We have worked together on the Veterans' Affairs Committee. We deal with the consequences of war. And so out of my respect for Mr. MICHAUD, I would like for us to clarify what may be a potential contradiction.

The gentleman said that, and correct me if I am wrong here, unanimously commanders did not ask for an increase in troops. According to General Peter Pace, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and this was in his testimony before the House Armed Services Committee on January 11, 2007: ''So, collectively, the military commanders, both U.S. and Iraqi, have asked for this increase. And those of us in advisory positions agree with their request.

''General Casey and his Iraqi counterparts have determined that there are more forces needed . . .

''To do this, we're going to need additional U.S. forces. General Casey and General Abizaid have asked for those additional forces, as have the commanders below them.

''In addition, to reinforce success at Anbar province, the Marine commander out there has asked for, and General Casey and General Abizaid have asked for, an increase of about 4,000 troops out there . . .

''So, collectively, the military commanders, both U.S. and Iraqi, have asked for this increase.''

That was our testimony of our Chairman of the Joints Chiefs before the Armed Services Committee. So I will yield to the gentleman and ask if he was aware of General Pace's comments before the Armed Services Committee because it appears contradictory to the gentleman's statement.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. Yes, that was a quote in a paper from General Abizaid where he said that they requested no additional troops, and I will try to find that article for the good gentleman to get it hopefully to him tomorrow.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I just want to make sure our record is clear because we have got the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs quoting General Abizaid. So I want to work with the gentleman.

Thank you.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much. And I will find that quote, because you know sometimes quotes get misquoted; so I will get that for the gentleman.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I now yield 8 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS).

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

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, failure in Iraq is not an option. We enjoy our freedom today only because we have been willing to fight for it in the past. We must win the war on terror that has been thrust upon us.

Before going any further, let me first clearly state that I do not believe we should have an open-ended commitment in Iraq. I believe a new strategy is needed. America has a proud history of promoting and fighting for democracy around the globe. I don't believe now is the time to abandon that commitment.

While a new strategy is needed, the resolution that we are debating does not present us with any new policy options. Instead, we are voting on a nonbinding status quo resolution which will not do anything to change the situation in Iraq. It smacks of political posturing. Americans expect more of the world's greatest legislative body.

Let us not debase the honor and tradition of the great men and women who have served before us. We are duty bound to serve the public and engage in serious lawmaking, not political pandering. This resolution does nothing. Worse, it endorses the status quo of the violence and bloodshed. Maintaining the status quo is what ultimately resulted in the situation we find ourselves in today.

The debate before is more consequential than the question of should we engage in a troop surge or not. None of us want to see Americans unnecessarily be put in harm's way. The debate before us is about the global threats facing the United States and how we choose to respond to them. Failure to forcibly respond to previous acts of terrorism has undermined America's credibility around the world and projected us as weak to our enemies.

Some examples of these attacks include: the World Trade Center in 1993; U.S. troops in the barracks in Saudi Arabia; sailors on the USS *Cole*; and

the bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Unfortunately, Americans were too quick to forget these terrible acts.

□ 2310

Like many Members of Congress, I believe there should be strategic benchmarks that are designed to hold both the administration and the Iraqi Government accountable for success in Iraq. These benchmarks should measure whether sufficient progress is being made. Unfortunately, under the restrictive rules imposed upon this debate, we will not have an opportunity to vote on other proposals which would institute benchmarks for success.

I am compelled to vote against this status quo resolution. Americans deserve a real debate with multiple options for success in Iraq, not closed proceedings that are intended to be a political ploy.

I would rather America fight the terrorists on the streets of Baghdad, instead of allowing the terrorists to attack our homeland.

I am concerned that the resolution we are debating this week is a precursor to cutting off funds for our troops. The Democrats have even called it a first step. I have heard it several times tonight. Our troops must have all the resources they need to accomplish their mission. I support our troops in the field. Therefore, I will vote ''no'' on this resolution.

General Petraeus has indicated that reinforcements will hasten the end of the Iraq battle, allowing us to direct our efforts elsewhere in this greater war on radical Islamic terrorists.

The national commander of the VFW, the Nation's largest organizations of combat veterans, issued a statement earlier this week which says, ''We need to send a message to our troops that America wants them to succeed in Iraq by giving the buildup a chance to succeed.''

As a Member of Congress, I will always do whatever possible to support our brave men and women in uniform. As such, I will actively oppose efforts to cut off funding to our troops.

I cannot support this resolution, but I am committed to working with the President and my colleagues in Congress to ensure that the actions taken in the war accomplish the following: Moves Iraq closer to a peaceful and stable democracy; improves America's security; ensures the utmost safety and best equipment for our soldiers; and provides the shortest feasible time frame for their return to their families.

Failure in Iraq will lead to Iraq becoming a training and staging ground for terrorist groups intent on destabilizing the entire Middle East and destroying the United States and our allies.

In closing, I thank and offer my prayers for all our troops, including those brave men and women in the Ninth Congressional District and throughout the State of Florida who have answered their Nation's call to duty.

God bless our troops, and keep them safe.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I am now pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI).

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this resolution and in support of a new policy in Iraq. Up until this point, the Bush administration's Iraq policy over the last 3½ years appears to be one of America's worst foreign policy blunders. More than 3,100 of our brave men and women in uniform have been killed and more than 24,000 have been wounded, many very seriously, and hundreds of billions of dollars have been spent and in some cases wasted. This has resulted from the tactical mistakes, errors in judgment and other major missteps by the Bush administration.

It is painfully clear that a change in strategy in Iraq is needed now. We need a plan for bringing stability to Iraq and bringing our troops home. Unfortunately, the President's plan to add over 20,000 additional troops does not provide this, and, therefore, I must support this resolution.

I see three main flaws in the President's plan.

First, the administration has not provided convincing evidence that this surge will succeed after many similar plans have failed. After almost 4 years in Iraq, the American people are asking, why should we have faith in this plan and place more troops in harm's way?

Second, by failing to provide clear benchmarks for success or a time frame by which we can expect the surge to yield positive results, the President's plan appears to commit our country to a ''stay the course'' strategy with no clear end in sight. Aid should be tied to a deadline for progress by the Iraqi Government.

Third, and most importantly, the President continues to place too much emphasis on a military solution, when it is clear that force alone will not solve this crisis. Solutions must support broad international engagement to promote stability and reconstruction in Iraq and must address political, economic and religious issues.

Because of the need for such a plan, earlier this year I laid out a set of recommendations, and this week I introduced H.Res. 152 based on these. My proposal consists of three core recommendations.

First, encourage achievement of important goals and national reconciliation, security and governance by arranging a peace conference for Iraq's ethnic and religious factions, similar to the conference that led to the Dayton Accords. One venue for this would be El Salvador, which has shown a strong commitment to stabilizing and rebuilding Iraq and has gone through its own recent history of a bloody civil war and ensuing reconciliation.

But wherever and however it is done, the political, economic and religious issues must be addressed if peace and security are to be established in Iraq. And it is essential that more pressure be put on the Iraqi Government and all interested parties in Iraq to find and accept real solutions so the American forces can begin withdrawal.

The second recommendation is to seek international cooperation to develop solutions for Iraq. This should include calling an international conference that will work on putting together a peacekeeping force and setting up an international reconstruction program.

Iraq's strategic position in the volatile Middle East, its potential to become a terrorist safe haven, its large supply of oil and the great potential for a humanitarian catastrophe make security in Iraq a critical international issue. It is time for America to engage the nations of the world to encourage them to address this international crisis.

The final recommendation is to require the administration to give Congress detailed reports on the situation in Iraq so that we can make informed decisions regarding funding for reconstruction and deciding when American forces can be redeployed. This new Congress has been vigorously conducting oversight after 3½ years of congressional neglect, but we must have the full cooperation of the administration.

If the recommendations laid out in my resolution are followed, I believe American troops can begin redeployment in 2007, leaving a secure, stable Iraq.

As the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops stated, ''The search for genuine justice and peace in Iraq requires moral urgency, substantive dialogue and new direction.'' Unfortunately, the President does not give us this. That is why his plan is discouraging to many Americans who are weary of this war.

But no one is wearier than our troops and their families. This past weekend I spoke to a soldier who spent 13 months in Iraq and will likely be returning. He told me that it is important to make sure that we let our troops know that they have our complete support. We cannot let anything in this debate be construed otherwise. If this surge occurs even after we pass this resolution, we must continue to support our troops and pray for them every day, so that by God's grace they can succeed in their mission.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 8 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT), a former Army captain.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Indiana. I appreciate the opportunity to engage in this debate.

Mr. Speaker, like many others here, previously I typed up different potential remarks for this debate. But as I have listened to the debate over the last couple of days, I kept hearing some things being said over and over

again, and I started making notes of some of the things I just really need to address.

As the old saying goes, we are all entitled to our own opinion, but we are not entitled to our own set of facts. Facts are facts.

□ 2320

One of the things I have heard over and over the last couple of days, well, it goes without saying. Normally in reference to we support our troops, it goes without saying. If there is anything I have noticed since I left the bench and came to Congress is that nothing goes without saying in this House . Everything gets said and seems like gets said over and over again. Nothing goes without being said.

But let us talk about that. It goes without saying we support our troops. That has stirred up a great deal of debate and animosity at one point, and led usually into things about the lies the President told before this war, lies the President told before this war. Well, look, some of us believe in forgiveness.

I think there is still potential disagreement. Obviously we know that Saddam had weapons of mass destruction. He killed thousands of Kurds, gassed thousands of people. Certainly he was killing with mass destruction, but if you happen to believe really, honestly, truthfully that the President lied, then it is time to forgive President Clinton for all those lies. Forgive Madeleine Albright for all those lies. All the time, Madeleine Albright and Bill Clinton told us over and over again that there were weapons of mass destruction, and if President Bush happened to have believed President Clinton and Madeleine Albright and those people that were saying there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, well, I guess they just should not have believed the Clinton administration.

But there were things that the Clinton administration could base that on, but we have got to get past that. It just seems to engender so much hatred.

I have heard people say over and over this is a historic debate because the Republicans never allowed this debate when they were in the majority. I remember having discussions like this twice in the last Congress. We voted on a couple of resolutions, and people would say one thing and then end up voting another on the resolution.

Now, I did hear one of my friends across the aisle say something I do agree with. He said he did not believe it was appropriate to tell troops they were coming home on a certain date and then change that. I agree, and a number of us have been pointing that out to those in the military and to the White House. That needs to stop. When you tell somebody who is in harm's way you are coming home on a certain date, they need to come home. We can agree on that.

But then I heard another say, we need to avoid a constitutional crisis by shocking this President into a new course of action. You shocked him into a new course of action. He said we are going to send 21,000 troops over there, 21,500. In fact, people like HARRY REID down in the Senate have been calling for that last fall, maybe even as recently as December, but oh, wait, as soon as the President calls for it, then it is a terrible thing; we cannot believe that he is doing this.

So the President has proposed something new. His commanders in the field have said we need this, and so it is being done. We have got troops already arriving and more arriving all the time.

I heard another one make reference to Vietnam, and one in indignation said, have we not learned anything from Vietnam? I would submit, I believe, Mr. Speaker, apparently not, because some people want to rewrite history; but the fact is, if you go back, the people were saying get out of Vietnam, get out of Vietnam are the same people saying this now in Iraq, and so President Nixon tried to get folks out. For all his faults, and he did have plenty, and you will not hear me say I think he was a great President because he lied, but one of the things he did try to do, he saw the polls and started trying to get people out of Vietnam.

When we started the Paris peace talks, things broke down. It was not going well. He decided to bomb North Vietnam. He went on the attack. He was carpet-bombing Hanoi, and as SAM JOHNSON and those who were in the Hanoi Hilton said, they were worried they might be hit by the bombs, but they were so glad, finally the United States was reacting and responding, and as SAM says, when he left, to get the chronology correct, the bombing went on. They came back to the peace talks, and we reached terms, and the POWs, most of them were coming home. Sam said one of the leaders at the prison said, you know, if you guys had just kept bombing a little longer, we would have had to surrender completely.

That was a winnable war, but people were not doing what it took to win so that we could have a good reputation. If you go look at our enemies and al Qaeda's, the rhetoric now in Iraq, Afghanistan, around the Middle East, they are saying look at what they did in Vietnam. They promised their allies they were going to stick with them.

Gerald Ford has been quoted recently. What a fine man. I hear people on both sides of the aisle at his funeral and after his death. He begged this Congress and this House please do not cut off the funding; we promised them funding even after we pulled our troops out. But this Congress said, no, we are cutting the funding, and we have been harmed ever since.

So in 1979, in Iran, they were bold enough to attack. An act of war, that is what attacking an embassy is, and I was at Fort Benning at that time. Nobody was dying to go to Iran, but everybody I knew was willing to go and die because we had been attacked, and that was the first act of war in this war involving terror, and we did not respond.

We did not respond in 1983 when our barracks were attacked and our marines were killed. We withdrew 1991, on through the 1990s. We have not responded, but I want to touch on one other thing.

I saw the majority leader come down. I saw it replayed in the wee hours this morning. I did not realize it went on, and he came down and challenged what HEATHER WILSON, who had left the floor, said, and ultimately said basically, that anybody that would come and say, as she did, that there might be a problem with Democrats being willing to support and fund the troops as needed, and he said to come and say anything of that nature was just not honest. I think it comes close to violating the rules if it does not, but the fact is HEATHER WILSON had stood right here and she had asked her Democratic friends across the aisle, look, if you are really willing to say that, if you are saying that this resolution means we will always provide everything that is needed to our troops in harm's way, let us put it in the resolution. We will have a unanimous-consent amendment, we will both agree, and it was not agreed. The Democratic majority would not agree. The Rules Committee did not agree. The Democratic leadership did not want that in there.

