United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 110th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 153 WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2007 No. 28

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CAPUANO).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 14, 2007.

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

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Reverend Carl Toti, Senior Pastor, Trinity Church, Lubbock, Texas, offered the following prayer:

Let's welcome God's presence into our hearts and into this place.

''I lift my eyes up to the hills, where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and Earth.''

Father, hear our prayers. ''If My people, called by My name, will humble themselves, pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land.''

We pray this Nation will return to the faith exhibited by men and women who trusted God, forged a Nation out of wilderness, raised families guided by standards from Your Word, and established a Nation that presently is the rival of the entire world. May the same standards be raised high by these leaders You have placed over us. May integrity and wisdom guide them to make decisions that please You.

Father, shield our military troops protecting our freedoms around the world. May godly decisions be made concerning them.

Lord, we ask that You would guide and bless our Representatives as they advance our Nation.

I pray in the name of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

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

WELCOMING PASTOR CARL TOTI

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

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have Pastor Carl Toti with us today delivering the opening invocation for the United States House of Representatives.

Pastor Toti currently serves as the senior pastor of Trinity Church in my hometown of Lubbock, Texas. He is a graduate of Rhema Bible Training Center. He has also earned a master's degree in theological studies from Vision University in Ramona, California.

Just as Pastor Toti speaks to diverse audiences through his ministry, so does he today speak to a diverse audience here in our Congress. Although Members of this body come from different parts of the country and varying beliefs, I hope his words will unite and guide us all today as we conduct the business of the people of the United States of America.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain 15 one-minutes per side.

VOTE AGAINST THE ESCALATION OF TROOPS

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Even as the House debates the continuation of the failing Bush policies in Iraq, Vice President DICK CHENEY, the chief architect of the Iraq strategy, is beating the drums for a new war, a war with Iran.

On Sunday, we had unidentified sources saying that the highest levels of the Iranian Government have directed use of weapons that are killing U.S. troops. No information was provided to substantiate the charge; administration officials yesterday deflected requests for more details, even as they repeatedly implied Tehran's involvement. It may or may not be true, but they have got a pretty bad record on intelligence. And now MG Peter Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said yesterday that he has no information indicating Iran's government is directing the supply of lethal weapons to Shiite insurgent groups in Iraq. It sounds like the Iraq war intelligence all over again, phony intelligence leading us down the path to disastrous involvement.

This has to stop. We start by voting against the escalation of the Bush policies in Iraq and begin to chart a new course.

STAFF SERGEANT RICHARD ROSE, USAF

(Mr. HAYES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, there are many heroes fighting the global war against terrorists, and many from the Eighth District of North Carolina. But today I rise to pay tribute to one hero

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in particular. Today I am proud to recognize Air Force Staff Sergeant Richard Rose, son of Robyn Rose of Laurinburg, North Carolina.

Staff Sergeant Rose, a member of the 1st Combat Camera Squadron at Charleston Air Force Base, served as a Joint Combat Camera photographer with the Multinational Division in Baghdad from May 18 to September 18 of 2006.

During this time, Sergeant Rose was attached to several Army units, documenting their daily missions and contributing over 1,000 images of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Sergeant Rose primarily shoots with his camera lens, but that changed last summer. During a mission with the 101st Airborne Division Air Assault Unit, insurgents began firing at an Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team which was clearing roadside bombs nearby.

Richard quickly responded by returning fire with his M4 rifle, which allowed the Explosive Ordnance Team to move to safety. His efforts are credited with helping to save the lives of 56 servicemembers during the attack, and his bravery in this firefight earned him the Bronze Star.

I ask that you join me in congratulating Sergeant Richard Rose on being awarded the Bronze Star in defending our Nation in the war against terrorists. Pray for their safety, and pray for victory against these terrorists.

MEMBERS WHO SUPPORT TROOP ESCALATION NEED TO EXPLAIN HOW WE PROTECT THE TROOPS

(Mr. STUPAK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, this week the House is conducting the most important debate of this Congress, whether Members will support the President's plan to send 21,500 more troops to Iraq. I oppose the President's plan, and during this debate I am hoping that those who support the escalation of the war can answer a couple of questions.

First, if the President is allowed to move forward, how do we guarantee these troops have the protective armor they need? Earlier this month we learned that troop escalation would create logistical hurdles for both the Army and Marines, which are already short thousands of vehicles and armor kits. Members who support the President's plan need to explain how do we provide the troops the equipment they need.

Members who support the plan also need to explain where do we come up with the additional troops that will be needed to support 21,500 combat troops. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates as many as 48,000 troops may be required to implement the plan.

Mr. Speaker, these are questions that supporters of escalating the war in Iraq should ask before they vote to escalate the war in Iraq.

NONBINDING RESOLUTION IS NOT THE WAY TO GO

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, the war in Iraq is the front line in the war on terror. We know this because the terrorists tell us it is so. In poll after poll, the American people tell us they fully believe that what happens on the front line in Iraq affects their security every single day.

You know, the Democrats have every right to disagree with the President's plan, but a nonbinding resolution is not the way to go. It sends a message of no confidence and no support to our troops in the field, weakening their morale while encouraging and emboldening the enemy.

Our men and women in harm's way are fighting the insurgents and they are fighting the battle of ideas every day, not only in Iraq but in 30 different countries around this globe. They know that what we have to do is continue to win in that battle, and they don't have time to fight the war of public opinion in this country, which is what some of my colleagues in this House would seek to have them do.

The Democrats have no alternative plan; they have no way forward. I welcome a responsible debate on this war, but let's make sure that we keep the focus on encouraging our troops, freedom, prosperity and ideas, and that we not encourage those who seek to do us harm.

ALBERT BRYAN, SR.

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, while we were here at work, his family, my prior coworkers at the Department of Health, my friends and community said farewell to a beloved son, Albert Bryan, Sr.

His sudden passing caught us all off guard, but that was often his way. Never one to call attention to himself, despite his good looks, tall stature and significant presence, he was unassuming and gentle, with a generous spirit.

Whether it was as a senior officer at one of our banks or as PTA president at the Pearl B. Larsen Elementary School our children attended, or whether it was as an administrator of the Charles Howard Health Facility or co-owner of a favorite watering hole, or whether it was as the devoted son, husband, father, grandfather who was always about family, he was the best there was.

Born and raised in St. Thomas, but living much of his adult life on St. Croix, he accomplished the impossible in bringing the two islands together, especially through the camaraderie of the Cruzan Gentlemen of his current home and the Gentlemen of Savaan, where he spent his early life.

Bert was my coworker, supporter, confidant and friend. I will miss him, as all who knew him and loved him will. He gave a lot to everyone that he touched as he passed this way. We are grateful for his life, a life he lived fully and well.

My family, staff and the Congress of the United States extend our heartfelt sympathy to his wife, children, grandchildren and his entire family. May he rest in peace.

TRUST THE TROOPS

(Mr. SMITH of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this nonbinding resolution is really a nonsensical political statement. It would deprive the generals and the troops of the reinforcements they desperately need.

How would you feel if you were an American soldier in Iraq and Congress passed this resolution? It is like telling you to fight with one arm tied behind your back, and that is no way to defeat a terrorist. Let's trust the men and women in uniform who are sacrificing their lives to protect ours.

There is a reason there has been no terrorist attack on America since 2001. It is not because some want to second-guess our military, it is because our troops want to win.

FAST TRACK

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

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, it is time to get off the fast track of lost jobs and on the right track for our American workforce.

In these very Chambers I hear that we just need to fix labor provisions and trade agreements and do a side deal on fast track and then the problem is solved. This is simply not good enough.

I ask my fellow Democrats that this is a time to sound the alarm on fast track. Fast track hamstrings Congress' ability to fix our broken trade policies.

The midterm elections show that most Americans understand that our current trade policies have failed.

Over 3 million American manufacturing jobs, one out of every six manufacturing jobs, have been lost during the fast track era. The U.S. trade deficit has exploded as imports have surged. U.S. wages stagnate as trade deficits soar, displacing good U.S. jobs.

Fast track trashes the checks and balances that are essential for our democracy. It is time to get Congress on the right track in the new majority. It is time for a new direction as we deal with trade agreements.

VICTORY IS THE ONLY WAY OUT OF IRAQ

(Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, in a time of war Americans and those risking their lives to protect freedom deserve leadership, not politics. As we continue to debate this nonbinding resolution today, we undermine the overall war on terror and the successes we have had since the attack.

In the battle for Iraq mistakes have been made, but the President put forth a plan for victory that understands those mistakes and sets benchmarks to ensure Iraqi involvement and success.

On the other side, they want to have it both ways. They say we support our troops, but at the same time they say we don't support the war you are fighting. Our troops deserve better. Either commit to their mission and bring them home victorious or stop their funding and bring them home in defeat. The choices are there in front of us.

Congress should allow time for the plan to take hold, not put forth a resolution that clearly is a step in the wrong direction, a policy of retreat and defeat.

Mr. Speaker, there is only one way out of Iraq, only one way out of this war, victory.

AMERICANS WANT CONGRESS TO DEBATE THE PRESIDENT'S TROOP ESCALATION PLAN

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

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, the American people deserve to know where we stand on the President's troop escalation plan, and this week every Member of this House will have an opportunity to explain why he or she supports or opposes President Bush's plan to send 21,500 more troops to Iraq.

The resolution that we are debating this week is a straightforward two-page bill. First, it highlights our continued support for our troops in Iraq. And second, it voices opposition to the President's troop increase plan.

The American people don't want Congress to continue to shirk from its responsibility to oversee the Bush administration's implementation of this war. Unfortunately, that is exactly what happened in the Senate, where a bipartisan resolution opposing the President's troop escalation plan is being kept hostage from the Senate floor by Republicans who seem content to allow the President to conduct this war any way he sees fit.

Mr. Speaker, the American people have unequivocally called on Congress to discuss this situation in Iraq and to take action to change our course there. Here in this House, we have begun the process this week.

□ 1015

DO NOT ENCOURAGE TERRORISTS

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to strongly condemn H.Con.Res 63, and the destructive message it sends our troops. Additionally, it sends a message that emboldens the very terrorists we are fighting to prevent another 9/11.

The debate over this resolution makes America appear weak in her resolve to win the war on terror. We have seen terrorism all across the globe, from bombings in Spain, to London and Bali.

America is fighting radical Islamic jihadists, an enemy that poses a threat of colossal proportions. They will stop at nothing to follow their twisted version of Islam and to pursue the destruction of Israel and Western civilization.

That is why I stand here with the firm resolve and pledge to protect my country and future generations from terrorism. I took an oath and have a constitutional obligation as a Member of Congress to protect and defend America from all enemies, foreign or domestic. This is an obligation all Members of Congress share, and it simply escapes me how some of my colleagues fail to understand the dire consequences of leaving Iraq.

LIES GOT US INTO IRAQ

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, the United States illegally attacked and invaded Iraq in a war based on lies. Now those same lies are being used to tell the American people we must escalate and continue to fund the war in the name of the troops. Now, where does this logic end?

The war could go on endlessly as we profess our support for the troops. It is time to stop using the troops as pawns. It is time to stop using the presence of the troops in Iraq as a reason to keep funding the war. It is time to use the money we have now to bring the troops home. And when they come home, it is time to take care of our veterans.

I have presented this Congress with a 12-point plan to bring our troops home, end the occupation, and stabilize Iraq. Yes, we should stop the escalation, but we should also end the occupation by ending funding for the war.

IRAQ IS A SMOLDERING FIRE

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, as we continue the debate of opposing reinforcements for American forces in the global war on terrorism, I am reminded of how crucial it is that we achieve victory to protect American families.

The current situation in Iraq reminds me of a smoldering fire in an urban area. Proper equipment and a sufficient number of professional firefighters are brought in to put out the fire. To sit back, overlook the seriousness or leave the scene of the fire only enables the fire to grow, become more intense and spread throughout the neighborhood.

This analogy is applicable to Iraq. As Secretary of Defense Robert Gates said recently, the violence in Iraq, if unchecked, could spread outside its borders and draw other states into a regional conflagration. Just as we know our fire chiefs would call up additional firefighters to contain a spreading fire, we must give our troops in Baghdad the chance to suppress violence and stabilize the region, which protects American families.

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

CONGRESS IS PROVIDING REAL OVERSIGHT OF THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE WAR IN IRAQ

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

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, since the beginning of the war in Iraq, congressional Republicans have stood on the sidelines as the Bush administration proved time and time again that it could not manage the war.

When Democrats took control of Congress we vowed things will be different. Mr. Speaker, we are living up to that promise. In the last month, House and Senate committees have held 52 hearings on the war in Iraq. Congress is finally asking the tough questions of this administration.

This week each of us has an opportunity to speak on the President's troop surge. Every single Member of this House will have 5 minutes to speak on the resolution. The House has not debated the issue of war like this since the first gulf war in 1991.

Mr. Speaker, the American people want Congress to take its oversight responsibility seriously. And this new Democratic Congress is doing just that.

ENSURE SENIORS GET FAIR ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH CARE

(Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, an estimated 2 million seniors suffer from a depressive illness, and another 5 million may have depressive symptoms. The risk for depression doubles when a person has a chronic illness such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer or Parkinson's disease. People with mental illness can get better with the right treatment, but Medicare's current policy discriminates against mental health by charging 2½

times more in copayments than for any other outpatient health care treatment.

Seniors who receive necessary mental health services reduce their hospital costs. One hospital offered mental health services for elderly patients with fractures, and reduced the length of stay by 2 days and hospital costs by over $160,000.

I will be reintroducing legislation to end Medicare discrimination for mental health services by adjusting copayments, and I ask my colleagues to cosponsor it. Learn more about how we can make health care affordable and accessible by visiting my Web site, Murphy.house.gov. We need patient-centered health care for patient quality, patient safety and patient choice.

GENERALS AGREE THAT PRESIDENT'S TROOP ESCALATION PLAN IS NOT THE BEST WAY AHEAD

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

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, today we will continue debating a bipartisan resolution that voices this Congress' opposition to the President's troop escalation plan. We are not alone in our opposition to the President's plan.

Military leaders have raised concerns since the framework of this plan was announced at the end of last year. Here are a few examples. In testimony before the Senate in November, General John Abizaid, the commander of Central Command said, ''I do not believe that more American troops right now is a solution to the problem.''

Retired General Joseph Hoar stated last month, ''The new strategy reflects the inability of the administration to get it right. The proposed solution to send in more troops will not work. It is far too little and too late.''

Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and Secretary of State, Colin Powell, said in December, ''I am not persuaded that another surge of troops into Baghdad for the purposes of suppressing this communitarian violence, this civil war, will work.''

Mr. Speaker, those are all men who have been on the frontlines. They join us in opposing the President's escalation plan.

UMATILLA COUNTY FARMERS

(Mr. WALDEN of Oregon asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, the failure of Congress to reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act is a breach of promise to the more than 600 forested counties across America and 4,400 school districts.

In Umatilla County, Oregon, it is the number one food producing county in the State. For them, a well-maintained road system is critical to ensuring family farmers can compete in this global market. With more than 340 bridges and, a State high, 1,650 miles of road, Umatilla County faces a significant infrastructure maintenance backlog and challenge.

County Commissioner Dennis Doherty says, ''American farms are dependent on a farm-to-market road system and loss of those funds will cripple our local road system.''

Tammy Dennee, executive director of the Oregon Wheat Growers League said, ''Global competition starts locally. Being the number one wheat producing county in the State, it is vital to farmers here that the road system is dependable.''

My colleagues, Congress must keep faith with these timbered counties and pass H.R. 17. Our future depends on it, our credibility depends on it, and time is running out.

HOUSE BEGINS HOLDING THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE WAR IN IRAQ

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

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, the days of this House rubber-stamping President Bush's failed war policies have ended. So far this year, House and Senate committees have held over 52 hearings on Iraq. And now this week, over a 4-day period here on the House floor, we will be debating the President's plan to send 21,500 more troops to Iraq.

The bipartisan bill is simple. It states that the House will continue to support our troops, but that we oppose the President's troop increase plan. Some of my Republican colleagues say that if you really support the troops, you must support the President's plan. But this makes no sense.

Do my colleagues not realize that our troops in Iraq were polled on the President's plan? Only 41 percent of them supported it. Not even a majority of our troops say that this plan of the President's is a good plan. What about our generals? Both retired and active duty military leaders have said that the President's plan will not reverse the devastating civil war that is now taking place in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, it is time that we listen to those military leaders and our troops and voice our opposition to the President's plan.

JOURNALISTIC ABUSE ON WOMEN

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, journalism has taken a plunge into the depth of disturbing depravity at Central Connecticut University. A writer for the college newspaper wrote a slam piece against sexual assault victims. His article was entitled, ''Rape Only Hurts if You Fight It.'' He claims rape is a magical experience and a blessing for unattractive women. He and his Third-World college newspaper now say the piece was satire and humor.

This mean-spirited article shows no humor, but vile and vicious and abusive words about women. Journalistic attacks on rape victims dehumanize them and show a total lack of understanding of this crime. Rape is a physical and emotional crime that tries to destroy the inner soul of the victim.

Almost one-fourth of the women on college campuses are rape victims. Journalists who are out of touch with the real world do a disservice to this field, and tragically, like physical abusers, heap journalistic abuse on rape victims.

And that's just the way it is.

NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR DEAL

(Mr. SCHIFF asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, the announcement in Beijing yesterday that the Government of North Korea has agreed to abandon its nuclear weapons program is a positive step, and I applaud the efforts of Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, as well as the efforts of our negotiating partners, Japan, South Korea, Russia and China.

Obviously much work remains to be done to ensure that North Korea follows through on its pledge to halt plutonium production at Yongbyon and to allow the return of international inspectors, as well as to resolve other outstanding issues; most noticeably, the need for complete declaration from Pyongyang of all of its nuclear activities and final disposition of North Korea's existing nuclear program.

As with past agreements with the reclusive regime of Kim Jong-Il, this agreement could collapse at any time.

There is now, however, rare optimism that a significant ratcheting down of tensions with the North is possible. The agreement should serve to remind those in the administration who see confrontation as the only way to convince Iran to abandon its nuclear program, that diplomacy can be effective, even if it is often immensely frustrating.

I hope that the President and Secretary of State will use this breakthrough with North Korea to reinvigorate diplomatic efforts to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

IRAQ WAR RESOLUTION IS BAD FOR AMERICA

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

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, let me give you four reasons why I think the resolution we will debate today is a bad resolution. Number one, it is nonbinding. It is a paper tiger. It does

nothing to influence our strategy or our direction in the global war with radical jihadists.

Secondly, it ill defines the enemy. It does not recognize that we are in a global war with radical jihadists who have attacked us around the world. Third, it omits recognizing key U.S. personnel that are serving, and serving ably, in this global war with radical jihadists. Why does it not recognize our intelligence professionals? Why does it not recognize our Armed Forces and intelligence professionals serving in Afghanistan, throughout the Middle East, Africa and parts of Asia?

Finally, most ironic, the bottom line of this resolution tells the President to stay the course. That is not good enough. This is a tough enemy. We need to develop and evolve our strategy to be successful.

TIME TO SEND THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION A MESSAGE THAT A CHANGE IN DIRECTION IS NEEDED IN IRAQ

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is time to send a message to the Bush administration that change is needed in Iraq. Mr. Speaker, the resolution we are debating this week here on the House floor is the first step in this new Congress' efforts to take Iraq in a new direction.

Last November the American people were clear that they wanted a dramatic change in Iraq. The President's troop escalation plan is not what they were asking for. This week this House will emphatically voice its opposition to the President's plan. We hope that this serves as a wake-up call and sends the ''Decider'' a message that he can no longer walk over Congress. We are not going to rubber-stamp his plans any more.

This week's debate is only the beginning, Mr. Speaker. House and Senate committees have already conducted 52 hearings on Iraq. That is what the Congress is supposed to do, provide real oversight on the administration. Unfortunately for the first 3 years of this war, congressional Republicans rubber-stamped the Decider's Iraq plan.

Those days are over. Mr. Speaker, we have an obligation to find a new course in Iraq, and a military solution is now out of the question. And that is why this troop escalation plan should be defeated.

□ 1030

WHAT IS YOUR PLAN?

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

Mr. SALI. Mr. Speaker, for those who would support House Concurrent Resolution 63, I ask, what is your plan? ''No'' is not a plan.

We have three options to follow. The first is to stay the course. I don't know of anyone, including the President, who is suggesting we take that route. The second is to increase the troops level, which the supporters of House Concurrent Resolution 63 are saying no to. The only other option is to reduce troops.

I would ask you who will support House Concurrent Resolution 63, read the Baker-Hamilton report, a bipartisan report, that talks about the effects that will occur if we do withdraw from Iraq. There will be widespread violence there, more than we are seeing today. And they warn us that a withdrawal may require the U.S. to engage, once again, in Iraq to stabilize that area.

So for those of you who would support House Concurrent Resolution 63, I again ask, what is your plan? ''No'' is not a plan.

IRAQ WAR RESOLUTION

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

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. When proceedings were postponed on Tuesday, February 13, 2007, time for debate on the concurrent resolution on that day had expired.

Pursuant to the resolution, it is now in order for a further period of debate on the concurrent resolution to extend not beyond midnight.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to yield my time for controlling the time to Mr. ANDREWS or his designee.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New Jersey is recognized as the designee of the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished majority leader, Mr. HOYER of Maryland.

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, 3 months ago, the American people sent a resounding message, a message for change. They voted for a new direction in our Nation, including a new direction for the war in Iraq, which will enter its fifth year next month.

This week on this House floor the Members of this great body can demonstrate that we not only have heard the voters' message, but also that we have the collective will to send one of our own.

The bipartisan resolution before us asks the Members one straightforward question to be answered. Do you approve of the President's proposal to deploy more than 20,000 additional troops in Iraq, or do you not? Thus, this resolution is a clarifying moment for the Members to say precisely where they stand on the President's plan.

There is little doubt that our Iraq policy is not succeeding. Our Commander in Chief, President Bush, acknowledged on this floor last month during his State of the Union address that, and I quote, ''Whatever you voted for, you did not vote for failure.''

I voted for the authorization, and I did not vote for failure. But the policies being pursued by this administration have not led to success.

After nearly 4 years at war, after more than 3,100 of our finest sons and daughters have given the ultimate measure of sacrifice in Iraq, after more than 25,000 have been wounded, after the expenditure of more than $400 billion on this war effort by the American taxpayer, our success seems as remote as ever.

Not surprisingly, two-thirds of the American people oppose the President's escalation plan. So do many current and former senior military officials, and Prime Minister Maliki has expressed his disapproval as well.

I oppose the President's plan for several reasons. First, we simply cannot ignore the many miscalculations made by the administration about this war, from sending too few troops, to grossly underestimating the cost, to failing to properly plan for the postwar period.

The President repeatedly said that his policies were working. He was tragically wrong, just as he is wrong today, in my view, about this escalation.

Secondly, this troop escalation does not represent a new strategy. In fact, we have tried at least four escalations in the past, none of which has succeeded in quelling violence.

The time for more troops was 4 years ago, 3 years ago, perhaps even 2 years ago, but not today.

The fact is our commitment of forces has never, has never been commensurate with the risk the President says exists. Never has the President, the Commander in Chief, suggested the resources necessary to succeed. This is too little, tragically, too late.

Third, we cannot disregard the deep skepticism and warnings of our military leaders. General Abizaid, not just another soldier, but the former chief of the Central Command in charge of our effort in Iraq, has stated that, and I quote, ''More American forces prevent the Iraqis from doing more, from taking more responsibility for their own future.'' That is the consequence General Abizaid believes of the President's policy.

Former Secretary of State Powell, one of the military leaders so successful in Iraq I, stated, and I quote again,

''I am not persuaded that another surge of troops into Baghdad for the purposes of suppressing the communitarian violence, this civil war, will work.'' That is General Powell.

And even Senator MCCAIN, who supports the President's escalation nonetheless, said just last week, ''I don't think it enhances our chances for succeeding in Iraq.''

It is obvious that there is not a military solution to the violence in Iraq. We need a diplomatic surge, a surge of Iraqi responsibility.

We must implement an aggressive diplomatic strategy, as suggested by our friend, FRANK WOLF, both within the region and beyond. The Iraqis must take the lead on security, and the mission of American forces must shift from combat to counterterrorism, training and logistics. And we must begin the responsible redeployment of our forces.

Now, let me close by urging Members to disregard the arguments of those who seek to mischaracterize this resolution. Some say that the resolution will demoralize our troops. In a democracy it is proper and essential that we debate the tactics and strategy we are employing when we are asking young Americans, and some not so young Americans, to be at the point of the spear. It is easy for us to talk about tactics and strategy, not so easy for those who are in harm's way.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Pace, says this debate will not adversely affect morale if we make it clear, as we have made it clear over and over and over again, that we will not abandon, we will not underman, we will not undersupply, we will not undertrain, and we will not defund those who we have put in harm's way. We will support our troops today, tomorrow and every day thereafter.

Some say that this resolution will demoralize our troops. Yet General Pace, as I said, says otherwise.

Others say that this resolution has not received adequate consideration. Yet, I tell my friends, in the first 6 weeks of this new Congress, we have held 52 House and Senate hearings. For the last 4 years this Congress has been absent without leave, and the American people know it. We did not demand accountability. We did not look at strategy. We did not question the President's policies. Fifty-two hearings have been held to date, and Chairman LANTOS has announced that he will hold a full committee hearing on all pending resolutions related to Iraq when we come back from the President's Day break.

Some say that this resolution is merely symbolic. To them I simply state that the bipartisan expression of the will of this House, when it mirrors the views of the vast majority of the American public, cannot, must not, should not be casually ignored.

Some say that this resolution signals retreat in the war on terror. As one who is absolutely committed to prevailing in the war on terror, to protect our people, to protect our country and, yes, to protect my three daughters, my three grandchildren, and my great grandchild, I am absolutely committed to policies that will protect us from terror and defeat those terrorists who threaten us. Continuing to support failed strategy, however, weakens our efforts in the war on terror. It does not strengthen them.

Furthermore, our failure to implement an effective strategy in Iraq has clearly, indisputably, resulted in encouraging and enhancing the ability of terrorists to recruit and to spread their twisted, hateful, violent ideology.

Finally, my colleagues, some assert that this resolution is a first step to defunding our troops in the field. This is categorically false.

While the new majority will explore other opportunities to affect Iraq policy, our commitment to our men and women in harm's way is unwavering.

Mr. Speaker, there is not a Member of this body, not one, on either side of the aisle, who does not pray for our Nation's success in Iraq.

Our brave service men and women have performed there with valor and with great honor. They have done everything that a grateful Nation has asked of them since the beginning of this war. We will not abandon them. I say to them directly, we will not abandon you. We will support you and we will assure that you are trained and equipped for the mission that we give you.

This is a critical moment, I tell you, my colleagues, in our Nation's war effort in Iraq. The President's policy is failing and his most recent proposal promises more of the same. This resolution is a first step in our attempt to forge a new direction in Iraq, and I urge every Member to support it.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to yield 10 minutes to the gentlelady from Texas (Ms. GRANGER).

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, on Sunday afternoon, I drove about 20 miles to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Balint in Willow Park, Texas. I had the solemn honor of presenting them with congressional remarks commemorating the noble and distinguished service of their son, Paulie.

The parents of Captain Balint did not complain to me or ask me to vote to end the war. They talked about the pride of their son and his lifetime desire to serve in the military.

The Balints have never waffled in their belief that the war in Iraq is one that demands our Nation's full commitment. They experienced a loss no one ever wants to share. Paulie was fighting to preserve our freedom and our way of life.

As I wished them well and turned to leave, the Balints asked me to bring a message back to Washington. They said to tell you to stay firm because we need to finish the job in Iraq.

So I am speaking today in memory of Paulie and his mother and his father and his brother and those who are still fighting there for us and listening to what we have to say.

I will not speak by calling into question anyone's patriotism or motives. All of us, Republicans and Democrats alike, recognize that much is at stake in Iraq and, undoubtedly, we all feel passionately about doing our duty to move forward and address what I consider to be the issue of our lives, the worldwide war against terrorists and a battleground of that war, which is Iraq.

The issue of responsibility in this war has been discussed during this debate, and I believe it is an important issue when addressing Iraq and in addressing this resolution.

□ 1045

Certainly in the change of direction the President has presented, the Iraqis have a clear responsibility to meet the goals of securing their own future. Likewise, Congress has a clear responsibility to produce meaningful legislation and provide effective oversight of our government's actions, especially during time of war.

Put another way, our citizens hold their elected Representatives accountable to craft legislation that results in meaningful and positive change. That is precisely what is so disappointingly unacceptable about this nonbinding bill, which fails to do anything, which holds no one accountable, and does not move our country forward on this critical issue.

