Flake
Forbes
Fortenberry
Fossella
Foxx
Frank (MA)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gilchrest
Gillibrand
Gillmor
Gingrey
Gohmert
Gonzalez
Goode
Goodlatte
Gordon
Granger
Graves
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Hall (TX)
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth
Higgins
Hill
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hobson
Hodes
Hoekstra
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hooley
Hoyer
Hulshof
Hunter
Inglis (SC)
Inslee
Israel
Issa
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
Jindal
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jones (NC)
Jones (OH)
Jordan
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Keller
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Klein (FL)
Kline (MN)
Knollenberg
Kucinich
Kuhl (NY)
LaHood
Lamborn
Lampson
Langevin
Lantos
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
LaTourette
Lee
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (KY)
Linder
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lucas
Lungren, Daniel E.
Lynch
Mack
Mahoney (FL)
Maloney (NY)
Manzullo
Marchant
Markey
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul (TX)
McCollum (MN)
McCotter
McCrery
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McHugh
McIntyre
McKeon
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mica
Michaud
Millender-McDonald
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller (NC)
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moore (WI)
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Murtha
Musgrave
Myrick
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Neugebauer
Nunes
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Payne
Pearce
Pence
Perlmutter
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Petri
Pickering
Pitts
Platts
Poe
Pomeroy
Porter
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Regula
Rehberg
Reichert
Renzi
Reyes
Reynolds
Rodriguez
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothman
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salazar
Sali
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Saxton
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schmidt
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sessions
Sestak
Shadegg
Shays
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuler
Shuster
Simpson
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Solis
Souder
Space
Spratt
Stark
Stearns
Stupak
Sullivan
Sutton
Tanner
Tauscher
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Tierney
Towns
Turner
Udall (CO)
Udall (NM)
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden (OR)
Walsh (NY)
Walz (MN)
Wamp
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch (VT)
Weldon (FL)
Weller
Westmoreland
Wexler
Whitfield
Wicker
Wilson (NM)
Wilson (OH)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Woolsey
Wu
Wynn
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—13

Alexander
Bilbray
Braley (IA)
Cramer
Davis, Jo Ann
Grijalva
Hastert
Johnson (IL)
Norwood
Pryce (OH)
Rush
Sensenbrenner
Tancredo

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). Members are advised that there are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1231

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I was unable to cast my votes on the following rollcall votes on February 13, 2007. Had I been present to vote, I would have voted as follows:

On rollcall No. 95—On the Motion to Suspend the Rules and pass H. Res. 122, Recognizing the significance of the 65th anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and supporting the goals of the Japanese American, German American, and Italian American communities in a National Day of Remembrance, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall No. 96—On Ordering the Previous Question on H. Res. 157, the Rule providing for consideration of 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, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 97—On Agreeing to H. Res. 157, the Rule providing for consideration of 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, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall No. 98—On the Motion to Suspend the Rules and pass H.R. 437, naming a post office after Lino Perez, Jr., I would have voted "aye."

IRAQ WAR RESOLUTION

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the rule just recently adopted, I call up 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, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 63

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That—

(1) 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

(2) 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.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 157, debate shall extend not beyond midnight on Tuesday, February 13, 2007, or Wednesday, February 14, 2007, with 12 hours of debate commencing on Thursday, February 15, 2007, in each instance equally divided and controlled by the majority leader and minority leader or their designees.

Pursuant to section 2 of the resolution, on each demand of the majority leader or his designee after consultation with the minority leader, it shall be in order to debate the concurrent resolution for an additional hour, equally divided and controlled by the majority leader and minority leader or their designees.

The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) each will control 5 hours.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland.

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

Ladies and gentlemen of the House, we entered today and we will be, for the next 4 days, involved in the most serious of discussions.

It is a heavy responsibility for any Member of Congress to determine whether or not to send our people in harm's way for the purposes of defending freedom. We should consider that with great solemnity and with great care. The reason for the extensive period of debate is because we believe that all Members of Congress ought to have the opportunity to express their view.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the distinguished Speaker of this House, NANCY PELOSI of California.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman for yielding and the solemnity with which he introduced this debate.

My colleagues, in a few weeks the war in Iraq will enter its fifth year, causing thousands of deaths, tens of thousands of casualties, costing hundreds of billions of dollars, and damaging the standing of the United States in the international community. And there is no end in sight.

The American people have lost faith in President Bush's course of action in Iraq, and they are demanding a new direction.

On January 10, President Bush proposed deploying more than 20,000 additional combat troops to Iraq. This week we will debate his escalation.

In doing so, we must be mindful of the sacrifices our military personnel are being asked to make in this war and the toll it is taking on them, on their families, and on our veterans. Each one of us must determine, in a

manner worthy of their sacrifice, whether the President's proposal will make America safer, make our military stronger, and make the region more stable.

As this debate begins, let us be clear on one fundamental principle: we all support the troops.

In this bipartisan resolution that is before us today, it clearly states: ''Congress and the American people will continue to support and protect the members of the United States Armed Forces who are serving or who have served bravely and honorably in Iraq.'' We honor the service of our troops by asking the difficult questions about this war. As Republican Senator Robert Taft of Ohio said 2 weeks after Pearl Harbor: ''Criticism in a time of war is essential to the maintenance of any democratic government.''

And just 10 days ago, President Bush told House Democrats: ''I welcome debate in a time of war . . . I do not believe that if you don't happen to agree with me, you don't share the same sense of patriotism I do,'' the President said.

In the spirit of responsibility to our troops and the patriotism we all share, let us consider whether the President's escalation proposal will lessen the violence in Iraq and bring our troops home safely and soon.

From the standpoint of the military, the President's plan must be evaluated for its prospects for success. It is based on a judgment that the way out of Iraq lies in sending more troops in. Our experience in Iraq has proven just the opposite. Four previous troop escalations have resulted in escalating levels of violence.

And as with any military action, the President's plan must also be evaluated on the additional burdens it will place on our troops and military families who have already sacrificed so much, the impact it will have on the already dangerous state of our military readiness.

Our military has done everything they have been asked to do, and they have performed excellently. But in order to succeed in Iraq, there must be diplomatic and political initiatives.

There has been no sustained and effective effort to engage Iraq's neighbors diplomatically, and there has been no sustained and effective effort to engage Iraqi factions politically. The Iraqi Government has failed to honor promises made last year when the constitution was adopted by failing to propose amendments to include all sectors of Iraq in the civic life of the country. As a result, today we are confronted by little political accommodation, hardening sectarian divisions, ethnic cleansing by neighborhoods, and waves of refugees burdening neighboring countries.

After the Members of this body, this House of Representatives, have fully debated the President's escalation proposal, we will have a straight up-or-down vote. In a few days, and in fewer than 100 words, we will take our country in a new direction on Iraq. A vote of disapproval will set the stage for additional Iraq legislation which will be coming to the House floor.

Friday's vote will signal whether the House has heard the American people: no more blank checks for President Bush on Iraq. Our taxpayer dollars must go to protect our troops, to keep our promises to our veterans, and to provide for the safety of the American people.

In light of the facts, President Bush's escalation proposal will not make America safer, will not make our military stronger, and will not make the region more stable; and it will not have my support.

I urge my colleagues to support our troops and vote ''aye'' on the bipartisan Skelton-Lantos-Jones resolution before us today.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to our Republican leader, Mr. BOEHNER of Ohio.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, let me thank my colleague from Florida for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, today we begin an extended debate on a resolution criticizing the latest effort by American forces to win in Iraq.

There is no question that the war in Iraq has been difficult. All Americans are frustrated that we haven't seen more success and that we haven't seen it more quickly.

But war is never easy and almost never goes according to plan. Al Qaeda and their supporters in the region have been steadfast in their efforts to slow us down and frustrate our efforts to succeed. But because they cannot defeat Americans on the battlefield, al Qaeda and terrorist sympathizers around the world are trying to divide us here at home.

Over the next few days, we have an opportunity to show our enemies that we will not take the bait.

It is fitting that yesterday was President Abraham Lincoln's birthday. And not since the dark days of the Civil War has our homeland been a battlefield. Lincoln's leadership preserved the Union through a turbulent age that threatened to undo the American experiment. His belief in the promise of the United States, a promise enshrined in the Declaration of Independence that stated for the first time in history that all men are created equal, this is what drove him to pursue victory.

Surrounded by personal and political rivals, Lincoln could have given up. He could have recalled the Union forces and sent them home. But he didn't.

I think we need a similar commitment to victory today.

The battle in Iraq is about more than what happens there. This is one part of a much larger fight, a global fight against Islamic terrorists who have waged war on the United States and our allies. This is not a question of fighting for land or for treasure or for glory. We are fighting to rid the world of a radical and dangerous ideology. We are fighting to preserve and defend our sacred way of life. We are fighting to build a safer and more secure America, one where families can rear their children without the fear of terrorist attacks.

Lincoln famously said in 1858 that ''a house divided against itself cannot stand.'' I believe, as Lincoln did then, that we must choose sides on a very critical issue. Then it was whether we should abolish the evil institution of slavery. Today it is whether we will defeat the ideology that drives radical Islamic terrorism. Will we do what it takes to stand and fight for the future of our kids and theirs? Will we commit to defending the freedoms and liberties that we all cherish? Or will we retreat and leave the fight for another generation? These are the questions with historic implications that will be answered this week.

Many of my friends across the aisle think this is exactly what we should do, give up and leave. This nonbinding resolution is their first step towards abandoning Iraq by cutting off funding for our troops that are in harm's way.

And we know what al Qaeda thinks when America retreats from the battlefield. They think that we can't stomach a fight. This is why they haven't been afraid to strike us whenever and wherever they have had the opportunity to do so.

This war didn't start in Iraq. This war didn't start on 9/11. The war began with the Iran hostage taking in 1979, went on for well over a year. Then on October 23, 1983, the suicide attack on our Marine barracks in Beirut occurred, killing 241 American servicemen and injuring 60 others. On February 26, 1993, was the first World Trade Center bombing that killed six people and injured more than 1,000 others. On June 25, 1996, the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia were bombed, killing 20 and injuring some 372 others. On June 7, 1998, the Kenya embassy bombing killed 213 people and injured 5,000 more. And on June 7, 1998, the Tanzania embassy bombing killed 11 people and 68 others were injured. On October 12, 2000, the USS *Cole* was attacked; 17 American sailors killed, 39 other sailors injured.

We all know what happened on September 11, 2001, when 3,000 Americans died for no other reason than they were Americans.

Do we really believe that if we pack up now, if we abandon Iraq and leave the country in chaos, that our enemies are just going to lay down their arms and leave us alone?

□ 1245

For too long, world leaders responded to terrorism by retreating and just hoping for the best. In a post-9/11 world, this is no longer an option.

God forgive us that it took such a loss of life to open our eyes, but our eyes are open. We are engaged in a global war now for our very way of life.

Every drop of blood that has been spilt in defense of liberty and freedom, from the American Revolution to this very moment, is for nothing if we are unwilling to stand up and fight this threat.

We didn't start this war. They did. Now we have got a duty to finish it, and, for the sake of our kids and theirs, to win it.

The nonbinding resolution before us today criticizes the new strategy for succeeding in Iraq implemented by General Petraeus. It ''disapproves'' of the strategy before it even has a chance to begin. The general's goal is to stabilize the Iraqi democracy, deny the terrorists a safe haven and ensure stability in the region. It is a prudent strategy that puts the performance of the Iraqi Government front and center.

I can't guarantee that this plan is going to work. I hope it does. Republicans have put forward a complementary bill aimed at helping it succeed. But I again can guarantee you this: If we cut off our funding for the troops that are in the field and we abandon Iraq, as many supporters of this nonbinding resolution want to, the consequences of our failure will be catastrophic.

Last year, Osama bin Laden issued this warning to the United States regarding the war in Iraq. He said, ''I would like to tell you that the war is for you or for us to win. If we win, it means your defeat and disgrace forever.''

Now, think about this for a moment. Al Qaeda knows what the stakes are and it issued all of us a challenge. Now, tell me, what message does it send if we are afraid to meet that challenge? What message are we sending to North Korea, Iran, Venezuela and other enemies of freedom around the world? If we abandon Iraq, regional stability is going to be jeopardized. Iraq will become a fertile breeding ground for radical Islamic terrorists. Without a central government or other stabilizing force, Iraq's neighbors will be compelled to enter Iraq to protect their own interests. The consequences will be devastating and could easily lead to regional war.

If we abandon Iraq, the instability, coupled with the damning image of another American retreat, will embolden Iran and Islamic militants and endanger Israel. Iran's leaders and terrorist groups have made it clear of their intentions to wipe Israel off the map. We would be leaving a staunch ally in the Middle East with nothing but chaos and instability separating them from their greatest enemy.

If we abandon Iraq, those who seek weapons of mass destruction will know they have nothing to fear from a fearful America. Neither al Qaeda, North Korea or Iran are going to give up their quest for weapons of mass destruction if they know they are free to pursue these weapons, secure in the knowledge that America doesn't have the stomach to stop them. We will be leaving for our children, and theirs, a vastly more dangerous world.

During the Cold War, we took some small comfort in the idea of mutually assured destruction, that the Soviet Union wouldn't attack us because we could retaliate with equal devastation. There is no such comfort in a world where terrorist gangs roam free. It is the nature of our enemy to fight us wherever and whenever they can. Whether it is in Asia, in Africa or elsewhere, al Qaeda has supporters and sympathizers throughout the world. They have the ability to strike us at any time with their lethal force across the globe.

Right now, we are fighting them in Iraq. The battlefield is the most visible part in the global war against these terrorists, but it is but one part. If we leave, they will just follow us home. It is as simple as that. We cannot negotiate with them. We can't reason with them. Our one and only option is to defeat them. And this nonbinding measure before us today will only embolden them.

Now, it is important for this body to debate the important issues of our day. Last summer, the House held an extended debate on the war in Iraq and the global war on terror which gave all Members an opportunity to go on record. We worked closely with our colleagues on the other side of the aisle to draft the language of that resolution, and I believe that we had a productive debate.

What we are dealing with here today isn't even a resolution to debate the war itself. It is a nonbinding resolution attacking a single strategy in the prosecution of a much larger war. ''Nonbinding'' means nonleadership. It is not accountable, and I don't think it is the right message for our troops.

This is a political charade, lacking both the seriousness and the gravity of the issue that it is meant to represent. And, as I said before, the question before us today isn't actually in this resolution. I think it is much more fundamental. The question is, do we have the resolve necessary to defeat our terrorist enemies? Will we stand and fight for the future of our kids and theirs?

As President Eisenhower once said, ''History does not long entrust the care of freedom to the weak or the timid.'' Does Congress have the fortitude to do what needs to be done? Our soldiers do. The men and women of our military are the greatest force for freedom that the world has ever known. They are brave, they are committed and they can win this fight if we ask them to. I think the big question is, will we support them?

My colleagues, the world is watching. The question is, how will we respond?

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the balance of the time available to this side be jointly managed by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), the chairman of the International Relations Committee.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WEINER). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 5½ minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I speak today with a heavy heart. I am deeply saddened as I take the floor this afternoon; saddened because we find ourselves embroiled in a conflict in Iraq, a conflict that is involved with insurgents that we failed to acknowledge or recognize, a conflict that is overlaid by sectarian violence between the Shiite Muslims on the one hand and Sunni Muslims on the other.

Mr. Speaker, this is a great American tragedy. The mission of this Congress is to urge the change of course.

We are here today because of a series of irretrievable strategic mistakes. Let's understand the goal of this resolution: number one, to fully extend our support to those in the uniform of the United States. I have been on the Armed Services Committee now throughout the years, and more recently as its chairman, and I cannot tell you how proud I am of those who are in uniform, whether they be deployed in the Middle East or somewhere else in the globe or here in our country. We must let them know, and this resolution does let them know, that we fully support them, as well as their wonderful families.

The second part of this resolution deals with the Presidential decision to increase our troops by 21,500. However, it is not clear what support troops are needed. The Pentagon says 2,500 support troops. The Congressional Budget Office says 13,000 minimum. But whatever it is, we find ourselves not seeing a change in strategy, as was promised by the administration and the White House, but just another tactic that had been used before, an increase in troops. No more, no less. We are here to say that is not a good idea.

The series of irretrievable mistakes is a serious list: the skewed intelligence we received from the Defense Department Office of Special Plans; the postwar phase of conflict that did not have sufficient planning; not enough troops, as pointed out by General Eric Shinseki, the former Army Chief of Staff; allowing the uncontrolled looting and the breakdown of law early on after the occupation began; the dismissal of the Iraqi Army, rather than giving them a paycheck and a shovel or having them do security work that is important to the stability of that country; the deBathification, that put so many thousands of Iraqis out of business, out of work, including thousands of school teachers. The administration has consistently refused to adjust its overall strategy.

I take no pleasure in this, but it is a moment of ''I told you so.'' On September 4, 2002, and again on March 18, 2003, I sent letters to the White House

predicting some of the deadly outcomes we are experiencing today, and I warned against a jagged ending to the conflict. While there is a peacefully elected Iraqi Government, it is a government so divided along sectarian lines it has not been able to accomplish even the most basic steps needed for national reconciliation. And now we have the President's plan for a troop increase, which is a tactic that we do not approve.

The President's plan will embroil our troops even more deeply into the sectarian conflict. Put together hastily, it is insufficient as a requirement for success. Forty percent of all of the Army equipment of our country is either in Afghanistan or Iraq. The readiness of our troops is in peril. We are stretching the Army and the Marine Corps to the breaking point. That is where we are, and basically it is because of the conflict in Iraq.

Today is an opportunity for us to express our support for the troops and to say it is not a good idea to increase the troop level in Iraq because it has been tried unsuccessfully before.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), our Republican whip.

□ 1300

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to this resolution. General Petraeus said a resolution like this would discourage the troops. The Secretary of Defense said a resolution like this would embolden the enemy. This Congress should be doing neither of those things.

What this resolution will not do is take a position on what we should do as we face the challenge of our generation.

President Johnson was criticized a generation ago and still today for choosing bombing sites in Vietnam. He was the Commander in Chief; yet he should have left those tactical choices to the military.

But his actions made imminently more sense than this. It is hard to imagine a group less capable of making tactical decisions about specific troop deployments than 535 Members of Congress.

The resolution today is about the exact number of troops. Will the one tomorrow or next week be a vote on which block in Baghdad to target or which car to stop?

And, of course, today what we debate is a tactic in the greater fight we are in. The new commanding general determined this surge is the right course of action. The Iraq Study Group was supportive of ''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 a step would be effective.''

Mr. Speaker, we can all agree that the current situation in Iraq cannot continue. That is why the President has advanced a new way forward.

Actions do have consequences, and this resolution the Democrats advance today is a vote for the status quo. It is a vote for the current strategy because it is a vote not to change that strategy. The current strategy is not working, and as a southwest Missourian told me yesterday, We are there. He went on to say, It really doesn't matter how we got there or what we thought. We are in a fight that won't stop if we leave.

The fact of the matter is that Congress does have the power to end the war if it has the political will to do so.

Almost 24 years ago, in November of 1983, the Congress voted to withdraw from Lebanon by March of 1984. Many of the proponents of this resolution voted then, who were Members of Congress then, voted to leave. They lost 153–274, but the message was sent, and we left anyway, and when we left, the myth of American weakness began to take hold in al Qaeda.

The language of this nonbinding resolution does not tackle the tough issues of war. It tries to have it both ways: disapproving the tactics but supporting the troops. It does not say we will fund the troops in the future or not fund the troops. It does not say we will supply the troops in the future or not supply the troops. This resolution just says enough not to say anything at all.

America should see this move for what it really is, a political first step to cutting off funding to the dangerous mission our troops face.

The truth is, we are in a war against a hostile and ferocious enemy that will stop at nothing. Imagine how this debate this week bolsters those radical terrorists whose sole goal is to destroy America because we disprove, as no society ever has, the dogma of religious totalitarianism that they use every day to recruit followers and funders and suicide bombers.

Our diversity, our ability to live together, and the prosperity and vitality that are the result have produced the enemies we face today. As long as we live as we do, they must be wrong.

This week, the Congress will send the signal to those enemies and to those who fight to protect us from them that America has the will and indeed the courage to continue fighting these Islamic totalitarians or that we do not take the consequences of failure seriously.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee (Mr. LANTOS).

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend for yielding.

I must begin by reacting to the two distinguished Republican speakers who preceded me. The distinguished Republican leader recited movingly and accurately terrorist outrages across the globe. Those terrorist outrages make the passage of our resolution all the more urgent and all the more imperative. We are not fighting terrorism in Iraq. We are attempting to referee a religiously based civil war which saps our strength and destroys our fabric as a society.

As to the distinguished Republican whip, may I say this resolution does not make tactical decisions. It reverses a mistaken course. The administration is recommending an acceleration of the wrong course. Our resolution reverses that course.

Mr. Speaker, it is too late to go back and make right all that has gone wrong in Iraq, and clearly carrying on with more of the same will do no good. But the administration has yet to learn that you cannot unscramble an omelet. Instead, it is trying to add to the mix another 21,500 men and women who deserve better than that.

In pursuing its policies in Iraq, the administration cannot unscramble and undo its many mistakes: buying into rogue and flawed intelligence; disbanding the Iraqi Army; conducting mindless and extreme de-Baathification; permitting the early looting and destruction and violence; allowing the growth of a government based on hate-filled sectarianism; allowing waste, fraud and abuse in the use of U.S. taxpayer funds; and on and on ad nauseam and ad infinitum.

While we all hope that the goal of a quiet and stable Iraq will be achieved under General Petraeus, I am deeply skeptical. It will be incredibly difficult, if not impossible. The place is just too much of a mess.

Our continued heavy presence in Iraq has not forced Iraqi leaders to take the requisite actions on power-sharing, resource-sharing, and national reconciliation. In fact, it has done the exact opposite. They have made minimal and cosmetic efforts in the knowledge that we will fill the gaps.

In the meantime, there are so many other fronts, globally and here at home, on which we might have made much more progress if we had not been fixated these last 4 years on Iraq. Domestic and foreign problems have festered while we invested blood and treasure in Iraq. As our Iraq problems have mounted, our commitment and ability to resolve other pressing issues have vanished.

Last November, the American people sent a loud and unmistakable message. With the announcement of an escalation of the war in Iraq, it is obvious that the administration did not get it. So we are trying one more time.

The resolution before the House is the second chance for this administration to hear a strong and clear message on Iraq, one it ignores at its peril and at ours as a country.

The majority of Congress wants de-escalation. The majority of the American people want de-escalation. Many Republicans throughout the Nation, and even our Republican colleagues in this Congress, want de-escalation. Poll numbers show that the Iraqi people want the United States to gradually withdraw, and Prime Minister al-

Maliki has indicated in virtually every way that he can that he, too, opposes the surge.

But the administration wants escalation. So it is going its own way, nearly alone.

There is a clear-cut policy difference here, Mr. Speaker. It is reflected simply and unambiguously in our resolution. Those of our colleagues who oppose escalation should vote for the resolution. Those of our colleagues who stand with the administration in supporting escalation should oppose it.

Along with 52 hearings on Iraq in the House and the Senate over the past 5 weeks, this resolution represents the first phase in a long overdue process of congressional oversight of the war in Iraq. It is not the last phase. Congress will be dealing with the Iraq issue for months to come, in fact, for as long as it takes to end this nightmare. But this simple resolution will establish the first marker. Those who want to draw down the U.S. presence will be on one side of that marker. Those who want to take further steps into the quagmire will be on the other.

Mr. Speaker, we are throwing our soldiers into the midst of a civil war, particularly those whom we are sending to Baghdad. It is utterly unrealistic and grossly unfair to expect soldiers straight out of Iowa, Alabama, or California to be able to differentiate between Iraqi Sunnis and Iraqi Shias, much less to be able to tell at a glance which of these groups are with us and which are against us. But that is exactly what we are asking them to do, and we are asking them to do it in an urban terrorist setting and to do it without any linguistic or cultural background.

The first sentence of the recent National Intelligence Estimate tells us everything we need to know on this issue: ''Iraqi society's growing polarization, the persistent weakness of the Iraqi security forces and the Iraqi state in general, and all sides' ready recourse to violence are collectively driving an increase in communal and insurgent violence and political extremism.''

Every day we read another article illustrating the impossibility of the situation into which we have inserted our brave men and women. One day, we read how the Iraqi Army is infested with militia members. Another day, we read that countless members of al-Sadr's violently anti-American Mahdi Army have actually been trained by U.S. soldiers unaware of the trainees' true affiliation. On yet another day, we read that U.S. soldiers cannot even tell their Iraqi counterparts the object of their joint military missions for fear that the mission will be compromised.

This weekend, we read an interview with a U.S. soldier who acknowledged that he had no idea whatsoever whether an arrest he witnessed by Iraqi security forces was justified or merely another instance of sectarian revenge.

Mr. Speaker, Iraq is a hall of mirrors, and the administration has utterly lost its way. More troops will not help. The United States wants Iraq to be a state based on the rule of law, but too many Iraqis prefer score-settling, chaos, and civil war. We cannot create a stable Iraq when the Iraqis themselves do not seem to want it.

Let us not leave our finest young men and women literally stranded in an Iraqi maze. Let us make this resolution the first step on their journey home. We must begin a reduction in force at the fastest responsible rate possible, consistent with the safety of our troops.

And then it will be time to rebuild our battered military and, just as importantly, rebuild the battered reputation of the United States.

For the sake of our troops and our national interests, I strongly support this resolution and urge all of my colleagues to do likewise.

□ 1315

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield to Mr. PUTNAM of Florida, the Republican Conference chairman, such time as he may consume.

Mr. PUTNAM. I thank my friend from Florida for the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose this resolution because, unfortunately, it is anything but resolute. In one legislative breath it offers support for our troops, but then expresses disdain for the mission they have been asked to carry out. And then, I must admit I am surprised, after all the tough talk we heard from the other side, this is a rather toothless 97 words. The resolution does nothing to help win the war, but it doesn't do anything to help stop it either, which allows the majority to offer its support and withdraw it too.

Now, the majority has surely studied its constitutional law, and knows that the most direct way that it can affect current strategy is to cut off the funds necessary for winning this war. So why are we not having this week a real vote, a real up-or-down vote on funding our men and women in harm's way? Actually, the Congress has had one up-or-down vote, it was up only, when the Senate unanimously confirmed General David Petraeus as our commanding officer in Iraq. General Petraeus, who took over just last Saturday, literally wrote the book for the Army on counterinsurgency strategies. And now, after unanimous Senate approval and just days into his command, the House is prepared to pull the rug out from under him. If that is not a mixed message, then what is it, Mr. Speaker?

Indeed, it is a shame that the majority has brought to the floor such a narrow, nonbinding resolution that misses the bigger picture, because this is so much larger than what is going on in any given neighborhood in Baghdad.

It is easy enough to go back and list all the disappointments we have had in Iraq; it is easy enough to wring our hands about any one particular tactic. But it is like focusing on one jungle, on one atoll on the march to Tokyo over 60 years ago. The very nature of our enemy requires us to look at the bigger picture. The harsh reality we have encountered in 5½ years since militants attacked us on American soil is that its intricate web of terror is utterly global.

Today, al Qaeda operates in over 60 countries, with members in the hundreds and supporters in the hundreds of thousands and perhaps even millions. This is the case even after the tangible successes that we have had.

More than three-quarters of al Qaeda's known pre-9/11 leaders have been captured or killed, more than 4,000 suspected al Qaeda members arrested, and more than $140 million of its assets seized from over 1,400 different bank accounts worldwide. And after having accomplished all that, the majority would have us consider a resolution that puts us one day closer to handing militant Islamists a safe haven the size of California. And when ideological militants achieve their objectives, history tells us that they don't settle, that they only attempt to expand their reach even further. And that means following us home.

The consequences of failure in Iraq read like a far-fetched war game, but I assure you they are quite real: the inevitable incursion of Iranian and Syrian combatants into the country, the threat to peaceful Arab states, and the further emboldening of Hamas and Hezbollah.

So we have arrived at one of those muddy historical crossroads. Will we continue to take the fight to the enemy, or will we fall back and hope that the enemy does not follow us home? That question is one that we must continue to ask ourselves, even if it is much larger than the narrow scope of this resolution, this resolution that was born of what has become an overly politicized debate.

Time was, politics stopped at the water's edge; but no longer, it seems. A discussion of this nature should be about more than political labels and single tactical issues. It should be about the consequences for future generations.

The history of free peoples divides itself as neatly as it can into generations for a reason: because it aspires to celebrate the contributions made by that group of people who consciously join together to vanquish a common enemy. If we do not join together now to defeat this insidious foe, then it will almost certainly fall to our posterity do so. And they will have a much larger concern than any one troop deployment in any one city. They will be tasked with rebuilding the lasting damage that was done to America's resolve this week. They will look back upon this discussion and seek to understand what we were thinking when, with just 97 words, we considered shrinking from this critical moment.

The poet Robert Frost once wrote that, ''The best way out is always

through.'' We doggedly seek the way through. Success in Iraq, security for our allies, and everlasting victory for freedom. This week's discussion should be about the way through, not the way back.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan, a veteran of the Second World War, Mr. DINGELL.

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

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I wish I could rise in support for the administration's policy. I wish it made sense. I wish it was in the best interests of this country to support that policy.

It has been now 4 years since the first American soldier entered the deserts of Iraq, and about 4 years since the President has declared victory. Since then, more than 3,100 Americans have been killed, 24,000 and more have been wounded, and anywhere between 40,000 and 100,000 Iraqis have died.

You know, I am proud and grateful that I could have the privilege of serving my country and making some small offering to its success in time of war. I understand how important it is we support our troops there. They have done a magnificent job, and everyone in this Chamber, including this speaker, support them fully. It is regrettable, however, the leadership in Washington that has been less than stellar.

Unfortunately, the veracity of this administration and the respect in which it is held on these matters ranks somewhere around that great fantasist Baron Munchausen, the teller of fantastic tales.

I am against this plan, if it can be called such, because it is just more of the same policies and programs that have consistently failed for 4 years. I am against this surge because it will not make Americans safer, because it will put more American lives at risk, because it continues to neglect the battle in Afghanistan, and because it completely disregards the necessary diplomatic and political recommendations of the Iraqi Study Group.

Twenty-one thousand is too many to kill and too few to succeed. And, more importantly, that number is going to be sent over there away from the adventures that we are confronting in Afghanistan and the troubles that we are seeing in that place, and we are going to send people over there without adequate preparation, proper equipment, and training.

Vice President CHENEY has told us that insurgency is in the last throes. Mr. Speaker, the national Intelligence estimates said that fanatical terrorism has now, and I quote, ''metastasized and spread across the globe.''

At each possible turning point, the toppling of Saddam Hussein's statue, the dissolving of the Army, the creation of the Iraqi Constitution, the vote for the constitution, the Parliamentary elections, the capture of Saddam, the death of Zarqawi, the Bush administration has told us that victory is at hand. And yet the killing goes on and seems to have risen to new levels and new evidence of risk.

I don't believe that we can any more condone this long train of failure which has brought us so little success and such tremendous sacrifice in blooded treasure. It is time that we recognize that our troops are in the middle of a civil insurrection or a civil war. It is time that we recognize that we must turn this situation now over to the Iraqis. The matter will be decided by the Iraqis, not by us. It will not be decided militarily, but rather politically, by the people in the area, and not by Americans who are coming increasingly to be viewed as intruders and to be less liked and less supported.

I know that commentators and defenders of the administration will assert that Iraq is too important, too vital to our national interests to be debated or criticized. I happen to think the debate in this body on matters of great importance is the reason that we exist, and it is time that we speak on behalf of the American people to tell this administration: ''Find a new mechanism to prevail in this matter. Find a new way to spend our lives and treasure. Find a new way to see to it that we prevail and that we make this country safe,'' because it is clear that this is not going to happen with the current policy as exemplified by this administration.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution. I hope that the country will see to it that the President finally hears the message that his policies are failed, it is time to make changes, and that we have to do so in the interest of the United States and world peace.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to yield as much time as he may consume to Mr. HUNTER, the ranking member of the Armed Services Committee.

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

Mr. Speaker, this resolution by the Democrat leadership sends a message to three parties: America's enemies, America's friends, and America's troops. And I think it is going to be received by friend and foe alike as the first sound of retreat in the world battle against extremists and terrorists.

Mr. Speaker, we are not stopping anything with this resolution. In fact, the Big Red One is already moving its first brigade toward Iraq; the 82nd Airborne, America's all-American division, is already in Iraq. In fact, the Second Brigade is already in their sector in Baghdad. As a matter of fact, in the Baghdad plan, which reinforcements are serving, all nine sectors now have American and Iraqi forces in place and operating. So you are not stopping anything; you are simply sending a message, and it is the wrong message. Because this Nation has been for the last 60 years involved in spreading freedom, and it is in America's interest to spread freedom. Nobody would say that it is in our interest or it is not in our interest, for example, to have a free Japan on that side of the Pacific, or to have a free El Salvador in our own hemisphere, or to have those nations which were behind the Iron Curtain, nations like Poland, now standing side by side with us in Iraq. It is in our interest to spread freedom.

Mr. Speaker, I have been here before. A lot of us have. I remember in the 1980s, when Ronald Reagan was standing up to the Russians in Europe and the USSR was ringing our allies in France and Germany with SS–20 missiles, and the President of the United States moved to offset those missiles with Pershing IIs and ground-launched cruise missiles, and you had from the left a call that this was going to start World War III. And you had pundits throughout this country, as a matter of fact somebody showed me an old headline the other day, ''Better Red Than Dead,'' which emanated from that debate and that action.

But we stood tough, we offset the Russians, we showed strength, and at some point the Russians picked up the phone and said, ''Can we talk?'' And when we talked, we talked about the disassembly of the Soviet Empire.

In our own hemisphere, when we went in and helped that fragile government in El Salvador and stood up a little shield around that government, we had people saying that is going to be the next Vietnam for the United States. Well, it wasn't a Vietnam for the United States, and Salvadorans are standing with Americans now in Iraq. In fact, I think we have got people who died of old age waiting anxiously for the next Vietnam.

Now we are in a different part of the world, and it is a tough mission, and moving freedom and spreading freedom in that part of the world is very, very difficult. And I would just say to my colleagues, my friends who have talked about the smooth road not taken, how we have made mistakes; if we just kept that Iraqi in place of Saddam Hussein's, somehow things would be better now. Saddam Hussein's army had 11,000 Sunni generals. Now, what are you going to do with an army with 11,000 Sunni generals whose mission is to stabilize a population which is in the majority Shiite?

□ 1330

A lot of people have said we should have had 200,000 to 300,000 troops in country. Now at the same time they would say we have got to put an Iraqi face on this occupation. How do you put an Iraqi face on the occupation with 200,000 or 300,000 Americans in country?

The facts are, there is no smooth road. This is a tough and difficult road. Our military planners have come up with a strategy. It involves nine sectors in Baghdad with Iraqi troops to the front and with backup American battalions behind them, mentoring them, giving them advice, and in many cases stiffening their spine.

Now, there is no guarantee of success. But this is a first time. I think we should check our history, and my friend, Mr. SKELTON, I think you should check our history and see if this Congress has ever, after a military operation is already in place, is already moving forward, the Big Red One is already moving out. The all-American division, the 82nd Airborne, already has troops in place in combat, in the city, that we retroactively say, you know, we don't support this. The only message that can possibly send to the rest of the world is a fractured message.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to end with a comment, with a quotation from Douglas MacArthur in his farewell speech at West Point. I thought it was appropriate for these times. He talks about the American soldier, and he says this, ''Their story is known to all of you. It is the story of the American man at arms. My estimate of him was formed on the battlefields many, many years ago, and has never changed. I regarded him then, as I regard him now, as one of the world's noblest figures; not only as one of the finest military characters, but also as one of the most stainless.

''His name and fame are the birthright of every American citizen. In his youth and strength, his love and loyalty, he gave all that mortality can give. He needs no eulogy from me, or from any other man. He has written his own history and written it in red on his enemy's breast.''

Mr. Speaker, our soldiers are engaged in combat right now. The worst disservice that we can give to them is to retroactively blast and degrade the mission that they are currently undertaking. There is no good role, there is no good purpose that is served by this.

So I would ask all my colleagues, let us get behind not only our troops, let us get behind their mission. Let us vote ''no'' on this resolution.

Mr. SKELTON. I yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from New York, a Korean War veteran, recipient of the Purple Heart, recipient of the Bronze Star, Mr. RANGEL.

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

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I didn't come down here, my colleagues, to talk about General MacArthur, but I guess I knew of him better than anyone in this room.

General MacArthur was called out of Korea. He was the commander of the entire Armed Forces there, and left us in the Second Infantry Division completely surrounded by the Chinese in November of 1950. The last I remember, he was called back by the Commander in Chief, Harry Truman, for defying his direction. So with all due respect to the great late general, this is hardly a time to talk about what soldiers have to do when they defy authority.

I want to thank those who have given us an opportunity today to express ourselves under question of life and death. Very few people have this responsibility, yet those here in this House, you didn't get elected to do this, but today you have to decide whether or not you want this war to continue and how many people have to die before it is stopped.

You here talk about me supporting a draft, but I challenge anyone to tell me that their feelings about this war in Iraq would not be different if they thought that their loved ones, their family, their community, would be placed in harm's way.

Whether you are for or against the war, or no matter how you voted, when you see the casualties mounting up, when you visit the hospitals and see young dedicated people without their skulls, their faces, their legs, their arms, you don't have to know any of these kids to start crying. But if you have children and grandchildren, and your imagination allows you to believe that they would be included in the 21,000, and no matter how many times they go, there has to be a feeling that maybe this is the last chance I have, you have to have a different feeling if you are not dealing with someone else's children.

Now, people would say these kids want to fight. I mean, they are different from most kids. They volunteered. They want to do it.

It is strange how most of them sought the $40,000, $30,000, $20,000 bonus or sought educational benefits, or don't come from families that are affluent in this country. It is strange that you never heard the President of the United States or the Secretary of Defense ever make a plea to the patriotism of America to say, Give me your young, your able body, give me your patriots, we have a war to fight. You have never heard that.

Oh, no, we applaud those who enlisted, but there has never been a plea out there for America to make sacrifices. A country at war, and the President doesn't ask people to sacrifice anything.

Well, my son in the Marines got out of the Persian Gulf. He is out, and he too enjoyed the GI Bill. But recently I attended a funeral in my district of a young man who died in Iraq, and I have gone to others, and the family was outside, and they pled with me, please, Congressman, tell them our son was a hero. Please, Congressman RANGEL, we thank you that you are here, salute my son, please.

I have gone to these funerals before. Most of these young men and women were marines. So I was so used to seeing this blue uniform with the red stripe. The family actually walked me to the coffin, and my knees buckled. Why? Because as sensitive and as passionate I am about the loss of life, instead of seeing a brown-skinned Dominican in a marine outfit, I saw a soldier about 20 years old. I saw a soldier of about 20 years old in an Army uniform, not a Marine uniform. Guess what, he looked just like me.

I ask my colleagues to try to figure, if you were involved as an individual, as a kid, or your family was involved, that this great country and this great Constitution has given you the right, right in your hand, to determine who lives and who dies. You cannot make a mistake in supporting this resolution, it is not going to hurt our beloved warriors, it is going to help our country, it is going to help them, and it is going to make us proud one day to be able to say, when asked, What did you do when this was going on in the world, and your Congress was asked?

You would be able to say, There was a resolution. It may not have been a profile in courage, but I supported it, and I am proud that I did.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield such time as he may consume to Mr. KING of New York, the ranking member of the Homeland Security Committee.

Mr. KING of New York. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I also appreciate the opportunity to take part in this debate, which as my friend from New York (Mr. RANGEL) said, isn't this a historic debate? It is part of our job. It is our obligation. It is a legal obligation; it is a moral obligation to be heard on this most pressing issue of our time.

I would also add at the outset, when we have talked about those who died in Iraq, and all of us go to the wakes of those who were killed in our district. Just the other day, if we are talking about the quality of the type of person, where they come from and who was killed in Iraq, there was a young man who was actually in what used to be the heart of my district, very affluent area, Manhasset. He was a graduate of Duke University, all-American Lacrosse player, was offered a scholarship to law school, but he turned it down to go in as an enlisted man, as an Army Ranger.

He served two tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, and he was killed on his third tour of Iraq. His family was proud of what he did, what he accomplished, what he stood for. I think it doesn't really add to the level of debate to somehow be suggesting that those who go to Iraq because they cannot be anywhere else or somehow it is all driven by economic need, he was a young man with everything in front of him.

He had all the opportunity in the world, and he went, and he joined the Army, went in as an enlisted man, died as a sergeant, and he was on his third tour in Iraq. So I think it is important to put that in the RECORD. Also, I know there are any number of Members in this body who have had members of their families serving in Iraq.

I think if we are going to talk about the gentleman from New York who wants to bring back the draft, we can have that in a separate debate. But I don't think it should be part of this debate.

Now, when this debate was actually scheduled, I actually thought it would

serve a constructive purpose. But as I look at the resolutions being offered, if I could really, I guess, quote from Senator LIEBERMAN of Connecticut, rather than a resolution, it is really a resolution of irresolution.

It is inherently contradictory, because it pledges support to the troops but also at the same time washes its hands of what the troops are attempting to do. I have heard speaker after speaker get up here today and say the new policy cannot work. The new policy is more of the same. This is the President's policy. He hasn't gotten the message from the American people.

Well the fact is, this policy is strongly supported by the new commander in Iraq, General Petraeus. As was pointed out, the Senate unanimously approved the appointment of General Petraeus by a vote of 81–0. Now, for people to come here today and say this is an inherently flawed policy, this is a policy that cannot work, this is a policy that is doomed to failure, to me, after General Petraeus has said that he believes the policy can work, that he supports the policy, is to attack directly either the credibility or the competency of General Petraeus, and that is a terrible message to be sending to our troops.

Actions do have consequences. I don't doubt the good faith of anyone on either side of the aisle when it comes to supporting the troops. The fact is, often you have to think beyond what the actual words are saying and realize the consequences those words have. For instance, my good friend, the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, who I have actually traveled to Iraq with in 2003, where we met with General Petraeus and others in Mosul and with others and troops in Baghdad, he said that Iraq is a mess, and we have to end the nightmare.

Does anyone really think by Americans pulling out the nightmare is going to end, that the Middle East will become stable if we leave? Certainly al Qaeda doesn't believe that. Certainly the mullahs in Iran don't believe that. And also our allies don't believe that.

Again, what are the consequences of our actions? Are we saying just draw down for the sake of drawing down? I heard the distinguished Speaker of the House of Representatives say our goal is to get our troops home.

Well, I would say our goal should be to have our troops come home after we have achieved a goal, a goal of at least a stable Iraq, an Iraq which is able to protect its borders against Iran, and an Iraq which is able to prevent al Qaeda from setting up a privileged sanctuary in Iraq, and an Iraq which is able to create a situation in the north where the Kurds and the Turks are not fighting with one another.

So these are all serious issues that have to be addressed. I regret to say this resolution does not address it in any way. If anything, it is a serious step backward.

Now, also we have heard that we have to listen to the polls. We have to listen to what public opinion has to be at any particular time. Well, if anyone wants to go back and look at the polls, in 1952, President Truman's popularity rating was 22 percent. War in Korea was amazingly unpopular, and yet today he is acknowledged as one of our greatest Presidents, and the war in Korea is looked upon as an absolutely indispensable step in the defeat of communism, because they drew the line in Asia at the 38th parallel.

I know my good friend Mr. RANGEL served in Korea, he was wounded in Korea, and he performed valiantly in Korea. That war now is looked upon as one of the linchpins of the Cold War strategy, which, again, brought down the Communist menace.

□ 1345

Also I tried to research this. I am not aware of any time in the entire history of our country where the United States Congress has adopted a resolution questioning a particular battlefield strategy.

Like him or not, and I certainly support him, but the President is our Commander in Chief. I said the same thing when President Clinton was our Commander in Chief, and I was serving in this body at that time when there was tremendous criticism directed at him.

But the fact is, the President, no matter where he or she happens to be from, is the Commander in Chief. And we are at war. It was a war that was authorized by this Congress. And we should not be, I do not believe, setting the precedent of adopting resolutions questioning specific strategies.

Should we have adopted a resolution in the winter of 1944, 1945, questioning President Roosevelt's strategy in allowing the intelligence failures that brought about the Battle of the Bulge? We can go step by step. Certainly President Lincoln, during the Civil War when strategies were changed throughout the war and finally resulted in a victory.

Also we have to realize that the war in Iraq is part of an overall war against Islamic terrorism. As the former chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, as ranking member of the Homeland Security Committee, certainly we see that this is an enemy which is overseas and it is here. It is an enemy which is plotting every day to find ways to attack us.

I know later the distinguished ranking member of the Intelligence Committee will also speak to this part of the issue. But the fact is, we do not live in vacuums. We cannot isolate battlefields and silos and say this is Iraq, this is Afghanistan, and this is the Twin Towers.

The fact is, we are talking about actions having consequences. And I have been very critical of the Republican Party for 1983 when I believe we precipitously withdrew from Beirut. That had consequences. I was in this body when we precipitously withdrew from Somalia. I was also in this body when the Twin Towers were attacked the first time in 1993 and we took no action, or Khobar Towers when a constituent of mine was killed in 1996. We took no action.

The USS *Cole* in 2000 when we took no action. In 1998 the attacks on the African embassies, where we took very limited action. All of those had consequences. In fact, now we see after September 11, 2001, we find the historical record where Osama bin Laden said that when we saw that the United States was willing to withdraw from Somalia, how that emboldened Islamic terrorists throughout the world, how that showed them that we did not have the staying power, we did not have the guts to stick it out.

Listen, those who are really putting it on the line, those who have the guts are the men and women of the battlefield in Iraq and Afghanistan. But also we as elected officials have to show some courage and not just give in to the zeitgeists, not just give in to the latest public opinion poll or to the latest election, because quite frankly we were not elected to win elections; we were elected to show leadership and to do what has to be done.

When future generations look back at this, will they really say that we helped the struggle against Islamic terrorism by pulling out of Iraq, by not continuing that fight? Does anyone really think that that will not embolden al Qaeda, that that will not embolden Iran? Can anyone honestly say that?

And so I believe that what disappoints me about this debate and this resolution is we are treating Iraq almost like it is a pinpoint. It is one issue standing by itself, and it is not. It is part of a mosaic; it is part of a worldwide struggle. As someone who lost more than 100 friends, neighbors, constituents on September 11, I have seen firsthand the evils of Islamic terrorism.

As ranking member on the Homeland Security Committee, I know how there are forces in this country who would take action against us. I know the connections between forces in this country and forces overseas. It is no secret. It should not cause us any confusion as to why al Qaeda wants us to lose in Iraq.

It should not cause us any confusion as to why al Qaeda encourages the enemy against us in Iraq, and in fact has al Qaeda in Iraq itself fighting against us.

So now we come to the question of, with our troops committed there, with this being an absolutely essential part of the war against terrorism, what do we do? I agree that there is a consensus that the current policy has not been successful. There have been successes, but the policy itself has not been fully successful.

That is true in almost every war in which America has been engaged. It was certainly true during World War II, it was certainly true during Korea, and even take a war like Kosovo, which is

probably almost as antiseptic as a war could be, even though every war when anyone's life is on the line is brutal and deadly.

But from a strategic point of view, we are talking about it should have been a simple war. We ended up bombing a Chinese embassy in Belgrade. So, I mean, mistakes are made. And for us to say because mistakes are made we should redeploy our troops, which really is a euphemism for withdrawal.

We are sending signals to the world. We are sending signals to our troops, we are sending signals to our allies, we are sending signals to our enemies. On the one hand if we are unanimously confirming General Petraeus who supports this policy, and on the other hand we are saying we know the policy cannot work and we are actually going for the first time in American history going on record opposing a particular strategic policy, then I would say, where are we getting this from?

People say that this is just the same policy as we have had all along. General Petraeus says it is not. And I do not believe it is. Can I guarantee the new policy will work? No, I cannot. But I have met with generals, I have met with military experts, and they give good reasons why it can work. And there are people of very good faith on the other side who say it will not work.

But as I look at this, our commander, who is looked upon as the expert in counterinsurgency, who is the general who has certainly achieved the most in Iraq, and anyone who has been to Mosul knows the job that he achieved there, if he says this policy should work, and can work, then I believe we have the moral obligation, we have the legal obligation, and we have the obligation to history and for our children and grandchildren that we not undercut General Petraeus, that we not tell our troops we do not have faith in their ability to carry out the mission which General Petraeus says can be carried out, and we do not embolden our enemies by saying just wait this out a few months, wait it out a few months and you will get it, wait us out a few months and we will pull out like we did in Beirut or Somalia.

We cannot allow that message to be sent. The burden is on us. And if we fail in this mission, and the mission I believe of standing with our troops, standing with our commander in the field, and standing with the policy that the overwhelming majority of Congress voted for in 2003, and also the pledge that all of us made on September 11, 2001, then we will have failed in our obligations as Members of the United States Congress and failed in our obligation to our oath of office to do what has to be done, which should be done, which is essential if we are going to win the war against Islamic terrorism.

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

I find it rather interesting, Mr. Speaker, that those who oppose this simple, straightforward resolution tend to confuse a permissive war with a necessary war. The goals of the insurgents in Iraq are far different from the terrorists that had their genesis in Afghanistan. Let us not be confused between the two conflicts or their origins or those against whom we fight.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to a veteran of the Korean War, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS).

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

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank our chairman, Mr. SKELTON, and I stand proud today with my fellow veterans in the House of Representatives to register our opposition to the President's plan to escalate the war in Iraq and to show our support for our men and women in uniform.

Now, last November 7 the American people sent a clear message to Congress and the President: we must end the war in Iraq. Now after nearly 4 years of bloodshed, death and destruction, Congress is likely to go on record as opposing the plan for escalation of this war.

No longer will Congress stand by while the President wages a war that defies logic, common sense and human decency. This week we shall take a stand. This week, we tell this administration enough is enough, stop ignoring the American people, stop ignoring your generals. And by the way, I include to the gentleman from New York two speakers ago, General Colin Powell, no less agrees with us.

Stop ignoring the foreign policy experts. Stop wasting American lives and resources on this disastrous and unnecessary conflict. This week's debate on this resolution represents an important turning point in public dialogue about Iraq. And so I welcome it, but it is not enough. The escalation must be stopped, and we cannot let the momentum against the war subside after we deal with the escalation.

Our priority must remain ending the fighting and dying in Iraq. We must end the senseless deaths of servicemembers like marine Tarryl Hill of Southfield, Michigan, who only last Wednesday died when his vehicle drove over a bomb in Fallujah.

Tarryl Hill was 19 years old. He had joined the military to help finance his education to become a chemical engineer. I do not want to see one more promising life like his extinguished on the altar of this administration's arrogance. The loss of Tarryl's life brings to mind the bereavement of another patriot from Flint, Michigan, Lila Lipscomb, whose 26-year-old son, Michael, died in Iraq in April 2003, when his helicopter was shot down.

A member of a military family, Ms. Lipscomb initially believed President Bush when he told the Nation that war was necessary for our national security. But her son's letters from the front lines and his tragic death showed her that he should have never gone to Iraq.

I need to spend a little time explaining my opposition to the troop surge, which is simply even more of the same. This policy is going in precisely the opposite direction recommended by the generals who get transferred if they do not agree.

It would simply expose GIs to more intense door-to-door fighting, in the vain hope that in the meanwhile the Iraqis will miraculously reconcile with us still being in their country.

The real and underlying question is how we remove ourselves from this quagmire. As I have emphasized many times, our Constitution gives Congress the central role in decisions of war and peace. Last fall the American people spoke loudly with their votes. We should be here showing the voters that we heard them and that their trust was well placed.

The ultimate, unequivocal authority of the Congress is the power of the purse. And so we must use it. Supporters of the President's failed Iraq policy have argued that using Congress's spending power to end the war means that we do not support the troops. It is beyond absurd to suggest that those of us who favor ending funding for the war would simply abandon the troops in the field without equipment and the supplies they need.

Cliches about supporting the troops are not really about our service members' best interests. The true purpose of these accusations is to distract us from the fact that we are bogged down in an unwinnable war that threatens to drag on for years, if not decades. Keeping our troops out of harm's way, especially when war is unnecessary, is the best possible way to support them. The American people understand that marching ahead blindly into oblivion is no way to support our troops. That is why they have asked us to end this war.