So, to say it goes without saying ain't the way it should be. It ought to be in print. It ought to be here said in black and white because HEATHER WILSON was right: if you really believe that, put it in black and white where our troops can see, and I would just in conclusion leave you with this: this resolution for what it does and does not do, it is a stay the course, stiffen the enemy, start our collapse, and you look at our friend Mr. MURTHA's comments to say, that is what this starts the process for doing.

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to yield 5 minutes to my colleague from Missouri (Mr. CLEAVER).

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

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, as I began to consider the comments I would make during this debate tonight on the occupation, escalation and gravitation of the U.S. military action in Iraq, I concluded that my visit to this well must somehow echo the threat and frustration of the people who sent me to represent them in the people's House.

Tomorrow, the United States of America should begin a massive and voter-mandated salvaging operation in Iraq. Yes, as bad as conditions have gotten, there are important and valuable things that could be salvaged. A tarnished international image clings to a nation like a shadow to a human being. It follows a nation to the next

world crisis. It cannot be blamed for faulty intelligence, and it spoils opportunities to influence a world desperate for direction. Henceforth, we must conduct our foreign policy in a manner which salvages our sunken international image.

Because of the way we launched a long-range military action in Iraq, our prestige among the community of nations has surely suffered. Nothing deflates as a punctured international image. We can salvage our image not only by de-escalating in Iraq but also by reestablishing desperately needed dialogue with all the sovereign nations in the neighborhood with Iraq. It takes many, many people, and not just one to put a policy together.

Now, with regard to peace in the Middle East, it has become crystal clear that the United States cannot whistle a symphony.

□ 2330

It will take an orchestra of many international players willing to make music in the same key. The days of the international soloist or a conductor without an orchestra are past. We must salvage our relationship with the family of nations. We must salvage what is left of our Treasury.

Mr. Speaker, for most Americans war does not pay, but it must be paid for. And, to date, we have spent billions and billions of dollars that could have been spent for valuable programs to set this Nation on the right course. We must salvage soldiers. Yes, thousands of brave young U.S. soldiers have been killed, and Iraqis are dying weekly by the hundreds. If this conflict continues, there will be only two classes of young people, one half in graves, the other half in hospitals.

Some have said this conflict will last for decades. Nevertheless, that kind of policy or lack thereof has caused young Americans to ask: Will we ever see the last of this war, or will it see the last of us?

The Kansas City Chiefs is my team. The general manager, Carl Peterson, would never go to the sports editors of the local media and admonish them not to criticize the game plan of Coach Herman Edwards, because to do so would demoralize the players. Such a warning by the general manager would be ludicrous, if not loony. Why? Because the players of the Kansas City Chiefs are professionals who cannot be so easily defamed. And, friends, neither can the men and women who form the fiercest fighting force in the history of this planet.

After all the ethnic and sectarian human butchering, after all the billions spent, after all the children of God killed, after all the maimed who have been hospitalized, after all the dissenters who have been heard, after all the purple thumbs that have been raised, the war drum still throbs, the sabers still rattle, and the blood still flows. Yet, we can salvage the soul of the Nation, even though at this hour we seem to have lost our way.

Tomorrow, this Congress must adopt House Concurrent Resolution 63 as bold and beckoning to begin salvage operations.

Mr. Speaker, as I began to consider the comments I would make during the debate on the occupation, escalation, and gravitation of the U.S. military action in Iraq, I concluded that my visit to this well must somehow echo the fret and frustration of the people who sent me to represent them in The People's House.

For more than 132 years, the steamboat *Arabia* lay beneath the fathoms of the waters of the mighty Missouri River. Not until Bob and Florence Howley committed their life savings to a massive salvaging operation, did the rusting of this once stately riverboat cease. Today, the salvaged cargo of this retrieved vessel is on display in Kansas City's Historic River Market. Since I first walked into the Arabia Steamboat Museum in 1992, I have become a serious supporter of salvage operations. Anything of great value that is lost or damaged is worth salvaging.

Tomorrow, the United States of America should begin a massive and voter-mandated salvaging operation in Iraq. Yes, as bad as conditions have gotten, there are important and valuable things that can be salvaged.

A tarnished international image clings to a nation like a shadow to a human being. It follows a nation to the next world crisis, it cannot be blamed for faulty intelligence, and it spoils opportunities to influence a world desperate for direction. Henceforth, we must conduct our foreign policy in a manner which salvages our sunken international image. Because of the way we launched a Lone Ranger military action in Iraq, our prestige among the community of nations has surely suffered. Nothing deflates as fast as a punctured international image. We can salvage our image not only by de-escalating in Iraq, but also by re-establishing desperately needed dialogue with all the sovereign nations in the neighborhood of Iraq. With regard to peace in the Middle East, it has become crystal clear that the U.S. cannot whistle a symphony. It will take an orchestra of many international players willing to make music in the same key. The days of the international soloist, or a conductor without an orchestra, are past. We must salvage our relationship with the family of nations.

We must salvage what is left of our treasury. Mr. Speaker, for most Americans, war does not pay, but it must be paid for. To date, we have appropriated $380 billion for the armed conflict in Iraq, and the President has requested an additional $142 billion in the FY08 supplemental. With this amount of money, we could have fully funded No Child Left Behind and the COPS program (which places badly needed police on the streets in high crime neighborhoods). We must salvage respect from our noble veterans who, today, are outraged that they are showered with praise when they are in battle but blasted with neglect when they return home. Soon enough, they will discover that the President's recently submitted budget raises fees on veterans for their health costs by $355 million in FY08, $2.3 billion over 5 years, and $4.9 billion over 10 years. Those who serve—deserve!

We must salvage soldiers. Yes, thousands of brave young U.S. soldiers have been killed, and Iraqis are dying weekly by the hundreds. If this conflict continues, there will be only two classes of young people: one half in graves and the other half in hospitals. Some have said that this conflict will last for decades. Nevertheless, that kind of policy, or lack thereof, has caused young Americans to ask, "Will we ever see the last of this war, or will it see the last of us?"

Let me address a part of this debate which has frustrated me because of its defective logic. Over and over again, many of my honorable colleagues have stood behind this distinguished desk and warned that the debate on House Concurrent Resolution 63 will demoralize our troops in Iraq. Nothing could be further from the truth. I will never accept the premise that U.S. troops are demoralized by the debate in a democracy. The President's stated goal in Iraq is to aid in creating a nation where citizens and public officials can debate in a robust democracy. And then to denounce debate in The People's House as demeaning or damaging? My friends, that denigrates the democracy we so proudly extol and that our troops valiantly fight to defend. We cannot lead others to the light while we stand in the dark.

The Kansas City Chiefs is my team. The General Manager, Carl Peterson, would never go to the sports editors of the local media and admonish them not to criticize the game plan of Coach Herman Edwards because it will demoralize the players. Such a warning by the General Manager would be ludicrous if not loonie. Why? Because the players of the Kansas City Chiefs are professionals who cannot be so easily defanged. And friends, neither can the men and women who form the fiercest fighting force in the history of Planet Earth.

After all the ethnic and sectarian human butchering, after all the billions spent, after all the children of God killed, after all the maimed who have been hospitalized, after all the dissenters who have been heard, after all the purple thumbs have been raised, the war drum is still throbbing, the sabers are still rattling and the blood is still flowing. Yet, we can salvage the soul of the nation even though at this hour we seem to have lost our way. Tomorrow, this Congress must adopt House Concurrent Resolution 63 as a bold beckoning to begin salvage operation.

Mr. BUYER. I would say to the gentleman that just spoke, that in 3 years Iraq has gone from a repressive dictatorship who enslaved his people to an inclusive government chosen by a freely elected Parliament under a popular ratified constitution. That is a fact.

I would like to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. INGLIS).

Mr. INGLIS of South Carolina. I thank the gentleman for yielding. Mr. Speaker, we face three questions here tonight: Where are we? Where do we want to be? And how do we get there?

First, where are we? We are in phase three of a conflict in Iraq. In phase one, we overran Iraq in response to an American national security threat. We won.

Then came phase two. 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 three. At best, Iraq is engulfed in a sectarian killing spree. At worst, Iraq has descended into a civil war.

So where are we? We are thankful for the incredible work of our military in winning phase one and two. We are aware, and I think all of us are aware, that only the Iraqi people can win phase three.

It is a neocon mistake to charge our warfighters with building an Iraqi national consensus. Iraqis must decide for themselves if they want to live in a unified, pluralistic, and peaceful Iraq. No amount of American military might can compel that result.

So where are we? Thankful for the successes and the outcomes that we can 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 can 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, and that they should settle these reconciliation questions quickly. 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 force's inputs, but wrong to hold them accountable for outcomes beyond their control.

Diplomats, statesmen, peacemakers, and everyday Iraqis must work 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.

If the Iraqi people follow the path to progress to a peaceful, pluralistic, 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 am concerned that a surge will have the opposite effect: that we will give breathing room to the death squads; that our servicemen and women will be caught in the crossfire; and that the surge will end right where it began. In fact, that is what happened in Baghdad in August and September of 2006.

I am concerned that a surge sends a conflicting message. On the one hand, we are telling the Iraqi leadership, ''Hurry up, you don't have forever.'' On the other hand we are saying, ''No, not to worry. We are increasing the size of the American security umbrella.''

I want all Iraqi factions and all leaders of Iraqi factions to worry. I want them to see us reaching for the button that would bring down that security umbrella. I want them to imagine the click of the button and the feel of the wind from that descending umbrella.

The resolution before us isn't written the way I would have written it, but it is 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 is why I am going to vote in favor of the resolution and express my concern about the effectiveness of the surge.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. SCHWARTZ).

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Mr. Speaker, on Monday morning of this week I had the opportunity to recognize and honor 53 elderly widows of veterans of World War II and the Korean War.

The sacrifices of that Great Generation are legendary, and they are a reminder of the sacrifice of the current generation of our military men and women who have heeded the call to service in defense of our Nation. Their patriotism, their willingness to put themselves in harm's way, possibly to pay the ultimate price for our Nation, should give us all pause.

So, Mr. Speaker, I stand here with deep gratitude and respect for the sacrifices of all of our troops, but especially for the 3,124 Americans killed in Iraq and those tens of thousands injured.

I stand here with great sympathy for the mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, whose loss is irreplaceable. I stand here tonight firmly and strongly in support of this resolution, in support of the troops, and in opposition to the President's escalation of our military involvement in the war in Iraq.

□ 2340

Let there be no misunderstanding. The men and women serving our Nation in our Armed Forces will continue to receive the support they require during their training, while they are in theater and when they return home.

It is in honor of their service and the sacrifices of their family, and the love of our country that we share that I stand to make it clear that the President's plan for Iraq to escalate the number of troops and to continue his failed conduct of this war is wrong.

Escalation of this war will not make our Nation safer. Escalation of this war will not stabilize Iraq. Escalation of this war will not move us closer to bringing our troops home, and escalation of this war will not better protect Americans from those terrorists who would stop at nothing to bring grave danger to our Nation and our allies. It is for these reasons that the President's escalation of the war in Iraq is wrong.

At a time when so many current and former military leaders, as well as the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, recognize the need for political, rather than military solutions to the ever increasing violence, that the President is so gravely misguided in sending more of our men and women into combat in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution is the answer to a simple question: Do you believe that an escalation of this war will bring our troops home sooner, and will it help the Iraqis achieve the national reconciliation needed to bring a lasting peace to their nation? I and the majority of Americans do not think so.

We believe the facts are clear. Escalation of this war fails to address the administration's strategic and diplomatic failures. It does not move us closer to success.

What we now need to succeed in Iraq is an overwhelming political and diplomatic force, not more American combat troops. Instead, the President should be working to end U.S. combat involvement in Iraq. To do so, he must demand that the Iraqis take charge of their internal security, should demand that the Iraqi President take the lead in national reconciliation, he should engage all the regional parties to prevent this war from escalating regionally and to explore every diplomatic and political solution to end this war.

Finally, the President must be accountable for his actions to this Congress and to the American people.

Mr. Speaker, over the first 6 weeks of the Democratic control of Congress, we have begun to move our Nation in a new direction, to restore credibility and ethics in this Chamber and to put the interests of everyday Americans in the forefront. There is so much more to do, here at home, and in our relations internationally, to better ensure the security and opportunity for all Americans.

The war in Iraq overshadows all that we do. The war has already cost this Nation so much, young lives lost, greater uncertainty and instability in the Middle East, greater hostility towards our own Nation and financial costs that will take years to repay. So it is timely and right that we take action now to change direction and strategy in Iraq.

I stand with the majority of Congress in support of this resolution, in support of our troops, and in opposition to the escalation of U.S. combat troops in

Iraq. This resolution sends the President a very strong message. It is our hope and the hope of the American people that he heeds it.

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

As a good listener of the gentlelady's remarks, I would think she would be in support of the President's plan. I agree with her when she was talking about what is necessary for Iraq to govern itself, but in order for this country to begin to govern itself, it also needs to have security, and the Iraqi people themselves must have a belief in the support of that new unity government.

Now, with regard to the Iraqis themselves, whom we have been training, that is, the Iraqi Army and the Iraqi police force, that is exactly what the plan is. The plan is for the Iraqis to take the lead.

So the gentlelady's remarks confuse me, because as she says, I want the political apparatus to do this, but I define Petraeus' need for additional troops as an escalation. Therefore, she advocates for the status quo, and everybody knows the status quo is for failure. The remarks confuse me.