Frankly, those many who have criticized the administration for staying the course too long are now presenting us with a bill that is the ''stay the course'' piece of legislation that both advocates failure and a position of status quo. More specifically, the bill ignores two of the most important parts of our Nation's role in Iraq: the consequences of failure and the principal support that we should provide our troops during times of war.

Let us say we do redeploy, which means quit. Or let us say the Congress takes the next step that is being talked about, and that is stopping the funding in Iraq. Let us look clearly at the consequences of a failed state in Iraq, not only for America but for the world.

Let there be no mistake, Iraq is but one front in a long war against a fanatical enemy who does not value human life and who seeks to destroy those who do. Failing to secure Iraq will result in massive instability in the Middle East, which will undoubtedly spill over to the rest of the world.

Consider the fractured nature of the Middle East and the nature of the dangerous threat we face. Iranian television stations routinely broadcast commercials that are designed to recruit would-be terrorists. In one ad specifically for children, cartoon characters entice them to be suicide bombers. Imagine a society that views indoctrinating 10-year-olds in the joys of

martyrdom as a positive action. And yet that is precisely the kind of hate-filled enemy we face in this war, where again Iraq is just one battle.

A failed Iraq would provide international terrorists fertile ground to sow the seeds of just that type of hatred and extremist thought. These terror groups are cold and brutal and fully dedicated to our destruction.

In a failed Iraq, terror organizations would exploit a populace who is distrustful of Western democracies, who have turned their backs on them. These people would be ripe for terrorist recruitment

Just yesterday, many of us met with the ambassadors of Jordan and Egypt who warned us of the consequences should we take the next steps that have been hinted at during this debate and meetings held in congressional offices. America cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of the past by withdrawal from a direct confrontation with radical terrorists. Should we retreat from the current fight, the enemy will continue to intensify their attacks against America, just as they did following the 1983 bombings of the Marine barracks in Beirut, the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993, the 1996 attack on the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, the U.S. Embassy bombings in Africa in 1997, and the brazen attack against USS *Cole* in 2000.

Many of the speakers on this resolution have cited the widely accepted Iraq Study Group report, which pointed to the dire consequences that America, indeed the world, would face should we fail in Iraq. What they choose to ignore is that the bipartisan authors of this report stipulated that they would agree with a short-term surge of American forces to bolster security and train Iraqi forces, which is precisely what our new strategy does.

Two weeks ago, the National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq was published, and it largely concurred with the findings of the study group of the results that failure in Iraq would bring.

Retreat from Iraq would result in pervasive instability in the Middle East, encourage rogue regimes, and give terrorists a secure base from which to launch attacks against free nations everywhere.

No one disagrees that the situation in Iraq has become more dangerous, but let me be perfectly clear. The consequences of failure in this fight would be catastrophic not only for America, but for the entire world.

While this war is certainly a test of our resolve, America has faced tough decisions during critical war years in the past. In 1862 debate over the Civil War threatened the success of the campaigns that our troops were engaged in. During the opening days of World War II, while the troops were engaged in a fight for their lives in the Pacific, Congress bickered over strategies of isolationism based in fear. And now in 2007, we find ourselves in the fight of our generation.

With all my heart I believe we stand at a crucial crossroad where the decision we make will affect not just us, but our children and their children and generations to come. Our enemies have demonstrated that they are willing to kill us even if they have to die themselves. Thankfully, our servicemen and women are willing to bravely defend our freedom as we in Congress go through the semantics of debating a nonbinding resolution.

For this reason and all the other reasons I have outlined today, I will not support a resolution that sends anything less than a clear message of support for our troops who are deployed in harm's way. Senator JOE LIEBERMAN stated last week in the Senate, ''This bill is a resolution of irresolution.''

If you believe the President's new strategy is unsound, then offer a better solution to win. If that is where your convictions lie, then have the courage to act decisively and be ready to accept the consequences of your convictions. Now, that would be a resolution.

The nonbinding resolution before us is at best confusing, at worst immoral. It pledges to support the troops in the field but washes its hands of what they are doing. We can't have it both ways. We can't say that our military men and women have our full support while disapproving of their mission on the eve of their battle. The bill does not resolve to do anything. It doesn't offer a solution. It only offers political expedient top-cover. It would be nice to play the game of nonbinding actions, but our soldiers and marines in Iraq don't have that option, and neither should we. In fact, if the troops in Iraq cared to watch what we were doing in Congress this week, they would be outraged. Fortunately for us, they have more important things to do and they live in a world where bullets are real and words alone carry little meaning.

I will close by asking all of you to picture yourselves as an 18- or 19-year-old marine or soldier who is preparing for imminent battle in Baghdad. At this very moment, you would be fueling your Humvee; loading your ammunition, checking your gear and equipment; taking time out to pray a private, quiet prayer. And if you are lucky, you might be able to call family and friends to tell them how much you love them. And all the while, the back of your hair is standing up and the back of your neck is itching because the support that you feel that is necessary from your government is lacking. As you prepare for battle, the best that your elected Representatives back home in your Nation's Capital can do is to debate a nonbinding resolution that has no real significance, except to call into question the mission you are about to embark on.

Quit? Unthinkable. Stop the funding while they are fighting? Immoral. Stay the course and do nothing? Outrageous.

What the Nation and our troops deserve is our best thinking and our best support.

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 11½ minutes.

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

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I support this resolution because it provides the affirmation and the change that I believe we need in Iraq. The affirmation is essentially universal in this House. It is an affirmation that we are irrevocably committed to arm, support, equip, and protect the troops that we have sent to Iraq. We are committed to stand by the young men and women who have made the choice to make a sacrifice for this country. That issue is not an issue.

What is an issue is whether American policy is working in Iraq or failing in Iraq. I believe it is failing, and I believe that a vote for this resolution is a vote for change.

We have frequently heard, Mr. Speaker, from the minority side that they would like to hear a plan. With all due respect, Mr. Speaker, I suggest they start listening to this debate and to the American people.

Here is how you build a plan: First, you acknowledge reality by properly defining the problem. The administration persists in rhetoric that defines the conflict in Iraq as a struggle between forces of civilization on one hand and the forces which wrought September 11 on the other. To some extent this characterization is accurate, but to a great extent this characterization is inaccurate.

A significant portion of the violence in Iraq is not the result of Islamic violence against American troops, although it exists. A significant portion of the violence in Iraq is the result of sectarian violence, Shiia against Sunni, Sunni against Shiia, and occasionally others against the Kurds. This is not the position of the Democratic Party. This is the observation of the military and intelligence leadership in public documents of this country. Sectarian violence is the principal problem in Iraq.

If the problem in Iraq were that a fragile but legitimate young government was struggling to hang on but could not overcome the resistance, then this idea of a troop surge would make sense. The idea of sending more fighters to defeat the resistance would make sense. This is not the proper definition of the problem. The troop surge does not send more fighters to defeat the resistance. It sends more referees to inject themselves into the violence between Shiia and Sunni militia and warfighters. The problem in Iraq is largely, not exclusively but largely, how to stop the sectarian violence.

The second change that we must have is a change that vests the Iraqis themselves with the primary responsibility and eventually the exclusive responsibility to defeat that sectarian violence. Sending more American troops to do the job of the Iraqis is not the answer. Insisting that the Iraqis do their

own job, defend their own country, fight their own fight is the answer.

Now, the United States should not divorce itself from that effort. The United States, in my view, should not immediately vest the Iraqis with all that authority. But sending more young Americans to fight the fight for legitimacy of the Iraqi Government will not further the legitimacy of the Iraqi Government. It will defer it. It will weaken it. It will undermine it. There is one way, and one way only, to determine whether Iraqis themselves are willing to fight for this government, whether Shiia are willing to fight Shiia militia, whether Sunni are willing to fight Sunni militia. And that is to let them do it, not to give the job to more and more Americans. This is the change that we need.

And, finally, we need a change which recognizes that the principal problem in reaching a unity government in Iraq is political negotiation. Now, this is not to say that diplomats alone can solve this problem, but it is most certainly to say that if those who are vested in the outcome of this civil war are not brought to a conference table, brought to a negotiation, and compelled or encouraged to reach a solution, I doubt very much that it will come.

The United States has become the guarantor of the status quo in Iraq, and the status quo is failing. The best way to serve the interests of the American troops is to engage in the democratic debate for which they are fighting. Young Americans are fighting and dying so that Iraqis will have the right to debate their country's future. It would be sadly and bitterly ironic if we abrogated our responsibility to debate our country's future over what they should be doing in that country and how long they should be there.

□ 1100

If you want to serve the troops, have the debate. And if you want to promote the idea of avoiding failure in Iraq, then change the policy in Iraq. Do not sustain the status quo. I believe that if you want to change the policy in Iraq, voting ''yes'' on resolution 63 is the right first step.

Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to my friend from California (Mr. SCHIFF).

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, it has been nearly 4 years since President Bush ordered American military forces into Iraq with the intention of toppling the government of Saddam Hussein. Now, after more than 3,100 American troops have been lost and this Nation has spent in excess of $365 billion, we find ourselves at a crossroads. Do we endorse the President's decision to escalate the conflict, or do we, as a coequal branch of government, exercise our prerogative to force a change in course?

In October of 2002 I voted for the resolution authorizing the use of military force in Iraq based on three assumptions: First, that the intelligence community correctly assessed that Iraq had active stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons and was pursuing a nuclear bomb; second, that President Bush would exhaust all diplomatic efforts to resolve the international community's standoff with Iraq over its weapons programs; and, third, that if the President determined that a resort to force was necessary the prosecution of the war and its aftermath would be competently managed by the President and his administration.

Each of these assumptions proved to be wrong. Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction and no nuclear program; President Bush did not exhaust all diplomatic efforts; and perhaps most tragically, his administration made terrible, costly and repeated blunders in its conduct of the war.

I have been to Iraq three times to visit our troops and to thank them for their service and their sacrifice. I have met the families of five soldiers and marines from my district who have been lost in Iraq. I have visited with our wounded here and overseas.

Words cannot convey the admiration that I have for the magnificent job that these men and women, many of them still in their late teens and early twenties, are doing on our behalf in Iraq. Whatever failings there have been in the prosecution of this war by the administration, our troops have performed magnificently in wretched conditions and against an often unseen enemy that has targeted U.S. military and Iraqi citizens without discrimination.

We must and we will continue to ensure that they have the resources they need to do their jobs and to come home safely, and once they are home, we will provide them with the care and benefits that they have paid for in blood.

Unlike some of my friends in the minority, I have never construed support for the troops to require a blind, unquestioning and slavish devotion to the Executive, even when the Executive is wrong, even when its policies will not achieve the desired result, and even when those very policies place our troops unnecessarily and unproductively at greater risk. On the contrary, on the contrary, an engaged Congress is essential to meaningful support for the troops.

On many occasions here on the House floor, in committee and in meetings with senior officials, I have pressed for accountability, oversight and a more vigorous commitment to force protection. In October 2003, I voted against the $87 billion Iraq supplemental because I believed that it shortchanged security for our troops and allocated too much for no-bid contracts.

Now, more than 3 years later, our reconstruction efforts in Iraq are a disaster and a national disgrace. Too many of our troops still ride into battle in vehicles that are not properly protected against IEDs and other weapons.

Last June I voted against the administration's ''stay the course'' resolution that sought to conflate the war in Iraq with the entire struggle against al Qaeda, even as it failed to acknowledge that our strategy to stabilize the country was not working and that its country was slipping into civil war.

Now, against the advice of Congress, the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, most military experts and the American people, President Bush has determined that victory in Iraq can be achieved by deploying 21,000 additional combat troops to Baghdad and its environs.

Regrettably, I cannot see how this escalation can be successful. Instead, I believe it will further the cycle of dependency that has allowed Iraq's Shiite dominated government to avoid making compromises with Sunnis and to avoid building capable security forces. It will increase the strain on our military at a time when the Army and Marines are already stretched to the breaking point. And, most of all, it will deepen our military commitment to Iraq at a time when there is a national consensus that we should be taking steps to reduce our combat role and reinvigorate the diplomatic process.

The administration and the minority charge that those who do not support the escalation have no plan and that this is the only possible path to success. I disagree. The Iraq Study Group laid out a strategy that centered around a reduced American combat presence in Iraq, increased efforts to train Iraqi forces, increased pressures on the Iraqis to make compromises and a regional conference to hammer out a common approach to Iraq.

This resolution is a clear message to the President that his approach has lost the confidence of this House and we need a change of direction. I hope he chooses to take our counsel. But he should be aware that the days of a rubber-stamp Congress are over, and we are willing to take other steps to insist on charting a new course in Iraq.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to my colleague from Texas (Mr. CARTER).

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

Mr. Speaker, I spent many years of my life being a trial judge in the beloved State of Texas, and as we are trying to make these decisions here today, I think there is a good parallel to be struck between the decisions that this House is going to make and the decisions that a jury gets asked to be made in the courtroom.

The process always begins with pleadings, and I have here in my hand the pleadings of the majority party of the House of Representatives, pleading for relief from this body.

They begin by section 1, the Congress and the American people will continue to support and protect the members of the United States Armed Forces who are serving and have bravely served honorably in Iraq.

Well, they are not really pleading for any relief there. They are not actually

asking us for anything, other than stating this is what they stand for. So we have to kind of fall back on our experience and what we have experienced recently.

We have just experienced a continuing resolution, as they called it, which cut the military over $4 billion. But that is okay, it is going to be put back in the supplemental, we are told. Yet in the argument in this case, I have heard many folks that step up there and start talking about they are part of the Out of Iraq Caucus and they wish to defund to get the troops back home. So if they are going to defund, when are they going to put that money back?

They say they support our troops. They, this Congress, has elected by its vote, General Petraeus, an expert in counterinsurgency, to give us a plan. And he has. He has told us, I need more boots on the ground to back up the Iraqi troops as they go in and clean out these militias and give some stability to Baghdad. That is what he has asked us for. And he has also told us that this type of action by Congress will discourage his troops.

Secretary Gates has told us in his opinion this will encourage our enemies, just this statement, this kind of thing that we are doing here today. And yet we hear arguments that is just not true.

Yet I don't know, I have got a little note here that ABC News, certainly nobody's conservative press, reports that they talked to some Army sergeants in Ramadi. First Sergeant Louis Barnum says, ''It makes me sick. I was born and raised a Democrat. When I see that, it makes me sad.''

Sergeant Brian Orzechowski says, ''I don't want to bad mouth the President at all. To me, it is treason.''

Then in this morning's paper, in the Washington Times, Cal Thomas' column, Army Sergeant Daniel Dobson, 22, of Grand Rapids, Michigan, in his second tour in Iraq, says, ''The American military has shown a stone-cold professional veneer throughout the seething debate over Iraq. Beneath that veneer, however, is a fuming visceral hatred. We feel as though we have been betrayed by Congress.''

So the evidence seems to be that this does seem to discourage our troops.

And how will it encourage our enemies? Let's think about that. If the majority gets its way and we pull out of Iraq, the enemy will be able to say, the jihadists of whatever faction they may be, will be able to say, ''We defeated the Russians in Afghanistan; we defeated the Shah and the United States of America in Iran; we have now defeated the United States of America and its coalition partners in Iraq.''

Won't this make a great recruiting poster and slogan for those who seek further jihadists who wish to do us harm?

So although their pleadings don't call for anything other than a statement of what they stand for, the consequences may be dire.

Then we go on to see what also they are telling us that they want to do. They are just telling us that Congress disapproves of the decision of President George Bush, that President George Bush announced on January 10, 2007, to deploy more than 22,000 additional United States troops in Iraq.

Okay. What does that tell us? That tells us they don't like what the President's decision was. That is what it tells us. Does it tell us why? Well, we have heard a lot of people tell us why. So I guess that is what we have to rely upon. Has it told us what alternative they feel like we are going to have? Does what they are asking us to do today give us an alternative? I find nothing else in this piece of paper that says that. I don't find any solution proposed.

So what should Americans expect from what is being asked for here today? I think they should expect discouraged troops. I think they should expect an encouraged enemy. But, more importantly, I think we as we make this decision should realize that what we may be doing is bringing this fight to the very people we are here to represent, so that when we stand in those metal detector lines at our malls we will know it all started with H. Con. Res. 63. Now we live in the unsafe world that the Israelis deal in every day.

Mr. Speaker, the relief sought here today is minimal, this action does nothing to help our troops or help our effort, and the only solution, if it goes bad, is prayer. We have a chance to have a solution here today, and I would submit that that solution is vote against House Concurrent Resolution 63.

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE).

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 63, to stop the President's escalation of our involvement in what has now become the Iraqi civil war.

I voted no in 2002 when the Congress passed the resolution authorizing the President to invade Iraq. It was wrong to start this war then, and it is wrong to escalate it now.

In 2002, I had several basic questions addressed to the President, questions that are still valid today. I asked then, what is the nature and urgency of the Iraqi threat to the United States? What is the mission of our troops? How much international support will we have? Will this military operation in Iraq decrease terrorism or increase terrorism? And what is the exit strategy to withdraw our troops from Iraq?

□ 1115

Mr. Speaker, we now know that Saddam Hussein did not have weapons of mass destruction. President Bush has since publicly acknowledged that there was no link or connection between Saddam Hussein and the terrorist attacks on 9/11.

The mission of our troops seems to change and expand daily, but their current mission appears to be to act as threatened referees in an increasingly bloody civil war between the Sunni and Shiite Iraqis.

As for international support, the American taxpayer has borne the vast majority of the costs to the tune of hundreds of billions of dollars. American fighting men and women and their families have borne the vast majority of the deaths and injuries to Coalition troops, over 3,100 Americans killed, 18 from my district, and over 23,000 wounded.

Even our staunchest ally, Great Britain, plans to reduce the number of its troops in Iraq to 4,500 by this June.

Are we safer today than we were before the invasion of Iraq? Declassified CIA National Intelligence Estimates indicate that the war in Iraq has become a primary recruitment vehicle for Islamic terrorists. Far from being the central front in the war on terror, as the President and his people say, Iraq is the incubator and training ground for new terrorists from around the world.

Finally, the President has never clearly stated what is our strategy to win in Iraq nor what is our exit strategy. ''Mission accomplished,'' ''Bring it on,'' ''Stay the course,'' or ''We will stand down as the Iraqis stand up'' are slogans, not strategies.

Our generals, our diplomats, the Iraq Study Group even the White House, all agree there is not a military solution to the war in Iraq. Only a political resolution between the warring Iraqi factions could end the current violence.

I do not believe that adding more American troops will do anything to help foster that crucial political solution. In fact, it may hinder it.

Telling the Iraqi leadership and the Iraqi people that they must solve their own internal problems without limitless American assistance has a far better chance of success than continuing our current blank-check policy.

Mr. Speaker, President Bush either did not get or did not understand the message the American people sent last November. Before the end of this year, U.S. troops should be redeployed and their efforts focused on support and training the Iraqi Security Forces. It is their country, it is their fight, and it is their future.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to my colleague from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS).

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, in this debate, our first care should be for the safety and morale of the men and women serving in the American Armed Forces. Whatever the way forward, nothing said here should be heard by friend or foe as disrespect for the work and sacrifice of those who willingly fight our battles in a very dangerous world.

It took the United States and coalition forces less than 3 weeks to topple

a brutal Iraqi regime that had held an iron grip on power for almost 30 years. Since then, they have battled a growing insurgency and rampant sectarian violence with professionalism and bravery. Of all the instruments of national power we could and should be discussing today, diplomacy, economic policy, intelligence and warfare, our military is the only one that has performed predictably, consistently, and well.

Still, knowing what we know today, after almost four years of attempted nation-building on the shifting sands of Iraq, the plan to put 21,000 more Americans in harm's way there has to be viewed with a cold-eyed skepticism born of that hard experience. Putting American troops between feuding Sunni and Shia in the middle of Baghdad, in my judgment, is a mistake. This is the appropriate place for Iraqis, not Americans.

The Iraq Study Group concluded that, ''Sustained increases in U.S. troop levels would not solve the fundamental cause of violence in Iraq, which is the absence of national reconciliation.'' They quoted a U.S. general who said that if the Iraqi Government does not make political progress, ''all the troops in the world will not provide security.'' I agree.

Like many Members, Republicans and Democrats, I voted for the resolution authorizing President Bush to use force in Iraq, just as I supported President Clinton's decision to take military action against the former Yugoslavia. Four years ago, we were trying to persuade Saddam Hussein to comply with the United Nations resolutions on disarmament and weapons inspections. Only a credible threat of force could possibly convince him that it was finally in his interest to respect the lawful demands of the international community.

Voting to support the President strengthened his hand in the diplomatic effort to get the Iraqi regime to comply peacefully. Saddam Hussein chose not to comply, and when diplomacy fails, and military action becomes necessary, politics should stop at the water's edge and every American should stand behind the Commander in Chief.

But no grant of authority is a blank check. Today, naive notions about a quick or tidy victory in Iraq have given way to far grittier options on how best to achieve our strategic goals in that nation, in the region, and in the global struggle against Islamic extremism.

We want the President to succeed, but we are disappointed our hopes and good intentions for Iraq remain unrealized. Many are frustrated by the mistakes and missed opportunities that plagued this noble but star-crossed effort. Poor planning for occupation and reconstruction of a devastated nation, and missteps by the Coalition Provisional Authority, allowed the insurgency and long-simmering factional hatreds to erupt and to take root.

At this point, it seems clear to many that only Iraqi interests, not ours, can be advanced on the streets of Baghdad. U.S. and coalition forces were tasked as protectors of Iraq's hard-won sovereignty, not referees in unchecked sectarian vendettas. From here, the surge looks much more like the status quo on steroids than a serious alternative policy to reach a realistic goal. Some way must be found to cut the Gordian knot that ties us to an Iraq strategy that says we can neither win nor leave.

Moreover, so long as American troops are the ones on the ground, taking the fire and being objects for sectarian terrorist hatred, other stakeholders who have more at stake in the region than we will refuse to step forward.

But whatever else it might accomplish, this resolution still does not do enough to illuminate a new, sustainable strategy in Iraq. It offers us few alternatives, and I am disappointed in that. The profound and complex issues central to our international position today cannot be reduced to simplistic political statements. We took an oath to uphold and defend the Constitution, not just strike poses on how that duty applies to the key questions before us as a Nation. In the end, these are purely political statements, when the debate we really need to have is about the most apolitical subject of all: national security in a time of global peril.

Today, the House sends a purely symbolic message to the President. It is a message that will also be heard by our troops, by the Iraqi Government, by the Iraqi people who have relied on us, and by our enemies who are hoping we will quit the fight soon. It does not say enough. We should be debating the elements of an effective policy to stem the tide of jihadism infecting growing swaths of the globe. This resolution says only what some Members are against, nothing about what we are for.

The Iraq Study Group report put forth 79 specific recommendations, many focused on the need for far greater engagement of regional powers, friends and foes in taking realistic steps to stabilize Iraq. I joined my colleague, FRANK WOLF, in supporting creation of the Iraq Study Group, and I wish he and others were allowed to offer those recommendations for discussion by the House. Those are the debates and the votes I had hoped to participate in today.

The lack of substantive alternatives before us, particularly on the question of adequate funding for deployed troops, betrays the majority's empty, conflicted positions on Iraq: against the President, but for nothing. The Senate majority attempted to straddle the same contradictions recently, confirming without dissent the new commanding general for Iraq, while at the same time claiming to be against the very same mission they know he has been ordered to undertake.

On the genuine questions of security and strategy in Iraq, we cannot remain, as Winston Churchill admonished, ''decided only to be undecided, resolved to be irresolute, adamant for drift, solid for fluidity, all-powerful to be impotent.''

Mr. Speaker, we must decide, and I have decided, to support this resolution because it is the only option that has been made in order by the majority today to engage the House in formulation of Iraq policy, but once troops are committed by the Commander in Chief and we are engaging the enemy, symbolic gestures like this must confront the more complex realities of how to support those forces in the safe and speedy completion of their mission.

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to my friend, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY).

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 63. Despite the brave efforts of our troops, the situation in Iraq continues to deteriorate. Our troops have gone above and beyond the call of duty. Unfortunately, they are caught in the middle of sectarian violence.

From the onset of the conflict, there has been mismanagement and mishandling from this administration. The administration was not prepared for the violence following the removal of Saddam Hussein.

In addition, the previous Congress did not do its job. The 110th Congress held the first oversight hearing since the invasion in 2003. That is 4 years without any congressional oversight.

I have heard so many speeches here saying that we support the troops. I think everyone, every single Member, supports the troops. Yet all those years that we were hearing from the families and from our soldiers themselves, saying they did not have the equipment, they did not have certainly the equipment to keep them safe, where were we? Where were we as Members in making sure that our military had the best equipment?

Since January, we have had 52 oversight hearings on Iraq. It turns out that nearly $12 billion from the American taxpayers have not been accounted for. That is $12 billion that could have been spent on our equipment to protect our troops. Our troops deserve better.

The President explained his new plan for Iraq last month. Again, I hear that we must stand by the President. Well, I was one that stood by the President. I voted with the President. I voted for every appropriation for the President, and now he is doing the same thing. It is not working. It has not worked. It is time for a new plan.

He called for an increase of 20,000 more troops in Iraq and, unfortunately, I am afraid that this is a little bit too late. We needed hundreds of thousands of troops in the beginning. That is when the generals asked for those troops and they were denied.

The truth of the matter is we did this war on the cheap. We did not do it right in the beginning, and now we are all paying the consequences.

Throughout the conflict our troop levels have changed. We have sent more troops in when our generals called for them. Then they were made smaller. To no fault of our troops, the extra numbers did not calm the situation. I do not believe that putting more of our brave men and women in harm's way is the solution to this conflict.

President Bush emphasized his intentions of placing more authority and responsibility on the Iraqi Government. Well, it is about time. We have spent a lot of money to train the police officers, to train their military, and yet they are not standing up for their own country.

Prime Minister Maliki has not proven that he can stop the violence that is going on in his country. That should not mean that our troops should be there. Our troops are trained for a war, not to settle political differences in that country. He has failed to bring equal representations of the Sunnis and the Shiites into the Iraqi Government. This shortfall has fueled sectarian violence, putting our troops in greater harm.

Poor planning by civilian leaders within the administration has placed our brave men and women in harm's way. Our troops have gone above and beyond the call of duty. They have served our country bravely and honorably, and we all know that. Many of these troops have served their full tours of duty in Iraq, and they have left behind family and friends to defend this great Nation.

More than 3,000 of our men and women have made the ultimate sacrifice, and not one of them, in my opinion, has died in vain because they were doing their duty. We sent them there, and they have lived up to that, and thousands more have suffered debilitating injuries.

It is time to shift the burden of this conflict to the Iraqis themselves. We have a responsibility in Congress to make sure that our troops are not put unnecessarily in harm's way.

President Bush has made his decisions without consulting enough experts and retired generals. Where was all the information that we needed years ago as far as bringing the experts, knowing what the culture was in the Middle East? That is something that we still are not addressing here.

Decisions have not been clearly thought out and our troops have paid the price. And after much thought, I have come to the conclusion that a phased redeployment of our troops is the best option.

No one is really talking about Afghanistan either. When we started, we were winning in Afghanistan. When we took those troops out of Afghanistan, we started seeing the insurgents coming in. We can put our troops along the borders. We can stop the insurgents coming into Iraq while the Iraqi Government tries to solve their own problems.

□ 1130

We can go back into Afghanistan and make sure that we shore up that country so more insurgents and military equipment are not coming from that country.

We must show the American people and our allies, by the way, who are leaving, they are not supporting us, it is not just Democrats and a lot of our Republican colleagues that feel that we should get out. Our strategy has been wrong, it is time to work together, and I am hoping after all these debates, when we come back from our break, we can actually go to our committees and come up with a way to solve these problems, not only for America, but before the world.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my colleague from Texas, a member of the Intelligence Committee (Mr. THORNBERRY).

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I have listened to much of the debate yesterday and today, and I appreciate the efforts of my colleague from Michigan to remind and educate us all about what is at stake for our security and how Iraq fits into the larger war against radical Islamic terrorists. That is serious work.

Unfortunately, this resolution is not serious work. I believe we have to start by asking a basic essential question: Why are we doing this? What is the purpose of this resolution? What good will come from passing it? I cannot find an acceptable answer.

The struggle in Iraq and the larger war against radical Islamic terrorists is, in my view, the preeminent national security issue facing our country. It is important for Congress to devote serious, meaningful attention to it. But whatever we do should have a purpose, a purpose that makes the United States stronger, a purpose that will help us be successful, a purpose we can explain and be proud of in years to come.