Mr. Speaker, the administration continues to live under the illusion that it can salvage its reputation by achieving a military victory in Iraq, when it is clear that diplomacy is the most effective means at our disposal. The recent National Intelligence Estimate reflecting the collective judgment of U.S. intelligence agencies only confirms what we have seen in the daily headlines for almost a year. It concludes that the civil war has reached an intensity that is "self-sustaining" and that there are no Iraqi national leaders with the ability to stop it. No wonder the administration stalled completion of the NIE until after the election and the President's presentation of his latest proposal.

Most of the American people know that there is only one way to proceed in Iraq. We must begin the phased withdrawal of American troops in the next 4 to 6 months and conclude it within the year. Redeploying our Armed Forces does not mean "cutting and running." On the contrary, we suggest continued and extensive involvement in the region through renewed diplomacy, a regional conference and reconstruction that is free from fraud and abuse. This sensible path is the only one that can lead us to victory.

ANNOUNCING THE PASSING OF THE HONORABLE CHARLIE NORWOOD

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I have been informed by House leaders that our colleague, Congressman CHARLIE NORWOOD, has passed away. I would

ask our colleagues to join me as we rise in a moment of silent prayer for CHARLIE.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues and visitors.

Congressman NORWOOD was a proud Vietnam veteran, and his service to our Nation will be sorely missed. Mr. DEAL will soon come to the floor to make a statement on behalf of his State's delegation.

With that, I would like to yield such time as he may consume to Mr. HOEKSTRA, the ranking member of the Intelligence Committee.

□ 1400

Mr. HOEKSTRA. I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, let's be clear of the purpose of today. We face a real test of what this House of Representatives stands for and who we, as Representatives, really are.

Do any of us really believe that the resolution in front of us today is a serious piece of legislation? Does it properly recognize all of America's military and other national security professionals who defend us day and night? What of the hundreds of folks in the Intelligence Community that are ignored in this resolution, who each and every day are working hand in hand with our Armed Forces trying to achieve success in Iraq?

Does this resolution discuss or force a debate on the really tough issues of who it is that hates America and others so much that they are willing to kill innocent men, women and children? Again, this resolution comes up short.

What is the threat, and how should America respond? That is the debate that we should be having on this floor. This resolution is all about staying the course. It says, Support our troops and don't engage in new tactics; just keep going down the same path. That is not good enough.

There are people who hate us enough to want to kill. I speak of militant Islam's hate for America, a hate that extends to others, including Muslims. And these militant Islamists kill, they kill violently and indiscriminately, but this resolution is silent on the threat that we face as a Nation, and it is silent on how we should respond.

Who are these radical Islamists, and what should America's response to this threat be? We face this on a global basis. What is America's response to jihadism? How will America win this war against this calculating enemy? And how will America lead the world once again in the face of such a ruthless threat?

The resolution that we are debating today simply asks, Do you support America's fighting men and women, and do you support or oppose a tactic in a battle that is only one front in the war with these military jihadists who are bent on the destruction of the infidel America and others around the world.

Let me say to my colleagues that I don't believe I am wrong in saying that this debate is really about whether or not America is a great Nation that leads in the face of difficulty. Nor do I believe that I am wrong to question what actually happens when this debate and vote are over. Have we really helped the American people understand the threat? What message do we send to our troops in harm's way? And what is it that the American public needs to understand so that it can better understand the challenges that we face? My own answer, Mr. Speaker, was that we need to understand the consequences of failure. We need to fully understand the nature of the threat that is posed now, and moreover in the future, if we fail in the larger war against militant Islam.

Mr. Speaker, let me outline some things about this very real threat to our very existence that needs to be known by the American public and, indeed, this body. This is not a global war on terror. I have never liked that term, I don't know why we keep using it. This is a global war with jihadists. We are not at war with a tactic, we are at war with a group of militant Islamists who hate us and who hate much of the rest of the world. What is a jihadist, other than someone or some group so full of hate that they are willing to kill?

I have a passion for understanding this threat. And thanks to a great deal of superb research done by many experts on the subject, in particular the author Mary Habeck, we have been enlightened as to who these individuals are, and perhaps also get an insight into the question of why do they hate, and why do they hate so much that they are willing to kill.

I can tell you that these militant Islamist jihadists are a fringe element of Islam who have very specific ideas about how to revive Islam, return Muslims to world power, and how to deal with their enemies. They are committed to a violent overthrow of the existing international system, and to its replacement by an all-encompassing Islamist state, the Caliphate.

Mr. Speaker, in studying this threat, this militant Islamic jihadist threat, we must also understand why Iraq is such an important element of their war against the West. This is where the letter from al Qaeda's number two leader, Zawahari, to the late al Zarqawi outlining the Islamic Caliphate that would stretch from Indonesia across the Middle East and Africa is instructive. In that letter, Zawahari outlines a four-stage plan to create this religious empire.

Stage one. ''Expel the Americans from Iraq.'' Expel them in defeat. I fear that this debate may be the first step in that process.

Stage two is to create an Islamic religious government in the old Mesopotamia, that is, Iraq, developing it and supporting it ''until it achieves the level of a Caliphate,'' until it fills the void stemming from the departure of the Americans.

Step three is to extend the jihad way to secular countries neighboring Iraq. The jihadists will attack heretic Muslims, as they define them.

And stage four is the clash with Israel, because Israel was established only to challenge any new Islamic entity.

Let's be clear about this. This jihad is about them. It is about their god, their religion, before it becomes anything about anyone or anything else. That's right, it is about them before it is about us.

The militant jihadists believe that Islam worked well for over a thousand years, spreading a true gospel, a unified society that followed the Shari'a, a law handed down by God. They believe that the modern world has forsaken that pure religious life, and they believe that only in a Caliphate governed by the Shari'a is the way to return to that pure life.

This is the world that they now want to recreate and force on the rest of the world. That is why they are fighting and that is why they are killing. They see today's world as one where unbelievers, the United States, Japan and others, dominate politically, culturally, militarily and economically. This directly assaults their religious beliefs, as in effect, much if not all of the world is controlled by unbelievers, unbelievers who must be destroyed, including secular Muslim states in the region.

To illustrate, let me quote from Osama bin Laden's Fatwa. Listen to what these people tell themselves and each other: ''There is no more important duty than pushing the American enemy out of the Holy Land, no other priority, except Belief, could be considered before it. There is no precondition for this duty, and the enemy should be fought with one's best abilities. If it is not possible to push back the enemy except by the collective movement of the Muslim people, then there is a duty on the Muslims to ignore the minor differences among themselves. Even the military personnel who are not practicing Islam are not exempted from the duty of jihad against the enemy.''

It should be clearly understood that a central tenet of jihadists' beliefs is the belief that God is one; he has no equals, he has no partners. This is important. If one believes that God is one and all that matters of rule giving or law making belongs to him, no human being, no government could make laws or alter the Shari'a laws of God. This would be, for all intents, setting oneself up to be the equal of God. Herein lies the problem that these militant Islamists have with the West and secular Muslim countries. This belief is applied equally to infidels and Muslim heretics.

The bottom line is that any government or order of law other than Shari'a is illegitimate. This belief, in their minds, justifies the killing of heretical

Muslims and non-Muslims alike. This is not recent thinking. A prominent early 20th century Egyptian Muslim ideologue named Hasan al Banna professed this point about Muslims and nonMuslim heretics. He stated, quote, we will not stop at this point, but we will pursue this evil force to its own land, invade its western heartland, and struggle to overcome it until all the world shouts the name of the Prophet and the teachings of Islam are spread throughout the world. All religion will be exclusively for Allah.

He went on to say that this violence would not be to avenge wrong suffered, nor to kill the unbelievers, but to save mankind from its many problems. Are we starting to get a picture of who the enemy may be? It is also important that jihadists' interpretation of Islam is they will reject any system of laws not based on Shari'a.

Democracy. Why do they hate us? Democracy, he claimed, is the ultimate expression of idolatry, giving reason for the hatred of Western values. This is about them, it is not about us.

Al Banna is not the only studied ideologue. Another name, Sayyid Qutb, wrote, ''Islam has a mandate to order the whole of human life, and that the Western idea of separation between religion and the rest of life is, quote, a hideous schizophrenia that would lead to the downfall of white civilization and therefore its replacement by Islam.''

Qutb maintained that political and religious ideology of the jihadist is derived directly from the Koranic argument that God, unique and without partner, is the only being of sovereignty. Therefore, the only role for national leaders is to implement God's laws. This gives the jihadists their belief that attacking secular or Muslim heretic societies is justified. Qutb basically justified all-out warfare on all of these societies.

Where does that leave us today? It leaves us with a discussion that should be much deeper than the resolution that is in front of us. The resolution in front of us is a shallow political document.

Let me return to Osama bin Laden's Fatwa against the West. Let me use his own words. In calling on all Muslims, he says, ''The explosions at Riyadh and Al-Khobar is a warning of this volcanic eruption emerging.''

To further his murderous goals, bin Laden then went on to outline the terrorist approach to his holy war to by saying, ''It must be obvious to you that due to the imbalance of power between our Armed Forces and the enemy forces, a suitable means of fighting must be adopted, i.e., using fast-moving light forces that work under complete secrecy; in other words, to initiate a guerrilla warfare where the sons of the nation, and not the military forces, take part in it. And as you know, it is wise, in the present circumstances, for the armed military forces not to be engaged in conventional fighting with the forces of the crusader enemy, unless a big advantage is likely to be achieved and great losses induced on the enemy side. That will help to expel the defeated enemy from the country.''

He goes on, ''Therefore, efforts should be concentrated on destroying, fighting and killing the enemy until, by the grace of Allah, it is completely defeated. The time will come, by the permission of Allah, when you will perform your decisive role so that the word of Allah will be supreme and the word of the infidels will be the inferior. You will hit with iron fists against the aggressors.''

The modern words of bin Laden alone do not adequately explain the current militant Islamic threat to the United States and its friends around the world. Again in their own words, this quote from a senior al Qaeda leader, quote, Islam became to be the only hope in jihad under the banner of Islam to become a solution for all of the enemies of America and of those weakened nations, even to the leftist and peace groups in the Christian world. Whoever follows the writings of some of the Western authors will find that some of them started to declare, through their writings, about the American tyranny, that there is no hope to face America other than through the armed Muslims. To the extent that in one of the demonstrations that included hundreds of thousands against globalization and war in Italy, the demonstrations carried a picture of bin Laden placing Che Guevara's hat on it, drawing him to be a Che Guevara look-alike. They wrote under his picture, ''anti-American.'' Through this action they expressed that the symbol of today's Islamic jihad is the only solution to face America.

□ 1415

Mr. Speaker, here is the true threat to America and the West: this militant Islamic jihad, a jihad that spans the globe, including attacks in Bali; in Spain; the United Kingdom; in the Philippines; in Kashmir; in Kenya; in Jordan; Israel; Nigeria; and, yes, in the United States and Iraq. What is not being discussed is this global problem, this threat to peace and stability everywhere in the world. Why, I ask, is the focus so keenly on Iraq as the problem, the only problem for us to debate? Iraq is not the problem. It is but one front in this larger war. The American people are not being well served by our leaders and the media that are solely focused on the conflict in Iraq. This is but a single front in a much larger war.

Mr. Speaker, let me close with these final thoughts about the militant Islamic threat we face not only in the front in Iraq but, indeed, around the world, including here in America.

There is a fundamental clash of civilizations at work here. There is a fundamental belief by the jihadis that Islam must expand to fill the entire world or else falsehood in its many guises will do so. This belief includes their facts that democracy, liberalism, human rights, personal freedoms, international law, international institutions are illegal, illegitimate, and sinful. Democracy, and in particular the United States democracy, is the focus of their wrath because it is considered the center of liberalism. This is not an enemy with whom we can negotiate. We must contain them and defeat them.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution before us does not address this threat, a real threat to our very existence. We are at war, and I fear we don't even know that we are under attack. This myopic resolution does not recognize or address that threat.

I urge my colleagues and the House to vote ''no'' on this resolution.

MOMENT OF SILENCE OBSERVED IN MEMORY OF THE HONORABLE CHARLIE NORWOOD

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that we recognize the Members of the Georgia delegation to make the sad commentary on Congressman NORWOOD's passing.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MORAN of Virginia). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman.

On behalf of my colleagues from the State of Georgia, it is with great sadness that I announce that our colleague CHARLIE NORWOOD passed away at approximately 12:45 today.

CHARLIE was a great Member of this body and a friend to all.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that this body observe a moment of silence in his memory.

Amen.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, once again my friends on the other side of the aisle are attempting to confuse the conflict in Iraq with the war against terrorists and has their genesis in Afghanistan, trying to put it all in one basket. That is not the case. Anybody can have their own opinion, but, Mr. Speaker, they may not have their own facts.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield 5 minutes to my colleague from California (Mr. THOMPSON), a gentleman who is a Vietnam combat veteran of the 173rd Airborne Brigade.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for recognizing me for time.

Mr. Speaker and Members, as a combat veteran, from the bottom of my heart, I say thank you to the brave men and women who have served in Iraq, each with great distinction.

Our troops have done an outstanding job. They have done all that has been asked of them and more. They have performed with the utmost professionalism, making all of us very proud.

Now, I believe it is past time that we start bringing these brave men and

women home. They should be home with their families, not in the middle of Iraq's civil war. Moreover, we shouldn't be sending more troops into Iraq's civil war. Some of our servicemembers have been on two, three, and even four tours of duty in Iraq already.

This escalation would put too much strain on our military and not just our troops. Much of our military's equipment is damaged. It will take years and billions of dollars to repair it and replace it. Nearly every Reserve and National Guard member has been mobilized. The escalation is in no one's best interest.

Two weeks ago I joined with my colleague PATRICK MURPHY from Pennsylvania, a decorated Army captain who served in Iraq, to introduce binding legislation to begin a phased redeployment of our troops out of Iraq. Our bill, which has already attracted 20 co-authors from both sides of the aisle and has a companion bill in the Senate, provides a practical and comprehensive strategy for ending our military involvement in Iraq. It sets a firm deadline for phased redeployment of our troops beginning May 1 with all combat brigades out by March 31 of 2008. It provides a concrete plan for shifting security responsibilities to where they belong: with the Iraqis.

I have visited with our troops in Iraq, and I have talked to those who have been training the Iraqi security forces. They have told me that the U.S. troops have finished their job and that Iraq needs to step up and start securing their country. Americans cannot continue to do it for them.

Our bill recognizes that the President's escalation plan is a continuation of his failed ''stay the course'' slogan and it would not allow the increase of troop levels without congressional approval.

Mr. Speaker, the United States cannot win the peace in Iraq. The Iraqis must be the ones to do that. Our bill recognizes this reality and creates a surge in diplomacy, not troops, by creating a special U.S. envoy that will help build relationships between Iraq and their neighbors. Our bill is a strategy for success in Iraq and is the best way to bring our brave men and women home as quickly and safely as possible.

While I strongly believe that today we should be debating and passing our binding solution, H.R. 787, I know that this week's debate is the first real debate we have had on Iraq in more than 4 years. In this week alone, we will more than quadruple the amount of time given to debate this war since it began.

Thank you, Speaker PELOSI, for bringing this important matter to the floor. This resolution is a critical step in getting our men and women out of this ugly mess, a full blown civil war in Iraq. I support today's resolution, which joins with the American people in sending the President a loud and clear message that escalation is not the answer. We need to focus on getting our troops out of Iraq as safely and quickly as possible and making sure that the Iraqis step up and assume the security responsibilities for their country.

I also rise to tell those who have served, those who are serving in Iraq today, and their proud families thank you. Your Nation thanks you for your great service to our country.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In this debate on Iraq, we must always be aware that the remarks are not to be confined only to the American people. Our words will be heard not just by our friends but by our enemies also. They are watching to see what America will do. No weakness of ours, no internal political struggle will go unnoticed.

The suicide bombers, the leaders of al Qaeda, the rulers of Iran, many others are listening, seeking encouragement for their fellow extremists, listening for signs of our defeat.

We know from many sources that al Qaeda, the terrorists in Iraq, and our enemies planning further attacks on us closely follow what is said and what is done in the United States and use that knowledge to help them calculate their next steps against us. They routinely cite statements by U.S. sources as validation of their strategy to defeat America.

Let me quote Muhammad Saadi, a senior leader of the Islamic jihad, who said that talk of withdrawal from Iraq makes him feel ''proud.'' He said: ''As Arabs and Muslims we feel proud, very proud from the great successes of the Iraqi resistance, this success that brought the big superpower of the world to discuss a possible withdrawal.''

They are looking for concessions of defeat, signs of weakness, and it is within this context that we embark on this debate today.

The question before us concerns not the past but the future. Where should our country go from here? We are not merely debating a resolution, but we are deliberating on our Nation's future.

The war in Iraq is but a part of a far larger struggle, a global struggle, the struggle against Islamic extremist militants. As in the Cold War, our current struggle is one of survival. The enemy does not mean merely to chase us away. The goal of the Islamic extremist radicals is to destroy us. If we run, they will pursue. If we cower, they will strike.

The choice before us is this: Do we fight and defeat the enemy, or do we retreat and surrender? We must not fool ourselves into believing that we can accommodate our enemies and thereby secure their cooperation. We should not believe that the enemies' demands are limited and reasonable and thus easily satisfied or that we can find safety by withdrawing from the world. This strategy has been tried in the past with catastrophic consequences.

Neville Chamberlain genuinely believed that he had brought ''peace in our time'' by washing his hands of what he believed to be an isolated dispute in what he termed ''a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing.'' That country was Czechoslovakia, and Chamberlain's well-intentioned efforts to withdraw Britain from the problems in that far-away region only ensured that an immensely larger threat was thereby unleashed.

The threat of Hitler did not appear suddenly out of a vacuum. The challenges that we face today thus have been building for many years.

We experienced the first attack on the World Trade Center in 1993. The destruction of our embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the bombing of the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia in 1998, the attack on the USS *Cole* in 2000, and then most dramatically the attack on our Nation on 9/11.

As these attacks built over the years, we did little in response. Our enemies came to believe that they could strike us with impunity and that we would shrink from our responsibilities, from defending our interests, that we would not stand up for our very own survival. They felt safe in planning for larger attacks.

Now our fight is truly one of global proportions. Some may not want to believe it. The terrorists, however, are certain to believe it. As stated by senior al Qaeda leader al Zawahiri, '' . . . Jihad in Iraq requires several incremental goals. The first stage: expel the Americans from Iraq. The second stage: establish an Islamic authority or emirate, then develop it and support it until it achieves the level of a caliphate, over as much territory as you can, to spread its power in Iraq.''

He continues: ''The third stage: extend the jihad wave to the secular countries neighboring Iraq. The fourth stage: It may coincide with what came before, the clash with Israel, because Israel was established only to challenge any new Islamic entity.''

These are the words of al Zawahiri, not my words. And this al Qaeda leader went on to say: ''The whole world is an open field for us.''

What then are the consequences of a U.S. withdrawal and surrender? The terrorists, our mortal enemies, will have demonstrated that they have defeated us, the strongest power on Earth. They will have proven that our enemies only have to make the cost too high for us and that we will give up. The result would be an extraordinary boost to their morale and standing in the world, resulting from such a historic and momentous accomplishment on their part. They will become heroes in the minds of millions. They will be inundated with recruits, with financing, with support of all types.

□ 1430

And they will be eager to go after us.

A leader of the terrorist organization Islamic Jihad recently said of an American withdrawal from Iraq, ''There is no chance that the resistance will stop.'' He said an American withdrawal from Iraq would ''prove that resistance is the most important tool and that this tool works. The victory of the Iraqi revolution will mark an important step in the history of the region and in the attitude regarding the United States.''

These are his words, not mine.

We know that the terrorists would draw these conclusions because they have done so before when we recoiled in the face of terrorist attacks. In bin Laden's 1996 Declaration of Jihad and other statements, bin Laden repeatedly pointed to America's weakness being its low threshold for pain. As evidence, he pointed to the U.S. withdrawal from Somalia in 1993 because of casualties from attacks by al Qaeda and its allies.

Bin Laden said, ''When tens of your soldiers were killed in minor battles and one American pilot was dragged in the streets of Mogadishu, you left the area carrying disappointment, humiliation, defeat and your dead with you. The extent of your impotence and your weakness became very clear.''

These are bin Laden's words, not mine.

We witnessed the consequences of Somalia and the ensuing inaction. However, the implications for withdrawal and surrender in Iraq could be even greater. There would be an intensification of the violence.

As the National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq recently affirmed, ''If Coalition forces were withdrawn rapidly during the term of this estimate, we judge that this almost certainly would lead to a significant increase in the scale and scope of sectarian conflict in Iraq, intensify Sunni resistance to the Iraqi Government, and have adverse consequences for national reconciliation.''

Iraq would become, as one of my Democratic colleagues said in December of 2005, a ''snakepit for terrorists.''

Sunni Arabs throughout the Middle East would certainly view the resulting situation as a Shiite victory in Iraq and, in turn, as a win for the regime in Iran. Neighboring countries would likely seek to prevent Iranian domination of Iraq and the region by providing financial and other support, including potentially troops, to anti-Iranian factions.

It would be interpreted as a defeat of the U.S. and would thus strengthen rogue regimes in Syria and Iran. Iran would be free to expand its influence throughout the Middle East, including its long-term effort to dominate the Persian Gulf and the world's oil supply.

Iran's sponsorship of terrorist organizations such as Hamas and Hezbollah would likely increase, thereby ensuring the murder of countless civilians and a further destabilization of countries in the region and indeed beyond.

Let us not forget that Iran's proxy, Hezbollah, twice attacked in our own hemisphere, in Argentina, in the mid-1990s. Let us not forget that in 2002 a court case in the United States found that one of two men were convicted of financing Hezbollah of $2 million in illegal activity here in the United States and that last year an individual from Detroit was charged with supporting Hezbollah financially and was described by the United States Attorney in the case as a ''fighter, recruiter and a fundraiser.''

Let us not forget that Iran is a nation believed to be pursuing nuclear weapons, and thus leaving the region vulnerable to Iranian domination, and that would have grave consequences for the U.S. security priorities.

Surrendering Iraq over to the terrorists would erode the trust of the U.S. in that region and affect our critical regional interests in the entire neighborhood. Our allies, such as Kuwait, Jordan, Bahrain and Egypt may become reluctant to continue their cooperation with us, which currently includes providing access to their facilities, logistical support that we need to protect our interests in the region.

The damage would not be confined, however, to the Middle East. Our enemies would be encouraged to join forces in a coalition to directly challenge the United States and expand their efforts to undermine us and our allies.

It is already happening. Venezuela's strongman Hugo Chavez is openly forming an alliance with Iran, and recently called on Iran and Venezuela to join forces to ''finish off the U.S. empire,'' quoting him.

Let us consider the consequences of withdrawing and surrendering Iraq to Islamic militant extremists. As James Woolsey, the former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, has emphasized, ''We have to do our damndest to win this thing, in spite of the history of mistakes in tactics and strategy. The stakes are too high to do otherwise. The whirlwind we will reap if we lose means that we owe it to the world and to future generations to do everything humanly possible to avoid giving the Islamists the encouragement they will certainly obtain if they win.''

Mr. Speaker, this is not just an abstract policy discussion for me. This is a subject close to my heart. My stepson Doug and his wife Lindsay are both marine pilots who served in Iraq alongside many other brave Americans. They understand the consequences of defeat. They recognize the deadly enemy that we are facing.

Lindsay will soon be deployed to Afghanistan, in just a few weeks, where, depending on our actions in this Chamber this week, she could face a more deadly enemy. All of us, all of us long for a world in which the mortal challenge of Islamic militant extremism does not exist. But that world is a fantasy, and that is the world that this resolution seems to address.

Many times in our history we have met with great challenges, and many of them seemed insurmountable. And yet every time we rose to face them, and we prevailed. We are faced once again with an overwhelming challenge, that of Islamic militant extremists focused on our destruction and on world domination. There is no path backward, there is no retreat, because that will only bring disaster.

I am saddened that some in this Chamber have felt the need on this floor to characterize the decision of our young men and women to join the military as being motivated by money, by bonuses and by other financial benefits, rather than their patriotism.

My stepson Doug and my daughter-in-law Lindsay are both college graduates. Doug is a graduate of the University of Miami. Lindsay is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and has a master's in English. They have many, many opportunities they could have pursued. They chose to serve their country, because they and many others are patriots. They did not do it for bonuses. They did not do it for money.

Let us not just support our troops. Let us support their mission. And their mission is to defeat the Islamic extremists.

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

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, during his 20 years of service to this country, the gentleman to whom I am about to yield earned two Distinguished Flying Crosses, two Bronze Stars, the Soldiers Medal and other awards. A Vietnam combat veteran serving two tours as an assault helicopter pilot, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. BOSWELL).

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

Mr. BOSWELL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much for the time. I appreciate being part of this discussion today.

Mr. Speaker, I couldn't help but be somewhat taken by Mr. RANGEL's comments about the lack of urgency and the lack of sacrifice in our country because of what is going on with our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, and I can say to you, whoever is listening or watching, wherever you are, when I go through my communities, my towns, I sense the same thing. Where is the sense of urgency and where is the sense of sacrifice?

I will tell you where it is. When you go to see the troops off, to see their families, to see them, then you know where the sacrifice is. Then you know where the urgency is, to be there when they go back the second or third time, and, as some have said, the fourth.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution, a resolution in support of our troops who are serving with distinction in Iraq, and opposing the President's call for escalating the troop levels in Iraq.

As a two-tour combat veteran of the Vietnam conflict, as Ike said, as an assault helicopter pilot, I, like many others in this body, know firsthand of the

everyday sacrifices made by our men and women in uniform serving in Iraq. And, I might add, if I could, I know the sacrifices of their spouses and children. Branded on me always will be the reminder of my children when I had to leave, and they wondered if their dad would come back. You can't forget that. And it is happening to our troops repeatedly. More than 3,100 have given the supreme sacrifice. Over 20,000 have been injured, many of them very severely.

This resolution recognizes our brave men and women for performing their mission to the best of their ability. All Members of this body, all Members of this body stand foursquare behind their efforts.

As one Member of Congress who voted in support of the Iraq war resolution in 2002, I recognize the pretext for going to war was based on faulty, misleading, misinformation. I cannot reverse that vote, but I can no longer acquiesce to a failed and tragic military exercise in Iraq.

Two months ago, Generals Casey and Abizaid stated they did not support the increase in U.S. troop levels in Iraq, and recently President Bush maintained that that military policy with regard to Iraq would be determined by our military leaders. However, last month, President Bush ignored his top military advisers and called for a 20,000-plus increase in U.S. troops in Iraq.

I and others have been pressing the administration to level with the American people on the status of the Iraqi Security Forces being trained and ready to defend their Nation. If the Iraqis are trained and ready, reportedly over 300,000, as we have been told, it is time to begin now a planned phased withdrawal of U.S. troops. Sending more U.S. troops to Iraq does nothing to enhance the Iraqis' training. It only places more U.S. forces into harm's way to become additional targets of the Iraqi civil war. This failed policy must stop. We can support our troops in the field and oppose this escalation of U.S. forces.

The sectarian civil war violence in Iraq is increasing, and U.S. troops are becoming an increasing target of the various tribes and factions. We cannot continue to place ourselves in the middle of this civil war. It is time to insist that the Iraqis resolve their own civil war. We must insist and allow the Iraqis to defend their own Nation. The Bush administration stated that Iraq Security Forces are trained and ready in sufficient numbers to do the job. Again, they stated over 300,000 trained and equipped.

Therefore, I believe now is the time to oppose any further escalation of U.S. troop levels and now begin the planned, phased withdrawal of U.S. forces. I regret today's resolution is nonbinding. We need to begin addressing this matter in real substantive legislation. I urge all of my colleagues to support this resolution and to work in unison to bring our troops home.

Mr. Speaker, you know what we do best? You know what we do best? I will bet everybody who is paying attention intends to file their income tax April 15. We do best when we are under pressure to get it done.

I think it is time to say to Mr. Maliki, you know what? You have got your government in place. You have got your chance for democracy. It has been given to you. We went in there and Saddam is gone. He is history. You have got your chance. It is up to you. Now, you have got your problems, but you have got your government and it is in place. You have your problems, but you have to work them out. We cannot come in there and settle a civil war. And that is exactly what is going on.

□ 1445

We were, like you were there and I was with you in the White House, 14 months ago when they said to the President, the Vice President, Secretary Rumsfeld, Secretary Rice and General Pace, if you have got at that time, 14 months ago, if you have got over 200,000 troops trained, equipped and in field, then what is your plan to bring our troops home? And just like now, silence fell in the room.

Now, the claim is over 300,000 trained and equipped in the field and we are not bringing ours home. So we should say to Mr. Maliki, you have got to do it, pick something, whether it is oil fields or pick something and say starting next week or the week after you are responsible for their security because we are going to bring our troops out and bring them home and we are going to take them to Baghdad, put them on airplanes and fly them home. You have got to do it. It is yours to do and we hold you responsible to do it.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire about the time that has been consumed and the time remaining on each side, please.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) has used 1 hour, 3 minutes, having 3 hours and 57 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) has used 45 minutes, leaving 4 hours and 15 minutes remaining.

Mr. SKELTON. Then subject to the Chair, I wish to recognize more than one speaker in a row on our side.

I yield, Mr. Speaker, 5 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BOYD), a gentleman who is a Vietnam combat veteran, rifle platoon leader of the 101st Airborne Division.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, may I ask the gentleman from Missouri, is it your intent to keep going or will you come back to the Republican side? Mr. BOYD and I are lucky enough to be in the same committee, and I think we are probably working under the same time constraint, if we could go back to the Republican side. That is what I wanted to ask you, after he speaks.

Mr. SKELTON. That would be fine.

Mr. KINGSTON. Thank you.

Mr. BOYD of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Mr. SKELTON, for giving me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my fellow veterans to express strong opposition to sending more than 20,000 additional United States troops to Iraq, and I rise in strong support of the underlying resolution that we are debating today.

Mr. Speaker, when thinking about our political and military situation in Iraq, I often reflect on my own service in Vietnam and my thoughts there as a person, when I served there as a young man in uniform proudly defending the ideals on which America was built.

I often think, how is it different today? How is today's soldier in Iraq different than soldiers 40 years ago in Vietnam? I think there are some differences, but there are obviously many striking similarities.

Obviously, our soldiers today have communications technologies and other war-fighting technologies that are far superior to what we had 40 years ago in Vietnam. Soldiers now have access to a 24-hour news cycle that we did not have in the 1960s.

But, Mr. Speaker, what is the same, what is exactly the same, is the fact that our soldiers are trained and equipped to accomplish the mission given to them by their political leaders in Washington. They are trained to execute this mission and to the best of their ability, without any thought to whether that mission is right or wrong, or even whether that mission is well thought out. Clearly, this is very similar to what we experienced during Vietnam.

When I served in Vietnam, we were trying to execute a mission that was impossible to do because our political leaders had given us a poorly defined mission that we could not win militarily.

Our brave men and women serving in Iraq rely on us, their political leaders, to develop a winning strategy, and it is very clear that we are not winning in Iraq by any standard of measurement that you might want to use.

I returned from my service in Vietnam at the height of the anti-war sentiment; and let me tell you, there was no worse feeling than coming home after a tour of duty to find that you had come home to an American society that was not grateful and was not behind you.

I want to make sure that our sons and daughters serving in Iraq today do not experience what we experienced 35, 40 years ago. The American people and their leaders in Congress all support the men and women executing the outlined mission. These men and women who have fought and defended our country should be proud of the job they have done, and we all are proud of them.

However, we should have learned from the mistakes our political leaders made in Vietnam and not make those mistakes again.

The problems we are having in Iraq have nothing to do with our troops and

their ability and their training and their equipment. Our problem is with our policy.

The men and women serving in Iraq are counting on their political leaders to develop a successful strategy in Iraq, and interjecting more young American men and women in uniform into the crossfire of an Iraqi civil war is simply not the right approach.

The warring factions in Iraq have been at odds since the death of Muhammad in 632 A.D., and the United States military is not going to solve an Iraqi political problem, a problem that has existed between the Sunnis and the Shias for more than 1,400 years.

Past troop surges aimed at stemming the violence in Iraq have failed, and continuing to deploy more American troops will not bring us any closer to a self-governed Iraq.

We have been training and equipping Iraqi security forces for almost 3 years. We have 325,000 trained, conducting security operations there. The continuing presence of large numbers of American troops in Iraq only postpones the day when Iraqis will have to assume responsibility for their own government. Ultimately, it is incumbent upon the Iraqis to make peace and promote democracy in their own country.

With 140,000 of our troops in Iraq, the war in Iraq is exhausting our resources, resources that we, our people, are demanding that we have at home to solve some of our domestic priorities such as health care and education. And those resources are not only dollars; they are human blood.

Again, I stand here today to oppose the Iraqi troop surge because all evidence suggests that it is not a path to victory in Iraq and will only put more Americans in harm's way.

Ultimately, the debate today is about one thing, the men and women that proudly wear the uniform and the best way to take them out of the center of an increasing sectarian conflict and civil war in Iraq.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield to Mr. KINGSTON such time as he may consume, a member of the Defense appropriations subcommittee.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Florida for yielding, and Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

I want to say this, that if the troops in Baghdad watched what Congress was doing today, they would be outraged. Fortunately for us in the Free World, they do not sit around and watch C–SPAN and what silly politicians do. They live in a real world where there are real bullets.

This resolution, on the other hand, is not real. It is a political whip check designed for press releases. It is nonbinding.

The Democrat National Chairman, Howard Dean, famously said: ''The idea that we are going to win the war in Iraq is an idea which is just plain wrong.''

Speaker PELOSI called the war ''a grotesque mistake.''

So if the situation in Iraq is so hopeless, and unwinnable, why are we messing around with nonbinding resolutions? If the war is a lost cause and there is no longer an American interest, why do we not just go ahead and get out of there now? It is not worth another life or another dime.

Conversely, if the cause is worthwhile, should we not fight to win? Nonbinding resolutions, Mr. Speaker, are great for the Democrat club back home, but for those of us who serve in Congress, we are the law of the land. We are elected to pass laws, fund wars and influence policies. Our opinions, as expressed in nonbinding resolutions about what should happen in Sudan or Israel or Cuba, they are appropriate, but when it comes to American soil, our job is to pass real legislation and make real laws. We do not have to vent our frustration. We can change policy.

This week's resolution is just a cover-your-rear-end political design to give the legislative branch a chance to say I told you so. But, Mr. Speaker, as you know, like it or not, a real vote is coming.

It is coming in the form of the fiscal year 2008 supplemental bill. In that supplemental resolution, $5.6 billion is designed to pay for 21,500 new troops in Iraq. All Members will have a chance to vote on that supplemental bill; and as you know, an amendment can be offered to delete the $5.6 billion. A ''no'' vote would be against it, and a ''yes'' vote would be to say we are against having the troops there and we are not going to pay for it. That is what is real.

I think in November the electorate made an adjustment. They did not like what the Republican House was doing, and I certainly understand that. I think we did fail on many levels to deliver the products which we promised we would deliver to the people. But the Democrats are in the same situation. It was an anti-war fever that swept so many of them into office, but here we are with a nonbinding resolution.

Now, I understand that it is frustrating. I serve, as you do, on the Defense Committee; and as you know, many times we do not get all the information that we want. We have heard, as Mr. BOYD said, general after general after admirals after captains telling us we do not need more troops in Iraq, and now they are saying that they do. We have also heard the President say the decisions for military changes in Iraq will be made in Baghdad, not in Washington, DC, and I hope that is the case with this situation.

I am very frustrated about it, but one thing we have been told unequivocally by those same generals and admirals and Secretaries of the Navy and Army and Secretary of Defense and today from the ambassadors from Jordan and Egypt is that if America withdraws from Iraq at this time, it is sure to bring chaos and destruction. That will lead to a full-scale sectarian war which could lead to a division. It could be so chaotic that the United States of America would have to return to Iraq in larger force numbers than we have now. It could lead to Iraq becoming a nation state controlled by terrorists or terrorist sympathizers and that would be in control of the third largest oil reserve in the world.

Now, we have seen what Mr. Putin and Hugo Chavez down in Venezuela are doing with their petro-dollars and all the anti-American ill will they are spreading around the globe. Would you really want to empower a bunch of terrorists with those kinds of oil revenues?

Then the other thing we are told is if you pull out immediately or quickly what happens to U.S. credibility abroad? As we are dealing with China, who very recently shot down a satellite, we are very concerned about that. North Korea, we are at the negotiating table with them right now. And Russia seems to be slipping away from democracy and going back to some of its older ways that we are worried about. As I have just said, Hugo Chavez is spreading bad street money all over South America, which is not a good sign.

And then finally, Mr. Speaker, if we pull out, what does it say to the American servicemen who have already lost their lives? Hey, sorry, we did not mean it; your sacrifice was not worth us gutting it out, if you will.

You know, it is interesting, the President has been criticized for ''staying the course,'' and he is no longer staying the course. Who is supporting staying the course by a ''yes'' vote to this nonbinding resolution, but the Democrat leadership and the Democrat Party.

□ 1500

If you are saying it is a lost cause but we support you, how are you saying, no, we are not going to send recruits? It doesn't make sense. You just can't have it both ways. This is staying the course. The President no longer wants to stay the course. He is saying let's plus-up the numbers, let's divide Baghdad nine different ways. And that is something the RAND Corporation has called for as it has studied the history of nations that have insurgencies. Subdividing the areas is an effective way to fight insurgencies. The President has said let's go into al Anbar province; let's go into Sadr city. Those are changing of the course.

Mr. Speaker, a ''yes'' vote is a vote to stay the course; a nonbinding resolution is an insult to those who are in harm's way. If you truly believe that the war is a lost cause, why mess around with a nonbinding resolution? A ''no'' vote to this is a vote for change, and I believe it sends a stronger signal to the troops that we support you and we are sending new recruits to help you finish and complete this job.

Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I now yield 6

minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee, my fellow Blue Dog, Colonel TANNER, a Vietnam Navy veteran, retired colonel of the Tennessee Army National Guard.

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to be here with the other Democratic Members who are veterans to talk about this resolution.

I want to start off by saying what ALLEN BOYD said. I was on active duty during the Vietnam years. The problem here is not the troops; the problem is the competency of the civilian leadership that has gotten us into this mess.

This resolution supports our troops and calls for a different strategy by our civilian leadership with respect to Iraq.

When I was on active duty when I was in the military, I followed orders. That was my job. My role here in Congress as I see it is to try to help formulate some sort of competent civilian leadership and strategy so the troops can be successful. We have not seen that in 4 years. The war began in Iraq in March of 2003. Since then, we have lost 3,124 people dead and over 23,000 wounded, and it is not a bit better today than it was the day we started.

The war has cost Americans almost $400 billion, with another request for $285 billion more, with no end in sight. Competent civilian leadership for our men and women in uniform on the diplomatic and political fronts must be demanded by Congress and the American people if we are to properly honor the sacrifice of the dead and the wounded and their families.

Instead, what do we have? We have unbelievable reports that the Pentagon can't identify 170,000 guns issued to the Iraqi forces in October of 2005; some of our soldiers buying their own body armor; up-armored Humvees sitting in Bosnia or Herzegovina while we needed them in Iraq. And David Walker, the Comptroller General, says he believes that almost 30 percent of the money spent over there has been wasted, stolen, or otherwise unaccounted for.

I think any patriotic American ought to come to this floor if he or she has the opportunity and ask questions about the incompetency of the Pentagon and civilian leadership thus far.

I believe any viable Iraqi strategy to be successful must contain clearly defined goals to hold the Iraqi leaders accountable for their own security. Mr. BOSWELL, a helicopter pilot in Vietnam, said as much earlier.

Our men and women in uniform have performed magnificently. They have completed every task assigned to them. But impressive military might alone is not enough if the Iraqi people cannot or will not make progress in securing their own country and establishing a civil democracy.

Western-style democracy works because we have a theory called separation of church and state. When people don't go to the same church, they nonetheless can get together Monday through Friday and build a civil society and get along with each other. If these folks are unwilling or unable to do that for philosophical or psychological reasons, then we can only try to force a square peg into a round hole for so long. It has been going on for 4 years, and they are seemingly incapable. And I say that what we need to do is rethink our strategy and that a pullback to the perimeter is preferable to prolonging a costly and deadly military strategy toward a political goal that is out of reach.

Whether or not this new strategy works, I am glad to see that General David Petraeus will be commanding our men and women on the ground. He has proved himself a strong military commander, and I wish him well. It is not his strategy that I question.

Here is why this resolution is important to me: not only do the majority of the Iraqis in every poll that has been taken over there say they will be better off if we leave or get out or pull back, or however one wants to talk about it, but what it is doing in Iraq to our effort in Afghanistan. I am going to be leading a delegation to Brussels next Saturday to talk about Afghanistan. We are losing our momentum in Afghanistan because of the Iraqi whirlwind that is sucking everything into it in terms of our military supplies, our military approach, and so forth. Almost everyone who has looked at this situation agrees, from the Baker-Hamilton Report to everybody else, that we need to radically change our strategy.

Listen to these words from the Council of Foreign Relations. They say: ''The United States' interests in the Middle East and Persian Gulf region can be more effectively advanced if the United States disengages from Iraq. Indeed, the sooner Washington grasps this, the sooner it can begin to repair the damage that has been done to America's international position.''

Speaking of Afghanistan, they also say: ''Iraq is siphoning off so many resources that we could end up failing in Afghanistan as well.'' The report warns that Iraq is all consuming and makes it difficult for the United States to address other priorities.

That is exactly what we are talking about here, a different strategy for Iran, for our troops to be successful; an accountability from them as to their own security, so that we can concentrate with 26 other nations in NATO who are helping us fight the war in Afghanistan, a war that we can win, a war that we must win, and a war that is every bit as important if not more so in the war on terror than Iraq ever was.

Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I now yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT), a veteran of the U.S. Navy.

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

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I proudly stand today with fellow veterans as the House debates the most damaging, costly, and divisive course of U.S. military involvement since Vietnam.

At a naval station in California, I treated combat veterans returning home from Vietnam, many with severe physical and psychological wounds like PTSD and the effects of agent orange. After Vietnam, America swore there would never be another tragic military misadventure, but that is exactly what is happening in Iraq.

The American people want this Congress to end the war and to bring our soldiers home now, not 2 years from now at the end of this President's term. That is what the American people elected Democrats to do in November.

What we do this week is a miniscule little step. Step two will come when we get to appropriations next month.

We have to get out of Iraq. We have to get out now, not 2 years from now. We are killing them, they are killing us, and nothing is getting better. And the reasons we started this whole war have turned out to be false. The American people know this, and today they are watching our debate. They will judge our actions.

Getting U.S. soldiers out of Iraq has been my top priority since they were sent there 4 years ago under false pretenses. And the new claim by the President that escalating the war will reduce the violence is just another attempt to mislead the American people. It is a lot like Lyndon Johnson sending the bombers into Cambodia and Laos. They don't accept it. The American people don't accept it and they won't.

Those who claim we cannot leave Iraq without causing chaos ignore reality.

I ask to insert in the RECORD a piece by Retired Lieutenant General and Reagan administration NSA Director William Odom that decisively debunks this argument.

[From the Washington Post, Feb. 11, 2007]

VICTORY IS NOT AN OPTION

(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.

Chaos, not democracy, has taken root in Iraq, and chaos will continue to take U.S. lives until we act in our best interest and order our people out of harm's way.

News accounts continue to remind us that our soldiers don't even have the proper body and vehicle armor. We cannot adequately protect the soldiers already serving, but more were ordered in anyway. If you want the most basic reason to vote to oppose escalation, it is that we haven't properly equipped the troops already in Iraq, and we are not doing any better by the troops we are sending in now.

Just being on the record against the President's escalation of this war is not enough. The only way to diffuse the violence in Iraq is to defund the war in Iraq. Congress has the power to control the funding, and we have the responsibility to exercise the power vested in us by the Constitution. That is what the American people elected us to do. We must exercise our constitutional power as a co-equal branch of government and do what the President is unwilling to do: bring our soldiers home.

When appropriations for Iraq come to the floor, I intend to offer an amendment based on the 1970 Hatfield-McGovern appropriations amendment to end the war in Vietnam. It will be an amendment to provide funding to protect our soldiers as we bring them home in a planned, safe, and orderly way, and to prohibit taxpayers' monies from being used to continue or expand the war in Iraq. This will provide a transition for the Iraqi security forces using a benchmark that matters: the date when U.S. troops will be out of there.

The Iraqis can't help themselves until we get out. Right now, almost anything constructive that Iraqis do is seen as collaborating with the United States occupiers. We have to get out of the way so the Iraqis can solve their own problems. We can't help; we just make good targets.

So I want to encourage everyone in the House to vote for this resolution. I want to make it the biggest, strongest, clearest vote that we can get to let the President know for the second time, he ignored the election, that the Congress says ''no.''

I know that many Members of the Republican Party are as distressed as I am about Iraq, and I admire their courage in standing up to their President. Every veteran, including myself, in this House and in this Nation is very proud of our soldiers. They have done what we have asked them to do. It is time for new orders to be issued. It is time to end the U.S. role in the Iraq civil war. It is not a war on terrorism; it is a civil war. And bring our soldiers home. We can begin to do it immediately. That is what I advocate and that is what the American people expect from us.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to yield such time as he may consume to Mr. BURTON of Indiana, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, and a long-time veteran on leading the fight against Islamic jihadists.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, those who don't profit from history are destined to make the same mistakes over and over again.

When I knew this debate was going to take place, I went back and started having my staff go through all the newspapers they could find prior to World War II criticizing Winston Churchill for his stand against Hitler and the build-up in violation of the Treaty of Versailles of Nazi Germany, and nobody listened. And as a result of nobody listening, 62 million people died. Not 1,000, not 10,000; 62 million people died. You ought to read these articles. They are very interesting. He was maligned; he was criticized. They said he should be run out of Parliament. And, of course, once the war started, he became Prime Minister and one of the greatest men of the 20th century.

□ 1515

We are in a world war now against terrorism. I know my colleagues on the other side of the aisle said this isn't a world war, this is a civil war. But if you look at the record, since 1983, there have been numerous attacks, numerous attacks, on the West. There have been attacks at the World Trade Center in 1993. There was attacks in 1994; the Khobar Towers in 1996; the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998; USS *Cole* in 2000; the September 11, 2001 attacks which brought this country into the war; the London bombings in 2005 and countless other attacks. This is not confined just to the Middle East. These people want to spread their venom throughout the world.

Now, if we pull out of Iraq, what does that do? Everybody knows right now that the President of Iran wants to expand his sphere of influence. He is sending terrorists across the border from Iran into Iraq. He is helping Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Let me read to you a quote from him. He said, ''Israel should be wiped off the map'' and that ''anybody who recognizes Israel,'' anybody who recognizes Israel, ''will burn in the fire of the Islamic nations' fury.'' And they have been involved in terrorist attacks. They are trying to build a nuclear bomb right now, and they are watching us on television as we speak, make no mistake.

Iran and the terrorists are watching, and they are thinking, my gosh, the will of the American people is waning, and we are going to turn tail and run. We are going to pull out.

This isn't Vietnam. Vietnam was a country, Cambodia and Laos are countries in southeast Asia. This is a world war. They have attacked the United States of America. It was a worse tragedy than that which took place in Hawaii in 1941 when they attacked Pearl Harbor, and now they are trying to develop a nuclear bomb.

If we pull out of Iraq, you may rest assured that Iran's sphere of influence will grow, and the fear of Iran throughout the Middle East and the world will grow. They will not back down from their development of a nuclear weapon and a delivery system that can reach not only the Middle East and Europe, but the entire world.

What I am trying to say now is if we start pulling out and looking like we are turning tail and running, we are likely to be in another huge war in the years to come. I don't know whether it will be 2 years, 5 years or 10 years, or quicker than that. But if they develop a nuclear weapon, and they see that we are weak, and we are pulling out, they are going to push like they have been pushing, and they will push, and they will push, and they will push until we have to go into a war that is much greater than what we face today.

There is a lot at stake right here, right now. My colleagues, I think, are being very myopic. They are not looking at the big picture. This is something that I think all of us ought to think about.

You know, we all have kids, and we all have grandkids, and we all have friends who are fighting in Iraq right now. We know young men who have gone over there and sacrificed, lost their arms and legs and have died, and it is tragic, it is a horrible thing. World War II was horrible.

Every war was horrible. When you see people dying, in combat, you can hardly stand it, because you know how their families and they feel, those who survive.

War is hell. But sometimes it is necessary. If you don't stand up to a bully or a tyrant, then they will push, and they will push, and they will push until you have to fight. If you wait too long, the fight is so severe that you really get hurt. It is better to whip them at the beginning than to wait until later on when the cost is much, much higher.

Lord Chamberlain went to Munich in 1938. He signed a peace agreement on Herr Hitler's terms, gave the Sudetenland to him and said, Hey, if you don't go into Poland or Czechoslovakia, we'll let you have it. All we want is peace, peace in our time.

He came back, and he had given the green light to Adolf Hitler because he appeared weak, and the allied forces appeared weak, they were dismantling their weapons and their military, and he said, They're weak. We can do whatever we want. So he started World War II, and 62 million people died.

We are in the same situation today, in my opinion, with the radical terrorists and Iran. We need to let them know that we are going to be firm, and we are going to stand up to whatever they throw at us right now so that we don't face a major Holocaust down the road. I really believe this. I am not just saying this as a political speech. I am not saying any of my colleagues are just making political speeches now, today. I really believe what they are saying.

But I am convinced after studying history and watching what happened in the past, that if we don't deal with this problem now, we will deal with it later, and the costs will be a heck of a lot more than it is today, and it may involve millions and millions of lives. Can you imagine what would happen if a nuclear weapon was launched in New York, California or someplace else in this country? Can you imagine?

Can you imagine a Holocaust if a nuclear war broke out involving Iran throughout the world, not only in the Middle East? This is what I think we face right now. Deal with them now, let them know we are going to stand firm, Iraq is going to be a democracy. We are not going to let Iran or any of the terrorists prevail, and we are going to stop a Holocaust in the future.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY) first and only Iraq war veteran to serve in this body, a Member of the 82nd Airborne Division, who received the Bronze Star and his unit received the Presidential Unit Citation.

Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate it.

Mr. Speaker, I take to the floor today, not as a Democrat or a Republican, but as an Iraq war veteran who was a captain of the 82nd Airborne Division in Baghdad.

I speak with a heavy heart for my fellow paratrooper Specialist Chad Keith, Specialist James Lambert and the 17 other brave men I served with who never made it home.

I rise to give voice to hundreds of thousands of patriotic Pennsylvanians and veterans across the globe who are deeply troubled by the President's call to escalate the number of American troops in Iraq.

I served in Baghdad from June of 2003 to January of 2004. Walking in my own combat boots, I saw firsthand this administration's failed policy in Iraq. I led convoys up and down Ambush Alley in a Humvee without doors, convoys that Americans still run today because too many Iraqis are still sitting on the sidelines.

I served in al-Rashid, Baghdad, which, like Philadelphia, is home to 1.5 million people. While there are 7,000 Philadelphia police officers serving, like my father in Philadelphia, protecting its citizens, there were only 3,500 of us in al-Rashid, Baghdad.

Mr. Speaker, the time for more troops was 4 years ago, but this President ignored military experts like General Shinseki and General Zinni, who, in 2003, called for several hundred thousand troops to secure Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, our President, again, is ignoring military leaders, patriots like General Colin Powell, like General Abizaid and members of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group who oppose this escalation.

But most importantly, Congresses in the past did not stand up to the President and his policies. But today I stand with my other military veterans, some who were just elected, like Sergeant Major TIM WALZ, Admiral JOE SESTAK and Commander CHRIS CARNEY. We stand together to tell this administration that we are against this escalation, and that Congress will no longer give the President a blank check.

Mr. Speaker, close to my heart is a small park on the corner of 24th and Aspen Streets in Philadelphia. This is the Patrick Ward Memorial Park. Patrick Ward was a door gunner in the U.S. Army during Vietnam. He was killed serving the country that he loved. He was the type of guy that neighborhoods devote street corners to and parents name their children after him, including my parents, Marge and Jack Murphy.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you, how many more street corner memorials are we going to have for this war? This is what the President's proposal does. It sends more of our best and bravest to die refereeing a civil war. Just a month ago, Sergeant Jae Moon from my district in Levittown, Bucks County, was killed in Iraq.

You know, a few blocks away from this great Chamber, when you walk in the snow, is the Vietnam Memorial, where half the soldiers listed on that wall died after America's leaders knew our strategy would not work. It was immoral then, and it would be immoral now to engage in the same delusion. That is why sending more troops in the civil war is the wrong strategy.