The commander on the ground of our forces in Baghdad just said on January 26, that this is about Iraqis taking charge of their own security. In order for them to do that, we have to buy them time to continue to train and for the government to become more legitimate in the eyes of the Iraqi people. Earlier what I said, the mission is to govern, sustain and defend. You have the political, economic and security necessities to accomplish that mission. I think everybody in this body is going to agree.

When I met with President Talabani in August, we talked about the establishment of the rule of law, we talked about the implementation of the national plan of reconciliation, the distribution of the oil revenue, the modernization of their electrical grid. Promoting Iraqi unity was really deep on the President's mind.

I wrote a note here after I met with him. The note I wrote was I believe the unity federal government has a real challenge. Their challenge is to convince the Iraqi political, religious and civil society leaders to compromise for a sustainable settlement to support the new federalism. That is the challenge.

So I am challenged when I hear individuals say, well, on the security apparatus, let's just get U.S. forces out of there, we'll let the Iraqis take care of this. The question is, are the Iraqis prepared to do it alone? I haven't heard anybody say they are, that they can do it alone.

The Iraqis in turn said we still need coalition assistance, and so the commanders on the ground say we need these more troops to do this. We are sending General Petraeus, our best commander, to the field.

Mr. Speaker, a father-in-law of a soldier wrote this 10 days ago: ''From where I am sitting, it seems that threatening loss of funding for operations in Iraq, tying the hands of senior officers, to say nothing of the Commander in Chief, and proposing to legislate the conduct of this war, looks worse than cut and run. It feels like betrayal of the families who bear the burdens.''

I can remember being in the desert in the first gulf war while this body debated a resolution on the utilization of force. I know what it was like to lose a friend in war. I shed the tears of my father when he lost buddies for his Army service in Korea.

Challenged by my own Member of Congress who voted against that resolution, I felt betrayed. While I was in the desert, I felt betrayed, so much so that I vowed while I stood at that cemetery in Lafayette, Indiana, the funeral of my friend, that I felt I still had a mission left, and it was to come help the country again.

So I ran against that incumbent Member of Congress who I felt betrayed me while I was in the desert in the gulf war. I had never run for any political office in my life. I was elected in this body at the age of 32 with so much to learn.

But I have never forgotten about the soldier, the sailor, the airman, the marine and the coast guardsman. I am so proud of them and what they do.

The world of an American soldier is more complex today than ever before, with technology, intricate rules of engagement designed to eliminate the loss of noncombatant life and a tough, innovative and savvy enemy. Our soldiers who are in the fight are watching and listening.

One wrote from Iraq 2 weeks ago: ''Until victory or until the perseverance and the spirit of the American will arose, victory in Iraq is achievable by our amazingly capable and determined Armed Forces. Their effort will only be undercut by self-serving politicking and pointless impatience. If we decide we want victory, we will have it. If we quit on our effort, we will have defeat.''

Contending with the complexity of today's battlefield and the ripple effects of politics 6,000 miles away, our soldiers live and measure value by simple enduring imperatives. They place a lot of value in loyalty. They count on each other, loyal to each other, to their commanders and to their oath to defend the Constitution, and their love of country helps them do their duty. A warrior bears true faith and allegiance.

□ 2350

Members of our Armed Forces live and die by the readiness of their buddies to express their loyalty in the conduct of faithful duty. They expect no less of their leaders up the chain, whether they wear the stripes and diamond of a first sergeant, the eagles of a colonel, or the stars of an admiral or general, or their leaders in government, both executive and legislative branches.

Yet, in response, what do we offer? The fortitude of contradiction I say. The Senate unanimously confirms a new multinational force commander, General David Petraeus, whose most compelling value is perhaps his reputation for unrivaled understanding for his clear grasp of counterinsurgencies.

Yet the authors of the resolution before us seek to deny our best commander the manpower assets he has asked for to prevail. What a disturbing contradiction. The Senate unanimously says, this is our best commander. Before they vote and say we are going to send you, he says, I need these five brigades. Then this body drafts a resolution that says, we do not think he should have the five brigades.

I suppose we have the Senate and the House now in complete contradiction. General Petraeus is a decisive man who has a decisive strategy, and he intends to reinforce our troops and root out the enemy. Aside from the gratuitous gloom that is smothering the debate on Iraq, moving in reinforced strength to destroy an enemy is a time-honored and frequently successful course of military action.

It is so especially when conducted by a capable commander. We have already agreed that General Petraeus is such a commander. Many of us know that this is what our troops yearn to do. It is what Americans yearn for us to do, prevail.

Now, lest one of my colleagues is tempted to try some contextual mischief, we all know that military victory with the right strategy is only part of the equation of success in Iraq. Real success is not a quick, easy affair. I might offer success as defined by the establishment of a stable, popularly elected government, the rise of the rule of law, and the stability necessary to foster the growth of a strong middle class.

That will take a combined and continued effort using diplomatic, informational and economic levers. But those levers cannot fully operate without security. And that is the challenge I have in listening to this debate. We in Congress have confirmed General Petraeus and sent him now into battle.

And what now do some want to do with him? They seek to turn the House floor into a cockpit of battlefield wisdom to disavow his strategy. Some may say, go to Iraq, Commander. Disregard the strategy that you talked about in the Senate. Instead use your brilliance to conduct a feckless campaign of status quo.

The resolution before us disavows the human assets our commander needs to accomplish his mission. But then it says, we support the troops. How can you say we support the troops but you don't give the commander that which he says he needs? I do not understand.

I am a colonel in the Army Reserve. I have served for 26 years this Nation. How can you say to me, Steve, I support you. I will give you the beams, the bullets, the ammo, the water. I will

give you anything you need, but do not ask me for any troops and good luck on your mission. Because you do not get to ask for reinforcements. You do not even get to ask for anybody else.

As we know the Pelosi-Murtha real strategy is to slowly bleed our battlefield commander dry. They know he cannot prevail waging a campaign of the status quo. So some will slowly reduce funding for his Army in an effort for it to wither on the vine. And it to me is disgraceful.

Ladies and gentlemen, does this fit the definition of loyalty and support of members of the United States Armed Forces serving bravely in Iraq?

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. GIFFORDS).

Ms. GIFFORDS. Mr. Speaker, as Members of the 110th Congress we are about to cast one of our most important votes yet. Americans in my district of southern Arizona and across the country want their Representatives to bring closure to the United States' involvement in Iraq. This vote is the first step towards doing precisely that.

A few weeks ago President Bush gave a nationally televised speech to the American people to announce his new way forward for Iraq. But it sounded strangely familiar. The President acknowledged that his policies and plans in Iraq had failed to yield the promised results, and yet his only suggestion was to do more of the same.

During my first few weeks in Congress serving on the House Armed Services Committee, the Foreign Affairs Committee, I have been listening, learning, asking tough questions. I have participated in many hours of hearings and briefings with top administration officials.

Those people include Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Peter Pace, Secretary of the Army Francis Harvey, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, former Congressman Lee Hamilton, co-chairman of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group commissioned by the President.

Since being sworn into Congress, I have also been reading dozens of letters sent to me by my constituents, flying home to my district almost every single weekend to meet with concerned citizens.

Recently I attended a returning warrior event in Arizona for Reservists coming back from combat. And last week I visited Walter Reed Hospital here in Washington, D.C. to speak with wounded soldiers and their families.

These collective experiences have made me more confident than ever that the global war on terror and the situation in Iraq are more complicated than President Bush seems to realize. Common sense dictates that in order for any plan to succeed it must require the Iraqi people to calm the sectarian violence and unify behind a workable political structure.

The President's plan fails to acknowledge the lack of willingness and capacity by the Iraqi political and religious leaders to achieve these necessary goals. Sectarian factions are divided more than ever. Without the serious involvement and motivation of the Iraqi people, the President's proposals to send more American troops into harm's way amounts to little more than having 21,000 more soldiers stay the course.

This I cannot support. The President should consider the views of many active and retired military generals who advised him to change his strategy in Iraq. Instead of adding more soldiers, he should instead focus on some of the best recommendations set forward by the bipartisan Iraq Study Group that he commissioned.

These recommendations include keeping Iraq rapid reaction and special operation forces in Iraq to strike al Qaeda militias, setting performance benchmarks for the Iraqi Government and holding them accountable, providing economic assistance to Iraq that will help create jobs, strengthen infrastructure, and improve the Iraqi capacity to be independent and stable.

Last but not least, beginning a new dialogue with Iraq's neighbors because they need to be part of the solution. The basic message of the Iraq Study Group and other credible experts and strategists is that the situation in Iraq is a political not just a military crisis.

The President's military escalation plan without a political component is bound to fail. Along with all other patriotic Americans, I strongly support our men and women in uniform who are risking their lives to protect and defend our Nation.

Our Armed Forces must have the tools, the training and the support that they need to be successful in any mission. I have serious concerns, Mr. Speaker, that our Army, Marine Corps, along with Guard and Reserve forces are being stretched too thin.

□ 0000

Instead of sending 21,000 more young American soldiers to Iraq as part of that same failed strategy, the President should focus on the Global War on Terror. Failure is not an option. America must prevail against many serious threats around the world, whether in the Middle East or elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, I will vote to support the resolution before this body because our brave men and women in uniform deserve a strategy that honors their sacrifices. The President's plan does not do that.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I am now happy to yield 5 minutes to the gentlelady from Minnesota (Ms. MCCOLLUM).

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, there is no more important issue facing our Nation today than the prolonged, painful, deadly war in Iraq. Next month America's courageous and determined troops start year 5 of combat operations inside Iraq.

As Iraq continues to deteriorate into a failed state of endless killing, President Bush has decided not only to stay the course but to escalate America's combat presence.

The resolution we debate tonight puts Congress in step with the American people in rejecting the President's escalation of the war. This resolution supports our troops and sends a clear message to President Bush that he is increasingly isolated in believing that Iraq's future can only be salvaged by sending more Americans into their civil war.

Let us remember that year 5 in Iraq will start with over 150,000 U.S. troops in the midst of an Iraq civil war. Year 5 in Iraq will start with 2,600 Minnesota National Guardsmen and -women who have already served and sacrificed for a year, being ordered to serve an additional 4 months of duty. Year 5 in Iraq starts with over 3,100 American troops having sacrificed their lives and nearly 24,000 troops having sacrificed their bodies.

To all of our veterans and their families, I offer my prayers, and I pledge my support in the difficult months and years ahead. With a true sense of humility and respect and admiration for their service and sacrifices, I thank you, I thank your families for what you have endured.

Our troops have always done their jobs with skill, with determination and courage. And now it is time for the elected leaders of this Nation to respond with courage and skill and forethought to the challenges presented in Iraq. It is time for the people of Iraq, the diverse ethnic groups, the religious sects, their tribal leaders, to decide for themselves whether their future is to be one of ongoing murder, revenge, civil war, or reconciliation, peaceful cooperation and security. It is time to end Iraq's dependence on U.S. troops and to fully transfer the responsibility for security and governance to the Iraqis. It is time to start the process of bringing American troops home safe, soon. It is time to bring this war in Iraq to an end. Achieving peace in Iraq will require an Iraqi political solution.

Peace requires a robust, active, tireless diplomacy from the United States, in partnership with Iraq's neighbors and the entire world community. This Congress has the opportunity and the obligation to advance a foreign policy vision rooted in the belief that Iraq's future requires shared global commitment.

Tomorrow Congress will pass this bipartisan resolution. This resolution is important because it is the second step in putting the White House on notice. The first notice was delivered to President Bush by the American people last November when they elected a new majority to Congress. The American people elected this majority because they wanted this very debate to take place, because they reject the ''stay the course'' status quo in Iraq.

Instead of hearing the American people, instead of acting on the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group, instead of learning from his past mistakes in Iraq, President Bush decided to escalate the war.

Rather than take the counsel and the advice of experienced statesmen and trusted military leaders, President Bush acted alone and decided to escalate the war.

Now our President calls himself ''The Decider.'' In America, the people, not the President, are the ultimate deciders in our democracy, and the people and this Congress have decided that the escalation of combat troops into Iraq is misguided. This Congress has the authority and the obligation to hold the President accountable, and this House is ready to exercise its constitutional powers.

The American people are demanding action to end this war in Iraq. Let us listen to the American people. Tomorrow let us pass this important resolution and begin the process of working together as Americans to end the war in Iraq.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I am now happy to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN).

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, as we approach the final day of the debate on this resolution, I have enjoyed the debate thoroughly. I have found it humorous at times. Our friends on the other side have tried every argument they could possibly muster. They have talked about President Clinton, they have talked about Vietnam, they are trying to bring up Israel, and my friend from Indiana also mentioned the issue of consistency. And I find it funny that the pro-life, self-proclaimed pro-life party is the party that wants to keep extending the war. I find it ironic that all of the great budget hawks in the Republican Party want to throw $8 billion a month to keep going and going and going as we borrow the money from China.

But I have also found the debate, at times, disappointing, where Members of the other side have questioned our side and they have said, whose side are we on? And how can we say that we support the troops, and that we are, somehow, unpatriotic.

And I would just like to say that when the Republican Party and this President didn't send enough troops, we didn't call you unpatriotic. And when you sent our young soldiers over there without the body armor, we never called you unpatriotic.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HODES). The Chair must remind the Members to address the Chair when speaking in debate.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, we never called the other side unpatriotic when they sent our soldiers over without enough body armor. And when they didn't send enough up-armored Humvees, we never called anybody unpatriotic. And now, when the next batch goes over without the proper jammers or up-armored kits, we don't call you unpatriotic.

Now we have called you incompetent. We said you are incapable, and we said you are derelict of your oversight responsibility. But never, Mr. Speaker, have we called anyone in this House unpatriotic.