Here we have a nonbinding resolution, which means it does not have the force of law. It conveys an opinion. Now, we do that from time to time. We congratulate a sports team, we express concern about curing a disease, we pat somebody on the back. We do express opinions.

What is the opinion in this resolution? It is that we support the troops, but we do not support their mission. We support the troops, but we do not support their new commander, who is this Nation's preeminent strategist and expert on counterinsurgency, who just wrote the manual for counterinsurgency, who was just approved by the Senate unanimously. We support the troops, but we don't support him or her or what he is trying to do. Now, what is the purpose of expressing that kind of self-contradictory opinion?

And I continue to be troubled when I think, when in the history of the United States has Congress passed a resolution expressing an opinion on a battlefield strategy for an ongoing operation that Congress has approved? It is like June 13, 1944, D–Day plus seven: Congress passes a resolution that says, ''We support the troops, but Eisenhower should never have landed in Normandy. And, besides, he doesn't have the right number of people to hit those beaches anyway.''

Mr. Speaker, I can only conclude that this resolution is more about political posturing than it is about anything else, and I think every American ought to be saddened and disappointed by it. We have a spectacle going on in this country where a group of people running for President try to outdo one another to see who can be the most against our involvement in Iraq. Now we come to add to that spectacle with a nonbinding contrary resolution.

Just put yourself in the shoes of those men and women going into battle in Baghdad. Does this resolution encourage you or discourage you? Put yourself in the shoes of those people who do not want stability in Iraq, our adversaries. Does this resolution encourage you or discourage you? Put yourself in the shoes of those families like Ms. GRANGER, just visited, or the Britt family in Wheeler, Texas, or the Das family in Amarillo, Texas who have lost their sons in this effort. Does this resolution encourage you, or does it discourage you? Who is helped by this resolution?

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to be misunderstood; mistakes have clearly been made with regard to our involvement in Iraq, and Members should be part of a serious study to learn from them. There are a good many questions that need to be asked, and there is very good reason for skepticism that this new strategy is really going to work. We should ask those questions. We should hold Iraqis accountable for doing what they say they are going to do. I know there are some people who say we don't need to ask any more questions, they have already made up their mind; they are ready to vote to leave today. Fine, let's vote on that. It is a serious vote, with consequences, and people that vote that way ought to be ready to shoulder the responsibility for the consequences that come from that sort of vote.

But this resolution is not serious, it is just political posturing, pure and simple.

Mr. Speaker, this struggle is going to require the best of us for years and possibly decades to come. It will require that we put aside the political temptations to get a momentary partisan advantage. It requires that we do our constitutional duty not to be a rubber stamp to any administration, but to be an independent branch of government committed to serious, thoughtful work.

To prevail over these radical Islamic terrorists and protect our people, we are going to have to bring the full array of national assets. Yes, our military, but also our diplomats and our

foreign assistants and our ideas and our ideals. All of that is going to have to be at our best. But it is going to require the best of us, too, and we are not giving our best with this resolution. Hopefully, we can do better.

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of bipartisanship, I yield 1 hour of our time to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES), and I ask unanimous consent that he be allowed to control this hour of time.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey. And I apologize for my voice.

Before I yield time, I want to take just a couple minutes and remind the House that, yes, we are here today to talk about resolution 63, but to remind the House that why we are in Iraq is the question.

I want to start my comments by sharing with the House that I met with a real marine general hero that very few people on the floor know his name; his name is General Gregory Newbold. And I want to quote him from Time magazine, April 9, 2006, ''Why Iraq Was a Mistake.'' I will be brief.

Two senior military officers are known to have challenged Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld on the planning of the Iraq war. Army General Eric Shinseki publicly dissented and found himself marginalized. Marine Lieutenant General Greg Newbold, the Pentagon's top operations officer, voiced his objections internally and then retired, in part out of opposition to the war. Here, for the first time, General Newbold goes public with a full-throated critique. I want to quote this to the House from General Newbold.

''I was a witness and therefore a party to the action that led us to the invasion of Iraq, an unnecessary war. Inside the military family, I made no secret of my view that these zealots' rationale for war made no sense, and I think I was outspoken enough to make those senior to me uncomfortable. But I now regret that I did not more openly challenge those who were determined to invade a country whose actions were peripheral to the real threat, al Qaeda.''

I mention that, Mr. Speaker, because today this is an important debate. And, yes, my friends on the other side I respect and have great love and affection. But I remember in 1999, when we were on the floor as the majority party criticizing President Clinton for going into Bosnia, that was a nonbinding resolution.

That is what the Congress is about: debate, disagreements, agreement, debate. That is our constitutional responsibility.

Let me tell you what Karen Hughes, who was speaking for then-Governor Bush, who is now President Bush, said about the nonbinding resolution. This was in The Washington Post, March 27, 1999. I quote Mrs. Hughes speaking for Governor Bush at the time, criticizing President Clinton, and this is a quote. ''If we are going to commit American troops, we must be certain that they have a clear mission, an achievable goal, and an exit strategy.''

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina, my colleague and friend (Mr. COBLE).

Mr. COBLE. I thank the distinguished gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. Speaker, I oppose deploying 20,000 additional troops to Iraq. Oh, if you oppose the surge, the troops will be demoralized, we are told. The five ''d'' words will be prominently exposed this week as my friend just mentioned: debate, dialogue, discipline, deliberation, and democracy.

The troop morale will be adversely affected because we are involved with these disciplines? I think not. I believe they would more readily be demoralized if we were willy-nilly rubber-stamping every issue confronting us.

I approved of removing Saddam Hussein because it is my belief, and I continue to believe it is the general consensus of this Congress, that Saddam was indeed an international terrorist. I regret that we were inept in formulating a post-entry strategy. I am not convinced that any particular strategy was ever in place.

It is unfortunate and, yes, unfair, that many people, strike that, some people, perhaps many people, are blaming President Bush, the United States, Great Britain, Australia, and our other allies for the civil unrest in Iraq. Saddam was removed and a free election was conducted, so the Iraqi people were given a choice between freedom and civil war. Unfortunately, they chose the latter. They rejected freedom and chose civil war. And the longer we maintain a presence there, the more they will rely upon us. The time has come, in my opinion, for the baton to be handed to the Iraqis.

Finally, permit me to discuss cutting and running. Oh, you cannot leave; you will be accused of cutting and running, we are told. If we had removed Saddam, which most Iraqis wanted, and then withdrew 4 or 5 weeks later, or even 4 or 5 months later, that would have constituted cutting and running. But we have been there for years, Mr. Speaker. Over 3,100 of our troops have given the ultimate sacrifice, in excess of 25,000 have suffered injuries, many permanent disabling injuries. This is sacrifice, not cutting and running. And I insist that we do not maintain an eternal presence in Iraq if for no other reason than the cost to the taxpayers, which has been astronomically unbelievable.

In excess of 2 years, Mr. Speaker, I have stressed the importance of retaining troop withdrawal as a viable option. Early on, virtually no one was even remotely considering withdrawal. I believe withdrawal is not unsound for the reasons I have previously cited.

Some Americans and perhaps some in this body oppose the Iraqi operation because they dislike President Bush. I, however, do not march to that drum. I am personally very high on President Bush. But on the matter of troop escalation, I am not in agreement.

The noted British statesman Edmund Burke, while addressing Solicitors at Bristol many years ago said, ''As your representative, I owe you my industry, but I also owe you my judgment. And if I sacrifice my judgment for your opinion,'' he said, ''I have not served you well.''

Some of my constituents will embrace my vote as demonstrating sound judgment. Others will likely reject my vote as a result of flawed judgment.

Not only do I owe my best judgment to my constituents, but to our troops as well, who we continue to remember in our thoughts and prayers.

I thank the Speaker and I thank the distinguished gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. At this time, I yield 6 minutes to our colleague from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP).

□ 1145

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, I want to first say, since I am coming at this point in this time, that I am a Republican who opposes this resolution. Most importantly, because this resolution is nonbinding, I am one of the ranking members on the Appropriations Committee who will fight to make sure that, no matter what, funds are not restricted or reduced or cut from the men and women in harm's way on behalf of this country in the future days, regardless of what is said on this floor.

I want to make some general observations. First, the war on terror is the worst-named war in the history of our country. We are at war with Islamic jihadists, fundamentalists, radicals. We need to be more clear as to who we are fighting. Frankly, my view is that this is a religious conflict. People may ask in Tennessee or Texas, why are we involved?

Well, for the first 1,350 years of this religious conflict we were not involved. But history shows that a man named Qutb, the Wahhabi leader, a radical, over 40 years ago, came to this country, was educated, went back and indoctrinated a man named Azzam and taught a man named bin Laden that Western liberalism, freedom, self-government would actually bring about apostasy or ungodliness.

That is the truth. He indoctrinated the Sunni radicals that your way of life, self-determination, would create ungodliness, and that it must be stopped, and at that point we were brought into this religious conflict, the split there in the Arab and Persian world created by the 1970s, organizations in Iran that overthrew the Shah,

and it gave them the first Islamic state when Ayatollah Khomeini was brought back in 1978, and, unfortunately, our leaders in the country helped bring that about in the late 1970s.

Khomeini took over, and within a few months they took our hostages in Tehran. That was a low point in this country's history and my life, and from 1978 forward 30 times our interests have been attacked around the world, and twice they have been attacked domestically in the United States.

It is important to remember this. We are at war with Islamic jihadists. Al-Zarqawi and Zawahiri were talking while al-Zarqawi was still alive, and he said we need to expand the caliphate from Indonesia to Morocco. They believe they can go north to Europe and all the way to the former Soviet Union. This is where the Arabs have had influence, this is their agenda.

It is interesting to me that this only became very difficult in the last 12 months in Iraq. This week was the 1-year anniversary of the Samara mosque bombing. That is when the sectarian violence broke out. They are attacking each other. Moqtada al-Sadr's uncle is buried at that mosque. He was killed by Saddam Hussein.

One year ago, they blew up that mosque in sectarian violence. What is Moqtada al-Sadr doing today? He is fleeing. Why? Because he hears that we are going to increase security, put more boots on the ground in Baghdad. He is fleeing to Iran.

What does that say about all of this? Well, it says to me that we are beginning to do the right thing. The region's leaders told us this week partition of Iraq is not acceptable in the Arab world or the Persian world or the region. A partition will not work. It will make things worse. They also said ''a precipitous withdrawal will be catastrophic.''

I remind my colleagues and the American people, we were not in Iraq before September 11. We were not in Afghanistan before September 11. This problem is not going to go away if we leave Iraq. This is a generational challenge.

As a matter of fact, I will say this, and this may be the most dramatic thing said on this floor, and I am briefed at a pretty high level. I believe we haven't been attacked domestically since September 11 for two reasons. One, we are better than we have ever been at intelligence again, and I am glad.

Two, they don't want to see us united like they saw us after September 11. Our enemies love the dissent and the division. They do not want to see us come together again, because when we do we are the best in the world.

Five points, Iraqi troops are showing up, progress is being made. This morning, a story out, several Iraqi battalions now exceed the 75 percent measurement on participation. For them that is very good.

Two, reinforcement is what this is. It is not a surge. The spread on how many troops we have had over the last several years is from 136,000 to 160,000. We are down to the lower level. This is going to bring us back to the upper level, about what we had when the elections were held. It is not a surge, it is reinforcement.

Three, the commanders tell us that reinforcement will, quote, will save lives and reduce violence. Reinforcements militarily, always there is a grid that shows that reinforcements save lives and reduce violence.

Four, there are two tracks here. One is troop strength and security. The other is diplomacy. You will see in the coming days diplomacy break out in the region. I say to all my colleagues who have great concern, that are afraid we are not talking to Iran and Syria, just stay with us. I believe you will see dialogues at every level take place in the region in the coming weeks, and I have been meeting with some of the administration officials.

Then let me say this, and I know what the distinguished majority leader said, and I respect him, and I believe many, many people, if not everyone in this House, have good intentions. If this resolution is followed by a funding cut, more Americans will die, and the sacrifices to date will be lost. We must do better, but we better not retreat in Iraq.

Too much is at stake. Our problems are not going away. Let's not be foolish. Let's not retreat from this challenge. Let's stand together and unite for the fight of our lives. It is a generational struggle, and we must pull together and meet in defense of liberty and our way of life.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Before I introduce my friend from Maryland, I want to read a statement from Marine General Joseph Hoar, former Commandant of U.S. Central, when he appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations on January 18 of 2007. This Marine general said, and I quote, the proposed solution is to send more troops, and it will not work. The addition of 21,000 troops is too little and too late.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 7 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCHREST), himself a former Marine, always a Marine, who served during Vietnam and was wounded for this country.

Mr. GILCHREST. I thank the gentleman from North Carolina for being generous with his time. I also want to sincerely thank the gentleman from North Carolina for his effort to resolve the issue successfully and for bringing those of us who are speaking here this morning together and for organizing this time.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to vote for this resolution for many reasons that I will explain, but this resolution is not a retreat from Iraq. This resolution is understanding the new phase that we find ourselves in with the war in Iraq and the war on terrorism. So it is a step forward in the right direction.

I want to begin by commending our American troops and the intelligence community for their bravery, their professionalism and their stunning competence in Iraq and Afghanistan under very difficult circumstances. Those young men and women have eliminated terrorist training camps and gotten rid of Saddam Hussein and his band of terrorists, who for years have brutalized the Iraqi people and many people, many thousands of people in the region.

They have eliminated the potential for weapons of mass destruction, these young men and women, and we are proud of that. The Taliban is disbanded and al Qaeda is on the run. These are our troops and the intelligence community.

Where are we now? We find ourselves now, the war on Iraq, and the global war on terrorism, in a new phase, the President understands that phase. The Congress is grasping with that phase. We now know the war in Iraq is in a new phase, and a global war on terror continues, so how do we respond?

How do we approach this new phase? Let's look at the recent past. Let's go back to the 1950s. President Eisenhower said, for the United States to be safe and secure we need a strong military, the best intelligence, and consensus and dialogue.

President Eisenhower implemented all of those practices, especially after Nikita Khrushchev pounded his shoe at the podium of the United Nations and pointed to the Western diplomats and said, ''we will bury you.''

Eisenhower's response? He invited Khrushchev to the United States for a dialogue.

President Kennedy was told there were armed nuclear warheads in Cuba. What did President Kennedy do? Proceed with dialogue and talking with the Soviets. We did not go to war. Nixon went to China.

Who during that period of time did we not have a dialogue with? It was Ho Chi Minh; 53,000 Americans died in the Ten Thousand Day War. Hundreds of thousands were wounded, and millions of Vietnamese were killed. What if we had a dialogue with Ho Chi Minh about ending the French colonial period and encouraging Vietnam to have self-determination, that which we fought for in World War II? What would have happened?

Fifty-three years of dialogue with North Korea just now may be yielding results, 53 years of dialogue. Ask yourself this question. Is a century of dialogue without resolution better than one day on the battlefield? Don't be quick to answer that, but ask that question to yourself.

The world, rich and poor, the people of the world, are intimately familiar with American history, especially with the following man. They know the words of Thomas Jefferson. ''We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness.''

They know Lincoln's words, ''with malice toward none and charity for all.'' They know Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, words, ''You should be judged by the content of your character.''

America is the race of races. The melting pot has become a common heritage with the world's people. Our enemies are ignorance, arrogance and dogma. Monstrous certainty has been and is the tragedy of mankind. The new phase of the war in Iraq and the global war on terror not only includes the military, it not only includes the intelligence community, but in this instance it must include a surge of diplomacy, to integrate the Middle Eastern countries in a diplomatic dialogue about the stability of the region, including reconciliation, economics, trade issues, medical and educational exchanges, et cetera, et cetera. This must be and is a necessary part of that complete strategy to make America safe and secure. The blueprint, the starting point, is to vote ''yes'' today on today's resolution.

The second phase of that is to understand the words which is the blueprint for this new phase, the Iraq Study Group. What do we do with U.S. troops in the Middle East? There are strong recommendations for that. What do we do about training and equipping the Iraqi Army and making them prepared? That is in the Iraq Study Group.

What is the framework for cooperation with the Iraq people, the Iraq Government, and the problems with sectarian violence? That is in the Iraq Study Group.

What about a new diplomatic initiative with all of Iraq's neighbors, including Iran and Syria? How about consultation with Congress? Vote for this resolution, and we can move on to end the violence, the sectarian chaos, the foolish, bitter electronic exchanges between countries, electronic exchanges, instead of face-to-face conversations.

That effort, fully implemented, will bring our troops home sooner. They will have a brighter future, and the generations to come for the people in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We as Members of Congress are at the controls. We are able to control the policy. How? With our vote. Do we know how to use the military? Do we know how to use the intelligence community? Do we know the possibilities of consensus and dialogue with all the countries of the region? If our young men and women are brave enough to go into Iraq and Afghanistan, then we as Members of Congress must be brave enough and informed to start a dialogue in Damascus, in Tehran, in the entire region, to hasten peace.

The first step is an ''aye'' vote on this resolution.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to a Member from California, a member of the Intelligence Committee (Mr. ISSA).

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

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I was here on the floor yesterday and thought I would only speak once. As I heard the debate of thoughtful Members on both sides of this issue, I was reminded of something I said yesterday that needed to be said again. Although the people you are hearing from mean well on both sides, less than a third of the Members speaking on this House floor served in the U.S. military, although everyone was eligible, and less than a third have traveled to Iraq, although everyone was eligible. Perhaps we will give the freshmen a pass.

This is, in fact, a debate by people who are not military experts. I count myself among those, who although I served in the military and have been to Iraq, I am not a military expert. I don't pretend to play one on television and before the American people, and yet that is what we are doing here for four solid days.

□ 1200

We are in fact, pretending to be military experts. Well, Mr. Speaker, this morning I had a military expert in my office, Staff Sergeant Bain. He is only a staff sergeant. How is he an expert? He is just finishing 3 years in Walter Reed, 3 years of recovery from terrible wounds. He came in doing a very good job with his artificial leg. He came in and shook my hand, even though he cannot feel with that hand.

All I could do was thank him for his service and hand him a coin and wish him well in his civilian life. But he took the time to tell me that he disagreed with the President sending 20,000 troops to Iraq.

He said, I am sorry I can't be there for that. He said, they ought to send 100,000. What we did there we need to finish. Staff Sergeant Bain got it right. The United States military and its experts believe we need to get this finished and get it right.

Now, the staff sergeant is 3 years out of Iraq, so I will forgive him for not being sure about whether it should be 20,000, as our military leaders, including General Petraeus, have asked for, or whether it should be 20,000 more if necessary, or 100,000. But it is important that Staff Sergeant Bain be heard.

Because in fact what you have here are a bunch of people, most of whom did not serve in the military, most of whom have not bothered to go to the combat zone, and those of us who did for the most part had a relatively quick tour in and out. We have not experienced what our troops have experienced.

And I know there is some disagreement among those who have been there. But, Mr. Speaker, I ask the American people to ask a vet of this war, their own vet, their own neighborhood, and they are going to find out they want to win this peace just as they won the war.

They toppled Saddam, and now they are being told to cut and run. That is what this is leading to. Mr. Speaker, we cannot do that and we know it. And yet for political expedience this body is pretending to be military experts.

Mr. Speaker, I will close simply by reminding this body of something we do know about. This is a body filled with people who understand history. Under fascism; we took on Japan, Germany, Italy and their allies. And it took 4 years before we did it, while they grew, and 4 years to defeat them. And it took a decade or more to turn those countries into functional democracies.

Yet America stayed the course. And we had troops deployed there and we have troops deployed there today, even though they are functional democracies.

Mr. Speaker, for more than 50 years we fought the other ''ism,'' communism. China, the Soviet Union, and the rest of the Soviet Bloc stood there threatening annihilation, but the American people put up with unspeakable amounts of money and significant loss of military lives, over 100,000 in two side battles of the Cold War.

We spent countless billions. Sometimes as much as 50 percent of our government's budget went to the military. And we did it. Now we are being asked to deal with radicalism. And I cannot name a country of radicalism. And I cannot say radical Islam or radical Islamic fascism, I simply say radicalism, because these radicals come from different sects of Islam, but they have one thing in common: They seek to conquer countries to put an ''ism'' onto them that is not of their choosing, and without freedom.

Won't the American people stand here today with the Congress representing them and stand against this ''ism'' for at least as long as we stood against fascism and at least as long as we stood against communism?

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote a military expert, General John Abizaid, former commander of the U.S. Central Command, who said during a Senate Armed Services hearing on November 15, 2006, ''I believe that more American forces will prevent the Iraqis from doing more, from taking more responsibility for their own future.''

General Abizaid is not in favor of this surge. He is a military expert.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE).

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman from North Carolina for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, since the beginning of the Iraq war, one of my foremost concerns has been the long-term stability of the Middle East, and the potential impact that chaos in this region could have on our security.

Our men and women in the United States military, among the hundreds of Delawarians, are doing extraordinary work under very complex and difficult

circumstances. We owe them an enormous debt of gratitude.

Notwithstanding the heroic efforts of our military personnel, the Iraqi Government has been unable to overcome the constant instability and sectarian violence that has marked much of the last 4 years. We have increased top levels in the past, including Fallujah in 2004, and Baghdad this past July, with mixed results.

Despite the incredible efforts of our brave solders, it is clear to me that an increase in American forces alone cannot resolve this conflict. Therefore, I will support this resolution, because I believe that the surge will be unsuccessful without a comprehensive diplomatic strategy to engage the international community and turn the responsibility over to the Iraqi Government.

That being said, I am disappointed that today's discussion has been structured in such a way that Members are limited solely to an up-or-down vote on the troop increases. On Friday, after Congress passes this resolution, we will still lack the strategy necessary to stabilize the Middle East and bring our soldiers home.

This Congress owes the American people a truly complete and comprehensive discourse regarding our future in Iraq. The situation facing our soldiers is extremely complex, and it is unfortunate that the Democratic resolution fails to accurately reflect that reality.

In December, the bipartisan Iraq Study Group presented a comprehensive blueprint to achieve stability in the region and transfer responsibility over to the Iraqi Government, which I have in my hand and I went back and reread this week. I would encourage everyone to reread it.

In my opinion, one of the important recommendations made by the group was to call for a robust diplomatic effort to stabilize Iraq and ease tensions in the region. In fact, some of our Nation's greatest military minds, including former Secretary of State Colin Powell, have joined the group in recommending that every country with an interest in averting a chaotic Iraq, including all of Iraq's neighbors, Turkey, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran and Syria among them, participate in this important dialogue.

The group also recommended that we engage the United Nations Security Council, the European Union and other international institutions in launching this new diplomatic offensive. The intensive diplomacy recommended by the Iraq Study Group should be familiar to all of us who remember the Cold War.

One of the best examples of this approach to diplomacy was evident when a week after President Reagan asked General Secretary Gorbachev to ''tear down this Wall,'' he sent his administration to Moscow for diplomatic talks.

The Iraq Study Group's recommendations are by no means a panacea. But their report does represent a new path forward, based on the pragmatic style of diplomacy that helped us win the Cold War.

For this reason, I have joined Congressman FRANK WOLF and some of my colleagues in introducing legislation that endorses the Iraq Study Group's call for an integrated diplomatic initiative. In focusing on a true strategy for achieving stability in Iraq, this resolution seeks to improve our global standing and concentrate our efforts on funding an end game based on a genuine commitment to diplomacy.

To obtain these goals, the Wolf resolution seeks to lift our debate above the existing political rhetoric and pursue a comprehensive strategy to build regional and international support for stability in Iraq.

It is equally crucial that we do everything within our ability to accelerate the training of Iraqi troops and provide them with the resources necessary to assume control of their own destiny.

Mr. Speaker, as we speak, thousands of our Nation's bravest and brightest are risking their lives to serve our country in Iraq. Protecting American soldiers must continue to be our greatest priority. I will oppose any attempt to cut off funds for our troops who are serving in harm's way.

Therefore, it is crucial that we advance constructive strategies, such as those identified by the Iraq Study Group, to end the violence and bring our troops home to their families.

□ 1210

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, before I yield to my colleague from Michigan, let me make just a couple of comments.

I think, as we all know, the Iraq Study Group did allow for a surge in troops on a temporary basis to allow us to achieve our objectives.

Also, as a previous speaker, I was negligent in not acknowledging the comments of my colleague from Maryland when he recognized the contributions that were being made by our intelligence folks in Iraq and around the world.

There are some who believe and are confused by what they may believe or perceive to be the callous omission of any reference to the contributions being made by our intelligence folks in Iraq today. It is a significant shortcoming of this resolution, and I am thoroughly confused as to why they would be omitted in this resolution, and their contributions. They are working side by side each and every day with our Armed Forces, and this resolution forgets to even recognize that contribution.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would now like to recognize my colleague from Michigan, a member of the Intelligence Committee, who thoroughly recognizes and has met with these people in Iraq and Afghanistan and understands their contributions. He is as confused as I am as to why they do not want to recognize their contributions. I yield 7 minutes to my colleague from Michigan (Mr. ROGERS).

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, this is a pretty important debate, and I have to tell you I am a little confused by my friends' resolution. It is a very complex problem.

When you look at the problem in Iraq today, you have really two distinct problems. One is the ethnosectarian violence that is self-sustaining now in Baghdad. It was a precursor to al Qaeda activity to actually create conflict between the Sunnis and the Shias, and unfortunately, it has raised to a level that it is self-sustaining.

And you have an al Qaeda-Sunni insurgency happening west of Baghdad that certainly warrants our attention, and the troops there have called for reinforcements. They said, give us reinforcements, we need them badly. Al Qaeda is settling in to make safe haven here.

And part of the plan or the surge in fact says that we are going to reinforce those soldiers who are fighting al Qaeda, and they have asked to be reinforced.

The simplicity of the resolution concerns me greatly. I am not in favor of sending American troops, the other 16,000, into the streets of Baghdad to intervene in the sectarian violence. I am not.

I am in favor of supporting the soldiers who have asked and should receive reinforcements fighting al Qaeda in the west.

This resolution really makes no difference in that fight. It makes no difference in the complexities and how we win and get our soldiers home. This resolution does not bring one soldier home. This resolution does not make one soldier safer. This resolution does not bring to justice one terrorist. This resolution offers not one alternative.

I think we made some devastating mistakes in Iraq: The extent of our de-Baathification, and what that has meant for us winning the peace, the dismissal wholesale of military units and what that has meant to our ability to sustain peace, the shuttering of nearly 300 state-owned enterprises and what that has done for unemployment and not allowing us to sustain the peace, our failure to focus our national power on solving some of these basic problems.

We, in fact, and this is up to us, have allowed politics to creep onto the field of battle, and that has created some very real problems for us and our soldiers. We have seen, because of that politics that has crept into the battlefield in Iraq and what that has meant, it has created some inefficiencies. I, the other day, have counted up 12 different groups or agencies or Departments that have some ability to provide reconstruction money in Iraq. Twelve. That is a problem.

Some conflicting policies. Our soldiers will tell you that they feel that they are handcuffed. They at least have one hand cuffed behind their back because of the politics that have crept in

that changed the way they are allowed to engage the enemy as they see him and protect themselves. Politics crept onto the battlefield.

The turf battles between the State Department and DOD, I wish they didn't exist. We all know they do. We took a very large, bureaucratic, civilian organization and set it down in the middle of Baghdad and wondered why it has some inefficiencies. But these are things that we can change. We can do that.

And my mother told me that if you are going to tell me what I am doing wrong, you better be prepared to tell me how to do it right.

The resolution before us today says nothing of an alternative. We have soldiers who are getting up every day engaging themselves in the fight for liberty and defense and going after al Qaeda targets in the west and trying to find al Qaeda elements locating and spurring on to self-sustaining ethno sectarian violence. It does nothing to tell them that we, A, support them and, B, will give them all the tools and make the changes that we know we can to make it possible for them to come home to their families soon.

This afternoon I am going to do that. I am introducing a resolution, it is fairly comprehensive, that will allow us to focus our national power without sending 20,000 troops to Iraq. It will help target the unemployment that we know is fueling terrorism in Iraq today. Clear rules of engagement for our troops, calling for the repatriation of the one to two million Iraqis who are middle class Iraqis, their doctors and lawyers and engineers and their teachers who fled Iraq in this turmoil to engage our allies to get them back and invest them in the future of Iraq.

What disturbs me most, Mr. Speaker, about this resolution, is its clear purpose is to divide those of us in this Chamber.

As I said earlier, I don't support the surge in Iraq that targets sectarian violence in Baghdad. I think that must have an Iraqi face for that to be successful, and I think we can provide logistics and command and control and we can provide combat air support and special operation support to make them successful as they move through Iraq. I think we can do that.