We need to win the war on terror, and reasonable people may disagree on what to do, but most will agree that it is immoral to send young Americans to fight and die in a conflict without a real strategy for success. The President's current course is not resolute, it is reckless. That is why I will vote to send a message to our President that staying the course is no longer an option.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for a new direction in Iraq. From my time serving with the 82nd Airborne Division in Iraq, it became clear that in order to succeed there, you must tell the Iraqis that we will not be there forever. Yet, 3 years now since I have been home, it is still Americans leading convoys up and down Ambush Alley and securing Iraqi street corners. We must make the Iraqis stand up for Iraq and set a timeline to start bringing our heroes home.

That is why I am proud to be an original cosponsor, with Senator BARACK OBAMA and fellow paratrooper, Congressman MIKE THOMPSON, of the Iraq De-escalation Act, a moderate and responsible plan to start bringing our troops home, mandating a surge in diplomacy and refocusing our efforts on the war on terror and Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, our country needs a real plan to get our troops out of Iraq, to protect our homeland and to secure and refocus our efforts on capturing and killing Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda. There are over 130,000 American servicemen and women serving bravely in Iraq. Unfortunately, thousands more are on the way. An open-ended strategy that ends in more faceless roadside bombs in Baghdad and more street-corner memorials in America is not one that I will support.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield such time as he may consume to Mr. PENCE, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, whose minority staff director, Greg McCarthy, setting up the posters, is an Iraq war veteran and a marine as well.

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

Mr. PENCE. I thank the ranking member for yielding time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the concurrent resolution for the House, and I do so from a position of a humble public servant, one who has not served in Iraq in uniform, as our previous speaker did, and others have who are in this Chamber at my side, but as one who has been there. I rise as one who is charged with public responsibility as the ranking member of the Middle East Subcommittee.

While this resolution before the Congress today and this week, while this resolution expresses support for our troops in Iraq, the heart of the resolution is a statement of disapproval of the President's so-called surge of troops in Iraq, and I cannot support it.

I see Iraq, as others have eloquently stated, as the central front in the war on terror. I rise today in opposition to this resolution out of a fundamental sense that we have a moral obligation to finish what we started, to confront the enemies of our way of life, and to support our duly elected Commander in Chief as he makes those decisions that he deems necessary and appropriate to achieve those ends.

Let me say from the heart, for a moment, my reasons for supporting this troop surge. A few days before President Bush addressed the Nation, he invited a handful of Members of Congress down to the West Wing of the White House. I must tell you that I had my doubts about this troop surge. In all four of my trips to Iraq, I had heard consistently from our military commanders over the past several years that a large American footprint in Iraq was actually counterproductive to our goals.

□ 1530

But August and the aftermath of 2006 changed all of that. All of that advice predated an extraordinary increase in violence that commenced in the late summer of last year, when it became clear to all of us in this body, and to freedom-loving people around the world, that our strategy and tactics on the ground in Iraq were not working.

Now, I took that skepticism and that counsel into the Cabinet room of the West Wing, and there I heard the President describe a new strategy and new tactics. For all of the world to have read the newspaper accounts, Mr. Speaker, I would have assumed the President was simply sending more troops for more troops' sake. But that was not the case.

Despite what the previous speaker on this floor suggested, this is a new strategy. It is a new way forward. It is an effort on the part of the President to embrace an increase in troop strengths in Baghdad that was initially recommended by the Iraq Study Group, and more on that in a moment.

But let me say that I believe this new way forward, this new approach ought to be given a chance to work. I believe to oppose the President's new strategy in Iraq is to accept the status quo. And the headlines of the last 24 hours should tell every man and woman of good will in this Congress that the status quo in Iraq is not acceptable.

Now, earlier I mentioned that the approach of a troop surge in Baghdad was first recommended by the Iraq Study Group. I am quite struck, Mr. Speaker,

that the previous speaker who is a freshman Member of Congress from Pennsylvania spoke, as many have in the Democrat majority, quite glowingly of the report of the Iraq Study Group. And I admire this work product greatly.

A bipartisan work authorized during the last Congress, James A. Baker, III, former Secretary of State, Lee Hamilton of Indiana, a former chairman of the House International Relations Committee bringing together a bipartisan group of wise counselors developed the Iraq Study Group report.

While I do not agree with every aspect of it, particularly those that talk about having a dialogue with terrorist states in the region, there is much that recommends the American people to the Iraq Study Group. And again I site in evidence the gentleman from Pennsylvania's glowing reference to that report just moments ago.

Now, let's look, if we can, at what the Iraq Study Group has to say about the idea of a troop surge in Iraq. I would offer very humbly, and maybe startling to some who are looking in, Mr. Speaker, that the very words ''troop surge'' comes from the Iraq Study Group's recommendations.

Allow me to quote from page 73 of the book that is available in book stores all over America. The Iraq Study Group said: ''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.''

Let me emphasize that again. The Iraq Study Group that the gentleman from Pennsylvania and many in the majority have heralded as an important work that provides us with a vision for going forward says: ''We could, however, support a short-term redeployment of surge of American combat forces to stabilize Baghdad.''

Mr. Speaker, that is precisely what President Bush called for in January. And it is precisely that which Congress this week is poised to reject in a nonbinding resolution. I submit to you today that if the Iraq Study Group is to be cited again and again by the majority as source authority, and a fount of wisdom, and I believe it is, then let's be clear about the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group.

It is not to say, Mr. Speaker, that a short-term redeployment or surge of combat forces in Baghdad will solve the present crisis and impasse that we face. It simply is a strategy to quell violence with Iraqis in the lead, to create the conditions of stability whereby a long-term political solution can be achieved.

Now let me say, Mr. Speaker, it was my great hope that the resolution before us today would have come to the floor under procedural rules that allowed for amendments. For my part I spent much of last evening offering an amendment, along with others, that would state that it is the sense of Congress that we should not take any action that would result in the elimination or reduction of funds for our troops.

I rise today not to complain about procedure, but to say, Mr. Speaker, I regret that this newly minted majority could not do as the Democrat chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee appears prepared to act.

My amendment that was offered, similar to others, has nearly identical language to a resolution being offered by the distinguished Senator LEVIN, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee. And both of us agree that Congress should affirmatively state that it will not cut funding to the troops.

I deeply regret that we were not able to make that declarative statement today. And let me say with great respect to the chairman of this Armed Services Committee, who needs not to hear from me about the deep respect I have for him, that I have to believe that somewhere in his heart of hearts, knowing his extraordinary record of service to this country, that he may well have hoped for a stronger statement as well.

While the Democrat resolution before us expresses the hope that Congress and all Americans will continue to support and protect our brave men and women serving in Iraq, it does not take the next step to show tangible support for our troops in the nature of funding. And let me say this with great sincerity: there is a fundamental difference between pledging to support and protect our troops and pledging not to cut off the funding for our war in Iraq.

It is a specious distinction, and one that is not lost on our colleagues in the Senate. I would submit to you that words have consequences, and ''support'' and ''protect'' do not assure the American people that we will continue to fund our troops in the field.

I believe the American people understand this point, Mr. Speaker. A poll cited this morning in USA Today shows that even though a majority of Americans are opposed to the surge of troops in Baghdad, a majority also oppose cutting off funding for the troops.

The American people do not want Congress to defund this war in the majority, even if they are concerned about the course and direction the war is taking. And Congress should tell the troops and the American people that it will never use the power of the purse to accomplish policy ends in the field of battle.

With this I close. Listening to this debate today and to the opposition to the surge being espoused by the Democrat majority, I have begun to wonder a very simple question: What if it works? I have made it clear that I support the surge and the President's new strategy.

My good friends on the Democrat side of the aisle and, as has been said, some Republicans have made it clear that they oppose the surge of forces in Iraq. And that is their right, and if it is in their heart, it is their duty. And at this moment, it appears that a majority of Americans are with the majority in this Congress.

But what if? What if they are wrong? What if you are wrong? What if the surge and the new leadership of General Petraeus and the courage and bravery of American men and women in uniform and the sacrifices of Iraqis in uniform succeed in the coming months?

You know, it is a snow day back in Indiana today, Mr. Speaker. And my kids are even home watching this on TV. I give my kids some pretty basic advice sometimes. One of the pieces of advice I give my kids when they are facing challenges, I say to them, you know, people don't like losers, but they like quitters even less.

And I think we ought to reflect on that old maxim as we come upon this decision today. If this new strategy in Iraq succeeds in the coming months, what will those who vote for this resolution say? The truth is, we must fight and win a victory for freedom in Iraq. The truth is we have no option but victory.

In their hearts the American people know this, and the American people are willing to make the hard choices to choose victory. Courage. Courage is the key in this moment.

C.S. Lewis wrote that courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point. Courage then is the answer, not recrimination and retreat. We are at a moment when the American people and the Members of this body will take a stand. This is a moment for courage. Our brave men and women in Iraq exhibit courage and uncommon valor every day.

It is my hope and prayer that we in this House might follow their lead and show them that such courage resides here as well. Let's vote down this resolution and find it within ourselves to lead the American people by bringing forward the resources and the support necessary to see freedom within Iraq.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER).

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this resolution and to call upon my colleagues to make a commitment to protect our troops and to bring them home as quickly and safely as possible.

Mr. Speaker, the American people and Members of Congress were deceived. Every reason we were given for invading Iraq was false. Weapons of mass destruction, not there. Saddam Hussein working hand in glove with al Qaeda, not true.

I ask you, if the President had gone to the American people and said, we must invade a country that poses no imminent threat to us and sacrifice thousands of lives in order to create a

democratic government in Iraq, would we have assented? I think not.

As the President now says to us that we should continue indefinitely to expend American blood and treasure to support one side in a sectarian civil war, should Congress continue to consent? I think not. We need to say enough already. Enough with the lies and the deceit and the evasions, enough with the useless bloodshed.

We must protect our troops and ensure their safety while they are in Iraq. But we must not send more troops there to intervene in a civil war whose outcome they cannot determine.

And we should set a swift timetable to withdraw our troops from Iraq and let the contending Iraqi factions know that we will not continue to expend American blood and treasure to referee their civil war.

Only if faced with the reality of imminent withdrawal of American troops might the Iraqis strike a deal with each other and end the civil war. We know, Mr. Speaker, that the administration has botched the handling of this war. They stood by as Baghdad was looted, they failed to guard ammunition depots, they disbanded the Iraqi Army, they crippled the government by firing all of the competent civil servants in the name of debaathification, and they wasted countless billions of dollars on private contractors and on God only knows what with no accounting.

And all this while they continued to deny resources to the real war on the real terrorists. They let Osama bin Laden escape.

□ 1545

They allowed the Taliban to recover and to reconquer. They allow our ports to remain unprotected from uninspected shipping containers, and they let loose nuclear materials remain unaccounted for, waiting to be smuggled to al Qaeda to be made into nuclear weapons.

And why does the President want more troops in Iraq? To expand our role from fighting Sunni insurgents to fighting the Shiite militias also. Of course, when we attack the Shiite militias, they will respond by shifting their targets from Sunnis to American troops. American casualties will skyrocket, and we will be fighting two insurgencies instead of one.

I believe the President has no real plan other than not to ''lose Iraq'' on his watch, and to hand over the whole mess to a successor in 2 years. He will ignore anything we do that doesn't have the force of law. That is why this resolution must be only the first step.

In the supplemental budget we will consider next month, we should exercise the only real power we have, the Congressional power of the purse. We will not cut off the funds and leave our troops defenseless before the enemy, as the demagogues would imply. But we should limit the use of the funds we provide to protecting the troops while they are in Iraq and to withdrawing them on a timetable mandated in the law. We should provide funds to rebuild the Army and to raise our readiness levels. We should provide funds for diplomatic conferences in case there is any possibility of negotiating an end to the Iraqi civil war. And we should provide funds for economic reconstruction assistance. But above all, we must use the power of the purse to mandate a timetable to withdraw the troops from Iraq.

We must use the power the people have entrusted to us. The best way to protect our troops is to withdraw them from the middle of a civil war they cannot win and that is not our fight.

I know that if we withdraw the troops, the civil war may continue and could get worse. But this is probably inevitable no matter how long our troops remain. And if the Iraqis must fight a civil war, I would rather they fight it without 20,000 more Americans dying.

Yes, the blindness of the administration is largely to blame for starting a civil war in Iraq, but we cannot end it. Only the Iraqis can settle their civil war. We can only make it worse and waste our blood and treasure pointlessly.

So let us pass this resolution, and then let us lead this country out of the morass in Iraq so that we can devote our resources to protecting ourselves from the terrorists and to improving the lives of our people.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina, United States Army veteran, Mr. ETHERIDGE.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, as a veteran, as you have heard, of the United States Army, myself, I strongly support our troops, our veterans and their families. Let me state at the outset that our troops have done everything that has been asked of them to do. They have done it well. Exceptionally well, I might say.

More than 34,000 from North Carolina have been deployed on Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. And more than 5,000 are currently over there now. More are preparing to go back to the desert once again.

I am tremendously proud of all the troops from North Carolina and across America who have laced up their boots, followed their orders, and done their duty. They are our heroes, and we salute them.

Regardless if one terms the President's announced change in policy a surge or an escalation or an augmentation, the so-called new plan can be summed up in four words: more of the same.

I myself have traveled to Iraq twice. And after I returned last year I said the administration must change from this failed policy. Specifically, I said that we need more burden-sharing support from other countries, more communities and countries in the region, because the whole world has a tremendous stake in a stable Iraq and a peaceful Middle East.

This administration's arrogant disregard for our international partners has destroyed U.S. alliances that were decades in the making. Those alliances saw us through the darkest days of the cold war when the very existence of our country hung in the balance. Yet, this administration tossed them aside like yesterday's news.

It is a sad tragedy to witness the forfeiture of America's moral standing in the world and the abandonment of diplomacy as an effective asset for America's interests.

We need to bring all the parties to the table and discuss cooperative action to secure Iraq's long-term stability and a peaceful Middle East.

Mr. Speaker, I voted to give the President the authority to topple Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq because he said it presented a ''grave and gathering threat to America.''

The President said Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction and intended to use them against America.

The President said Saddam was in cahoots with Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda terrorists. I took the President of the United States of America at his word. We have learned, to our great regret, what that was worth.

Now the President wants to send 21,000 more troops to Baghdad. Republican Senator Arlen Specter called the new deployment ''a snowball in July.'' An outgoing commander of the Central Command, with responsibility for Iraq, told the Senate last November, and I quote, ''I do not believe that more American troops right now is the solution to the problem. I believe the troop levels need to stay about where they are.''

And the former Republican chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, John Warner, a decorated marine and former Secretary of the Navy, said last month, ''I feel very strongly that the American GI was not trained, not sent over there, certainly not by resolution of this institution, to be placed in the middle of a fight between Sunni and Shiia and the wanton and just incomprehensible killing that is going on at this time.''

Mr. Speaker, I have voted for every defense bill and war funding legislation that Congress has passed for Iraq. I am very concerned about the state of readiness of our American Armed Forces.

As the Representative for Fort Bragg and Pope Air Force Base, I know that America's military and our military communities have many unmet needs, while the war in Iraq continues to consume more and more public dollars, with no end in sight.

In conclusion, I rise in support of this resolution with no joy in my heart, but with solid conviction in my soul. The failure of this administration has gone unchecked and unchallenged by the Congress of the United States for far

too long. We need a new direction in Iraq.

The question before Congress is this: Is more of the same in Iraq an acceptable policy? The answer is no.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield such time as he may consume to Mr. ROYCE, the ranking member of the International Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Trade Subcommittee, obviously an expert in this field.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LYNCH). The chair is trying to address an imbalance in the time for debate.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I very much agree, and we have been doing that approach. There are some time restraints from some of our Members, and so it necessitated this change, but we have been making sure that the Democrats could get their members in.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman may proceed.

Mr. ROYCE. I will begin my remarks by saying that I hope that these 3 days of debate, Mr. Speaker, are characterized by civility and respect. Without doubt, this is the most difficult issue that we will confront in this Congress.

Iraq is terribly complex. The stakes for our national security are great, and the sacrifice in American lives and the loss of Iraqi lives have been very painful.

This is a war unlike any other we have fought, and it has been vexing. All of us, supporters and opponents of this resolution alike, Republicans and Democrats, all Americans, have a vital interest in our Nation succeeding in helping to build a stable Iraq and defeating Islamist terrorism. That is the challenge of our time.

As we have heard, mistakes have been made. There is no doubt about that. I have been dismayed by some of them: the lethargy in training Iraqi troops, the inability to meter oil and protect civilian infrastructure. But we can't allow this to cloud our strategic judgments.

To my mind, this resolution, indeed our struggle in Iraq, can be boiled down to two questions: Are Iraq and the global struggle against Islamist terrorism separable? And is Iraq hopeless? The answer to both questions is no, which leads me to a ''no'' on this resolution.

The rationale for this war has changed, whether we like it or not. We are now fighting for stability and moderation against the Islamist terrorism that is now host in Iraq.

Our Civil War didn't start out as a battle against slavery. It was a fight to save the Union.

We started out fighting Saddam and to stop what the majority of this House believed was his weapons of mass destruction program. We are now fighting Islamist terrorism. It is a different and more daunting fight, but the consequences of our success or failure are no less critical because the stakes of this battle have changed.

Let there be no doubt about this: Defeat in Iraq will be a terrible blow to our national security. It will psychologically boost the Islamist terrorists who we are fighting there and elsewhere.

The bipartisan Iraq Study Group reported Ayman al-Zawahiri, deputy to Osama bin Laden, has declared Iraq a focus for al Qaeda. That declaration is more than words.

While not all fighters in Iraq are jihadists, many are. Some have wrongly denied that here on the House floor today. Jihadists are coming from all over the world. The report reads, ''They will seek to expel the Americans and then spread the jihad wave to the secular countries neighboring Iraq.'' Chaos in Iraq will allow for more terrorist safe havens there.

The 9/11 Commission stated that every policy decision we make needs to be seen through the lens of terrorist sanctuaries. My colleagues, I would ask if we are doing that.

And that report stated that if Iraq becomes a failed state, it will go to the top of the list of places that are breeding grounds for attacks against Americans abroad.

We saw what happened when Afghanistan descended into chaos. Al Qaeda emerged out of the ruin to strike America on 9/11. That is the type of threat we are facing today, which will be supercharged if Iraq fails.

We have to confront the potential disaster scenario in the region that U.S. failure in Iraq could bring, which would be worsening strife which could engulf the entire region, sparking a wider war in this resource-rich area.

Saudis have warned that they are prepared to aid Sunni militias. Jordan could move troops into Iraq's western desert to serve as a buffer. The Turks are increasingly worried about the independent Kurdish movement. Iran could move to secure the oil fields to the south.

In describing the consequences of continued decline in Iraq, the Iraq Study Group wrote, ''Such a broader sectarian conflict could open a Pandora's box of problems, including the radicalization of populations, mass movement of populations, and regime changes that might take decades to play out.''

This is the powder keg that is Iraq today. The status quo is nasty. But the consequences of failure, while unpredictable, is far worse.

So to the second question: Is Iraq hopeless? I can understand why many Americans may feel that way. Every day there are horrific car bombings, the sectarian violence has intensified. We will hear many assessments that Iraq is hopeless in this debate.

No one is going to argue that success is guaranteed. But arguments that we have no chance of bringing stability on the ground in Iraq are also extreme arguments.

Are the forces of chaos so strong, and are the forces of stability and moderation so weak as to doom with certainty our efforts?

But I have spoken with too many people in the field, people with some optimism, that I am not ready to conclude that with certainty. And I don't think this House should reach that conclusion.

□ 1600

And that is my read of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group which, while recognizing the grave challenges, spoke of improving the process for success. The fact that the consequences of our defeat would be so great also leads me to persist.

Let's consider more about the implications of defeat. Look at neighboring Iran. Most Americans remember the 1979 Iranian takeover of our embassy in Tehran. That led to 444 days of captivity for our men and women. Unfortunately, relations with Iran have only worsened since. Iran today is a state sponsor of terrorism. It aids Hezbollah, and it backed this terrorist group's war on Israel this summer. With Iranian backing, Hezbollah is the A Team of terrorism, running highly sophisticated operatives worldwide, including here.

Some terrorism experts consider Hezbollah to be a more challenging foe than al Qaeda. Iran is backing the insurgents fighting our men and women in Iraq. Iran is also storming ahead with a nuclear weapons program.

The embassy takeover was a big morale boost for Islamist terrorists; some trace the beginning of Islamist terrorism to that embassy takeover. The shattering of the Iraqi state in our hands would be that 1979 morale boost magnified. It would also prove the way for tremendous Iranian influence in the region.

We must face our responsibility to the Iraqi people. Yes, we have given them 4 years to come together; it has been beyond frustration that they haven't. Tens of thousands of Iraqis have died during this time. What happens if we leave or operate without the manpower our military leadership says it needs? I don't think anyone believes that the carnage won't be several times what we have seen.

We often hear calls to intervene in countries for humanitarian reasons. Some would like our military to go to Darfur in Sudan. Maybe we should take decisive military actions to stop that genocide, but what about trying to finish a job where we have already made a huge military commitment, knowing full well that Iraq's withdrawal would lead to a brutal humanitarian crisis?

We also often hear from some about how unpopular our country is worldwide. This is said to greatly harm our influence and interest. And there is truth to that. Just wait if our withdrawal precipitates a horrific scale of ethnic cleansing. Is that the Iraqi legacy we want? I am not ready to concede the inevitability of this.

It is very important that our Nation be united. Our success depends upon it.

We need to be sowing discord among the enemy, not ourselves. We have had successes against Islamist terrorism worldwide.

This resolution states that Congress disapproves of the January decision of the President to deploy more troops to Iraq. The bipartisan Iraq Study Group panel, but one month earlier, said it could support a short-term redeployment of American combat forces to stabilize Baghdad. This resolution goes in the opposite direction.

I have heard the argument about why this resolution isn't a retreat, but it is a nonbinding rebuke of the President's tactics, that it doesn't cut off funding. That may be the case on paper, but the symbolism is far greater. I don't see how opposing our professional military's call for more troops at this pivotal time is anything but a signal of permanent retreat. It is also congressional micromanagement.

The war is horrible. The easy thing would be to just say out. But we can't wish away the Islamist terrorists will take great strength from our defeat. That is what they are saying. These individuals in groups are as persistent as they are brutal. They must be fought and defeated. So let's not give these forces a win on the floor of the U.S. House.

I ask my colleagues to think through these implications and vote down this resolution.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I now yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. BACA), former paratrooper with both the 101st and 82nd Airborne Divisions.

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

I thank the Armed Services Committee chairman, Mr. SKELTON, for carrying this legislation in support of our military troops and opposing the President's plan to send at least 21,500 more troops to Iraq.

I speak today as a proud veteran who served in the United States armed service as a paratrooper in the 101st and 82nd Airborne Division.

As a veteran and as a Congressman, I voted against this war in year 2002 because no one could convince me why we had to be there in the first place. I was tormented with this decision. I talked to many of my constituents. I called the bishop in my area. I couldn't see what invading Iraq had to do with securing the homeland. No one in the administration could convince me that there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. But we sent our troops there anyway, without proper training or proper equipment.

This administration was in such a hurry to invade Iraq that we sent our military in there with defective body armor and Hummers that couldn't withstand the roadside bombs. In fact, before Congress made any appropriations for an Iraq invasion, the President took $600 million from our troops in Afghanistan and sent it to Iraq.

The administration has refused to listen to its own generals, to Congress or to the American people. They just do what they want.

After September 11, I was willing to do anything to make our country safe, like all of us. We came together in a bipartisan way. I believed in fighting terrorists in Afghanistan was the right thing to do, but the current situation in Iraq proves what we have been saying all along, that the Iraq war has not and will not make America safer. Instead, it is costing the American taxpayers $200 million every day. The money that we spent in Iraq could have sent 17 million high school students to college. Can you imagine, 17 million students going on to college right now that we could have provided assistance to, or paid for 6 million new school teachers, reduced the student ratio, funded the No Child Left Behind Act, or help with Katrina. But more money has been spent on this war, and yet it is costing us money for those that are losing their lives right now.

Over 3,000 men and women have given their lives for this war, and over 23,000 are coming home wounded or disabled. Mr. Speaker, over 10,000 of these troops are so severely wounded that they will never be able to serve again. Let me tell you, and you have to look at them, never able to serve again.

Now the President wants to send 21,500 more troops to the most dangerous part of Iraq. Why? Why are we sending our troops to fight in another country's civil war? Mr. Speaker, this isn't a strategy for success. This is a desperation attempt by the administration who can't admit that they made a mistake. They made a mistake, and they need to admit it. And the sooner we come to this realization, the better off this country will be. As a veteran, I understand that sometimes war is necessary, but as a veteran, I also know that war should always be the last resort because war means someone's sons and daughters won't come home. That means separating parents from their children, leaving their homes, someone making a sacrifice.

In my home State of California alone, we have lost 325 men and women in Iraq. Back in my home district, we have lost 10 outstanding young men. It just breaks my heart. Mr. Speaker, you don't put the American families through this kind of pain unless you are sure, beyond any shadow of doubt, that there are no other options. The President had failed to convince me in 2002, and I am still not convinced to this day.

I say let's support this resolution. Let's bring back our men.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, at this time I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Con. Res. 63.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

Mr. SKELTON. I yield the balance of my time, Mr. Speaker, to my friend, my colleague, the gentleman from California, the chairman on the Committee on Foreign Affairs (Mr. LANTOS). I ask unanimous consent that he be allowed to control the time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend from Missouri for yielding.

I am very pleased to yield 5 minutes to a distinguished member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, chairman of our Europe Subcommittee, my friend and colleague from Florida (Mr. WEXLER).

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you, Mr. LANTOS.

Mr. Speaker, today I stand with the American people in support of this resolution and in opposition to the President's escalation of the Iraq war. I stand in opposition to a President that failed the American people by initiating an ill-conceived war; an administration that misled the Nation, vulnerable after 9/11, into believing that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction; an administration that invented links between Baghdad and al Qaeda; that ignored the views of the intelligence community, while convincing Americans that our brave soldiers would be greeted in Iraq as liberators; an administration that assured us that Iraqi oil money would pay for the reconstruction; and that through military force, rather than diplomacy, we would cultivate American values of freedom and democracy in Iraq.

The American people know that they have been taken down a false path by this administration, down a spiraling path of war under false pretenses into a quagmire with a President who will not change course, even in the face of a growing civil war. This resolution sends the President an unequivocal message that he must change direction of this war.

How did we arrive in this desperate situation? From the top down, the President, the Vice-President and the Secretary of State have manipulated evidence, broadcast half truths, and doctored intelligence through an orchestrated effort to smear and destroy those who have opposed their policies. Just last week, in a scathing report, the Defense Department's Inspector General concluded that the Pentagon took inappropriate action by advancing conclusions that were not backed up by the intelligence community.

The American people have judged the actions of this President, they see this war for what it is, and they spoke clearly in November, stating loudly that we must end our disastrous Iraq policy. Yet this administration continues its defiant disregard of the views of the American people. Not the voice of the American people nor the conclusions of the Iraq Study Group have

budged this administration from its stubborn and misguided path. And now, the President is doubling down on a bad bet that risks the lives of thousands more American soldiers on a misguided plan that ignores the recommendations of our military commanders on the ground.

□ 1615

Unbelievably, President Bush has already tried twice the strategy of escalation. It failed both times. To try again is to act in blind faith, ignoring the facts, ignoring the experts, ignoring the will of the American people, and, worst of all, ignoring the terrible sacrifices that will undoubtedly be endured by our soldiers and their families.

Mr. Speaker, our troops must be redeployed from Iraq. Instead of a surge of American troops entering Baghdad, there should be a surge of American soldiers back into every town and every city across our Nation. For our troops who have given so much in Iraq, for our military families whose lives have been shattered by this war, it is time to bring them home.

How do we honor our brave men and women? How do we honor over the 3,000 who died, and thousands more who have been maimed? Instead of an escalation, we should honor these soldiers by bringing them home and giving them the best health care, the best mental health support that they have justly earned.

I applaud Congress for taking a stand on this war. I only wish we were voting on a binding resolution that mandates a redeployment of troops and cuts off funding for this tragic escalation. Each month we remain in Iraq, 100 more American soldiers die, hundreds more are maimed, and $5.5 billion is spent.

Mr. Speaker, we have endured 4 years of a failed Iraq policy, longer than we were in World War II, longer than we were in the Korean War, and we can afford no more blank checks for this President.

Today I stand with the American people, our soldiers in Iraq, with my fellow Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle in strong opposition to the President's escalation in Iraq and in support of our redeploying our troops and reversing, most importantly, our Nation's failed strategy in Iraq.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY).

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in vigorous opposition to this resolution. With all due respect to my colleagues across the aisle, this resolution does not outline a new strategy for how we move forward in Iraq and it will have absolutely no impact on the current strategy. Furthermore, it is the wrong signal to send to our allies in the region and the wrong signal to send to our troops, those brave, courageous men and women in uniform who have performed magnificently and done everything that we have asked them to do.

This nonbinding resolution addresses a tactic, not an overall strategy; a tactic that the President of the United States as Commander in Chief has full constitutional authority to move with.

Now, I respect my colleagues across the aisle, and I know we all want to see a disengagement of our troops from harm's way in Iraq. But I would submit that disengagement must be done under favorable circumstances in the interests of our national security. There is no other alternative.

Let's look at what would happen with a failed policy in Iraq. Iraq is on the verge of anarchic fragmentation. There are 27 ethnic groups in Iraq. It is not as simple as a Sunni versus Shiia conflict. There are other splinter groups using violence for their own designs.

Precipitous withdrawal from Iraq will lead to unprecedented violence, spilling over into neighboring countries such as Jordan, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and we will see Shiia uprisings in Lebanon and Bahrain, which have significant Shiia populations. Jordan is already facing massive numbers of refugees coming across the border, putting strain. And Iranian influence is growing. The regime is intent on gaining hegemony in the region, exerting its influence widely throughout the Middle East and controlling oil and gas reserves to use the money to further fuel terrorism. Al Qaeda will consolidate a base to work from in western Iraq to perpetrate further transnational terrorism, and Turkey will be compelled to cross borders to deal with separatist groups.

America, dear America, will lose support of its vital allies in the region and our reputation will suffer immensely for a very long period of time, much longer than what we saw after the Vietnam conflict.

It is clear to me that security and political reconciliation in Iraq run parallel, and without halting the spiral of violence, reconciliation within Iraq will not occur. Without halting the spiral of violence, our allies in the Persian Gulf and the broader Middle East will be forced to deal with their own political disruption, rather than starting multilateral dialogue that is so essential for a longer standing peace throughout this entire region, whether we are talking about the Palestinian issues, Lebanon, Iraq or Iran. Our allies in the region, particularly, need political cover. I have heard this from numerous Arab Ambassadors whom I have had many conversations with.

The ground must be laid for multilateral diplomacy. It will not occur during a spiral of violence. Our allies in the region have given commitment that they will help with Iraqi military training, police training, as well as rebuilding of Iraq and further resources, once the stage is set with security and a move toward reconciliation.

So, if we are going to be responsible in this body, there are questions we really need to ask if we are going to formulate a strategy and work with this administration for a winning strategy in Iraq. The questions that need to be asked are these: What are the benchmarks for its Iraqi military? What are the benchmarks for the Iraqi Government, for reconciliation and for internal reform in Iraq? What are the rules of engagement for our troops who will be going over there to assist in this Baghdad security operation? What resources are available? What manpower and personnel are available to our State Department and USAID to help and assist in the reform and reconciliation process so that we can create the groundwork for diplomatic resolution? And as we look at a clear holding bill, who is going to do the holding? Who is going to do the building? These are questions that a responsible Congress should be asking, not whether or not to support this surge.

The American people voted for change. This resolution offers nothing to shape a new strategy on how to move forward successfully in Iraq. The American people deserve more from Congress, and, by God, our troops deserve more from this Congress.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. BARRETT), a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, over the next 2 to 3 days, Members of Congress will come to the well and they will talk about the Iraq resolution. They will talk about troop levels and spending and funding and security, training, strategy, a lot of different things in a lot of different ways, with valid arguments on both sides. But I want to boil it down to something simple, something that I understand, something that means more to me than some of the things I mentioned.

There is a gentleman from my district, a Major Rick Simmons, a native of Pickens, South Carolina, an Eagle Scout, a Citadel grad. From time to time he has written me letters concerning different issues in Iraq. He is in Fallujah right now.

He wrote me a letter dated 5 February, 2007. It is a rather lengthy letter, but I want to read you one sentence from this letter:

''This is not Bush's war, it is my war, and it is the war of every volunteer here because we know how high the stakes are for this country.'' ''My war.'' That is what he says. ''This is my war.''

Rick, first to you and all your comrades over there, I say thank you and God bless you. I pray for you every day. But I want to tell you something, son; it is my war too. It is my war and my children's war and my children's children's war.

This is our war, ladies and gentlemen. This is the greatest enemy that we have ever faced in my lifetime, Mr.

Speaker. And when I raised my right hand and put my left hand on the Bible, it was to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies. And it was to protect the protectors, the protectors of liberty, the protectors of democracy, the protectors of freedom. And if it takes a troop surge and a funding stream that is guaranteed, I will do everything I can to ensure the protectors have everything they need.

There is only one way out of Iraq, Mr. Speaker. There is only one way out of this war. Victory. Victory. I urge my colleagues to do the right thing and I urge them to vote against this resolution.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5½ minutes to a new member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, my neighbor from Northern California, Ms. LYNN WOOLSEY.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I am a proud member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, I am a member of the Progressive Caucus and the Out of Iraq Caucus, and I have been working to bring our troops home since before we sent them there.

Mr. Speaker, the decision to send more brave Americans into the Iraq grinder is an act of staggering arrogance for the President. Nearly two-thirds of our people think this is a deeply flawed, tragically misguided policy. They get it, Mr. Speaker. They can see that more troops won't stop the sectarian violence, because it is our very military presence that ignited this sectarian violence in the first place.

The human cost in Iraq has been devastating. By some estimates, several hundred thousand Iraq citizens have died, died for the cause of their own so-called liberation. No wonder a majority of Iraqis want the occupation to end.

As the late columnist Molly Ivins put it, ''Iraq is clearly hubris carried to the point of insanity. It is damn hard to convince people you're killing them for their own good.''

I hope that an overwhelming vote in favor of this resolution will compel the President to rethink his Iraq policy. But, if not, this body will have no choice but to take further steps. Ultimately we must do more than send a message. We must send a convoy of military planes to bring our troops home.

Together with my colleagues, Congresswomen LEE and WATERS, I have offered a plan to end the war once and for all. Our bill is H.R. 508, the Bring Our Troops Home and Iraq Sovereignty Restoration Act. H.R. 508 would complete a fully funded military withdrawal from Iraq within 6 months of enactment, because our military and their families have given enough for this policy that is only increasing the terrorist threat and doing damage to our national security. The bill would accelerate the training of Iraqi Security Forces during that 6-month period. And because Iraq is not yet ready to defend its people against thugs, insurgents and militias, our bill calls for an international stabilization force to help keep the peace in Iraq. But it would stay only for 2 more years and would deploy only at the request of the Iraqi Government.

Because we have already poured enough of the people's money down this sinkhole, H.R. 508 would prohibit any further funding to deploy U.S. troops, but would provide the resources for a safe withdrawal of all of our U.S. military personnel and contractors.

The proposal would also provide for humanitarian aid and major investments to rebuild Iraq's physical and economic infrastructure, because taking our troops out of Iraq doesn't mean abandoning Iraq.

□ 1630

We can and we must go from military occupier to reconstruction partner.

Our proposal expressly prohibits the construction of U.S. military bases in Iraq because it is that kind of permanent occupation that fuels the rage and anti-American jihadists in the Middle East.

Iraq should belong to the Iraqis, and that includes Iraq's resources. So under the terms of our bill, the United States would forfeit any proprietary claim to Iraqi oil.

Finally, H.R. 508 guarantees full health care funding, including mental health benefits, for U.S. veterans in military operations in Iraq and other conflicts. It is the least, the very least, we can do to express our gratitude and repay their sacrifices.

Mr. Speaker, we must never, ever forget what war does to bodies, to minds, to families, to communities and to the human soul. The victims of war are not pieces to be moved around on a chess board. They are our fellow citizens in a global village that gets smaller every day. They are our brothers. They are our sisters. They are God's children and have as much right to human dignity as you or I.

The one thing I desperately hope we have learned from the Iraq nightmare is that we must find more sensible, humane ways to keep America safe and resolve global conflict because, if we do not, given the kinds of weapons that are available today, I fear that we are putting the entire planet on a path toward destruction.

I fear most of all for our children. ''War,'' said Martin Luther King, Jr., ''is a poor chisel to carve out tomorrow.'' Mr. Speaker, tomorrow belongs to our children. So, for their sake, we must find alternatives to war. We must protect America by relying not on our basest impulses, but on the most honorable and humane of American values, our love of freedom, our desire for peace, our capacity for global leadership, and our compassion for the people of the world.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5½ minutes to my friend from Georgia, a new member of the Foreign Affairs Committee (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. It is indeed an honor to stand before this House as a very proud member of our Foreign Affairs Committee under our distinguished Chairman LANTOS and also to stand as our co-chair of our Democratic Group on National Security, as well as a voting member of the NATO parliament.

I have been to Iraq. I have been to Afghanistan, been to Pakistan, been to Kuwait. I have been there with our soldiers and our generals, and what I am about to say is based upon my experience in this whole arena.

Now, a lot has been said and I think it has been misguided, very unfortunate. So allow me, if I may, to state for the record exactly what this resolution does.

There has been talk up here about this resolution is here to cut funds. Nothing could be further from the truth. There is no Democrat in this Congress who would dare cut the funds from our soldiers who are in harm's way, and any Member that continues to say that is doing a disservice to this Congress and to the people of the United States.

This resolution does not say we are pulling out troops. We know the situation in the Middle East. We know this region is vital to our interests. The issue here is not pulling out troops. The issue here is a vote, up or down, on a policy that says two things, 57 words. Allow me to read them to you.

It says that the ''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.''

Then it says: ''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 it says. Those two things. Let us not mislead the American public anymore, certainly not on what we are going to vote on here today. I stand as a proud member who has cosponsored, who supports this resolution 100 percent because of four important reasons.

The first reason is that this 21,500-man escalation, number one, is deceiving in and of itself, when we know from the CBO account that it is not 21,500. It is more like 48,000 when you put the support troops involved. I am here to tell you, this is a dangerous strain on an already overstrained military.

Let me share with you what the National Security Advisory Group is saying. It says this: nearly all of the available combat units in the U.S. Army, Army National Guard, Marine Corps, have been used in the current operations. Every available combat brigade from the active duty Army has already been to Afghanistan or Iraq at least for a 12-month tour, and most are now in

their second or third tours of duty. There is a strain here, and some are on their fourth tours of duty.

Approximately 95 percent of the Army National Guard's combat battalions and special operations units have been mobilized since 9/11, and there is very little available combat capacity remaining in the Army National Guard.

All active duty Marine units are being used on a dangerously tight rotation schedule, but here is another.

We often forget that these are soldiers with families, with mothers, with fathers who are out there, separated from their children. Listen to this. This is why we are against this 21,500, or 48,000, surge. Between 2001 and 2004, divorce rates among active duty Army officers have tripled, and rates among Army enlisted soldiers have gone up.

Let me conclude by saying this: on the bleached bones of many great past nations and civilizations are written those pathetic words, ''too late.'' They moved too late. The American people are watching us and they are hoping and they are praying that we not move too late, and let us get our young men and women out of this crossfire of a civil war.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. MYRICK), the Chair of the Congressional Anti-Terrorism Caucus.

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, Iraq is just one battlefield in this multigenerational struggle against radical Islamist jihadists, but it is a very important battlefield.

This is the beginning stage of a multigenerational worldwide struggle that will last throughout our lives and likely our children's lives.

It is hard to accept that the safety and security that most Americans felt in the 1980s and the 1990s was just a smokescreen while the Islamist extremists planned and carried out a one-sided war in other parts of the world.

On September 11, we saw the unthinkable: airplanes flown into buildings, thousands of innocent people killed, and the killers claiming that this was done because God desired it. Some people still do not understand how anyone could rationalize such disgusting acts.

For the past few years, and specifically in the past month, I have joined with some of my colleagues to learn about the true nature of the threat that we face from this jihadist ideology. This ideology is preached by the likes of Osama bin Laden, Moqtada al-Sadr, Hassan Nasrallah, and the ayatollahs in Iran.

Our presence in Iraq did not make us vulnerable to these killers. There were many previous worldwide attacks before America was attacked on September 11 and before we entered Iraq.

We face this threat because we refuse to succumb to live in a world where women cannot speak, as I speak now, without risk of death. We face this threat because we seek a world where people of all religions and races and sexes are entitled to the same rights. We cannot retreat.

If we pull out, there is no doubt that Iraq will become a safe haven for al Qaeda, Hezbollah and other terrorist groups to plan and carry out attacks on unbelievers or infidels. How do I know this? Because they tell us. They told us before 9/11, but we did not pay attention. They tell us all the time that they will not stop until all lands from India to Morocco and Spain to Russia are governed by radical Islamic law.

In 1938, Adolf Hitler told us what he was going to do, and we refused to pay attention. We cannot afford to repeat that historical mistake.

This is not a Democrat and Republican issue. Our security is an American issue, and I hope we are going to start to act as Americans, like the American people expect us and want us to do.

We must understand that we are fighting the first battles of a war against radical Islamist ideology that will be waged for the next 50, maybe 100 years.

Mistakes have been made and more mistakes will be made in the future. War is never easy; nor is it predictable. But if the people of the United States understand the true nature of the threat that we all face and Congress realizes that this war against jihadism will be fought in various forms around the world for at least the next 50 years, then we can make informed policy decisions that will help us in the future.

We must plan now for the future. We need to unite as a country behind this struggle against radical Islamic jihadists.

It is downright irresponsible to tell our troops that we support you but do not support the mission that you are fighting. What message does that send to our troops? It may score political points, but it hurts our troops who are over there fighting to defend us and our right to be here and speak freely.

This resolution does not deal with the larger problem of radical Islamic jihadists. So I strongly urge a ''no'' vote. We must support our troops in the field by supporting their mission. I support our troops wholeheartedly and believe their mission is just and necessary for the security interests of our country.

The world our children and grandchildren will inherit will be a better place because we had the courage to stand up today to fight these battles.

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS), a senior member of the Armed Services Committee.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Armed Services Committee and a member of the Board of Visitors of the United States Naval Academy, I rise today to express my unwavering support for the men and women who wear the uniform of our proud Nation and to make clear my staunch opposition to putting more of these men and women in harm's way in Iraq.

In the absence of a clear and meaningful strategy for success, it is time to extricate our troops out of this civil war and redeploy them out of the occupation of Iraq.

Back in 2002, I joined my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus in formulating a brief and succinct statement of principles regarding the Iraq war. Within these principles we expressed our clear opposition to a unilateral first strike action in the absence of clear evidence of an imminent threat to the United States. We further stated that any post-strike plan for maintaining stability in the region would be costly and would likely require a long-term commitment of our troops and treasure.

Today, it is very clear that the overthrow of Saddam Hussein has provoked sectarian divisions in the Iraqi society that are now expressed daily through violence on a staggering scale. It is also clear that our efforts to stabilize Iraq has, indeed, required the massive commitment of both lives and taxpayer dollars that we predicted.

What was not clear then but is clear now is that this administration had no definite plan for achieving our stated objectives in Iraq.

□ 1645

The administration had lofty rhetoric, but no strategy for creating a stable democracy that could be our partner in the war on terror.

Mr. Speaker, I raise these points to remind our Congress that from the beginning of this war there have been voices raised not in opposition to our President but in demand of a strategic approach to the growing threats we face, opposition and demand of an honest assessment of what could be accomplished with military force, and in demand of a clear purpose for why we send our troops into harm's way, our young men and women, the future of our Nation into situations where they may seriously be injured or killed. These are the very points that the resolution before us today demands.

I have no illusions about the danger inherent in the growing number of nations that may soon have the capability to construct weapons of mass destruction. To the contrary, I am convinced that maintaining the peace in this increasingly dangerous world has become a precondition to our continued survival.

The question is, given the situation in which we find ourselves in Iraq and given that our primary consideration must always be the security of our Nation, is sending additional troops into action most likely to stabilize that nation and the region? Is it the action most likely to cause Iraqis themselves to take the essentially political actions that only they can take to create a government capable of governing? Is

it the action likely to initiate the reconciliation between Sunni and Shiite, and the most recent National Intelligence Estimate says is critical to reducing the violence in Iraq?

I have seen no compelling evidence that the answer to any of these questions is ''yes,'' and many of our top military commanders have testified that sending 21,500 more United States forces to Iraq will not create a path to success.

Our forces have done all and more than we have asked them to do, and their families have been patiently sacrificing for 4 long years. The voters spoke in November, and we as Members of Congress of the United States do not have the right to remain silent. We cannot allow more to be asked of our soldiers now if their mission is not clear. The President has no plan likely to produce victory. And if, as the National Intelligence estimates suggest, the Iraqi forces and the government are not capable of being partners in their own reconstruction, I urge my colleagues to support our troops by supporting this resolution.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 5 minutes to Dr. WELDON of Florida, a member of the Appropriations Committee.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to address H. Con. Res. 63, disapproving of the decision of the President announced on January 10, 2007 to deploy 20,000 additional United States combat troops to Iraq.

This resolution essentially has, by my interpretation, three sections. It has the first section, which speaks in support of our troops; and then it has the second section, disapproving of the mission of 20,000 of the troops, which is a little bit of an inconsistency. We are saying we support the troops, but we don't support what you are trying to do.

But the most important part of this resolution is the third section shown here in white. There is nothing there. No plan.

So the authors of this resolution are essentially saying, we don't approve of the President's plan but we have no plan to deal with this challenge.

Ladies and gentlemen, we won the war in Iraq. What we are struggling to win now is the peace, establishing a peaceful government that can run this country. And we have very determined opponents seeking to make sure that chaos reigns in that country and we do what this resolution is leading us to do, which is essentially to leave.

Indeed, a senior member on that side of the aisle recently said in the press that, ''This is the bark, and the bite is coming.'' We supposedly support the troops, but what is next is no funding for the troops; that this Congress under this new leadership is going to exercise the power of the purse and cut off the flow of money.

But, ladies and gentlemen, my colleagues, this is not Vietnam. The war in Iraq in not going to go away. It is going to continue to be a problem. If we do withdraw our troops, as many in this room want us to do, the war on terror will continue.

We had a meeting today with the Ambassador from Jordan and the Ambassador from Egypt asking us not to withdraw; that we have to stay and persist and to try to establish a peaceful regime there. And they have their reasons, because they know this is a component of the war on terror. And the war on terror is a bad term; it is a war on radical fundamentalist jihadist Islam. And these jihadists are not going to stop coming at us. Indeed, since over the last 4 years, there have been attack after attack after attack in Bali, in Spain, in London, and they are going to keep coming after Western interests, because their goal and their agenda is to defeat the West, to defeat everything we stand for, and to ultimately establish a global fundamentalist Islamic regime.

I oppose this resolution. I am going to vote against it, and I encourage all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to do the same. The President's plan was recommended to us in the Iraq Study Group. It is amazing, many of the people who are saying they are going to vote for this supported the Iraq Study Group, and the Iraq Study Group recommended many of the components that are in the President's plan. We need to give this time to work. I know the American people are losing patience in this conflict, but I also know the stakes in this conflict are huge. And if we fail, the consequences could be huge to the region, they will be huge to the world, they will be huge to the American people and our children and our grandchildren.

So I strongly encourage a ''no'' vote on this resolution.

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5½ minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS), a senior member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, there is a concept from the people of West Africa called Sankofa. Literally translated, it means, ''It is not taboo to go back and fetch what you have forgot.''

Today, I want to use the premise of Sankofa and go back to some of the things that have occurred in the recent past with regard to Iraq so that we can learn from those lessons. In order to know where we need to go in Iraq, we have to evaluate what missteps have been made. That is our responsibility.

As we look at the last 5 years, the President has shown no accuracy on the challenges we face in Iraq. While our soldiers are courageously carrying out their orders, it has become apparent that military action to bring security to Iraq has reached its limitation, but our President insists on escalating military force.

I recall over 4 years ago hearing the President and the administration push for war with talk about a smoking gun that would come in the form of a mushroom cloud. The administration pulled on the emotions of the public while our Nation was still in shock from 9/11. Our President pushed for war with arrogance. ''Bring it on,'' he said. Coalition of the willing. Deck of cards. Freedom on the march. Mission accomplished. A plan for victory. Those are just some of the promises that have been made, but the administration has not been able to make good on those promises. It is fair to say that the President has defaulted on a promissory note.

Today, the question before us is can the President make good on the promise of security in Iraq with an escalation of the combat operation. All of the facts point to a strong ''no'' on that question.

After reviewing all of the facts, I saw that increased troops did not work in the spring of 2004, when troop levels were raised by thousands, but this did nothing to prevent the continued uprising, and April of 2004 was the second deadliest month for American forces. I have heard from generals, former Secretaries of State, and a bipartisan commission, all saying that escalation will not work. I am vehemently opposed to the escalation of the Iraq war and its open-ended commitment to a failing effort.

The President only accepts the advice of those who agree with him. After months of threats and a long military build-up, the United States attacked Iraq on March 19, 2003. The administration cut short U.N. arms inspections after a war-sanctioned resolution failed by a wide margin to gain support in the U.N. Security Council. Because the President could not get the U.N. or the world public in support of an invasion, he developed his unilateral preemptive doctrine.

The President has had generals tell him that this war should end and an escalation is not the answer; but when he gets advice he doesn't like, he simply fires the generals.

He has had a commission of experts advise him that a diplomatic political effort with all of Iraq's neighbors would be the most effective way to enable the U.S. to move its combat forces out of Iraq responsibly. However, the President did not like that advice, so he has chosen to simply ignore it.

When the President needed Congress to approve military action against Iraq, he cared about the perspective of the Congress then. As Congress begins to conduct oversight of the combat operation, the President wants to ignore the voices of dissent that come from this very body.

The cameras of history are rolling, and I hope and pray that at the end of this debate history can record that this body, starting with this resolution as a first step, has taken the appropriate action to end a morally wrong war that threatens to irreversibly stain the fabric of Congress if we do not exercise our constitutional authority and our

patriotic responsibility to balance the President's power.

To move forward and bring security to Iraq will require a bipartisan effort; it will require dialogue with Congress, dialogue between Congress and the administration, and dialogue and diplomacy between Iraq and all of its neighbors, as the Iraq Study Group wisely recommended. I am reaching across the aisle to my colleagues who also believe that military action has its limitations and a diplomatic offensive will bring a new and critical approach to secure Iraq.

This war has created deep humanitarian crisis in Iraq and a deep political crisis in the international system. Based on all that has happened leading up to this war and since its commencement, I cannot in good conscience support any escalation of military force in Iraq. But I plan to move forward with a strong push for a diplomatic effort to a problem that military action simply has not been able to solve.

Some ask what will happen in Iraq if we leave, but the more fundamental question is, what will happen to Iraq and the United States if we stay.

Dr. King, when speaking on Vietnam once said, ''A time comes when silence is betrayal. That time has come for us in relation to Vietnam.'' I echo those sentiments today. If Congress is silent while the President escalates the war in Iraq, we betray the American people, we betray the American soldiers, and we betray our constitutional responsibility.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5½ minutes to Mr. WOLF of Virginia, the ranking member of the State and Foreign Operations appropriations subcommittee.

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

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, we are a coequal branch of government. We do not work for the President or the administration; our job is to thoughtfully consider the issues before us, and to work with the President and with the administration. When we agree, it is our responsibility to work together for the best interests of our country; and where we cannot agree, however, we have an equal responsibility to make the case of why we disagree, and offer responsible and thoughtful alternatives. This resolution does not meet that test.

Some may say that is what we are doing in the House this week, disagreeing with the President and offering alternatives to the plan. This resolution fails. There is no plan offered.

Certainly the resolution before us includes a statement on which we all unequivocally agree: support for our brave men and women in the Armed Forces who are serving or who have served in Iraq.

□ 1700

Yet it also includes a statement of disapproval on the plan for Iraq offered by the President, a statement of disagreement to which, again, no alternative is offered. If we disagree with the President's plan, we should be offered reasoned, responsible alternatives. Instead of speaking today as Democrats or Republicans, we should come together, speaking as Americans who are seeking to answer the questions of how to move forward with success in Iraq.

Under the process today, we have only one option from the other side of the aisle. Is that what the American people expect from this House? No. The American people expect more. What is so amazing to me and in this Congress, you voted, this Congress voted and passed legislation last year that set our country on a course to find our way forward in Iraq. We have to look no farther than the report of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group to find a way forward, a new approach for Iraq, an approach that can bring us victory.