Now let me speak to the resolution. This is very simple. It says two things: We support our troops and we do not support the escalation. It is very simple and here is why. We have already done this, Mr. Speaker. We have already done this. We have already tried the escalation and it has not worked. From November to January of 2005, we escalated by 18,000 troops, boots on the ground, and the number of daily attacks increased by 17 percent. From June to October of 2005, we increased by 21,000 boots on the ground, and the number of daily attacks increased by 29 percent. And from May to November of 2006, 17,000 more boots on the ground, and the number of daily attacks increased by 80 percent.

This escalation has not worked and it will not work. The number of insurgents have increased from 5,000 in 2003 to between 20,000 and 30,000 to October of 2006. So this is very simple.

And I want to make just a few more points, Mr. Speaker. One is this. With the last vote for the war, regardless of what party you were in or how you voted, we assumed that the President and the Secretary of Defense would send our troops over there with the proper equipment. But with this escalation, Mr. Speaker, we know that the 21,500 troops that are going to go over there will not have the proper Humvee kits, the up-armor for their HUMVEES. They won't have the proper jamming devices or enough of them, and they won't have the number of trucks that they need.

□ 0010

You now know it. So if you vote against this resolution, you are voting to send our troops over there without the proper equipment before it could be excused because we trusted the President, assumed, but now we know.

And, finally, Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot over the last couple of days about the American Revolution and the Civil War and World War II. Well, Mr. Speaker, our President today is not Washington, he is not Lincoln, and he is not Roosevelt. So I think our Republican colleagues should take the advice of the Secretary of Defense, and that is you go to war with the President you have. You don't go to war with the President you wish you had.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair must remind the Members to address their remarks in debate to the Chair and not to others in the second person.

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

Sometimes in the middle of debate when one gentleman refuses to yield to another gentleman, it can be for a variety of reasons perhaps, but sometimes it is because the argument is pretty weak.

So I have listened to this debate. I have not heard anybody on this side of the aisle call any of my Democratic colleagues unpatriotic. So the gentleman who just spoke protests too much. Maybe he has some deep feeling inside, has some guilt inside perhaps. I don't know. I can't speak to that. Only he can. I would be more than pleased to yield to him. I would extend the courtesy to him. But I just don't recall that at all.

As a matter of fact, I had to turn here to some staff that is with me because they are just as sensitive about this as I am and the seriousness of this debate.

The gentleman to my left is an Air Force Academy grad and he is the Air Force Reserves, and he flies C–5As right into Baghdad. He knows what that is like.

The two gentlemen right behind me, this gentleman right here, Jeff Phillips, served in the first gulf war, in the second gulf war, and has two Bronze Stars. This other gentleman over here, Jim Lariviere, served in Afghanistan and wears the Bronze Star.

So I turned to all three of these guys and I asked them, Have you heard anybody say or make someone feel as though they were unpatriotic? And the answer was ''no'' from these three men.

So please don't come and pollute the debate because it only makes you look silly.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair must remind Members to address remarks to the Chair.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, it only makes Members look silly if they pollute the debate.

One thing about war is that you have to improvise, adapt, and overcome. Right? You hear that a lot. We do it and our enemies do it, and it is extremely important.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 10½ minutes to the former veteran of the Arizona National Guard, Mr. SHADEGG.

Mr. SHADEGG. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

And just to follow up, I was going to actually begin my remarks tonight by noting the tremendous speech I thought that was given by my colleague Mr. MCHUGH, I believe it was the night before last, in the midst of this important debate. And I think this is an extremely important debate. Indeed, I think this is the most important debate in my 12 years in the United States Congress and I would assert the most important debate this Congress may, indeed, ever have.

But with regard to being unpatriotic, I want to make my position clear and I want to reference what Mr. MCHUGH said.

First, I respect every Member on the other side of the aisle, and I respect

their right to express their views. And, quite frankly, the other evening when I spoke in this debate, I said I respect and share their frustration, both at where we are in this war and how we got there.

But the gentleman pointed out that he hadn't heard anybody labeled unpatriotic. I think Mr. MCHUGH's comments were quite in tone with what I have heard in the portion of this debate that I have watched, and I have watched a lot. And he said, ''I have listened today with great interest, and I have enormous respect for Members on both sides of the aisle.'' I have that respect. I have the respect for the sincerity of my colleagues on both sides of this aisle. We have, however, an important disagreement which deserves to be aired.

I think there is an important question that needs to be asked. That question is, if we do not defeat radical jihadists in Iraq, the radical Islamists with whom we are at war there now, if we do not defeat them in Iraq, then where? And if we do not defeat them now, then when?

Let me first start by making a few points about the record and setting the record straight. My colleague from Texas pointed out a few moments ago that we are each entitled to our own opinion, but not to our own facts. I would suggest that there is a fact across this Nation, an accepted fact, which is flat untrue. And it was referred to in the debate here just a few moments ago. And that is the notion that Shia and Sunni have been at war with each other for hundreds of years and killing each other for hundreds of years.

Today, the bipartisan Antiterrorism Caucus met, and we heard from an expert from Brookings, and he said that is simply not true. The notion that we are in the midst of a civil war that has gone on for hundreds of years simply is not true. It is not a fact.

What is a fact is that we face an extraordinary enemy, an enemy that hates us, an enemy that has been taught a set of beliefs that requires them to kill us; that requires them to kill all Americans, all Westerners, all unbelievers; indeed, a radical jihadist sect that calls for them to kill many Muslims and to do so without excuse. To break all law in doing so. To ignore international law in doing so.

I would call my colleagues to read this book, ''Knowing the Enemy'' by Mary Habeck. I read it after she spoke to the bipartisan Antiterrorism Caucus. I want to read a few paragraphs out of this book because I believe it is important to understand: ''Jihadist ideologues use this generally accepted belief to argue that their interpretation of Islam is also intended for the entire world, which must be brought to recognize this fact peacefully if possible and through violence if not.''

We have been told over and over and over and over again that these jihadists, the radical jihadists, hate us. In the debate earlier on this floor I asked my colleagues, I asked anyone on either side of the aisle, if you can name for me a single radical jihadi leader who has said that if America leaves Iraq, if America will pull back from Iraq, the war will end? I have asked that question on this floor at least twice, maybe three times, and nobody has taken it up. And the answer is because that is not what they want.

I listened to the debate here tonight and I respect it. As I said, I share the frustration over where we are in this war. But if you listen carefully to this debate, what you hear is: well, if we will stop, the war will end. I am afraid it is not that true. I am afraid it is not that easy. I am afraid it is not that simple. If we were to stop, the war would not end.

Listen to the words of al Qaeda, the words of Osama bin Laden, the words of Ayman al Zawahiri. Over and over and over again, they have told us that that would not be the end of the war. Indeed, it would not end their war against us.

Let me talk first about Ayman al Zawahiri. Here is his quote: ''It is jihad for the sake of God and will last until our religion prevails . . . The entire world is an open battlefield for us. We will attack everywhere until Islam reigns.''

Osama bin Laden: ''The whole world is watching this war and the two adversaries; the Islamic Nation on the one hand and the United States and its allies on the other. It is either victory and glory or misery and humiliation.''

□ 0020

Ayman al-Zawahiri again: ''The jihad in Iraq requires several incremental goals; expel the Americans from Iraq, establish an Islamic authority or amarat, extend the jihad to secular countries neighboring Iraq, and then the clash with Israel.''

And last, Osama bin Laden: ''Hostility toward America is a religious duty. We hope to be rewarded by God for it. I am confident that Muslims will be able to end the legend of the so-called superpower that is America.''

There is no end to this war simply because we choose to stop fighting. It will not go away.

Let me refer again to Mary Habeck and ''Knowing the Enemy,'' which, Mr. Speaker, I hope you have read and all others who participate in this debate will read.

''The three main jihadist ideologues make clear a central point of the ongoing war with falsehood: That it will continue until Islam has liberated the entire world from darkness, tyranny and servitude. Jihadists thus neither recognize national boundaries within the Islamic lands, nor do they believe that the coming Islamic state when it is created should have permanent borders with unbelievers. The recognition of such boundaries would end the expansion of Islam and stop offensive jihad, both of which are transgressions against the laws of God that command jihad to last until judgment day or until the entire Earth is under the rule of Islamic law.''

It would be nice if we could ask this war to go away, but it won't. So I ask again, if you do not want to confront radical jihadists in Iraq, then where? And if not now, then when?

This war did not begin in 2003. It began not in 2001 with the attack on the World Trade Center. No. We have been at war with these radical jihadists for decades. In 1979, radical jihadists seized the American embassy in Tehran and held American hostages for 444 days. In 1983, radical jihadists attacked the Marine barracks in Beirut; 241 were murdered. In 1988, they brought down Pan Am Flight 103, known as the Lockerbie bombing; 270 were murdered. In 1993, Islamic terrorists attacked the World Trade Center for the first time; six were murdered. In 1996, they attacked the Khobar Towers. I have been to Khobar Towers before it was brought down. I saw where they killed 19 U.S. servicemen. 1998, al Qaeda attacked the U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya. They killed 212 in Tanzania and 11 were murdered in Kenya. In 2000, the Islamic terrorists attacked the USS Cole and 17 are murdered there. 2001, they attacked New York, Washington and Pennsylvania and they killed 3,000.

This war is the heart of the war on terror, and if we do not confront them now, then when? If we do not confront them in Iraq, then where?

There have been parallels to prior wars. I would suggest that this debate is similar, very similar, to the debate that led up to our involvement both in the World War I and World War II. Men of goodwill do like not to engage in war. It would be nice to have been able to believe that Hitler would go away, and well-meaning Americans argued that we should stay out of that war. But ultimately we couldn't, because ultimately the Japanese empire attacked us at Pearl Harbor and we recognized that we had to be involved in that war.

I would suggest to you that that is where we are now, and I would suggest to you that there is no such thing when you are at war as a nonbinding resolution, and there is no such thing as a resolution that does not do damage to the morale our troops.

Let me conclude, if I might, just by pointing out that this resolution may send a message to the White House, and I understand and sympathize with the desire to do that. But the more important message it will send is to our allies around the world that America cannot be trusted, that America cannot be relied upon, that America is an ally that will leave.

Osama bin Laden has said it over and over and over again: Attack them, fight them. Ultimately they will grow weak and they will back down.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK).

(Mr. MEEK of Florida asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am excited about being here. I want to thank the gentlelady for yielding. But I am going to put my prepared notes to the side here, because I don't think that is needed at this point, because we are well into debate now, Mr. Speaker, on this very issue of Iraq.

I would like to disclose to the House that I am not a member of the armed services. I have never served in a forward area. I wasn't even a member of the ROTC. But I am a Member of the U.S. Congress, and I have been federalized to come here to represent my constituents and the people of this great country.

I know sometimes we say some things on the floor that we don't really mean, and then there are some things we do really mean.

I had the opportunity to go to the White House today to speak to the President on this very issue, and I shared with him, delivered the message from the majority of the Members of this House of Representatives on a bipartisan basis, Republicans and Democrats that have come to this floor and said they are going to vote in the affirmative on this resolution because they don't believe in the escalation of troops.

A supermajority of the Members of the House have not served in the military. Now, do we respect and honor those that allow us still to salute one flag? You are 110 percent right as it relates to my feelings towards that. And I respect those Members who have been in the ROTC and came up through college and what have you and joined the Reserves and active duty. I trust their judgment. They have the right to say what they want to say when they want to say it.

But I shared with the President that this will pass. And he shook his head and said, ''I believe it will pass too, Kendrick.''

I said, ''Mr. President, here is something else that we have to be together on, and there has to be some level of compromise.''

Yes, this is a nonbinding resolution, but this is the first time that the President has ever had any, any, any pressure from the Congress on his original thoughts and what he says military commanders call for.

Now, since folks have been talking about who they are here on this floor and what they have done and chest beating and all, I have been a member of the Armed Services Committee. I am a member of the Ways and Means Committee now and still on Armed Services on a waiver.

I said I wanted to go back to Armed Services because we are at war and we have to make sense here in this House. We just can't say we are there and we got to stay there as long as we got to stay there, until the last insurgent says that they give up. Well, guess what? They are not going to give up. They are not going to give up, and they are not going to say, well, we are leaving. They are not going to say that.

So if our mission is to stay there as long as the last insurgent is there, so someone would not be looking at troops leaving on the plane saying we won, if that is the issue, then we have to readjust our thinking here.

Let me just share something with you. I said to the President, ''Yes, this is nonbinding, but it means a lot. It sends a message to the country that we heard them last November.''

You know the reason why this House is in the majority for the Democrats this time? You know why? Because the rubber stamp Republican Congress rubber stamped everything that the President sent to this House and to the Senate. And if this was about politics, I would just go home and sit and watch this debate on television and talk to my wife and tell my wife, guess what, sweetheart? The Democrats are about to gain a greater majority, because the American people are going to continue on a bipartisan way, not just Democrats, Republicans, independents, those that never voted before, will start voting because they think that we are not listening.

Now, I am going to share this also with you, what is very, very important. I said, ''Mr. President, it is nonbinding, but you are going to have a supplemental that is going to come through, and there has to be language in there that speaks to the point of readiness, speaks to the point of the fact that if you say we are going to send 20,000 combat troops and 3,000 support personnel, that they have what they need to carry out the mission.''

The President heard what I had to say and came right back and said, ''Kendrick, do you believe for a minute that I would put troops in harm's way if the military commanders did not tell us what we had?''

Respectfully I told the President, ''It has happened before.'' I have sat next to Mr. RYAN in the Armed Services Committee and watched four star generals answer the question, ''Do you have what you need?'' ''Yes, we have it.''