But this resolution does nothing to bring Members together to solve this problem. If you win this vote today, and this passes, we will have solved not one problem for one soldier who gets up this morning hoping and praying that he can accomplish his mission and come home to his family, not one. It truly seeks to find the differences of those of us in this Chamber on how we move forward in Iraq. There is nothing constructive in that, nothing constructive in that.

There is a young soldier that I met, I visited him down in Brooks Army Medical Center. He asked that his leg be amputated so that he could have full range of motion so he could pass the physical training test for the United States Army and go back to Iraq. And he was going through all that very painful process of getting it fitted and going through the physical training and trying to rehabilitate himself.

And as I got ready to leave, I said, is there anything that I can do for you as a Member of Congress? And he turned and said yes, sir, there is. Just don't give up on us.

Now, if this soldier can believe in this mission, and he can get up every day and fight through the sweat and the pain and the anguish of a lost limb so that he can get back in the business, if he can roll up his pant leg every day and fit that prosthesis, isn't there a way, and shouldn't we do better and roll up our sleeves to work together to find a solution? We got in this together, we must get out of it together.

We need to stop the division that this resolution brings to this House and start working together. Our soldiers deserve better. America deserves better. The future of this country and safety and security deserve better.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, would you please tell us how much time is left?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THOMPSON of California). The gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) has 41 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA) has 4 hours, 13½ minutes.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. RAMSTAD).

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, the President has said for more than 4 years that he would follow the advice of his commanders on the ground with respect to troop levels in Iraq. That is why I am both surprised and disappointed the President did not follow the advice given as recently as 2 months ago by the Army and Marine Corps Chiefs of Staff, as well as General John Abizaid, General George Casey, and General Colin Powell. All of these highly respected commanders expressed their opposition to increasing the number of U.S. troops in Iraq.

As General Abizaid, the top commander in the Middle East said, an increase in U.S. troops would be counterproductive because it will perpetuate the dependency of Iraqi forces, create more targets and stretch our military too thin.

□ 1220

Until recently the top ground commander in Iraq, General George Casey, has said that sending more American troops into Baghdad and Anbar province would increase the Iraqi dependency on Washington. As General Colin Powell, one of the most respected military leaders of our generation put it, a surge was already tried in Baghdad last fall and it failed. Now it will only further delay Iraqis taking control of their own security.

''It will only further delay Iraqis taking control of their own security.'' That is from General Colin Powell, who also noted that he had not heard any generals on the ground in Iraq ask for more troops.

Mr. Speaker, the original mission of U.S. troops in Iraq was to liberate the country and turn it over to the Iraqi people. We need to get back to that original mission. Our brave troops have done an absolutely heroic job of liberating the people of Iraq. Now our troops should get back to the original mission of training Iraqi security forces so they can secure their own country and turn it over to the Iraqi people. General Casey has long argued that the principal emphasis of American policy should be training Iraqi security forces and handing over responsibility to the Iraqis.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution authorizing the use of force in Iraq that we passed in the fall of 2002 was never intended to authorize the use of American troops to police a civil war. It was never intended to provide justification for sending 21,500 more American troops into the middle of a civil war. As former Navy Secretary in Virginia, Senator JOHN WARNER, put it: ''Whom do they shoot at, the Sunni or the Shia?'' With 325,000 Iraqi security forces already trained, Mr. Speaker, that is according to our Defense Department, it is time for Iraqi troops to step up to the frontlines in Baghdad, Anbar province, and Fallujah. It is time to accelerate the training of Iraqi security forces and the turnover of security to the Iraqis so our troops can come home with their mission completed. It is time for enforceable benchmarks to measure the progress of Iraqi security forces. Mr. Speaker, it is time for a surge in diplomacy, not a surge in troops to mend a broken country. It is time for a stepped-up regional peace effort in the Middle East to settle this conflict.

Mr. Speaker, Congress should listen to our commanders on the ground. We should follow the advice of the Army and Marine Corps Chiefs of Staff. We should follow the advice of General Abizaid, General Casey, and General Powell when they spoke up in December. It is time for Congress to step up and express our strong support of our brave troops, our continued support of the original mission, and our opposition to the increase of U.S. troops to police a civil war in Iraq.

I urge a ''yes'' vote on the resolution.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to yield 6 minutes to Mr. HENSARLING from Texas.

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

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I believe that this is a sad day for our institution, the House of Representatives, and I think it is a sad day because I sense this debate has very little to do with coming together as a Nation to face the greatest threat that we have faced since the Cold War. But instead I sense and I fear it has much to do with politics as usual.

I have heard speaker after speaker come to the floor to decry faulty intelligence, to decry how our Nation became involved in Iraq in the first place. I have heard speakers decry how the war had been conducted. But, Mr. Speaker, regardless of how we got into Iraq, regardless of whose war it might have been once, today it is an American war, and we must accept that fact.

As the people's elected Representatives, certainly we should look at this new strategy. We need to take an open and honest look at it. And certainly we are all disappointed that the previous strategy has not yielded the desired result. But, Mr. Speaker, very, very much hangs in the balance.

I myself do not know if the new strategy will work. I think it can work. I hope it will work. And I know it is at least a strategy that has been recommended by the Iraqi Study Group and our new battlefield commander, General Petraeus. So until such a time as somebody brings to me a more compelling strategy or until such a time that somebody convinces me that somehow the security of my country and the security of my family is somehow made better off by our immediate withdrawal and the subsequent implosion of Iraq, I feel we must support the new strategy. Defeat is not an option.

So what are the options, Mr. Speaker? Clearly many, if not most, of the Democrats call for withdrawal from Iraq, as do several of my very respected Republican colleagues. And I respect their views when they are heartfelt. But, Mr. Speaker, since Democrats now control both Houses of Congress, why are we not voting on a withdrawal resolution? And that is one of the reasons this is such a sad day.

I mean, think about it, Mr. Speaker. How do you look a soldier in the eye and say, You know, I don't believe you can succeed in Iraq. I don't believe in your mission. I don't believe you can win this war. And I have the power to bring you home, but I refuse to do it. I refuse to do it. Where is the courage in that resolution? Where is the conviction in that resolution? If you truly believe in your heart of hearts that our soldiers are needlessly risking their lives, don't you have a moral obligation to bring them home? So with lives hanging in the balance, with our national security hanging in the balance, we have a nonbinding politics-as-usual resolution.

Mr. Speaker, it is not really all that easy to figure out exactly what it is that the Democrats support. But if they don't put forth their own strategy and yet they want to vote against the new strategy, that says one and only one thing. It says stay the course. It says status quo. If you don't have an alternative and you want to vote against this new strategy, then you are voting to stay the course. The stakes are too high to stay the course.

Now, we all know that fighting this war is very costly. And like many Members of this institution, I have met with the mothers of fallen soldiers. Their burden and sacrifice is solemn and profound. But I never, never, never want to meet with the mothers whose children may perish in the next 9/11 if we accept defeat in Iraq. Iraq must be seen in the larger context of this war with jihadism, with radical Islam. Whether we like it or not, the battle lines are drawn in Iraq. And don't take my word for it. Take the jihadists' word for it. Osama bin Laden has said, ''The epicenter of these wars is Baghdad. Success in Baghdad will be success for the United States. Failure in Iraq is the failure of the United States. Their defeat in Iraq will mean defeat in all their wars.''

Mr. Speaker, we must soberly reflect on the challenge that we face. Listen to al Zawahiri, Osama bin Laden's number two in command: ''Al Qaeda has the right to kill 4 million Americans, 2 million of them children.'' Listen to Hassan Abbassi, Revolutionary Guard's intelligence adviser to the Iranian President: ''We have a strategy drawn up for the destruction of Anglo-Saxon civilization.'' Listen to Iraqi Ayatollah Ahmad Husseini: ''Even if this means using biological, chemical, and bacterial weapons, we will conquer the world.''

□ 1230

This is the enemy we face, Mr. Speaker, and we face him foremost in Iraq.

The consequences of failure in Iraq are immense, the beginning of a Sunni-Shiite genocidal clash as American troop convoys flee the country. The battle for Baghdad will undoubtedly spill over to the entire country. Shiites will most likely win. They will draw in Jordan and Saudi Arabia to the defense of Sunni Iraqis. Iran will rise to the defense of Shia Iraqis. An entire regional war could easily ensue, and what is left of Iraq would become a safe haven for the recruitment, training and financing of radical Islam.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the Members of this House take great pride in saying that this is the people's House. An AP poll on January 11, 2007, says 70 percent of the American people are opposed to the surge.

With that, I yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER).

Mr. KELLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the Iraq war is the central issue of our time. We are spending $2 billion a week and we are losing 100 American lives a month. Under these conditions, I feel I owe my constituents my best judgment.

Interjecting more young American troops into the cross-hairs of an Iraqi civil war is simply not the right approach. If the President sends these troops anyway, I will support their funding 100 percent so they have the bullets and equipment they need to defend themselves.

I approach this decision with a great deal of angst and humility. I am not trying to micromanage this war. I am just a Member of Congress, not a four-star general. But I have listened to what our country's most well-respected four-star generals have to say about this matter, and Generals Abizaid, McCaffrey and Colin Powell have all said that sending more troops into Baghdad now is not the answer.

Some people will say, if you are not for surging more American troops into Baghdad now, what are you for? What is your plan?

I am for a different kind of surge. I am for a surge of Iraqi troops to take out al-Sadr and his militia, especially since the Iraqi security forces outnumber the Sadr militia by a ratio of 5 to 1. That is 325,000 versus 60,000. I am for a surge of political process by the Iraqi Government to finally reach a deal on sharing oil revenue. I am for a surge of action in implementing the Iraq Study Group recommendations, which were adopted in a bipartisan, unanimous fashion. I am for a surge of gratitude by the Iraqi people, 61 percent of whom think it is okay to kill American troops and 79 percent have a mostly negative view of the United States.

Some people argue that we should support President Bush's decision. I like and respect President Bush. I want him to be successful. Three years ago I could have voted for this surge. But the situation on the ground in Iraq today is very different than it was 3 years ago.

Three years ago, Iraq was not in a civil war. Now it is. Three years ago, Iraq did not have 325,000 of its own security forces to defend itself. Now it does. Three years ago, we didn't know whether surging more American troops into Baghdad would give us a long-lasting impact. Now we know the answer, because we tried the same thing last summer. The benefits were temporary. The body bags were permanent.

We are now told we should trust the Maliki government. I have been down that road before. I personally went to Baghdad and met with the Maliki government officials last summer. I was told by December of 2006 they would have enough security forces that they would need to defend themselves and we would then be in a position to start bringing our troops home. Now they say, give us another year.

We were told when America sent 15,000 of its own troops to surge in Baghdad last summer that the Iraqi troops would be right there beside them. Well, Iraqi troops didn't show up. The benefits of the surge were only temporary.

Mr. Speaker, I voted to authorize the use of force in 2002 because I did not want Saddam Hussein to give weapons of mass destruction to al Qaeda. Now Saddam is dead and there are no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

We have remained in Iraq for 4 years because we want a unified and secure Iraq, so it doesn't become a haven for terrorists. Unfortunately, it seems the Americans want a unified and secure Iraq more than the Iraqis do.

Let me give you an analogy. Imagine your next-door neighbor refuses to mow his lawn and the weeds are all the way up to his waist. You decide you are going to mow his lawn for him every single week. The neighbor never says thank you, he hates you, and sometimes he takes out a gun and shoots at you. Under these circumstances, do you keep mowing his lawn forever? Do you send even more of your family members over to mow his lawn? Or do you say to that neighbor, you better step it up and mow your own lawn, or there are going to be serious consequences for you.

Mr. Speaker, sending more young American troops now into the middle of Iraqi civil war violence is not the answer. I will support the troops 100 percent. But we are not going to solve an Iraqi political problem with an American military solution. And that is my best judgment.

May God bless our troops, our President and our country.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 6½ minutes to my colleague, Mr. SAXTON.

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

Mr. Speaker, it has been said here on the floor by more than one speaker, or suggested at least, that the war in Iraq is not part of the war on terror. I disagree. I could not disagree more with that statement. But if you agree with that statement, and if you are casting your vote because you think that is a rationale upon which you can justify your vote, I hope you are sure.

I would say I would hope you are sure because I am in my 23rd year, and I know how this place works. It is a wonderful system, because we almost always have a chance to come back and correct our mistakes. A vote on tax policy? I happen to favor lower taxes. But if we make a tax vote that is a bad vote, we can come back next year and fix it. Or if we spend too much money on transportation this year, we can come back next year and reduce it.

This resolution takes us down a different road. This starts us down a road where, at some point, we won't be able to come back next year and just fix it.

You don't have to believe me. But listen to what our enemies say. I have here the text of a letter that was written on July 9, 2005, from Ayman al-Zawahiri, the author, the second in command in al Qaeda, to al-Zarqawi, the person who at that time was the leader of al Qaeda in Iraq. ''Our intended goal in this age is to establish a caliphate in the manner of the prophet.''

Now, I don't claim to be an expert in Islam, but I am told that at one time under this establishment of a caliphate, the caliphate stretched from Spain through the Middle East and Northern Africa to Central Asia and to India. That is a vast stretch. If that is the goal, then we ought to be aware of it, because it becomes a very serious matter.

The first stage of this process is to expel the Americans from Iraq, according to al-Zawahiri.

The second stage, establish an Islamic authority or an emirate, to develop it and support it until it achieves a level of a caliphate over as much territory as you can spread power in Iraq.

The third stage, he says, is to extend the jihad wave to the secular countries neighboring Iraq.

The fourth stage, it may coincide with what came before, he says, the clash with Israel, because Israel was established only to challenge any new Islamic entity.

□ 1240

So clearly, the al Qaeda leadership believes that Iraq is part of the global situation that we refer to as the global war on terror, and if that is right, and I think at least for me I have to assume that that is their intention, Iraq is certainly part of the global war on terror from a Western perspective. And so what the President has suggested is to take advantage of the assets that we have developed, while training Iraqi soldiers to provide for their own security, and send three brigades into the Sunni Triangle, mostly in Baghdad, to be supported by the 21,500 Americans who he has proposed to send. I heard yesterday that the Iraqi brigades are, in fact, showing up in Baghdad at a 75 percent level, which is better than anyone expected, at least better than I expected. Maybe others expected better.

So I think if we are going to take on this effort to develop a caliphate, as one of the previous speakers said before it gets here, then maybe we ought to do what the commander of the national VFW suggests.

The commander of the national VFW put out a press release, and I have the text of it here. ''The national commander of the Nation's largest organization of combat veterans is very concerned that the ongoing debate in Congress about the planned troop buildup will be perceived by those in uniform as a sign that America's lawmakers have given up on them and their mission in Iraq.

''My generation,'' he said, ''learned the hard way that when military decisions are second-guessed by opinion polls or overruled by politicians, it's the common soldier and their families who pay the price.

''There is no question,'' he said, ''that mistakes have been made in the prosecution of the war in Iraq,'' but ''there is no playbook to fight an unconventional war against an unconventional enemy that wears no uniform and acts without conscience, yet our forces have adapted and are performing brilliantly,'' and I agree with him.

''We fully respect congressional oversight and the first amendment rights of all Americans to debate issues of national importance, but the VFW is very concerned with the tone and timing of it,'' he said. ''We need to send the message to our troops that America wants them to succeed in Iraq by giving the buildup a chance to succeed.''

Mr. Speaker, I think the commander of the national VFW is absolutely right, and I thank the gentleman for yielding time.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5¼ minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ENGLISH).

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, with regard to the current debate on the floor on Iraq policy, I would like to offer the following observations.

First, I respect the President's constitutional role as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, and I appreciate President Bush's offer to entertain suggestions from Congress regarding Iraq policy.

I understand that success in Iraq depends on bipartisan support at home.

I applaud U.S. troops who are serving in Iraq with professionalism and bravery. They deserve the support of all Americans.

It is becoming self-evident that multiple, extended deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan have strained the military. Current deployments and those to come will have lasting impacts on recruiting, retention and readiness of the all-volunteer military.

Unfortunately, sectarian violence in Iraq between Sunni and Shia Muslims is increasing, and the failure of Iraqis to reach political settlements and support a unified government greatly contributes to the increased violence.

I believe it is time for Iraq's government and security forces to step forward and bear primary responsibility for internal security.

As the gentleman from North Carolina noted, the former head of the U.S. Central Command, General John Abizaid, told Congress last November that sending in more U.S. troops would not contribute to success in Iraq because it would prevent the Iraqis from taking more responsibility.

It is clear that Iraqi public sentiment opposes the continued U.S. troop presence.

In November, the Iraq Study Group called for new diplomatic and political efforts in Iraq and the region and a change in the primary mission of U.S. forces that will allow the United States to ''begin to move its combat forces out of Iraq responsibly.''

Unfortunately, the Iraqi Government has made little progress toward assuming more responsibility for security, disbanding militias, reconciling sectarian differences and improving essential services.

Therefore, I have reluctantly concluded that I have to disagree with the President's plan to send in an additional 21,000-plus combat troops. While I applaud the President's reassessment of U.S.-Iraq policy, I joined with several of my colleagues in January in informing the White House that I did not support an expansion of American troop strength on the ground, and

nothing that I have learned since has caused me to reconsider my position.

Nevertheless, Congress should not take any action that would endanger U.S. military forces in the field, including the elimination or reduction of funding for troops in the field.

Most Americans fundamentally understand the long-term security interests of the United States would be best served by an Iraq that can sustain, govern and defend itself and serve as an ally in the war against extremists.

Overall U.S. military, diplomatic, and economic strategy should not be regarded as an open-ended commitment but should be conditioned upon the Iraqi Government's meeting benchmarks, including the deployment of additional Iraqi troops in Baghdad, equitable distribution of resources without regard to sect or ethnicity, the use of oil revenues to benefit all Iraqi citizens equitably, and granting military commanders authority to make decisions without political interference.

Mr. Speaker, with very minor edits, the remarks you have just heard from me summarize the resolution on Iraq offered by Senator WARNER in the other body. It is one of the alternative resolutions we should be debating here today. Unfortunately, the majority leadership does not want to allow a full and fair debate on Iraq.

When the Democrat leadership in the other body tried to force a vote on the resolution without an opportunity to offer meaningful amendments, the minority was able to insist on their right to a real debate rather than this phony pretense. Unfortunately, we do not have that ability in this Chamber.

So I will vote in favor of the resolution before us as offered, as narrow and as inadequate as it is, but I cannot help but express my frustration that the leadership of the House has squandered an opportunity to allow a full and fair debate with real amendments, not just to Republicans, but to all Members of the House, including their own Members whose voices are stifled by this decision to put political calculations ahead of the national interests and a robust debate.

I am not sure what the leadership of the majority party is afraid of. If they have the votes to reject alternatives, then they lose nothing by allowing them to be offered. If they do not, they will quickly learn, as we did, that if you need to use procedural games to avoid a tough vote, you have already lost on the underlying issue.

I thank the gentleman from North Carolina for allowing me to be a part of this debate.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN).

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Michigan for yielding the time, as we come to the floor to debate this nonbinding, no confidence resolution that is going to serve to discourage our troops and embolden our enemies.

I have noted that this obviously is the best that the Democrats have to offer when it comes to national security and to their thoughts on how we deal with the situation in Iraq, and that is a disappointment to me.

□ 1250

I think that the question that we have to ask is, whose side are you on? Whose side are you on? Are you on the side of winning? Are you on the side of freedom? Or are you on the side of allowing the terrorists to get an upper hand?

And as I begin my remarks, I do want to thank the troops that live in my district, those of the 101st Airborne at Fort Campbell, members of the National Guard who have served with distinction, Reservists who have been deployed more than once. I want to thank their families, and I want to thank the veterans that served in an advisory capacity to me as we look at these issues and as we make decisions about how best to approach preserving freedom, preserving liberty, and preserving the sovereignty of this great Nation as we know it. I thank them. I am grateful for their sacrifice. I am grateful for their service to this Nation, and I want it to be noted on this day. They have a commitment and a perspective and a love of freedom that few Americans will ever know. I wish that we all did.

I am grateful also that they can articulate so fluently their mission and what they are called on to do every day in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and in the 30 countries around the globe where Americans fight to preserve freedom. They articulate this in e-mails and blogs, and even in notes and letters to their Member of Congress.

I also, Mr. Speaker, want to recognize the Kurdish community that calls Nashville, Tennessee home, and recognize their commitment and their appreciation to our U.S. troops. One of the points that many of them make to me regularly and also one of the points that our men and women in uniform make regularly is to remind us of why we are in this fight, why we are in this fight and providing the historical perspective that is so important. This didn't begin on September 11. It did indeed begin long, long, long ago.

Indeed, the radical Islamists have fought Judaism and Christianity not for decades but for centuries. This is something that we all know. The Islamic radicals did get a toe-hold in Iran in the late 1970s with the approach at that point by President Carter, then President Carter, and those around him. And now those radicals tell us, they tell us that Iraq is indeed the central front in the global war on terror. We know that they want to change the Middle East and then they want to change the world. And, Mr. Speaker, that is not the type change that we want. I want my children and grandchildren to live in freedom. I want them to know an America that is free and strong and independent.

Our soldiers are fighting. They are fighting every day. They are fighting the insurgents in the field, they are fighting the battle of ideas; and the battle of ideas is a very, very powerful fight in Iraq at this point in time.

Now, too many in this Chamber want to add another fight to our military men and women, to their agenda every day. They want them to have to fight the battle of public opinion here in the United States. I see that as a disservice to the men and women in uniform. This legislative body does have a role in oversight of the war, but I do believe, I personally believe it is inappropriate, Mr. Speaker, that we try to micromanage from the comforts of Washington. I do believe that we should be listening to our troops and our commanders in the field.

General David Petraeus, who has taken the command, accepted the coalition flag this Saturday, said it very well and I will enter his comments for the RECORD. He reminds us that progress is being made and lays that out, and I will enter that for the RECORD and have the opportunity to talk about it again later. I think that what we have to do is realize the resolution before us, Mr. Speaker, will not build morale with the troops on the ground, and it does give the terrorists just what they want. We have to fight back. We have to realize sacrifices do have to be made in order for us to further the cause of freedom and liberty in this great land.

The situation in Iraq is exceedingly challenging. The stakes are very high. The way ahead will be hard and there undoubtedly will be many tough days . . . however, ''hard'' is not ''hopeless''; indeed, together with our Iraqi partners, we can and we must prevail. (General David Petraeus, Commander MNF–I, 2/10/07.)

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING: GENERAL PETRAEUS TAKES COMMAND

This Mission Is Doable: ''Our job in the months ahead, supporting and working with Iraqi forces will improve our security so tht the Iraqi government can resolve the tough issues it faces and so that the economy and basic services can be improved. These tasks are achievable, this mission is doable.'' (General David Petraeus, Commander, MNF–I, 2/10/07)

Enemies Who Brag of Inhuman Acts Against Fellow Human Beings: ''Tragically, barbaric enemies have prevented Iraq from making the most of the abundant blessings bestowed by the Almighty on Mesopotamia. These are enemies who brag of inhuman acts against fellow human beings, who invoke religious justifications for actions that no God could countenance, who try to drive wedges between religious and ethnic groups that have lived together in harmony in the past, and who in recent weeks have even targeted a girls' school, innocent laborers, marketplaces and pet shops in their efforts to spark sectarian violence.'' (General David Petraeus, Commander, MNF–I, 2/10/07)

Together We Can Defeat The Enemies of Iraq: ''Surely the Iraqi people realize that these enemies do not want the best for Iraqi's citizens, and surely now is the time for all Iraqis to reject violence, crime and corruption and to rise up against those who employ such methods to further their agendas. It is against these enemies that all

Iraqis must now fight. And I pledge the full support of the Multinational Forces Iraq in this endeavor. Together we can defeat the enemies of Iraq.'' (General David Petraeus, Commander, MNF–I, 2/10/07)

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, may I ask how much time we have?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from North Carolina has 25¾ minutes.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, this resolution 63 is first to thank the troops for their service, and we all support them. The second part of the resolution is to oppose the surge.

I quote a great military general, Colin Powell: ''I am not persuaded that another surge of troops into Baghdad for the purposes of suppressing the communitarian violence, this civil war, would work.'' He supports our position. He opposes the surge. That is Colin Powell.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 7 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL).

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

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I rise in support of the resolution and in opposition to the escalation in Iraq. I want to thank the gentleman from North Carolina for his very determined and principled effort to end this ill-advised and dangerous war, and I am very pleased that he brought together a group of Members today who are representing the traditional conservative position on war and peace and I deeply appreciate that.

Mr. Speaker, this grand debate is welcomed, but it could be that this is nothing more than a distraction from the dangerous military confrontation approaching with Iran, which is supported by many in leadership on both sides of the aisle. This resolution, unfortunately, does not address the disaster in Iraq. Instead, it appears to oppose the war while at the same time offering no change of the status quo in Iraq.

As such, it is not actually a vote against a troop surge. A real vote against a troop surge is a vote against the coming supplemental appropriation which finances it. I hope all my colleagues who vote against this surge today will vote against the budgetary surge when it really counts, when we vote on the supplemental.

The biggest red herring in this debate is the constant innuendo that those who don't support expanding the war are somehow opposing the troops. It is nothing more than a canard to claim that those of us who struggled to prevent the bloodshed and now want it stopped are somehow less patriotic and less concerned about the welfare of our military personnel.

Osama bin Laden has expressed sadistic pleasure with the invasion in Iraq and was surprised that we served his interests above and beyond his dreams on how we responded after the 9/11 attacks. His pleasure comes from our policy of folly, getting ourselves bogged down in the middle of a religious civil war 7,000 miles from home that is financially bleeding us to death. Total costs now are recently estimated to exceed $2 trillion. His recruitment of Islamic extremists has been greatly enhanced by our occupation of Iraq.

Unfortunately, we continue to concentrate on the obvious mismanagement of a war promoted by false information and ignore debating the real issue which is this: Why are we determined to follow a foreign policy of empire building and preemption which is unbecoming of a constitutional republic?

Those on the right should recall that the traditional conservative position of nonintervention was their position for most of the 20th century, and they benefited politically from the wars carelessly entered into by the left. Seven years ago, the right benefited politically by condemning the illegal intervention in Kosovo and Somalia. At the time, the right was outraged over the failed policy of nation building.

It is important to recall that the left in 2003 offered little opposition to the preemptive war in Iraq, and many are now not willing to stop it by defunding it, or work to prevent an attack on Iran.

□ 1300

The catch-all phrase the ''war on terrorism'' in all honesty has no more meaning than if one wants to wage a war against criminal gangsterism. Terrorism is a tactic. You can't have a war against a tactic. It is deliberately vague and nondefinable in order to justify and permit perpetual war anywhere and under any circumstances. Don't forget, the Iraqis and Saddam Hussein had nothing to do with any terrorist attack against us, including that on 9/11.

Special interests and the demented philosophy of conquests have driven most wars throughout all of history. Rarely has the cause of liberty, as it was in our own Revolution, been the driving force. In recent decades, our policies have been driven by neoconservative empire radicalism, profiteering in the military-industrial complex, misplaced do-good internationalism, mercantilistic notions regarding the need to control natural resources, and blind loyalty to various governments in the Middle East.

For all the misinformation given the American people to justify our invasion, such as our need for national security, enforcing U.N. resolutions, removing a dictator, establishing a democracy, protecting our oil, the argument has been reduced to this: If we leave now, Iraq will be left in a mess; implying the implausible, that if we stay, it won't be a mess.

Since it could go badly when we leave, that blame must be placed on those who took us there, not on those of us who now insist that Americans no longer need be killed or maimed, and that Americans no longer need to kill any more Iraqis. We have had enough of both.

Resorting to a medical analogy: A wrong diagnosis was made at the beginning of the war and the wrong treatment was prescribed. Refusing to reassess our mistakes and insisting on just more and more of a failed remedy is destined to kill the patient. In this case, the casualties will be our liberties and prosperity, here at home, and peace abroad.

There is no logical reason to reject the restraints placed in the Constitution regarding our engaging in foreign conflicts unrelated to our national security. The advice of the founders and our early Presidents was sound then, and it is sound today.

We shouldn't wait until our financial system is completely ruined and we are forced to change our ways. We should do it as quickly as possible and stop the carnage and the financial bleeding that will bring us to our knees and eventually force us to stop that which we should have never started.

We all know in time the war will be defunded one way or another and the troops will come home. So why not now?

Mr. HOEKSTRA. At this time I would like to yield 5 minutes to my colleague from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE).

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. I thank the gentleman for yielding. And I especially thank you for your leadership on the floor through this very important debate, a hard debate for us here in the House of Representatives and a hard debate for this country.