That is what we should be considering today. The recommendations of this distinguished group can bring us to a consensus and unite the Congress and the Nation on Iraq. I have been to Iraq three times, and since there, I continue to be deeply concerned.

So when I came back from my third trip, I offered this idea of an independent bipartisan commission we called fresh eyes on the target, and many Members on your side have been hailing it, yet you would not permit this to come up for a vote. Why would the Rules Committee shut down something that many of you ask for over and over? And there are Members on my side who don't like it, but it is the only balanced plan.

This legislation was set up, the 10 Members, bipartisan, five Republicans, five Democrats, Jim Baker, former Secretary of State; Lee Hamilton, who served here and has probably, quite frankly, forgotten more about this issue than any Members on your side or any Members on my side. A 10–0 decision, Leon Panetta, Ed Meese, whose son will serve with General Petraeus, they came up with this idea.

Yet the Rules Committee has shut this down not to permit a vote. They worked for more than 8 months supported by expert working groups, and senior military advisors in the areas of the economy, reconstruction, military, security and political development. The study's report was issued on December 6 and was hailed, but yet it is not permitted to come up for a vote.

Because of the importance of this group, I introduced a sense of Congress resolution in support of the recommendations. I asked the Rules Committee late last night to make my resolution in order to be considered during the debate. By doing so, I believe the House will be working to meet our responsibility as political leaders to seek a bipartisan consensus on the issue of war and peace.

But the request, not on my behalf, but on behalf of the American people, was turned down by the Rules Committee. Believe me, just for a second, maybe our side at times treated you wrong; but, believe me, you are getting to be a fast learner, because every time you seem to speak over here, the Republican side of the aisle is shut down from offering anything. This is the major issue of war and peace. Can you imagine if this were 1937 or 1938 or 1939 in the House of Parliament, and it was a resolution like this with Nazi Germany pouring over Europe, there would be some resolution, and everyone else, Churchill would have been shut out because he wanted to offer something constructive to make a difference.

Let me read from a letter penned by Jim Baker and Congressman Hamilton. There is no magic formula, they said, to solve the problem of Iraq. They basically say there are actions to take. The political leaders need to establish a bipartisan approach. They go on to make the report, the consensus report as to work that they have done. We recommend their report, and then they end by saying, ''Yet, U.S. foreign policy is doomed to failure—as is any course of action in Iraq—if not supported by a broad, sustained consensus.'' Then they go on to say how dangerous this is.

I ask you, why? Why couldn't we get a vote? Why couldn't the American people get a vote on something that many on your side may not like, but most do, and some on my side may not like, but most do, and I ask, this body ought to be voting on the Iraq Study Group to show the American people that we can be successful.

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN), a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and chairman of the Middle East Subcommittee.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, the coalition of the willing no longer is. If those who are no longer with us are against us, then we have lost the support and the admiration of the entire world. Those of us who came of age in the sixties believing that war is the ultimate breakdown of civilized process have done the unthinkable. We trusted our leadership when we should have questioned more.

We gave war a chance. We called upon our sons and daughters entering the prime of their young lives to step up, as had generations before them, to defend our freedom and our liberty against an Iraqi nuclear threat that did not exist. Our young people did not disappoint. They answered the call, have been fighting bravely and ferociously, putting their lives on the line every day for going on 4½ years.

They followed the orders of their officers right up to the Commander in Chief, and a grateful Nation, indeed, can ask no more. They did not disappoint. But it is we who let them down, tragically. We are reminded that the President is the Commander in Chief, and, indeed, he is. He sent them to fight and die in a war based on a

faulty and tortuously shifting premise. That we, in our positions of great trust, were misled and then misplaced our trust, does not excuse us.

He sent them to fight in a war without equipping them properly, and, as many generals believe initially, in insufficient numbers. With an abundance of prayers but inadequate plans, he sent them to fight international terrorists; but, instead, they are mired down, enmeshed, and are being slaughtered in someone else's sectarian and deadly civil war while the real terrorists prepare to retake Afghanistan.

Six years ago I voted with the President. He is our President. I did not want him to fail. His failure is our country's failure, and that is not acceptable. But here is where we are. We have lost the support of even those in the region who wanted Saddam's demise. We have not found the real terrorist, Osama bin Laden.

We have lost the support of the coalition of the willing. We have lost the support of our major allies. We have lost the prestige and admiration of the world. We have lost our credibility. We have lost the confidence of the American people. And we have lost over 3,000 precious lives of our bravest patriotic and promising young citizens. I voted with the President, and I was wrong, but I know I was wrong.

Grown-ups know that not every story has a happy ending regardless of good intentions. I am afraid this is one such story. I am afraid we have been led into a dead-end chasm from which there is no easy escape. Under the administration's leadership, everything has gone wrong. So what do we do now? Do we compound the disaster?

Perhaps we can learn from the great Iraqi poet, Omar Kyayyam, who in the Runaiyat wrote:

''The Moving Finger writes; and having writ,
Moves on; nor all your Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.''

Mr. Speaker, sending 20,000 additional troops is not a change of plans, it is merely an escalation. About one out of every 40 people we send to Iraq comes home in a casket. As an old math teacher, I can tell you by extrapolation that sending 20,000 more brings home 500 more dead. Little else changes.

This vote is, indeed, nonbinding. It is but the little boy in the crowd yelling, ''The emperor has no plan.'' Mr. Speaker, managing failure is unpleasant, but reinforcing it is criminal. Vote for the resolution so that we might help the President to avoid compounding this disaster.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, before I yield the 5 minutes to Mr. KING of Iowa, I would like to yield 15 seconds to Dr. GINGREY of Georgia to make some remarks.

Mr. GINGREY. I appreciate the gentlelady yielding.

Mr. Speaker, in response to our articulate friend from the State of New York, in regard to his comment, we have given war a chance. I would just say to him, you have. We have given war a chance, and we have not given victory a chance. This is not the time to pull the rug out from under those who have given their lives for their country.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield to Mr. KING of Iowa for 5 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I thank the gentlelady for yielding this time, and I appreciate very much the privilege to address you, Mr. Speaker, and the message that is coming, at least from our side of the aisle.

Mr. Speaker, I take us back to how do we identify this enemy that we are fighting? So I looked back through some of the history. In 1783, we made peace with Great Britain. The Revolutionary War, for combat purposes, was over. 1784, American merchant marines were being attacked in the Mediterranean by Barbary pirates.

In 1786, two diplomats, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, went over there to meet with them, and their idea was, we will be able to talk them into peace. Well, they talked to them all right, and the representative of the Barbary pirates, Mr. Sidi Haji Abdul Rahman Adja, responded to them, and this is in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD from Thomas Jefferson's report.

He asked him, why do you fight us, why do you attack us, why do you kill us? We have done nothing hostile towards you. His answer was, It is founded on the laws of our Prophet. It was written in the Koran. All nations who should not have acknowledged their authority were sinners, that it was their right and duty to make war upon them wherever they could be found and to make slaves of all they could not take as prisoners, and that every Muslim who should be slain in battle was sure to go to Paradise.

I take you back to today. We call our marines leathernecks. The reason for that is they wore a heavy leather collar to diminish the odds that they would be beheaded by this enemy who has, to this day, at least fairly recently, is still beheading marines. That is how this started.

Now, we are in a war. Von Clauswitz wrote that the object of war is to destroy the enemy's will and ability to conduct war. That means take away their munitions, take care of their armies, destroy them if you can. But in the end, whatever you might do doesn't break their will. You have to destroy their will. There is nothing going on on this side of the aisle that is diminishing the will of our enemy.

I will tell you, they will interpret it as encouraging the will of the enemy. I would point out this quote from Moqtada al Sadr. I heard this over al Jazeera TV when I was in the Middle East, actually in Kuwait City, waiting to go into Iraq the following morning, June 11, 2004. He said, ''If we keep attacking Americans, they will leave Iraq the same way they left Vietnam, the same way they left Lebanon, the same way they left Mogadishu.''

June 11. Where does he get this from? Well, he gets part of it from General Jeaps' book in Vietnam, the successful general there. They understand, as I heard to my own shock and sorrow, a World War II veteran said to me on one of the days we were honoring him, We haven't really won a war since World War II.

Think about what that means. Think about what that means to our enemies who are encouraged by this kind of debate and this kind of behavior. We must have the resolve. I point out also our casualties. We have lost 2,534 brave, patriotic Americans in hostile action. We have lost 591 to accidents within that theater.

The loss in American lives as a price to be ready between Desert Storm 1 and the beginnings of Operation Iraqi Freedom, that 10 years, was a little over 5,000, averaging 505 a year. There is a price to be ready, and they pay that price. Those lost lives are every bit as precious to us.

I listened to the debate over on this side of the aisle. A brave American, former admiral from Pennsylvania, stated that he believes his job now is to come in and help manage a successful conclusion to the war.

Well, I want to compliment Judge Louie Gohmert, who had the urge from the bench, to legislate from the bench, and realized that his constitutional responsibility, if he wants to legislate, is to run for Congress. So now we have Representative GOHMERT in Congress actually legislating instead of legislating from the bench.

I would submit my question to the gentleman from Pennsylvania: Do you really think your job is to come here and micromanage the war? Do you really think that is constitutional? Regardless of that question, do you think it is wise?

How would you like it if Congress made a decision that you really only needed one destroyer in your task force, or you get along without the submarine or maybe you only needed half the supplies on your supply ship?

□ 1715

That would be micromanagement that I think he would raise a powerful objection to. And so I would point out that here on the floor of this Congress when we had Nouri al-Maliki, the Prime Minister of Iraq, speaking from that very podium behind me, July 26, 2006, a short half a year ago, he said, ''The fate of our country and yours is tied. Should democracy be allowed to fail in Iraq and terror permitted to triumph, then the war on terror will never be won elsewhere.''

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to be here and to be part of this debate. I wanted

to congratulate the bipartisan way in which this resolution was brought before this House with two Members of the Armed Services Committee, the chairman, IKE SKELTON from Missouri, and Republican Member JONES from North Carolina, and also Chairman LANTOS of the Foreign Affairs Committee. I congratulate them in their leadership.

At a recent send-off of troops being redeployed from my home district in Missouri, I told the families that I would work in Congress to bring their loved ones home safe, sound and soon. However, this proposed military escalation flies in the face of that intention.

As we enter the fifth year of this mismanaged war in Iraq, with an ill-defined plan, it is irresponsible to think that an escalation is in the best interests of our troops. The Bush escalation plan is yet another indication that the President has failed to listen to the American public, military experts, the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, and Democrat and Republican Members in this Congress.

Even General Colin Powell, the former Secretary of State, said, I am not persuaded that any surge of troops in Baghdad for the purposes of suppressing this communitarian violence, this civil war will work.

It is my solemn responsibility to act on behalf of Missouri constituents and their overwhelming desire for change. I am proud to see the new Congress has begun to systematically analyze the President's proposal regarding the war in Iraq.

Since the beginning of the year, we have already held 52 hearings in this Congress about the war in Iraq. Evidence this new Democratic-led Congress is exercising real oversight and demanding accountability on the Iraq war. We will continue to ask the tough questions about the President's plan, continue to insist on a new direction while always putting our troops first.

We have the best military in the world, and we owe our troops a clear mission. Our men and women in uniform have done their job two and three times over, and our civilian leadership must provide a clear, achievable objective so they can come home soon.

This Congress has a grave duty to listen and take action. Recently, the mother of a young soldier being deployed back to Iraq told me, Congressman CARNAHAN, I am one of those mothers who is against the war in Iraq, but my son volunteered to serve his country. Please be sure they get the support and equipment they need to come home quickly and safely.

That mother's heartfelt request is a powerful example of our national unity and resolve to support our troops and oppose this escalation policy that is not making the Iraq Government more self-reliant. In fact, it is using us further as a crutch.

It is not making the Middle East region more stable. In fact, many of our military leaders say our very presence there is fueling the insurgency, and it is not making our country safer. Today, the House begins a detailed deliberation on House Concurrent Resolution 63, which is only the beginning of this Congress's oversight of the President's strategy in Iraq.

This straight-forward resolution plainly expresses our support for the brave men and women who are currently serving or who have served in the Armed Forces. In my home State of Missouri, over 27,000 men and women have been deployed to serve in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraq Freedom since September 2001.

It is our duty as Members of Congress to ensure they have the necessary training, equipment, resources and support while in harm's way and when they return home.

When debate concludes this week, it is my firm hope that the result will be a bipartisan vote reflecting both our unwavering support of our troops and the reality that a fourth U.S. escalation is the wrong direction for our country.

As the new majority, we have the opportunity to develop a comprehensive and commonsense solution to enable us to protect our troops, maintain our obligation, and end this conflict as quickly as possible. We stand ready to provide real peace of mind for the American people by securing our homeland and changing course in Iraq.

Great change is possible when this Congress acts in unison with the American public. In the weeks and months ahead, this Congress will act in a bipartisan way to carefully and thoroughly examine the President's proposals and pass decisions through hearings, debate and oversight using all tools available to change the direction of this war.

Most importantly, we will continue to support our troops in hopes of de-escalation of the war and escalation of the political solution for Iraq. Working together, Mr. Speaker, great change is possible.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5½ minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SHADEGG), a member of the Anti-Terrorism Caucus.

Mr. SHADEGG. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding. I rise in opposition to House Concurrent Resolution 63, the resolution that calls on us to disapprove of the increase in troops in Iraq. I rise to oppose it, and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to carefully reflect on what we are doing.

This debate may benefit the American people. This resolution will undoubtedly harm America and harm our troops. Every American wants our troops home. Every American wants this war over. But it is not that easy. You cannot just wish this war would end and believe it will go away as a problem for America. Life is never that easy.

Let us begin with the text of the resolution. Make no mistake about it, it is very brief, and all of us should have read it. It is two sentences long. It essentially says: stay the course. A resolution which says, we oppose increasing troops, but we support our current troops is a resolution that says, stay the course.

It is not a resolution that says withdraw. That might be a morally defensible position, because perhaps we should withdraw, at least some believe. It is not a resolution that says, put in more troops. It is a resolution that says, adding more troops is wrong, but we support those that are there.

That is a resolution to stay the course. I would suggest no American believes we should stay the course. I would suggest that the RAND study and the Army's manual on counterinsurgency both suggest that staying the course is wrong. Indeed, it is a recipe for failure. Both RAND and our own counterinsurgency manual say, if anything, we should have between 400,000 and 450,000 troops there.

So why would we support staying the course? Now, we all know that many of us, and I included, wanted a change in strategy in Iraq. My colleagues on the other side called for a change in strategy. This surge is the change in strategy.

Indeed, and I am mystified, and I am glad some of my colleagues today have made the point, this is the change in strategy, at least one of them, recommended by the Iraq Study Group. I thought my colleagues on the other side supported that. It seems to me that there is also an important flaw in this debate.

My colleagues say that this is a nonbinding resolution. I would suggest to you that when you are at war, and when the United States Congress acts with regard to that war, it is not nonbinding. The world is watching. The world is watching every word that is said on this floor.

I believe we have a moral duty to finish what we began. Earlier on the floor, my colleagues have mentioned that many leaders in the region, in the Middle East, have begged us not to leave. They have begged us to stay at least long enough to stand up the Iraqi Government so that it can defend itself. They have implored us not to leave.

Let me give you their words. They have said, because they opposed our originally going in, the coalition came uninvited, it should not leave uninvited. They are making the point that we have a duty to finish this effort. They have talked about analogies. They pointed out that a heart surgeon who begins a heart surgery is not entitled, halfway through the surgery, to say, you know what, I am tired, I want to leave.

On the other side of the aisle many of my colleagues have said this is hard. Indeed, it is hard. But that is not a justification for leaving. The best analogy I heard was one that said, this is like stepping on a land mine, where you put your foot on it, but you know that if

you lift your foot off it will blow up. We have put our foot on a land mine in Iraq. But if we lift our foot off before the Iraqi Government can defend itself, it will blow us up, and it will blow them up.

You cannot wish this war away. And so I would suggest this resolution is binding. The world is watching. Our allies, if we abandon Iraq, will never trust us again. But why do they want a nonbinding resolution? Because they do not want to accept responsibility.

The President does not have that choice. He has responsibility. Those who oppose this war have a duty to take a stand, one side or the other. If you oppose the war, then seek withdrawal. If you do not, then do not undermine our troops. Because make no mistake, this nonbinding resolution hurts our troops.

Let me just conclude with this point. In the midst of an ongoing war, it is impossible to support the troops and oppose the mission. Let me make that clear. The world is watching. Our enemies, al Qaeda, and the radical jihadists who hate us and want to kill us are watching. If we tell them we oppose the mission, we are encouraging them. They have guns, rockets, and missiles pointed at our troops. This resolution is a grave error. I urge my colleagues to oppose it.

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5½ minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HINOJOSA), who is a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and chairman of the Higher Education Committee.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 63. The State of Texas has a proud history of military service. Thousands of Texans have fought with distinction in every conflict this country has entered.

Hundreds of my constituents are currently serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. They are willing to leave behind their families and friends to risk their lives in service to their country. Many will never return home. Many will come home maimed and injured.

I want to read the names of the young people from the 15th District of Texas who have given their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan: Darrell Shipp, Benito Ramirez, Javier Marin, Julio Alvarez, Gary Moore, Tomas Garces, Mark Anthony Zapata, Juan Calderon, Christopher Ramirez, Dustin Sekula, Juan Garza, James Kesinger, Mitchell Mutz, John Russell, Quinton Gertson, Christopher Kilpatrick, Tina Priest, and Daniel Galvan.

I know how much their families and friends have grieved at their loss. I have spoken to their parents and spouses and have attended many of their funerals. We are all so very proud of their military service and know they did their very best.

However, as an elected Representative of the United States Government, I have a responsibility to make sure that the sacrifices of these brave men and women were not in vain.

□ 1730

I have a responsibility to see that more Americans will not be sacrificed unnecessarily. I have supported the funding to give our military the body armor, the equipment and training they need, and I will continue to see that they have whatever they need. But I will not support an administration policy that puts more troops in harm's way, with no apparent end in sight and with no clear goals on how to win the fight.

In 2002, I stood in this well and I spoke on that resolution giving the President permission to go to war, and I voted against going to war with Iraq because I didn't believe we had all the information we needed on Iraq's nuclear capabilities and weapons of mass destruction and its support for terrorism. I was concerned that the President had not convinced the 39 countries who had supported us in the previous war with Iraq. I was disappointed that the President did not have an exit plan after we defeated Iraq. And I was disappointed that the President would not put in the budget what we were going to spend on that war.

No one denies that Saddam Hussein was a cruel dictator who brutally oppressed his people, and I am glad that the Iraqis are free of this tyranny. But the Bush administration did not have accurate information then, and I don't believe they have an accurate picture of the situation today.

Our troops are now caught in the middle of a civil war between religious groups that have hated each other for centuries. There is no defined enemy and no clear battle lines.

The task of imposing and growing democracy in a place where it has never been is not the job of our military. It must come from the political will of the Iraqi people. Only the Iraqis can decide whether they want to put aside centuries of discord and come together to create a stable, democratic country where the rights of every group is recognized. The Iraqi Government must take responsibility for its own future.

After more than 4 years, the U.S. is not safer because of our efforts in Iraq. By dividing our resources, we have allowed the Taliban to reemerge in Afghanistan and have given al Qaeda a strong foothold that it never had before in Iraq. Syria and Iran have gained influence throughout the entire region.

We have spent hundreds of billions of dollars at the expense of critical programs at home like education, health care and homeland security. Our military is severely strained with troops on their third and fourth tours of Iraq. Units are being deployed, either understaffed or with new personnel, that has decreased unit cohesiveness, proficiency and morale. Equipment is worn out and our readiness to deal with an additional crisis is in jeopardy.

Unfortunately, most of his generals disagree. The distinguished members of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group disagree, and more importantly, the American people disagree.

I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting H. Con. Res. 63 and opposing the President's decision to send more troops to Iraq.

We have spent hundreds of billions of dollars at the expense of critical programs at home like education, health care and Homeland Security. Our military is severely strained with troops on their third and fourth tours of Iraq. Units are being deployed either understaffed or with new personnel that has decreased unit cohesiveness, proficiency, and morale. Equipment is worn out and our readiness to deal with an additional crisis is in jeopardy.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, before I turn over our segment of the debate to Mr. HOEKSTRA of the Intelligence Committee, I would like to recognize our last speaker for our segment, Mr. SHUSTER of Pennsylvania, a member of the Anti-Terrorism Caucus, for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, ''So they go on in strange paradox, decided only to be undecided, resolved to be irresolute, adamant for drift, solid for fluidity, all-powerful to be impotent.'' The words of Winston Churchill on the eve of World War II ring true today as clearly as they did decades ago describing our state of affairs.

I am disappointed with my colleagues in the majority. They spent the time and effort solidifying their caucus against the war in Iraq. They devised a number of plans to withdraw our troops. They made Iraq the focus of their agenda in November and not staying the course their slogan. However, they stand today, as Churchill said, resolved to be irresolute in their position on Iraq.

The resolution we debate in the House today is based on flawed logic. The resolution states that Congress supports the efforts of our troops in mind but not in body. The fact is, this resolution is framed upon the idea that the current state of affairs in Iraq is beyond recovery and should be abandoned.

Instead of offering any real alternatives, the Democrats have drafted a nonbinding resolution that rejects the President's plan to reinforce our troops and give the Iraqi Security Forces the assistance they need. This resolution does not bring us one step closer to victory. This resolution does nothing more than reinforce the status quo.

This resolution does show the American people that yet again, the Democrats, for all of their rhetoric, have no plan, no alternative to fight the threat of Islamic jihad. They instead have chosen, amazingly, to simply stay the course.

I will be the first to admit that, despite the outstanding jobs that our troops on the ground have done, progress in the war is slow and frustrating. We overthrew a violent despot, only to see a new and dangerous threat emerge. But we can not be fooled into thinking that by leaving Iraq this threat will melt away.

By the very admission of the Islamic fundamentalists we fight, this war is

only part of a larger power play to consolidate power and form a jihadist Islamic state in the center of the Middle East.

In a speech released this month, Ahman Zawahiri praised al Qaeda's master plan for Iraq. He asked Allah to consolidate Iraq so that it unites all our Muslim brothers in Iraq and sets up an Islamic state which will proceed to liberate Jerusalem and take steps towards reestablishment of the Caliphate.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is a grave mistake for us to not take our enemy at their word. The jihadists do not want peace. They want capitulation. We ignored their threats in the 1980s and they bombed our Marine barracks in Beirut. We ignored their rhetoric in the nineties and they bombed the World Trade Center and our embassies in Africa. We ignored their threats in the days leading up to September 11, and our world was changed forever.

Democratic Presidential Candidate John Edwards described this resolution best when he compared it to a child standing in a corner, stomping his feet. This resolution may draw headlines, but it will not change a thing.

We have one Commander in Chief, not 435 separate executives. What the Congress does have is the power of the purse and the ability to cut off the funding for the war. Let's be honest. This resolution is the first step in that direction.

If cutting off funding is the Democrats' plan, and I believe it is, then let them state it openly. They are no longer the voice of the opposition in Congress. They are the majority, and they have an obligation to govern. It is time for them to create a plan, a real course of success. The American people are waiting.

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5½ minutes to the Representative from California, DIANE WATSON, senior member of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, the escalation of the conflict in Iraq is an exercise in futility. It has been 3 years now since the President declared that our original mission was accomplished in Iraq.

And then the President let victory escape from our grasp. He confused the toppling of Saddam Hussein with accomplishing the mission.

But there is a more important question being raised here on the House floor. It is an issue which has confused our mission in Iraq from the beginning. And it is the preposterous argument that Iraq is part of the war against al Qaeda.

The al Qaeda attack on America killed almost 3,000 innocent Americans in New York, at the Pentagon, and in a field outside of Shanksville, Pennsylvania. We pursued al Qaeda into Afghanistan, dislodged the Taliban and cornered Osama bin Laden at Tora Bora. We had al Qaeda on the run. We had the world united against terror and in favor of freedom and democracy.

But then the President switched his focus at a critical time. He dismissed the factors which had brought success in Afghanistan, a just cause, clear evidence, and a community of nations, and instead pursued his Iraqi adventure based on faulty intelligence and employing a strategy rejected by his own Army Chief of Staff and numerous other generals.

Thus, the President gave al Qaeda breathing room; he let them regroup, because he lost focus on the war on al Qaeda, to wage war on Iraq. Meanwhile, in Afghanistan, al Qaeda and the Taliban regrouped.

Iraq is not the central front in the war on al Qaeda. Iraq is a distraction from the war on al Qaeda. Each day we spend in Iraq is a day we are not working to bring the perpetrators of 9/11 to justice.

Whatever happened to Osama bin Laden? Why aren't we looking for him?

We have a direct connection to 9/11. The families of those who perished on 9/11 are still waiting for an answer.

This escalation is an appalling display of our weakness. We are sending only 21,000 combat troops to Iraq because, after stretching our military thin for 4 years, that is all the troops we have available at the moment.

The President cannot tell us what victory is or when he hopes to achieve it. What is really our goal in Iraq? What are we trying to achieve? And are we going to leave this mess for the next President?

Today, Iraq is consumed by civil war. Her neighbors, including our allies, Jordan, Kuwait and Turkey, are overwhelmed with refugees, and Iran is strengthened and emboldened. If that is not already destabilized, then the word truly has no meaning.

The occupation itself is what is destabilizing Iraq. The occupation is placing Americans on the killing fields. The occupation undermines American prestige and authority, and the occupation in Iraq makes it harder to defeat al Qaeda.

The military battle is over. Our only hope is to change course, to acknowledge the reality that we have lost the military struggle in Iraq. Only then can we reengage with a strategy to give us a political victory.

We must remove our forces and move forward with a political and diplomatic strategy to engage both our allies and our adversaries in the region. This will mean talking to Iran, not capitulating to Iran. Even at the height of the Cold War, Reagan was willing to talk to Moscow. Until we are willing to engage with Iran, our friends in the Middle East, who fear Iranian dominance as much as we do, will not believe we are serious about confronting the Iranian threats.

Last, and most appalling, is the desperation accusation that we are going to cut off funds for our troops. Simply not true.

This attack is especially galling when it has been a Republican Congress and a Republican President who, for 4 years, left our troops vulnerable, without proper equipment, without proper armor, and in an effort to fight this war on the cheap.

I will never vote to leave our troops without the support they need. But neither will I vote to continue down a path that is putting them at needless risk.

Vote for this bill.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 6 minutes to my colleague from Alabama, who recognizes the danger of believing that we can negotiate with al Qaeda and bin Laden, Mr. EVERETT.

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member of the Intelligence Committee, my friend from Michigan.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to H. Con. Res. 63, the Democrats' nonbinding resolution that does nothing to improve the outcome of the war, but does much to hurt the war against terrorism.

The resolution claims they support the troops. However, regardless of what the previous speaker said, they refuse to protect the money our troops must have while they are in harm's way.

□ 1745

If we wanted to have a meaningful debate on the real issues facing this country, we would take up Congressman SAM JOHNSON's bill that opposes any effort to cut off or restrict funding for our military.

But that is not the debate we are having today. Instead, we are debating a nonbinding resolution that, in my mind, can only hurt our troops who are on the battlefield as we speak, and this resolution can only give comfort to those who wish to kill Americans.

Making Iraq a secure place is difficult because of deep-seated religious and ethnic divisions. This is highlighted by the murderous acts of Saddam's dictatorship that killed so many thousands. In addition, al Qaeda and local terrorists along with hostile foreign governments, including Iran, have both encouraged and funded the current violence in the hopes that Iraq will not follow the path to democracy. They must not be allowed to succeed.

Any American lives lost in the defense of our Nation is one too many. Yet we must not turn from our task of defeating terrorism before the job is done. President Bush is the Commander in Chief and intends to reinforce American troop strength by 21,000 soldiers to help Iraq's new government finally control violence and restore order. While I believe the decision to increase troop strength in Iraq could have been made much sooner and in greater numbers, it today presents the only viable option to bringing order to the country and laying the foundation for Iraqi Government control of that nation's security.

Iraq's government is taking new steps to control the violence from all ethnic groups and made it clear that

our abandoning them at this stage would guarantee failure for democracy in Iraq. And it would ensure a tremendous setback in America's battle to deny terrorism a foothold and give them more chances to continue to kill Americans. Pulling back now with no viable plan to stabilize Iraq would be a disastrous action. This sentiment was expressed in the most recent National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the NIE is the intelligence community's most authoritative written judgments on national security issues and is designed to help us develop policies to protect U.S. national security interests. Specifically, this report states: ''Coalition capabilities, including force levels, resources, and operations, remain an essential stabilizing element in Iraq.'' In addition, it goes on to say: ''If coalition forces were withdrawn rapidly during the term of this estimate, we judge that this almost certainly would lead to a significant increase in the scale and scope of sectarian conflict in Iraq, intensify Sunni resistance to the Iraqi Government, and have adverse consequences for national reconciliation.''

While America must not be in Iraq indefinitely, we should not leave without ensuring that the terrorists that are there are put down. To do otherwise would be terribly shortsighted and would ultimately embolden our terrorist enemies who have made no secret of their desire to continue to kill Americans.

As a member of the House Armed Services Committee and Intelligence Committee, I have monitored the developments in the war on terrorism, including those in Iraq. I met with President Bush in the White House to discuss the military mission in Iraq shortly after he outlined his strategy for Iraq in early January. We explored what would happen in Iraq, the Middle East, and America if we withdrew from the fight before Iraq's democratic government is strong enough to maintain the peace. Our conclusion was that Iraq would become a sanctuary for terrorists and a base from which they could launch future attacks against Americans.

Some Members have tried to claim that the war in Iraq has nothing to do with the war on terrorism. That is the only way they can justify this nonbinding resolution, and that is pure nonsense.

We have the greatest military on the face of the Earth, one that no other military dare stand before lest they be destroyed. The only thing that can defeat us is the lack of will. And may God help us if we lose the will to defend this great Nation against terrorism.

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from California, HILDA SOLIS, member of the Energy and Commerce Committee and Vice Chair of the Environment and Hazardous Materials Subcommittee.

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time.

I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 63.

I am a strong supporter of our service men and women and strongly committed to finding a reasonable and responsible resolution which includes a redeployment of our troops. However, a responsible resolution does not include the deployment of more of our brave service men and women to Iraq. Sixty-six percent of Americans oppose the President's escalation plan to send additional troops to Iraq. They believe, as I do, without a new policy to secure the peace and stabilize Iraq, further escalation will do nothing but unnecessarily risk the lives of more U.S. service men and women.

There are currently 135,000 U.S. troops courageously serving in Iraq. At the direction of our government, they left their fathers, mothers, brothers, children, and wives. This war is having, as you know, a significant impact on their families and our communities.

In the district that I represent, the 32nd Congressional District of California, we have lost 13 sons to combat. Note the photograph that I have here on display. This includes Lance Corporal Francisco Martinez from the city of Duarte in the San Gabriel Valley, who bravely served our country despite not even being a U.S. citizen. I was able to meet his parents. They were very humble individuals who spoke only Spanish and proudly stated that their son served their country with honor. It breaks my heart to think that this was only one servicemember, only one of the more than 3,000 families that have been through this since the war started almost 4 years ago.

The past 3 months, as you know, have been the deadliest months in the war in over 2 years. While Latinos make up 12 percent of the U.S. population, they make up 17 percent of the service men and women in combat in Iraq, and 11 percent of those have already been killed. U.S. casualties are now more than 3,100 and more than 23,400 service men and women have been wounded in action, and nearly half of those wounded will not be able to lead a normal life because of severe injuries, permanent disabilities, and post-traumatic stress syndrome. Yet many of these service men and women will return to Iraq for a second, third, and maybe even a fourth tour.

The President's proposal to escalate ignores the real needs of our troops and the grave reality of this situation. Three times in the past 2 years the number of U.S. troop levels have increased in Iraq. Three times this approach has failed. And during Operation Together Forward, additional troops were sent into Baghdad because of an increase in sectarian violence. U.S. military spokesman General William Caldwell stated that the increase was a failure and had ''not met our overall expectations of sustaining a reduction in the levels of violence.'' Even the commander of the U.S. Central Command in Iraq has testified that top military commanders in Iraq do not believe that increasing the number of troops is the right approach. He stated, ''I do not believe that more American troops right now is the solution to this problem. I believe that the troop levels need to stay where they are.''

Increasing the number of U.S. troops is not a solution. The increase does nothing to improve long-term security and end sectarian violence. Our country needs a policy to secure and stabilize Iraq and one that constructively engages in diplomacy and partners with our neighboring countries and the region to create a stable and peaceful nation, not a blank check to send more men and women into harm's way. We need a policy and a plan to put the welfare of our service men and women first so they can come home, rejoin their families, and receive the care they deserve. They should include adequate services for returning service men and women, including culturally competent care, mental health care for veterans, housing and education.

We need a plan to ensure that U.S. tax dollars are not going to war profiteering and fraud, such as the $1.4 billion that has been somehow charged by Halliburton. I strongly believe that this is possible, but it will require courage, cooperation, and leadership on the part of all my colleagues. Let me say to my colleagues that I support our troops and the war on terror. Unfortunately, the war in Iraq is not the war on terror.

Mr. Speaker, I will continue to support and protect our sons and daughters who are serving, as these young people have served us so well. I will do so by voting for this resolution and by supporting their redeployment.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I yield at this time 5 minutes to my colleague from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, the co-Chairs of the Iraq Study Group, former Secretary of State James Baker and former House Foreign Affairs Chairman Lee Hamilton, wrote late last year: ''There is no magic formula to solve the problems of Iraq. However, there are actions that can be taken to improve the situation and protect American interests.

''Many Americans are dissatisfied,'' they go on to say, ''not just with the situation in Iraq but with the state of our political debate regarding Iraq. Our political leaders must build a bipartisan approach to bring a responsible conclusion to what is now a lengthy and costly war. Our country deserves a debate that prizes substance over rhetoric and a policy that is adequately funded and sustainable. The President and Congress,'' Baker and Hamilton go on to say, ''must work together.''

''The President and Congress must work together.'' ''Our country deserves a debate that prizes substance over rhetoric.'' Good advice, especially when we are in the middle of a war to

help a suffering people living in a tortured land striving to matriculate from dictatorship to democracy.

Like many Americans, Mr. Speaker, I too have serious questions about this war, especially its cost in human life. I too am impatient and want our men and women brought safely home as quickly as possible.

But with so many Americans and Iraqis and coalition forces at risk, it is important to ask what message a nonbinding surge disapproval resolution with no force of law might have on a troop surge already under way and what message do we send to our troops, our allies, and our enemies. Will it demoralize even a little, maybe a lot, those brave Americans who have put their lives on the line so that others may be free? Will it undermine the resolve, commitment, and solidarity of those nations that have stood with us against the hate and murder of the extremists? And how will our enemies regard passage of this resolution? With celebration? Will they step up their already far too robust campaign of terrorism, murder, and suicide bombing?

If the Democratic leadership wants to stop the surge or the war itself, bring a measure to the floor to defund it. The debate on defunding the war and, most certainly, the vote would have predictable clear-cut consequences. The President can't spend money on a war he doesn't first get from Congress. But by offering what is essentially a sense of the House resolution, the weakest, least effective way of driving home a point because it compels nothing, I am concerned that the House this week may, unwittingly, significantly hurt the morale of our warfighters while empowering the hate mongers. Surely no one in this Chamber wants that.

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN), member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee and Vice Chair of the Subcommittee on Health.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for allowing me to speak.

I rise today in support of this resolution. The President's escalation, or surge, as he calls it, is not a strategy that will quell the violence in Iraq.

We have heard for too long that change in Iraq is just around the corner, and we continue to spend billions of dollars and have taken thousands of U.S. casualties.

I supported our goals to bring democracy to Iraq, voted for the Iraq resolution, and voted for the billions of dollars to support that effort. And I will not vote to cut funding for our troops while they are in the field in Iraq and Afghanistan.

□ 1800

They are doing their best with a very flawed plan, and that doesn't come from just GENE GREEN saying it. I heard it less than a year after we went there, from e-mails that parents forwarded me.

Our goals were great in Iraq. The plan was not. The administration's plan has not worked since the first year. It is time we send a strong message to the President that we no longer support the administration's strategy.

President Bush addressed the Nation on January 10 of this year to announce his plans to send an additional 21,500 soldiers and marines to Iraq. This move ignores advice from the military and has been tried before without success.

General John Abizaid, former commander of the Central Command, testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee on November 15, 2006, that he and General George Casey, the Corps Commander, and Lieutenant General Martin Dempsey all agreed that more troops were not needed. The White House is continuing with the same flawed strategy to pacify the country that has not worked, and adding another 20,000 troops will not make it work.

March 19 of this year will mark 4 years since we went into Iraq. May 1 will mark 4 years since the President declared ''mission accomplished.'' But we turn on the news today and still see headlines, ''Car Bombers Kill 60 in Baghdad,'' ''Four More American Soldiers Killed in Gunfight With Militia.''

We have made great strides in Iraq, but we are now trying to police a war between sectarian armies. Our troops have performed all that has been asked of them, and according to the National Security Council's analysis, we have achieved many of our initial objectives: removing Saddam Hussein from power, assisting Iraq with a constitution and free elections, and helping establish democratic institutions.

It is time for the Iraqis to take control of their own country and that we begin bringing our troops home. This is in the best interests of our military, the Iraqis and our national security.

Our forces cannot indefinitely sustain the demands we currently are placing on them. Joint Chiefs Chairman Peter Pace acknowledged last week when testifying before the House Armed Services Committee that nondeployed U.S. forces are not sufficiently equipped, echoing similar concerns expressed recently by Army Chief of Staff Peter Schoomaker and Lieutenant General Steven Blum, chief of the Pentagon's National Guard Bureau.

The Guard, nationwide, is only equipped to about 30 percent of their needs. Units are taking equipment with them into theatre and being forced to leave much of it for other units to use when they come home. It will cost about $25 billion to reequip the National Guard and Reserves to pre-Iraqi war levels.

We cannot continue to send troops to Iraq for 12-month deployments every other year and expect to maintain a well-equipped and experienced fighting force with high morale.

This resolution expresses the beliefs of many Members of this House that sending an additional 21,500 troops to Iraq is not in our Nation's interests and not a solution for the violence in Iraq. The solution is for the Iraqi Government, the elected government, to do what they need to do. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Madam Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to my colleague from California (Mr. ISSA), a member of the Intelligence Committee.

Mr. ISSA. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be modified at page 1, line 6, after the word ''Iraq'' to include ''personnel from the United States Intelligence Community who are serving or who have served bravely and honorably worldwide to counter radical jihadists.''

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. KAPTUR). The previous question has been ordered without amendment.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. ISSA. Madam Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state it.

Mr. ISSA. Madam Speaker, does that mean that unanimous consent cannot be offered?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The previous question has been ordered, to adoption of the concurrent resolution without intervening motion.

Mr. ISSA. Madam Speaker, further point of inquiry. My understanding is that a unanimous consent request is always in order separate from the rule. Is that not correct?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. That is not correct. Under the present circumstances the Chair is constrained not to entertain an amendment to the resolution.

Mr. ISSA. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, that makes it very clear that in fact even if there is no objection to including the brave men and women who operate, often without weapons, who operate behind enemy lines, who in fact are part of our Intelligence Community, they cannot be included in this resolution. It is a sad day when democracy does not even include that which there is no objection to from being considered.

Notwithstanding that, Madam Speaker, I think it is extremely important that we deal with the limited strict language we have been offered, and, in the spirit of that strict language, I must oppose it. I must oppose it because in fact on a strict basis this resolution, if heeded by the administration, says stay a failed course of action.

Madam Speaker, it is amazing that the election very clearly told us in November that the American people were not comfortable with the conduct of this war; that in fact on both sides of the aisle, people were calling for a bolder vision, a vision that was more aggressive diplomatically and militarily. In fact, two Presidential candidates, Senator HILLARY CLINTON and,

in fact, Senator MCCAIN, are and have been saying we should have had more troops early, we should have more troops now. It is amazing that in fact the one thing this resolution is saying is stay the course, make no changes.

Further, regardless of what my Democrat colleagues would say today, the next step after ''Mr. President, we will not send more troops,'' is, ''Mr. President, we will not send more tanks; Mr. President, we will not send further personnel and intellectual gatherers to understand our enemy; Mr. President, we won't send more translators; Mr. President, we cannot and will not support more body armor; Mr. President, we will not support this war on terror throughout the region.''

Those are the next steps, because you can't simply say, as this resolution tries to, stay the course. Do nothing. No increases, no decreases. Support the troops, but send them no more.

That makes as much sense as telling the people at the Alamo, stay the course. That wasn't the right solution at the Alamo. At the Alamo they should have either increased their forces so that they could have sustained the bombardment, or withdrawn.

We, in fact, are in a position where the President has made a multitude of new initiatives, one of which includes additional troops to help relieve those tired troops, to help bring the force level up to a level similar to exactly what Presidential candidates on both sides of the aisle were clamoring for just a few weeks ago and throughout the election.

Madam Speaker, one of the other things that just amazes me, today I took a little time and I checked out how many Members of Congress served in the military. It turns out it is less than one-third. I checked out how many Members went to Iraq in the previous Congress. It turns out less than one-third.

The fact is that we are considering a resolution as though we were General Petraeus, a man who was unanimously confirmed in the Senate just a few days ago, and deployed to support and defend our troops and this effort, who is solidly convinced that we have to do more and do it better and who is there to do it and was unanimously confirmed.

In closing, Madam Speaker, only here, with less than one-third of the Members having gone and seen what is going on in Iraq, less than one-third having served in the military, even at a minor level of lieutenant or captain or private, have the hubris to say that we have to not add, not subtract, just keep the exact same number that we and the American people believe is not getting the job done. That is exactly what this resolution is claiming to do. We are not given an alternative in any way, shape or form.

So, Madam Speaker, there is no choice on either side of the aisle. Whether you believe we should have more or we should have less, nobody believes that we should stay the exact course with no change, and that is what this is asking for.

So I call on my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to realize that in fact this resolution calls for the one thing that the American people most object to, and that is unchanged staying the course at this level. The American people called on us in November to do something bolder, to bring peace in the region, and I call on you to vote down this resolution just exactly to do that.

Mr. CARNAHAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee and chairman of the Subcommittee on Telecommunications.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

Madam Speaker, this debate marks the beginning of the end of the ill-conceived, mismanaged and ultimately failed war in Iraq. The war in Iraq was launched on the basis of false and misleading intelligence about a nonexistent nuclear weapons program. When the inspectors looked for nuclear weapons in all the most likely places, there was nothing there. When they looked in all the unlikely places, there was nothing there. When this was reported to the world, the world said ''don't invade.'' But when this was reported to the President of the United States, he chose to invade Iraq. In other words, the President did the opposite of what the evidence would dictate.

Here we are, 4 years after the invasion. The American people looked at the facts on the ground in Iraq and voted in November to de-escalate. The generals looked at the situation and said de-escalate. The Iraq Study Group analyzed our options and said we should de-escalate.

So what has the President of the United States decided? After all the evidence, he has chosen to escalate the war. Once again, our President is doing the opposite of what the evidence and common sense dictates.

Our troops continue to fight heroically to prevent Iraq from sliding into anarchy, but they are losing ground to a deep emotional cycle of religious strife and revenge that goes back 14 centuries. Our soldiers cannot be beaten on the military battlefield, but neither should they be faulted for failing to drain a political swamp.

The American people are now speaking out with one clear voice, in frustration and in anger, demanding change, demanding a new direction in Iraq. But the President isn't giving us a new direction. All he has to offer is more of the same, an escalation of our troop presence in Iraq. And this escalation ignores the recommendation of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, which said that all combat brigades not necessary for force protection could be out of Iraq by the beginning of 2008.

This week, we have a choice: We can say no to the President's failed war in Iraq, we can say no to the President's escalation, and we can say no to the unnecessary loss of another American soldier, marine or airman; or we can once again vote to stay the course and to continue on with this failed policy.

Many Americans have expressed frustration that the resolution we vote on this week is a nonbinding resolution, and I understand that frustration. On January 9, Senator KENNEDY and I introduced companion bills in the Senate and House to block President Bush's new plan to escalate troop levels in Iraq. Our legislation would prevent the obligation or expenditure of a single dollar to increase the number of troops in Iraq unless Congress affirmatively voted to do so.

But I would not dismiss this resolution's importance simply because it is nonbinding. Twenty-four years ago, this House took up another nonbinding resolution when it first debated my nuclear freeze resolution. We passed the nuclear freeze on the floor of the House. It was nonbinding and it never passed the Senate. But it nevertheless changed the course of this Nation's nuclear weapons policy. It did so because of the pressure it put on the White House to change, and it was followed by binding legislation that halted tests of anti-satellite weapons, cut funding for Star Wars and cut in half the plan size of the MX missile force.

That is why I fully understand why some Republican Members have simultaneously denounced this resolution as silly and unserious, and, at the same time, have tried to prevent its passage. Why are they afraid of a nonbinding resolution? Because this resolution exposes the lack of support in the Congress for the President's escalation scheme.

The administration's failed strategy has already ended any chance of a successful short-term outcome. The just-released, deeply pessimistic National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq simply confirms this situation.

We are in the middle of a sectarian religious civil war in Iraq, and the presence of our troops is preventing the Iraqi people from taking responsibility for their own security and for their own political solution that must follow.

This war should never have been fought, period. It was a mistake, the American people know it was a mistake, our military leaders know it was a mistake and a bipartisan majority in the United States Congress know it was a mistake.

□ 1815

Let's pass this resolution and send a strong signal to the Bush administration that it is time to stop the escalation, bring this war to an end, and bring our troops home. I urge adoption of this resolution.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Madam Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. KAPTUR). Please state your parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Does this resolution include any provisions expressing support for the members of the United States intelligence community serving inside of Iraq?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will not interpret the pending measure.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Further parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman may state his inquiry.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. When would it be appropriate to ask for unanimous consent to correct this oversight in this resolution that only addresses support for our armed services, but as the ranking member of the Intelligence Committee, I feel that it does a great injustice to the hundreds of people in the intelligence community who are not recognized for their service in Iraq?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would look to the majority manager of the concurrent resolution for any proposal to alter it.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Further parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman may state his inquiry.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Would it be appropriate at any time during the debate on this resolution to ask for unanimous consent to modify this resolution to address the significant oversight in the underlying resolution?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would only entertain such a request at the instance of the majority manager of the concurrent resolution.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. I thank the Chair.

With that, I would like to yield 5 minutes to my colleague from the State of Illinois (Mr. MANZULLO).

Mr. MANZULLO. Madam Speaker, I am privileged to be a member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Our chairman, Mr. LANTOS, has scheduled for March a hearing to discuss the different proposals relating to the handling of the war in Iraq. He has promised a lot of time for debate on all the different bills introduced in the House of Representatives, ranging from those that call for us to pull out of Iraq immediately, to those that demonstrate our presence there as part of a larger war, not against a nation, but against a movement, Islamic jihadis. They are everywhere and are responsible for attacks in India, Jordan, Israel, England, Egypt, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Spain, Turkey, the Gaza, Morocco, Pakistan and in the United States and Iraq.

Chairman LANTOS wants to make sure that all sides are heard, that all possible alternatives are given an airing. But that is what is missing in the bill that the Democratic majority has given us this evening: it can't be amended. Can you imagine three days of debate without the opportunity to amend a bill? That implies the Democratic leadership believes they have a monopoly on truth and fear input from other Members of Congress.

The bill we are debating today condemns the infusion of up to 21,000 more troops in Iraq. However, at a time when we should be excited about a new proposal calling for a major shift in our policy on Iraq, the bill we are debating condemns it. This proposal taps as its new leader Lieutenant General David Patraeus, who should be given an opportunity to succeed. Confirmed unanimously by the Senate, he has extensive knowledge of other wars and military conflicts and has resolved that America can achieve a favorable result in Iraq.

The new policy is a shift in the rules of engagement and calls upon the Iraqis themselves to step up in responsibility and achievement. A Washington Post story dated January 12 of this year with the byline, ''Withdrawals could start if Iraq plan works: Gates,'' repeats the words of Secretary of Defense Robert Gates testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee on January 11, Gates said: ''If these operations actually work, you can begin to see a lessening of the U.S. footprint both in Baghdad and Iraq itself. Then you could have a situation later this year where you could actually begin withdrawing.''

Isn't that what Americans want, a plan of action with a new focus, stabilizing Iraq and bringing our troops home? But that plan is not being debated today, and that is why I am going to vote against this resolution.

We live in extremely dangerous times. We know Iran is developing atomic weaponry. We also know that six other Arab nations are actively seeking atomic technology, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency. The stakes are onerous. That is why America's men and women in uniform not only deserve our support in the field, but also here in the House of Representatives, by allowing their opinions to be voiced through their Members of Congress. It is the least we can do for them.

Mr. CARNAHAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from California, MAXINE WATERS, Chair of the Out of Iraq Caucus.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I rise as Chair of the 76-member Out of Iraq Caucus, and I will be followed by many other members during this hour. I rise in support of our troops and in support of this resolution opposing the President's escalation of this war.

Madam Speaker, I support this resolution, hoping this will be a first step in ending this war and reuniting our troops with their families and loved ones. This is an unbinding resolution. The real test for this Congress is going to be whether or not we will continue to fund this war.

For nearly 4 years, our troops have served bravely and admirably in Iraq. Unfortunately, the President and his administration have decided to pursue a political agenda when it decided to push for an invasion of Iraq. The President ignored the advice of dozens of experts inside and outside the government about invading Iraq. For example, the administration ignored the intelligence community's opinions about the status of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs. The administration also ignored recommendations about the number of troops needed to secure Iraq following the fall of Saddam Hussein. In addition, the President and the administration ignored warnings about the difficulty and danger of occupying Iraq and that Iraq would likely break down into sectarian violence.

In short, the administration ignored everything that conflicted with its plan to invade Iraq. Unfortunately, no one has borne the burdens of the administration's Iraq narrow agenda more than our troops and their families. The decision to escalate the war, to send more than 21,000 additional troops to Iraq, will only increase the burden on our troops. Many of the troops serving in Iraq have served two, three, even four tours of duty. And of course the failed Iraq policy has resulted in the death of 3,109 U.S. troops, including 325 from my own State of California, and injury of more than 23,000 others.

Madam Speaker, many experts believe that the President's latest plan will not work, and early indications support that conclusion. About 5,000 troops have arrived in Baghdad since the President announced the plan in January, yet the violence and devastation in Iraq is increasing. It is estimated that more than 2,276 Iraqi civilians have died so far this year and that more than 1,000 Iraqi security forces and 33 U.S. servicemen have died in just the past week. We are sending thousands more troops to Iraq in what is now known to be a civil war. Sending more troops to Iraq is not the answer. The key to stabilization is bringing our troops home and renewing our commitment to diplomacy.

This resolution is the first step in reining in this President and his misguided policies. However, as many have noted, this is, again, an unbinding resolution. I look forward to working with my colleagues on the war, spending bills that will be considered in the coming months to enact meaningful changes to this failed policy and to finally bring our troops home. The future of the entire Middle East is at stake.

The President does not appear to understand or appreciate the situation in Iraq is deteriorating each day. We are losing; however, we can win. And we will win by using leadership to engage and unite rather than attempting to overpower and conquer. Who are we fighting? The Sunnis, the Kurds, the Shias? Who are the insurgents? Some Sunnis, some Shias, some Kurds? Who are the terrorists? Shias, Sunnis, Kurds, Syrians, Iranians? Who are we fighting? I don't think our soldiers know, and I am not so sure this administration has really given the kind of deep thought and consideration as to who we are really fighting.

Diplomacy is the only answer. Today, we must oppose this escalation. However, I have no choice but in the final analysis to oppose continued funding of the American taxpayers' dollars to the war giant whose appetite cannot be satisfied, but in the interest of peace, must be denied.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. At this time I would like to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Madam Speaker, I think we need to ask ourselves several questions: Does this resolution make America safer? Does this resolution send a message to our allies that draws them closer to us? Does this resolution encourage our troops, or does it discourage our troops?

We heard about de-escalation and when that might be appropriate, when it may not be. But I can tell you that this resolution does not accomplish de-escalation. In fact, it does not even support the troops on their way as we speak. It only supports the troops who have served or are currently serving.

Madam Speaker, in my conversations with constituents, with soldiers, with those closest to the situation, they see hope, they see hope in a change of strategy. We know that the status quo is not what we need to do, and that is why a change in strategy is certainly in order.

I don't pretend to be General Patraeus, and I hope that none of us pretend to know more about the situation than General Patraeus.