Then we went to Iraq twice. Not once. Not when somebody told me that got off the plane that came back from Iraq and said, ''Kendrick, guess what.'' In Mosul, in Baghdad, folks getting ready to go out on patrol did not have up-armored vehicles. And I am a Member of Congress. You would think someone would bring up-armored vehicles out because they have Members of Congress there. And people are there saying, and the troops are there saying, soldiers, in the field, 18 months on the second deployment, saying, ''Congressman, I know what you think, but let me tell you something: We don't have what we need.''

□ 0030

They still do not have what they need. So I come to this floor, yes, with great passion. I was not a member of the military, but doggone it, I am a Member of Congress. I am not going to let any Member of Congress make me believe or any other Member believe that they are less of a Member because they do not have the credentials that the next person has.

What I do know is that someone woke up early Tuesday morning at 7:00 a.m. to vote for representation in this U.S. House of Representatives, and doggone it, they are going to get, and those troops are going to get it.

So tomorrow it is going to be judgment time. Either you are with going in the old direction or in the new direction.

And the only reason that I have comfort, Mr. Speaker, tonight is the fact that I know that there is going to be a bipartisan vote on that board, just like it was on the minimum wage, just like it was as it relates to prescription drugs, just like it was in cutting back interest rates on student loans. All these bipartisan votes, and this is going to follow the number of those bipartisan votes. I know that we are going to start having the kind of oversight we have to have on this war.

I do not believe that it would be a full pull out of troops, and I am not even looking for that, but I am looking for management of this war in Iraq, and I am glad that we are having this debate.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ).

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I am going to bring it back down a notch for a minute.

On Tuesday, I had the privilege to spend time with some of our Nation's finest. I traveled to Walter Reed Army Medical Center and talked with some of our soldiers who dedicated their lives to protect our Nation and gave their hearts, souls and bodies to the cause of freedom.

As I was driving out to the hospital, I reflected upon the changes in Iraq in the year-and-a-half since my first visit to Walter Reed. During that visit, IED was not a regular part of the American vocabulary, Mr. Speaker. Fatalities were shocking. The mounting death toll was disturbing.

Today, there are insurgent attacks almost every day. Iraq has descended into a deadly civil war, and almost every American has become familiar with the term IED and the deadly impact they have on the young men and women that we send to fight for us in this war.

The terms of war that my good friend from Indiana so well knows, the casualties, death, kidnappings, injuries, helicopter crashes, bombs, amputations, good-byes, sorrow and pain have all become commonplace.

We hear that another helicopter was shot down or that three more soldiers died today in Iraq, and soon enough we become numb to the true impact that

this war is having on our troops and their families.

These young men and women represent true honor, courage and selflessness. They also represent the incalculable cost of the war, the price tag that is not mentioned, the lives, limbs, hopes and dreams.

They are soldiers like a young man I met Tuesday who was travelling on foot with his convey when an IED exploded, and as he put it, blew him up. He had served in Iraq twice before, and on his third tour of duty, Mr. Speaker, he became a double amputee, lost his arm and leg. Clearly, his total experience will change him completely.

Another young soldier was spending time with his family when I visited. He has a 6-year-old little boy who talked to me excitedly about how his daddy was finally going to come home forever after August. He, too, had two previous tours and fell severely ill this third time. Amazingly, this soldier hopes to go over and finish his tour with his company when he is better.

As a mom of 7-year-old twins, my first thought when meeting this delightful little boy was that his dad had missed half his life so far, half his life. I could not help but worry that if we do not get it right soon in Iraq it will not be long before this little boy and my twins will be part of this conflict.

And finally, there are soldiers like the young man who shared so much with me and who sincerely explained to me that he was actually glad that he was badly injured, as opposed to his gunner, because his gunner had a wife and kids and he did not want his buddy's family to have to look into his eyes like that. He told me he wants to run for office one day, and our Nation will be better for it.

America's future depends upon this generation of Americans, but while they fight to protect our country, they are depending on us to protect them. They are counting on us, the United States Congress and this President, to have a plan, a strategy that gets us somewhere and to help get them home and not endlessly commit their lives and their families' lives to this war.

So, Mr. Speaker, today I join an overwhelming majority of the American people, a bipartisan majority of Congress and some of the President's own military leaders to raise my voice and to be the voice of the constituents, the thousands of people who I represent in the 20th district of Florida, against escalating this war in Iraq.

But more importantly, I raise my voice for my generation and for all the little boys and girls in America whose mommies and daddies are in Iraq and Afghanistan fighting for this country and for freedom.

This President owes the American people, but more importantly, these brave troops, a strategy that makes sense, that will do the job and that will help get them home. The President's policy fails that 6-year-old little boy with a heart of gold and a smile that lights up the room who only wants his daddy to come home forever.

I support this resolution because the explanation the President has given the American people is not good enough. I cannot help but think about the way this war is affecting not only my generation, Mr. Speaker, but the generations following mine. They, too, recognize the sacrifices that our men and women in uniform are facing.

Students from two schools in my district, Nob Hill Elementary and Silver Ridge Elementary, made Valentine's Day cards for the soldiers, and I got a chance to deliver them Tuesday during my visit to Walter Reed. One of these cards reads, the one right here: ''Thank you for protecting our country and me. You're the best. I would never have had the guts to fight with guns anyways. You are my hero. Forever and ever. Get well very, very soon.''

These young children recognize the service and sacrifice that these warriors are making. As Members of Congress, we owe them no less.

It is our responsibility to provide for the common defense, and that includes vigorous debate, informed discussion and responsible public policy.

I support this resolution because it does just that, and Mr. Speaker, I support this resolution because the gentleman from Indiana knows better.

It does not require words to question patriotism. We have had plenty of implication throughout this debate on this floor on the other side of the aisle, and death by a thousand cuts is the same as direct words. It is irresponsible and unconscionable that the other side of the aisle has questioned the patriotism of the Members who disagree.

It is Congress' job to disagree. It is our role in the system of checks and balances, as our Founding Fathers envisioned them, unfortunately a role that was absent for the last 12 years.

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

I would like to, on my time, yield to the gentlewoman. I would like to yield to the gentlewoman on my time, since she would not yield on her time. Would the gentlewoman please identify by name a Republican who has called a Democrat in this debate unpatriotic?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BUYER. I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I thank you for yielding.

I was just taking my opportunity. You have had more than 45 minutes to an hour of your own time to discuss your own view, and each us would like that same opportunity. It is 12:40 in the morning. So I appreciate you yielding.

I can tell you, as I just mentioned in my remarks, that it does not require express words. By implication, there are many Members on your side of the aisle who have questioned the patriotism of any of us who disagree with the President's policy. The President's policy is inappropriate, and it is Congress' role to question to engage in vigorous oversight. That is a role that was absent for the last 12 years, and that is why the American people elected Democrats to lead this chamber on November 7 and move this country in a new direction, which unfortunately you have neglected to do.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I have neglected to do?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. You collectively.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, are you questioning my motives

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, parliamentary inquiry. Is it proper for one Member to try to question the motive of another Member?

□ 0040

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Even in heated debate, the Members should be more orderly in the process of yielding and reclaiming time.

Mr. BUYER. I thank the Speaker. I am thankful that the gentlewoman gave the answer to her question, and the answer was that it was implicit.

It is very easy in debate to come down and to create a straw person and then attack the straw person. If the gentlewoman has felt that way, that is completely unfortunate. But please don't say you have been called unpatriotic. That is the exchange I had with an earlier speaker. Don't accuse Republicans of such things. I am disturbed by that and very bothered.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Would the gentlewoman yield?

Mr. BUYER. I am more than pleased to yield to the gentlewoman.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Does the gentleman not understand that when words are used, that they don't actually have to be exact words to suggest a particular opinion on the part of the Member? And do you really think that it is beyond question that any of the Members on your side of the aisle as they engaged in this discussion and debate did not question the patriotism of our Members? I mean, me thinks thou dost protest too much, as the gentleman stated earlier. I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. BUYER. I thank the gentlewoman for her remarks.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. BUYER. I am more than pleased to yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. As I was watching the debate prior to my speech, I wrote down a quote that was stated by the gentleman from Indiana looking at the Democrats saying, How can we say we support the troops? Question mark.

Now, if that is not questioning the patriotism of our side, I don't know what is.

Mr. BUYER. Now I seek to reclaim my time, because that is a legitimate question.

As the commander in the field, if you say to the commander, ''I support

you.'' All right? What is the commander going to say? The commander says, ''All right, I have a mission, and you say I support you.'' That means, I suppose, that I support you by making sure that you have been properly trained, that you have your uniform, that you have your ammunition, you have your helmet, you have your body Kevlar. You have what is necessary to accomplish your mission. But do you? If the commander says, ''I need more troops to accomplish that mission,'' you say, ''But you can't have those.'' Is that then supporting the commander?

That is why I pointed out the contradiction in that the Senate says to General Petraeus, ''We agree, you are our best commander to go over there.'' And before they took that vote, he said, ''I need those five brigades.'' So they passed the vote and they sent General Petraeus over.

Now we are faced with a vote that says I support the troops, I support the members of the Armed Forces.

How can we say, ''I support you, but, Mr. Commander, we are not going to give you the troops''? That is the point of the question.

So please don't try to spin it into something that says, oh, you are calling me unpatriotic. That is what I think is rather peculiar.

Mr. Speaker, does the gentlewoman have any other speakers?

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Yes. Mr. Speaker, we have one additional speaker.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT).

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, when people on the other side of the aisle wonder how we can ask, Do you really support the troops? How about this quote that was contributed to Mr. MURTHA? ''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. They won't be able to do the work.'' There is no question in my mind.

On his Web site that has now been taken down, it says, ''Chairman MURTHA will describe his strategy for not only limiting the deployment of troops to Iraq, but undermining other aspects of the President's foreign and national security policy.''

He is the Commander in Chief. That is undermining the President.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I just want to inquire of our remaining time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from California has 18 minutes. The gentleman from Indiana has 16 minutes.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN).

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, it is entirely possible and welcomed under the Constitution of the United States to have disagreements about how we need to handle troops deployments, how we need to handle our situation in different wars. And it is not to be said that because one party or one group of people have a different philosophy and a different strategy, that somehow they are not supporting the troops.

Now, your party and your President, the Republican Party, Mr. Speaker, and the Republican President are the ones who sent our kids to battle without armor, without body armor. And it took JACK MURTHA months to uncover it, and then to finally get it paid for and distributed. It was the Republican Party, Mr. Speaker, who sent kids into battle without up-armored Humvees.

Now, nobody questioned the Republican Party's patriotism, and nobody asked them if they supported the troops. Again, we called you incompetent, we said you were incapable, we said you were derelict in your duty, we said you should have provided oversight and you didn't. But we never called you unpatriotic.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I now recognize Mr. CHRIS MURPHY of Connecticut for 5 minutes. He will be our last speaker, and, as we all know, he is a veteran of the Iraq war.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding. I often get confused with my good friend from Pennsylvania.

Let's just touch for one minute, before I address the resolution on the question that our friends from the other aisle brought to us today and that Mr. RYAN was so good enough to talk about as well, that is this notion that in order to support the troops, you have to support the commander of the troops.

Well, having spent the last 2 years walking around talking to every sector of the constituents of the Fifth District of Connecticut, having a sense of where the American people came down in November on this question, the American people seem to agree with folks on this side of the aisle, which says this: There is a difference between supporting the troops and supporting the commander.

It is not an issue of patriotism necessarily, it is an issue of differentiating between the brave men and women who are over there fighting and dying for this country, and the man who sends them into battle. You can disagree with him and you can support the troops. You can do that out in the public as a matter of your private advocacy, and you can do that here on this floor.

That is where the American public came down on election day. They said loud and clear that day, ''We support the troops.'' They go every day to celebrations of those troops when they leave and when they come home. They go to much more somber ceremonies when they don't return home. And then on election day they come out and they say this: ''I support those troops. I don't support the man who put them into harm's way in the manner that he did that.''

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Speaker PELOSI and Leader HOYER for allowing us to be here this morning. It is late at night, and I will be brief in my remarks on the resolution before us.

Amidst the embarrassing overabundance of thorny foreign policy questions before this House currently, the question before this Chamber tonight is a fairly simple one: Do we agree with the Nation's military establishment, with the country's foreign policy community, with popular opinion, and reject this President's very wrongheaded plan to send 21,000 more troops into Iraq? Or do we remain silent in homage to Congress' past and allow this potentially disastrous escalation to move forward?

I think the question answers itself. And I am proud today to stand here in support of this resolution, and register my strong support of our troops and my strong opposition to escalating this war.

As we finish the debate tonight, I have been joined in these final remarks by some of the younger colleagues in the House of Representatives. And I think our unity is significant. I should remind other Members of this House that we are discussing the fates of many young men and women, my classmates, my friends, that are this hour fighting and dying in a country halfway around the world.

□ 0050

As younger Members we also serve as reminders that our duty here is not just to set policies to secure the safety of our country in terms of months or years but also in terms of decades.