But, Mr. Speaker, a new plan is being implemented, a new plan with political, economic and military components. Reinforcements are on their way even as we speak. The Iraqis do need to do their part, we know that. President Maliki tells us that they will. And if we reinforce now, they will take it over. They will stand up because they must, and then we will come home.

Mr. Speaker, not everyone believes that this is a good plan. It is sophisticated, it is comprehensive, but not everyone agrees that it is the right plan, and I understand that.

This war certainly hasn't achieved its intended results. The President said ''stay the course,'' and some said no. The President now says, ''change the course,'' and the same folks say no. That's fair; we have room in this great Nation to disagree. But if that is the case, that you don't want to stay the course or change the course, then use the tools and the powers available to you to stop the course.

The tools are at your disposal, the power of the purse to defund the effort. You could repeal the authorization that most of us voted for this in 2002. You could require troop withdrawal. You have that power and you have that right. But, Mr. Speaker, with the world watching, with Islamic fundamentalists, jihadists, just waiting, and with

our troops working tirelessly to protect and defend us, don't pass this pointless resolution.

If it meant anything, it would be a different argument, but it won't bring one soldier home sooner and it won't change the course of this war. It has no teeth, no muscle; but most of all, it has no positive value whatsoever for us as a Nation at war. Some people say it sends a message to our Commander in Chief, and I believe that that is true. But that message pales compared to the message it sends to our enemies; our enemies, who pledge that their jihad will last until their religion prevails in the world; not until we are out of Iraq, until their religion prevails in the world; our enemies, who believe it is their religious duty to bring hostility to the West and to America. They are tuned in today, Mr. Speaker, you better believe it, and no doubt they are cheering.

But what this message says to our enemies and to the President and to everybody else in the world is nothing compared to what it says to our troops. This resolution says, Your cause is lost. This impatient Congress says, Thanks, but we have had our fill. This resolution says to our troops that your cause is no longer worthy and your friends have died in vain. And today we learn that this is only the first step in the slow-bleed strategy.

We can't say in the first paragraph that we support them and in the next paragraph that we can't reinforce them. We can't say that first we honor our troops and their service, and in the next breath say that their cause really isn't worth it after all.

Mr. Speaker, our military leaders have a plan. They don't have guarantees, there are no guarantees in war. General David Petraeus asked for these troops. I met him when I was in Iraq. He is one of the country's most qualified, brilliant military leaders. He says this is what is needed.

This plan gives our troops the help they need and gives the Iraqi Government a last chance to stand up and take over. This resolution rejects the only plan on the table. If we reject this plan, then what should we do? We will be at the status quo. What should we do to keep this country free from terror for another 5 years? What should we do to show solidarity? Nothing? What we should do, Mr. Speaker, is defeat this resolution. Don't demoralize our troops.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5½ minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN).

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, Dick Armey, our former majority leader, said in an interview with a major newspaper chain last week that he deeply regretted voting for the war in Iraq. Mr. Army said, ''Had I been more true to myself and the principles I believed in at the time, I would have openly opposed the adventure vocally and aggressively.'' Chris Matthews, on MSNBC on election night, said, ''The decision to go to war in Iraq was not a conservative decision historically.'' And he added that it ''asked Republicans to behave like a different people than they intrinsically are.''

William F. Buckley, Jr. wrote in 2004 that if he had known in 2002 what he knew then, he would have opposed the war. And in 2005 he wrote that to continue there beyond another year would indicate ''not steadfastness of purpose but, rather, misapplication of pride.''

What about this surge? The conservative columnist George Will wrote in opposition to it and said it would take a miracle for it to succeed.

Very few people, Mr. Speaker, pushed harder for us to go to Iraq than the columnist, Charles Krauthammer. A few weeks ago he wrote that the Maliki government we have installed there cares only about making sure the Shiites dominate the Sunnis.

□ 1310

''We should not be surging troops in defense of such a government,'' Krauthammer wrote. ''Maliki should be made to know that if he insists on having this sectarian war, he can well have it without us.''

But listen to what the enlisted men say: Specialist Don Roberts, 22, of Paonia, Colorado, now in his second tour in Iraq, told the Associated Press: ''What could more guys do? We cannot pick sides. It is like we have to watch them kill each other, then ask questions.''

Sergeant Josh Keim of Canton, Ohio, also on his second tour said, ''Nothing is going to help. It is a religious war and we are caught in the middle of it.''

PFC Zack Clauser, 19, of York, Pennsylvania, told the McClatchy News Service: ''This isn't our war. We're just in the middle.''

Sergeant Clarence Dawalt, 22, of Tulsa, Oklahoma said, ''They can keep sending more and more troops over here, but until the people here start working with us, it's not going to change.''

And Sergeant First Class Herbert Gill, 29, of Pulaski, Tennessee, said: ''Sunnis and Shiites have been fighting for thousands of years'' and he said that after our raids melt insurgents away, ''2 or 3 months later when we leave and say it was a success, they'll come back.''

Saddam Hussein was an evil man, Mr. Speaker, but he had a total military budget only a little over two-tenths of 1 percent of ours, most of which he spent protecting himself and his family and building castles. He was no threat to us at all. As the conservative columnist Charley Reese has written several times, Iraq did not threaten us with war. They did not attack us and were not even capable of attacking us. But even before the war started, Fortune Magazine had an article saying that an American occupation of Iraq would be ''prolonged and expensive'' and would make U.S. soldiers ''sitting ducks for Islamic terrorists.''

Now we have had more than 3,000 Americans killed, many thousands more wounded horribly and have spent $400 billion and the Pentagon wants $170 billion more. And as one previous speaker said with all the added medical and veterans' costs, the ultimate cost of this war could reach $2 trillion. There is nothing fiscally conservative about this war. Most of what we have spent has been purely foreign aid in nature, rebuilding Iraq's infrastructure, giving free medical care, training police, giving jobs to several hundred thousand Iraqis and on and on and on. Our Constitution does not give us the authority to run another country as we have in reality been doing in Iraq. With a national debt of almost $9 trillion, we can't afford it. To me, our misadventure in Iraq is both unconstitutional and unaffordable. Some have said it was a mistake to start this war but that now that we are there we have to, quote, finish the job and we cannot cut and run. Well, if you find out you're going the wrong way down the interstate, you do not keep going, you get off at the next exit.

There is no way, Mr. Speaker, we can keep all of our promises to our own people on Social Security, veterans' benefits, and many other things in the years ahead if we keep trying to run the whole world. As another columnist, Georgie Anne Geyer, wrote more than 3 years ago, Americans, quote, will inevitably come to a point where they will see they have to have a government that provides services at home or one that seeks empire across the globe.

We should help other countries during humanitarian crises and have trade and tourism and cultural and educational exchanges. But conservatives have traditionally been the strongest opponents to interventionist foreign policies that create so much resentment for us around the world. We need to return to the more humble foreign policy President Bush advocated when he campaigned in 2000.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we need to tell all these defense contractors that the time for this Iraqi gravy train with their obscene profits is over. It is certainly no criticism of our troops to say that this was a very unnecessary war. It has always been more about money and power and prestige than any real threat to us or to our people. And this war went against every traditional conservative position I have ever known.

It is time, Mr. Speaker, to bring our troops home.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS).

Mr. SESSIONS. I appreciate the gentleman from Texas (Mr. THORNBERRY) for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, on Monday night the Rules Committee met and after hours of testimony from members of both parties, the Democrat members of the committee voted along party lines to shut out every opportunity for amendments to be a part of this debate of this

resolution today that we will be debating for the next 2 days.

Our colleague from Texas, Congressman SAM JOHNSON, brought an amendment that would have clarified that Congress and the American people support our troops and that funding for our Armed Forces serving bravely in harm's way should not be cut off or restricted in any way.

Our colleague from Virginia, Frank Wolf, also brought to the Rules Committee a very comprehensive amendment that would have made clear that Congress supports the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group, with its emphasis on providing American commanders serving in Iraq with the strategy and tactical means that they need for success and accelerating cooperation with Iraqi leaders to meet specific goals, as the strategy for moving forward to success in Iraq.

A number of other Members also spent a lot of their evening sitting in the Rules Committee waiting to share their ideas about how to improve this resolution which thus would help America in our message to not only the President but also the world. However, the 13 members of the Rules Committee are the only ones who had the benefit of hearing and debating these good ideas because none of them were given the opportunity to be considered and voted on by the House. Instead, rather than allowing this body to consider good ideas, today we are continuing debate on the floor with a completely closed process to debate a nonbinding resolution with no teeth and serious logistical flaws.

In two short paragraphs, without explicitly stating that funds will not be cut off for our troops that serve in harm's way, the resolution asserts that Congress and the American people will continue to support the members of the Armed Forces who are serving in Iraq. This nonspecific language is something that every single Member of this House already supports. It also states that Congress disapproves of the President's plan to deploy 20,000 reinforcements to Iraq to bolster the mission and provide additional support to the troops already there serving on the ground. This resolution gives no direction on how we should proceed in Iraq. Instead, it settles for some generic language about supporting the troops without guaranteeing that Congress will continue to fund their efforts and stand behind them as they remain in harm's way. And it simply amounts to a vote for the status quo.

Mr. Speaker, this is a serious debate about the serious challenges that America faces in not only this fight in Iraq but also against Islamic terrorism. We all understand the cost of failure in Iraq is too great to bear. It would embolden radical Islamic terrorists and give them a base from which to train from and to attack America for generations. But with this resolution, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle provide the troops with nothing: no guarantees that we will continue to fund their heroic efforts; no guarantees that Congress will heed the advice of the Iraq Study Group, which notes on page 73 of their report that it would ''support a short-term redeployment or surge of American combat forces to stabilize Baghdad, or to speed up the training and equipping mission.'' Nor does this resolution provide the American people with a clear picture of our direction in Iraq. It simply says ''no.'' It says ''no'' to the only strategy for success that has been placed forward. President Bush said, ''If you disagree with me, then come outthink me.'' This resolution in its simple form does not do that.

Mr. Speaker, I think Congress can do better than this nonbinding resolution for the status quo of Iraq. I know that a number of my Republican colleagues tried to improve this legislation but were denied that opportunity. But I know that our troops serving in harm's way and the American people deserve better than this simplistic resolution that provides no new ideas, outlines no strategy for victory, and makes no guarantees that we will continue to stand behind our troops with funding. I am greatly disappointed in this resolution and the Democrat majority's efforts to prevent this body from considering meaningful amendments.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE).

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

□ 1320

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to thank my friend and classmate, Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for yielding me the time, and also for his leadership on this issue, and had the President followed his very respectful letter of January 10, we would not be having this debate on this resolution drafted by the Democratic leadership.

Mr. Speaker, like most Americans, I desperately want us to succeed in Iraq, and I was heartened by the Iraq Study Group report, and I was heartened when the President of the United States said we were going to take a fresh approach in Iraq. I fear, however, that this is not a fresh approach, that this is more of the same. I also fear that our course of ''more of the same'' could lead to the deaths of more Americans.

I know that the President believes in his heart that the surge will succeed. I like and respect the President of the United States, but we tried last year a surge of about 12,000 troops in Operation Together Forward. The result has been an escalation of sectarian violence and attacks on our troops that has been unprecedented and unrelenting.

If I thought that the presence of 21,500 additional American troops in Iraq would quell sectarian violence and stop the killing and aggression towards Americans in Iraq, I would support it. If I thought that the presence of 21,500 new American troops would cause the Maliki government to get their house in order and their country in order and make the Iraqis step up and do their duty to protect their country, I would support it.

Instead, we find ourselves with an Iraqi security force that has more time in training than the young people that we are sending from our country to defend theirs, yet they cannot get the job done. It is time to ratchet up diplomacy, make the Iraqis accountable for their own security, and kick off the training wheels that we have tethered them to.

Even the Pentagon has warned that an escalation of troops in Baghdad could fuel the jihadists, cause an uptick in attacks and embolden al Qaeda even more. What shakes me to the core, however, is that we plan to send these additional troops into harm's way without adequate equipment and vehicles. General Speakes, the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Force Development, recently laid out a bleak scenario, a surge without enough armor kits and without enough up-armored trucks.

Others within the military add there won't be enough up-armored Humvees, which even as fortified as they are offer no match for the destruction and the power of the IEDs that are used against our troops. One senior Army official speculated that the only way, the only way, there will be enough Humvees for this surge is if five brigades of up-armored Humvees fall out of the sky.

This prognostication takes me back to what I thought was one of the most insensitive remarks uttered by a public official during the course of this war, the former Secretary of Defense in 2004, who indicated you go to war with the Army you have, not the Army you want.

Mr. Speaker, I can't believe that 26 months later we are going into a surge with what we have got instead of what we need. It is not fair to the men and women already in Iraq, nor those on the way, and the costs are too high, both in American lives and also the toll on the American spirit. Make no mistake, like all Americans I support our troops and am eternally grateful for their courage and their sacrifice, and I hope and I pray that we succeed in Iraq.

Some of the troops that will be part of the surge are already in Iraq. I wish our President had chosen a different path, but he did not. I wish my Democratic colleagues had chosen a different approach and allowed my party to offer alternative language, but they did not. It is what it is, but that does not change my resolve that this surge is not in the best interests of this Nation.

May God bless our country, our troops in the field, and the President of the United States.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5¼ minutes to the distinguished

gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SHADEGG).

Mr. SHADEGG. I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I rise to discuss a part of this debate that relates to the Intelligence Committee, and I think it is important that I thank them for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I have argued on this floor that this discussion and debate ought to be about more than just Iraq, indeed, that it is about the worldwide jihadist movement to attack us. I have argued and quoted many jihadist leaders who have said their goal isn't just to win in Iraq, but to take that fight to Westerners and, in turn, ''unbelievers'' throughout the world.

But I am not alone in that view. This is the language of the National Intelligence Estimate written last April, and it warns America in very simple terms. It sets the case forward in two clear sentences, which I hope all of my colleagues have read and thought through.

The first sentence is, ''We assess that . . . perceived jihadist success [in Iraq] there would inspire more fighters to continue the struggle elsewhere.'' What does that tell you? If they are successful, if the jihadists who hate us in Iraq are successful there, they will carry that struggle on elsewhere. Ask yourself, where is elsewhere? I would suggest to you elsewhere is Great Britain. I would suggest to you elsewhere is Japan. I would suggest to you elsewhere is the United States of America and the streets of your hometown.

I have challenged my colleagues on the other side of this debate to name for me a single jihadi or Islamist leader, name one, name me just one who has said if we withdraw from Iraq, if we pull our troops back, they will stop. Name me one who has said that if we leave Iraq they will walk away and not carry their fight to the rest of the world.

But I am not alone in saying this issue is bigger. Let me tell you what the National Intelligence Estimate, written by our Nation's best and brightest intelligence experts in every intelligence agency we have, said next. They said, ''Should jihadists leaving Iraq perceive themselves, and be perceived, to have failed, we judge fewer fighters will be inspired to carry on the fight.'' That is the national intelligence community giving us a simple message. If we prevail in Iraq, the world will be safer. If we are defeated in Iraq, the world will be more dangerous.

Now, I would argue that there ought to be some attention given to the words of the troops in the field, and I want to devote the rest of my remarks to a column written by First Lieutenant Pete Hegseth last October.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask to insert this column by First Lieutenant Hegseth in the RECORD.

MORE TROOPS, PLEASE—''NOT LOSING'' ISN'T THE SAME AS WINNING

(By First Lieutenant Pete Hegseth)

I've heard President Bush repeatedly state he will send more troops to Iraq if the commanders on the ground ask for them. I think, having returned home from Iraq two months ago, that there must be a breakdown in communication somewhere along the line. Maybe units on the ground are painting too rosy a picture for the generals. Perhaps the generals aren't asking because it goes against the ''can do'' ethos of the Army. Possibly the military is being squeezed by the Pentagon to do more with less. Or maybe the White House doesn't want to admit more troops are needed. In any case, while I do not have the answers nor do I seek to place blame, it is painfully obvious there's a disconnect.

I volunteered to serve in Iraq because I believe in our mission there. I share the president's conviction about the Iraq war—we can and must win, for the Iraqi people, for the future of our country and for peace-loving people everywhere. But I'm frustrated. America is fighting with a hand tied behind its back. Soldiers have all the equipment we need—armored humvees, body armor for every body part, superior technology, etc.—but we simply do not have enough troops in Iraq, and we need them now.

After witnessing two national elections during three months in Baghdad, my Army unit moved north to Samarra, where we spent eight months sowing the seeds of progress. While we had success in uprooting the insurgency and building the local government, it wasn't enough. We had just enough troops to control Samarra and secure ourselves, but not enough to bring lasting stability or security. ''Not enough'' became the story of my year in Iraq.

The future of Samarra, and Iraq as a whole, ultimately lies in the hands of her people—their sympathies are the ultimate prize in this war. No matter how many insurgents we kill, city leaders we meet or policemen we enlist, it is all for naught if we cannot provide security and stability. Tribal sheikhs told us that even within Samarra—deep in the Sunni triangle—a vast majority of people just want peace and order and will side with whoever can provide it. Right now Samarrans rightfully question who that will be.

The end goal is for Iraqis to do everything for themselves. But their government and security forces are not ready. Insurgents use death threats and murder to assert power over anyone working with the City Council or joining the police force. This atmosphere forces moderate Samarrans to keep their mouths shut, and their silence abets the insurgents who live and fight in Samarra. Despite killing scores of insurgents, we are unable to provide lasting security, and so the Samarran street slips away.

Two things are to blame for our predicament, one a corollary of the other. The first reason is that we did not have enough troops in Samarra. The skill and courage of 150 American soldiers prevented chaos, but was never enough to fully secure a city of 120,000 people or maintain the rule of law. The soldiers in the city were preoccupied with defending themselves and conducting night raids, and were therefore largely unable to regularly patrol during the day—thus giving insurgents reign to move freely and intimidate the local population. A visitor in Samarra on an average day would be hard-pressed to point out a single American humvee traversing local neighborhoods. The same is true for Baghdad.

Our four-vehicle civil-affairs patrol was often the only American presence deep inside the city and we were frequently greeted by locals with the question, ''Where have you been?'' Americans can't of course be omnipresent; but we should at least be there when it matters. When Americans are there, either the insurgents are not or they are on the losing side of a firefight.

Second, because of a lack of troops, American military leaders are forced to make a choice between mission objectives and self-preservation. Many of our leaders are opting to guard supply routes and coagulate on sprawling military bases, rather than consistently moving into dangerous areas and fighting the insurgency. In our case, we had 500 soldiers stationed outside Samarra who made infrequent trips into the city center. There is little reason why most of these troops were not stationed inside Samarra, canvassing every neighborhood with platoon-sized patrol bases and suffocating insurgent operations. Rather than take the risks necessary—like small patrol bases and frequent foot patrols—our unit opted to secure itself and its supply routes rather than commit resources inside the city. And while this approach is safer in the short run, it only prolongs mission accomplishment, ultimately endangering more troops. We often speculated our unit would be back next year, driving the same streets with even fewer guys.

I believe that ''the safety of America depends on the outcome of the battle in the streets of Baghdad.'' Why then do we have just enough troops in Iraq not to lose? Americans understand a defeat in Iraq would have horrible consequences for America and its allies for decades to come. America has the capacity to win.

Why then are we pursuing a bare minimum approach?

Mr. SHADEGG. Pete Hegseth served in both Baghdad and Samarra for a year. He was an infantry platoon leader in Iraq. He fought both on the streets of Baghdad and Samarra, and here is what First Lieutenant Pete Hegseth said about the surge. He never heard the term ''surge,'' but he described the struggle he faced. He said, and I quote, ''America is fighting with a hand tied behind its back.'' ''We simply do not have enough troops in Iraq, and we need them now.'' That was last October.

Discussing his situation in Samarra, Lieutenant Hegseth went on. There in Samarra, he goes on to say, and I quote, ''We had just enough troops to control Samarra and secure ourselves, but not enough to bring lasting stability or security.''

He goes on and says, ''Two things are to blame for our predicament. The first reason is that we did not have enough troops in Samarra,'' and I quote ''the second, because of a lack of troops, American military leaders,'' those on the ground, those engaged in this fight, ''are forced to make a choice between mission objectives and self-preservation.'' He goes on to complain that all too often that choice that they are forced into is protection of our troops, not mission objectives.

Let me tell you how he concluded, because I think it is pertinent to this debate, where what we seek to do is to disapprove the surge of 20,000 troops.

I believe that the safety of America depends on the outcome of the battle in the streets of Baghdad. Pete Hegseth

asks, and I quote, ''Why then do we have just enough troops in Iraq not to lose?''

To conclude, he says ''Americans understand a defeat in Iraq would have horrible consequences for America and its allies for decades to come. America has the capacity to win.'' He wrote, ''Why then are we pursuing a bare minimum approach?''

I urge my colleagues to vote against this dangerous and ill-advised resolution.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution is, first of all, to thank our men and women in uniform. They are absolutely magnificent. They are the real heroes of America, not the football players, not the basketball players, and not the baseball players. It is our men and women in uniform, and that is what H. Con. Res. 63 says. We appreciate you. We will be with you today, tomorrow, and in the future.

□ 1330

The second part is that we are opposed to the surge. Let me read very quickly, before I introduce the next speaker, General Barry McCaffrey before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on January 18, 2007, and I quote General Barry McCaffrey, former commander of the Southern Command. He said, ''There the current administration is going to try to muscle this thing out in the next 24 months with an urban counterinsurgency plan that I personally believe, with all due respect, is a fool's errand.''

That is a military professional. A military professional.

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

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I know that Iraq has been on all of our minds for a long, long time. Many of us here have visited Iraq on multiple occasions. Many of us have also visited Bethesda Naval Hospital as well as Walter Reed and tried to comfort our brave and caring servicemen and women.

Yes, many of us have grieved with the families that have lost a loved one at a gravesite back in our districts. Mr. Speaker, we had a breakthrough this week in North Korea. It was a diplomatic success. And our country led the effort to engage other countries in the region: Russia, South Korea, Japan and China. The Six Party Talks helped see a negotiated settlement that made sense and the world today is a better and safer place. Diplomacy won again.

Now, one of our big problems in Iraq is that we have not pursued the diplomatic angle like we should have. We have not seen a diplomatic surge like we ought to. Let's talk about this resolution. The first finding, of course, is that the Congress and the public will continue to support and protect those serving in Iraq. That tells me that we are not going to cut off the aid for the brave folks that are there.

It is almost a daily routine for me when I see a man or woman in uniform at the airport, the cafeteria, at home, anywhere, Bethesda, Walter Reed Hospital, I take a moment and thank them for their sacrifice and their service.

Our troops need all of the equipment to make sure that their safety can be as secure as it can be. This week I e-mailed a number of our troops that I have met that are overseas. I talked about this resolution, including the policy of the surge. And many of them responded at length. I want to share part of their stories and responses without using their names.

One of my Army captains said this. ''Bringing in more Americans will force us into more confrontational roles. This is not the way to win. More American soldiers on the ground will not win the war, it will only delay the enemy's reaction. If the people do not believe that their government can protect them, they will look for one that they believe will.''

Mr. Speaker, these folks are on the ground. They know what is going on. The generals on the ground, too, said that more U.S. troops would be counterproductive and in fact only increase or deepen the threats on our U.S. troops.

Let's face it, this is a civil war. It is real anarchy. And in fact the Iraqis do not want us there. Nearly 80 percent of them in Baghdad say that the American troops provoke more violence than they prevent. And these same polls show that Iraqis overwhelmingly want U.S. troops gone within a year.

In fact, we know that a majority on both sides, Shia and Sunni, believe that it is okay to kill our troops. So much for being a liberator. In other words, we are viewed as part of the problem, not the solution.

Mr. Speaker, all of us, all of us support our troops. But there are many of us that believe that this surge strategy will fail and will only prolong the day that the Iraqis will finally pick up the baton and lead their own government.

The Baker-Hamilton unanimous bipartisan report labeled the situation as grave and deteriorating. It called for regional cooperation and a new direction. Mr. Speaker, I am one that believes that the vote authorizing the war was based on evidence that was flat-out wrong.

Let's not continue to ignore the real situation and the mistakes of the past. It is time, it is time for the Iraqis, not the United States, to lead after 4 years. We need to send a message to our troops that, yes, we support them, and, for this administration, a signal for them to pursue a diplomatic surge involving the region.

For these reasons, I too support the resolution.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, first I would like to thank Chairman SKELTON and Chairman LANTOS for allowing me to be part of this resolution, H. Con. Res. 63.

Also I want to thank the 10 Republicans who came to the floor to join me today to support this resolution. In closing, I want to again say this resolution is simple and to the point. The most important point is to say, Thank you, men and women in uniform; you are great, you are magnificent, we are behind you 100 percent.

The second part deals with the surge. Two very quick stories. Six months ago Gene Taylor and I went to Walter Reed. We went into a room that we were carried into and saw a mother with tears in her eyes, a father, and we shook their hands.

Then the Army colonel took us to the bed to speak to the Army sergeant who had been wounded in Iraq. We thanked him. We told him he was a hero. And he was just great. His fiancee was sitting at the end, at the foot of the bed. We met her. Then he said, I don't know if my opinion matters to you gentlemen. And we assured him it did matter. It mattered greatly.

He said, well, let me share this with you. I have been to Iraq three times. He said, I don't care if you are there 5 years or 10 years, you cannot change the people. If you look at the history, he is probably right. But then after he said that you cannot change the people, Mr. Speaker, he pulled the sheets down from his waist and we saw that above his knees his two legs were gone. In his third tour in Iraq he lost his legs.

I close by sharing this in this debate. I quoted five generals that have said in the last 6 months this surge will not work, it is not the right policy answer. I don't think anyone can say it any better than retired Army General Jay Garner, the first U.S. official in charge of postwar Baghdad. January 7, 2007. This is his quote. ''I don't know that the Iraqi Government has ever demonstrated an ability to lead the country, and we should not be surprised. You will never find in my lifetime one man that all of the Iraqis would coalesce around. Iraqis are too divided among sectarian, ethnic and tribal loyalties'' he said, ''and their loyalties are regional, not national.''

Mr. Speaker, as I close, and this is my close, let's pass this resolution. Let's work with the President to find an end point to the strategy, and let's not put our men and women in the middle of a civil war to make them referees.

God bless America, and God bless our men and women in uniform. Please, God, continue to bless this country.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5½ minutes to the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE).

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, it is a very dark time for the Nation. The President is at an unpopularly low rating, unprecedented in our history. We are involved in an unpopular war. Elected officials on both sides are calling for us to get out of the war. I am not talking about this war, I am talking about the civil war, when President Lincoln had the courage and the vision to hold onto that concept that we must

let liberty triumph. And because of his courage, we have a Nation that has set the course for liberty for the entire world.

Exactly what are we involved in here? This is far broader than a war in Iraq. This is a war with radical Islam. It is not the first time we have engaged with radical Islam. The first time that comes to my attention was 1786.

□ 1340

Thomas Jefferson goes to find out about the Barbary Coast. He comes back and he reads the letter about why the Barbary pirates were fighting everyone in that region. He buys his own book of the Koran to understand, but that letter that he had and brought back says that it was founded, he is talking about Islam, it was founded on the laws of their prophet, that it was written in their Koran that 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. That same principle is holding today. We read it on all the Web pages of the radical Islamists.

Now, we can wish that it weren't true. We can wish that the attacks on the *Cole* did not happen. We can wish that 9/11 did not happen. But they did. And now we are involved in a very difficult, unpopular war with the President, again, at historic low ratings.

I rise today, Mr. Speaker, in opposition to this dangerously misguided resolution which will only embolden our enemies and demoralize our troops.

Our friends on the other side of the aisle claim to support our troops, and I do not discount that. I do not question their sincerity. I question their judgment.

I will tell you that the political gymnastics that are required to come this soon after they campaigned against stay the course, to present a resolution that supports our troops who are in Iraq, and yet says that we will not change the tactic, we will not increase, if we are not going to get out, if they have turned down those resolutions which would bring us home, and if they do not want to declare to defund the war, if they do not want the surge, then we are involved in a resolution today that is nonbinding, but says stay the course.

Do tell. Stay the course is what they had to campaign so hard against in the last elections.

I served in Vietnam when elected officials were on the floor of this House having these same conversations, and I will tell you it is extraordinarily distressing from the point of someone serving in harm's way to have the elected officials playing games.

My friends, if you don't want to support the effort in Iraq, you have the majority, call the troops home. It is within your capability. Have the courage of your convictions. Stand for what you believe. Do not put this resolution in front of us that simply encourages our enemies and distresses our troops.