I am concerned when we hear that this resolution is the first step for cutting funding. Why don't we just put that resolution up right now? We can save a lot of time; we can send a more direct message. Is that the appropriate thing to do? I hope that you will join me in voting ''no'' on this resolution because I support our troops and their mission.

Mr. CARNAHAN. I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New York, JOSÉ SERRANO, member of the House Appropriations Committee.

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

Mr. SERRANO. This is, indeed, a very solemn occasion; and anyone watching this debate, either on television or in the gallery, should understand that we take very seriously what we say here today. We may disagree on what the final outcome should be, but we do take it very seriously.

And I take it seriously as I recall a funeral I attended, it seems a long time ago, for a member of the Armed Forces, Luis Moreno, who was killed in Iraq. I remember that rainy morning, leaving the church on the way to the cemetery, the pain and the sadness that took place in the whole community, the pain and the sadness that engulfed a family and everyone who was there.

We took seriously the loss of that life, and we honor every day the fact that he was sent to that battlefield and he gave his life for that particular cause, which we discuss today.

We are here in his honor to say that we have to make sure that we no longer continue to escalate this war which was presented to us, it seems again, a long time ago based on, at the minimum, false information, and at most, sadly, lies presented to this Congress.

□ 1830

We have to make sure that no further loss of life takes place. So much has been said today about supporting our troops. Well, I know of no greater support than to bring them home tomorrow morning.

I know a lot of people will say, if you bring them home, Iraq will become a mess. Well, has anyone noticed that Iraq is a mess?

Well, if you bring them home now, Iraq will become a country in a civil war. Has anyone noticed that Iraq is involved in a civil war?

The question is, will we wait for more Americans to lose their lives and more to be wounded?

When I say that we were given bad information or possibly lied to, we were told at that time, I remember, how the weapons of mass destruction were stored in Iraq and that we had to get them before they got us, and how there was a link between al Qaeda and September 11 and Saddam Hussein. And now, even the administration and its ardent supporters agree that there was no link between Saddam Hussein and September 11, there was no link between al Qaeda, there was no link between any of that that we were told; and we still haven't found the weapons of mass destruction. It was simply a desire to take us to where we shouldn't be. And in the process, we really blew it.

I was in New York City on September 11; I was not with my colleagues here. It was election day in New York, primary day, and I was there in New York on that day for some local elections. I lived through that moment, and I know how painful that was. But beginning with September 12, the world was with us. Every country was supportive of what we were going through. It always amazed me that countries that live with terrorism on a daily basis thought that, for some reason, the attack on us was in many ways even bigger than the attacks on their own country, and they supported us. We could have taken that goodwill and used it for positive things throughout the world. What did we do? We totally lost the goodwill by going and invading a country that had nothing to do with September 11. And so now, the same people who supported us no longer support us.

What we are doing here today is exerting a constitutional right. This is not a political exercise, this is not a legislative exercise, this is Members of Congress saying that it is our right to oversee the President and to stop him whenever we can when we know that any President, any administration is making a mistake.

Now, how has this administration been able to keep us supportive in some ways up to now? By doing something which is really sad, by questioning our patriotism. And so tonight and tomorrow and for the next couple of days more will question our patriotism. But I ask you, isn't a true patriot he or she who is not holding back to question the actions of his country even during wartime? Isn't that the true patriot who is willing to say, even during wartime, stop it now, stop the madness before it goes any further and before we lose more of our young people?

And so we gather here after 3,109 losses, after 23,000 wounded soldiers saying we have to stop it now, and we have to vote for this resolution.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. At this point in time, I would like to yield 5½ minutes to a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and also a member of the Subcommittee on the Middle East, Mr. FORTENBERRY from Nebraska.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Madam Speaker, when I left home this week for Washington, my 6-year-old Kathryn became very sad. See, she has big, beautiful brown eyes and they welled up with tears at the prospect of my leaving again for Washington. And she said to me, Daddy, why do you have to be a Congressman? And I thought of the words of the Revolutionary War author Thomas Paine when he said, ''I prefer peace; but if trouble must come, let it come in my time so that my children can have peace.''

Madam Speaker, this is a pivotal moment for our Nation and a very grave, solemn policy debate. We cannot afford to allow the ups and downs of the daily news cycle set the course for our deliberations. The stakes in Iraq are simply too high.

During last year's debate on Iraq, I emphasized that this war is different from wars of the past. There is no front, no lines of demarcation, no clear enemy in distinct uniforms. This is a war that invades tranquil time and space without warning, carried out by those who hide among populations seeking to exploit the vulnerable for ruthless, ideological purposes.

We have never before waged a war in an era of globalization, in an age when technology eviscerates the concept of distance, magnifies our losses, trivializes our accomplishments, and places our adversaries in a far better position to leverage our freedoms, particularly the freedom of speech, against us. These are the complexities we face now.

Madam Speaker, I submit that our choices now stand to determine not only the future of the Middle East but the very future of civilization. We can point fingers and blame each other, or we can think constructively together.

So what are our choices? The National Intelligence Estimate categorically rejects an arbitrary or precipitous U.S. troop withdrawal. The result

would be horrific chaos, a humanitarian disaster, destabilizing the entire Middle East, emboldening the geopolitical aims of Iran, and leading to a much less peaceful world in very short order.

The conflict in Iraq is dangerous, risky, and complex. And we can all agree that our troops are doing an outstanding job, and so are their families who bear the biggest burden in their absence.

I submit that our time and energy as leaders of this Nation should be focused on new, clear military and geopolitical strategies.

First, Iraqis must fight for their own country now. They must lead in the battle for Baghdad now.

Over the past several months I joined colleagues in urging the President to deploy trained Iraqi troops into the heart of the battle for Baghdad, and I am pleased to see that this recommendation is now under way. However, I remain concerned about exposing our forces to unnecessary danger in the sectarian violence of Baghdad. As best we can, our troops should remain in support and training roles. I also believe that it is prudent to send reinforcements to our marines in Anbar province who are achieving good success against al Qaeda elements in collaboration with Sunni tribal leadership.

Second, we must engage responsible members of the international community, particularly the pan-Arab world, to assume a unified and decisive role in neutralizing the forces of chaos and helping secure stability and peace throughout the Middle East.

Third, we must provide meaningful congressional oversight. And I commend Chairman LANTOS for taking this lead in the House Foreign Affairs Committee and for his commitment to a substantive and reasoned debate in this regard.

I would have liked to have had the opportunity to support a constructive bipartisan initiative drawing upon the substantive resources like the Iraqi Study Group to enhance congressional oversight and set out meaningful benchmarks to measure progress toward the stabilization of Iraq and the drawdown of our troops.

While it would be politically easier for me to vote for this resolution, I cannot. I see no useful purpose in supporting a nonbinding resolution that may have the unintentional consequence of undermining our efforts while our troops remain in harm's way.

Madam Speaker, this resolution, while wrapped in the mantle of supporting our troops, does not point to a credible way forward in Iraq. I believe I would make the same decision if a Democratic administration were struggling with similarly arduous challenges. If we flinch now, regardless of the goodwill behind our motivations, if we are perceived as weak and divided and eager to throw up our hands in frustration, we will pay a heavy price. And every nation that counts upon us as a friend and ally will also pay a very heavy price. None of us wants to see the repeat of the last helicopter out of Saigon.

I urge my colleagues, let's find constructive ways to get the job done.

Mr. SKELTON. May I make an inquiry, Madam Speaker, of how much time has been consumed and how much time remains on each side, please.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Missouri has 2 hours, 28 minutes. The gentleman from Michigan has 2 hours, 15½ minutes.

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

The great Chinese strategist and thinker once wrote that war should not be begun unless the end is in sight. Sadly, that admonition of Sun Tzu was not adhered to in this war in Iraq.

Let me bring us back to what we are all about today. We have been hearing discussions ranging from both ends of the football field. This is a very simple, straightforward resolution.

The first part of it is: We fully support the American troops. And I am going to say, Madam Speaker, we are so proud of them. They are volunteers, they are professionals, they understand the word duty.

And, secondly: We do not agree with the troop increase of 21,500, for the simple reason it has not worked in the past, for the simple reason it is going to cause somewhere between 2,500 and 13,000 support troops to support that effort. And, consequently, it is not a well-thought-out tactic. And despite the fact that some wish to call it a strategy, it is a tactic, and there is a large difference between the two.

Madam Speaker, at this time I yield 5 minutes to a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee as well as the Budget Committee, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS).

Mrs. CAPPS. I thank my colleague for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution supporting our troops and disapproving the President's plan to escalate the war in Iraq.

More than 4 years ago, the resolution to support a war in Iraq came before this House. After careful consideration of the evidence and arguments put forth for a unilateral preemptive attack on Iraq, I decided I could not in good conscience vote for that resolution.

My ''no'' vote against the President's plan for war in Iraq is one of my proudest moments in Congress. I didn't believe the case where war had been made. There was no real evidence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. The administration's arguments about al Qaeda connections with Iraq were specious, and its attempt to link Iraq with the tragedy of 9/11 was shameful.

I was deeply concerned about the effects of preemptive war on America's standing in the world, and equally worried about the ramifications for the greater Middle East, a region of great importance and even greater fragility. And I had strong concerns about the administration's preparation for the aftermath of a war in Iraq. The administration was completely focused on waging war and not on winning the peace.

Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, all of those concerns have been borne out. There were no WMDs, no al Qaeda connections, no 9/11 link. It was all trumped up evidence by an administration consumed with toppling the dictator in Iraq. Today, Iraq is in civil war, the Middle East is even more unsettled, and our standing in the world is at a low point. The international support given to America after 9/11 was squandered and will take years to repair the damage. And, as a Nation, we are even less secure today than we were the day we invaded Iraq. I point this out only because it is critically important to know where we have been if we want to know where we should be going.

This resolution gives voice to the deep, deep opposition here in the Congress and throughout the country to the President's plan for escalating the war in Iraq.

□ 1845

I speak for the vast majority of my constituents on the central coast of California when I state my unequivocal opposition to this escalation. The administration's plan looks like more of the same failed policies that got us here in the first place. It is a plan based more on hope than on fact, buttressed by hysterical rhetoric. It is a plan opposed by numerous military leaders and experts. It is, quite frankly, simply not believable.

The recent National Intelligence Estimate makes it perfectly clear that the President's grand plan is just never going to work. The resolution here before us puts Congress on record against the proposition that success will come only after more troops are thrown into battle.

The other objective of this resolution is to remind everyone that opposing the war in Iraq, and especially opposing the President's escalation, is consistent with supporting our troops. Our men and women in uniform have done everything we have asked them to do and so much more. Over 3,000 have made the ultimate sacrifice. More than 20,000 others have been injured, so very many of them seriously.

Let no one doubt the bravery of our troops and the support that I and my colleagues who are opposed to this war have for them. I am eternally grateful for the sacrifices our men and women in uniform and their families are willing to make every single day. They continue the long distinguished line of soldiers, sailors and airmen that have kept our country and so many others free from tyranny and oppression, but their service is due more than heartfelt appreciation and flowery words from politicians.

Their sacrifice, their service, is owed responsible leadership from those civilian leaders with whom power ultimately rests, and that is where our soldiers have been let down. This administration has taken arrogance, stubbornness and incompetence to new heights. It ignored the advice of military experts leading up to and throughout this war.

It stocked reconstruction teams with political hacks, and it brushed off the indisputable reality of Iraq in a meltdown. It dismissed the considered opinion of the Iraq Study Group, the Congress, most importantly, the American people.

Make no mistake, the failure of the war in Iraq lies at the highest levels of the White House and at the desks of the Pentagon's civilian leadership, and the cost of that failure is borne by our troops, their families and the Iraqi people. It is time for the administration to stop obfuscating the conditions on the ground in Iraq, stop the charade about so-called new plans that will finally bring success in Iraq.

Madam Speaker, it is time to stop the war in Iraq. Support the troops. Indeed, bring them home.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Madam Speaker, at this time I would like to recognize my colleague from New Jersey (Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, today tens of thousands of our young men and women are serving in uniform heading for Iraq. More are headed there as we speak. They will do what American soldiers do. They will serve our Nation with courage and pride, and for that they deserve our deep gratitude.

Today in the House we are engaging in a debate on a resolution that declares their military and humanitarian missions failed. I have seen this resolution described in the press as symbolic, toothless and meaningless. I couldn't disagree more. Our consideration of this resolution, the words spoken on this floor, carry great meaning and weight.

The actions of this body have consequences. When Members speak, the world listens: our friends, our allies, our rivals, our enemies and future enemies alike. What are they hearing?

I remember just 2 weeks ago, during the Super Bowl, seeing the video of our troops in Baghdad watching the game. Our soldiers watched that game. Every Member on this floor should know with certainty that our soldiers surely are watching this debate, and so are their families, and so are our enemies and so are the loved ones of those who made the ultimate sacrifice in their service to our Nation.

Instead of showcasing the best partisan rhetoric and working for political advantage, we should be working together with our Commander in Chief to honor their service and commitment, to find a way forward in Iraq that protects our Nation and results in a stable Iraq that can govern and protect itself.

I know that none of us are happy with the progress of the war. I know that the American people are struggling with this war. I struggle too. I am reminded that we have been sent here by our constituents to exercise our best judgment and to bring our experience to bear on the most pressing issue facing our Nation, the global threat of a radical Islamic fundamentalism.

Last week in the House Appropriations Committee on Defense, on which I serve, I asked the chiefs of staff of the Army about the consequences of failure in Iraq. I was reprimanded for getting off topic. But that is the topic. That is the point. Withdrawal from Iraq will have consequences, both immediate and in the seeds of future conflicts.

What will Congress do if we leave Iraq to flounder and descend into chaos, and how will we handle the next challenge laid before us, for there will be others. Do any of us doubt the determination of forces who are counting on our failure, on our resolve? This is the most fundamental question that confronts us, not solely the question of troop reinforcement that is already under way. Our answer to this question will be the legacy, not just of this President, but of all of us in this Chamber.

Over 35 years ago I served with the Army in Vietnam. While I never much advertised this fact, I was proud to serve, even as my father, then a Member of Congress himself, was subject to many personal attacks on the home front from those who opposed the Vietnam War.

Like many soldiers then, I wanted to do my time and come back safely. I promised myself one day that if I had the chance, I would be a better person, a better elected official, for that military experience. I promised myself that I would never let our soldiers down wherever they might be.

Madam Speaker, we are Americans first, and as Republicans and Democrats, we need to come together to work on solutions in Iraq and the Middle East. We are a Nation at war, lives are on the line, and we could do much better than this resolution.

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Northern Virginia, a member of the Appropriations Committee, Congressman JIM MORAN.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I would like to paraphrase a poem that Rudyard Kipling wrote upon the death of his son in World War I that seems particularly apt to the war in Iraq:

When they ask why the young men died

Tell them it's because the old men lied.

Madam Speaker, when the White House announced 4 years ago the U.S. military would attack Iraq under the guise of the global war on terrorism, there wasn't one single uniformed military officer who believed that Iraq was part of a global war on terrorism. Saddam had had nothing to do with the 9/11 attack.

Saddam wasn't harboring any al Qaeda cells that did attack us. In fact, they understood that starting a new war would distract us and limit us from accomplishing our immediate need to eliminate Osama bin Laden. Saddam was a vicious, secular, despotic dictator, but he saw al Qaeda as a threat to his control, and al Qaeda viewed Saddam as an enemy of their religious extremist world vision.

The U.S. Intelligence Community knew that there was no clear evidence that Saddam was a threat to the United States. There was no failure of our professional Intelligence Community, but there was an abysmal failure of our political leadership.

So how did we get to this point? First we were scared with the threat of Saddam's arsenals or weapons of mass destruction, al Qaeda training camps, an Iraqi meeting with the 9/11 hijacker, mobile labs, aluminum tubing, yellow cake uranium. But there were no weapons of mass destruction, Madam Speaker.

The training camps didn't exist. Mohamed Atta never met an Iraqi agent in Prague. The White House knew, before they informed us about the mobile labs, that our experts had determined that they were not in any way related to chemical or biological weapons. Likewise, the aluminum tubing was bogus information. Well before the so-called yellow cake uranium from Niger was cited as evidence at an attempt at nuclear armament, our Intelligence Community had informed the White House that it was a hoax.

Yet we were told repeatedly by the President and the Vice President that Saddam was a threat to global stability, that there was a direct connection between Iraq and al Qaeda and September 11. We were told in the buildup to the war that our troops would be greeted by the Iraqis as liberators, being offered flowers in the streets. This was propaganda that the State Department warned the White House not to believe, but they nonetheless peddled it to the Congress and to the American people.

We were told that to liberate Iraq was to spread freedom and democracy, to keep oil out of the hands of potential terrorist-controlled states. We were told that the war would pay for itself with Iraqi oil revenues. Yet all we have done is to finance our enemies, the insurgents and Iranian Shiia interests.

After Baghdad fell, we were told that America had prevailed, that the mission was accomplished, that the resistance was in its last throes, that more troops were not needed. As things went from bad to worse, we were told of turning point after turning point, the fall of Baghdad, the death of Saddam's sons Uday and Qusay, the capture of Saddam, a provisional government, the trial of Saddam, a charter, a constitution, an Iraqi Government, elections,

purple fingers, a new government, the death of Saddam, all excuses for triumphant rhetoric while the reality on the ground continued to worsen.

We were told, as they stand up, we would stand down. We would stay the course. Now we are told that there is a new course, but it is in the same misguided direction. Falsehood after falsehood unravels each day, with the morning paper reporting even more deaths.

Now the American people are being asked to put 20,000 more sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives into the line of fire, and into the dead zone between the sectarian sides of a civil war. A message was sent to President Bush on November 7, 2006. This surge of more troops into Iraq defies the will of the American people.

But this is a new Congress. We will no longer be cowed by leaders using 9/11 as a political ploy against sensible people who oppose the administration's failed Iraq policy. Today for the first time since the war began, Congress will go on record opposing the President's failed Iraq policy. Some will argue that it is a nonbinding resolution, that it will not have the impact of a law, that it will not stop a roadside bomb or bring a single soldier home to their family. But the President understands what this resolution means. It is the beginning of the end of this wrong war of choice.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Madam Speaker, I yield 10 minutes to my colleague from New York, a member of the Intelligence Committee, roughly 1 minute for every foot of snow that his community has recently received.

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Very roughly, you owe me a few.

Madam Speaker, listening to this debate tonight, it becomes obvious that kind of like life itself, those of us in Congress have moments of high drama and great importance, and by any measure, the date this evening and tomorrow and the days that follow and, most importantly, the vote that will attend it, is just such a moment.

I would observe, Madam Speaker, in the now nearly 231 years that this great Union has endured, this House has encountered few sessions demanding greater honesty, greater selflessness, and greater wisdom than that of occasions of war. And as I said, this is such a time.

But this debate really does stand alone. It is unique over the more than two centuries and three decades of our history, because from my study at no time in this Nation's history has the Congress considered the matter before us this week. The question of shall we resolve, in a nonbinding resolution, that this House disagree with a mission, duly designated by the constitutional authority vested in the President, as Commander in Chief, in the conduct of the war, that this same Congress, in an earlier session has, in fact, expressly endorsed.

I have listened today with great interest. I have enormous respect for all Members on both sides of the aisle. But I have heard about how wherever they are, many Members tonight will go to the well when they ultimately vote and try to send the President a message, try to signify to the administration that this war has not been conducted in the appropriate way. It has not achieved the objectives that we all felt were possible, in fact, absolutely necessary at its outset.

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I would say, Madam Speaker, I understand that perspective; not only understand it, in many ways I strongly share that perspective. But I have to argue the fact of the matter is, for all of the good intentions we have here tonight, the negative aspect of such an action is going to far outweigh, far outweigh whatever good it might attempt to achieve.

The reality is, if this message is heard at all at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, it is going to speak in whispers. Whispers. But in other lands, in other continents, in other cities, far, far away, when this resolution comes before us, and if it is passed, it is going to crash like thunder. In places like Ramadi and Basra, from Baghdad and beyond, friend and foe alike are going to hear something far different than what we intend.

They are going to hear that through this vote we have abandoned the Iraqi people. They are going to hear that America has forsaken this struggle. They will hear that we disavow our military objective in Baghdad really before it has meaningfully begun, and most importantly in the shadows where our enemies lurk, in places like Tehran and Damascus, the message will fail where its authors intend, but it will succeed very, very mightily where they wish it would not.

Madam Speaker, for all of the good intent embodied in this proposal, it will not bring a single soldier home sooner. This vote, no matter what the tally, no matter what this board shows as to green and red at the end of the day, will not shorten this conflict by a single month, not by a week, not by a day. It will not change the course of a single battle. It will not even alter a pebble that lies on the battlefields in which those struggles will be fought.

It will, however, say to the insurgents, the Saddamists, the radical Islamic militants and their patrons that time is on their side. It will say that America has no stomach for this fight. And somewhere in a cave in Afghanistan, or in a hut on the Afghan-Pakistan border, Osama bin Laden is going to smile.

His words of a failure of America will be that much closer to reality. As he has said: ''The epicenter of these wars is Baghdad, the seat of the caliphate rule.'' They keep reiterating that ''success in Baghdad will be success for the United States, failure in Iraq the failure of the U.S. Their defeat in Iraq will mean defeat in all their wars and a beginning to the receding of their Zionist crusader tide against us.''

Those are bad messages, Madam Speaker. But I would suggest respectfully to all of my colleagues for all the wrong messages this resolution will send to our enemies, nothing it contains will be more devastating than what it says to our troops, to our military, those brave men and women in uniform who answered the call to arms, issued not by some ephemeral entity, but by us, by this Congress.

And how do we say through the resolution we are considering here today, we support your needs, but we reject your mission? We allow for your deployment but we shun the premise of your departure? And what do we say to the wife or husband? How do we respond to the father or the mother or the loved one of the next warrior lost in battle who asks, why did you oppose through that resolution the job they were sent to pursue but did absolutely nothing from preventing them from going from the outset?

That is the tyranny, and I have to say it, Madam Speaker, that is the folly of the resolution before us for all its lack of practical result, for the fact that this resolution will do absolutely nothing. Never has this Congress in its history of war considered an action of such dramatic consequence.

Now, it is said during the Civil War that the great Southern general, Robert E. Lee, was really tired, and I think we can all relate to this, of the criticism, the second-guessing that was directed at his leadership through the major newspapers of his time.

And he observed, Apparently all my best generals had become journalists. Today, tonight, I think it can be fairly said of some, apparently all of our best generals have become Congressmen. My colleagues, we are not generals. The Constitution of this great Nation does not provide for 535 Commanders in Chief, yet that is the reality lost in the proposal that we are considering this night in this week.

But I would suggest, instead of being diminished by that fact, instead of being lessened by what we are not, we need to be empowered by what we are. And I say to my colleagues tonight on both sides of the aisle, we indeed have a grave responsibility in this matter. But it does not lie in nonbinding resolutions that send wrong messages to our troops and absolutely wrong messages to our enemies. It rests in the authorities vested in us by the Constitution of this great land, the power to fund or not all matters of government, especially war.

Like all of us here tonight, I want this war to conclude. I represent the 10th Mountain Division, the most deployed division in the United States Army. I was there 3 weeks ago. I know the pain. I know the suffering. And like all of you, I am frustrated by the path we have traveled to this point, and I am troubled by the course that apparently lies ahead.

And we can, we must have, a different approach, one that especially places responsibility for success where it rightfully lies, and I have heard my colleagues tonight speak about that, with the Iraqi people. I propose an amendment to the supplemental appropriations bill that will just do that, require the Iraqis to step forward, to stand up, to stop the talking, and to begin to act.

It will fully fund the needs of our troops and provide for us, the Congress, the rightful role and expedite an opportunity to review the Iraqis effort and to judge the progress of this new mission in Baghdad. These things have to be done. But this resolution, in my judgment, in my judgment, is what must decidedly not.

This weekend I took the time to reread John F. Kennedy's Pulitzer Prize-winning work ''Profiles in Courage.'' And in those pages our martyred President spoke: ''In no other occupation but politics is it expected that a man will sacrifice honor, prestige, and his chosen career on a single issue.''

My friends, this is such a moment. I accuse nobody in this Chamber, Madam Speaker, of any kind of transgression, honorable people, good people. We will disagree, as I expect they will on this and other days, but I do plead that every Member in this House vote on this resolution, not for themselves, not for gain or posture through politics, not because of their alleged attention to public opinion, because it is right.

We can do better. We must. But this resolution is not the path to that objective.

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

My friend from New York, a fellow member of the Armed Services Committee, Mr. MCHUGH, a good friend, I must agree with him on one comment that he made when he said, I am troubled by the course that lies ahead.

Madam Speaker, I am very troubled about the course that lies ahead. That is what we are about this evening. We have seen an irretrievable strategic mistake made in Iraq that put us where we are. And consequently it brings us to this point where we express our concern and disagreement with the increase in troops in this crucial time in Iraq and allows us the opportunity to say thank you. We are proud of you, each of you who wears the American uniform.

Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RUSH), a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

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

Mr. RUSH. Madam Speaker, I raise today to voice my support for this resolution. For too long now, under a Republican-controlled Congress and a Republican-controlled Senate, the President has been given a free hand and a blank check to conduct this war in Iraq, for far too long without any oversight, for far too long without any accountability from this the equal branch of government, this U.S. Congress. Madam Speaker, and because of the Republicans' unwillingness and the Democrats' inability to question the President or his administration about the conduct of this war, we now find ourselves embroiled in a civil war on a foreign soil.

We are not seen as liberators. We are seen as an occupying force on a foreign land. We are seen as an occupying army by the Iraqi people. Madam Speaker, we are trapped in a deadly situation where American soldiers and Iraqi citizens are targeted for murder, mayhem and maiming.

Many of our top generals and experts in this field have testified that the American troop presence is the biggest, largest, most provocative catalyst to the violence in Iraq. The Iraqi people are very suspicious of this administration and the motives of this President. And they do not view foreign soldiers in their cities, in their towns, in their homes as something that they desire.

So if the Iraqi people no longer want us in their country, and if the military objective, which was supposed to be the toppling of Saddam Hussein has been achieved, then why do we still have hundreds of thousands of our troops there?

Why on Earth are we sending more troops to this unstable and volatile area when it is obvious that the solution to this problem is not a military one, but a political one?

Madam Speaker, if we want to get out of this hole, then we must first stop digging. It is well past time for this President to finally understand that he cannot solve the world's problems with brute force, the American military, and our boys' and girls' lives. We must begin a serious and political and diplomatic effort in this region to hold the Iraq Government responsible for protecting its own people and to solicit comments from Iraq's neighbors as well as our friends and allies around the world to help stabilize Iraq and to rebuild that devastated country.

The Iraqi people do not want to see more American troops coming into their homes and into their cities. They want their chosen, duly elected leaders to step up to the plate and to protect them as they were elected to do. And they want their foreign occupiers to leave their homeland.

Madam Speaker, this is not hard to comprehend. Would we not want the same thing if a foreign military came and occupied our cities, our States, our Nation, our homes?

This war is draining American resources and stretching our military to the point where we will be unable to protect ourselves against any real threat to our national security. We know that to date over 3,000 American soldiers have lost their lives in Iraq, and more than $500 billion has been appropriated for this unjust and this misguided war.

Yet dispute these costs, neither the American people nor this Congress has been given a reasonable explanation or reasonable grounds for keeping American troops in Iraq to do the job that Iraqi soldiers should be doing for themselves.

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Madam Speaker, because of our grave missteps, our enormous miscalculation, the situation in Iraq has steadily declined. And there is no evidence that increasing the number of American soldiers at this point will do anything other than provide more targets to the Iraqi insurgents and make the situation in Iraq even more volatile.

Madam Speaker, after being wrong on so many counts time and time again, I believe the stakes in this war are too high for us to continue to put blind trust in this administration. The world in which we live deserves more.

Madam Speaker, I am against this troop surge because the American people and the Iraqi people want truth surge. They want strategy, not more of the same.

It is the job and the responsibility of this Congress to reflect the will of the people who have put us here, and demand that the Administration bring an end to this ill-fated war, not escalate it.

Believe me, Madam Speaker, it brings me no pleasure to have this debate and publicly disagree with the President, but my solemn oath to my constituents, as well as my conscience and integrity prevent me from doing anything less.

It is time for us to end our occupation in Iraq. I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting H. Con. Res. 63.

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from the Appropriations Committee, Mr. HINCHEY, the gentleman from New York.

Mr. HINCHEY. Madam Speaker, as a veteran of the United States Navy, I am very, very honored to be a Member of this House of Representatives. And today I am very proud and pleased to stand here in support of this very important resolution, which needs to be adopted as the final first step of this Congress in dealing with this unjust, illegal, unnecessary invasion of Iraq and the subsequent disastrous occupation.

In October of 2002, when the resolution authorizing this invasion came to the floor, 133 Members voted against it. 127 Democrats and six Republicans voted against it. Most of us voted against it because we knew that the so-called logic or rationale that had been presented by the administration was untrue, that there was no connection between Iraq and the attack of September 11, that there was no evidence that there were chemical or biological weapons left in Iraq, even though we know that previous administrations of this country had supplied those weapons.

We knew that the rationale presented for the development of a nuclear weapon in Iraq was completely falsified. The documents were forged.

On the 19th of March, this administration carried out an illegal, unnecessary, unjustified invasion of Iraq. We will soon mark the fourth year of that action. In all of that time, this Congress has done nothing significant or substantial to stand in the way of the illegal, unjustified actions of this administration, in spite of the fact that they have caused the death of now more than 3,000 American servicemen and women, more than 23,000 physically injured, unknown numbers psychologically injured, hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians killed.

In spite of all of that, and in spite of the fact that, increasingly, every Member of this Congress has begun to understand with greater and greater clarity, how the information was falsified, how what the Intelligence Committees told the White House, the Department, the State Department, and others in this administration, had been twisted and distorted and turned around purposely and specifically to carry out this disastrous invasion and subsequent occupation, nothing has been done.

The previous leadership of this Congress failed to step forward and take any kind of action against this administration. And we hear people on this side of the aisle, tonight, speaking against this resolution saying it doesn't do anything significant. It doesn't do enough.

Well, let me tell you something. This is the first step of a new majority in this Congress taking the right kind of action on the basis of our obligations and responsibilities under the Constitution to stand up to the actions of this administration and to put this country back on the right track. Not just in the case of what is going on in Iraq, even though that is so terribly disastrous, but the consequences here in our own country, the intimidation of people, the internal spying, the elimination of habeas corpus, all of the impingements on the American Constitution, based upon the culture of fear cultivated purposely by this administration for their own personal and political objectives. No one in the previous leadership, no one in the previous majority, stood up to this administration in any kind of a constructive way.

So, if you want to correct the failures that have existed in this Congress since that resolution came to the floor and since the 19th of March in 2003, when this administration carried out that illegal, unnecessary and unjustified invasion, then you will support this resolution, recognizing that it is the first important step taken by a new majority here in this Congress to deal with the consequences of all of that falsehood.

If you fail to do so, you will continue to leave the door open for further violations of law and constitutional principles by this administration, perhaps next in Iran, because that may be the next illegal step of this administration.

If you want to make up for what you failed to do, if you want to do the right thing for this country, for our people, and for our military personnel, please, support this resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. KAPTUR). The Chair would like to announce that the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) has 2 hours, 5½ minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA) has 2 hours, 30 seconds remaining.

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, at this time I yield the balance of my time to the gentlelady from California, who is a member of the Armed Services Committee and chairman of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee, Mrs. TAUSCHER. I ask unanimous consent that she be allowed to control the time from this moment.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman and the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee for yielding time.

At this time I am happy to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH).

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, as we debate this nonbinding resolution on Iraq, the administration is preparing for the next war in Iran. We are losing our democracy to war, massive debt, fear and fraud. The American people need Congress to surge towards the Constitution, surge towards the truth.

Now, some call this resolution a first step. I would like to believe that Congress will respond to the will of the American people expressed in the November election. They expect us to take real action to assert our constitutional power, to take America out of Iraq by refusing to provide any more funding for the war. That is our right. That is our duty. We have a duty to restrain an administration which is conducting an illegal war. We have a duty to hold to a constitutional accounting a President and a Vice President who led us into a war based on lies.

I led the effort against the Iraq war resolution.

Madam Speaker, I ask to include into the RECORD an analysis of the President's war resolution which was given to Members of Congress back in October of 2002. It pointed out that there is no proof that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction, anything to do with 9/11, anything to do with al Qaeda's role in 9/11. It is not as if Congress had no idea the war was based on untruths.

Now we must tell the truth, not just about the escalation, but about the occupation. We are illegally occupying Iraq. We attacked a nation which did not attack us. We must recognize the wrong that has been done and move to right it.

Instead of debating the end of the war, Congress is ironically preparing to give the war a new beginning. Some have made it clear long before this particular resolution that they will continue to fund the war by approving the upcoming supplemental appropriation, even though money exists to bring the troops home now.

When we equate funding the war with supporting the troops, we are dooming thousands of young Americans who are valiantly following the orders of their Commander in Chief. If we truly cared about the troops, we would not leave them in the middle of a civil war. If we truly cared about the troops, we would not leave them in a conflict for which there is no military solution.

The war is binding. The resolution is not. This resolution will not end the war. It will not bring our beloved troops home. It will not even stop the administration from sending more troops. That is because this resolution is nonbinding.

The war is binding. The resolution is not; 3,100 U.S. troops are bound in death; 650,000 innocent Iraqi civilians are bound in death.

The war is binding. The resolution is not. American taxpayers are bound in debt. The war could cost $2 trillion. We are borrowing money from Beijing to fight a war in Baghdad. Worse, each and every time Congress votes to fund the war, it votes to reauthorize the war. There were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, but there are weapons of mass destruction at home. Poverty is a weapon of mass disruption. Lack of education is a weapon of mass destruction. Poor health care is a weapon of mass destruction. We must find and disarm those weapons of mass destruction which threaten the security of our own Nation. But Congress must first take responsibility.

The Federal Court has made it abundantly clear that once a war is well underway, Congress' real power is to cut off funds. Funding the war is approval of the war.

The American people are waiting for us to provide real leadership to show the way out of Iraq. My 12-point plan responds to that demand. This plan, drafted with the help of experts in international peacekeeping, specialists with U.N. experience and veteran military advisors, creates a peace process which will enable our troops to come home and stabilize Iraq.

Here are the elements of the Kucinich plan.

First, Congress must deny any more funds for the war.

Second, the President will have to call the troops home, close the bases and end the occupation.

Third, a parallel peace process which brings in international peacekeepers must begin. That is third.

Fourth, move in the international peacekeeping and security force and move out U.S. troops. Peacekeepers will stay until the Iraqis are able to handle their own security.

Fifth, order U.S. contractors out of Iraq.

Sixth, fund an honest process of reconstruction.

Seventh, protect the economic position of the Iraqi people by stabilizing

prices in Iraq, including those for food and energy.

Eighth, create a process which gives the Iraqi people control over their economic destiny without the structural adjustment policies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Ninth, give the Iraqi people full control over their oil assets, with no mandatory privatization.

Tenth, fund a process of reconciliation between the Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds.

Eleventh, the U.S. must refrain from any more covert operations in Iraq.

And twelfth, the U.S. must begin a process of truth and reconciliation between our Nation and the people of Iraq.

There is a way out. Congress should stand for that. And we will have an opportunity to do it once again in about 6 weeks.

ANALYSIS OF JOINT RESOLUTION ON IRAQ

(By Dennis J. Kucinich)

Whereas in 1990 in response to Iraq's war of aggression against and illegal occupation of Kuwait, the United States forged a coalition of nations to liberate Kuwait and its people in order to defend the national security of the United States and enforce United Nations Security Council resolutions relating to Iraq;

Key Issue: In the Persian Gulf war there was an international coalition. World support was for protecting Kuwait. There is no world support for invading Iraq.

Whereas after the liberation of Kuwait in 1991, Iraq entered into a United Nations sponsored cease-fire agreement pursuant to which Iraq unequivocally agreed, among other things, to eliminate its nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons programs and the means to deliver and develop them, and to end its support for international terrorism;

Whereas the efforts of international weapons inspectors, United States intelligence agencies, and Iraqi defectors led to the discovery that Iraq had large stockpiles of chemical weapons and a large scale biological weapons program, and that Iraq had an advanced nuclear weapons development program that was much closer to producing a nuclear weapon than intelligence reporting had previously indicated;

Key Issue: UN inspection teams identified and destroyed nearly all such weapons. A lead inspector, Scott Ritter, said that he believes that nearly all other weapons not found were destroyed in the Gulf War. Furthermore, according to a published report in the Washington Post, the Central Intelligence Agency has no up to date accurate report on Iraq's WMD capabilities.

Whereas Iraq, in direct and flagrant violation of the cease-fire, attempted to thwart the efforts of weapons inspectors to identify and destroy Iraq's weapons of mass destruction stockpiles and development capabilities, which finally resulted in the withdrawal of inspectors from Iraq on October 31, 1998;

Key Issues: Iraqi deceptions always failed. The inspectors always figured out what Iraq was doing. It was the United States that withdrew from the inspections in 1998. And the United States then launched a cruise missile attack against Iraq 48 hours after the inspectors left. In advance of a military strike, the U.S. continues to thwart (the Administration's word) weapons inspections.

Whereas in 1998 Congress concluded that Iraq's continuing weapons of mass destruction programs threatened vital United States interests and international peace and security, declared Iraq to be in ''material and unacceptable breach of its international obligations'' and urged the President ''to take appropriate action, in accordance with the Constitution and relevant laws of the United States, to bring Iraq into compliance with its international obligations'' (Public Law 105–235);

Whereas Iraq both poses a continuing threat to the national security of the United States and international peace and security in the Persian Gulf region and remains in material and unacceptable breach of its international obligations by, among other things, continuing to possess and develop a significant chemical and biological weapons capability, actively seeking a nuclear weapons capability, and supporting and harboring terrorist organizations;

Key Issues: There is no proof that Iraq represents an imminent or immediate threat to the United States. A ''continuing'' threat does not constitute a sufficient cause for war. The Administration has refused to provide the Congress with credible intelligence that proves that Iraq is a serious threat to the United States and is continuing to possess and develop chemical and biological and nuclear weapons. Furthermore there is no credible intelligence connecting Iraq to Al Qaida and 9/11.

Whereas Iraq persists in violating resolutions of the United Nations Security Council by continuing to engage in brutal repression of its civilian population thereby threatening international peace and security in the region, by refusing to release, repatriate, or account for non-Iraqi citizens wrongfully detained by Iraq, including an American serviceman, and by failing to return property wrongfully seized by Iraq from Kuwait;

Key Issue: This language is so broad that it would allow the President to order an attack against Iraq even when there is no material threat to the United States. Since this resolution authorizes the use of force for all Iraq related violations of the UN Security Council directives, and since the resolution cites Iraq's imprisonment of non-Iraqi prisoners, this resolution would authorize the President to attack Iraq in order to liberate Kuwaiti citizens who may or may not be in Iraqi prisons, even if Iraq met compliance with all requests to destroy any weapons of mass destruction. Though in 2002 at the Arab Summit, Iraq and Kuwait agreed to bilateral negotiations to work out all claims relating to stolen property and prisoners of war. This use-of-force resolution enables the President to commit U.S. troops to recover Kuwaiti property.

Whereas the current Iraqi regime has demonstrated its capability and willingness to use weapons of mass destruction against other nations and its own people;

Whereas the current Iraqi regime has demonstrated its continuing hostility toward, and willingness to attack, the United States, including by attempting in 1993 to assassinate former President Bush and by firing on many thousands of occasions on United States and Coalition Armed Forces engaged in enforcing the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council;

Key Issue: The Iraqi regime has never attacked nor does it have the capability to attack the United States. The ''no fly'' zone was not the result of a UN Security Council directive. It was illegally imposed by the United States, Great Britain and France and is not specifically sanctioned by any Security Council resolution.

Whereas members of al Qaida, an organization bearing responsibility for attacks on the United States, its citizens, and interests, including the attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, are known to be in Iraq;

Key Issue: There is no credible intelligence that connects Iraq to the events of 9/11 or to participation in those events by assisting Al Qaida.

Whereas Iraq continues to aid and harbor other international terrorist organizations, including organizations that threaten the lives and safety of American citizens;

Key Issue: Any connection between Iraq support of terrorist groups in Middle East, is an argument for focusing great resources on resolving the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. It is not sufficient reason for the U.S. to launch a unilateral preemptive strike against Iraq.

Whereas the attacks on the United States of September 11, 2001 underscored the gravity of the threat posed by the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by international terrorist organizations;

Key Issue: There is no connection between Iraq and the events of 9/11.

Whereas Iraq's demonstrated capability and willingness to use weapons of mass destruction, the risk that the current Iraqi regime will either employ those weapons to launch a surprise attack against the United States or its Armed Forces or provide them to international terrorists who would do so, and the extreme magnitude of harm that would result to the United States and its citizens from such an attack, combine to justify action by the United States to defend itself;

Key Issue: There is no credible evidence that Iraq possesses weapons of mass destruction. If Iraq has successfully concealed the production of such weapons since 1998, there is no credible evidence that Iraq has the capability to reach the United States with such weapons. In the 1991 Gulf War, Iraq had a demonstrated capability of biological and chemical weapons, but did not have the willingness to use them against the United States Armed Forces. Congress has not been provided with any credible information which proves that Iraq has provided international terrorists with weapons of mass destruction.

Whereas United Nations Security Council Resolution 678 authorizes the use of all necessary means to enforce United Nations Security Council Resolution 660 and subsequent relevant resolutions and to compel Iraq to cease certain activities that threaten international peace and security, including the development of weapons of mass destruction and refusal or obstruction of United Nations weapons inspections in violation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 687, repression of its civilian population in violation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 688, and threatening its neighbors or United Nations operations in Iraq in violation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 949;

Key Issue: The UN Charter forbids all member nations, including the United States, from unilaterally enforcing UN resolutions.

Whereas Congress in the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution (Public Law 102–1) has authorized the President ''to use United States Armed Forces pursuant to United Nations Security Council Resolution 678 (1990) in order to achieve implementation of Security Council Resolutions 660, 661, 662, 664, 665, 666, 667, 669, 670, 674, and 677'';

Key Issue: The UN Charter forbids all member nations, including the United States, from unilaterally enforcing UN resolutions with military force.

Whereas in December 1991, Congress expressed its sense that it ''supports the use of all necessary means to achieve the goals of United Nations Security Council Resolution 687 as being consistent with the Authorization of Use of Military Force Against Iraq

Resolution (Public Law 102–1),'' that Iraq's repression of its civilian population violates United Nations Security Council Resolution 688 and ''constitutes a continuing threat to the peace, security, and stability of the Persian Gulf region,'' and that Congress, ''supports the use of all necessary means to achieve the goals of United Nations Security Council Resolution 688'';

Key Issue: This clause demonstrates the proper chronology of the international process, and contrasts the current march to war. In 1991, the UN Security Council passed a resolution asking for enforcement of its resolution. Member countries authorized their troops to participate in a UN-led coalition to enforce the UN resolutions. Now the President is asking Congress to authorize a unilateral first strike before the UN Security Council has asked its member states to enforce UN resolutions.

Whereas the Iraq Liberation Act (Public Law 105–338) expressed the sense of Congress that it should be the policy of the United States to support efforts to remove from power the current Iraqi regime and promote the emergence of a democratic government to replace that regime;

Key Issue: This ''Sense of Congress'' resolution was not binding. Furthermore, while Congress supported democratic means of removing Saddam Hussein it clearly did not endorse the use of force contemplated in this resolution, nor did it endorse assassination as a policy.

Whereas on September 12, 2002, President Bush committed the United States to ''work with the United Nations Security Council to meet our common challenge'' posed by Iraq and to ''work for the necessary resolutions,'' while also making clear that ''the Security Council resolutions will be enforced, and the just demands of peace and security will be met, or action will be unavoidable'';

Whereas the United States is determined to prosecute the war on terrorism and Iraq's ongoing support for international terrorist groups combined with its development of weapons of mass destruction in direct violation of its obligations under the 1991 cease-fire and other United Nations Security Council resolutions make clear that it is in the national security interests of the United States and in furtherance of the war on terrorism that all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions be enforced, including through the use of force if necessary;

Key Issue: Unilateral action against Iraq will cost the United States the support of the world community, adversely affecting the war on terrorism. No credible intelligence exists which connects Iraq to the events of 9/11 or to those terrorists who perpetrated 9/11. Under international law, the United States does not have the authority to unilaterally order military action to enforce U.N. Security Council resolutions.

Whereas Congress has taken steps to pursue vigorously the war on terrorism through the provision of authorities and funding requested by the President to take the necessary actions against international terrorists and terrorist organizations, including those nations, organizations or persons who planned, authorized, committed or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001 or harbored such persons or organizations;

Key Issue: The Administration has not provided Congress with any proof that Iraq is in any way connected to the events of 9/11.

Whereas the President and Congress are determined to continue to take all appropriate actions against international terrorists and terrorist organizations, including those nations, organizations or persons who planned, authorized, committed or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such persons or organizations;

Key Issue: The Administration has not provided Congress with any proof that Iraq is in any way connected to the events of 9/11. Furthermore, there is no credible evidence that Iraq has harbored those who were responsible for planning, authorizing or committing the attacks of 9/11.

Whereas the President has authority under the Constitution to take action in order to deter and prevent acts of international terrorism against the United States, as Congress recognized in the joint resolution on Authorization for Use of Military Force (Public Law 107–40); and

Key Issue: This resolution was specific to 9/11. It was limited to a response to 9/11.

Whereas it is in the national security of the United States to restore international peace and security to the Persian Gulf region;

Key Issue: If by the ''national security interests'' of the United States, the Administration means oil, it ought to communicate such to the Congress. A unilateral attack on Iraq by the United States will cause instability and chaos in the region and sow the seeds of future conflicts all other the world.

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SEC. 1. SHORT TITLE.

This joint resolution may be cited as the ''Authorization for the Use of Military Force Against Iraq''.

SEC. 2. SUPPORT FOR UNITED STATES DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS.

The Congress of the United States supports the efforts by the President to—

(a) Strictly enforce through the United Nations Security Council all relevant Security Council resolutions applicable to Iraq and encourages him in those efforts; and

(b) Obtain prompt and decisive action by the Security Council to ensure that Iraq abandons its strategy of delay, evasion and noncompliance and promptly and strictly complies with all relevant Security Council resolutions.

Key Issue: Congress can and should support this clause. However Section 3 (which follows) undermines the effectiveness of this section. Any peaceful settlement requires Iraq compliance. The totality of this resolution indicates the Administration will wage war against Iraq no matter what. This undermines negotiations.

SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES.

AUTHORIZATION.—The President is authorized to use the Armed Forces of the United States as he determines to be necessary and appropriate in order to—

(1) Defend the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by Iraq; and

(2) Enforce all relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions regarding Iraq.

Key Issue: This clause is substantially similar to the authorization that the President originally sought.

It gives authority to the President to act prior to and even without a U.N. resolution, and it authorizes the President to use U.S. troops to enforce U.N. resolutions even without U.N. request for it. This is a violation of Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter, which reserves the ability to authorize force for that purpose to the Security Council, alone.

Under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, ''The Security Council shall determine the existence of any threat to the peace . . . and shall make recommendations to maintain or restore international peace and security.'' (Article 39). Only the Security Council can decide that military force would be necessary, ''The Security Council may decide what measures . . . are to be employed to give effect to its decisions (Article 41) . . . [and] it may take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security.'' (Article 43). Furthermore, the resolution authorizes use of force illegally, since the U.N. Security Council has not requested it. According to the U.N. Charter, members of the U.N., such as the U.S., are required to ''make available to the Security Council, on its call and in accordance with a special agreement or agreements, armed forces . . .'' (Article 43, emphasis added). The U.N. Security Council has not called upon its members to use military force against Iraq at the current time.

Furthermore, changes to the language of the previous use-of-force resolution, drafted by the White House and objected to by many members of Congress, are cosmetic:

In section (1), the word ''continuing'' was added to ''the threat posed by Iraq''.

In section (2), the word ''relevant'' is added to ''United Nations Security Council Resolutions'' and the words ''regarding Iraq'' were added to the end.

While these changes are represented as a compromise or a new material development, the effects of this resolution are largely the same as the previous White House proposal.

The U.N. resolutions, which could be cited by the President to justify sending U.S. troops to Iraq, go far beyond addressing weapons of mass destruction. These could include, at the President's discretion, such ''relevant'' resolutions ''regarding Iraq'' including resolutions to enforce human rights and the recovery of Kuwaiti property.

PRESIDENTIAL DETERMINATION.—

In connection with the exercise of the authority granted in subsection (a) to use force the President shall, prior to such exercise or as soon thereafter as may be feasible, but no later than 48 hours after exercising such authority, make available to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate his determination that—

(1) Reliance by the United States on further diplomatic or other peaceful means alone either (A) will not adequately protect the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by Iraq or (B) is not likely to lead to enforcement of all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions regarding Iraq, and

(2) Acting pursuant to this resolution is consistent with the United States and other countries continuing to take the necessary actions against international terrorists and terrorist organizations, including those nations, organizations or persons who planned, authorized, committed or aided the terrorists attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001.

(c) WAR POWERS RESOLUTION REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) SPECIFIC STATUTORY AUTHORIZATION.—Consistent with section 8(a)(1) of the War Powers Resolution, the Congress declares that this section is intended to constitute specific statutory authorization within the meaning of section 5(b) of the War Powers Resolution.

(2) APPLICABILITY OF OTHER REQUIREMENTS.—Nothing in this resolution supersedes any requirement of the War Powers Resolution.

SEC. 4. REPORTS TO CONGRESS.

(a) The President shall, at least once every 60 days, submit to the Congress a report on matters relevant to this joint resolution, including actions taken pursuant to the exercise of authority granted in section 2 and the status of planning for efforts that are expected to be required after such actions are

completed, including those actions described in section 7 of Public Law 105–338 (the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998).

(b) To the extent that the submission of any report described in subsection (a) coincides with the submission of any other report on matters relevant to this joint resolution otherwise required to be submitted to Congress pursuant to the reporting requirements of Public Law 93–148 (the War Powers Resolution), all such reports may be submitted as a single consolidated report to the Congress.

(c) To the extent that the information required by section 3 of Public Law 102–1 is included in the report required by this section, such report shall be considered as meeting the requirements of section 3 of Public Law 102–1.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Madam Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Do any of us really believe that the resolution in front of us today is a serious piece of legislation?

Does it discuss or force a debate on the really tough issue of how big this conflict is?

Who is it that hates America and others so much that they are willing to kill innocent men, women and children?

Again, it does not do that. There are people who hate us enough to want to kill. I speak of militant Islam's hate for America, a hate that extends to others as well, including Muslims. And these militant Islamists kill. They kill violently and indiscriminately.

Who are they?

What should America's response to this threat that we and others face on a global basis be?

What is America's response to jihadism?

How will America win this war against this calculating enemy?

How will America lead the world, once again, in the face of such a ruthless threat?

What is a jihadist, other than someone or some group so full of hate that they are willing to kill?

□ 1930

I have a passion for understanding this threat. These Islamic jihadists are a fringe element of Islam who have very specific ideas about how to revive Islam, return Muslims to world power, and how to deal with their enemies. They are committed to a violent overthrow of the existing international system and to its replacement by an all-encompassing Islamic state, the caliphate, as it is called.

This is more than just about Iraq. It is a much bigger problem. It is also clear that this jihad is about them, their god, their religion before it becomes anything about anyone or anything else. That is right, it is about them before it is about us. And that is why this resolution comes up so short because it does not address all of these issues.

Madam Speaker, I would like to yield to my colleague from California (Mr. CAMPBELL).

Mr. CAMPBELL of California. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

You are right. A big problem, big issues, and this resolution doesn't address them.

What does it do? It basically says that the military leaders have a suggestion that we have reinforcements that they believe may improve the situation, help us get a victory in Iraq. Now, they can't guarantee that. The President can't guarantee it. Nobody can guarantee it. But what does this say? It says we are not going to do that. Okay, fine. But what are you going to do instead?

This resolution, by rejecting the only plan on the table, basically is saying stay the course, keep the status quo.

I don't think the status quo has been working. I think we know we have to make some changes in strategy and whatever. We have to make something work. But this basically says we will take the only plan that is out there and reject it. We won't do it.

So my question would be what do you do instead? What do you do to ensure that we don't have a genocide in Iraq on the scale of what is going on in Darfur? If you don't want to do this plan, what do you do to ensure that terrorism does not grow and flourish in Iraq and that then they come to attack us on our soil again, which they haven't done for 5 years? What do you do to protect our troops?