Mr. Speaker, I have never fought in a war. I haven't shot another man on the battlefield nor have I been wounded myself. But I have been allowed the privilege to represent my constituents in this body because of the selfless bravery of those men and women around this country that made a different choice than I did, those that volunteered to go overseas and fight and defend this country. It is my duty to stand here today and thank them for their service, thank their families for their service, but also to be their advocate here tonight. Because the President is asking a cadre of our bravest young men and women to go house to house in Baghdad to root out an insurgency while he does virtually nothing to address the systematic causes of that insurgency. One hundred thousand troops may not be able to do the job that the President is asking 21,000 to do. Escalating the number of troops in Baghdad hasn't worked in the past and it most likely won't work here. Through his actions, the President is putting our soldiers' lives at unnecessary and unconscionable risk. There is a resolution in Iraq but it's a political solution. It's not a military resolution. And we owe it to our soldiers who have done everything that we have asked them to do to stand up to a President who would ask them to do a job that

they cannot and should not do. And beyond our duty to our current generation of troops on the ground, our responsibility, quite frankly, also lies with the generations to come. I decided to seek a seat in this House at a relatively young age because I was fearful that the decisions that were being made here today would have dramatic consequences for the world that my future children and grandchildren will grow up in. And I came here to begin a conversation that acknowledges that what will make this Nation safe for generations is not a Nation built on bullying, not a strategy based on scattershot military intervention but a comprehensive foreign policy that combines American might with American diplomacy. In order to secure this Nation for the next generation, we need to acknowledge that the most important question we must ask is not who do we attack next, but instead how do we reset our place in this world in a way that would prevent the forces who would do America harm from becoming stronger?

Mr. Speaker, we need to come to grips with the fact that we live in a world in which our own supposed allies create societies that foster extremism and violence amongst their most marginalized members. At the same time our Nation often strangely views cultural and political global detachment as a virtue rather than a weakness. This combination causes those that speak different tongues and those that worship different gods to look upon our great Nation with undeserved derision. This must change.

For my mind, we do that in three parts. First, we must pass this resolution in order to pivot to a much broader conversation. And in that conversation in the coming days and months, we must redeploy our troops both to home and to fights that are central to the war on terror, such as in Afghanistan. The gentlemen from the other side of the aisle are right. This battle with terrorists who may do harm to this country does not end no matter what happens on the ground in Iraq. But we must focus on our energies there. Lastly, we need to begin, going forward from today, to renew that multilateral spirit that once made this country great by proving ourselves in the future to be both a strong America and a humble America.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here today in support of this resolution.

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

There was a peculiar comment a bit ago from the gentleman from Ohio when he said, well, I didn't call you unpatriotic when you sent troops into battle and they didn't have their up-armored Humvees. What a weird statement to say.

You see, we prepare our force. So, for example, when myself and Colonel Phillips in the first Gulf War, those Hummers that we took in, they didn't even have doors on them. We didn't have doors on the side of those. We didn't go in with all the side plates and front plates, groin plates, neck plates, shoulder plates. We didn't do all that. Most of that, the body armor, was reserved for special ops. When you move in to counterinsurgency and then the enemy begins to use roadside bombs to attack our Hummers, what do we have to do? We respond. That is why I made the comment of what does our military do? They improvise, they adapt and they overcome, and that is exactly the same thing which our enemies do. So it was a very peculiar comment to say, well, we didn't attack you because. I don't know. It's so peculiar, I don't even want to comment anymore on it.

What I would like to comment on is the nature of the enemy and the significance of Iraq and the global war against militant Islamists.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to turn our attention to the nature of the enemy we face and the significance of Iraq in the global war against militant Islam. We often use the term ''global war on terrorism'' to describe our efforts since the September 11 attacks. I believe this is a misnomer. In reality, we are engaged in a campaign to counter a global, radical Islamist insurgency, a global jihad. This global insurgency is, in fact, a diverse confederation of Islamic movements that uses terrorism as only one of its many tactics in their war against the West.

On February 23, 1998, Osama bin Laden, leader of al Qaeda, declared war on the United States, Israel and the West in his statement ''World Islamic Front Declaration of War against Jews and Crusaders.'' Subsequently, bin Laden's deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, issued a statement after September 11 announcing a two-phase strategy for al Qaeda's war. First, reestablish the Islamic Caliphate, the historical and temporal authority of all Muslims that existed from 632 A.D. until 1924 A.D, and, second, use the Caliphate as a launch pad for a jihad against the West.

No one believes that Osama bin Laden directly controls this worldwide insurgency. Rather than a single monolithic movement, al Qaeda is but one movement that symbolizes a broad and diverse confederation of militant Islamic movements that operate around the world. This insurgency includes such wide-ranging organizations as the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, the Islamic Army of Aden, al Qaeda in Iraq, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, the Abu Sayyaf Group in Malaysia and the Philippines. In addition, Iran, a majority Shia country, backs numerous radical Islamic groups, including Hezbollah and Palestine rejectionist groups such as Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. These wide-ranging and disparate groups are loosely linked ideologically, linguistically and culturally. They use family ties, personal relationships and financial links to coordinate their efforts. Thus, the global jihad plays out in a variety of theaters around the world. These include:

The Americas, where in North America we saw the September 11 attacks and as a House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence report stated, Federal authorities have shut down at least 25 charities contributing to terrorist activities since September 11. That is here in our own country.

In South America there is a strong al Qaeda presence in the tri-border area of Argentina, Paragiau and Brazil.

In Western Europe, where there have been recently uncovered plans for attacks against Great Britain and the United States and where insurgent financial networks and planning cells flourish throughout Europe supporting insurgent activities.

In the Southern Pacific, where the Bali bombings in October 2002 were attributed to an al Qaeda-linked cell.

In the Ibernian Peninsula and North Africa where North Africans were blamed for the May 2004 Madrid bombings and where there have been bombings in Casablanca, Morocco and Tunisia.

In the greater Middle East, where there are ongoing Islamic insurgencies in Iraq, Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Turkey, Lebanon and Israel/Palestine.

In East Africa, where simultaneous bombings in October 1998 in Kenya and Tanzania were coordinated from the Sudan.

The Caucuses and European Russia, where nationalist insurgencies in Chechnya, Georgia, and Azerbaijan have been co-opted by Islamic militants.

South and Central Asia, where the Taliban and al Qaeda continue to operate in Afghanistan and in Pakistan's federally administered tribal areas.

And in Southeast Asia, where Islamic insurgencies continue in Indonesa, the Philippines and southern Thailand.

These Islamic insurgencies share a common goal. They are oriented toward the overthrow of the current world order and its replacement with a pan-Islamic Caliphate. They wish to change the status quo using violence and subversion in order to initiate a clash between Islam and the West. They use terrorism, subversion and propaganda to further their goals and initiate open warfare.

It will come as no surprise that most of the active Islamic insurgencies take place either within the historical bounds of the Caliphate, meaning North Africa, Spain, Turkey and the Middle East, or in areas claimed by the new broader pan-Islamic Caliphate, South Asia, Southeast Asia and Indonesia. These insurgencies contribute to what is called an arc of instability that reaches from Indonesia across South Asia and the Middle East to North Africa.

Where does Iraq fit into this global jihad? Iraq has become the front line in the open warfare of the global insurgency. In many ways, Iraq is a microcosm of the complex worldwide Islamic

insurgency. The centrality of Iraq to the insurgency became clear in a July 2005 letter to the late Abu Musab al-Zarqawi from al Qaeda's deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri. In discussing Iraq, Zawahiri stated:

''I want to be the first to congratulate you for what God has blessed you with in terms of fighting battle in the heart of the Islamic world, which was formerly the field for major battles in Islam's history, and what is now the place for the greatest battle of Islam in this era.''

Zawahiri went on to outline the larger strategy for Iraq. First, expel the Americans from Iraq. Second, establish an Islamic authority and reestablish the Caliphate. Third, extend the jihad neighboring secular Islamic countries. Fourth, eliminate Israel. Thus we see a clear statement from the number two man in al Qaeda that Iraq is centrally important to the global jihad.

Al Qaeda is not alone in operating in Iraq. There have been extensive Iranian involvement that has been alleged recently. On March 14, 2006, General John Abizaid told the Senate Armed Services Committee that ''Iran is pursuing a multitrack policy in Iraq, consisting of covertly supporting the formation of a stable, Shia Islamist-led central government while covertly working to diminish popular and military support for U.S. and Coalition operations there.''

While the full extent of Iranian support is unknown, it appears that at a minimum Iran is supporting the 20,000-man Badr Brigade as well as the 2,000-man Wolf Brigade which is an offshoot. Just this week, administration officials announced that Iran was the source of deadly explosive form projectiles being used in Iraq.

Iraqis also grasp that Iraq is central in this global struggle. Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki told us here in a joint session of Congress, ''I know that some of you here question whether Iraq is part of that war on terror, but let me be very clear. This is a battle between true Islam, for which a person's liberty and rights constitute essential cornerstones, and that of terrorism, which wraps itself in a fake Islamic cloak.''

The centrality of Iraq in the larger global Islamic insurgency cannot be disputed. Our enemies and our friends in the region grasp its significance. To fail in Iraq is to fail in the larger struggle. And our enemies are watching. They remember what America did not grasp the scope of the threat posed by radical Islam. Yet the signals were there:

In 1979, 66 American diplomats taken hostage, held in Iran for 444 days.

In 1983, a truck bomb kills 241 Marines at their barracks in Beirut.

In 1988, Pan Am flight 103 bombing kills 270, including 189 Americans, over Lockerbie, Scotland.

In 1993, six killed at the first World Trade Center bombing by militant Islamic terrorists.

In 1996, 19 U.S. servicemembers were killed at Khobar Towers.

In 1998, 225 people killed in bombings at our U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya.

In 2000, al Qaeda's attack on the destroyer USS Cole kills 17 American sailors.

In 2001, September 11, killed 2,973.

Until 2001, we failed to properly react to this threat. The enemy perceived us as weak and believed that we lacked the will to fight.

This resolution before us, if approved, will signal our lack of resolve and I am troubled. It will be interpreted, I believe, by the forces of the global jihad that the United States lacks the will to persevere against the forces of radical Islam. It will give comfort to their thoughts, for they will know that we in Congress are uncertain and irresolute. In a war where information and willpower are more important than firepower, we must continue to send the signal that we cannot and will not cease to fight the enemy's vision of the world. You see, even if you have your way and you say we are going to withdraw the troops, whether they come back to the United States or whether they go to an over-the-horizon position and this new infancy government fails, we cannot cower to the security of America. This front continues.

The Bible states, ''If the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?'' If the trumpet is uncertain, who will follow? This resolution, I think, sends the wrong signal to our friends and to our enemies and I urge my colleagues to support those troops, sound the certain trumpet, and defeat the resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague on the other side of the aisle, because in many ways he has really made the case for us. The argument on his side has been that we can't just use our military, the tools that they bring us, the great treasure that we have in them. We cannot solely look to them. And I think our great consternation over this war has been that we have not used our political, our economic and our diplomatic tools to represent the great Nation that we are.

I have to tell my colleague that I was really saddened when the veterans of my community asked me, and I have asked our generals and I have asked the President, are we in fact a military at war and not a Nation at war? The generals told me that we are a military at war. I think the President disagreed with that. But the reality is that we have not brought our Nation to this effort in the way that I think is appropriate to have done. And so when we talk about the strategic risks that are there, when we talk about the fact that we need to understand those risks, we are doing it in a context that we know that when we went to this war, we didn't properly assess those risks.

□ 0110

We failed to do that, and we can't fail to do that any longer.

So what we bring to the table and what we bring to this discussion and this debate, and I think it has been a good debate, Mr. Speaker, is I think it is important, as a lot of my colleagues have said on both sides of the aisle, that we represent the people of our community.

I often go into schools and talk to students about what representation means and tell them that it would be really impossible to take their entire class to Washington and have everybody there to speak on the floor of the House. Well, we are honored, and I know that my colleague is too, to be in the House, to be able to make those presentations, and we do it for people who actually sometimes disagree with us as well as agree with us. But it is important that we do that.

I think what we bring to this debate is to try and understand what these strategic risks are today. You made my case, and I appreciate that, because there are many conflicts, and we need to understand them. That is why only focusing on a troop escalation, which isn't 20,000 troops, Mr. Speaker, we know there are probably another 15,000 in support troops, and those 15,000 troops, which are there for support of combat troops, sometimes get in the way. We know that, and we know we have had many deaths from our support troops as well. So we need to think about this as a much larger troop escalation.

But the reality is we need to utilize all of our other tools, and we want to put the pressure on our country, on this administration, on the Iraqi people and its government and all of our friends around the world to help us and step up to the plate; not to just rely on our military, not to just rely on our treasure. We believe that is essential to make the statement.

So I want to close, Mr. Speaker, by saying that this has been a good debate. It will continue. It will continue into tomorrow. Then Members will have an opportunity to vote and to let their constituents know how and why they chose to do that.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, if the gentlewoman will yield, I just want to compliment her for her civility and the way she led the debate. It was a good discussion, and it is exactly what the American people are looking for from this body. I congratulate the gentlewoman.

Mr. WALSH of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this resolution formalizing this body's resolve to support and protect the men and women in the United States Armed Forces in Iraq and disapproving of President Bush's decision to deploy 20,000+ additional combat troops to Iraq.

Like the overwhelming majority of my colleagues in the House and Senate, in 2002 I voted to authorize the use of force in Iraq should the President deem such force necessary.

Since then, the men and women of our Armed Services have carried out their mission with great courage and bravery, and they successfully achieved every military objective we set forth.

They removed a tyrannical, oppressive dictator who brutally slaughtered his own people, including innocent women and children.

They rebuilt schools and replaced a crumbling infrastructure.

And they provided security for the Iraqi people to successfully conduct interim elections, to write a new constitution, and to democratically elect and install new national leadership.

The remaining objectives articulated at the outset—conflict resolution between Sunnis and Shiites and national peace and stabilization—can only be achieved for the Iraqis, by the Iraqis. Their success will take personal will and political compromise from all domestic parties involved.