There are those who claim that General Abizaid has said we can't win the war. President Lincoln was faced with the same thing, generals who listened too much to the public. He had to fire General McClellan and replace him with General Grant.

Many recall those words of President Lincoln saying, if you will not use the troops, sir, can I borrow them?

We have replaced the general who was in charge of Iraq with a new general. I am sorry, but he is a troop. He is a commander. He is the commander, he is the supreme troop in Iraq, and he says, I could use more troops. Please, don't leave me dangling.

And yet, this Congress, with this leadership, is going to say, we support the troops but we are not going to support the troops. The mental gymnastics, the political gymnastics are to appease the very shrillest of their proponents, the very shrillest of their supporters. But everyone knows they will not be content with this nonbinding resolution. Those supporters will be like the tiger at the door, eating their own if it does not escalate from here.

Have the courage to bring the troops home, my friends, if you are not going to let the generals run the war. Let the military run the war.

The greatest mistake we made in this House in Vietnam was trying to manage it with people who are elected rather than military leaders, and it was an abysmal failure.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my friend, my colleague and chairman of the Appropriations Committee, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY).

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, 4 years ago this Congress voted to authorize the President to engage in a preemptive attack to Iraq, a country that had not attacked the United States. I supported the military action against Afghanistan because they gave sanctuary to Osama bin Laden and those who attacked us on 9/11. But I opposed the President's unilateral and preemptive attack on Iraq, because I believed that this action would destabilize the Middle East, isolate us in world opinion, and weaken our influence in the world. Our opposition was vilified. Our patriotism was questioned, and that continues today.

We are told that if we oppose the President's intensification of the war, we are giving aid and comfort to the enemy. Well, I, for one, am tired of those who have been consistently wrong about this war lecturing those of us who have been right from the start. I am tired of the manipulation of intelligence by this administration. I am tired of the stubbornness of an administration that didn't have a clue about the Middle East realities when they got us into this mess, and don't have a clue now about how to get us out.

Sadly, there will be no happy endings to this war. The President's policy has done so much damage that there is no good way for us to get out, whether it happens in 6 months or a year or 5 years.

Our troops won the war, God bless them. But the problem with the President's plan is that it calls upon our troops to do something they do not have the power to do, and that is to convince the Iraqi factions to stop killing each other and work together on a political compromise.

Instead of the President's surge, in my view, we should set a rough target for repositioning our troops out of the area. We should recognize that Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds, will never join together in a strong central government. We should tell the Iraqis that if they do not amend their Constitution to allow for a loose confederation with an oil sharing agreement between the Sunnis and the Shiites, that we will leave them to each others' tender mercies. We should participate in regional discussions with all parties, including Syria and Iran. We should resume aggressive leadership to resurrect a meaningful Middle East process, peace process, and Congress should pass legislation prohibiting an attack on Iran without authorization by this Congress.

Given the chaos that the administration's policy has produced, none of these suggestions may work. But all of them would be better than continuing to be stuck in another 5-year period in an endless war with endless promises to the American people and with endless failures on the ground.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague, the chairman of the Readiness Subcommittee of the Armed Services Committee, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ORTIZ).

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

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bipartisan resolution.

I could ask a question, were we ready to go to war? I don't think so.

I just want to put a little of the history of Iraq in context. And we probably remember these names, Specialist Edgar Hernandez, Specialist Joseph Hudson, Specialist Shoshana Johnson, PFC Jessica Lynch, PFC Patrick Miller and Sergeant James Riley. They were all members of the 507th Maintenance Company that went missing after an Iraqi ambush in Nasiriya on March 23, 2003.

They were a maintenance company. They weren't supposed to be in front of the infantry. And, of course, we understand this is war and there is a confusion.

□ 1350

They were taken prisoners. But this illustrates for us again that we were not ready for this war from the beginning. We went in with too few soldiers, who, by the way, were not greeted with flowers or parades. This administration went against the recommendations of the Chief of Staff of the Army, General

Shinseki, who said, you know what, we need no less than 250,000 troops to overwhelm the enemy. So what happened? We went in with less than that. What was the goal? To go straight to Baghdad. And we left the left flank, the right flank completely open. Not only that. With thousands of ammunition dumps all over the place in Iraq, you know what? They were ready for war. They were ready for us. But we were not ready for them. Because a lot of things went wrong in this war. The intelligence was flawed. It was wrong. And, my friends, I am saying this because we cannot afford to make a another mistake such as this.

I was just at a hearing about an hour ago, 2 hours ago, and let me read to you what the Chief of Staff of the Army, Schoomaker, said just a few moments ago. He said, ''After years of insufficient investment in the Army, many of our units were underequipped and not ready for deployment, especially in our Reserve units. To meet combatant commanders' immediate wartime needs, we pulled equipment from across the force to equip those soldiers deploying into harm's way, a practice that we are continuing today to meet current operational needs.''

My friends, we are at war. We support our soldiers. The men and women in uniform are in dangerous places around the world to do their duty on behalf of all of us, military, civilian, Republicans, Democrats, and independents.

This resolution is very simple: 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 Congress disapproves of the decision of the President of the United States, George W. Bush, who announced on January 10, 2007, to deploy more than 20,000 additional United States combat troops to Iraq.

Now, it is going to take more than 21,000 soldiers. You have got to send support troops. So I think sometimes I wonder whether if we could just pause or take time off so that we could regroup or correct the mistakes. But you can't do that when you are in the middle of two wars.

This is a different mission, and we ask our soldiers to do the best that they can, and then we say that we need for the Iraqis to stand up so we can stand down. My friends, if we cannot even equip our military, how can we expect to equip the Iraqis so that they can stand up?

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 10 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from New Mexico (Mrs. WILSON), a member of the Intelligence Committee and a veteran and retired officer herself.

(Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor here today, disappointed. Over the next few months, the United States will make some very important decisions, probably the most important national security decisions that we will make in this decade. These decisions are going to affect the size and the composition and the equipment of our military. It will impact our relationships with our allies, the perception of our enemies, and the stability of the Persian Gulf region. These are serious and difficult issues that demand thoughtful leadership and the careful exercise of our considerable responsibilities under the Constitution.

The resolution that we have before us today is not binding in a legal sense. We are not exercising any real power here. But I think it is worse than that. The words in these two brief sentences are vague enough to allow people with very different views on what we should do to feel satisfied whichever way they vote. The language in this resolution is clever, but this isn't a time for clever. Whether I support this resolution or oppose it, this body should say something, say something that matters about what our vital national interests are, about how we should pursue those interests, about what the risks are, what the trade-offs are and the potential consequences. We should say whether we intend to buy the bullets and the body armor for those who are about to deploy and take on the challenges that we face as a Nation.

With power comes responsibility. And rather than do the hard work of building a consensus here in the House and leading the way, it is easier to punt, to be vague and clever, to frame political issues rather than confront forthrightly the difficult problems that we face as a Nation. For that reason I believe this resolution represents a lost opportunity that we cannot afford to lose.

I believe that too often in the last 3½ years our goals in Iraq have been described in the lofty and idealistic terms that go far beyond America's vital national interests. There has been a tendency to move beyond the hard-nosed and clear-eyed view of what America's national interests are in Iraq and we have come to emphasize the loftier dreams for the American people.

To be sure, I am glad that Saddam Hussein is dead and gone. And I hope that the Iraqi people seize this opportunity to create a unified state that respects minorities and has robust democratic institutions. But there is a difference between what we would wish for the Iraqi people and what is vital for America's national security.

In thinking about America's vital interests in Iraq, I think it really boils down to two things: First, Iraq must not become a safe haven for al Qaeda; and, second, Iraq must not be a source of instability in the region. These vital interests are actually quite narrow. Some might argue that they are too narrow. But they are most notable for what they do not include. Perhaps most significantly, I don't believe it is vital to America's national interests to stop all sectarian violence in Iraq.

We admire our military because they are forward leading and ''can do'' people. But in this instance we cannot do for the Iraqis what they will not do for themselves.

The President is sending an additional 20,000 troops to Iraq. The problem isn't the numbers. The problem is the mission and setting the conditions to be able to accomplish that mission. Some of these troops are going to Anbar, and I think that we do need to enforce our troops in the Sunni heartland to fight al Qaeda and to make it less likely that they will be welcomed there for the long term. But I am skeptical about the Baghdad mission. Operation Together Forward, the effort to secure Baghdad last year, failed. The idea was to clear, hold, and build; but the Iraqi units did not show up in enough numbers to be able to hold what America had cleared. In the early days of this surge in Baghdad, there are too many indications that this will be happening again.

The resolution we are considering this week contains only two thoughts. It is only two sentences long. First, that we oppose increasing troop levels in Iraq by 20,000. As I have said, I support increasing troops in Anbar, even though I am skeptical about the likelihood of success in Baghdad.

□ 1400

But the second thought is notable for what it omits. The resolution says that this House will fund our soldiers and our veterans if they are there now or if they have been there before.

This begs the most important question about our real power here in the Congress. What about the five brigades of young Americans who are now preparing their families and packing their gear to deploy? What about them? What are you saying to them? Will we buy body armor for them? Will we have armored Humvees for them? Will they have trucks to take them to their assigned place of action? Will they get the bullets and the night scopes and the sleeping bags and the chow? What about them? Will they get their combat pay? Will they get their family separation allowance?

I believe that the majority in this House and the sponsors of this resolution would support a clear statement that we will fund the troops and the mission they are being ordered to undertake. But, of course, perhaps half of the Democrats in the Congress, from the far left of America's political spectrum, want to stop the funding.

In this war on terrorism, the greatest burdens have fallen on the shoulders of the relatively small number of Americans who have volunteered to take great risks on our behalf. As leaders of this Nation, this House abdicates its responsibility if we fail to make clear to them that they will have the equipment they need to do the job and come

home again. The short two sentence resolution we will vote on here this week doesn't address any of these important issues.

If you are asking the wrong question, perhaps any answer will do. But we will vote anyway, and it will make headlines, and it will accomplish nothing of the hard work we have in front of us. What are our vital national interests in Iraq, and what is not vital? What strategies can we use to protect and promote those vital interests? What are the resources that are required to pursue those strategies? What are the risks and the costs and the choices we must make? Are there ways to mitigate those risks?

These are the important questions, and in the short two-sentence resolution, they remain unresolved, leaving the House with nothing very important to say about what matters to America and what we should do.

I have made my position clear in ways that this resolution fails to do. I will seek to provide leadership in this House to address these important questions, to influence this administration and to focus on what is vital to America. It is for these reasons that I must oppose the resolution in front of us today.

THE RESOLUTION AND THE CONGRESS

I come to the House floor today disappointed.

Over the next few months, the United States will make some of the most important national security decisions of this decade. Those decisions will play out principally in Iraq, but will affect our broader national security and foreign policy.

The decisions we make will affect the size, composition, and equipment of the American military for many years.

These decisions will impact our relationships with our allies, the perceptions of our enemies, and the stability of the Persian Gulf region.

These are serious and difficult issues that demand thoughtful leadership and the careful exercise of our considerable powers under the Constitution.

We have to do more than debate. We have to take a stand; we have to make tough decisions; we have to clearly articulate what America's vital interests are. We have to do things that matter and build a broad consensus moving forward.

The resolution we have before us today is not binding in a legal sense—we are not exercising any real power here. But it is worse than that. The words in these two brief sentences are vague enough to allow people with quite different views on what we should do to feel satisfied with whatever way they vote.

The language in this resolution is clever. But this isn't a time for clever. We are better than this. Whether I support a resolution or oppose it, this body should say something about what our vital interests are, about why this matters, about what we do recommend and what we do not recommend, about whether or not we will buy the bullets and the body armor for the troops for the next rotation of troops, about the risks and the challenges we face to best protect our Nation.

With power comes responsibility. And perhaps the real truth is that the Congress is as uncertain and divided as the country is on what is best to do in the Middle East. Rather than do the hard work of building consensus and leading the way, it is easier to punt, to be vague and clever, to frame political issues rather than confront forthrightly difficult problems important to the security and future of this country.

For that reason, this resolution represents a lost opportunity that we can ill afford to lose.

REVIEWING IRAQ POLICY

Over the last 3 months, I've spent a lot of time thinking about Iraq, reading widely from both classified and unclassified sources, meeting with experts inside and outside of government, spending time with our intelligence agencies and our men and women in the military listening to what they think and drawing on their experience.

At the New Year, I returned to Iraq. I went to Falluja, al Kut, Baghdad and Balad.

At each stop along the way, I was reminded of how fortunate we are to have such dedicated, capable and decent men and women serving us in uniform. They are all committed to their missions and they are performing admirably.

Our forces have the ''can do'' attitude that we have come to take for granted but never should. They are doing difficult work a long way from home and have been at it for a long time.

There are good reasons to be restrained in public comments about military strategy and operations when we have young Americans in combat. Honest debate about policy can be confused with lack of support for the troops.

There have been times that I have questioned the administration's conduct of the war over the last 3½ years—the inadequacy of force levels immediately after the fall of Saddam, the decision to disband the Iraqi army and the slow reconstitution of the Iraqi Army, the need to expand the size of the active duty Army and Marine Corps, and the failure to understand the strategic significance of treatment of prisoners at Abu Ghraib. All of these decisions were made at senior policy levels, not by people in the military doing the job.

I'm from the old school that believes partisan politics should stop at the water's edge. The security of this country is too important to make it subservient to domestic political maneuvenng.

It was clear to me in late October that it was time for a complete review of American strategy in Iraq. That means we must: Fully understand the situation we face in Iraq and be honest with ourselves and the American people about the challenges we face; clearly define and build a broad consensus on exactly what the vital national interests of the United States in Iraq are and, conversely, what is not vital; and develop strategies, plans, and resources to pursue those vital national interests fully vetting the alternatives and the risks of those alternatives.

THE SITUATION IN IRAQ

Iraq is a country of 26 million people in a land area about twice the size of the state of Idaho. About 6.5 million people live in the capitol, Baghdad.

Ethnically, Iraq is 75–80 percent Arab and 15–20 percent Kurdish with the remainder Turkoman, Assyrians and others.

Iraq is 97 percent Muslim by religious faith. It is one of four countries in the world where there are more Shi'a (60–65 [percent) than Sunni (32–37 percent) Muslims. Shiite populations constitute a majority in Iran, Iraq, Bahrain and Azerbaijan. Worldwide, about 10–15% of all Muslims follow the Shiite branch of Islam. Sunnis and Shiites share most basic religious tenets. Their differences have sometimes been the basis for sectarian violence and political infighting.

GOVERNANCE

The Iraqi people have made substantial progress in governing themselves over the past two years. They have written a Constitution, conducted elections under that new Constitution and formed a government. The Iraqi people as a whole voted in the face of death threats and Iraqi elected officials serve in spite of risks to themselves and their families. If you are wondering whether there are Iraqi's who are willing to take great risks to build their future, you should visit the military hospital at Balad. Two thirds of the casualties brought to our great surgeons and trauma teams are Iraqi, not American.

Our admiration for their progress and their courage cannot blind us to some other realities.

The central government in Iraq is weak. In part, that weakness is inherent in the Constitution under which the Prime Minister does not form his own government. Ministers of Health, Interior and Defense for example are chosen separately and do not serve at the pleasure of the Prime Minister.

Ministers are loyal to different parties and factions. Corruption, a long established practice in that region of the world, is endemic. Both the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defense are heavily penetrated by militias loyal to factions rather than loyal to the national government. As one officer involved in training local Iraqi police told me, ''The head of training for the police in this province has no experience and is not qualified for the job. He has the job because he is a member of the Badr Organization.''

Another officer involved with training the Iraqi border patrol said, ''The commander in my sector was given a list by the Ministry of the Interior of 42 people he was supposed to hire. They were all militia.''

The Iraqi central government and its ministries do not have the capacity and, in some cases, perhaps the will to support operations in the 18 provinces. Even though the central government has money, it can't seem to spend it. There is no national banking system so soldiers and police are paid sporadically and in cash. They must travel home to give their pay to their families.

The combination of factionalism within the ministries and weak logistics systems are used to undermine units in the field. As another officer told me, ''If I train a really good Iraqi police SWAT team that's going after the 'wrong' people, they can be strangled by logistics. No bullets. No gasoline. No SWAT team.''

The national police are heavily infiltrated by the militias, particularly Jaish al-Mahdi or JAM, which is loyal to Shia firebrand Muqtada al-Sadr.

A principal characteristic of a sovereign government is that it has a monopoly of the use of force within its borders. The central government of Iraq has not yet consolidated this monopoly for itself.

The Iraqi Army is more reliable and has made significant progress over the last 18 months. But the quality and capability of its

units varies. Even units that are fully manned usually have half of their soldiers on leave at any time. During Operation Together Forward, the joint Iraqi-American operation to secure Baghdad this summer, some Iraqi Army units refused to be deployed to Baghdad, a clear indication of the weakness of the central government and the questionable effectiveness of these units.

LEVELS OF VIOLENCE

There is not a single insurgency or source of violence in Iraq. There are a number of interrelated and overlapping conflicts.

In the south, while there has been less violence, different Shi' a factions, principally those associated with Muqtada al-Sadr (JAM) and the Supreme Council for Islamic Resistance in Iraq (SCIRI) (the Badr organization) periodically fight each other for local advantage and attack coalition forces as well.

In the northern Kurdish region the Kurdish Peshmerga has made the area mostly secure and stable. We can expect violence to increase in Kirkuk in the run-up to the referendum on whether this oil rich city will be associated with the Kurdish region.

Anbar province, the large province in western Iraq that borders Syria, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, is predominantly Sunni. While there is a Sunni insurgency and rejectionists in this region, it has also been fertile territory for al Qaeda in Iraq and foreign fighters. In recent months, some key Sunni tribal leaders have started working together to resist al Qaeda in this region, opening opportunities for United States forces to work more cooperatively with local leaders to fight al Qaeda.

Overlaying these regional fights is a rise in sectarian violence that has increased substantially since the bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samarra in February 2006. Anger and distrust between Sunni and Shiite is very high and plays out in death squad killings, torture, intimidation and what amounts to ethnic cleansing of neighborhoods in Baghdad.

This summer, the Iraqi government with the multinational force in Iraq launched Operation Together Forward to reduce widespread sectarian violence in Baghdad. U.S. Forces, including the American striker Brigade, were sent to Baghdad as part of an effort to ''clear and hold'' those neighborhoods. The operation failed, as did Operation Together Forward II this fall. Levels of sectarian violence are high and are not improving.

The concept was for U.S. forces to ''clear'' violent neighborhoods and the Iraqi Army would ''hold'' the neighborhoods providing security after they had been cleared out. The Iraqi Army forces didn't show up in the size required and were not able to provide security. As one Army officer told me, ''It wasn't clear and hold. It was clear and fold.''

Confidence in the ability of the central government, the Army and the national police force to provide security has declined causing people to rely on local militias and neighborhood security to protect their families. In some cases, JAM, Muktada al-Sadr's militia, has built confidence and support by blocking emergency response by the central authorities while JAM members help victims, thereby increasing local trust of the militias and further undermining the credibility of the government.

Finally, while the Sunni insurgency may have been spurred by al Qaeda in Iraq and various Shi'a groups get support from Iran, at this point, the violence in Iraq is largely internal and self-sustaining.

In summary: The overall security situation in Iraq is grave and is not improving. Strategies to quell violence have not been effective; while some violence is anti-coalition, the most dangerous trend has been the rise of sectarian violence between Sunni and Shiite militias and death squads in a cycle of violence and retaliation; while the unity government of Nouri al-Maliki says all the right things, there are strong doubts about the ability of the unity government to reduce widespread sectarian violence; further political evolution in Iraq is likely as factions maneuver for power relative to one another and decisions are made on critical issues including federalism, distribution of oil revenues, and the militias. Iraq will make more and more of its own political choices, less and less influenced by America.

AMERICA'S VITAL INTERESTS

Too often in the last three and a half years, our goals in Iraq have been described in lofty and idealistic terms that go far beyond America's vital national interests.

Most of us in the Congress voted to authorize the use of force against Saddam Hussein because the intelligence said he had or was seeking to acquire chemical, biological and nuclear weapons and that he intended to use them against the United States.

In my case, it was the intelligence on biological weapons that was the deciding factor, reaching the high threshold required for preemptive military action.

As we all now know, the intelligence was wrong in several important respects. Perhaps in part because it was wrong, there has been a tendency to move beyond a hard-nosed, clear-eyed view of our national interests in Iraq to emphasize loftier dreams for the Iraqi people.

To be sure, I'm glad that Saddam is dead and gone, and I hope the Iraqi people build a unified state with a society that respects minorities with robust democratic institutions. But there is a difference between what we would wish for the Iraqi people and what we need for American security.

The American military should only be used to protect America's vital national interests, under American command, with the resources necessary to win and come home again.

When it comes to clearly defining our vital national interests in Iraq, we have lost our way in mushy rhetoric. These words matter because they set the goals we ask our military to achieve and drive the strategies and resources to achieve them. There has been far too little debate and discussion on what our vital interests are and what they are not in Iraq.

Every discussion of what path forward we should choose in Iraq should start with clearly defining our vital national interests. As the saying on the classroom wall goes, ''If you don't know where you are going, you're likely to end up somewhere else.''

In thinking about America's vital interests in Iraq, it seems to me there are only two: Iraq must not become a safe haven for al Qaeda or its affiliates; Iraq must not be a source of instability in the region.

These vital interests are really quite narrow—some might argue too narrow—and probably most notable for what they do not include.

It's not vital to America that Iraq be able to defend itself from outside powers. Iraq is unlikely to have an Army that can defend against external threats for a long time and we should not define success this broadly or even raise the possibility of arming them with indirect fire weapons, tactical air forces and so forth.

It is not vital to American interests that Iraq remain unified except to the extent dissolution of Iraq as a strong nation contributes to regional instability or creates ungoverned areas where al Qaeda could thrive. Iraq was created after World War I from three Ottoman provinces of Baghdad, Basra, and Mosul. The country has a history of instability as a result of ethnic, religious and regional rivalries. It is not vital to American national interests that we resolve these tensions and probably not reasonable to expect to do so.

There are a variety of governing models from a loose confederation to de facto local arrangements that are consistent with the vital national interests of the United States.

The Iraqi constitution allows for regional arrangements and we need not spend too much capital resisting new arrangements that might emerge.

Perhaps most significantly, it is not vital to American interests to stop all sectarian violence in Iraq. Certainly if sectarian violence escalates to a conflagration that affects stability in the region, it could affect our vital interest in regional stability. But the Iraqi's must decide to quell sectarian violence. While we might assist and support Iraqi efforts, we cannot and should not do this for them. They must take the lead.

We admire our military because they are forward leaning and ''can do''. But in this instance, we cannot do for the Iraqi's what they will not do for themselves.

There are other things that do not appear in a clear statement of America's vital interests like making Iraqi into a model of democracy in the region and ensuring its economic prosperity. Both of these things are desirable. Iraq certainly has the oil, natural gas, and two fertile river valleys to sustain itself and prosper economically. But these desirable things are not vital to America's national interests and what is vital should drive American strategy.

If everything is a priority, nothing is a priority. What is vital, it seems to me, boils down to two things: No al Qaeda safe haven and an Iraq that is not a source of instability in the region.

AMERICAN STRATEGY

The shear breadth of the policy options for Iraq put forward in recent months by thoughtful people is striking.

Quit and withdraw. Reposition in neighboring countries. Increase U.S. forces temporarily. Increase forces substantially and with no deadline.

Side with the Shia because they are likely to win. Befriend the Sunnis. Destroy the Sunnis.

Withdraw U.S. forces from the cities. Start with Baghdad and the cities first.

Divide the country into three pieces. Insist on unity.

These debates are healthy when they get beyond the brainstorming stage—which they rarely do—but the breadth of the options out there is partially due to a lack of clarity and consensus about America's vital interests.

We should also be clear that no strategy is without risk. There are no easy or obvious paths here.

DENYING AL QAEDA SAFE HAVEN

Al Qaeda in Iraq principally thrives in the Sunni regions of the country. Defeating al

Qaeda and denying them sanctuary must be a central objective for U.S. Forces in Iraq. This must be an area of focus and, to some extent, we have lost that focus over the last six months as we have emphasized the fight for Baghdad.

Using U.S. special forces, conventional U.S. military forces and American intelligence capabilities, the United States should target, kill or capture and detain al Qaeda leadership in Iraq.

U.S. forces have had some significant success in recent months capturing middle and high ranking al Qaeda operatives in Iraq in spite of the reduction of emphasis and fewer troops in the Sunni dominated areas of the country.

But there is an infuriating fact seldom discussed: fully half of the high value al Qaeda targets in Iraq have been captured and released before. As one senior officer put it, ''I have great photographs of half the people we are hunting. They are wearing orange jumpsuits in the mug shots we took of them when we captured them the first time.''

Weare operating a catch and release program for al Qaeda in Iraq. This is inexcusable and frustrating as all get out for our men and women in the fight.

American soldiers are capturing terrorists trying to kill Americans and Iraqis and they are turned over to an Iraqi run detention system that is likely to release them.

Indeed, some officers whose opinions I trust describe detention as training camp for al Qaeda where they share information and contacts improving their skills and enhancing their position within al Qaeda when they are released.

We cannot afford to spend half our resources hunting al Qaeda members we have already caught before. We need to change our detention policy so that there are no high value targets with orange jumps suit mug shots in ''wanted'' posters hanging on the walls in the operation centers of our special forces units in Iraq.

Using classic counter-insurgency strategies and tactics, the United States military and intelligence services should build relationships with tribal and local leaders in the Sunni-dominated regions who will deny al Qaeda safe haven for the long term.

We are having some recent and fragile success with this approach to security in al Anbar. Sunni tribal leaders, with the support and encouragement of U.S. forces, are recruiting men from their tribe into security units.

These counter-insurgency efforts building on established local tribal relationships and indigenous leadership must be supported financially directly by the U.S. military. Large U.S. aid programs run at the national level have been slow and ineffective at engaging the Iraqi people and getting things done.

The American military has the capability to use funds to support counter-insurgency operations at the community level rapidly and where needed without a lot of hassle. This mechanism has been used successfully in Iraq before, although it is not universally supported. It's a turf and power thing. To a certain degree, we have a choice. We can micro-manage contracts from Washington and Baghdad or we can get things done rapidly and effectively giving authority within broad guidelines for Lieutenant Colonels to use their judgment.

While al Anbar is a very large area, it is sparsely populated with about 1.2 million people, the vast majority of whom live in the Euphrates river valley. An intense counterinsurgency strategy in the Sunni areas can help to root out al Qaeda today and make their brand of extremism unwelcome for the long term.

Strengthen both technical intelligence collection and human intelligence collection in the Sunni regions of Iraq.

Intelligence is the first line of defense in the war on terror and we are doing a lot of things right. But there continues to be a need to strengthen technical intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance collection so that more requirements can be met.

More importantly, we continue to lag behind in human intelligence collection capability.

We are five years after 9/11 and we still are desperately short of linguists in strategic languages. We need more soldiers trained in basic 30 and 60-day language programs in order to effectively conduct a counter-insurgency effort.

At a higher level, we need more military members and intelligence specialists who are fluent in languages like Arabic, Farsi, Pashtun and Dari. Heretofore, this has just not been a national priority and it must change.

TRAIN AND EXPAND THE IRAQI ARMY

The training of the Iraqi Army has gone slower than any of us want. They are still heavily dependent on the U.S. for logistics and their capability and effectiveness is limited by the practice of allowing military members to go home for about two weeks of each month.

Still, the Iraqi Army offers the best possibility for the Iraqi government to consolidate its authority and quell violence.

The United States should continue to accelerate training and equipping the Iraqi Army so that they can take responsibility for internal security.

I am not convinced that embedding large numbers of U.S. soldiers in Iraqi units is the most effective way to train Iraqis. I'm not convinced that it is not effective either. There are differing views by thoughtful people and I don't have the experience to know. But it is an important question for the military and its training elements to assess. We should pursue training strategies that are most likely to make Iraqi units effective and independent in the shortest time.

There are two disadvantages of embedding Americans in Iraqi units. First, it is harder to protect and support the Americans to the standards we expect for our soldiers when they are detached. Second, some American trainers who have been embedded express concern that it is difficult to get the Iraqis to stand on their own and take responsibility because they think the Americans will do things for them. An embedded American trainer told me, ''I have to decide that I'm not going to do the maintenance for them even though I can. That's hard to do.''

Assist the Iraqi Army and Ministry of Defense in establishing logistics and service support for the Army.

While we have focused on training military units—and Iraq may need more of them than they initially planned—the systems for payroll and logistics support just do not exist. We need to put effort into helping them develop those systems so that the Iraqi army is fed, paid, has gasoline and trucks and uniforms.