I think these are a lot of questions that we have, Mr. HOEKSTRA, which is why just saying no to the only plan that is on the table won't do it. It is kind of like a football game: the coach and quarterback call a play, and they are in there, and then someone runs into huddle and says, No, we are not going to run this play.

What play are we going to call?

We don't have a play.

So the quarterback gets under the center. The center snaps the ball, and nobody goes anywhere. Nobody knows what to do because there is no play, there is no plan. That will fail.

This simple status quo resolution is not the solution.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Madam Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman. I think he has made some very good points about what we don't see in this resolution. We don't see a discussion of what the global threat is from these jihadists who hate democracy, who hate other heretic Muslim states, who want to establish this caliphate that spreads throughout the Middle East, spreads into Europe, across Africa, into Asia. It lacks the concept of putting it into a bigger picture.

There is no alternative plan. Really, if you vote for this resolution, what you are voting for is you are voting for stay the course. Support the troops; don't try a new strategy or tactic. Just stay the course. And it also does not deal with what the potential consequences may be of that failed strategy.

Madam Speaker, I would like to yield to my colleague from Arizona.

Mr. SHADEGG. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

And I have listened to his eloquent words today about the radical threat we face.

I have a fundamental question for the other side. I thought our colleague from New York did a superb job of acknowledging the good intentions of every Member of Congress involved in this debate and the good intentions of the majority. I share his frustration with the progress of the war to date. I share the comments made by my colleagues on the other side who are unhappy at how we got here. But I think that misses what I believe is the essential question we confront now, and that is, where do we go from here? What will this resolution do? And I would suggest that that is a question that has not been examined in this debate. I would suggest that many would like to wish this war would go away, that many would like to believe that if the United States withdrew its troops from Baghdad and withdrew its troops from Iraq that somehow Iraq as a problem would go away.

But, Mr. Chairman, you have made the point over and over and over again today: this isn't about Iraq.

I would ask my colleagues on the other side can they name a single jihadi leader, a single radical Islamist, who has said if they prevail in Iraq, if we will just leave Iraq, that this will end, that they will no longer desire to conquer the world, that they will back away from all of their rhetoric about attacking all Westerners everywhere? And I suggest you can't name anyone like that.

Let me read you just a few quotes to make this point. Ayman al Zawahiri, we all know who he is, a well-known jihadi leader: ''It is a jihad for the sake of God and will last until our religion prevails.'' Not until we abandon Iraq, but until their religion prevails.

''The entire world is an open battlefield for us,'' he goes on to say. ''We will attack everywhere until Islam reigns.'' Ayman al Zawahiri does not say we will attack until the war in Iraq ends, we will attack until Americans pull out of Baghdad, we will attack until they are no longer in the nation of Iraq. He says, ''We will attack everywhere until Islam reigns.''

Again al Zawahiri: ''The jihad in Iraq requires several incremental goals. The first stage: expel the Americans from Iraq.'' Note that that is only the first stage. ''The second stage: establish an Islamic authority or emirate. The third stage: extend the jihad wave to the secular countries neighboring Iraq.'' It will not end.

If your resolution, if a resolution tonight, could end this war and bring our boys home and our girls home and make the world safe, I would be the first to vote for it. But it won't.

Osama bin Laden says it clearly: ''Hostility toward America is a religious duty, and we hope to be rewarded for it by God . . . I am confident that Muslims will be able to end the legend of the so-called superpower that is America.''

We are on notice. I think we have to take them at their word. It isn't about Iraq. It is about our confrontation, a historic confrontation, with radical jihadists who seek to kill us.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Madam Speaker, reclaiming my time, I think the gentleman from Arizona stated it very well. When we talk about the jihadists, they believe that the modern world has forsaken that pure religious life. They believe only in a caliphate governed by shiria law and that is the way to return to that pure life. That is the world they now want to recreate. And as they recreate it, they want to force it on the rest of us.

Madam Speaker, I would like to now yield to my colleague, Mr. SAXTON.

Mr. SAXTON. Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. HOEKSTRA for yielding.

I would just like to build on something that Mr. SHADEGG said. He said, in essence, that this subject is so important because it goes so much further than Iraq. And as a member of the Armed Services Committee, I try to keep close tabs on where our soldiers and sailors and marines and airmen are deployed. And it may surprise some on the other side of the aisle, but perhaps not, to know that we have troops deployed in Southwest Asia in five countries; we have troops deployed in Europe in quite a few countries, several countries; in Central Asia we have troops in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan; in Southeast Asia we have troops deployed in the Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia; in South America in Colombia, Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, and Guantanamo Bay; and in 19 countries in Africa, all in support of the war on terror.

And as Mr. SHADEGG mentioned a few minutes ago, it has been clearly stated that Iraq is the first battleground chosen to make their stand and clearly stated that all of these other places where we have sent troops, not because we have extra troops to send somewhere, not because we have extra taxpayer dollars that we are trying to get rid of or spend, but because every one of those countries exhibits a piece of geography where there is a threat related to the global war on terror.

So a vote for this resolution is a vote, perhaps, of goodwill on the part of those who will eventually in a few days vote for it, but it won't end this war. It won't end the desire of the Islamists to take advantage of various situations and, as Mr. HOEKSTRA mentioned, achieve their goals.

And so this is a broad war. This is a war where it will be years and perhaps decades to bring to a conclusion. And the worst thing we can do is to send messages that we are not serious about carrying out our duties in defense of this generation and, as I will point out later, future generations of Americans.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Madam Speaker, reclaiming my time, with that I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Madam Speaker, I would like to yield myself 20 minutes. And at this time I would like to yield 5 minutes to my good friend and neighbor in California, the gentlewoman from Oakland, Representative BARBARA LEE of the Appropriations Committee.

Ms. LEE. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman for her leadership, for yielding, for her deep commitment to our troops and to our country.

As a daughter of a proud veteran of two wars, I know personally that we have a moral obligation to support and protect our brave men and women on the ground in Iraq. However, there is no reason for us to stand behind the President's plan to escalate his failed policy in Iraq. In fact, Madam Speaker, the American people are way ahead of us.

A USA Today/Gallup poll released just today shows that 60 percent oppose this escalation, 63 percent favor bringing our troops home by the end of 2008, and last November the American people soundly rejected the President's failed policy in Iraq at the voting booth. You would think that the President understood what all this meant. After the election he continued his listening tour on options for Iraq, but it seems that he wasn't hearing what the American people were saying.

The Iraq Study Group actually indicated and said very clearly that there was no military solution to this mess. And rather than heed the call of military experts, advisers, and the American people, the President offered an even worse plan: put more troops in harm's way in Iraq. This just doesn't make any sense.

That is why this no-confidence resolution puts the administration on notice: end the occupation and bring our troops home. However, if the President doesn't change course, we must go further. This war has undermined our credibility and standing in the world. It has cost too many lives and injured too many of our troops. This war has cost too many Iraqi lives. This war has cost us nearly half a trillion dollars, and the costs keep mounting. The chaos in Iraq that the President set in motion has further destabilized an already precarious balance in the Middle East.

We must take steps to use the upcoming supplemental appropriations bill to set in motion an end to this terrible and misguided war and bring our troops home from Iraq.

To that end I support fully funding the safe withdrawal of our troops from Iraq over a 6-month period, and I will work with my colleagues to do this. Additionally, along with Congresswomen WOOLSEY and WATERS, we have introduced H.R. 508, the Bring our Troops Home and Sovereignty of Iraq Restoration Act.

□ 1945

This bill would completely fully fund military withdrawal from Iraq within 6 months, while ensuring that our troops and contractors leave safely, and accelerate the training of Iraqi Security Forces. And we would make certain that our veterans, who have given us so much, receive the health and mental health benefits that they deserve.

Our bill would remove the specter of an endless, and that is what this is right now, it is an endless occupation, by preventing the establishment of permanent military bases. Our very presence in Iraq is fueling the insurgency, and our troops have been the targets of this civil war.

Madam Speaker, these are the best and the safest ways to end this occupation. But it really didn't have to be this way. Imagine for a moment what would have happened had Congress adopted my substitute amendment to the authorization to use force against Iraq in October 2002. We would have allowed the United Nations inspectors to finish their job. We would have discovered what we all know now as fact, that Saddam Hussein had no weapons of mass destruction, and, as then, there was no connection between the horrific events of 9/11 and Iraq. Iraq did not attack us, as many are trying to continue to convince the American public that it did. Iraq did not attack us 5 years ago.

The bottom line is that Iraq also would not be a war-torn country as it is today, and, again, the world is less safe. And if this wasn't enough, over the last several months the President has been saber-rattling on the issue of Iran. We must not go down the same path and end up in another unnecessary, dangerous, costly and disastrous preemptive war with Iran. This notion of the ''axis of evil'' and preemptive war is very, very dangerous.

Madam Speaker, the stakes are too high. We need to stop digging ourselves deeper into this hole. Escalating this war and expanding this war does nothing in terms of our national security. It puts us more at risk. Iraq was not a haven for terrorists as it is now. Again, Iraq, Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda, there was no connection, and we have to dispel that notion so the American people know the truth.

So, rather than end this war today, we are saying let's just for today at least take one step and stop the escalation and expansion, and we will be back to talk about how we are going to begin to bring our troops home, and bring them home within 6 months.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Madam Speaker, I am happy to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HARE), a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Mr. HARE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from California. I rise today in strong support of this resolution.

Recently at a town hall meeting that I had, a man approached me, pulled out a picture of his son, said that he had just died in Iraq 6 months ago. His wife won't come out of the home. He said, ''I want you to promise me that when you go to Washington, you will do everything you can to make sure that this never happens to another family.''

Three days later, I called the family of Senior Airman Daniel Miller of Galesburg, Illinois, who lost their son to a roadside bomb explosion outside of Baghdad 2 weeks prior to when he was supposed to be coming home. I hope and pray I don't ever have to make another phone call to another grieving family. That is why I come to the floor this evening in strong opposition to the President's decision to deploy 21,500 additional troops in Iraq, and I strongly support this resolution.

The current situation in Iraq is grave, and it is rapidly deteriorating. The sectarian conflict is the principal challenge to stability in Iraq, and caught in the middle of this civil war are approximately 140,000 of our bravest troops. Over 3,000 troops have already lost their lives, while over 22,000 have been wounded.

Our current strategy has not made significant impact on reducing the violence. In fact, December 2006 was the third deadliest month since the war began. The cost of this war, both in the number of lives lost and the amount of dollars spent, has had a profound effect on Illinois and my congressional district. Out of the 3,128 deaths, 95 have been from Illinois, and eight soldiers from the 17th District.

But not only will an increase in troop levels not solve the fundamental cause of violence, it places us at a great disadvantage here at home. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the troop surge could require as many as 48,000 troops and as much as $27 billion, which is five times the amount of the President's request of $5.6 billion. Also the U.S. military will be forced to deploy many combat units for their second, third, and even fourth deployments in Iraq, and extend the redeployment of others.

Currently as we sit in debate on this resolution, 16,000 single mothers are serving in Iraq. This troop surge would only extend the time their children are left at home alone, with their mother or their father.

Since the military is already short thousands of vehicles, armor kits and other protective equipment, a troop surge threatens the readiness of our forces. In fact, if you saw the paper recently, a soldier was quoted saying he had to go to the junkyards to dig up pieces of rusted scrap missile and ballistic glass so they could armor the vehicles and make them combat ready.

While only a first step, this resolution is a good start. It does not give up on our troops or declare defeat in Iraq, but offers a new forward direction towards a nonpartisan goal of bringing our troops home safely, quickly, and securing stability in the region.

Already, this Democratic-led Congress has had 52 oversight hearings on various issues related to this war, and many of my colleagues have introduced several bipartisan measures that promote political and diplomatic engagements.

A person this evening said, Where do we go from here? I would strongly suggest that this administration try something it hasn't tried yet: diplomacy. It can work. You just have to have the courage to try.

In the coming weeks, I am hopeful that Congress will consider a comprehensive measure such as H.R. 787, the Iraq War De-escalation Act, of which I am a cosponsor. In addition to requiring the responsible redeployment of U.S. forces from Iraq and allowing basic force protection, it launches a comprehensive regional and international diplomatic initiative. I am thoroughly convinced that the only way we will attain peace in this region, in Iraq, is through diplomatic initiatives.

This legislation also makes the Iraqi Government responsible for their own destiny by establishing benchmarks concerning Iraqi military readiness to police their own country without United States assistance.

Finally, as a veteran myself, I also hope as we move forward we will adequately prepare for the return of thousands of new veterans. Our number one priority should be to fully fund the cost of veterans health care and PTSD benefits.

This administration's budget calls for cutting prosthetics by $2 million and severely cuts funds to the VA at a time when it is proposing an increase in troop levels. Without full funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs, our veterans are left without the services they were promised when they pledged to defend this Nation.

Madam Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this resolution as the first of many steps towards bringing our troops home and securing our success in Iraq. As I told the gentleman at my town meeting, I promised him I would do everything I could so this would never happen again. That journey begins this evening.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Madam Speaker, I am happy to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS), a member of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

(Mr. DAVIS of Illinois asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, first of all, I want to thank Speaker PELOSI for providing what we never had in the last session, and that is ample opportunity to fully discuss Iraq, where we are and what we ought to be doing about it.

I have always been told that when you start with a faulty premise, you will inevitably reach a faulty conclusion. And the rationale given for entering the war was faulty. There were no weapons of mass destruction, no connection to 9/11. Therefore, we never should have invaded Iraq in the first place.

But then after the invasion, the occupation of Iraq has been tragically mismanaged. Civilian military leadership ignored the advice of senior commanders on requirements for preventing chaos in the aftermath of the invasion. As a result, our extended presence in Iraq continues to worsen the situation, not only in Iraq, but in the entire region.

Terrorist incidents continue to flare up around the world, from England to Spain, from Indonesia to Jordan. Chaos and intolerance in the form of civil war now has secured a deadly grip on Iraq. The policy of escalation has failed, and failed again, to loosen that horrendous grip. The Iraqi people want us to leave, and so do the American people, especially those in my congressional district, and especially those that I encounter at churches, schools, synagogues, town hall meetings and on the street.

Madam Speaker, democracy and self-government cannot be imposed on Iraq by any foreign power, including us, the United States of America. Our troops have done everything we have asked of them, even when we have failed to equip and protect them. The problem does not lie with our troops, but with the distorted world view of this administration and the military and diplomatic doctrine of preemptive war as a solution to global political problems.

We must do everything possible to protect our troops and we must do everything in our power to take care of them when they return home.

It is impossible, Madam Speaker, to build a coalition against terrorism by attempting to unilaterally impose these doctrines on the international community. We cannot undo the many mistakes which have been made in Iraq. And when our national interests have been so distorted, when we have so lost our direction, it is the historical, moral, and constitutional responsibility of this Congress to set us back on course and on the right track.

It is time to recognize that we are enmeshed in an unending, vicious circle of escalating violence, rather than a force for peace, and that is why I am a cosponsor of H.R. 508, which would bring the force of law to end this war.

Today we have before us a nonbinding resolution, most likely insufficient to end the occupation. But it can help to move us in the right direction and set us on the right path. Therefore, I support this resolution, because it reflects the will and interests of the American people, and I trust that this administration will abandon demagogic calls for constantly changing notions of success and victory and awaken to the world of reality.

Madam Speaker, it is time, it is past time, to bring our troops home. I am told that insanity is doing the same thing over and over and over again and expecting different results. This resolution sets us on the right course, gives us the right direction. I urge its passage.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Madam Speaker, I am happy to yield 5 minutes to my neighbor and colleague from California (Mr. HONDA).

□ 2000

Mr. HONDA. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, the gentlewoman from Northern California (Mrs. TAUSCHER).

Like so many of my colleagues, I stand here today in opposition to President Bush's surge in Iraq.

We should not have attacked Iraq in the first place, and we definitely should not escalate things further. The initial evidence for the war was flimsy at best, and realizing that, I voted against the authorization for war.

The most recent evidence that the President has presented in support of this surge is even less credible, and I urge my colleagues to prevent the President from throwing more gasoline onto a fire that is already burning out of control.

When I speak to veterans of the Iraq war, I become infuriated by their tales of the destruction that this President's policies have wrought in that country. Nor can they fathom why their Commander in Chief insists on squandering the strength of the greatest fighting force in the history of the world.

While Iraq under Saddam Hussein's rule was a rogue state and an affront to American values, today Iraqi citizens are forced to endure even more severe and deadlier situations.

There is no indication that Iraq was a center for international terrorism prior to President Bush's adventure there. Now, as a result of his irresponsible actions, it undeniably is.

Over 3,000 brave American service men and women have lost their lives in Iraq in addition to the 100,000 or more Iraqis who have been killed; 25,000 American soldiers have been injured.

For what, Mr. President? For what? You have yet to answer this simple question, and I suspect this is because you do not have an answer. There is not, nor can there be, a credible answer to this utter folly.

Each Member of this House has tales of constituents whose lives will never be the same because of the Iraq war.

In the aftermath of 9/11, one of my constituents joined the Army out of a deep sense of patriotism. One day while on patrol in Iraq, his tank drove over an explosive device, sending the vehicle 10 feet in the air. He survived but suffered severe brain and spinal injuries. For his bravery, he was awarded the Purple Heart, multiple commendations and other medals.

After completing a service to his country, he returned home to resume his life with his wife and newly born triplets.

Upon returning to work, however, he found that he had difficulty concentrating as a result of his head injury. He was diagnosed with traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder.

As a result of the strain that the President's policies are placing on the Veterans Administration, he, like so many of my constituents, was unable to receive a change in his benefit allowance in a timely manner. So that he could continue to live in dignity, local officials and media had to put out a call for donations to pick up where his government failed him.

This brave man expected that his sacrifices would be repaid with the generosity that America promises to our veterans. Instead, he encountered a system that is overextended and ill equipped to help him when he needed it. Other constituents have told me that when they try to call the Veterans Administration they have to wait on hold for over 2 hours before they can talk to a human being.

Is this how we should treat those who put their lives on the line for our country? The Veterans Administration recently testified that it needs a 13 percent increase in funding to address rising costs and increased demand, but the President's budget proposes less than half of that.

And now the President wants to further escalate the strain on our already over-extended system by sending more soldiers off to Iraq? I am outraged and I cannot mince my words. This is a national shame. This is not how America repays its valiant heroes.

Madam Speaker, we must stop this madness. This surge, this escalation will fail just as past surges have.

This conflict requires the diplomatic and political solution, not just simply sending more troops into the fight. We cannot allow this President to shatter the lives of more of our best and brightest. It is time to bring our troops home.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. AL GREEN of Texas). Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I understand we have until 12 o'clock to complete this part of the debate?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is correct.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, in my office I keep a photo of about a dozen Kurdish mothers whose bodies are strewn across the hillside in northern Iraq, holding their babies, killed in mid-stride where they were gassed to death by Saddam Hussein. As I listened to some folks in this debate talk about what they consider to be an immoral war, an illegal war, an occupation that is not consistent with morality, I harken back to that picture and the thousands of people that it represents, and I harken back also to the exhuming of mass graves with, again, mothers shot in the back of the head with a .45-caliber pistol by Saddam Hussein's executioners and with their little babies similarly with holes in the back of their skulls.

Mr. Speaker, this operation in Iraq is indeed a moral operation. It represents the goodness of the American people.

I am also reminded of something that lots of folks and the Vice President talked about, and that is the goodness that we have brought with the 3 million-plus babies who have been vaccinated, with the hundreds of schools and hospitals that have been built, and with all those expectant mothers that were given prenatal care by the Americans so that their children would be born in a healthy fashion.

But, Mr. Speaker, I recall that in 1984 Ronald Reagan very eloquently asked the American people to support him in bringing freedom to the people of El Salvador. I remember his speech; and in his speech, he harkened back to another American who had appealed to us in bringing freedom to another part of the world, which was at that time endangered, and that was Greece in 1947.

The communists were very close to victory in Greece, and Harry Truman appealed to the American people in a joint session of Congress. He said the free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms. If we falter, we may endanger the peace of the world, and we shall surely endanger the welfare of this Nation.

Now, we have no guarantee of victory in Iraq. There is no battle plan that comes with a guarantee of victory, but I will tell one thing that is very clear: what is happening in Iraq and our efforts in Iraq are connected and are watched by every terrorist in the world, and that connection is established and travels as fast as the speed of electrons in this age of television and technology and high-paced, fast media and the Internet. They see what we are doing.

And that connection, Mr. Speaker, was made when the Beirut bombings occurred against the Marines in the Marine barracks in Beirut. In fact, I think Mr. SKELTON was with me. We were over there very shortly before those bombings occurred.

They are connected and the terrorist world watched very closely when there was no response to that. They watched very closely when there was no response in the Khobar Towers, with respect to the Cole and extremely anemic response with respect to the bombings in the embassies in Africa.

Now we are undertaking an important and difficult mission; and, Mr. Speaker, I pointed out before that at least one brigade of the 82nd Airborne is already in place in Baghdad, now engaged in the operation, and we have a brigade of the Big Red One moving now toward the theater. I believe we have right at 4,000 members of the 82nd Airborne now in country in Iraq, and we have Iraqi soldiers and Americans engaged in the nine sectors of the city already undertaking this operation and this plan that has been developed by our warfighting commanders.

The idea that we are here, poised to retroactively condemn an operation that our soldiers are already carrying out, is, to my mind, remarkable. There is not going to be any force in effect with respect to this vote that will take place shortly that will do anything but send the wrong message to America's

allies, and I think you have seen comments by some of our allies over the last several weeks with respect to the message that we send out. We are interesting people are we not, Mr. Speaker. We send out messages with all the electronic gadgets in the world to convey the messages to the entire world, and then we say, you know, we really did not mean what you take our statements to mean and we really did not intend to give anybody the wrong message that we still support the troops.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we have got a number of great members of the Armed Services Committee that I want to yield to, and I want to come back later and talk a little bit later about this war against terror and the centerpiece that is Iraq and the centerpiece of that which is as planned.

You know, I was thinking there was a statement once that in a little hut in Central America when we were standing up to the Communists and we were providing a shield for El Salvador, while that fragile democracy stood up, there was a hut in El Salvador which reportedly had the writing on it, Thank God for Ronald Reagan. I am wondering if some trooper in the 82nd Airborne, in the 2nd brigade of the 82nd Airborne may write on a wall in Baghdad, maybe on Friday when we take this vote, This is the day in which the American Congress condemned the mission that we are carrying out today.

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

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 5 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to lend my strong support to this bipartisan resolution supporting our men and women in uniform and opposing the President's decision to send more troops into Iraq.

Last year, Congress united across party lines to say loudly and clearly, the year of 2006 must be a year of significant transition in Iraq. Rather than chart a new course, the President is proposing more of the same. His actions will only deepen America's involvement in Iraq's civil war.

Instead of acknowledging the facts on the ground, instead of listening to the combatant commanders and the Iraq Study Group and instead of hearing the American people's call for change, the President has once again chosen to stick to his failed policies, and now he has raised the risk by insisting more U.S. troops head to Iraq.

It has been 4 years, Mr. President. The American people have every right to expect a change of course in Iraq, and it is your responsibility to them and our men and women in uniform to stop fighting Iraq's civil war.

As General Odom, the former head of the National Security Agency under President Reagan, wrote this weekend, unless Congress speaks up, and I quote, we may be doomed to 2 more years of chasing a mirage in Iraq and possibly widening the war to Iran. We cannot let that happen. Sending more U.S. troops to Iraq will not stabilize it or the region as a whole. As the latest National Intelligence Estimate makes clear, Iraq is becoming more polarized and violent, not less. Sending more American troops to Iraq without stronger Iraqi leadership will only lead to further chaos.

My consistent opposition to this troop surge is built upon years of hearings in the House Armed Services Committee, congressional briefings and five trips to the region, including three to Iraq, witnessing the war firsthand and speaking with our troops and commanders on the ground.

I have watched the President plead his case to the American people, trying to justify why more troops will save his failed policy; but I am consistently disappointed by the stubbornness exhibited by an administration that has failed every step of the way.

I have stated from the beginning of the war that the Commander in Chief has the responsibility to define a well-articulated mission that has the support of the American people and an exit strategy to bring our troops home sooner and safer. He has neither.

Top military commanders in Iraq, the bipartisan Iraq Study Group and the American people all agree that sending more troops to Iraq will not end the civil war. They understand the Iraqi Government needs to take responsibility for securing their own country, and we should immediately begin a strategic redeployment of U.S. troops in conjunction with diplomacy that forces Iraq's neighbors to step up as regional, responsible partners.

If the President sidesteps the Congress, he does so at his own peril; and, sadly, it is the men and women of our Armed Forces and their families who will pay the highest price.

□ 2015

I believe it is grossly irresponsible to send more troops to Iraq when only two thirds of our Army's up-armored Humvees in Iraq and Afghanistan have been fitted with the latest anti-IED protective kits. That is over 4,000 Humvees without the right equipment.

General Pace has indicated that all armored vehicles will not be up-armored until July, well after the President's surge has occurred.

This is why I am an original cosponsor of the Meehan legislation that requires the President to ask Congress for an up-or-down vote if he plans to raise troop levels in Iraq and why I am proud to support this legislation today.

I will continue to challenge the President to abandon his flawed troop surge policy, and I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution. We owe it to our troops and to our conscience.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself just 30 seconds, and I would like to just make one note. That is, if we add the 21,500 troops that are already partly in Iraq, these reinforcements to the 138 who existed before the movement started, and we allow for the troops who are rotating home, we will have fewer; we will have 157,000 troops in Iraq, according to DOD. That is fewer than the number of troops that we had a year ago in December. That is the state of this so-called surge; fewer troops than we had last year.

Mr. Speaker, at this point I would yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) who, for a number of years, chaired the Terrorism Subcommittee and is now the ranking member.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the ranking member for yielding me this time.

I rise in opposition to the resolution that will be voted on Friday. And my statement, as clearly as I can, says why.

Mr. Speaker, I recently attended the funeral of an old friend who passed away after a wonderful, productive 90 years of life. His family and friends gathered at the church to celebrate his life and to remember his accomplishments. During World War II, he served as a member of the Army Air Corps.

Near the end of the service, two Air Force sergeants unfolded and refolded an American flag, and then caringly presented it to my friend's widow saying, ''On behalf of the President of the United States, the United States Air Force, and a grateful American people, I present this flag in honor of your husband's service to his country.''

Mr. Speaker, we survive as a nation today in large part because of the selfless service to our country by a great many Americans just like my friend. Soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, members of the Coast Guard, and members of the foreign service organizations have been supported by the American people and by American resources and funding.

Because we are once again involved in a war which threatens our country, we find American military personnel are again deployed to many parts of the world. Last week, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Peter Pace listed the long list of countries where our forces are deployed and are present to help protect us as part of the global war on terror. Earlier tonight, I read from that list. There are 70 countries where Americans serve abroad in support of the global war on terror. We don't send them there because we want to send them off to some far off part of the world for no good reason. There are threats there, threats like al Qaeda, threats like Hezbollah, threats like the Quad groups that are funded by Iran.

This is a unique and historic struggle for a number of reasons. Chief among them is that our enemies are both state and nonstate actors. They are lethal and deadly. Fortunately, the great citizens of this country have responded. Americans have volunteered in large numbers to work, defend, and fight to protect our way of life. Yet,

today some among us would question whether we are on the right track. And I think they are on the wrong track.

As many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle know, I have devoted much of my career in Congress to studying and understanding this enemy. I must say that I believe I have developed some understanding of them, and so I would like to take a few minutes here tonight to share some thoughts and some facts about them. You simply cannot discuss or understand our situation in Iraq without first addressing some of the fundamental and important questions about the enemy.

Who is he, or who are they? How do they work to achieve their goals on the battlefield? How do they work to achieve their international objectives? What is our record against them? And what is at stake?

First of all, who are they? Members of al Qaeda and Hezbollah, the Quads forces, and other similar terrorist groups' view of the world is based on an extreme ideology, an ideology that is far more extreme than most Middle Eastern people want or support. I certainly can't speak for the citizens of the Middle East, but it seems clear to me that in the opinion of the great majority of citizens and residents of the Middle East, both Muslim and non-Muslim, that this is an extreme ideology which they feel they should reject. And they do.

The extremists are groups of individuals who do not believe in any form of secular government, and will go to seemingly any lengths to sabotage others who try to establish secular or representative free types of governments. Their tactics run the gamut from sermonizing to mistreatment to capture, torture, and death, often by beheading. Their leaders are male and assign subservient roles to females. Their ideology holds that members of society, both Middle Eastern society and otherwise, who do not share their same radical beliefs are assigned to a subservient role or simply eliminated. They are members of organizations who state openly and repeatedly, ''Death to the non-believers, death to America.'' They say it every day. This, in short, is what they are about.

Perhaps there are some of us here in Congress who don't take these people seriously. I do. And I am glad Franklin Roosevelt took Hitler and his people seriously as well. It is much the same.

Twenty years ago, while on my second trip to Israel, it was 1987 to be exact, I came across an article about Hamas. In 1987, I had never heard of them before; they were a brand-new group. So while I was there, I asked about them. And I learned much about Hamas, but also about other groups that we hear about today, groups like Hezbollah and the Islamic Jihad, other groups that existed at the time. And I will always remember getting back on that airplane to come home. I thought, ''Today these people are a huge problem in the Middle East, and I bet it won't be long until they are a huge problem in the U.S.'' They are today.

The second thing I would like to talk a little bit about is how they work to achieve their goals on the battlefield. It is kind of unique, certainly unique in history. Their radical ideology breeds an unconventional strategy of violence, and they are not to be underestimated. This is the method to their violence:

They have recognized that it is difficult or impossible for them to achieve their goals through conventional warfare strategies and techniques. They have instituted as a substitute a four-stage process that replaces traditional warfare, at least traditional warfare as we know it in the West. Their strategy is well laid out and planned; it is called insurgency. Four steps.

First, they work quietly to gain the support of the population through social, charitable, and ideological groups and organizations, schools, hospitals, charities. They gain the support of the people.

Second, now that they have developed some strength in organization, they begin to develop strength in unconventional warfare capabilities. Unconventional warfare capabilities, terrorism, if you will, until their ability exists to severely harass their enemy, usually the superior legitimate force, the government of whatever country they happen to be operating in. This is often the traditional or newly created government, just like the one that we are dealing with in Iraq. And in this way, they build popular support through unconventional warfare successes as well as through charities.

Step three. They develop the ability to reconsider the danger of counter-attack posed by the stronger legitimate force or government, and the ability to fade away temporarily into the population until the pressure is off so they can come back and fight again, all the time getting stronger, all the time carrying out their work through the charities and the schools and the hospitals, and the terrorist acts against their enemy.

Finally, the fourth step, they develop it over time, the conventional capabilities that are necessary to be used against the stronger traditional force with the objective of defeating the legitimate government.

If that sounds familiar, it should, because it is exactly what is happening in Iraq. This is the traditional four-step insurgency process first used in China by Mao in the 1920s, and in Vietnam during the 1960s and 1970s.

Studying this concept, one can apply it to various theaters around the world in the global war on terror and identify various stages in various theaters in many places in the world. I believe, for example, Hezbollah in Lebanon has worked its way nearly to the fourth stage of the insurgency process. Other groups like al Qaeda in Iraq are following the same course elsewhere.

The third thing I would like to talk about a little bit is how they work to achieve superiority strategically internationally. Let's look at the process, the process that fosters the doubt that some citizens in the U.S. have today. That is why we are here tonight. Some people doubt our capabilities. And this is the type of thinking that brings us here tonight. This is the doubt that fuels the desire to disengage, to pretend that the danger doesn't exist, to discuss, as we are here today or tonight, solutions to limit our success and move toward disengagement.

The enemy has demonstrated a strong understanding and some success internationally in developing this unconventional strategy of warfare. It has evolved something like this:

In the early 19th century, armies met each other on the battlefield, frontline to frontline. We all remember looking at those old movies of wars in the 19th century. Warriors were trained in techniques aimed at defeating their foe's frontlines so as to prevail on the battlefield. There was little thought, planning, or training given to reaching beyond the frontlines in battle, much less to strike directly at central governments. Today, this strategy of warfare is called first-generation warfare.

Then, during the 20th century, specifically during World War I and World War II, two new generations of warfare evolved. During World War I, armies were trained to carry out tactics not only against frontlines but also against logistical supply lines. The intent was to damage the enemy's ability by reaching back beyond the battlefield frontline. This is called second-generation warfare.

World War II brought about third-generation warfare by using tactics to reach even further behind the lines to attack the industrial production facilities of the enemy's central governments.

Finally, the most recent evolution, strategic and tactical execution of warfare, designed as fourth-generation warfare. The goal, to destroy the determination of the enemy's decision-makers to continue the fight.

□ 2030

Today's decisionmakers are the citizens of Europe and the rest of the West, including, of course, the United States and the decisionmakers of the United States Congress. Unconventional tools have been used by al Qaeda through fourth-generation warfare and other groups to convince the decisionmakers to discontinue the effort. Unconventional tools such as the Western media, terrorist acts such as those on 9/11, and unconventional warfare such as killing Shiia citizens, Sunni citizens and coalition military participants with IEDs and car and truck bombs.

Through the media, every one of these acts which is reported has an effect and carries a message intentionally to discourage decisionmakers,

and that is precisely the plan. That is precisely why we are having this debate tonight.

That brings us to the debate today. Often American decisionmakers have been convinced through fourth-generation warfare used by al Qaeda and used by other groups, Shiia militias, Sunni insurgents, to convince some here to vote to discontinue necessary efforts in one of the central theaters of the global war on terror, Iraq, and hence convince us not to provide the level of national security so important to the citizens and children and future generations of the United States of America.

Fourth, let me talk about understanding the consequences of withdrawal and our record. Withdrawal under fire is unacceptable and history is replete with examples of harmful consequences in doing so. Lebanon and Somalia are two examples where we presently face increased threats to our national security as a result of previously ill-timed withdrawals.

As a result of the U.S. withdrawal in Lebanon, for example, after the Marine barracks bombing in 1983, the country, Lebanon, even today remains a terrorist hotbed. The withdrawal strengthened Hezbollah. It contributed to years of civil war in Lebanon. It diminished U.S. prestige in the region and influence throughout much of the world.

The lingering question: Could the U.S. have prevented the rise of Hezbollah and the influence of Tehran with sustained engagement in Lebanon? We will never know.

In 1993, we withdrew our forces from Somalia after a failed military operation in Mogadishu. A decade later an Islamic militia with ties to al Qaeda has controlled that country and is responsible for destabilizing the entire Horn of Africa. We didn't know it at the time. We decided to withdraw. It was a mistake. This radical movement briefly shows signs of regaining lost ground in Somalia, even today.

At the very least, Somalia remains a dangerous, ungoverned place, and the lingering question, could the United States have prevented the spread of radicalism in the Horn of Africa with a sustained engagement in Somalia, but we withdrew.

Further evidence of failure to respond to terrorism emboldened al Qaeda. In 1993, the World Trade Center was bombed. No response. In 1996, Khobar Towers were bombed. No response. In 1998, the U.S. Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania took place. No response. In 2000, the attack on the USS Cole took place. No response.

Result? September 11. We are not alone. The Soviet Union and Israel both paid heavy prices for implementing a precipitous withdrawal on two separate occasions. The Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989 and left behind the conditions of anarchy and warlordism, which ultimately led to the rise of the Taliban and provided safe haven for al Qaeda.

Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000 resulted in an empowered Hezbollah, weakened Lebanese moderates failed to keep peace. The best example was Hezbollah's naked aggression this past summer in delivering unbelievable attacks against Israel's civilian population. As one commentator has put it, this is from Victor Hanson in the National Review Online, December 1, 2006, ''By not responding to a decade of prior attacks in East Africa, New York, Saudi Arabia and Yemen and withdrawing precipitously from Lebanon and Mogadishu, we gave the fatal impression that terrorists could strike the U.S. with near impunity.'' That is what we are talking about doing now in Iraq.

The lesson here is obvious. We must remain engaged until we complete our mission. Finally, what is at stake? It is clear that al Qaeda and other groups constitute a serious threat to the citizens of the U.S. for this generation and, even more importantly, for the future generations. Our enemies have demonstrated significant success in carrying out activities to the detriment of the citizens of the U.S.

They have successfully attacked numerous targets overseas, mostly with explosives, and have used missiles known as jumbo jets to attack New York City and Pennsylvania and at the Pentagon, and they have used explosives in terror operations in Afghanistan, and even more successfully in Iraq to pit the minority Sunni population against the Shiia. They fueled the insurgency and have cost Sunni, Shiia, as well as the lives of U.S. soldiers.

Our choices may be difficult. It is not easy to be at war. It is even harder to stay at war, but it is clearly proven by history that we must not abandon the missions in the war on terror nor in the Iraqi theater. We have seen the results of the precipitous withdrawals. It would be unconscionable to vote and to do other than to support the administration's plan.

Mr. HUNTER. Would the gentleman yield briefly?

Mr. SAXTON. I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. HUNTER. I want to thank the gentleman for yielding briefly. I want to thank him for his statement and just clarify the record, while he has got some time, if I could.

Mr. Speaker, my good friend from California, the gentlelady, made the remark, as I understand it, that the Iraq Study Group did not agree with the President's so-called surge. I just would point to the statement that the Iraq Study Group published in their report. They said we could, however, support a short-term redeployment or surge of American combat forces to stabilize Baghdad or to speed up the training and equipping mission if the U.S. commander in Iraq determines that such steps would be effective.

We also rejected the immediate withdrawal of our troops because we believe that so much is at stake. So the Iraq Study Group did state that they would support a surge to effect the stabilization of Baghdad, and it is in the nine sectors of Baghdad with Iraqi battalions to the front, American battalions backing them up, that this operation is taking right now. So it appears to me that the President is, in fact, following and is on common ground with this recommendation by the Iraq Study Group. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. If the gentleman will yield, I just wanted to respond, since you were so nice to quote me.

Mr. Speaker, the truth is, as we all know, the Iraq Study Group had a very comprehensive strategy, but it was a radical departure from what the President is proposing today in this surge. I think there was some, you know, 70-plus recommendations in the Iraq Study Group, including shifting the mission to training of the Iraqi Security Forces and a big emphasis on diplomacy. So I don't think it is fair for the gentleman to cherry-pick a paragraph out of what the Iraq Study Group says.

But with all due respect, I will tell you what the Iraq Study Group recommended is not what the President is doing now. Frankly, the President has rejected the Iraq Study Group recommendations, and I think that to suggest that he is going along with the Iraq Study Group recommendations is really not correct.

Mr. HUNTER. I would just say to my friend from California, he is consistent with the Iraq Study Group to the extent of 21,500 troops, which has been described by your side of the debate as very substantial and such an important thing and such a major thing that it should be stopped. So that, obviously, is not an inconsequential aspect of the Iraq Study Group's statement.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Well, yielding myself some time, I don't disagree with you, but one recommendation out of some 70-odd does not make the Iraq Study Group what the President is doing.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I am going to yield myself 25 minutes, and at this time I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois, the chairman of the Aviation Subcommittee, Mr. COSTELLO.

Mr. COSTELLO. I want to thank my friend from California for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Skelton bipartisan resolution opposing President Bush's policy to send 21,500 additional troops to Iraq. I do so because I am strongly against escalating the war in Iraq.

This is not so much a policy as it is a hope that additional troops will somehow make right the long list of poor decisions by this administration regarding our involvement in Iraq. Putting 21,500 more soldiers on the

ground only gives President Bush little more time to resist the conclusion that the vast majority of Americans have already reached, and that is that the events in Iraq have moved beyond our ability to impact them in a meaningful way militarily.

It is important to note that we have reached this point not because of some failing of our men and women in uniform who continue to make sacrifices. Indeed, our respect and admiration for our troops is matched only by their bravery. Regrettably, but not unpredictably, the plan for postwar Iraq woefully was inadequate, and the Bush administration, instead of taking responsibility for its failings, continues to insist that victory is just around the corner. It is not. A civil war is raging in Iraq, and our troops are caught in the crossfire.

The grand designs of the Bush administration are not attainable now, if they ever were. It is time to admit it and move forward. This is not to say that we should abandon the region. Far from it. The United States must continue to work with countries of the Middle East and of the world to stabilize Iraq and its neighbors.

I have said for months that I believe the best way to get the rest of the world to take responsibility for what is happening on the ground in Iraq may be to remove our troops, and I am convinced that this is the necessary course of action now. We can maintain a strong presence in the region, but we cannot make the hard political decisions that the Sunnis, Shiites and others must make to save Iraq, and then they will not make them as long as our military is there.

Let me just reemphasize that. We cannot make the hard political decisions that the Sunnis and Shiites and others must make to save Iraq, and they will not make them as long as our military is there.

Mr. Speaker, the American people do not support sending more troops to Iraq. In fact, the American people want us out of Iraq, and the people of Iraq want us out as well.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the sacrifices and service of our men and women in uniform, and I commend Chairman SKELTON for bringing this bipartisan resolution to the floor of the House. I urge my colleagues to support the bipartisan resolution.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield 6 minutes to my friend and colleague from California (Mrs. DAVIS).

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of our extraordinary troops and oppose sending over 20,000 additional U.S. forces into the middle of Iraq's violent sectarian conflict. I oppose the President's plan because it will not end the insurgency, halt military activity, or accelerate our departure from Iraq. The plan is not a strategic change.

Rather, it is the continuation of a failed policy. When Congress voted to authorize the use of military force, I voted ''no.'' I felt at that time that we had not exhausted all diplomatic avenues and that unilateral action would have a grave effect on our strategic position in the world. More significantly, it could undercut the broader long-term war against Islamic extremism. Sadly, Mr. Speaker, many of these predictions have come through. We now find ourselves in a position where only grim choices remain.

□ 2045

The war in Iraq has indeed strained our military, drained taxpayer dollars and damaged our credibility in the international community. As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I have heard from a number of administration officials and academic experts on the way forward in Iraq. And many of these experts have warned against increasing the number of troops.

Last November, General Abizaid told Congress that an increase in U.S. troop levels would only delay the ability of Iraqis to take the lead. Mr. Speaker, what changed between November and today? Even the most ardent proponents of the troop increase acknowledge that to work all pieces must come together.

First, the military must be able to quell sectarian and insurgent violence. And then if the violence subsides long enough for a window of opportunity to open, the economic and political components must be executed flawlessly.

Even if our forces are successful in reducing violence in the short term, assurances cannot be given that other parts of the government will be able to address the economic and political components of the President's plan.

Well, the track record of the administration and the Maliki government make it hard to believe that such a plan will bring real results. One of the most egregious errors of our entire experience in Iraq has been the failure to put trained experts in critical civilian positions.

To accomplish this new mission, civilian agencies have been asked to send several hundred experts to Iraq to carry out the plan. However, the military has reported that because of hiring delays, DOD will have to assign their own personnel because U.S. civilian agencies are unable to fill the much needed positions.

Mr. Speaker, it should not be the role of the military to rebuild nations on their own. We should have been leveraging our talented and experienced Federal workforce all along. Many of my colleagues have already discussed key issues such as readiness and equipment levels, but two of the greatest concerns I have with the President's plan are the effect on our volunteer force and the strategic risk that is created by putting more military assets into Iraq.

By adding more troops, the administration leaves our Nation with fewer resources to deal with Afghanistan and future contingencies. Will we be able to respond if our military is needed elsewhere? With more of our troops bogged down, will our allies around the world continue to have faith in our ability to respond to extremist and military threats around the globe?

We must answer these questions. But I have not heard satisfactory responses from the President or military officials. Mr. Speaker, I also oppose the surge because the present administration has not sufficiently answered questions about the impact on military personnel. For those in the military, this war hits close to home every day.

While we have asked few Americans to sacrifice during this conflict, servicemembers and their families continue to face the uncertainty of repeated deployments, injury and in some cases the death of a loved one. They deserve better.

Mr. Speaker, I told President Bush that veterans in my district have said, ''We are a military at war, not a Nation at war.'' And military leaders agree. Mr. Speaker, if we truly want to create a situation where we can withdraw our troops, we need to escalate our diplomatic efforts and call on Iraq's neighbors to help the Iraqi Government make the tough political decisions needed to reduce the violence.

We must not give in to the President's diversion, but develop a multipronged strategic plan the American and the Iraqi people deserve.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ZOE LOFGREN).

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution that supports our troops, but oppose the President's escalation plan. My opposition to this war has been clear and consistent. The night before I voted against the Iraq war resolution in October 2002, I stated on this floor that Congress should not grant the President power to pursue a war in Iraq for three reasons.

First, Iraq was not an imminent threat to the safety and security of America, something we now know to be true. There are no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

Secondly, we were acting without real international support. And we now know that our unilateral action proved to be disastrous to our standing in the world community.

Finally, I questioned whether the President had an exit strategy. Now, 4½ years later, it is clear that President Bush did not have and still does not have an exit strategy for our troops.

Even though I voted against the invasion, I never dreamt that the President's policies and course of action would be as disastrous as they have been for Iraq, for the gulf region and for America.

Americans went to the polls in November to send a clear message to Congress and to the administration. They

are against this war and they want a successful exit plan. Americans see that we are spending 8 to $10 billion a month to fight this war, while in our own country we have 47 million Americans without health care insurance and our national debt is almost $9 trillion.

Mr. Speaker, my Democratic colleagues and I hear the American people loud and clear. They want oversight of this war. They want to know the hard facts of the situation on the ground in Iraq, instead of the rosy picture the Bush administration tries to paint. They want investigations of and an end to the shady contracting in Iraq that has given away billions of American dollars without so much as a receipt. They want assurances that our troops will be protected.

Mr. Speaker, even though it was a mistake of titanic proportions to initiate this war, now that Iraq has been destabilized, what are we to do? The answer cannot be more of the same, because what we are doing is failing to have a positive impact. Our troops have performed the difficult missions given to them in Iraq with courage.

Congress and the American people will continue to support them and provide them with every resource they need. 320 soldiers from my home State of California have died in this war. We can never repay our debt to their faithful service and the sacrifices made by their families.

The failure in Iraq is not a failure of our fighting men and women. It is a failure of command, a failure of political leadership. We must provide our troops and their families with a new exit strategy instead of a new deployment.

The civil war in Iraq is not the product of ad hoc, spur-of-the-moment individual violence. No. It is organized and it is a strategy of various political and sectarian factions in Iraq. Putting our troops in the middle of these warring factions will not end the violence. It will only put our troops in the middle of it. That notion is borne out by the fact that more than 60 percent of the Iraqi public believes that it is a good thing to attack and kill Americans stationed in Iraq.

Proponents of the President's escalation plan act as if the United States has but two options: one, increase the American troops at great cost, both in human lives and financial; or, two, do nothing. But those are not the only choices. We must step up our diplomatic efforts in the region as recommended by the bipartisan Iraq Study Group.

Americans should call upon neighboring states in the Middle East to take strong measures to avoid a spread of the conflict beyond Iraq. As Iraq disintegrates into sectarian violence, her neighbors must insist that the factions within Iraq halt their civil war.

We need to remind the countries in the region that stability in Iraq is vital to their interests. If they want to avoid having this war spill out across the Middle East, they must step up their diplomatic efforts. With the help of the entire region, we can push the Iraqis to help themselves.

Iraqi security forces must be trained in a faster pace so they can be responsible for their own country. There is no guarantee of success in Iraq, nor is there a clear definition of what success might look like; but we do have a moral obligation to make our best efforts to diffuse the chaos the war has created. The solution must be a political and a diplomatic one.

Unfortunately, the President refuses to pursue the diplomatic options endorsed by the bipartisan Iraq Study Group and his own military advisors. As we saw today with the welcome news that diplomatic efforts have led to the de-escalation of tensions in North Korea and an agreement to abandon their nuclear weapons ambition, a conflict is not always the right answer to world challenges.

Even General Abizaid, the outgoing top commander of the U.S. forces in Iraq, does not believe an escalation will increase our chances of American success. The American public has long been ahead of Congress in their opposition to this war.

I am here today to tell the American people that they are being heard. I stand with the majority of Americans who say they have had enough. In the coming weeks and days, Congress will give the President's plan the scrutiny the American people expect and our troops deserve. It is time to bring this war to an end and time to support this resolution.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT), my friend and colleague.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, America begins the fifth year of war in Iraq. I am pleased that Speaker PELOSI has scheduled such a thorough debate of the most important moral and political issue of the day. The war in Iraq was misguided from the outset, even illegal, and has been mismanaged consistently ever since.

The resolution we have before us today puts Congress on record opposing the escalation of troops in Iraq proposed by President Bush and expressing our steadfast support for our troops.

Let me say at the outset that I intend to vote for this resolution. It is an important first step. The President's escalation of forces in Iraq is worse than the stay-the-course strategy so clearly rejected by Americans. If we pass this resolution, we will be doing more than repudiating the President's disastrous policy. We will for the first time be putting Congress on record in a way that will allow us to bring this war to an end for Americans.

Mr. Speaker, U.S. Armed Forces who are serving in Iraq are heroes. They are the most finely trained and dedicated group of patriots any leader could want. But they now find themselves mired in the middle of intense violence, based on sectarian, political, social and cultural factors dating back 1,000 years.

The situation in Iraq cannot be solved militarily. Pretending otherwise only puts our soldiers, marines and others in greater danger. I have visited them in theater, in Iraq and other countries in the region and, yes, at Walter Reed Hospital here in Washington.

I have met with their families in New Jersey. The quality of these men and women, their earnest wish to serve their country makes this situation all the more tragic.

Mr. Speaker, they were sent to Iraq irresponsibly and in ignorance by leaders, sometimes improperly equipped, and are now asked to achieve an impossible mission. There is no way for us to resolve militarily the emerging multifaceted civil war that is engulfing Iraq.

When he ordered the invasion of Iraq, President Bush unleashed forces he did not understand and could not control. As the most recent National Intelligence Estimate attests: ''The term civil war does not adequately capture the complexity of the conflict in Iraq, which includes extensive Shia-on-Shia violence and al Qaeda and Sunni insurgent attacks on coalition forces and widespread criminally motivated violence.''

Whenever American forces leave Iraq, there will not be a stable American-style liberal democracy. Prolonging the occupation of Iraq whose stability has only declined by any measure as our presence goes on increases the costs we incur in lives, dollars, and international prestige.

No one will look back and say, if only the American military stayed a little longer. No, historians will look back and ask what took Congress so long to recognize a disaster and do something about it. Extracting American troops from this quagmire will dry up support for the various insurgencies operating in Iraq, and encourage other nations to take part in the process of stabilizing the country and promote the domestic processes necessary for long-term stability.

Given all of those factors, the burden should not be on those who believe that American forces should be withdrawn. The burden should be on those who want to continue this endeavor to show any compelling evidence that is worth sending more Americans to kill and to be killed.

Sending more troops should require the same high standard of evidence that should have been met to go to war in the first place.

□ 2100

But the President and, I am sorry to say, the previous Congresses did not apply that high standard. Some of us said 4 years ago that there was not evidence sufficiently compelling to send Americans to kill and to die. After the President went to war anyway, I called for withdrawal early.

Now, Congress must establish standards that we failed to set, standards of intelligence and evidence, standards of diplomacy, standards of legislative oversight, so that we do not go to war or escalate wars based on ideology rather than evidence, bravado rather than humility, patriotic fervor rather than patient diplomacy.

Congress failed in its constitutional role to exert a check and balance on the Executive. With this resolution we begin on a new course, under new legislative leadership. We will audit the books. We will review the procedures for detaining prisoners, for engaging civilians, for conducting intelligence.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for President Bush to catch up with the American people. The American people understand that American forces should not remain in Iraq to try to quell a civil war they cannot control. The American people understand that we must refocus our attention on our real interests. If the President did not, let us show at least that we do and pass this resolution.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE).

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. AL GREEN of Texas). Before recognition, the Chair announces that the gentlelady from California (Mrs. TAUSCHER) has 1 hour and 17 minutes, and the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) has 1 hour and 18 minutes.

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, and 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 simply not acceptable. We have lost too many American lives, seen too many soldiers seriously injured and spent too much of our hard-earned taxpayer money for no good reason. I am proud of my vote against the initial Iraq war resolution, and see this resolution before us tonight as the beginning of the end to U.S. military involvement in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor this evening to commend our troops for the valiant work they have done over the last 5 years. I am thinking of them when I voice my strong opposition to the President's plan to send 21,500 additional troops to Iraq.

The President hopes this troop escalation plan will 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. Last summer the President moved more troops into Baghdad and said that he hoped to see some results in a matter of months. By October, General William Caldwell had publicly stated that the surge was a failure and the operations had ''not met our overall expectations of sustaining a reduction in the levels of violence.''

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.