Mr. Speaker, success in Iraq today requires a political solution, not a military one. Twenty thousand more armed American men and women on the ground in Iraq will not change the determination or alter the strategy of the warring factions and militants our troops now face.

The addition of more American forces will certainly not encourage the Iraqi Forces to take responsibility for their nation's security. This premise never became clearer than when GEN. John Abizaid told the Senate Armed Services Committee, ''I believe that more American forces prevent the Iraqis from doing more and from taking more responsibility for their own future.''

He continued, ''I've 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.''

Today's U.S. military role in Iraq should be to assist in support and training initiatives, not to lead the charge. We must remember that this democracy does not belong to us, but to the Iraqi people who are responsible for protecting and enhancing it.

If an increase of troops is needed to stabilize specific regions, those troops ought to be Iraqi troops. At last count there were 325,000 trained, equipped and fielded Iraqi Security Forces. At some point in time, these Iraqi Forces have to lead security efforts.

What better time than now? What better opportunity could there be for the Iraqis to manifest their national pride and commitment to democracy by concrete actions? The Iraqis are ready and the U.S. needs to stop enabling their dependence.

Recently, the 174th Fighter Wing of the New York Air National Guard based in my hometown of Syracuse returned from a support tour in Iraq, and I'm proud that a young member of my staff deployed with them. Dozens of other young men and women from New York's 25th Congressional District have fought in Iraq and Afghanistan. I am deeply proud of them and their remarkable service to our country.

Mr. Speaker, I stand before you as a member of the greatest deliberative body in the greatest representative democracy in the world. We are the people's House. We are all elected—chosen—every two years by citizens across this land to converge here in Washington to represent them, to vote on their behalf, and to ensure that their voices are heard in every national debate. And as Members of Congress we do so with a unique balance of personal belief and public will.

The President is the Commander in Chief. That is a fact. But he is not the sole decider. We—the other elected leaders of our government—have a responsibility to express the will of the American people as we perceive it.

The people of my New York district overwhelmingly supported this mission at its start, as did I. We still support its goals. We will always support our troops. But we do not support the continued build up of U.S. troops in Iraq.

This resolution states the House's disagreement with the President on this strategy, and I support this 97-word resolution before us. But I also say today clearly and without equivocation that I will not support any proposal to cut funding to our troops while they are in harm's way.

America has kept her promises to the people of Iraq. Over 3,000 American soldiers have given their lives to ensure those promises were kept, and their families now go forward with a constant reminder of the price of their sacrifice.

This resolution confronts the reality that there are defined military objectives, defined diplomatic objectives, and defined political objectives that can only be achieved by a sovereign and selfsustaining people.

This resolution, ultimately, is about the role and the responsibility of the Iraqi people. This resolution does not call for us to step out—American troops there need to remain and take on a different role. Rather, this resolution calls for Iraq to step up.

For that reason, it has my support.

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I voted against the original resolution authorizing President Bush to take military action against Iraq. As a Member of the Out of Iraq and Progressive caucuses, I have and will continue to call for the immediate withdrawal of American troops.

I rise today in strong opposition to the President's proposal to send more than 20,000 additional United States combat troops to Iraq. Today's non-binding resolution is an important first step. After its passage, I will encourage my colleagues in Congress to take further steps to end the War in Iraq.

When a scientist uncovers facts that contradict a theory, he or she throws out that theory. But when President Bush learns of facts that contradict his theories, he throws out the facts. As a member of the reality-based community, I continue to be amazed by this President's disregard for objective truths.

The President, however, isn't just a scientist experimenting with chemicals in a laboratory. He is an executive whose decision to take us to war under false pretenses has adversely affected the lives of millions of Americans and Iraqis. The costs of the nearly four-year old conflict are grave.

More than 3,100 brave American servicemen and women, including at least 325 from my home state of California, have already died in the war. An additional 23,000 plus have been wounded. Estimates of the number of Iraqi civilians killed since the invasion run even higher, from 47,000 to 70,000. All at a cost of $379 billion to the American people. That's more than $1250 for every man, woman, and child currently living in the U.S.

But these are facts. President Bush is more interested in cockamamy theories.

In the run-up to the war, Bush speculated that Iraq possessed nuclear weapons. When intelligence officers suggested that might not be the case, he ignored them. To date, no weapons of mass destruction have been found.

Bush also hypothesized that the attack would turn Iraq into a liberal democracy. When academic scholars wrote that Iraq's history and culture didn't suggest such an outcome was likely, he dismissed them. Today, despite the election of an Iraqi Assembly and formation of an Iraqi government, the country is in a full-fledged civil war.

During the past four years, the President has repeatedly theorized that America was making progress in Iraq, and that ''success'' was just around the corner. I remember, in particular, Bush's summer 2003 statement that ''major combat operations in Iraq have ended,'' his summer 2004 claim that we were ''turning the corner'' abroad, and CHENEY's summer 2005 reference to an insurgency in its ''last throes.'' Despite these promises, the situation in Iraq has gotten worse every year, not better.

My favorite declaration came this past summer, when the President said that the formation of a new Iraqi government represented a ''turning point.''

Unfortunately, the body count in Iraq continues to grow. This past July, an average of 110 Iraqi adults died each day, the deadliest month of the war for Iraq. In October, militia attacks spiked 22 percent. In December, more than 100 American troops were killed, the third deadliest month of the war for the United States.

But the November elections did represent a turning point—in the United States. The Bush administration no longer has a Republican Congress to lick its boots. What's more, voting on this resolution will soon suggest President Bush doesn't even have the support of his own party.

When the President in January suggested sending additional troops to Iraq, Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle criticized his foolhardy proposal. Senator CHUCK HAGEL, Republican from Nebraska, termed it ''Alice in Wonderland'' thinking that would ''represent the most dangerous foreign policy blunder since Vietnam.''

Retired military personnel weren't much more enthusiastic. Former General Barry McCaffrey called the surge ''a fool's errand.'' Retired Colonel Paul Hughes said ''sending more troops to Baghdad is like pouring more water in the sands of Al-Anbar. It's just going to disappear without accomplishing anything.''

I couldn't agree more. The President's proposal to escalate the war in Iraq in the naive hope of winning a lasting peace is another cockamamy theory that contradicts all available facts.

I strongly urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' and take this important first step to end the War in Iraq and bring all of our troops home.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, every member of this Congress, every member, regardless of political party, and regardless of their position on this war, or the resolution before us now, is equally committed to the security of this nation, our communities, and our families. And I believe every member of this Congress supports our troops and their families while they

are deployed. We must all support our veterans and their families when they return home.

Since this war began, I have attended, as many of my colleagues have, deployment ceremonies as we send the troops off to fight. I have been on the tarmac in the cold and dark mornings when they've come home to their families. I have been many times to Walter Reed to visit the wounded. I have been to funerals for the fallen and held the hands of loved ones left behind.

Over the past weeks, months, and in the years since this conflict began, I have heard from constituents on all sides of this issue, including members of our armed forces who have served or are now serving in Iraq. Some of our troops support the war in Iraq, others oppose it, some support an increase, others don't. To suggest that opposing the President's planned escalation means not supporting the troops would imply that many of the troops themselves and many of their loved ones back home don't support the troops. That suggestion simply makes no sense and we should put it to rest for good.

The real question today is not whether or not we are committed to security, or whether or not we support the troops. The real question is how we believe protecting security is best achieved. On that, there is legitimate disagreement, which is, or should be, what this debate is about. To have that debate is not only a right, but a responsibility of the elected representatives in a republic such as ours. Indeed, it is to defend that very right that our troops are being asked to serve and sacrifice not just in Iraq, but around the world.

I saw the Pentagon explode from my office window on September 11th. We all knew that thousands of our fellow citizens were dying before our eyes and I was worried about the safety of my own family. None of us need to be reminded through floor speeches or Presidential homilies about the threat of terrorism. But let us also not forget that the terrorists of that day did not come from Iraq. And let no one forget that, with only one exception, the entire House of Representatives, Democrats and Republicans alike, all voted to authorize the use of force to destroy the Al Qaeda bases and the Taliban who harbored them in Afghanistan. That is where the terrorists of September 11th were based, that is where the central focus of the fight against terrorists was focused, and we were united, along with virtually the entire world, in that fight.

Iraq is different, and the focus on Iraq has distracted and detracted from the mission in Afghanistan and the real battle against terrorists. Administration suggestions aside, none of the terrorists of September 11th came from, or were trained in Iraq, and there were no weapons of mass destruction.

President Bush and the rest of the administration took this Nation into an unnecessary and ill conceived war based on false threats and with a deeply flawed plan. Our soldiers, their families, our economy, our overall military readiness, the Iraqi people, friends in the region, and our coalition partners, have all suffered as a result of the administration's misinformation and miscalculations.

Before this war, I, and many others, asked the administration to answer fundamental questions. How many troops will this take? How many lives will be sacrificed? How long will we be there? What will it cost financially? How will we pay for it? How will you manage internal conflicts among the Iraqi's themselves? What will be the impact on our overall security elsewhere in the world?

The fact is this administration has never answered any of those fundamental questions honestly or fully. Never. Either they knew the answers and refused to give them, or they did not know and went ahead anyway. If the first is true, they were being dishonest. If the second is true, they were incompetent. Sadly, it appears likely that both incompetence and duplicity were at work.

Unfortunately, very little has changed since this war began. As we consider the proposed escalation of the occupation in Iraq, none of the most important questions has been answered.

I voted against this war from the outset and believe to this day that was the right vote. But once we were committed and engaged, I believed, as most of my colleagues and most Americans, that we had a responsibility to support the troops and try our best to help the Iraqis rebuild their nation, establish a democratic republic, and try to restore stability. I, along with most members of this Congress, voted repeatedly to provide our troops the needed resources to succeed, and I fervently hoped the mission would be successful. To a degree, there have been successes. We determined there were no weapons of mass destruction. Saddam Hussein has been removed from power, and is now dead as a result of a public and open judicial process. There have been free and open elections, and Iraq has a constitution and elected government.

Those are good things. But the costs have been horrific and the key questions still have never been, perhaps cannot be, answered by this Administration. As we consider the President's latest proposal we must ask again: How many more lives? How much more will this cost? How will we pay for this? What will it do to the rest of our security internationally and at home?

Because these questions are at the core of whether or not this policy will enhance or jeopardize our troops and our security, and because the administration to this day is unwilling or incapable of answering these basic questions honestly, I must vote in favor of this resolution, and oppose further troop increases.

It is irresponsible to allow a commander in chief, who has not been honest or accurate from the outset, to continue sacrificing the lives, bodies and families of our troops to a mission that lacks a clear objective or any foreseeable endpoint.

It is recklessly dangerous to permit a commander in chief to jeopardize our nation's security by letting our military equipment, readiness and troop morale continue to decline. It is shortsighted and unwise to leave our National Guard and Reserve unprepared and under-equipped to respond to other challenges or crises abroad or within our own borders. It is wasteful and foolhardy to build the largest embassy in the world in this very small nation. It is dangerous and strategically unsound to concentrate more of our intelligence assets in this one city, leaving the rest of the world and other dangerous threats less covered. It is unsustainable for our economy to keep pouring out money, forgoing needed investments at home, and piling debt onto our children with no real plan to pay for it, and no real end in sight. It is a breach of trust to not provide the needed services for our veterans and their families when they return home. It is irrational and inaccurate to believe that securing Iraq is the real key to keeping our nation safe from terror, or that if we withdraw from Iraq the only possible outcome is for our nation to be more vulnerable. It is immoral to leave our soldiers dying and bleeding in the middle of a centuries old religious conflict that is not of our creation and is not within our power or responsibility to resolve.

For far too long we have given this President far too much credibility, far too much power, far too many lives and far too much money. It is time to stop.

Having said how I will vote, the sad but simple truth is this, neither moving forward with the President's proposed troop increase, nor voting for this resolution of disapproval, will really do what is needed to secure our own nation, solve the problems in Iraq or bring real stability to the region. There are, in fact, better alternatives to the administration proposal and those of us who oppose the President's plan should spell out what we think is the better course.

This is where I believe that better course should take us:

1. We must renew our focus on securing and rebuilding Afghanistan and increase both troop strength and financial investment in that nation along with our allied partners. The fight in Afghanistan was the real and most important fight against the terrorists of September 11th. It was justified from the beginning and remains just today, and it has the support of the world. We cannot let the Taliban regroup and reinstate their reign of terror and extremism there and we still have a chance, though it is slipping fast, to help the Afghanis establish a successful, tolerant and secure nation.

2. In Iraq, the administration should meet confidentially with the Iraqi leaders and give them a timeline with key benchmarks by which our forces will withdraw. The timeline and benchmarks should be sufficient to ensure the safety or our forces and give the elected Iraqi government a reasonable time to train their forces and strengthen their political processes, but there must be a timeline so there is real pressure for real progress. The process of conveying this information and the timeline itself should be confidential. The elected Iraqi government should then announce that it is they who are asking us to begin withdrawal, thereby strengthening their credibility and leadership while giving our nation a graceful way to exit at their request. Frankly, this should have been done by the administration before the Iraq Study Group report and before this debate in Congress, but it is still not too late.

3. While beginning a measured and strategic redeployment of our forces from Iraq, we should increase our support for infrastructure repair and shift increasing responsibility for that effort to Iraqi companies and workers and away from foreign contractors.

We should, however, maintain close oversight of the spending to ensure the resources are being used as intended and we should link continued financial support to real political and security progress on the part of the Iraqis. Further, we should prevail upon wealthy neighbors in the region, notably the Saudi Arabians and others, to expend some of their own vast funds to enhance the infrastructure effort. We should also dramatically reduce the size of the

embassy complex that is now under construction in Baghdad and we should pledge to no permanent U.S. bases in Iraq.