The Iraqi police and border patrol are infiltrated by militia and ineffective. We should not expect that the police will be effective as other than a mechanism to employ and occupy young men anytime soon.

SUPPORT THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT AS THEY ADDRESS SECTARIAN VIOLENCE

I do not believe that the United States should take the lead in resolving sectarian violence between Shi'a and Sunni or between different militias vying for power in Shi'a areas. The Iraqi government and Iraqi leaders must take the lead. We cannot and should not do this for them.

I told the President this before he announced his new plan for Iraq and I have been clear about this publicly both in New Mexico and here, in Washington.

American soldiers should not be in a situation as reportedly happened on October 24th when they raided an area looking for a leader of a Shi'a militia group and were told by the Iraqi government to stand down.

We cannot do for the Iraqis what they will not do for themselves. If they do not choose to disarm the militias and stop the death squads, Baghdad will continue to be a violent place.

I believe it is unlikely that this violence will rise to a level where Iraq becomes a source of regional instability even if it does threaten the internal stability and political direction of the country. As cold as it sounds, the sectarian violence is not something we can stop by getting in the middle of it and it is not vital to American national interests that we do so.

This is where we are at most risk, again, of losing our way by reaching beyond our grasp.

THE SURGE

The President is sending an additional 20,000 troops to Iraq. The problem isn't the numbers. The problem is the mission and setting the conditions to be able to accomplish that mission.

Some of those troops are going to Anbar, and I think we do need to reinforce our troops in the Sunni heartland to fight al Qaeda in Iraq and strengthen relationships that will make it less likely that they will be welcome there over the long term.

But I am skeptical about the Baghdad mission.

Operation Together Forward, the effort to secure Baghdad, failed because there was no ''holding'' after a neighborhood was ''cleared''. The Iraqis did not show up. And the ''building'' never really happened at all. It was a failed approach without adequate resources from the Iraqis to follow through. We probably made plenty of enemies without making people feel safer or more confident in the ability of their government to protect them.

Rather than ''clearing'' neighborhoods where there is sectarian violence, we should focus on strengthening indigenous security in cooperation with the Iraqi government and the Iraqi Army in neighborhoods and villages where there is stability or leadership to work with. This is an inside-out approach that builds indigenous capacity rather than an outside-in approach.

In the Kurdish region, the Peshmerga protect the Americans, not the other way around. That is a relationship we built over a decade. Al Qaim on the Syrian border used to be a hotbed of foreign fighter activity. Now it is largely peaceful and led by strong local tribal leaders who cooperate with the Americans and own their community.

In 2003 and 2004, immediately after the fall of Saddam when there was no Iraqi government, I believe a large U.S. presence that took charge and visibly controlled the streets killing or disarming any Iraqi with a weapon would have made a difference. When it comes to occupation, quantity has a quality all of its own.

But we are beyond that now. Iraq has its own government with an Army that is getting better. They must own their own neighborhoods. We can help them, but we cannot do it for them.

In the early days of this ''surge'' there are too many indications that we will be doing this for them. Two units of Iraqis have showed up to help secure Baghdad, and they are at about half strength.

Like Operation Together Forward, the units committed by the Iraqi government have shown up far below strength, which means the effort is unlikely to have enough reliable soldiers and police to conduct an effective counter-insurgency in a city of 6 million people.

Perhaps more importantly, as projected by the intelligence community in Congressional testimony, the Jaish al-Mahdi militia loyal to Muqtada al Sadr seems to have decided to lay low, put away their arms and wait out the surge calculating that they can afford to bide their time.

In contrast, the Sunni insurgents have escalated their attacks in recent weeks. As a result, it is possible that U.S. forces will concentrate on putting down Sunni insurgents and possibly rogue elements of Sadr's Shiite militia who don't keep their heads down. The irony here is that we risk strengthening radical anti-American cleric Muqtada al Sadr in the medium and long term by taking out his enemies now while his militia lays low waiting for America to leave.

While this scenario is not inevitable, we need to understand that US forces in the midst of sectarian violence may be helping consolidate the power of a radical anti-American Shiite.

FUNDING THE TROOPS

The resolution we are considering this week contains only two thoughts. First, that we oppose increasing troop levels in Iraq by 20,000.

The second thought is notable for what it omits. The resolution says that this House will fund our soldiers and veterans if they are there now or if they have been in Iraq before. This begs the most important question about our real power as the Congress.

What about the five brigades of young Americans who are now preparing their families and packing their gear to deploy? Will we buy body armor for them? Will they have armored Humvees and trucks and bullets and night scopes and sleeping bags and chow? Will they get their combat pay and their family separation allowances?

Most of you know that I served in the United States military. I'm the only woman in the House or Senate who has. Some of you know that I am married to a man who continues to serve as a drilling reservist in the Air Force Reserve. A lot of our closest friends in the world still wear the uniform. These are not idle questions if you are the parent or the spouse or the child of a soldier who is being called up to do their duty.

I believe the majority of this House would support a clear statement that we will fund the troops and the mission they are being ordered to carry out. But, of course, perhaps close to half of the Democrats, from the far left of the American political spectrum, want to stop funding.

In this war on terrorism, the greatest burdens have fallen on the shoulders of a relatively small number of Americans who have volunteered to take great risks on our behalf. As leaders of this nation, this House abdicates its responsibility if we fail to make clear to them that they will have the equipment they need to do the job we are asking them to do.

IN CLOSING

The short two sentence resolution we will vote on this week does not address any of these important issues. If you are asking the wrong question, perhaps any answer will do.

But we will vote on it anyway, and it will make headlines and accomplish nothing of the hard work we have in front of us. It is a disappointing abdication of our responsibility to grapple seriously with defining and protecting vital US national interests in the Persian Gulf.

What are our vital national interests and what is not vital? What strategies can we use to protect and promote those interests? What resources are required to pursue these strategies? What are the risks and the costs of the choices we might make? Are there ways to mitigate those risks? These are the important questions and, in this short two sentence resolution, they remain unresolved leaving this House with nothing very important to say about what matters to America and what we should do.

I support increased troops in al Anbar—the Sunni region where al Qaeda thrives. These forces are part of the 20,000 referred to in the resolution. It is vital to U.S. interests that we destroy al Qaeda in Iraq and deny them a safe haven from which to operate. The resolution makes no distinction or even reference to these forces.

I am skeptical that increasing U.S. forces in Baghdad in the quantity and with the mission and tactics described by the President and his military commanders will quell the sectarian violence between Shia and Sunni, nor do I think it is vital to America's national interests to do so. The Iraqis must resolve these sectarian rivalries. The President believes the Baghdad security plan is the most realistic path forward. I disagree with the President on this point and I have told him so directly. It's not about the troop numbers, it's about their mission.

The resolution intentionally leaves unanswered the question of whether we will fund the bullets and body armor for troops who are not there yet but are going. I believe a majority of this House would vote to equip and support the men and women being sent there, even if they question the President's strategy. The resolution's silence on this important reassurance to our troops and their families brings discredit on this House.

I have made my position clear in ways that this resolution fails to do. I will seek to provide leadership in this House to address these important issues and to influence the administration to focus on what is vital to America. We must adopt strategies, tactics and apply resources to secure those vital interests and garner the support of the American people for doing so. It is for these reasons that I will oppose the resolution before us.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my friend the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN), who is also the chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the Armed Services Committee.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding.

With all due respect to my friend from New Mexico, I want to make the point that this resolution does not do anything to stop funding for the troops. As a matter of fact, it was this administration that sent 140,000 troops into harm's way without up-armoring Humvees. There is nothing in this to cut funding for the troops. But this administration sent 140,000 troops into harm's way without up-armored Humvees, without Kevlar vests. And what did Secretary Rumsfeld say? He said you go to war with the Army you have, not the Army you wish you had.

We are the United States of America. We should never go into harm's way, never go into harm's way, without up-armored Humvees and Kevlar vests.

The Washington Post did a front page piece just the other day. It says that we still don't have the most effective up-armored Humvees that are available in the United States. It is not acceptable. It is inexcusable and indefensible.

I will be going to Iraq in a few days. I expect to see a country, unfortunately, that has gotten worse and worse in terms of the level of violence than the one I visited in 2003 and in January of 2005.

When I came back in January of 2005 I presented a strategy, a white paper, entitled ''Iraq: The Light at the End of the Tunnel.'' Many of those recommendations were included in a bipartisan Iraq Study Group with distinguished experts on foreign policy and military affairs. They didn't call for more troops in Iraq. What they called for was for America to go into the background.

The simple facts bear out a true grim reality. We are told that we are going to rebuild the country's infrastructure. But here are the facts. Iraq has less electricity than it did before the war. Residents of Baghdad get 4½ hours of electricity now, one-quarter of what they expected before the war.

We were told that oil revenues would pay the entire cost of the way. But here are the facts. Iraq produces less oil today than it did before the war. Instead of funding the war, oil is turned out at about half the rate it was when Saddam was in power.

The bad news continues. Skyrocketing unemployment, decreasing levels of drinkable water and a security situation that has deteriorated into a full-blown civil war.

Now the President wants, in face of the recommendations of experts, to send 21,500 more troops into this situation. Does the President really think that the surge will stabilize the security system long enough to undo all the failures of the last 4 years? I cannot honestly believe that this is the best strategy and the collective wisdom of the Department of Defense, of

the State Department and of the intelligence community.

You know what I see? I see a President who seems to be desperate to divert attention away from the missteps, away from holding people accountable, and to just hold on to Iraq as long as he can and let the next administration deal with it. When I watched his speech, when I listened to Secretary Gates describe it, I saw nothing that gave me the impression that the escalation would do any good in the long term.

When we need to encourage them, Shias, Sunnis and Kurds, instead we are alienating. When we need to be standing up Iraqi security forces so our men and women can stand down, instead we are undercutting. When we need to be engaging Iraq's neighbors, instead we are on a war path with Iran. We need to fundamentally change our approach in Iraq, and this plan is more of the same.

I admit that the escalation we are debating will accomplish a number of things. It will endanger more American lives. It will continue to erode our national security. It will continue around the world to keep America up front in the war in Iraq, creating more terrorists and more insurgents, not less. It will deplete our military's resources, which are already stretched to the limit. And this plan will again ask our soldiers and marines to leave their families and return to the war zone that they have just left.

I stand here today with a simple message: Mr. President, the American people want a policy that changes direction. We urge you to rethink this policy of escalating the war in Iraq.

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Mrs. WILSON) to respond.

Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I wonder if my colleague from Massachusetts, given his comments about the resolution and the support for the troops we are deploying, would join me in a unanimous concept request to amend the resolution to express our intent and the intent of this House to support those in the U.S. Armed Forces who are serving and who will serve in Iraq.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, if the gentlewoman will yield, if I may, we have supported the troops. In fact, if it were not for this Congress working in a bipartisan way with Republicans and Democrats, we never would have gotten up-armored Humvees into the field. We never would have gotten Kevlar vests.

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Mrs. WILSON of New Mexico. Reclaiming my time, this is exactly my point, is the gentleman will not support those who are deploying, and the resolution does not do so. I thank my colleague from Arizona for the time.

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER).

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding, and I just wanted to address a point that my friend from Massachusetts just made.

He said that we always need to have up-armored Humvees in any war that we enter into. We had at the end of the Clinton administration about 112, as I recall, up-armored Humvees, only for VIPs and for diplomats. We have today 15,000 up-armored 114s. This is the first war in our history since the beginning of this country in which we have had up-armored tactical vehicles.

With respect to the SAPI vests, that is, the bulletproof vests and body armor that our troops wear, we had at the end of the Clinton administration this many, zero pieces of body armor for our troops. We have today over 400,000 sets. That is enough sets for two sets for everybody who is in theater, and everybody has them.

I have said for the last several years if there is anybody who has a son or daughter who does not have body armor who is in theater, call me personally at my office. In the last 2 years, I have received zero calls.

So we have, we feel, the new equipment, not just up-armored Humvees but body armor, which incidentally is very heavy and, to some degree, does result in some degradation of mobility, but we have put in hundreds of new systems, weapons and equipment systems, since the year 2000 which have accrued to the benefit of our troops.

I just wanted to set the record straight. I appreciate the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my colleague, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. LARSEN) who is also a member of the Armed Services Committee.

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman SKELTON for yielding time, and I rise today certainly in support of this resolution.

I rise also today in support of a strong U.S. military, a military that is ready to combat terrorists and a military that is ready for the challenges of this century. And for these reasons, I have to oppose the President's plan to escalate the war in Iraq and support the resolution before us.

The President's announcement to add 21,500 U.S. troops to Iraq is a step in the wrong direction. The American public does not want an escalation of the Iraq war, especially without an explanation of what we are trying to achieve. The President promised a new approach, but more troops does not equal a new way forward.

The United States has a choice. We can stay in Iraq to keep a lid on Iraq's civil war or we can devote enough time and attention to fighting terrorists wherever they are and securing a military that is prepared to protect our national security.

I choose the latter. At a time when we need to manage our strategic risk in the face of terrorists and nuclear uncertainty, at a time when our enemies are numerous, unpredictable and dangerous, this administration has made the wrong choice.

I believe this approach damages our military readiness today and damages our ability to prepare for threats in the future.

This war has strained our ability to train here at home with functional equipment. It has strained the ability of our services to recruit for the future. It has strained our ability to prepare a defense budget that can prepare us for 21st century threats.

Every State in this Union, including Washington State, has National Guard units that are depleted. They do not have the equipment that they need to train and are forced to leave equipment in theater, making it harder to do their job at home.

In Washington State, 90 percent of the Army National Guard and 65 percent of the Air National Guard have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan and performed admirably and honorably; but at home, they only have 55 percent of their required equipment on hand, equipment that is integral to the training of these Guardsmen.

The President's escalation plan will not solve these problems. It will make them worse. The President's plan will not decrease our strategic risk. It will exacerbate it.

Units at home are struggling just to meet the training requirements necessary to deploy to Iraq. With this escalation plan, units at home will suffer as the Army and Marine Corps are forced to take more of their equipment to supply the additional brigades going into Iraq, depleting their training opportunities.

Equipment shortages at home are what we hear about most, but the war's effect on our prepositioned equipment abroad may be as serious a threat.

The Army relies on prepositioned sets of equipment in strategic locations around the world. This equipment ensures that our troops are able to deploy at a moment's notice. A large portion of this equipment has been taken to support the troop increase, increasing the chance that equipment will not be available in the case of an emerging crisis.

I personally have lost confidence in the Iraqi Government to fulfill its commitments to the United States. I want our women and men in the military to know that we have a strategy that is worthy of their individual actions and sacrifice and that they will have the resources necessary to do their job. But most of all, I am concerned that the President's decisions have led us away from our greatest national security threat; that is, fighting terrorists who will do us harm.

Make no mistake, while some of us support this escalation and some of us oppose it, all of us can agree on the need to support our women and men in the military, honor their commitment, and make sure they get the resources they need to do their jobs.

I recently heard from a friend of mine who, I will conclude with this, who served in the Army Reserve in Iraq and likely will return. This is what he said.

''Here I am, socially and culturally aware of the greater world. I am educated and a father of two beautiful children, children who have not been touched by war or tragedy. People tell me I should get out of the military because I have done my part, I don't need to serve again; but I do because if not me, then whom? I serve as an instrument of the State because I believe in the institution which is the Army and in turn with what that institution supports. As an officer, I have a duty to provide leadership to those under my command, and if it means I give my life at the expense of my children and all the things I love and hold so dear in life, then that is what I will have to do. I do not seek this action blindly. I am cognizant of the dangers inherent in soldiering and understand the risks and rewards involved. As a soldier, I will always pray for peace, but in a time of war, I am willing to move towards the sounds of the guns. I will fight for the Army and I will fight for my country, but most importantly, I will fight so others will not have to experience the mental anguish and soul-crushing reality which is war. For in the end, I know that I can love the Army all I want, but the Army and this country will never love me back, no matter what the sacrifice. I am at peace with this dichotomy.''

We owe my friend and his brothers-in-arms the training and equipment he deserves, and we owe him a national strategy that honors our military and our safety. That is why I ask everyone to vote for H. Con. Res. 63 to show that this escalation is a step in the wrong direction.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the majority leader.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding. I was watching this debate from my office, and I was constrained to come to the floor.

There are legitimate issues raised by this resolution as to whether or not you support or do not support the escalation that has been proposed by the President. But no one ought to hide behind the troops. No one ought to come to this floor and say that this Congress, 435 of us, will not support whatever soldier or sailor or marine is deployed to Iraq. Whether it is today or tomorrow, they will have our support.

And when we say in this resolution they are serving, it means if they are serving, if the Commander in Chief has sent them there, we will support them.

And very frankly, for my friend from New Mexico to come to this floor and make the representation that somehow we have limited that support to those who currently are on the ground is not an honest representation, in my opinion.

There are those of us who disagree as to what supporting the troops means. My friend, the former chairman of the committee, just got up and said he has not gotten any calls lately, but we got a lot of calls in in 2003 and 2004 and 2005. And today, Chairman MURTHA of the Appropriations Committee is saying we do not have the armored Humvees for these new troops that are going to be deployed or in the process of being deployed.

□ 1420

So when you come to the floor, my friends, debate the substance of this policy, but do not hide behind the troops, do not assert that anybody on this floor does not have every intention and commitment to supporting to whatever degree necessary our young men and women and, as I have said, some not so young, who are deployed in harm's way at the point of the spear. Because no one in this Congress, and our troops ought to know, that no one in this Congress will not support them when they are deployed at the point of the spear.

Mr. HUNTER. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HOYER. I will be glad to yield to my friend.

Mr. HUNTER. I thank the gentleman for yielding. The point that I made——

Mr. HOYER. I was not referring to you, my friend. I want to make that clear.

Mr. HUNTER. I am talking about the armor issue. The point that I made is the idea of coming to the floor and implying that somehow there was bad faith in this government for not having the new body armor that our troops presently have to the tune of 400,000 sets, that somehow that was a dereliction of duty is also a disservice, not only to the former Congresses, but also to the former administrations. Because the last administration in the year 2000 had zero sets of body armor.

Body armor is a new advent, it is a new system. We now have hundreds of new systems that we have injected into the warfighting theater. So the idea that we had a ragtag military moving across the berm into Iraq is also not accurate.

And I would hope that the gentleman would admonish his colleagues who come to the floor who imply that our people went across that berm unequipped is also not accurate. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for his observation. I am not sure the gentleman and I agree. I am not an expert in this area; I do not serve on the subcommittee or the committee. But the information that I have is that the troops that we sent in 2003 and 2004 on the ground did not have sufficient quantities of body armor for each one of them. Now, that may be inaccurate, and if the gentleman thinks that assertion is inaccurate I would be glad to yield.

Mr. HUNTER. My point is to the gentleman.

Mr. HOYER. Is that inaccurate?

Mr. HUNTER. That is inaccurate if you refer to the historic amount of body armor that our troops have had.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time.

Mr. HUNTER. Then I would say, yes, that is inaccurate. The way the gentleman stated and if he is not going to qualify it, then that is inaccurate, because we have never had body armor until this war.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, is the gentleman asserting that all of the troops who were in Humvees in 2003 and 2004 had armored Humvees or that they had all of the troops deployed in harm's way, and, by the way, being in Iraq is in harm's way wherever they may be, had sufficient body armor? Is that what the gentleman is asserting?

Mr. HUNTER. The gentleman and I are good enough friends, if the gentleman will allow me to make a one-sentence answer.

The answer is, not since 1776 until just a few years ago have American troops in Vietnam and Korea and World War II, in any war, had what is known as ballistic body armor. It is a brand-new thing. And we have got yet new systems that we are going to be putting into the field shortly. So they don't have the newest and they didn't have the newest. They now have 400,000 sets. But to imply that that lack of having them from 1776 to 2000 made them into some type of an unequipped force is also not fully true.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for his observation. But, of course, my assertion was not 1776 to 2000; it was 2003 and 2004.

But the point that I will make, and if I can conclude, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the time. The point that I wanted to make, though, is irrespective of that assertion one way or the other, I believe every one of our colleagues, whatever their view on this resolution might be, all 435 have every intention and will in fact do whatever they need to protect and promote the safety of our men and women in harm's way. And the assertion, I tell my friend, that was made by the gentlewoman from New Mexico that the verbiage of this resolution says, because serving, it does not mean those who will serve, obviously, as soon as they are sent into theater, they are serving in Iraq and they are covered by this resolution. There ought to be no confusion on that issue by anybody on the floor or anybody who might be listening to this debate.

Mr. HUNTER. Will the gentleman yield one last time?

Mr. HOYER. I will be glad to yield to my friend.

Mr. HUNTER. I thank the gentleman for yielding. And let me say to my friend, and I listened to the gentlewoman's discussion. The gentlewoman is a very careful Member of Congress, and she looked at the words and she asked the question: Does this include, because it appeared that it refers, the equipage language refers to people who are presently there but does exclude,

and she is a very careful person and I have been in markups with her and committee meetings before. She is very careful about wording; words mean things. That it doesn't refer to people who are going to be deployed by the President in the future. And her worry, and I think it was a sincere concern, is that people who may be sent by the President in the future may end up seeing a cutoff of funds, of supplies, O&M dollars, as a result of this Congress.

So if the gentleman is assuring us that that is not going to happen, I think that is good news to the gentlewoman from New Mexico.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, I am glad that it is good news. I will repeat: No one in this Congress, not Chairman SKELTON or Chairman MURTHA or any Member on this side, will take any action that will put at risk the men and women whom we have placed at the point of the spear in harm's way. I make that representation to you, that assertion, and I make it as strongly as I can possibly make it.

This is about a policy, a policy as to whether or not we ought to send 21,000 additional people. And as the gentlewoman from New Mexico said she herself has great reservations about that policy, but rationalizes voting against the resolution which opposes that policy on an assertion that I think was not correct. And if she wanted that clarification, I am glad that I could give it to her. I thank the gentleman. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. RENZI. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the dialogue, and I thank the gentleman from California. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I also could benefit from the wisdom of the gentleman from Maryland. In defense of my neighbor from New Mexico, she articulately pointed out that the resolution also talks about the fact that the flawed language in this resolution, and I quote, says that Congress disapproves of deploying more than 20,000 additional United States combat troops to Iraq.

Certainly you do not disapprove of the several thousand troops that will be sent to al-Anbar province. I mean, after all, that is where we are engaging al Qaeda, the folks who attacked us. I mean, after all, that is where the generals are asking for those several thousand troops.

So you throw out a number of 20,000 troops. Not all of them are going to downtown Baghdad. Many of them are going to al-Anbar. A funny thing about al-Anbar province and Fallujah. The tribal authorities in that area who were with al Qaeda have now turned against al Qaeda. They are looking to join the American forces. They are looking to take advantage of this new enthusiasm, this new troop deployment.

Certainly when you put down 20,000 troops, you don't mean the 4,000 or 5,000 going to fight al Qaeda that attacked us. Do you? Because that portion of the resolution is flawed.

I was recently in Iraq and had the honor of meeting Major General Moore. Major General Moore reminded me, ''Al Qaeda is a hyena waiting in the dark, ready to rip apart innocent Americans. And they are coming. We need to be lions, fiercely defending our people, ferocious in the face of enemy.''

You know, unfortunately, this nonbinding resolution is a political whimper rather than a roar of support for our troops. The language undermines our battlefield plans, it fails to offer any alternatives, it offers no hope, encourages no victory, and contains no solutions.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution is a cruel message to our brave soldiers on the front lines and it undermines their fighting spirit and their morale. It pushes for an abrupt exit to Iraq, sidesteps the dire consequences of leaving Iraq, not just of the country but of the people.

On a recent trip to Baghdad I was stunned by the honorable Iraqi families who live in the Sunni-Shia fault line neighborhoods, families who have lived together despite ethnic differences and religious differences. These are neighborhoods that are a model for religious tolerance. Can you imagine enduring religious bigotry and living peacefully alongside a different Muslim sect, and yet in exchange for your moderation and understanding your family is hunted, you are forced to move by armed militia at gunpoint, and these are the same radicals that pursue and round up your husbands and your sons and torture them and kill them?

□ 1430

And then you are left as a single mother in downtown Baghdad with children, and all you have to hold on to is a fledgling government and American soldiers, these same American soldiers that are already deployed and being sent and are already on their way to Baghdad to protect your home and your children's future. And yet this morning you awake in Baghdad, you await the news of politicians in Washington arguing about taking away this little bit of security that you have.

And if you can't imagine that, and a lot us have traveled together who have been to the Iran-Iraq border, go with me to al-Kut, where we are developing evidence of Iran's active engagement in exporting weapons and money and support for radical Islamists. Could the news be true that the Americans are talking about leaving the border, about leaving the several hundred El Salvadoran and multinational forces that are serving there with us? Those are the El Salvadorans from our own hemisphere. These are the El Salvadorans that survived death squads in their own country. These are the El Salvadorans who will return home. And what will they say about America? Did we leave too soon? Did we leave that border unguarded? Did we turn it over to the Iranians? Did we allow that little city called al-Kut to revert back to the city named ''Little Teheran''?

The State Department has warned us that a retreat of American military forces at this time could trigger ethnic cleansing. The resulting humanitarian crisis could be one of the worst in the region, and genocide could trigger a refugee exodus into Jordan and Syria and the surrounding regions.

My friends, should we lose our resolve, it is likely death squads will roam and will become immediately more emboldened and more murderous, and what is now referred to as violence in Baghdad will quickly regress into mass killings.

Mr. Speaker, genocide is what caused our involvement in the Clinton administration to put us into Bosnia. Eventually the cry from mass slaughter of innocent civilians in Baghdad could cause us to reenter Iraq. We need to take responsibility, all of us, for our words and our actions. We need to understand the effect this flawed resolution has on the morale of our soldiers overseas, and the effect it will have on the desires of our allies to team with us in the future.

Finally, we need to take responsibility, all of us, for the encouragement this resolution gives to our enemies.

I was up in Bilad recently with General McCrystal. After a long briefing and discussion, we were ready to depart the region and General McCrystal said to me, You know, tell the folks back home that I am going to stay and fight until somebody makes me leave.

General McCrystal, today we are trying to stop that from happening until your work is done.

Mr. Speaker, the American people must demand that the authors of this resolution tell us what their better plan is for al Anbar province. Tell us what your better plan is for the tribal authorities who have just joined us in the fight against al Qaeda in our national interests. Tell us, my colleagues, explain to me the consequences of withdrawing from downtown Baghdad and the slaughter that that could have on the tens of thousands of innocent families.

Tell me what we say to the Salvadorans serving with us on the Iraq-Iranian border if we are about to leave that border unguarded. Please explain to me how this measure of discouragement, this flawed resolution, doesn't affect the performance and the morale of our troops. Please tell me how this political debate doesn't weaken the resolve of our country to win, to endure, and to prevail.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my colleague, a fellow member of the Armed Services Committee, the gentlelady from California (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ).

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this resolution and in opposition to the President's decision to send more of our troops to Iraq.

I was against this war from the onset. On October 10, 2002, I was one of

the few who voted against the resolution authorizing the President to use military force in Iraq. But the authorization passed, and we went to war. At that point we supported our troops and we wanted to win, and we want win. And I have voted for every appropriation bill to give our troops what they need to achieve their mission.

So here we are, more than 4 years later, and what do we have to show for this war? Violence in Iraq continues to skyrocket. This past December was the deadliest month for Iraqi civilians since the war began.

Over the course of this war, 45,000 to 65,000 Iraqi civilians have lost their lives, maybe more; we really don't know, because nobody is counting here in America. And over 3,000 brave American troops, men and women in our Armed Forces, have lost their lives. My home State of California sends the most to the services. We alone have lost 325 men and women in Iraq, and we have sustained about 2,500 injuries to our military personnel, more than any other State in the United States.

And Iraqis have paid the price. Our military, their families; the families of our military are the ones sacrificing in this war. They have paid the price, and our country has paid the price for this President's war.

Yet Iraq is less secure than ever, even before the President's ''mission accomplished'' declaration. There is no functioning infrastructure, no banking system, zero economic stability. Iraq is not secure, Baghdad is not secure. The Iraq Study Group reported that the President's strategy in Iraq is failing. It is failing.

And how does our President respond? With more of the same. He wants to send 21,500 more of our men and women into Iraq to carry out the same failure.

The President has failed to articulate what these new troops will do that is different from what has been done over the past few years. What is his plan? Four surges? Four surges that didn't work. He wants to do it again?

And believe me, sitting on the Armed Services Committee, I have been here to see it. I was the one in the first few months who told General Franks, this is an insurgency, it is guerrilla warfare. He refused to call it that. I was the one that went to Iraq when General Odierno told me there were only 359 insurgents left, that we were almost there, while the day before, his boss, Abizaid, had said he thought there were about 5,000. That was 2 years ago.