Mr. Speaker, many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle claim that if you speak out against the President's proposal, you are not supporting our troops, and this is nonsense. And if they listened to the troops, they would know that not even a majority of our troops support the President's plan. According to a poll conducted by Army Times, a weekly newspaper popular with Active Duty and retired Army personnel, only 41 percent of our troops support the President's plan. But they will do whatever is asked of them, regardless of whether or not they agree with the command.

Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of the war, our troops fought without the body armor they needed to protect themselves against improvised electronic devices. It now appears that the military doesn't have the protective equipment needed to properly outfit the troops the President plans to send to Iraq. According to the Army, it lacks not only armor kits for soldiers, but also trucks and vehicles needed to accommodate any escalation in troop levels. Lieutenant General Steven Speaks, the Army's deputy chief of staff for force development, said any additional units of troops sent to Iraq would have to share the trucks assigned to the units now there.

Do supporters of this plan really believe this Congress should allow the President to move ahead without properly investigating whether or not our troops will have all the necessary protective equipment they need?

Mr. Speaker, we also need to realistically look at the distraction that the Iraq war is causing in the overall war against terror. While the administration and the Pentagon focus their attention on Iraq, the war in Afghanistan has been forgotten. The Taliban has significantly grown in strength in Afghanistan, and America needs to focus its attention there, the source of the attacks on 9/11.

Mr. Speaker, I opposed this war from the very beginning, and want to see our troops home. The President should be putting forth a plan for withdrawal from Iraq, not escalation. I am willing to vote to cut off funding for the escalation. I have voted against the Iraq supplemental appropriation bills to send a message that we need to end U.S. military involvement in Iraq. With this resolution, we begin the process of getting out of a place where we should never have been from the beginning.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 3 minutes to just make a brief response to a couple of statements that have been made.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. HOLT referred to our wounded folks in Walter Reed as tragic. They are not tragic. They are American heroes, and they are the people who have bought the freedom that allows us to have this debate today.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield some time to three unusual Americans on the Armed Services Committee who all have had sons serving in the Iraq theater. The first gentleman is the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE), whose son has been a helicopter pilot in Iraq, as much time as the gentleman wishes to consume.

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, of course I rise today in strong opposition to this resolution.

It occurs to me, Mr. HUNTER, that I need to thank you not only for your service, but for your son's service in the Marine Corps. It is one of those little twists of those things that I served my whole life in the Marine Corps, and my son is serving in the Army. You served in the Army, and your son is serving in the Marine Corps. And I don't know if we will ever untwist this. But I thank you and him for his service.

Mr. Speaker, the proponents of this resolution will have us believe that this resolution supports and protects our military personnel while criticizing the President for changing course.

We have listened to several speakers today who, like me, served in Vietnam and witnessed firsthand the micromanagement of the war from Washington. Ironically, they stand here today endorsing the same incompetent policy of interference. Instead of President Johnson choosing bombing targets, however, we have 535 legislators dictating General Petraeus's reinforcement levels; yes, dictating his tactics. It was wrong in 1967, Mr. Speaker, and it is wrong in 2007.

I notice that the distinguished chairman of the Armed Services Committee has risen several times today to point out his belief that what the President is doing is not a change of strategy, it is a change of tactics. And I would say to my good friend, that great gentleman from Missouri, that if that is right, if this is tactics, then in fact this resolution is trying to do just that, micromanage the tactics of this war.

If congressional micromanagement were the only problem with this resolution, I would still argue vigorously for its defeat. But it is not the only problem. Understanding the purpose and intent of this resolution, its proponents have revealed their true intentions in the course of this debate. They intend for this resolution to be the first step on the path to defunding our troops, withdrawing them, and allowing Iraq to become a chaotic, ungoverned space that will act as a training ground for al Qaeda and the radical jihadists that we are at war with.

Though few in the West knew it, a new war had already begun during my days as commander of Marine aviation forces in Somalia. In the intense battle in the back alleys of Mogadishu that inspired the movie ''Blackhawk Down'' and the bombing of vulnerable U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya captured America's attention briefly, but it took an unprecedented attack on our homeland for the country to realize what Islamic extremists had long known: The United States was at war. And I think Mr. SAXTON did a very thorough and eloquent job of explaining the length and nature of this war. Every country was now a potential front and every city a battlefield in the enemy's war against Zionist crusaders and nonbelievers. Whether by design or not, Iraq has become the front in not only a physical war of attrition, but in the war of wills between free societies and Islamic jihadists who seek to destroy them.

The proponents of this flawed resolution prefer to ignore reality. They believe that repeating the mistaken belief that Iraq is not a central front in the war against Islamic jihadists will make that perception real. Unfortunately for those who hold this belief, the enemy, our enemy has a say in the matter. Al Qaeda's second in command, al-Zawahiri, in December 2006, made it quite clear where al Qaeda stands. In a video posted on jihadist Web sites, al-Zawahiri sent a clear message: ''The backing of Jihad in Afghanistan and Iraq today is to back the most important battlefields in which the crusade against Islam and Muslims is in progress. And the defeat of the Crusaders there, soon, Allah permitting, will have a far-reaching effect on the future of the Muslim Ummah, Allah willing.''

We have heard repeatedly that al Qaeda and the jihadist terrorists understand that Iraq is the central front in this war against radical Islam. Thankfully, the U.S. military leadership has also recognized this fact.

In his recent testimony before the Senate, General David Petraeus was asked if he believes that Iraq affects the overall war on terror. His response was clear and unequivocal: ''I do, sir.''

Clearly, there are elements of the greater al Qaeda network of international extremists that want something very different than most Iraqis want, and want something very different in that region and in the world.

Many mistakes have been made as our military, unparalleled in conventional strength and maneuver, has changed strategy and tactics to fight the counterinsurgency battle. In response to the frustration at the lack of progress felt by those in Iraq and at home, the American military demonstrated its greatest strength: the ability to adapt to new conditions on the ground and develop new strategy.

To those who have lived and studied the art of military strategy and tactics, the plan we debate this week, developed by American commanders in Iraq and here at home, represents a fundamental shift. In a study updated last week, Anthony Cordesman from the nonpartisan Center for Strategic and International Studies, declared that, ''Much of the criticism of the new Bush approach has been unfair. The new strategy is considerably more sophisticated and comprehensive than the details the President could fit into his 20-minute address,'' or, I might add, Mr. Speaker, than I can include in this 10-minute address, ''presuming it combines political, military and economic action in ways that do offer a significant hope of success.''

But rather than acknowledge the comprehensive nature of the new Baghdad and al-Anbar security plan, opponents prefer to ignore the pleas of General Petraeus to provide him with the troops necessary to turn the security situation in Iraq's capital city around. Instead, they pat him on the back, wish him ''Godspeed'' in his endeavor, and then promptly move to deny him that which he has requested and needs to succeed. As a Vietnam veteran, I cannot in good conscience watch as Congress once again undercuts the morale of those in uniform.

I will not stand idly by and watch others resurrect the ghost of that painful conflict, and we have heard it resurrected many times this day, Mr. Speaker, without acknowledging the slaughter and humanitarian disaster that resulted from the fall of Saigon. And it was a humanitarian disaster. Millions died. Just as in 1974, decisions we make today in this body will have consequences for entire nations and generations to come. History stands ready to judge the wisdom of this body, its ability to learn from past mistakes and its ability to comprehend the ramifications of its actions. In spite of countless warnings, I fear we will come up short in the eyes of posterity.

Opponents call for the administration to heed the advice of its generals, only to reject the commanders' pronouncement when such states are at odds with their own misguided perceptions. They criticize the ''cherry-picking'' of prewar intelligence, and then proceed to do just that, while reading the most recent National Intelligence Estimate, choosing to ignore the dire warnings of the Intelligence Community's most authoritative written judgments on national security issues.

But to those who criticize this new security plan and offer no solutions for success, only demands for capitulation, we must demand that they answer a vital question they choose to ignore: What will happen if the Iraqi Government does not succeed and we withdraw prematurely?

One critic of the administration's handling of Iraq, a very vocal critic, and a man who I knew and admired throughout my Marine Corps career, retired General Anthony Zinni, the former commander of Central Command, spelled it out bluntly when he noted that, ''We cannot simply pull out, as much as we may want to. The consequences of a destabilized and chaotic Iraq sitting in the center of a critical region in the world could have catastrophic implications.''

□ 2115

The recent National Intelligence Estimate was even more specific in its analysis. If the United States were to withdraw rapidly, the Iraqi security forces would likely collapse, neighboring countries might intervene openly in the conflict; massive civilian casualties and forced population displacement would be probable; and al Qaeda in Iraq would attempt to use parts of the country to plan increased attacks in and outside of Iraq.

It seems pretty clear to me, Mr. Speaker, what we are debating here is success or failure.

Let us not support that catastrophe. Let us not promote a humanitarian disaster which is almost unimaginable. Let us support success in Iraq. Let us support the new commander in Iraq and give him what he needs to succeed in this mission.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN).

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

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution expressing disapproval of the President's decision to escalate the war in Iraq.

During the past 4 years, I have embraced, stood by, and prayed with Wisconsin families as they said their last goodbyes to their brave sons and daughters and husbands and wives. Those fallen soldiers have served with the utmost loyalty and courage, trusting decision-makers in Washington, the President, his administration, and this Congress to do the right thing. Like almost all of my colleagues, I have visited with wounded troops at Walter Reed and at home and joined with families and communities to send troops off to war and to welcome them back home. All of them, all of them, the dead, the wounded, the deployed, the returned, and their families, deserve political leaders who will make decisions worthy of their enormous sacrifice. Mr. Speaker, we have fallen well short of that goal, and we will only honor their sacrifices when we acknowledge this and end the war.

I want to review just some of the things that we now know. We all know that this is a war of choice, not a war of necessity. We all know that Iraq posed no imminent danger to America that would justify what this administration called a ''preemptive'' war. We all know that Iraq had nothing to do with the tragic September 11 attacks that our Nation suffered. We know that few in the world stood with America as we undertook this nearly unilateral war. And we now know that our war in

Iraq has diverted our attention and our resources from efforts to combat terrorist threats to our Nation.

And beyond that, we know now that worldwide resentment of our military presence in Iraq has become a central recruiting tool for terrorist organizations worldwide. Therefore, we know that this war continues to make America less safe and more vulnerable.

What else do we now know? We now know that the planning and execution of this war was wrought with enormous miscalculations. We know that more than 3,000 American servicemembers have lost their lives in Iraq, and we know that between 56,000 and 61,000 Iraqi civilians have been killed since the war began. And based on polls released Monday, we know that 68 percent of Americans disapprove of the President's handling of this war.

Mr. Speaker, I was among the first group of House Members to speak out against the prospect of going to war in Iraq, and I voted against authorizing the use of force in Iraq; and as an early and consistent critic of the war, I understand the importance of offering a new course in Iraq. We must bring an end to our military occupation and replace it with a program of humanitarian relief, rebuilding political stabilization, and diplomatic engagement. We must participate in a robust regional diplomatic effort, including direct discussions with Syria and Iran, to promote stability in Iraq. And I think that this effort will be well received by Iraq's neighbors because regardless of whether these countries are close allies of the United States or not, Iraq's neighbors have more to gain if Iraq is stabilized and more to lose if it is not.

We must also heed the advice of many, including the Iraq Study Group, and acknowledge that other conflicts in the Middle East require our attention and leadership if the region is to achieve lasting stability. Therefore, we must also initiate a new push for Arab-Israeli peace. I believe that Congress has not only the right but the responsibility to assert its constitutional role as a co-equal branch of government in overseeing the conduct of this war and bringing it to an end. In doing so, I believe all options, including using the power of the purse, should be on the table.

The United States is the lone superpower in the world today. And along with that awesome power comes responsibility to humankind. America's reason for maintaining its superpower status must be to export the best of our democratic system of governance and the hope of the American Dream to the rest of the world. But these cherished ideals cannot be exported through force. We must teach and lead by example.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution expressing disapproval of the President's decision to escalate the war in Iraq.

During the past 4 years I have embraced, stood by, and prayed with Wisconsin families as they said their last goodbyes to their brave sons and daughters, husbands and wives. Those fallen soldiers have served with the utmost loyalty and courage, trusting decision-makers in Washington—the President; his administration and this Congress—to do the right thing. Like almost all of my colleagues, I have visited with wounded troops at Walter Reed and at home, and joined with families and communities to send troops off to war and to welcome them back home. All of them, all of them—the dead, the wounded, the deployed, the returned, their families—deserve political leaders who make decisions worthy of their enormous sacrifices. Mr. Speaker, we have fallen well short of that goal, and we will only honor their sacrifices when we acknowledge this and end the war.

I want to review just some of the things that we know. We all know that this is a war of choice, not a war of necessity. We all know that Iraq posed no imminent danger to America that would justify what this Administration called a "pre-emptive" war. We all know that Iraq had nothing to do with the tragic September 11 attacks that our Nation suffered. We know that few in the world stood with America as we undertook this nearly unilateral war. We now know that our war in and occupation of Iraq has diverted our attention and our resources from our multi-faceted efforts to combat terrorist threats to our Nation and its allies. And beyond that, we now know (based upon last year's declassified intelligence estimates) that worldwide resentment of our military presence in Iraq has become a central recruiting tool for terrorist organizations worldwide to increase their ranks. Therefore, we know that this war continues to make America less safe and more vulnerable as long as it persists.

What else do we now know? We now know that the planning and the execution of the war following our invasion were wrought with enormous miscalculations. We now know that billions of U.S. taxpayer dollars have been lost or squandered through no-bid contracts, lack of accountability measures and lack of Congressional oversight under the previous Republican majority. We know that more than 3,000 American service members have lost their lives in Iraq. We know that between 56,000 and 61,000 Iraqi civilians have been killed since the war began. And, based on polls released Monday, we know that 68 percent of Americans disapprove of the President's handling of the war in Iraq and 72 percent of Americans believe that things are going badly in Iraq.

The situation in Iraq today has variously been called an all-out civil war or more simply a state of chaos.

For years many Americans, including many members of this Congress from both parties, gave this war a chance. It is time for this administration to give peace a chance. It is time for the President to pay attention to the vast yet still growing majority of Americans that want us to get out of Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I was among the first group of House Members to speak out against the prospect of going to war in Iraq. I voted against authorizing the use of force in Iraq, and as an early and consistent critic of the war, I understand the importance of offering a new course in Iraq. Many of my colleagues have introduced bills that would redeploy our troops in a responsible manner within a reasonable time frame, while focusing on aggressive diplomatic efforts to stabilize the Middle East. A number of these bills and resolutions establish concrete benchmarks for the Iraqi government. It is long overdue for this Administration to start paying attention to these alternative proposals, that chart a new course in Iraq. I believe that we must redefine our mission in Iraq. We must bring an end to our military occupation and replace it with a program of humanitarian relief, political stabilization,and diplomatic engagement. We must participate in a robust regional diplomatic effort, including direct discussions with Syria and Iran, to promote stability in Iraq. And I think that effort would be well received by all Iraq's neighbors, because regardless of whether these countries are close allies of the United States, or not, Iraq's neighbors have more to gain if Iraq is stabilized and more to lose if it is not.

We must also heed the advice of many, including the Iraq Study Group, and acknowledge that other conflicts in the Middle East require our attention and leadership, if the region is to achieve lasting stability. Therefore, we must also initiate a new push for Arab-Israeli peace.

I believe Congress not only has the right, but the responsibility, to assert its constitutional role as a co-equal branch of government in overseeing the conduct of this war and bringing it to an end. Our Constitution explicitly authorizes Congress the power to declare war and to raise and support armies. If Congress is given the power to make wars, we must also exercise our power to end wars. In doing so, I believe all options, including using "the power of the purse," should be on the table.

The United States is the lone superpower in the world today. Along with that awesome and unprecedented power comes responsibilities to humankind. America's reason for maintaining her superpower status must be to export the best of our democratic system of governance and the hope of the American Dream to the rest of the world. But these cherished ideals can't be exported through force. We must teach and lead by example.

Mr. Speaker, while I support the resolution, I strongly believe Congress needs to do more to represent the will of the people and pursue all options that would lead to an end to this occupation and this war.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 10 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. AKIN) and note that he has a son who has served as a U.S. Marine in Iraq.

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

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Speaker, we come here today, we have spent most of the day on this, to discuss a resolution. It has two parts. The first says that we support our troops, and the second says that we are opposed to the mission that the troops are sent on.

Now, the problem with the resolution is that it is self-contradictory right up front. If we were going to say we are supporting our troops, we would give them body armor. We would give them up-armored Humvees. We would give them tanks. But would we withhold the most important in our arsenal and that is other American fighting men and women? So to say that we are going to support our troops, but we are not

going to send them any reinforcements is on the face of it contradictory. Could you picture Davy Crockett at the Alamo looking at his BlackBerry, getting a message from Congress: Davy Crockett, we support you. The only thing is we are not going to send any troops. I am sure that would really be impressive to Davy Crockett.

The second problem with this resolution is that it really misses the job of what Congressmen should be doing. Look, I am an engineer by training. If we are about to make a mistake or we are doing something wrong, I am open minded to my Democrat colleagues saying to me, TODD, we are going down the wrong path. That is a bad idea. You should do it this way instead. I was always trained that if you are ready to criticize somebody, you at least offer an alternative. But the problem with this nifty little resolution is that it says we support the troops, but we are not going to give them any reinforcements, and then it is blank. There is no recommendation. There is no leadership. They are just saying we are going to stand on the sidelines and say, It won't work. But don't we owe our soldiers something positive, something specific, a positive recommendation?

The Democrats have been elected to majority. That means leadership. That means if you have got a better idea, put it on the table; but if you don't, shut up and don't undermine the morale of our troops and encourage our enemies. That isn't very helpful.

Now, I have heard people talking about the fact that this is a civil war. This isn't a civil war. If we leave, it will be what is a real civil war. Right now there is a lot of ethnic clashing and violence, and what is that caused by? Guess what, terrorists. They said they are doing it intentionally. They blow up a holy place of the Shias, and the Shias react and they go shoot up a bunch of Sunnis, and so, yes. But who started all of this? Well, of course, it is the terrorists. It is their intention. And do we think if they can destabilize Iraq by fomenting strife between racial groups that they won't take the same strategy to the other barely stable nations in the Middle East, nations where you have a Sunni leadership and a Shia majority? Are they not going to do the same? Or are you going to say, oh, but it is a civil war, so we can wash our hands of it, it is nothing to worry about?

Now, we had the ambassadors to Egypt and to Jordan, and they pleaded with us today, do not rapidly withdraw your troops. So we started to ask, well, what would happen if we were to do this? Well, nobody knows. But there is one thing we can kind of assume. All the way through history, the history of mankind, whenever there is anarchy, it lasts but a short time; and it is immediately filled with some kind of very strong dictator. Now, do we think that the dictator is going to be a moderate, reasonable sort of guy, or if we pull out of Iraq immediately, is it not likely that we are going to get an Islamoterrorist dictator? I think that that makes at least some sense. So then now what do we have? Now we have Iraq with the oil money supporting it, with this crazy dictator spreading this same kind of radical Islam all over the Middle East. That is a minimum for the scenario of what we are potentially looking at if we rapidly withdraw.

Now, it seems to me that all of us, as Americans, need a little bit of a direction check. And I think sometimes when we need direction, it is helpful to look at the people who came and founded this great Nation before us. And so I go back to a question that I ask audiences, not only school kids but adults. I ask them, What is it that makes America so unique and so precious? If you take America like an onion and take all the outer layers off, when you get down to the heart, what makes us who we are as a people? And invariably I hear the word ''freedom.'' But that is not quite sufficient because it isn't quite complete. You see, the people at Tiananmen Square, those little kids in college, wanted freedom, but they greased the treads of Chinese tanks. Just because you want freedom doesn't mean you can have it.

There was more to what our Founders understood, and they set it forth before we embarked on our first war as a Nation eloquently in our Declaration of Independence. It says: ''We hold these truths to be self-evident.'' Rather flowery language. Any idiot should know this: ''That all men are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these is Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.'' And our job in government is to protect those God-given rights. It is not just an idea; it was a conviction. People say ideas have consequences. Many idiots have ideas, but an idea that you die for has consequences. And this idea was powerful. It is the engine that has driven America. It has guided us in times of war because we will say, yes, we believe there are certain fundamental God-given rights that all people are given.

And that is what I taught my son when he was a little kid. Here he is with the Marine Club, just a little guy, saluting Old Glory with a whole bunch of little kids in some motley uniforms they bought from the used equipment store for military services. Here he is posing just as proud as can be. Founder of the Marine Club, taught, taught that there are some things in this world that are worth dying for, and those convictions are the fact that God gives us life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness. And I believe America still believes that.

There is the little marine. He has grown up now. That is the cache of terrorist arms that was found in Fallujah. That is the gang that he had the proud opportunity to lead as a second lieutenant in Fallujah because he believes that there is nothing particularly strange for us to be fighting terrorists.

Why would it be so odd for us to fight terrorists? What do terrorists believe? They believe that you blow up innocent people. What do we believe? That life is a gift from God.

□ 2130

What do terrorists do terrorism for? To take your liberty away, to compel you to do something you don't want to do, to make women into slaves, to take away people's freedom, to take away your liberty. That is what terrorism is for, and that is fundamentally against the idea that God made people to be free. That is why he fights.

That is why America has always fought. There is nothing weird or unusual about this. Is it worth fighting terrorists? Is it worth risking your life for freedom? I taught my son yes. When I went over to visit him, together we reaffirmed what we were doing in Iraq.

What? Is it so unusual that we have a debate about whether we should be going to war or not? That very first war was over the Declaration of Independence. There was a gentleman from Virginia who said, What has there been in the conduct? But perhaps maybe we could adjust his words.

What has there been in the conduct of the terrorists that gives us any room for hope? The terrorists say the only good Jew is a dead Jew, the only good Christian is a dead Christian. That doesn't leave you a lot of room for negotiation.

If we want to stay free, we must fight. Millions of Americans that are armed in the holy cause of liberty are invincible by any force which the terrorists may send against us. A just God presides over the destinies of nations. Is life so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of the terrorists running the world? Forbid it, Almighty God.

I know not what course others may take, but as for me, and as for my son, we will choose liberty.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my friend, colleague, and neighbor from California (Mr. MCNERNEY).

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, the young men and women who joined the Armed Forces after 9/11 out of a sense of duty and love for our country are just like my son Michael, who joined the military because of those terrible attacks. I am proud and heartened by their commitment to service and patriotism, just as I am proud of my own son's commitment, and I am concerned about their safety and well-being, just as I was about Michael's when he was in the service.

When I talk about supporting our troops, it is not rhetorical, it is personal. And it is with great sadness and steely resolve that I stand up here tonight on the issue of Iraq and the President's plan to escalate that conflict. I am saddened because the misguided and mismanaged conflict has become a tragic disaster and a genuine

threat to Mideast stability and global security. The escalation will cause more violence in the Middle East and will weaken our Nation.

I am resolved, because it is our duty as the Congress of this great Nation to check and balance the power of the President on any issue we believe harmful to this country. This administration insists on finding a military answer rather than changing this failed approach and pursuing the diplomatic and political solutions necessary to bring an end to the violence.

Unfortunately, the President's plan to escalate the war in Iraq will not bring success there, nor make the United States more secure. In fact, the proposal means a further distraction from the mission in Afghanistan and the need for a tougher, smarter approach to the global war on terrorism. The President's proposal puts more U.S. lives at risk, further stretching the readiness of our ground forces and increasing the drain on our Treasury.

President Bush's plan is opposed by military experts, by Republicans and Democrats in both Chambers of Congress, and by the vast majority of our country. That is why I rise in strong support of the resolution under consideration in this body.

The resolution has two straightforward provisions: continuing support for those American soldiers who have served or are currently serving in Iraq; and disagreeing with the President's plan to escalate the conflict.

Supporting our troops is my top priority, not just because it is our duty and responsibility, but because it is personal to me and my family.

Recently the Washington Post reported that the Marine Corps and Army brigades that would be sent to Iraq under the President's plan are short of body armor, vehicles, and other important equipment. That shows just how desperate the President's misguided plan is. Military action should never be executed in desperation.

We must transfer the responsibility for establishing and maintaining law and order on the streets of Iraq to the Iraqis. Training those Iraqi units must be done outside of Iraq. This will mean more troops trained more quickly and will lessen the likelihood that Iraqi army and police turn to dangerous militias and death squads.

The members of our Armed Forces who have served in Iraq have done so, bravely and honorably. Unfortunately, the President's strategy in Iraq has not matched the commitment with which our troops have served in that country.

We must begin a responsible redeployment of our troops out of Iraq on a public timeline that makes sense, while pursuing political and diplomatic solutions. Yet the President has steadfastly refused to engage in the political and diplomatic efforts necessary to bring a resolution to the violence in Iraq.

Both Republicans and Democrats agree that we need a new direction in Iraq. I will continue to push for that new direction while always putting our troops first.

This resolution is an important first step. I stand with resolve in opposing President Bush's plan for an escalation in Iraq.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. AL GREEN of Texas). The Chair will remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of proceedings or other audible conversation is in violation of the rules of the House.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. HOOLEY).

Ms. HOOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join the discussion on Iraq that is taking place in this Chamber, across this country, in classrooms, coffee shops, living rooms and across back fences. This resolution asks whether the House of Representatives believes with regard to the war in Iraq that doing more of the same is a correct strategy to adopt.

Since this war began, 3,125 American soldiers have died and 23,417 have been wounded. There have been over 100,000 Iraqi casualties and nearly $500 billion has been spent. We have tried troop surges before in this war and we have seen the results. In November of 2004, the United States increased the troop levels by approximately 18,000. And guess what happened? Insurgent attacks went up by 17 percent. Did that surge work? No.

In June of 2005, we increased troop levels again, this time by 21,500 troops. Guess what happened? Insurgent attacks went up 29 percent. Did that surge work? No.

If we allow to surge troop levels again, by how much can we expect insurgent attacks to rise this time? Einstein once suggested that insanity is doing something over and over and over again and expecting different results.

Mr. Speaker, I voted against going to war in Iraq, but ever since the President committed our first soldier, I have done everything in my power to support our troops and give them equipment to keep them safe. Our warrior soldiers have done everything we have asked of them and more, and I remain committed to our troops until the very last soldier leaves Iraq, and I will do whatever it takes to protect our soldiers. But putting an additional 37,000 American troops in harm's way when there hasn't been a change in strategy is not how we as a country support our troops.

Last November, the American people spoke loud and clear. They said that the current tactics in Iraq weren't working and they don't support more of the same. An escalation of troops will not quell the violence, but will lead to increased violence, more American casualties and a further destabilized Iraq.

There is a moment when wisdom requires change, and I believe that the time has come to say enough is enough. America's military involvement in Iraq needs to draw to a close and it is time for the Iraqi people to assume control over their own country.

I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in voting ''yes'' on this resolution.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, to complete this triad of veterans' fathers, fathers of sons who have served in Iraq, is JOE WILSON, whose son Alan has received the Combat Action Badge for service in Iraq and the Palmetto Cross, which is a high award for the National Guard in South Carolina, and who has a son in the Signal Corps, Julian, a doctor in the Navy, and a son Hunter, a well-named son, Hunter, in the ROTC.

The reason I am going through these members of the Wilson clan, Mr. Speaker, is because inspired by his wife Roxanne, all these young men are serving in the military, and if the Wilson family does not re-up, we are in trouble.

I yield such time as he may consume to the great gentleman from South Carolina, JOE WILSON, to follow that wonderful presentation by Mr. AKIN.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Thank you, Congressman HUNTER, for your leadership for our troops and for your son's service in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of our men and women serving in the United States Armed Forces and in opposition to House Concurrent Resolution 63, a resolution that claims to support the troops but opposes reinforcements. To truly support our troops, we must provide the equipment and sufficient personnel requested by their commander, General David Petraeus.

I believe that we must triumph in the global war on terrorism, that victory in Iraq is the only option, and that America's survival is at stake. My convictions are deeply derived from personal experience and from historical perspective.

My concerns have been developed as a member of the Armed Services Committee, through which I have visited Iraq six times, as a 31-year veteran of the Army Reserves and Army National Guard, and as the proud parent of an Iraq veteran.

Less than a year after the war in Iraq began, my eldest son, Captain Alan Wilson, was deployed across Iraq, where he served honorably for 1 year. Alan worked for young girls to be able to attend schools. He has been a trusted military advisor to me regarding life on the front lines in Iraq. Alan today continues to serve in the South Carolina Army National Guard.

In addition to Alan, my younger three sons are also in the military. My wife Roxanne and I appreciate their dedication to protecting American families.

The decision to support continued efforts in Iraq is not one I made lightly. In the end, however, it is the only viable solution. Retreat is not an option.

Defeat is not an option. There is no end but victory.

I was truly transformed by September 11th, and I live with its ramifications every day. I sincerely believe we are faced with fighting the terrorists overseas today, or we will face them in the streets of America tomorrow.

The attacks of September 11th were not isolated, random events. Our enemy is highly intelligent, well financed, and committed to the destruction of our freedoms.

Terrorists have declared war on the American people. We have a choice of opposing them overseas or fighting them again here in America. The concept that America's retreat in Iraq will bring an end to sectarian violence and terrorist activity in the region ignores history. Premature retreat will embolden the enemy and make us more vulnerable to attacks.

□ 2145

We have seen it happen before. Withdrawals from Beirut and Mogadishu led to the 1993 World Trade Center attack, the 1998 embassy bombings across Africa, the 2000 bombings of the USS *Cole* and ultimately September 11, 2001.

Al Qaeda has openly stated Iraq is the central front in the war on terrorism. Osama bin Laden himself has said, ''The issue is big and the misfortune is momentous. The most important and serious issue today for the whole world is this third world war. I say to you that the war will be won either by us or by you. If it's the former, loss and disgrace will be your lot for all eternity, and, Allah be praised, this is the way the wind is blowing. If it is the latter, you should read the history books. We are a nation that does not remain silent over injustice, and we will seek blood vengeance all lifelong. Not many days and nights will pass before we take blood vengeance, like we did on 9/11,'' end of quote of Osama bin Laden.

We ignore bin Laden's words to the peril of American families.

All of this is not to say that Members of Congress do not have an obligation to question foreign policy. As elected public officials, it is our duty to do so. If by conscience one disagrees with our direction, he or she has a responsibility to put forth an alternative plan.

An alternative plan, however, is not what we are debating today. Instead, the Democrat leadership has put aside 36 hours of debate for a resolution that provides no substantive solutions.

Our men and women in uniform deserve better. Their families deserve better. These men and women deserve to know that America supports them, that Congress will provide requested equipment and personnel, and that we are all committed to their victory.

There is no magic bullet, no cure-all pill, but the fact remains that we must endure. The stakes are too high, the consequences of defeat too catastrophic. As men and women elected to represent our constituencies and provide for their well-being, it is our responsibility to look out for the safety of American families.

In conclusion, God bless our troops. We will never forget September 11. Our thoughts and prayers are with the late Congressman CHARLIE NORWOOD, his wife, Gloria, his family, his staff and his constituents.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield 6 minutes to my friend and colleague from Tennessee, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COOPER).

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

Mr. COOPER. Mr. Speaker, I disapprove of the President's January 10 decision to surge 20,000 new troops into Iraq. I urge my colleagues to support the resolution.

Mr. Speaker, although the President says that the 20,000 new troops constitute a change in his strategy, all I am seeing are a repeat of the same failed policies of the past. America has sent additional troops to Iraq before, several times, without result. America has tried to work with the Maliki government, and it has not been very successful.

Mr. Speaker, we have to admit that this approach is not working. The President himself has admitted that his patience is running out with the Maliki government. It is really just a question of whether Congress should try to force President Bush and Vice President CHENEY to change course now or whether they will do it several months from now. I say that the time for change is now.

It is true that Congress has no business micromanaging a war. No one here in Congress is Commander in Chief. It is also true that we must not shirk from our responsibilities to support our brave men and women in uniform, and we need to support the brave Iraqis who have stood with us and the good people of the region, but we do deserve a better strategy. More of the same is just not good enough, either for our soldiers or for the good people of the region.

President Bush, we have to admit, has shown a distressing stubbornness regarding Iraq. Although former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld offered to resign twice due to his own embarrassment with his failures, President Bush refused to accept his resignation for years, and finally only accepted it the day after the last election. Colleagues on both sides of the aisle know that if the President had accepted that resignation earlier, not only would Pentagon policy have been different; the core of the war might well have been different.

I think that the President needs a nudge now, and this resolution will offer it. True, it is nonbinding, but that is a good thing. Congress is not cutting off money for the troops, nor should we. We are sending a message to the President.

Now, I will admit that it is a shame that we do have to do it this way; but on this issue, the President has refused to heed the advice of so many of his own top generals, of his own father, of the Iraq Study Group, of our few remaining allies, or of the leadership of this equal branch of government. It is also a shame that today in America there is a widespread fear that the President could even be establishing the preconditions for war with Iran. Regardless of that situation, I hope that this resolution will curb any reckless behavior.

Finally, why is a change in strategy necessary now? Iraq appears to be descending into a civil war that neither Congress nor the Pentagon predicted. Defense Secretary Gates has described no less than four separate conflicts going on in Iraq today. That has led stalwart Republicans like Senator John Warner, the former chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, to question whether the 2002 authorization to use force in Iraq is even still valid today. American influence in the region has substantially diminished, while the influence of Iran has increased. It is time for a change.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the original judgment of CENTCOM commander General Abizaid who testified before Congress not long ago, and he said, ''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 went on to say, ''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.'' That is quoting General Abizaid.

Mr. Speaker, I would have been more inclined to support the President if he had asked for a much larger number of troops or for a sacrifice on the part of all Americans who do not have a loved one in our military. Such proposals would have led me to believe that the President was considering a serious change in strategy, but the President has not recommended either.

Instead, he has consistently violated the so-called Powell doctrine by not waging war with an overwhelming military force, a clear objective, or a defined exit strategy. From the beginning of this conflict, we have skimped on the number of troops, the equipment for our soldiers, the commitment of our allies. It is simply too late to add on a few thousand more troops now.

Our brave troops and their families in the all-volunteer military have carried the entire burden of this war. Wall Street and Main Street have not been asked to help. Where are the war bonds to pay for this war? We have not even tried to pay for it. We have borrowed most of the money from nations like

China. Policies like that do not make the Nation more secure.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, Congress has already given the President more time to fight this war than it took to win World War II, more money than was spent in Korea and Vietnam, and the unfettered use of the finest military in history. We are spending more on our military than every other nation in the world combined, and yet we are bogged down in a Third World country embroiled in its own civil war. At this point in time, it is not unreasonable for Congress to say enough is enough. Voters certainly said so clearly in the last election.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute just to respond to my friend from Tennessee.

Let me just point out that we are spending roughly 4 percent of GDP on defense at this point. President Ronald Reagan spent 6 percent. President John Kennedy, 9 percent. Operations in the war against terror are not bankrupting this country.

With respect to the group of allies that the gentleman called our few remaining friends, I am reminded that there is a number of them like Poland and Moldavia and Herzegovina and Georgia and Bosnia and Azerbaijan and Armenia and Albania, lots of little countries that used to be behind the Iron Curtain or in the case of El Salvador, in what was called by the Democrat Party the unwinnable war in Central America in Salvador, those countries, which themselves were the beneficiaries of an American policy of expanding freedom are standing with our country in this operation in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT), who is a member of the Armed Services Committee.

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the resolution offered by the majority expressing the disapproval of President Bush's decision to deploy more than 20,000 additional troops to Iraq.

This resolution, in my opinion, is nothing but politics. Opposition to a plan is not a plan. This resolution is using our service men and women in a debate that does not address policy. If this was an earnest debate about the administration's proposal, then the majority would have offered a bill that answers two pertinent questions: What is success, and how do we achieve it?

Instead, we stand here debating a bill that opposes sending reinforcements to Iraq. There are no amendments allowed, and there is certainly no plan offered in this bill.

In fact, this debate is incredibly ironic since many of those on the other side of the aisle were calling for more troops not too long ago. Once again, the debate was not about success, but about opposition to the administration's vision.

Let us talk about policy. First, nostalgic thoughts and longing for the times before the U.S. entered Iraq are not useful nor can they be used as a vision for the future. We are in this war. We must win. Anything less than an honest discussion on how to proceed forward is a disservice to this Nation and to our military.

Second, if our policy is to support a stable Iraq, then we must employ a strategy to achieve that goal. The President and our military commanders have stated that in order to fulfill that policy objective, Baghdad must be secured. In order to secure Baghdad, the Iraqi security forces need more American troops to reinforce their operations. President Bush agreed to this on the condition that the Iraqis lead the fight and that the Iraq Government take more responsibility for securing their country.

If the majority party disagrees with this policy objective and the strategy to achieve it, then I ask them, what is their policy objective, and how do they plan to achieve it? I have yet to hear a consensus from my friends on the other side of the aisle on what they believe our policy should be. They certainly cannot suggest that this resolution even faintly resembles a plan or vision for a successful resolution to the current conflict.

I will tell you what the debate is. It is a sound bite. It is a quick and easy way to feed the defeatists in this country. More than anything it is a disappointment. The majority would rather score political points than have a real discussion on the most important question of this generation, how to win the war against our enemies and keep our country safe.

We should be asking ourselves, what would failure in the Middle East mean?

Our enemies have stated that they believe that Western Civilization is rotten to the core. Unless we get out of the Middle East entirely and convert to Islam, we will always be their enemy. In chapter 2 of the 9/11 report, the authors answer what the terrorists want from America:

''To the second question, what America could do, al Qaeda's answer was that America should abandon the Middle East, convert to Islam, and end the immorality and godlessness of its society and culture.''

Al Qaeda is closely watching Iraq, sending fighters and weapons and doing most everything in its power to bring about an American retreat. If we leave Iraq before it is secure, what will that do to our enemy, an enemy who has already stated that they seek to destroy us not for being in Iraq but for being in the Middle East and for being non-Muslim?

An American failure would bolster al Qaeda and every other terrorist organization in the world. It would give them a reason to believe that they can win and that it could give them confidence so they could surely breach our shores one day. It would let them believe that their plan, a plan to destroy Western culture for its godlessness, is correct.

As 9/11 taught us, warfare is no longer limited to the enemies within our region. Geographic boundaries and long distances do not keep us safe.

□ 2200

An enemy encouraged by a retreat in Iraq will be close to our heels. That is exactly why we must stay and confront our enemies.

So how is this enemy, who is at a military and financial disadvantage, seeking to win? They simply studied a little American history. Both Osama bin Laden and al-Zarqawi have referenced the Vietnam conflict in forming their strategy to defeat us.

Many in this body often rush to compare this conflict with Vietnam, and in one respect it is very similar: both enemies understood the way to victory was through American politicians. If they can weaken the American political will, they knew they could achieve victory. The majority often invokes the number of our war dead as the reason to leave or the fact that this conflict has gone longer than our involvement in World War II. These arguments play right into the hands of the enemy and their propaganda machine.

What people don't seem to understand is that we cannot fall into the trap of comparisons, or we risk losing sight of what our men and women in the Armed Forces need from us: they need our support. They need a coherent policy and strategy that does not make politics the long pole in the tent.

Courage to do the right thing is not always easy. I will not abandon those who have fought and given their lives in this conflict. I will not abandon the Iraqis who long for peace. Instead, I support the President's call for more troops. I believe it is the right thing to do. It is illogical to say you support the troops that are there, but not the reinforcements that they need.

In closing, I would like to remember those who have lost their lives to the acts of terrorism:

The Beirut embassy and Marine barracks bombing in 1983; the bombing of Pan Am 103, 1988; the first bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993; the bombing of the AMIA Jewish Community Center in Buenos Aires in Argentina in 1994; the bombing of the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia 1996; the bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998; the bombings of the USS Cole in Yemen in the year 2000; the attacks on New York City and the Pentagon, September 11, 2001; the Madrid train bombings, March 11, 2004; the London bombings, July 7, 2005.

Do not doubt that if they were given the chance, our enemies would come in this Chamber tonight and kill us all.

This resolution is not a solution. It is nothing but doubt, fear, and weakness. I urge my colleagues to vote against this resolution and stand up for victory.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 7 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ISRAEL).

Mr. ISRAEL. I thank the gentlewoman.

Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by setting the record straight. I have heard my friends on the other side talk about this resolution as calling for withdrawal, as calling for retreat. There is nothing in this resolution that says withdraw; there is nothing in this resolution that says retreat; there is nothing in this resolution that says exit.

What this resolution says is that we support our troops, and we do not believe that it is a good idea to add 20,000 more troops to a policy that has not worked.

In October of 2002, I voted to authorize the use of force in Iraq. I believed then, as I believe now, that the Middle East is a dangerous place and that you have to use a combination of hard power and soft power to help change the trajectory of the Middle East from a place that teaches kids how to blow things up to a place that teaches kids how to put things together.

In January of 2005, I visited our troops in Iraq, and I remember sitting with General Casey and asking him, How many foreign fighters are here and how many insurgents? And at that point, January 2005, the General said, Congressman, there are about 500 foreign fighters and there are about 5,000 insurgents. And so what to do? We committed more force to try and solve that problem.

And then I went back to Iraq in April of 2006, 15 months later, and I asked General Casey, How many foreign fighters are there and how many insurgents? And General Casey said, Congressman, there are 5,000 foreign fighters, there used to be 500, now 5,000; there used to be 5,000 insurgents, now there are 20,000 insurgents. And so what did we do? We threw in more force.

And now a year after that we stand here debating a resolution on whether we should commit another 20,000 troops to a mission that is poorly planned, from a military that has been strained by that poor planning and that is ill conceived.

Now, I want to be very clear, Mr. Speaker. If the President of the United States asked me to support additional troops into Afghanistan tonight to find Osama bin Laden, who by the way was the one who killed over 100 of my constituents, or to stop the resurgence of the Taliban, which by the way was the group of people who really gave aid and comfort to the enemy, I would vote for that tonight. I absolutely would vote for that tonight. But this decision by the President to put 20,000 more people into Iraq is the wrong number at the wrong place at the wrong time.

Mr. Speaker, during this debate I have heard my colleagues talk about the messages that we are sending our troops and how it will affect their morale, and I have an obligation as somebody who supports our military to suggest that if we had given our troops up-armor for their Humvees, Kevlar for their vests, night-vision goggles that work, and consistent rotations, their morale would be much better.

Our troops are not afraid of democracy being waged on the floor of the House of Representatives. And, in fact, on the chance that our enemies are listening to this debate, let me suggest that this debate doesn't give aid and comfort to our enemies. It tells our enemies what democracy is about. So for our enemies who may be listening: welcome to democracy. This is what it sounds like, this is what it looks like, and this is what we are willing to fight for.

What our servicemembers deserve to hear is the truth. What they deserve is a government that confronts reality rather than simply hoping for the best. So here is the truth, Mr. Speaker: somewhere between those who believe that we can stay the course in Iraq indefinitely and those who believe that we should leave Iraq tomorrow is the painful truth. The truth is that neither of those options will work.

Now, if you agree with me that that is the painful reality, then you are left with a hard choice: add 20,000 troops to continue the administration's ineffective plan, or try something different. 20,000 additional troops to Iraq, or rebuild our readiness here at home to deal with the growing challenges of Iran or naval expansion in China or genocide in Darfur or the other dangers in the world. Hold the Iraqi Government accountable for accelerating the training of their troops, or continue hoping for the best while putting the burden on the backs of 20,000 more U.S. troops.

Let me make two other points. The gentleman who preceded me, my friend from California, said, what do you have to offer? We have offered ideas; we have offered ideas from day one. The problem has been the stubborn resistance by the administration to listen to our ideas.

I have been advocating with my friend from California (Mrs. TAUSCHER) a status of forces agreement in Iraq, so that we would send the message that we are not occupiers, that we don't want to be there for one day longer than we need to be. The administration has rejected that.

I have been advocating with my friend from Pennsylvania (Mr. CARNEY) a one-for-one resolution. I and others have been advocating a formula, a one-for-one formula that says that for every Iraqi security force that stands up an American will be redeployed.

So we have provided ideas. And I want to once again offer a bipartisan invitation to my colleagues to work with us, because whether this resolution passes or not, the war is not going to end the next day. We still have many challenges ahead, and we are going to have to work together.

And, finally, Mr. Speaker, let me make a point about some of the characterizations that we have been listening to. As a Democrat, I know that there is not a single Republican who wakes up in the morning wanting this war to last for one day longer than it has to last. And in the same spirit, I am offended by anyone who would suggest that there is a Democrat who gives aid and comfort to the enemy, who wants us to be defeated, who wants us to lose. That is not what we are about.

We need to end the sound bites and the partisanship and the war rooms off the floor of the House that tell people what to say, and begin formulating effective policy for the troops that are listening to us tonight.

I visited my VA hospital yesterday, and I saw men and women in wheelchairs and gurneys. It didn't say Republican or Democrat on those wheelchairs and gurneys. When the time came, they went to fight for us. Our obligation is to stand by them, not with sound bites, not with policies that haven't worked before, but with new ideas for a stronger country.

Mr. HUNTER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 2 minutes to respond to my colleague, my good friend who just spoke, Mr. ISRAEL.

Let me just make a couple of points. With respect to up-armored Humvees, when we entered this administration, the Humvee is a successor to the Jeep, it is a tactical vehicle, we had 1,200 up-armored Humvees. That was in the year 2000. Today, we have got 15,000 up-armored 114s, plus thousands of Humvees that have the so-called MAC kits which are also protective armor kits.

We had virtually no body armor in the year 2000. I don't believe we had a single set that was available for any line units in any American division in the world. Today, we have over 400,000 of those.

I just want to make a point, if there are American moms and dads, and we have had a few who have thought that their sons and daughters were going to Iraq without body armor, I have said, Call me personally at the office, and I have not had a single phone call in 2 years. So they have plenty of body armor.

And, lastly, I just want to make one other point with respect to what America has, because there has been an implication I think throughout the debate that we are stretched too thin, that others may attack us, may take advantage of the fact that we have deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan. Since the year 2000, we have more than doubled the precision firepower of this country. That means the ability of this country, and Republicans and Democrats have supported the funding that has done this; but if any country in the world should think they are going to take advantage of an America that is, in their estimation, stretched too thin, the precision firepower, that means the ability to send a smart weapon on target to thread a goal post at many, many miles, has more than doubled since the year 2000. And so no country

that feels that there is that implication in our situation in Iraq and Afghanistan should bet their life on it, because they will lose.

Madam Speaker, I yield 10 minutes to Mr. COLE, the outstanding gentleman from Fort Sill.

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about the challenges we face as a Nation, and to urge the Members of this House to confront those challenges honestly and forthrightly.

As I do, I remind my colleagues that this House is not a debating society. It is not a place to merely score political points or rhetorical points. It is a place where we should confront the issues that face our country and then act accordingly. This responsibility rests not just with the Members individually, but with the majority especially. We come to this floor not just to speak, opine, and orate. We come here to set policy, to legislate and, most importantly, to act.

This resolution the majority, the Democrats, put before us today presents us with a choice; but after we make that choice, nothing will happen, nothing will change. We will have chosen to state our opinion, but we will refuse to act on that opinion. Some will see this as a tragedy; some, Madam Speaker, will see it as a farce.

This resolution is not serious. It is a political ploy rather than a principled position. It is sound and fury that signifies nothing. It is a cruel joke on those who sincerely want to leave Iraq before our mission is finished, and it is an affront to those of us who wish to succeed in Iraq. But while this politically motivated resolution achieves nothing, it does have real and lasting consequences. Passing this resolution will embolden our enemies, it will discourage our friends, and it will disappoint our troops. It will raise questions about our seriousness as a legislative body to anyone who actually pays attention to our proceedings, and it will lead our enemies to question our resolve and it will leave our men and women in uniform wondering why we are sending them on a mission in which we do not believe, but lack the political courage to cancel.

Mr. Speaker, I am surprised and disappointed that the majority party would bring a resolution to the floor which condemns an action directed by our Commander in Chief and his military advisers yet which neither forbids that action nor offers an alternative course.

□ 2215

If the majority party, the Democratic Party, was being honest with their supporters and with the American people, they would have a straight up-or-down vote on whether or not to fund the initiative ordered by the President. This is the way in which we should approach our constitutionally defined responsibility in regard to war and peace.

Madam Speaker, I have often voiced my respect for my Democratic colleagues on the floor, and as individuals I do respect and admire them. However, I neither respect nor admire the manner in which their leadership has chosen to frame the issue which they now place before the House. My friends on the other side of the aisle have abdicated the responsibilities of being in the majority.

They do not want to legislate. They do not want to act, they just want to state an opinion. But they are stating it in a fashion that will lead many to question our sincerity as Members of this House and to doubt the effectiveness of the institution which we all love, and they are now privileged to lead.

Madam Speaker, the majority in this body has the responsibility to do more than just criticize. So, I ask, what is their plan? We don't know. How will they achieve a stable Iraq? They won't say.

It is time for Democrats to step up and answer these questions. It is easy to second-guess the decisions of former Congresses and the President. It is easy to reconsider one's support and the support many in this Congress and in their majority have voiced in the past of placing additional troops in Iraq. But, what is easy isn't always right and certainly not in this case.

Let there be no mistake. Our soldiers are engaged in combat this very minute. Our military commanders have voiced support for the mission that they have been asked to complete. General Petraeus, our commander in Iraq, supports the surge of forces. Indeed he says he needs these additional troops to succeed. Moreover, the declassified National Intelligence Estimate makes clear the disaster that would result from failure in Iraq.

Madam Speaker, let us consider what will happen if the Democrats are successful in undermining the mission and the objectives of the surge. What would it mean? What effect would this have on our forces? What would be the implications for our Nation and the region?

Well, Madam Speaker, at a practical level, it would certainly mean that our enemies would know they have weakened the will and resolve of the American people. They would take this as a lesson and a guide for the future. At a tactical level, it would likely increase the level of insurgent activity aimed at destroying our forces. Additionally, it would also mean that, lacking reinforcement, our current forces would be stretched even further.

Strategically adopting this resolution would undermine the credibility of the United States. It will make the region more chaotic and dangerous than it is today. I remember many Members of the majority party calling for an increase in the size of our force in Iraq not so long ago. I remember numerous statements by Members from the other side of the aisle that said the alternatives to success were too horrible to contemplate. They were right, but now those concerns seem to be no longer operative.

I am under no illusions that we face an easy road ahead in Iraq. Quite frankly, it is the greatest challenge our Nation has faced in a generation. However, the alternative to showing resolve in Iraq is defeat in the central front in the war on terror. That will be disastrous for the Iraqis, threatening for our friends in the region, and dangerous for the security of our own country.

That is why this resolution is so disturbing. Democrats want to have it three ways. They want to criticize the President's plan, offer none of their own, and then refuse to let our side of the aisle offer a proposal for consideration by this body. A nonbinding resolution is no plan for the future. It is a plan for the next election.

In the next few days, I will continue to engage in this debate and outline what I believe to be the real challenges and choices that we face, and why we must support the surge in forces. I hope that in this debate my side persuades my colleagues to reject this resolution.

But if they are not persuaded, then I hope they will have the political courage to act, as opposed to just talk; that they will legislate as opposed to just debate. I hope they will discharge their duties as a majority by laying out and enacting their strategy, as opposed to merely criticizing the President and complicating a dangerous situation faced by our forces in the field.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Madam Speaker, may I inquire about the time remaining on both sides?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlelady from California has 47½ minutes remaining, and the gentleman from California has 33 minutes remaining.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Madam Speaker, at this time I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I was interested in my colleague, the last speaker's questions, the question about why do we have a nonbinding resolution and does it have any significance. I should say, no one should minimize the significance of this resolution. Passage by a bipartisan majority of the House of Representatives of this resolution opposing the President's plan to escalate the war in Iraq would be a major turning point in the war debate.

Despite the fact that it is nonbinding, passage would have enormous significance. This bipartisan resolution is serving as the basis for the first real debate on the President's flawed Iraq war policy since the war began nearly 4 years ago. Last November, the voters sent President Bush a loud and unmistakable message about Iraq, but the President didn't listen.

As his announcement of an escalation of the war showed, passage of this bipartisan resolution is a second

chance for the President to hear a strong, clear message that cannot be ignored. Passage of this bipartisan resolution will send another clear message: No more blank checks for the President on Iraq.

In addition, passage of a nonbinding resolution opposing the President's escalation plan is only the first step in the Congress, demanding a changing of course in Iraq. When this resolution containing fewer than 100 words passes, we will take the country in a new direction in Iraq. A vote of disapproval will set the stage for additional legislation, which will be coming to the House floor.

Furthermore, what is surprising, as I see my colleagues from the other side trot forward one after another, I have to remind them that in their 12 years in the majority, House Republicans passed hundreds, hundreds of nonbinding resolutions, including in very similar situations.