4. To help fund the infrastructure and security activities within Iraq, and to give every Iraqi a stake in the success of their political process. An equitable means of distributing oil revenues should be created that ensures all Iraqis will benefit from the oil resources and, simultaneously, that all Iraqis will lose economically if insurgents damage those resources.

5. We should encourage the Iraqis to work more closely with moderate Arab neighbors, notably Jordan, Egypt and others in the region to help with the training of the security forces and with the reconstruction effort. This assistance has been offered since the beginning of the conflict but the Iraqis have not taken advantage of that offer to any real degree as of yet.

6. Because the Iraq conflict has had a devastating and destabilizing economic, political and social impact on friendly and moderate nations such as Jordan, Egypt and others, we should provide additional financial aid to those nations, particularly to help them deal with the influx of refugees, the high costs of energy, reductions in trade and tourism, and other adverse impacts. We cannot leave our friends to suffer from this conflict, and we dare not let the instability spread to nations that have been models of change and moderation.

7. We must also reach out once again to our traditional allies in Europe, Asia and elsewhere in the world, openly acknowledge past mistakes, spell out this new direction, and ask for their financial, diplomatic, and, if necessary, military help in making it succeed.

8. While supporting and working with friendly and moderate nations in the region and elsewhere, we should engage in direct discussions and negotiations with other nations in the region, notably Iran and Syria. We disagree profoundly with these nations on many issues, and we must not be naive or overly optimistic, but it is in our best interests to at least engage in a dialogue and search for areas where we may find common ground. The administration's refusal to do this, even through back channels, is misguided and counterproductive.

9. It is dishonest to not include the full costs of this war and the associated increases in defense spending as part of the annual budget and deficit projections. We must at last fully account for the costs of this war and fully fund our commitment to veterans when they return.

10. Our focus on the Iraq situation should not cause us to lose sight, as it has for too long, of the real goal, which is promoting broad security, stability and moderation in the region for the sake of that region itself and in the interest of our own security. Even if we could fully secure Iraq with this surge of troops, which is highly doubtful, if we do not improve our overall image and relationships in the region and the world, and if we do not do more to support moderate and friendly nations, we will see continued and worsening threats from extremist groups and rogue nations.

A key part of this effort will be playing a constructive role in working to resolve the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians. We also have important and necessary work to do to improve our image and relationships within our own hemisphere and we must not ignore or neglect that work.

11. Finally, but importantly, for far too long our energy policy and dependence on petroleum has distorted our foreign policy and thereby endangered our national security, our economy, and our environment. We must recognize that energy policy is coupled with national security and we must change both policies or we will never have real and lasting security.

I urge my colleagues to consider this course, but before I conclude, I must respond to those who suggest that if we do not give unquestioning support to this administration regardless of what they ask for, regardless of history, and regardless of the evidence on the ground, we are somehow empowering the terrorists or undermining our troops. The President himself has implied that any questioning of his policies is ''politically motivated'' and anything short of further escalation is sending a message that our Nation will ''cut and run'' when things get tough.

I believe the evidence suggests the opposite. The evidence from this war is clear, while there may be differences of opinion about policy, this Congress, and the American people have, and will continue to support our troops to the fullest. The evidence is also clear that our troops will serve valiantly and effectively whenever and wherever they are called.

For the elected representatives of the people of this great nation to exercise their constitutional responsibility and demand change is not a sign of weakness, it is a sign of the strength of our own republic. Perhaps more importantly, it is a sign of the strength of our very form of government itself, which is, after all, what we are hoping to promote in Iraq and elsewhere in the world. The rest of the world, our allies and adversaries alike, understand this and understand that the strength, character, courage and commitment of this Nation, its people, and the Congress are separate from, and stronger than the flaws, and mistakes of any one President or administration.

We are not turning away from the fight against terrorists or terrorism by changing course in Iraq. We are changing the course of a strategy that has been wrong from the beginning and has not gotten better. Our Nation, our Armed Forces, and our Congress are fully willing to sustain a tough fight when the fight is right and the strategy is sound. But our republic, our people, and this Congress are also strong enough, wise enough and courageous enough, to recognize the truth and change direction when the time comes. That time is now.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak against the motion under consideration. As the House debates this so called non-binding resolution concerning the recently implemented troop surge in Iraq, I think it is important to remind my colleagues exactly what is being sought by this resolution and what is to be accomplished with its passage.

This ill-conceived resolution seeks to do two incompatible and indeed conflicting things; it attempts to speak for this chamber in disapproving the proposed troop increase. And it simultaneously claims to support those troops, whose devotion to duty is essential, in prosecuting a mission which is, in part, renounced by this very same resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I do not question that the members who serve in this chamber do so with integrity and with a high regard for the men and women who serve in uniform. I do, however, question the wisdom of considering a resolution which will have no practical effect, but will have serious and inevitable consequences for the men and women who have been asked to serve.

While we consider this resolution, our enemies, in prosecuting their side of this war—will little note its allegedly non-binding character. In that sense, Mr. Speaker, this is very much a binding resolution. It binds this House irreversibly to a statement of disapproval. But it will do nothing to change the situation to which it is nominally addressed, because it does not bind our words to any actions.

General Peter Pace, in his testimony before the Armed Services Committee displayed confidence in our armed forces. He said that he believes our men and women in uniform understand the intricacies of our democracy and the nature of our vibrant debate in this Congress. Mr. Speaker, I would add that while they may understand our prerogatives, they will seek to decipher our intent and the resolve of this Chamber to support them in this fight. I also believe that they will rightfully see this resolution for what it is—mere contradiction.

Without our continued commitment to the young democracy in Iraq, the political and security situation in that country will suffer tremendous setbacks. Without support from American troops and our allies, there is a greater chance of failure in Iraq. General Petraeus, Commanding Officer of Multi-National Force-Iraq, last month described what failure in Iraq would look like when he said that ''Sectarian groups would obviously begin to stake out their turf, try to expand their turf. They would do that by greatly increased ethnic cleansing.''

Defense Secretary Robert Gates in a press conference last month said that if we fail, ''One would see an emboldened and strengthened Iran, a safe haven and base of operations for jihadist networks in the heart of the Middle East, a humiliating defeat in the overall campaign against violent extremism worldwide, and an undermining of the credibility of the United States.'' Mr. Speaker, these results are not acceptable to Americans because they are not in America's interest and because more turmoil in Iraq or the Middle East will unacceptably threaten our national security.

Mr. Speaker, we know that among the strengths that our men and women in uniform possess is the courage to carry on. They are armed with the notion that no matter what inspires our enemies, we fight in defense of human dignity and natural rights. This chamber, which would say that it supports our troops, should not do anything that would lead those troops to question the meaning or sincerity of our support.

I therefore encourage my colleagues to join me in opposing this dangerous resolution, which in two short paragraphs declares principles while avoiding the actions those principles seemingly require.

Mr. BILBRAY. Mr. Speaker, in the 230-year history of our country, the United States has fought in conflicts both at home and abroad that have tested the resolve and unity of the American people. During that time, the purview of the Commander in Chief has justly been scrutinized and questioned. These debates are a part of our past and will be a part of our future as long as we send our men and women into battlefields to fight for our country.

Today's debate is no exception. The question we must answer for ourselves is a fundamental one that speaks not to our approval of the War in Iraq but rather to our commitment to the men and women fighting this war. It is a commitment we must reaffirm without question or doubt. With commitment and unity.

Now it seems to me that we have two courses of action we can take regarding the War in Iraq. We can pull our troops out immediately and leave the stability of the region up to an increasingly violent insurgency, thereby admitting defeat, or we can send in further reinforcements to work with Iraqi Security Forces to seize control of their country.

We can all agree that a change in the status quo must be made. With an increased level of violence between Sunni and Shia insurgent groups, an escalating cost, and the loss of American lives, it is imperative that we have a legitimate and substantive debate on the direction of this war.

However, if we are to succeed in Iraq and complete the mission, then the United States House of Representatives should not waste its time debating a nonbinding resolution criticizing the Commander in Chief. This resolution offers no real policy alternatives for Iraq and does not bring our men and women home any sooner. It is a political shot aimed at the President, but it is really our troops who suffer most from these grandstanding tactics.

I recently visited Walter Reed Hospital to hear from the wounded who have been to Iraq and sacrificed so much for their country. I talked to a wounded soldier who had a bone infection that prohibited him from returning to Iraq. He was not concerned about his physical well-being but instead he was upset that he could not go to finish the job that he had started. His feelings reflected the thoughts of many of the soldiers that I had the privilege to sit and talk with that day.

The fact is we face a moment of unparalleled opportunity to, in voice, in one vote, fulfill our promise to our troops—the promise that we will give them the resources, the armor, the manpower and reinforcements they need so that they may safely and effectively win the War on Terror and come back home.

Ms. CLARKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because I am very supportive of our troops around the globe and in particular those who are in harms way in Iraq. I wholeheartedly support H. Con. Res. 63.

Mr. Speaker, in the President's January 29, 2002, State of the Union address, in regards to protecting America, responding to the terrorist threat and capturing Osama bin Laden, he said (meaning Iraq): . . . This is a regime that agreed to international inspections—then kicked out the inspectors. This is a regime that has something to hide from the civilized world.

States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred. They could attack our allies or attempt to blackmail the United States. In any of these cases, the price of indifference would be Catastrophic.

Secretary Rice, after being named Secretary of State to succeed Colin Powell, Secretary Rice warned six months before the invasion of Iraq that Saddam Hussein could deploy a nuclear weapon, saying that the administration did not "want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud." according to the Washington Post. We now know that these assertions were a fiction created by this administration to justify the unjustifiable.

U.S. Central Command Gen. Tommy Franks, the war's operational commander misjudged the interests of our Afghan allies. He ran the war from Tampa with no commander on the scene above the rank of lieutenant colonel. According to another Washington Post April 17, 2002, article; The first Americans did not arrive until 3 days into the fighting.

As a representative from NY whose constituents resent the lies and deception thrust upon us to justify this war and creating a distraction away from the homeland security we all desire the question is: When will Osama bin Laden be brought to justice.

The article continues by identifying that Osama bin Laden slipped through the cordon ostensibly placed around Tora Bora as U.S. aircraft began bombing on Nov. 30. More precisely, bin Laden was in Tora Bora on Nov. 26, spoke to his fighters about "holy war" then, as quickly as he had come, bin Laden vanished into the pine forests with four of his loyalists walking in the direction of Pakistan. bin Laden escaped according to the Christian Science Monitor, somewhere between Nov. 28 to Nov. 30 as confirmed by Arabs and Afghans in eastern Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, I support our troops and that is why we must commence the redeployment of our troops today. Thus far:

There are 135,544 troops in Iraq today. 3127 or 2.3 percent of U.S. soldiers have been killed in service to our country.

Seventeen percent or 23,279 U.S. soldiers have been seriously wounded in service to our country.

Twenty percent of the troops wounded have received serious brain or spinal injuries; 30 percent of U.S. troops develop serious mental health problems within 3 to 4 months of returning home.

During the President's tenure, he has requested a cumulative total of more than $700 billion to pay for the war effort in Iraq; $9 billion of U.S. taxpayers money is unaccounted for.

The State of New York has lost 143 soldiers, 16 from Brooklyn. U.S. troops continue to die from improvised explosive devices (IEDs) have been sent to Iraq with poorly constructed and poorly armored equipment. Pentagon war planners have created a high level task force that has spent $6.7 billion on how to combat IEDs.

Thousands of Americans are dead, thousand more will die if we don't get our troops home and get them redeployed today. I oppose the President's call for 21,000 more troops to go to Iraq. I support our troops and that's why I want them home where they belong.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for that, I thank the entire body, and I thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3 of House Resolution 157, further proceedings on the concurrent resolution will be postponed.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE COMMITTEE TO ATTEND FUNERAL OF THE LATE HONORABLE CHARLIE NORWOOD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 159, and the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Members of the House to the committee to attend the funeral of the late Honorable Charlie Norwood:

The gentleman from Georgia, Mr. LEWIS

The gentleman from Ohio, Mr. BOEHNER

The gentleman from Missouri, Mr. BLUNT

The gentleman from Georgia, Mr. BISHOP

The gentleman from Georgia, Mr. DEAL

The gentleman from Georgia, Mr. KINGSTON

The gentleman from Georgia, Mr. LINDER

The gentleman from Georgia, Mr. GINGREY

The gentleman from Georgia, Mr. MARSHALL

The gentleman from Georgia, Mr. SCOTT

The gentleman from Georgia, Mr. BARROW

The gentleman from Georgia, Mr. PRICE

The gentleman from Georgia, Mr. WESTMORELAND

The gentleman from Georgia, Mr. JOHNSON

The gentleman from Wisconsin, Mr. SENSENBRENNER

The gentleman from Texas, Mr. BARTON

The gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. COBLE

The gentleman from Texas, Mr. GENE GREEN

The gentleman from Michigan, Mr. HOEKSTRA

The gentleman from Illinois, Mr. MANZULLO

The gentleman from California, Mr. MCKEON

The gentleman from Florida, Mr. MICA

The gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN

The gentleman from Washington, Mr. HASTINGS

The gentleman from Illinois, Mr. LAHOOD

The gentleman from Iowa, Mr. LATHAM

The gentlewoman from North Carolina, Mrs. MYRICK

The gentleman from Arizona, Mr. SHADEGG

The gentleman from Kansas, Mr. TIAHRT

The gentleman from Mississippi, Mr. WICKER

The gentleman from Alabama, Mr. ADERHOLT

The gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. PITTS

The gentleman from Texas, Mr. SESSIONS