For example, on October 30, 1995, the House Republican leadership brought to the floor and passed H. Res. 247, a nonbinding resolution repudiating President Clinton's pledge to deploy up to 20,000 troops to Bosnia as part of a peacekeeping force. I will remind my colleagues, Kosovo is about to be declared independent because the United States and NATO countries interceded and stopped the genocide there. That is a perfect example of wrongheaded policy that Democrats were able to put forward.

Madam Speaker, at this time, I am happy to yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN).

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

Mr. LANGEVIN. Madam Speaker, I am proud to join my colleagues in appreciation of our troops' exceptional service and sacrifice, and to voice my opposition to President Bush's plan to send more forces into what amounts to a civil war.

As a former member of the House Armed Services Committee and a new member of the Intelligence Committee, I recognize that our next steps in Iraq present one of the greatest security decisions our Nation has faced in decades.

The Iraq Study Group called the situation grave and deteriorating and said it requires a new approach. I agree. We can all conclude that an unstable Iraq, torn by sectarian conflict, would lead to continued violence and civilian casualties, provide combat training opportunities to those who would do us harm, and pose increased challenges to the region.

Yet I disagree with President Bush's misguided belief that sending more Americans into combat will solve the problem.

Our military has served valiantly for nearly 4 years, particularly in some very challenging and nontraditional missions, in some cases for which they were never trained. However, we have done all that we could do militarily to help the Iraqi people, and their problems no longer require a U.S. military solution. The underlying causes of violence are primarily political and must be addressed in that framework. Sending more troops would simply be a continuation of the same failed strategy.

In October of 2002, I expressed my concerns that President Bush's approach to Iraq could have dangerous ramifications in the region and America's own efforts in the war on terrorism. For those reasons and many others, I voted against authorizing use of force against Iraq, a war that was mismanaged by civilian leadership from the start.

Now, to address our troops' lack of protective gear and up-armored Humvees, I supported legislation to provide additional funding for proper equipment, as well as other efforts to assure our forces would be safe and effective. Now, however, we can best support our troops by changing our mission in Iraq and adopting a new strategy that reflects the realities on the ground. The Iraqis must now take the lead in providing for their own security, and we must reduce our presence to let them do so.

The President's claim that by adding 21,500 additional combat troops we can force a greater stability in Iraq is an argument that ignores some basic truths. Not only have past surges of U.S. forces proved unnecessary in reducing sectarian violence among Iraqis, but the addition of more troops would further inflame anti-American sentiment and turn popular opinion even more against us in our efforts. We have no proof that another surge would lead to a different outcome than in the past, but we do know that it would have negative consequences.

Now, perhaps of greatest concern is the impact of the surge on our military readiness. The President's estimate of 21,500 more combat troops does not count the additional 15,000 to 28,000 support troops that would be needed, spreading our military even more dangerously thin.

Madam Speaker, we have asked much of our forces, included repeated deployments, and a surge will only exacerbate that problem. Operations in Iraq have also taken their toll on our equipment.

According to the Government Accountability Office, 40 percent of the Army's and Marine Corps' equipment is now located in the Central Command theater of operations. Our National Guard/Reserve units are underequipped to deal with emergencies, and we have depleted our preposition stocks, which we need to respond quickly to other contingencies.

Now, in testimony before the Armed Services Committee in January, General Conway, Commandant of the Marine Corps, noted that an increase in forces in Iraq would increase our strategic risk and possibly lead to slower and less effective response to another potential threat.

Madam Speaker, sending more troops to Iraq is a dangerous gamble with our national security, and we need a new approach. A number of experts, including the Iraq Study Group, had made important recommendations, and they must not be ignored.

It is clear that the President's plan for escalation would harm our national security and ignores the will of the American people. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution so that we can promote a new strategy for Iraq and bring our troops home.

Mr. HUNTER. Madam Speaker, let me just respond to my good friend from Rhode Island, he is a great friend of mine and a former colleague on the Armed Services Committee, the estimate that has been given, that has been bandied around, that we would need some 20,000 support troops to support the 21,500 troops that are involved in the President's plan, some of whom are already in theater, has been rebutted by DOD, which said it is not 1 for 1 support to line troops, it is about 1 in 10, which in the estimate that they gave us was about 2,000 to 2,300, not 20,000 support troops.

Using that number, even with the 21,500 troops that are involved in the Baghdad plan, adding them to the 138 that we have right now, still brings us to a number that is lower than the 160,000 that we had December a year ago. I know that number has not been absolutely resolved, but I would just tell my friend that I believe it is going to be much lower than the number that has been put out there.

To my good friend from California, who talked about the Kosovo vote and the resolution to disapprove it, my recollection is that vote was undertaken before troops were moved. In this case, the 82nd Airborne is not already over the line in Iraq, but they actually have a brigade deployed in this operation, and the Baghdad operation that is being undertaken right now has a combination of Iraqi troops and American troops in each of nine sectors.

Madam Speaker, I yield as much time as he would like to take to Mr. CONAWAY from Texas, who is a gentleman that represents a great base at Fort Hood.

□ 2230

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Chairman, thank you for yielding me this time. Let me correct that record just a bit. I have got the area just west of Fort Hood. So I have got a lot of civilian contractors and retirees and active duty personnel who live in my district, but serve in Fort Hood.

Mr. HUNTER. I will stipulate that the gentleman would like to represent Fort Hood.

Mr. CONAWAY. Absolutely. I certainly would. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this time tonight.

I am opposed to this nonbinding resolution. This is a vehicle that the majority is using to bring us to this debate tonight. The resolution is pretty

simple in its language. It simply says that Congress disapproves of the decision President George W. Bush announced on January 10, 2007, to deploy more than 20,000 additional troops, U.S. combat troops to Iraq. It says this twice, in the preamble and then once again in the resolved.

It also says once that 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 bravely and honorably served in Iraq. We must assume, of course, that, because it is not stated, that Congress and the American people will also support and protect those additional troops that are headed into harm's way who will serve in Iraq, even though the resolution disapproves of the decision that sends those young men and women into harm's way.

The majority knows that this resolution will pass. They would not have brought it to the floor if their leadership had not be assured that they had the minimum 218 votes needed to pass this resolution. Since passage is assured, we have to ask, why this language? Why something so like this, that simply says what they are against, as opposed to something that is perhaps more meaningful, like what you are for.

It allows those who would vote in favor of this, and like I said I am quite confident it will pass, to set themselves up in that very enviable position to say I told you so if things do not go exactly as planned. And no plan in war has ever done that. So our colleagues who vote in favor of this resolution will be in that position to be able to say I told you so across a variety of circumstances.

I do not believe that either side of the aisle believes that it is the role of this or any other Congress to tell the President how not to deploy 20,000 troops. I believe there is another reason for this language. One explanation may be that it sets the stage for something that will really have an impact on the War in Iraq, the way that war is being fought, and I think that has to do with the power of the purse.

In spite of the language that says we will continue to support and protect our troops, I believe we will see in the not too distant future attempts by the majority to cut off funding for this war. I think we got a preview of this tactic last week when we passed the continuing resolution which cut $3.1 billion in spending for military quality of life projects and infrastructure that is needed to support the various BRAC decisions.

A lot has been made as to whether or not this debate will have an impact on the morale of our troops. Last week in a hearing with the Armed Services Committee, General Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff told us, as well as Bob Gates, that this debate in and of itself will not directly hurt or harm the morale of the young men and women who are fighting this fight.

I think that is generous. But what Pace did tell us was that if this Congress begins to cut funding, cut financial support, begin to go back on the promises made to those young men and woman, that that will in fact have a deleterious impact on the troops' morale and their families who serve here. I think that the debate tonight and the next 4 days will have a direct impact on the families who support these young men and women, who allow them to do what they do on behalf of this country.

And that is certainly is regrettable, if that support is hurt and harmed, and that hurt and harm is then transmitted to our young men and women who are fighting this fight every single day.

I also do not believe it is the role of 535 independent contractors that make up the House and Senate to become five-star generals and make decisions on how to fight this fight or any other war. I do believe it is our job to look as far into the future as we can, and make decisions and then pass laws that lead this Nation.

I do not know of anyone who believes that a failure in Iraq is in our national interest. Both sides have been saying this. There are no good results for such a failure. General Petraeus has listed out a couple of the possibilities that he talks about. One is that sectarian groups would begin to stake out turf. This would generally involve ethnic cleansing. The humanitarian suffering that would go on while that was happening is totally unacceptable.

He also mentions that international terrorist organizations might gain control of Iraq, and therefore use their bases in Iraq to further their interests.

The disruption to the oil markets and the impact that that will have not only on our economy but economies around the world would certainly occur if we have a failure in Iraq.

None of these guesses as to what would happen for failure in Iraq, that failure would almost automatically happen with an untimely withdrawal of our troops, none of them are positive, none of these scenarios make Iraq a safer place, none of them make the Middle East a safer place, and they certainly do not make America and the United States safer.

There are no guarantees, of course, that any plan will work. But telling the President what not to do is clearly not in the interest interests of moving this debate forward. My personal view of that future that I spoke about is that the effort in Iraq is a major part of the overall global war against Islamic Jihadists. Other Members have eloquently stated tonight that this war will last for decades.

I take very seriously the threats that the Islamic Jihadists have made and are making to kill Americans and to hurt American interests. I do not understand why they take these positions, but I certainly believe them when they tell us they are coming to hurt us.

This fight, this global war against Islamic Jihadists is really a fight for the heart of Islam. We must begin imploring moderate Muslims to stand against those few who seek to hijack the religion, and who are prosecuting this fight.

Let me preface my next remarks by saying that I am a Christian, and I believe that God is always in the business of changing men's hearts, and that the hearts of these Islamist Jihadists can be changed by the God I serve. But short of that, I believe we have only two choices, either we lock these people up forever or we kill them.

That is pretty harsh for a Christian to say, but those are our only options. I don't believe we can compromise with them and I don't believe they will compromise with us. I don't believe that they will alter their beliefs to peacefully coexist with us.

So we are in a fight that will last for years and for decades. There is no guarantee as to how this fight is being prosecuted and how we win this fight, I just know that we cannot lose it. And this resolution tonight does not move that process forward in a positive way.

We are in a long and hard struggle to protect freedom and liberty here and around the world. We are blessed by men and women who are willing to risk everything to defend you and me every minute of every day.

This resolution does not help in that struggle. And I urge my colleagues to vote against it.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. SHEA-PORTER).

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Madam Speaker, this is a very important debate. Four long years and we are searching our souls. We have sent our finest and our bravest soldiers on a mission that made no sense from the beginning. Our Nation was attacked by evil people who trained in Afghanistan.

We have a right to go into Afghanistan to remove the terrorist training camps. As a matter of fact, we should be working even harder there to make sure our Afghanistan mission does not fail. We must not allow the Taliban and other terrorist groups to control Afghanistan again.

However, we are unable to give Afghanistan our full attention because our President has led us into a war with Iraq. Why? There are no Iraqis on the plane that day. The Iraqis had no weapons of mass destruction. And they never asked us to come to their country. They do ask us to leave, though. And yet we will not leave.

The President will not listen to the Iraqis. The President will not listen to the American people. The President will not listen to the world. But Congress will. We are ready to go in a new direction and say no to the President, and no to his plan to escalate this war.

I was a military spouse. I am very, very proud of my husband's service. I am also on the Armed Services Committee. I know our troops need our support and they have it. But troops also

need to know that their leaders will make sure that their mission is in the best interests of the United States before they are asked to go fight and die for their country.

I watched a young soldier walk down a ramp on the way to Iraq. He was looking at all of us, and we were looking hard back at him. And I think most of us had the same thoughts in our hearts, that we could not look him in the eye and tell him that his mission was so essential to the security of the United States and the freedom of the world that he had to go and he had to die if necessary.

Why could we not tell him that? Because the mission had changed. Several times the President told us why we were there, and it was always a different reason. The mission had changed. And therefore the soldier looked confused and we certainly felt confused also, because we could not tell him why we were there.

I wanted to run up to him and tell him I support you, I support you by making sure that you never get sent to a war against unless we know why you are there.

What is this talk I have heard tonight about freedom and liberty? This talk of glory that I heard on the floor. This romanticized language, this talk about Davy Crockett. There is no Davy Crockett in Iraq. Our troops need clear-eyed leaders, not this romantic rabble that we have been hearing. This war has cost us. We have paid a terrible price.

Our military troops are strained. Yes, they are strained. Their families are strained. Our brave soldiers have died or they have been injured. The Iraqis have lost their lives. They have lost their society. They have lost their infrastructure. They are losing their middle class who are moving to other countries to keep their children safe.

Their people are fleeing from their own country. We are wary, they are wary, the world is now more dangerous. Iraqis were polled and the majority of them said they wanted the Americans to go home and let them work out their problems. For 4 years the administration and its supporters here have made no plan for them to do that.

Now they ask us on this side of the aisle what our plan is. This is a strange question. But it shows how confused this administration's supporters are, if they are looking to us and ask us what our plan is. They have been offered plans. They even commissioned a plan, and they do not follow any plans. The President follows his own way.

We have offered plans. They will not listen. I for one want the United States to succeed in this world. Therefore, I am going to listen to all of the generals who have pled with the President and pled with the President's supporters in this administration to do the right thing here.

But the President does not listen. Now, I am going to vote to tell the President that I am against his escalation.

Mr. HUNTER. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS).

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time. I appreciate him letting me go out of order. I am not a member of his committee. But when my committee has time on Thursday night, I am hoping to be able to attend the memorial service for our comrade, CHARLES NORWOOD, whom we lost today.

Madam Speaker, I rise to speak against H. Con. Res. 63. I think it is a mistake. It is the first step of this new Congress, the first step this new Congress is going to make towards cutting off the funding for our troops.

You do not have to take my word for it. Yesterday's CQ Today, a magazine widely read up here in Washington, and I am quoting, ''It is a foot in the door toward limiting military involvement in Iraq. The Democrats want to do this by the Congressional power of the checkbook.''

Further in the article it says, ''Democrats are well on their way toward planning more aggressive measures in an attempt to force redeployment beginning by blocking funding, and ending in the supplemental spending request.

And then finally, Democrats said, ''The resolution would just be a first step in the process that could result in a reduction or reconditioning of funds slated for our troops in Iraq.''

Well, we do not have to go too very far back in our past to see the consequences of that type of action. When I was in Iraq in August of 2005 General Casey told myself and a group of us who were there that there is no group in the world that can stand up to the American military. In fact, the only organized body in the world capable of defeating the American military was the American Congress.

I believe he was right. The CRS has done a report for this Congress, a report for Congress about restrictions of military operations in Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Somalia and Kosovo, funding and non funding approaches. I reference particularly, I urge my colleagues, this is easy to download from the Internet on the CRS, simply type in Cooper-Church amendment, and you will get this well-researched product.

□ 2245

It details the Mansfield amendment, the Cooper/Church amendment of 1970 and 1973, the Cranston amendment, the McGovern/Hatfield amendment. It also talks about the funding for Somalia. In fact, in this House, in 1999, when President Clinton was President, a bipartisan group in this House came together to defeat a motion to block funding for the troops in Kosovo. So congressional actions regarding funding do have a real world impact.

And I would submit that much of the chaos that ensued after we left Vietnam, and I would include the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in that chaos, I would include the militant jihadist takeover of our Embassy in Iran in that chaos, much of that ensued because of congressional action that was taken on the floor of this House in cutting off funding for our troops.

And I am not a big one on process. I haven't been here that long. I don't know that I understand process all that well. But why in the world would we not allow a vote or even a motion to recommit on, say, SAM JOHNSON'S bill, H.R. 511. SAM JOHNSON'S bill, a simple two-page bill that details all of the fine things done by our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, and ends with this simple paragraph: Faithful support of Congress. Congress will not cut off or restrict funding for units and members in the Armed Forces that the Commander in Chief has deployed in harm's way.

Wow, that is pretty simple. I don't understand. I frankly, do not understand why this House could not vote on this simple measure submitted by my fellow Texan, SAM JOHNSON, a legitimate war hero in his own right. I simply do not understand why we wouldn't have an opportunity to vote on that bill or offer it as a motion to recommit before we vote on the resolution.

And the resolution itself, it is a shame that we weren't offered a chance to amend the bill, to amend the resolution, to perhaps make it better. I urge people to go on line and read it for themselves. It is only two lines. It is not a very heavy lift to read this particular piece of legislation.

Line 1, Congress and the American people will continue to support and protect Members of the United States Armed Forces who are serving or who have served bravely and honorably in Iraq. That is sentence one. Remarkable for what it leaves out. What about a comma, and who will serve? Would it be so wrong to include those individuals who will serve in whatever time is left in the country of Iraq, to include them in as being worthy of our support in Congress?

Line 2 is so vague as to almost defy description. Line 2 reads: Congress disapproves of the decision of President George W. Bush, announced on January 10, 2007, to deploy more than 20,000 additional troops.

Well, would 19,995 troops be okay? Would Congress then not cock an eyebrow to say we don't like that either? Well, what does that second statement actually, what point are we trying to make by that second statement, other than we don't support the Commander in Chief, we don't support the mission, and as a consequence, you do have to ask if we support the troops.

Now, we are all sent here in Congress, we are all elected by 600- to 700,000 people, back in our districts, back in our States, to make hard decisions. We are not sent here to read the polls, stick our fingers in the wind and then decide which direction to go. We are not sent here to shift tactics because we think we may become more

popular back home if we do that. I fully recognize that by voting against this resolution, I put myself in jeopardy of reelection, and I am willing to do that because I believe a vote for this resolution puts my country's fate in significant jeopardy for decades to come.

Now, I was not here when this House voted in October of 2002 to give the President the power he needed to deploy the troops. But I have always voted for funding for the troops. And I appreciate so much the chairman standing up here and offering his telephone number to any family who is concerned whether or not their loved one will have access to body armor in Iraq.

I remember those first hearings when I came here in March of 2003, we were instructed on how quickly our men and women in the field could get into their chemical suits. This was an object of great concern to everyone in this body. In fact, most of us sit on top of a chair which has a gas mask underneath it, just in case we need to leave this body in a hurry because of the deployment of chemical weapons. We were all concerned about chemical weapons back in 2003.

Now, I have made five trips to Iraq, and I know that what is reported on our television news services here in the States is not always accurately reflective of what is happening on the ground back in Iraq. I referenced Dr. NORWOOD a moment ago. My last trip to Iraq was in July of 2006. Dr. NORWOOD, Chairman Deal and I, and GENE GREEN from our Health Subcommittee went over to see the status of health care for our troops. I was very impressed with what I saw that day.

But, Madam Speaker, I think everyone in this body has to answer two fundamental questions on this resolution before us: Is it in our broad national interest to win this fight? The second question: Can we prevail? Can we provide a modicum of security in the country of Iraq? Can we provide a modicum of sovereignty in the country of Iraq? For me, the answer to those two questions is yes. Yes and yes. And I recognize that people of goodwill can disagree about these issues. But if your answer is no, and no, then please stand up, show some courage.

This is a nonbinding resolution, for crying out loud. Even a Democratic Presidential candidate said it is equivalent to standing in the corner and stomping your feet.

We have heard a lot about moral obligations tonight. Well, I would submit that we have a moral obligation that if we can't answer both of those questions in the affirmative, bring the troops home now. Don't wait till April. Don't wait till September. If we haven't the resolve to see this thing through, or if we no longer feel that it is in our broad national interest to continue this fight, why in the world would you ask any man or woman to continue to serve in that country under those conditions?

It is our moral obligation to ensure that our troops know our intentions and they know that we are going to provide continued support for them, and that continued support, whether it is bullets for their gun, whether it is the M–16, whether it is the Humvee, or whether it is reinforcements, we are going to continue to provide the things that the generals on the ground say they need for their men and women to get the job done.

When the President invited me down to the White House right before his Oval Office speech, he asked me what the constituents in my district would say. And I said, Mr. President, it is pretty clear. My constituents would say to you, if they were standing here today, fight the war or bring the boys home.

The rules of engagement sometimes, frankly, I don't understand. If we capture someone in Sadr City and we get a call from the Prime Minister's Office and we have got to take him back and let him go, that doesn't make sense, good sense, if you are fighting a war.

Well, it looks as if a lot of those restrictions have been removed. In fact, on the Drudge Report on Fox News earlier this evening they broke the story that Moqtada al-Sadr is now living is Iran. That is a good thing. That reflects the change in tactics on the ground brought to you by our men and women who are fighting for our freedom abroad.

Madam Speaker, I suggest that we commit together to support the future, the future support of our troops in the country of Iraq, or simply get them out of harm's way now. Again, Moqtada al-Sadr has fled to Iran.

I think we can prevail. I think it is in our broad national interest. I think the price of defeat is simply too steep, not just for us today, but for generations in the future.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I would like to pose a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. HERSETH). The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, would it be wrong to propose an amendment that would ask that we add support for troops that will be in harm's way in the future in line 1 of this bill?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would entertain such requests only from the majority manager of the concurrent resolution.

Mr. BURGESS. Well, then I would call on the majority manager of the concurrent resolution to consider adding future support for our troops, or those troops who will be in harm's way in the months to come.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Madam Speaker, I am happy today, right now, to yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. MATHESON).

Mr. MATHESON. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution. This afternoon I went to Walter Reed and I visited some injured soldiers. One of them was from my congressional district in the State of Utah; had a number of serious injuries. He has been in intensive care at Walter Reed for about 3 weeks now. His wife was there with him. There were pictures of his 2-year old daughter plastered up all over the wall. His daughter is back in Utah with a set of grandparents.

I wish everyone could have the experience of going and meeting the soldiers and the families. They inspire me, and they also tell me how serious this issue is about putting people in harm's way, because the lives of that family are changed forever based on these severe injuries that this soldier undertook.

With regard to the situation in Iraq, our military personnel have done everything we have asked. We can never thank our troops enough, and we owe them. We have an obligation to them to give them the best opportunity for success.

The problem is that we have never really stood here and talked about a strategy for success. A successful strategy has to be comprehensive. That is what has been needed from the outset of the conflict in Iraq, and it is still needed today as Iraq descends into civil war.

A strategy for success in Iraq requires more than a military strategy. We have the most powerful military in the world, without a doubt. If military might alone could succeed, we would be done by now.

The situation in Iraq has always required a more comprehensive effort. We need a plan for political and diplomatic and economic success.

Now, just a couple of months ago, Congress was actually handed just such a strategy in the report from the bipartisan Iraq Study Group. The report was put together by some of the greatest statesmen, diplomats and military minds of our generation. This was a bipartisan group led by former Secretary of State James Baker and former 9/11 Commission Chairman Lee Hamilton. These venerable men and women painstakingly considered all the available options. They talked to military strategists, generals, Iraqis and each and every type of individual who might hold the key to a way forward. They acknowledge that each recommendation of the Iraq Study Group carries its own risk factors. But in the end, this bipartisan group unanimously endorsed a plan to move forward. And in doing so, they rejected the overly simplistic discussion that seemed to dominate the 2006 election season when the primary options that were discussed were either stay the course or cut and run. In fact, the Iraq Study Group report provides reasoned arguments against both of these options.

As for staying the course, the Iraq Study Group states that, and I quote, ''The longer the United States remains in Iraq without progress, the more resentment will grow among Iraqis who

believe they are the subjects of a repressive American occupation. As one U.S. official said to us, 'Our leaving would make it worse. The current approach without modification will not make it better.' ''

As for an immediate withdrawal, the Iraq Study Group states that if we left tomorrow we would simply leave an immense power vacuum in Iraq. The results would have devastating effects on the global economy, the region and the Iraqi people themselves. And specifically, the report says that ''a premature American departure from Iraq would almost certainly produce greater sectarian violence and further deterioration of conditions.''

Now, the resolution we are debating right now addresses the proposal to increase the number of U.S. troops in Iraq by just over 20,000. Let's remember that the Iraq Study Group specifically took a hard look at the surge option. In discussing the merits of a surge the Iraq Study Group report said that a surge ''might temporarily help limit violence in a highly localized area. However, past experience indicates that the violence would simply rekindle as soon as U.S. forces are moved to another area.''

Furthermore, many generals and other military strategists have roundly criticized the surge strategy.

Now, I have long believed that the lack of independent, accurate assessments of our progress has hampered our efforts to secure Iraq and assist in its reconstruction. I strongly believe that the U.S. cannot linger in making the important policy and strategic decisions recommended in the report.

That is why we need to follow the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group report. U.S. forces should be redeployed from combat missions to support functions. Our troops should be supplementing the Iraqi Army. And at the same time, we have to move forward on the economic development front and the political front and the regional diplomacy front.

The resolution we are debating today is very simple. We support our troops and we oppose the surge strategy. I will vote for this resolution.

As I said before, our troops have done everything we have asked of them. Their performance is a source of great admiration and pride for everyone in America. At a minimum, we owe them a new approach and a thoughtful approach to the situation in Iraq and the pursuit of a comprehensive strategy for success.

□ 2300

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Madam Speaker, I am happy to yield such time as he may consume to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from New York (Mr. WEINER).

Mr. WEINER. Madam Speaker, first of all, I think that I speak for all of our colleagues and all of us here in paying tribute to the 137,000-some-odd American men and women who are fighting in Iraq, the 25,000 or so that are fighting in Afghanistan. We are here to do what we can to honor them. We are trying to express our patriotism. We are trying to do what we are obligated to do by standing up here.

The notion that it is our patriotic duty, our obligation to sit silent and to do whatever the President thinks is best and blindly walk in that direction, that is not the way to honor the troops that are there. I can imagine the challenges that they face every single day, and would the message going back to them be most appropriate that just as often as they wake up in the deserts of Iraq trying to figure out why people are shooting at them and what they can do to stop it, they should know that every single day we here in Congress are trying to think about ways to make their mission safer and make it more possible for them to accomplish their mission and to extract them as soon as possible. We pray that they are successful. Although I strongly oppose the President's initiative, that I am going to vote ''yes'' on this resolution, I pray that they are successful. I pray we don't lose another life. We want them to be successful. But it is not enough just to be silent and to be prayerful. We also have to act.

Some in this Chamber have objected to this resolution because what it seeks to do is to do two things: one is the thing that I have done already, which is to pay tribute to the troops, something we all share in doing; and two is begin on a path of oversight. It is not surprising at all to hear my friends on the other side of the aisle have such a difficult concept with this idea of doing oversight over something the President proposes. They have done no oversight over how the money has been spent over there, and so as a result, we found out in the first month of the Democratic Congress that a $12 billion pallet of currency was delivered to Iraq and promptly disappeared. We had hearings last week that showed that even Mr. Bremer and officials on the ground from the administration have no idea where $12 billion disappeared to. So it is not surprising that my Republic friends have a difficult time figuring out what it is we are doing here. We are doing oversight, and we are going to do more of it.

We are doing oversight over the equipment that the troops had. This weekend there were stories coming outside of Iraq that Iranian-built armor-piercing projectiles were being used in roadside bombs. It reminded us again that the troops had been sent there without sufficient hardware, without sufficient protective gear, without sufficient armor-plated vehicles to be able to do their job. We are going to do oversight on that as well.

And I have to say that as part of the oversight that we are doing today, we are doing oversight on how the troops are being used. And let us not kid ourselves. The troops have done a remarkable job. They have done just about every single thing we have asked. They brought down a dictator. They set up a trial. They allowed a government to be stood up. They built roads and bridges. They have done an extraordinary job, and we in this House support them in that work.

But now what is their mission? Their mission is essentially to stand in the middle of a shooting match of the worst order. It is not over a patch of land. It is not a shooting match over what a border is going to be. It is not a shooting match even over oil. It is a shooting match of the most ingrained type between Shia and Sunni that goes back hundreds of years. Are our troops going to solve that conflict with 20,000 troops or 40,000 troops? I don't believe so. And even worse, I believe it is an untenable mission to be giving them. They are essentially in a schoolyard where everyone wants to fight.

And I have to say to my friends on the other side of the aisle, over and over and over again today I have heard this dynamic being described that if we were to leave or to support this resolution, we would let down our allies, we would embolden our enemies, and we would betray the Iraqi people. In fact, this policy does all of those things. Let us look at it.

What does this policy say to our allies? Well, it says to our allies in Afghanistan we are not going to devote the resources there necessary for you to do the job. This isn't an abstract notion. You can watch it happen every single day. So long as we have 140,000 troops or 130,000 troops in this shooting match largely in Baghdad, we are watching as Afghanistan slips further and further back into the hands of the Taliban.

We have heard, for example, from our so-called ally the Saudis, and what have they said? They have been most telling. They said recently, well, to you, the citizens of the United States, if you pull your troops out, we are going to be forced to put resources in to support our Sunni brethren. So the Saudis have said if the American troops leave, we are going to have to jump in on the side of our Sunni brethren in Baghdad. What does that say? What does that say? That says they will jump into a blood-letting, but they won't come in now to help us stabilize Baghdad. They have argued, essentially, that the only reason they are not involved is our troops are. Some ally. Some message we are sending to our ally Saudi Arabia. What they are saying is, You had better keep your boys dying because otherwise we are going to have to send ours in.

That is exactly what we want. We want them to send they resources in. We want them to take ownership of this.

And the same is true with Egypt and other allies in the region. They have said to us, You had better keep doing what you are doing, Mr. President. We are getting exactly the wrong message.

And I have also heard my colleagues speak frequently today about

emboldening our enemies. Well, it seems like just about anything Democrats propose is emboldening our enemies.

Let us take a closer look at this. Is Iran truly upset about what is going on in Iraq? Are the Iranians truly wringing their hands every day saying, Boy oh boy, I hope the United States does not pull out of there? No. They have never been happier with this existing policy. Their worst elements, their worst Shia elements, are crossing over the border practically at will, joining the fight. The President of the United States himself has said it. I have heard people here on the floor say it. They like this confrontation that is going on. They want it to be like this.

But they are happy for another reason, and I say this particularly to my friends on the other side of the aisle. They are happy because I am truly concerned about the threat that Iran poses not only to the United States but to the world. Do you think we are in a position right now with our military stretched so thin that if we needed to act against Iran, we could? No. Our engagement in Baghdad, adding more and more and more troops, has stretched us thinner and thinner and thinner. And the most happy people in the world are the tyrants in Iran because they know they can get away with just about anything. And if you think I am wrong about that, take a look at the war back last year on the northern border of Israel. Hezbollah felt completely unencumbered, which is essentially, as we all know, an agent of Iran. They felt completely unencumbered again just to attack a democracy in the region because they knew that all of us were stretched entirely too thin to be able to respond. So this notion that we are going to send the wrong message to our enemies is completely wrong.

Do you know what would send the right message to our enemies, I say to my colleagues? You take some of those troops out of Baghdad, you put them on the Iranian border. That is how you send them a message. You get them out of the shooting match, but you keep them in the neighborhood. You keep them right on the border of Iran and you say, We don't need 140,000, but we are going to make sure you don't export any more problems. We are going to seal off the schoolyard.

And, finally, I have heard it said that this will be an abandonment of the Iraqi people. Well, ladies and gentlemen, there is no element here that I am more disappointed with, and I think I speak virtually for all of us. Our troops are in there trying to create stability in Iraq, and for some reason, overwhelming numbers of Iraqis say that they think it is okay to shoot at our troops. It is outrageous. It is outrageous. Our troops are in there trying as best they can to build this country, put it back together, and the Iraqi people over and over again are saying, You know what, it is kind of okay when I read stories about snipers shooting at our troops.

The Iraqi people have to have a moment where they confront the reality of the situation. Everyone agrees, I think, and whenever I say that, I hear someone come to the floor and think that everything is going just fine in Iraq, but just about everyone agrees that the Iraqi people themselves ultimately have to take responsibility for their own country.

Are we creating an environment that is more likely to happen or less likely to happen? Well, there is no sign that it is happening; so the de facto response to my own question is that it is not happening. But I would argue that every time we stand up and put additional troops in, we push the Iraqi people further from the point where they have to confront that they have to take control. Might it be messy? Yes. Might it even be bloody? Yes. But one thing is for sure: up to now the Iraqi people have simply said, We are not going to. We don't have to. We have got our boys from the United States of America, and now we have another 20, 30, 40,000 that are going to be rolling into town.

My colleagues, I have heard my friends on the other side of the aisle complain, and I have to say, present company excluded, it sounded a little like whining most of the day. I have heard, well, we need more choices. I have heard we need more bills. I have heard we need more language. There are going to be plenty of opportunities to confront these issues, but today my colleagues have to confront the choice in front of them. Sometimes in this job you have to say ''yea'' or ''nay.'' And this week what you have to say ''yea'' or ''nay'' on is a resolution that is exquisite in its simplicity. It says two things and two things only. It says we support the troops. We are going to keep them safe. We are going to keep them secure. We are going to do anything that they need to show our support. And, two, we disapprove of the way the President wants to increase the number of troops going there. That is it. You are going to get to vote on other things later on because we are not done. Many of us believe very strongly that we need major tactical changes, and I know Mr. MURTHA has a plan. The Blue Dog Caucus has a plan for more transparency. There are going to be plenty of choices. You are going to get oversight.

I know it has been years, I say to my colleagues, since you have seen any around here, but you are going to get it. But today what we have is a simple proposition. It is the same proposition that is being discussed in coffee shops, in church socials, in corner stores all around this country, and that is: Do we support what the President is doing by increasing our engagement rather than reducing it? That is what this is about. And all of the foot stamping and all of the complaining and all of the whining, I want another bill, I want different language, I want to deal with something different, I want a hug, well, for the time being this is the choice that you are confronted with.

If you believe that this surge is the right policy, you have a simple vote. You can vote ''no.'' If you believe that you don't want to support the troops, and there is no one like that, you can vote ''no.'' But this resolution is the beginning of finally starting to do what the American people are thirsting for, and that is this Chamber is a place where we stand up and say whether we support these things or not.

I urge a ''yes'' vote.

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

I want to take a couple of minutes to answer a couple of things that my friend said.

First Mr. WEINER said, ''We aren't done.'' Madam Speaker, that is one thing that I am worried about. He said that we want more choices, more bills, more language. Not this Member. I will settle for a ''no'' on this resolution. I haven't asked for more bills, more choices, or different language.

And the problem with this resolution, the gentleman said this is a very good resolution because it is very clear, very concise, and gives us clear choices. This resolution retroactively condemns an action that has already been taken. That is the movement of reinforcements into the theater. You already have the 82nd Airborne in the theater. That is part of the reinforcing force. They are already in there. You already have a brigade from the 82nd Airborne in one of the nine sectors right now, operating, boots on the ground as we talk. So you aren't prohibiting the President from sending reinforcements.

He said that American forces are being stretched thinner and thinner and thinner.

We have 2½ million Americans in uniform. We have roughly 138,000 before the surge. Now a little more than 140,000 counting the ones that are already in country. When they are in country and the support troops are there and less the troops who will be rotating home at that point, you will have at the high point, we are told by DOD, about 157,000 troops. That is less than we had a year ago in country, I would say to the gentleman. So that is not a huge surge.

□ 2315

He stated that we are going to be drawn thinner, and I quote, ''thinner and thinner and thinner.''

So you have about 160,000 troops, a little less than that, max. That is not 10 percent of the 2.5 million persons who are presently wearing the uniform of the United States.

Secondly I will say to my friend, I want to say to folks who listen to this debate, because this statement about us being drawn thin and therefore being susceptible to problems and being vulnerable is a message that has come up several times in this debate.

We have more than doubled the precision firepower of this country since the last administration, that is the Clinton administration. You have more than doubled the precision firepower. That means the ability, if people should give the United States a need to respond militarily, the ability to send precision systems that can explode right straight through goalposts at long distances and handle lots of stuff.

Now, the gentleman is very concerned about Iran. I share that concern. And I share the concern the gentleman has about the centrifuge activity and the proposed centrifuge activity that Iran has discussed and may at some point develop with the aid of the Russians and the Chinese.

I would just remind the gentleman that those precision systems, that doubling of the precision firepower that we now have, is probably the right medicine if we should have to keep the military option open and on the table with respect to Iran. So we will watch them as they try to walk down this road to developing a nuclear weapon.

Mr. WEINER. Madam Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HUNTER. I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. WEINER. Madam Speaker, I honor the gentleman for his mastery of the numbers. Perhaps you can enlighten me, what is the number of Reserves that are in country now?

Mr. HUNTER. We have been up as high as 40 percent National Guard and Reserve, and that is a deliberate policy of the United States. When we went to war in Vietnam, the Guard and Reserve for practical purposes stayed home. And we said from here on out, when we go to war, we go to war with what is known as a total force.

So you have a Reserve element that goes to war. If you were over in Iraq, as the gentlelady has been there a number of times, you will see Reservists flying C–130s, doing a lot of support missions, and you have National Guard units on the ground.

Mr. WEINER. If the gentleman will yield for a further question, are there any there doing second or third tours of duty?

Mr. HUNTER. Certainly. I can tell the gentleman, my son has done two tours of duty. There are a number of people that have done that.

Mr. WEINER. If the gentleman will further yield, is it not your view that that has a dramatic toll only those families and communities who are not regular army who are there as Reservists and are being called back tour after tour? You don't think that is stretching those communities thin?

Mr. HUNTER. I will just tell the gentleman, in the MOSs that our folks sign up for, especially the aerial supportive MOSs, that is always out there, that they are going to have to go, because where the armed services go, where the active folks go, let me just finish my answer to the gentleman. He asked me a question. I am going to ask answer it.

If you are in a supportive service that involves things likes aerial refueling, C–130 work, which is the workhorse of the U.S. military, you understand when you go in, you are going to be making probably multiple tours. If you join the U.S. Marines right now, the recruiter tells you as you sign up, you can be guaranteed that you will go to Iraq.

I would say to the gentleman another thing: Knowing those things, we are meeting all of our enlistment goals in the Guard and Reserve. So the active duty people who are undertaking multiple tours are coming back and reenlisting. And knowing that, knowing that you are exposed to multiple tours, we have more people signing up for the Guard, for the Reserve.

And interestingly, I will tell the gentleman, the place where we have had problems with recruiting in the last year from the information I have seen is the Naval Reserve, which doesn't do tours in Iraq. But the combat arms have multiple tours.

Mr. WEINER. If the gentleman will yield further, I thank the gentleman very much. I think what you have just described is a military stretched thin, my friend. I think when you have people in the Reserves doing three tours, that are being taken away from their communities, I think that is a military stretched thin.

Mr. HUNTER. Reclaiming my time, I will just tell the gentleman this: There is a difference between people in specialties spending more time doing multiple tours, and I will say to him again, almost all Marines know that they are going to do multiple tours, either in country or on the so-called float, which is the deployment around the world, because they are the 9/11 force for this country. So that is something that people do.

That is a far cry from not having enough firepower to respond to an Iranian crisis. We still have tons of firepower to respond to an Iranian breakout or surprise, a technological surprise, with respect to development of nuclear systems.

Madam Speaker, if the gentlewoman from California has more speakers, I will enjoy listening to them, and I will reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Madam Speaker, I am happy to yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague from North Carolina (Mr. MCINTYRE).

Mr. MCINTYRE. Madam Speaker, I rise tonight in support of the resolution before us that disapproves of the President's recent announcement to deploy more than 20,000 additional U.S. combat troops to Iraq.

As a member of the Armed Services Committee, I am committed to supporting our troops and making sure that they have the resources they need. I always have and I always will. There is no debate about supporting our troops. This resolution clearly and unequivocally states that both the Congress and the American people support our valiant men and women in uniform. Our troops have been and are continuing to do an excellent job, and they deserve our support.

Yet, overall, our military is being stretched thin, and now we face the prospect of not only sending over 20,000 more combat troops into Iraq, but also another 15,000 troops on top of that, at minimum, to support those troops, with additional military police, intelligence units and supply function personnel. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that it might take even more troops than that. So reality is that we are now looking at a total of 35,000 or more troops actually involved in this potential surge.

We need to be moving toward a successful conclusion in Iraq; not with a timetable, but with definite benchmarks of accountability that are meant to ensure that the Iraqis are taking control of their own security and future. The Iraqi army, the national police and the local police in Iraq must take responsibility for their own country and communities, and only by lessening the American footprint in Iraq will we empower the Iraqi people to take responsibility for their own self-governance and ultimately their own destiny.

Is not just my opinion or the opinion of some here, it is exactly what General John Abizaid, our U.S. Commander said, when I visited Iraq and when he testified before Congress.

We cannot continue to increase troop levels in Iraq at the expense of allowing the Taliban to come back into power in Afghanistan. The Global War on Terrorism is exactly what the name says. It is a global war, not just an Iraqi war, and we cannot let our troop strength be so focused on what is becoming a civil war in Iraq that we lose focus on threats that face us elsewhere in the world.

Previous surges have not solved the problems in Iraq. Let us not be fooled into thinking that this one will.

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

Madam Speaker, I have got one speaker left here, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, but let me just say one thing before he speaks. I appreciate the debate. I think we have had a good discussion this evening.

I wanted to say one thing about CHARLIE NORWOOD. He passed away. He was a Member of the 173rd Airborne Brigade. I was a member of that brigade. I had a very average tour, a very easy tour in Vietnam. I did nothing special. But CHARLIE NORWOOD was a real hero who won the Combat Medical Badge and two Bronze Stars in Vietnam.

I thought to commemorate CHARLIE, I have got my copy of General Douglas MacArthur's farewell speech that I quoted earlier, and let me just quote a paragraph about duty, honor and country that Douglas MacArthur thought so represented the fighting man in this country.

He said these of words, duty, honor and country, ''They teach to be proud and unbending in honest failure, but humble and gentle in success; not to substitute words for action; not to seek the path of comfort, but to face the stress and spur of difficulty and challenge; to learn to stand up in the storm, but to have compassion on those who fall; to master yourself before you seek to master others; to have a heart that is clean, a goal that is high; to learn to laugh, yet never forget how to weep; to reach into the future, yet never neglect the past; to be serious, yet never take yourself too seriously; to be modest so that you will remember the simplicity of true greatness; the open mind of true wisdom, the meekness of true strength.''

I think that largely represented our great friend CHARLIE NORWOOD.

Madam Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS).

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Thank you, Mr. HUNTER. I certainly add my own feelings toward the words that you just spoke on behalf of CHARLIE NORWOOD. None of us know when we have to step from this floor for the last time. This man, while he was here, maintained a sense of honor. He was always committed to doing those things that would bring better hope to future generations. He was honorable among us, and we can certainly salute that kind of brotherhood that he represented to all of us.

I certainly pass along my own condolences and also congratulations to his family, because in a sense CHARLIE NORWOOD's dreams were fulfilled in that he dreamed to be a statesman, and he certainly rose to that occasion in every way.

I suppose it is in a sense a little bit of a statement to all of us that the brief moments that we have here should be spent debating those things that would truly make a difference, not only for this generation, but for whatever generations remain to America.

Madam Speaker, tonight I think that is what I would like to talk about. There is an old Indian Iroquois quote that says that the secret to the universe is in the true naming of things, and as we debate tonight, it is easy for us to see each other as the opposition or as the enemy.

I think tonight, if all else should fail us, we must consider who the real enemy here is. This one is a little different than those that we faced in the past, because even though there are parallels, this is an ideology. This is not just a group of people that we face in Islamic jihadism. It is an ideology that I believe has the seeds of danger in it for the entire human family.

I think it becomes very, very important for us all to understand that one thing, because in a sense right now the battle that goes on across the world related to terrorism is a battle between those who are deeply committed with their lives to the destruction of the Western World on one side of the equation, and on the other side of the equation the opposition is largely asleep, and I think that nothing represents a greater danger to us than not only knowing what we face, but being completely oblivious to its potential.

I believe that the ideology of jihad has the ability and even the propensity to germinate and one day threaten the entire human family. And even though America is engaged in some type of fight against terrorism and jihadism in nearly 70 countries across the world, whether we realize it or not, in the eyes of the leaders of jihad, Iraq is the frontline of that conflict, and it becomes profoundly important that we recognize it from their perspective, because in any ideology, one must understand that to grow, it must somehow take root and resonate in the hearts of the potential recruits.

One of the things that causes this ideology to grow is a sense of victory on the battlefield, and leader after leader in the jihadist movement have said that Iraq is critical to the survival of their ultimate goal.

□ 2330

I know that we have faced dangerous ideologies before. There are a lot of people who have parents and family members that faced the Nazis down in World War II, and yet just a cursory glance at history helps us understand that the parallel here is real.

There was a time when the Nazis were just a bunch of lunatics riding bicycles across France, and nobody paid much attention to them. They spewed a hate and a sense of superiority over their fellow human beings and even a sense of being willing to subordinate the innocent life of others for their own ideology. We did not pay much attention to them until it began to grow and the fires of this ideology began to spread across Europe.

In the final analysis, the Western world and people of freedom did not wake up until this thing had become a monster, and when we finally did engage it, the ensuing war was so difficult and so horrible that at the end of the day, 50 million people had died.

I will just say this, Madam Speaker, Winston Churchill warned us in a way that I think is pretty profound. He said, If you will not fight, then you can easily win without bloodshed. If you will not fight, then your victory will be sure and not too costly. You may come to the moment when you will have to fight and all the odds against you with only a precarious chance of survival. There may even be a worse moment. You may have to fight when there is no hope for victory because it is still better to perish than to live as slaves.

I submit in the ideology that we face tonight that is the equation that is before us.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I just want to rise to close this debate from our side and say how impressed I have been by the debate that I have heard today. It has been about 11 hours. We are going to have tomorrow and debate on Friday and Thursday, and this is the first real serious debate we have had about the President's policies in Iraq since the vote in October of 2002.

This week the House is considering a bipartisan resolution introduced by Representative IKE SKELTON of Missouri, TOM LANTOS of California, and WALTER JONES of North Carolina, which supports our troops and opposes the President's plan to add 21,500 more combat troops in Iraq.

People have talked quite a lot tonight about the size and the scope of the resolution, but it is elegant and it is certainly spare in the fact that it is about 100 words, but it is significant because of what it says.

The resolution is very straightforward. It says:

''Resolved by the House of Representatives that:

''(1) 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

''(2) Congress disapproves of the decision by President George W. Bush announced on January 10, 2007, to deploy more than 20,000 additional United States combat troops to Iraq.''

Those supporting this bipartisan resolution strongly support our troops and our veterans. Let us be clear on this one fundamental principle. We are honoring the service of our troops by asking the difficult questions about this war. In conducting this debate, we must be ever mindful of the sacrifices our military personnel and their families are making during this war and the toll it is taking on them and their families and our veterans. Each Member must determine for themselves, in a manner worthy of our troop's sacrifice, whether the President's plan will succeed in making Iraq more stable.

I, for one, do not believe it will, and I strongly believe and hope that my colleagues will support this resolution and the debate that is coming forth in the next 2 days.

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, scripture tells us, "David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds and with every leader." Throughout the war in Iraq, the President has failed to adequately consult with the American people and their Congress or other countries in the region whose best interests are also served by a stable Iraq. He has long recognized that staying the course in Iraq is not working, yet he stubbornly stays the course.

The Congress has a duty to make sure once sent into harm's way for good cause, our troops are equipped and supplied with everything necessary to accomplish a given mission. The Congress has an equal duty to change or end a given mission, when circumstances, realities and rationales demand it.

We in Congress want to work with him to bring our troops home from a more stable

Iraq. We should not only ensure that the people are given a full accounting of what the President is expecting of our troops in the coming months, and how much it will cost our Treasury, but we must also demand accounting of what the war in Iraq has cost the U.S., and our men and women in uniform, over the last four years.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I am proud to stand today with my fellow veterans in the House of Representatives to register our opposition to the President's plan to escalate the war in Iraq and to show our support for our men and women in uniform.

Last November 7th, the American people sent a clear message to Congress and the President: we must end the war in Iraq.

Now, after nearly four years of bloodshed, death and destruction, Congress is likely to go on the record as opposing the plan for escalating the war. No longer will Congress stand by while the President wages a war that defies logic, common sense and human decency. This week, we shall take a stand. This week, we tell the administration: ''Enough is enough. Stop ignoring the American people. Stop ignoring your generals and retired generals, including Colin Powell. Stop ignoring the foreign policy experts. Stop wasting American lives and resources on this disastrous, unnecessary conflict.''

This debate represents an important turning point in the public dialogue about Iraq, and so I welcome it. But it is not enough. The escalation must be stopped, but we cannot let the momentum against the war subside after we deal with the escalation. Our priority must remain ending the fighting and dying in Iraq.

We must end the senseless deaths of service members like Marine Tarryl Hill of Southfield, Michigan, who died only last Wednesday when his vehicle drove over a bomb in Fallujah. Tarryl Hill was just 19 years old. He had joined the military to help finance his education to become a chemical engineer, but instead he became the 120th serviceman from Michigan to die in Iraq. I don't want to see one more promising life like Tarryl's extinguished on the altar of this administration's arrogance.

The loss of Tarryl's life brings to mind the bereavement of another patriot from Michigan, Lila Lipscomb of Flint, whose 26 year old son Michael died in Iraq in April 2003 when his helicopter was shot down. A member of a military family, Ms. Lipscomb initially believed President Bush when he told the nation that the war was necessary for our national security. But her son's letters from the front lines and his tragic death showed her that he never should have gone to Iraq.

I need not spend much time explaining my opposition to the troop surge, which is simply even more ''more of the same.'' This policy takes us in precisely the opposite direction recommended by the generals and the experts. It would simply expose GI's to more intense door-to-door fighting, in the vain hope that, in the meanwhile, the Iraqis will miraculously reconcile.

The real and underlying question is how we remove ourselves from this quagmire. As I have emphasized many times, our Constitution gives Congress the central role in decisions of war and peace. Last fall the American people spoke loudly with their votes. We should be here showing the voters that we heard them and that their trust in us was well placed.

The ultimate, unequivocal authority of the Congress is the power of the purse. We must use it. Supporters of the president's failed Iraq policy have argued that using Congress' spending power to end the war means that we don't ''support the troops.'' It is beyond absurd to suggest that those of us who favor ending funding for the war would simply abandon the troops in the field without the equipment and supplies they need. Every piece of legislation proposing cutting funds for combat operations would require the spending necessary to bring the troops home safely.

Cliches about supporting the troops are not really about our service members' best interests. The true purpose of these accusations is to distract us from the fact that we are bogged down in an unwinnable war with no end in sight. Keeping our troops out of harm's way, especially when war is unnecessary, is the best possible way to support them. The American people understand that marching ahead blindly into oblivion is no way to support our troops. That is why they have asked us to end this war.

Madam Speaker, the administration continues to live under the illusion that it can salvage its reputation by achieving a military victory in Iraq, when it is clear that diplomacy is the only effective means at our disposal. The recent National Intelligence Estimate reflecting the collective judgment of U.S. intelligence agencies only confirms what we have seen in the daily headlines for almost a year. It concludes that the civil war has reached an intensity that is ''self-sustaining'' and that there are no Iraqi national leaders with the ability to stop it. No wonder the Administration stalled completion of the NIE until after the election and the President's presentation of his latest proposal.

Most of the American people know that there is only one way to proceed in Iraq. We must begin the phased withdrawal of American troops in the next four to six months and conclude it within the year. Redeploying our armed forces does not mean ''cutting and running.'' On the contrary, we suggest continued and extensive involvement in the region through renewed diplomacy, a regional conference and reconstruction that is free from fraud and abuse. This sensible path is the only one that can lead us to victory.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Madam Speaker, I yield back 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.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has agreed to the following resolution.

S. RES. 79

Resolved, That the Senate has heard with profound sorrow and deep regret the announcement of the death of the honorable Charles W. Norwood, Jr., late a Representative from the State of Georgia.

Resolved, That the Secretary communicate these resolutions to the House of Representatives and transmit an enrolled copy thereof to the family of the deceased.

Resolved, That when the Senate adjourns or recesses today, it stand adjourned or recessed as a further mark of respect to the memory of the deceased Representative.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. HASTERT (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for the week of February 12.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Mrs. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 742. An act to amend the Antitrust Modernization Commission Act of 2002, to extend the term of the Antitrust Modernization Commission and to make a technical correction.

BILL PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House reports that on February 9, 2007 she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bill.

H.R. 434. An act to provide for an additional temporary extension of programs under the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 through July 31, 2007, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 35 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, February 14, 2007, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

598. A letter from the Interim Director, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's final rule — Allocation of Assets in Single Employer Plans; Valuation of Benefits and Assets; Expected Retirement Age — received January 2, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and Labor.

599. A letter from the Interim Director, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's final rule — Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans — received January 2, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and Labor.

600. A letter from the Interim Director, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's final rule — Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans; Allocation of Assets in Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Valuing and Paying Benefits — received January 2, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and Labor.

601. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting certification that the export to the People's Republic of China of the specified items is not detrimental to the United States space launch industry, and that the material and equipment, including any indirect technical benefit that could be derived from such exports,