I was there when Secretary Rumsfeld was saying we have trained 89,000; 2 days later, 95,000; a week later, 160,000 Iraqi Army. This was 2 years ago. Just pulling numbers out of the air, that is what they were doing to America.

And I was there in Iraq the day that General Petraeus, who was successful in Mosul, and then Mosul fell because he pulled his troops from there to Fallujah, and to try to take Fallujah. And he said to me with tears in his eyes, We couldn't hold Mosul because we had to take the troops to go to Fallujah.

□ 1440

At that point he said, We didn't have enough troops. But the President didn't listen. The President fails to grasp that military action alone is not sufficient to stabilize Iraq. And without a legitimate diplomatic component, there will be no end to the civil war in Iraq. But the President has refused to engage the powers in the region. He has outright rejected the notion of dialogue with Iran and Syria, a key suggestion from the Iraq Study Group. It is not the role of Congress to command our forces. That is the constitutional responsibility given to the Commander in Chief. But he has to do it right. And we have to hold him accountable for our failures in Iraq.

As Commander-in-Chief, that responsibility is up to President Bush.

The President must be frank with Congress and with the American people, and admit that the strategy in Iraq to date has been a complete failure.

The President must come up with a new strategy to stabilize the situation in Iraq, one that ends with the redeployment of our troops home. What is his plan?

My message for the President is this:

The voters have told you, Mr. President, that they have had enough of your failed strategy in Iraq.

And today, Mr. President, this Congress is telling you that we too have had enough of your failed strategy in Iraq.

Our troops deserve more from you. You have ignored the American people's wishes. You have ignored the Iraq Study Group's recommendations.

Today, I hope you will not ignore this Congress. I hope you will not send any more of our Armed Forces into harm's way, until you have a plan to win.

Our military is the strongest and most capable in the world, but they cannot continue to be overextended and asked to participate in your failing strategy.

Mr. President, I ask you to listen to the American people, the Iraq Study Group, and this Congress.

We are telling you clearly that we do not want you to send any more troops to participate in a failing strategy. It is your responsibility as the Commander-in-Chief, to come up with an actual plan to stabilize Iraq and begin bringing our troops home to their families.

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

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CROWLEY). Will the gentleman suspend momentarily.

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.

The gentleman from California may proceed.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, thank you, and I wanted to take this couple of minutes to expand on my conversation with the majority leader.

Mr. Speaker, it has been said a number of times that we went over the berm and went into Iraq without body armor. In fact, no American troops until just a couple of years ago, from the time that we were first a Nation and deployed military forces on our homeland or around the world, in all those years, in that entire history of the United States, we never had body armor. I never had body armor in Vietnam. Nobody ever saw it. We had no body armor in Korea. We had no body armor in World War II, except perhaps in very, very specialized operations where perhaps specialized custom-made body armor, that is, bulletproof armor would be manufactured for some special forces teams or special operations.

Now, I have in front of me a comparison. This comparison is between a soldier in 1999, at the end of the last administration and the equipment that he has, and a soldier today. Now, as you can see, this is a soldier in 1999. He has a number of accessories. In fact, he has an M–16; he has a flak jacket; he has gloves; he has load-carrying equipment; he has protective goggles. He does have a night vision device. He has also got a helmet and accessories that can be utilized when he is in combat.

Now, the soldier today has a lot more. That soldier has, for example, instead of an M–16, he has an M–4 carbine. He has now body armor, including an outer tactical vest body armor. He has enhanced small arms protective inserts, called SAPI plates. He has deltoid auxillary protection and side plates. He has knee pads. He has more sophisticated aiming equipment and night vision equipment than his counterpart of just a couple of years ago.

My point is that whenever new systems are introduced into the force, and the first thousand or so systems or several thousand systems go into the force and a battalion or even a brigade has those pieces of equipment, you can by definition say that everybody else that doesn't have them is now deficient in equipment. But, in fact, they are not deficient in equipment. This point was made by a leader in the 101st Airborne who pointed out that one of his battalions that they looked at, which was rated the top level of readiness, that is C–1 readiness, ready to go, ready to fight, in 1999. If you took all of the new equipment that troops have today and put that new equipment on as a requirement for that same battle-ready battalion in 1999, they would be rendered C–4, or unready for battle by definition because they don't have the new equipment.

So I think one thing we need to do, as we lean on the Army, the Marine Corps, and the other services to move equipment into the field quickly, let's not penalize them, and when they move the first several thousand sets into the field, let's not say, Congratulations, you've just rendered on paper the rest of your units unready because they don't have the new stuff you're moving in. That will have a chilling effect on

what is already a very cumbersome process and a very steep bureaucracy to get through in terms of moving equipment to the field.

I wanted to just make that point.

What I would like to do at this point is yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. FORBES).

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon among a sea of voices that I quickly confess I do not understand. Now, some of them are my friends and some of them are very good people and I don't want to make any mistake about it. I understand the pressures they are under. I understand what it is like when you have major news media outlets who will not even take individuals who attack innocent civilians in the United States and destroy our property and they won't even call them terrorists. I understand the pressure when they control much of the media that we get across the country.

I also understand what it is like, Mr. Speaker, when we have Web sites that are filled with hate, that spew poison out throughout all of our congressional districts, and I understand the pressure that we get when we have people who don't want to listen but simply want to scream, who stand outside and protest at our offices. I understand those pressures. What I don't understand is the response that I am seeing here today on this floor.

Just a few years ago, I had the privilege of traveling with then Speaker DENNY HASTERT to the 60th anniversary of one of the greatest military achievements the United States has ever seen, and that was the invasion of Normandy. Almost every historian agrees it was the battle that literally saved the world. It was of particular importance to me because my dad had died just a few months before and he was there during World War II. Mr. Speaker, I sat that day in the sun among a sea of heroes who didn't come up to the microphone and pound the desk and they didn't speak in shrill voices. They sat with quiet silence because they had done the hard work and they had literally saved the world. And after that ceremony, I had the honor of just walking with them, in the same presence with them, as we walked down on the beach at Omaha Beach and stood there literally speechless as the military historians first told us that that was a victory that didn't necessarily have to be a victory, that we could have easily lost that battle. And if we had lost Omaha Beach, we would have lost that invasion. If we had lost that invasion, Germany would have signed a treaty and Europe would have looked much different than it looks today.

And they told us about the guns that were pointed up and down Omaha Beach, huge cannons and the machine guns locked on the front that created virtually killing fields for our young men that would have to come on that beachhead.

And then, Mr. Speaker, they told us about the very first Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Frederick Morgan, who had warned against doing exactly what we are doing today when he said this: ''Do not have efforts that end in the production of nothing but paper, but we must contrive to produce action, not paper, if our goal is victory, not defeat.''

□ 1450

Mr. Speaker, they described how when General Eisenhower, one of the most beloved generals of our time, when he was strategizing that great vision, his own generals disagreed with him on many issues. In fact, some of them threatened to quit because there were different strategies. Some said don't go today, some said go today, some said do it a different way.

But then as they watched that invasion, greatest victory of all times, let me tell you what happened early that morning. Our airborne men, some of them were dropped into the flooded lowlands, and they drowned without a bullet ever being fired on them because we dropped them in the wrong places. Some of them were dropped in the midst of German positions, and they were captured or they were killed.

Less than a half of the 82nd Airborne's gliders ever reached their assigned landing fields. By early morning, 4,000 men of the 82nd and 60 percent of their equipment was unaccounted for.

The high seas that day swamped many of our boats, and we lost our radios in the bottom of the sea, and only three out of 16 of our bulldozers survived. But what was worse, in the first 4 minutes we had 97 percent casualties on that beach. The Germans were elated.

Mr. Speaker, as I have listened to this debate, I could only think what would happen if the leadership controlling this floor had been on the command ships sitting off of Omaha Beach, because you and I know what would have happened. One by one, they would could came up to the podium, they would have grabbed a microphone, they would have pounded, and they would have looked at all the things that happened. At the end of all that, do you know what it would have resulted in?

It would have had a note that they would have passed to the 29th Division, and those young boys on that beach, some of them 17, 18, 19 years old, who were hunkered down on that beach in the sand, some of them paralyzed with fear not knowing what to do. That note would have said, we love you, we support you, we just want to let you know we disagree with the action that you are taking. We don't know what to tell you, we just disagree with the action that got you here.

But fortunately, that was not the leadership that governed that day. The leadership that governed that day was people like Brigadier General Cota who went up and down that beach and he looked at those young boys and he said, essentially, don't look at the beach. Don't look at the bullets that are flying here at you, because if you do you are going to die on this beach and you are going to lose everything you believed in.

What he told them to do, he said, Look at that hill. We have got to take that hill. He said, Rangers, lead the way. Americans, lead the way. You know what? They took that hill, and they won the greatest military victory in the history of this country. As a result, they saved the world.

Mr. Speaker, I hope and I pray that we will continue to birth voices that say don't look down, don't look at the mistakes, look at that hill. We have got to take this hill, and we have got to save the world from this threat of terrorism that so threatens us.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Missouri has 3 hours, 3 minutes remaining. The gentleman from California has 3 hours and 4 minutes remaining.

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

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to note that this debate is about so many things other than the resolution that is before us. Simple, straightforward, in plain English language, two points. The first is, we in this Congress fully support those wonderful young men and women in uniform.

Secondly, we do not agree with the addition of 21,500 troops into Iraq. That is what we ought to be debating.

I listened to my good friend from Virginia speak of Normandy, I was there with him. I saw my friend, Dr. Tommy MacDonnell, with a worn Purple Heart and a Cluster and his Silver Star in his uniform that day. Great memories, great American victory. But what in the world is the debate involving other battles, other days, other conditions, when we ought to be talking about this? This is a simple, straightforward debate.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Georgia, a member of the Armed Services Committee (Mr. MARSHALL).

Mr. MARSHALL. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, we are debating today a nonbinding resolution to disapprove the Iraqi-American military surge in Baghdad. We do so knowing Congress cannot manage a war, let alone micromanage one. We do so knowing the surge has begun, and we will continue despite our debate and vote. We do so hoping our debate will not discourage those called upon to execute the surge, but we also do so knowing that it might.

Mr. Speaker, that is enough for me to oppose the resolution. I will vote ''no'' on the anti-surge resolution, despite the fact that for 3 years now I have

consistently contended that we should have fewer troops in Iraq, not more. Clearly, the surge is inconsistent with my general view with how to make our effort in Iraq sustainable and winnable.

But the anti-surge resolution is akin to sitting on the sidelines booing in the middle of our own team's play because we don't like the coach's call. I cannot join mid-play naysaying that might discourage even one of those engaged in this current military effort in Baghdad.

To those soldiers and marines who are engaged, I would say the following. Don't be discouraged by this debate and vote. It is birthed by the very democracy that you are defending. If you are successful, Iraqis may one day enjoy the same right to debate and vote like we are debating and voting. If they do, they may well look back at you as having birthed that right for them.

Nearly 40 years ago, I was a grunt platoon sergeant in Vietnam, a kid who dropped out of college and enlisted specifically to go to Vietnam. And at the very time that I was fighting insurgents in Vietnam, our country was torn by antiwar protests and debate. I didn't worry about that. You should not either. I didn't let it discourage me. You should not let it discourage you. You should simply do your duty and be proud of the fact that you have done it. Do it to the best of your ability.

I made tons of mistakes, failed many, many times to do what I should have done. But do what you can to discharge your duty on behalf of the country and let others, the President and the Congress, debate what that duty actually is. There are legitimate differences of opinion in the United States among the leadership concerning the best way forward in Iraq, how to get to the best possible result. Don't worry about that.

No doubt you have your own ideas. I certainly did when I was in Vietnam. While in combat in Vietnam, I was convinced that the tactics that we were using needed to be dramatically changed. But, nevertheless, I continued to do the best I could as I was instructed to do.

I gave a eulogy for Sergeant Victor Anderson of the Georgia National Guard about 2 years ago, 39 years old, disqualified because of diabetes when the National Guard was called up. He fought his disqualification, he went to Iraq.

The week before he died, hit by an IED, he saw some of his men killed. He sent an e-mail back to his family. In that e-mail, he explained this, people ask me why I fight. I do not fight for some ideology. I fight for that man to my left and the one to my right. They are men of their honor. When called, they responded and did their duty. They did not run away. If you believe in nothing else, believe in them.

It is that kind of spirit that I hope you have. I hope, in fact, that I can look at you when you come back from Iraq and be as proud of you as I am of so many others who have fought for us in Iraq and elsewhere. I am a good bit older. It has been 40 years since I was in combat. When I look back at combat, I remember the things that I failed. I forget the things that went particularly well.

Don't fail, do as well as you can. Don't be discouraged by this debate, and we will continue to have additional debates. There will be laws, et cetera, passed. Just do your duty as best you can.

□ 1500

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 6 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I want to also acknowledge Mr. MARSHALL and the powerful sentiments he just shared with all of us. Mr. Speaker, this debate is long overdue. It is our first extended and substantive debate on the war in Iraq since Congress gave the President the authority to invade more than 4 years ago.

But if we do nothing more than debate the President's escalation plan, we will not keep faith with the American people who rightly expect this new Congress to bring our costly involvement in Iraq to a close. And while the resolution before us is largely symbolic and nonbinding, it can be, I think it should be, the opening part of a longer, thoughtful debate about our long-term national interests not only Iraq but the entire Middle East.

So this resolution is a start. And I will vote for it because I agree with the message it sends. The resolution expresses disapproval of the President's sending more troops to Iraq, an action that is contrary to the wise advice of the Iraq Study Group, critical members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and experienced military commanders like former Secretary of State Colin Powell.

The President's escalation is most likely too small to be effective, and adopting new counterinsurgency tactics comes 2 years too late. The resolution, in my opinion, represents the correct response to these facts. It expresses support for our brave men and women in uniform, but disagreement with the policy of military escalation.

Mr. Speaker, as we speak here today, the death toll in Iraq rises, and the war continues to drain our national Treasury, stretch our Armed Forces, and weaken our capacity to effectively counter Islamic terrorism. Congress needs to send the message that things must change.

I opposed the Bush administration's decision to go to war in Iraq, and I have never once regretted that vote. But today we must focus on the future. We cannot move the clock back, but we need to avoid making a bad situation worse. We should not be scaling up our military mission in Iraq, we should be scaling back. We need to make the U.S. military footprint lighter, not in order to hasten defeat or failure in Iraq, but to salvage a critical measure of security and stability in a region of the world that we can ill afford to abandon.

As a member of the Armed Services Committee, I know about the pressure on our active duty and National Guard and Reserve soldiers. They lack enough equipment and training. They are experiencing multiple or extended deployments and limited time at home between deployments. But to be successful our men and women must be properly trained, equipped, and ready to deploy worldwide quickly.

Shortfalls in personnel, equipment, or training increases the risk to our troops and to their mission. In short, this administration's policies have brought us to the point where we not only cannot sustain an escalation in Iraq, but also we are not fully prepared for other contingencies.

But that is not the only reason I oppose the escalation. I do not think the President's rationale for it makes sense, no matter our readiness levels. The just-released National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq agrees that the term ''civil war'' accurately describes what is happening in Iraq, and suggests that the conflict may in fact be worse than a civil war.

Putting more Americans at risk is not a recipe for victory. And as a new Foreign Relations Council report notes, we bear responsibility for developments within Iraq, but are increasingly without the ability to shape those developments in a positive direction.

So what should be the way forward? For one, I believe a reduction of military forces in Iraq and a phased redeployment of our Armed Forces to border regions like Anbar and the Kurdish areas of Iraq would be effective. That can give us flexibility to act militarily in Iraq if necessary, but will also increase the pressure on the Iraqi Government to move toward political reconciliation.

I do not think an immediate withdrawal of American forces or setting a date certain for withdrawal makes sense, but neither does an open-ended commitment for American blood and treasure. And as bad as the situation is in Iraq, we must work to avoid a collapse in the region. Not only because we have a moral obligation to the people of Iraq, but also because our national security has been badly compromised by the Bush administration's failures.

We should adopt the main policy recommendations of the Iraq Study Group, including stronger efforts of diplomacy in the region. It is not in the interests of any nation to have Iraq descend into further civil war and chaos. As challenging as diplomacy is in the Middle East, I believe the sacrifice of our soldiers demand that we engage in serious regional talks, including those with our adversaries Syria and Iran.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I am convinced we must reach for bipartisanship in crafting our policy in Iraq. Mr. Speaker, the stakes in Iraq are very high.

The outcome in this region will have consequences for future generations that will long outlive those of us who are in Congress today.

Great leaders acknowledge mistakes, learn and chart a new course. For the sake of future generations and to keep faith with the generations that built America, let us be a Nation of great leaders.

Mr. Speaker, this is the first significant debate we have had on the war in Iraq since Congress passed the President's request for an authorization to invade Iraq more than four years ago. And even though our debate today is on a largely symbolic question—a non-binding resolution disapproving the President's announced plan for moving additional troops to Iraq—I believe it ought to serve as the beginning of a deeper and more thoughtful debate about our long-term national interests in the Middle East, and Iraq.

If all we do is debate the wisdom of a surge, we will not keep faith with the American people, who rightly expect this new Congress to bring our costly involvement in the Iraq war to a close.

Nevertheless, I will support this resolution disapproving the president's call for additional troops in Iraq because it runs contrary to the wise advice of the Iraq Study Group (the Baker-Hamilton Commission), critical members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and experienced military commanders like former Secretary of State, Colin Powell, on the best strategic approach in Iraq. The President's plan calls for an infusion of additional soldiers—probably too few to have the desired outcome—and utilizing counterinsurgency tactics that are two years too late and that I believe will be ineffective in the context of the civil war that has emerged in Iraq.

We are also expecting General David Petraeus and our troops to operate under a complicated joint command structure with Iraqi forces and political leaders that is unprecedented in our military history and undermines the ''unity of command'' rule in warfare. And all this comes at a time when the death toll in Iraq is rising and the war continues to drain our national treasury, stretches our armed forces, and decreases—rather than enhances—our ability to wage an effective war against Islamic terrorism. Even as we debate a ''surge'' in Iraq, we should not forget Afghanistan. We will win there if we redouble our efforts now.

I opposed the Bush Administration's decision to go to war in Iraq and I have never once regretted that vote. Today, we cannot move the clock back, but we can surely avoid making a bad situation worse. We should not be scaling up our military mission in Iraq—we should be scaling back. We need to make the U.S. military footprint lighter—not in order to hasten defeat or failure in Iraq, but to salvage a critical measure of security and stability in a region of the world that we can ill afford to abandon.

I say this as a Member of the Armed Services Committee who understands the pressures on our active duty and National Guard and reserve soldiers, including a lack of equipment and training, multiple or extended deployments, and limited time at home between deployments. To be successful, U.S. forces must be trained, equipped, and ready to quickly deploy worldwide. Shortfalls in personnel, equipment, or training increase the risk to our troops and to their mission. By all measurements, we are not in a position to sustain an escalation of troops.

But I don't believe the President's rationale for the ''surge'' makes sense, no matter our readiness levels. The just-released National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq agrees that the term ''civil war'' accurately describes aspects of the Iraq conflict and goes further in suggesting that the conflict may in fact, be more complicated and worse than a civil war. Putting more American troops at risk in this kind of setting is not a recipe for victory; it is only a prescription for quagmire. As a new Foreign Relations Council report notes, we bear responsibility for developments within Iraq, but are increasingly without the ability to shape those developments in a positive direction.

So what should be the way forward? How should Congress respond?

I believe a policy aimed at escalating diplomatic and political efforts is preferable to one that continues to rely on our soldiers to carry the heavy burden of nation-building—a mission that soldiers are ill-equipped for without strong international support, particularly in the midst of civil war and sectarian violence. That is why I favor a reduction of military forces in Iraq, and a phased redeployment of our armed forces to border regions in places like Anbar province and the Kurdish areas of Iraq, which should give us some flexibility to respond militarily should circumstances require it, but will also increase the pressure on the Iraqi government to move toward political reconciliation and stability.

I do not believe an immediate withdrawal of American forces or setting a date certain for withdrawal makes sense, but neither does an open-ended commitment of American blood and treasure.

As bad as the situation is in Iraq, however, we must work to avoid a collapse in the region—not only because we have a moral obligation to the people of Iraq, but also because our national security has been so badly compromised by the Bush Administration's failures there. The President's decision to take the Nation to war has made our country less safe. We need to change course and chart a path that enhances our national security and sets the right priorities for the war on terrorism and struggle against extremists.

To do this, I believe Congress should pass a resolution that embodies the main policy elements of the Baker-Hamilton Commission, including a call for stronger efforts at diplomacy in the region and internationally. It is not in the interests of any nation to have Iraq descend into further civil war and chaos. As challenging as diplomacy is in the Middle East, I believe the sacrifice of our soldiers demands that we engage in serious regional talks, including talks with our adversaries, Syria and Iran.

Finally, I believe we must reach for bipartisanship in crafting our policy in Iraq. The President misguidedly took us into war on the eve of a bitter national election. We must try hard not to compound this error by turning a debate on Iraq into a partisan game of one-upmanship where legitimate disagreement with the Administration's plan for escalation is called a betrayal of our troops or where resistance to immediate withdrawal is called warmongering.

For my part, I intend to speak out loudly and often for a responsible withdrawal strategy in Iraq, but I will also offer proposals that are aimed at finding common ground. I will be introducing legislation that looks beyond the ''surge'' and toward the necessary and inevitable contingency planning that will be needed if we are to avoid deeper and more catastrophic scenarios in Iraq and the region.

Mr. Speaker, the stakes in Iraq are very high. The outcome in this region will have consequences for future generations that will long outlive those of us who are in Congress today. Great leaders acknowledge mistakes, learn, and chart a new course. For the sake of future generations and to keep faith with the generations that built America, let us be a Nation of great leaders.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON).

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

First, let me begin by saying that I have observed several speakers here during this debate who I am sure in good faith made the representations that they did, that the short-term redeployment or surge was not a recommendation of the Iraq Study Group.

This is a copy of the report of the Iraq Study Group. On page 73 there is a discussion of increasing troop levels in Iraq. And the Iraq Study Group did in fact suggest that a substantial increase of 100,000 or 200,000 troops would likely be not a good idea.

However, they say this, and I quote. ''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.''

And so I would say to my friends that is in fact the case. And so I hope that that puts that matter to rest. Mr. Speaker, this resolution, I suspect, has been drawn up as a well-meaning resolution. There have been some suggestions here today that it is political in nature. I do not know if that is true. But I would hope that it is a good, well-meaning resolution.

I have been here now for well over 20 years, I am in my 23rd year. I have learned a lot about the House. This is a great system. We do great work here. And we usually do it right. Sometimes we make mistakes.

On many issues we make corrections to those mistakes. When we pass tax bills, months later or a year later we will make some technical corrections to the tax bill, because we did not do it quite right. In many other cases, if we spend too much money in an appropriations bill this year, we can come back and reduce it in a future year.

But I would suggest to my friends who support this resolution that it is a start down a road; it is a start down a road that at some point could have disastrous effects. So we want to make sure, I am sure you want to make sure, that you get this right. I would like to walk you through some reasons why I think that this takes us in the wrong direction.

In fact, there is a bunch of evidence to point to the fact that the enemy is watching what we are doing, that they have learned from our past mistakes, and that they are in fact hoping that this resolution passes, for some fairly obvious reasons. Let me go through four case studies that we have made about similar situations.

First, a situation in Lebanon. Lebanon was a wonderful country. It was a democracy. It had a Parliament. Had Christians and Muslims living together sharing power. In the middle 1970s, things began to change. The big change was that fundamentalist Islam came to town and Hezbollah came to town.

□ 1510

And in 1975, a war erupted, which has been called a civil war. There was the emergence of multi-sided militia groups, sectarian violence and civilian massacres. Sounds familiar.

In 1982, the U.N. sent in a multi-national force to try to quell the violence. And on October 23, 1983 the Marine barracks was bombed by Hezbollah with the support of Iran. The best description of it I have heard or read comes from a description by some Navy SEALs who were sleeping in their bunker on the beach, not in the barracks. And the magnitude of the explosion, to hear them describe it, was something to behold. And it shocked America. And in 1984 we withdrew our Marines. The remainder of the peacekeeping force was gone by April of 1984. There was no serious U.S. retaliation for the Beirut bombing. The civil war continued until 1990. Hezbollah emerged from a loose coalition of Shia groups and, with Iranian assistance, quickly grew into a strong fighting force in Lebanon. That is case number one.

Case Number two. We have got troops today in Afghanistan. If things had happened somewhat differently a couple of decades earlier, they might not be there at all. But in the mid-1980s the Afghan resistance builds momentum with Muslim fighters to recruit a jihad against the Soviets. And we all have read about that resistance movement. It was fierce, and we actually helped them. And in 1989 the Soviets had had enough, just like we had had enough in Lebanon, and the Soviets withdrew.

From 1989 to 1992, the Afghan civil war continued until the government of Afghanistan fell. In 1993 and 1994, the Taliban came along, and they gained power. In 1996, Osama bin Laden moves back to Afghanistan and forges an alliance between al Qaeda and the Taliban. Since then, we know the history very well of Afghanistan. A void was there to be filled, and the fundamentalist Islamists filled it.

Now, I would like to turn to the third case study, the case study involving Somalia. In 1980, the Somalia Government becomes increasingly totalitarian and resistance movements emerge across the country, which leads to a civil war in 1991. Being great big-hearted Americans, in 1992 and 1993, we decided to save the starving Somalis, and we initiated Operation Restore Hope. In May 1993, the U.N. assumed the mission from the U.S. as an international mission. In October of 1993 the battle for Mogadishu took place. Eighteen Americans were killed. The U.S. stops operations against Aidid, and in March, 1995, both U.S. and U.N. forces withdraw. It was later confirmed that al Qaeda supported Aidid's militia. There is evidence that the U.S. withdrawal inspired bin Laden's first bombing of the World Trade Center. The Islamist fundamentalists filled the void once again.

Let me move to my fourth case study, the Israeli withdrawal, again, from Lebanon. Preceding the Israeli invasion in 1982 the PLO was conducting attacks on Israel from south Lebanon. In 1982, Israeli forces invaded southern Lebanon in response to an assassination attempt by Abu Nidal against Israel's ambassador to the U.K. After attacking PLO, Syrian and Muslim Lebanese forces, Israel occupied southern Lebanon.

If you want to read a great account of this, read the book entitled ''Because They Hate.'' It is a book written by a Christian woman by the name of Brigitte Gabriel, who is now living in the U.S., and she tells the story of living in a bunker, living in a bunker until the war was over, not a nice thing to do.

In 1982 to 1984, the multi-national peacekeeping force came to Lebanon. The PLO withdrawal in 1982 is replaced by a strengthening of Hezbollah. In 1985, Israel moves to the security zone in southern Lebanon. And in 2000, Israel withdraws.

I only need to point to the events of last summer in Lebanon to say, once again, the fundamentalist Islamists, Hezbollah, filled the void.

We are embarked today on a discussion of another potential road to withdrawal. And I don't represent that this resolution does that, but it puts us in that direction. Evidence of our failure to respond to terrorism has emboldened al Qaeda for years. This withdrawal would be another one, if it goes that far.

In 1993, the World Trade Center bombing took place. We didn't respond. In 1996, the Khobar Tower bombings took place and we didn't respond. In 1998, the U.S. embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania occurred and we didn't respond. In 2000, the attack on the USS Cole occurred and we didn't respond. The result, New York City, 9/11.

People ask me why I am so concerned about this. People ask me why, Saxton, you have been on the floor too much.

Let me show you the next chart. This is why I am concerned. This is my family.

When I first ran for Congress in 1984 the steering committee asked me why I wanted to be a Member of Congress. I said, because I have had a good life. I said, because this is a great country, and because I want my family to have the same opportunities I have had.

This is my son Marty and his wife and their little gal, my granddaughter Allie. This is my daughter, Jen, this is Kate, and this is Jacqueline.

I will admit the artist got a little carried away because they made a montage out of this picture and they put my grandchildren on here two or three times each. But I will tell you what, if we go down this road to the point where we can't correct a mistake, I wonder what the future is going to be for my family and for your family.

And so this resolution today is an important one. It may be only 97 words or whatever it is, and it may have only two statements in it, but we are headed down a road, and it is a dangerous one, in my opinion.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from the great State of Oklahoma (Mr. BOREN), a member of the Armed Services Committee.

Mr. BOREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of our men and women in uniform, and in support of this resolution.

Nearly 230,000 Americans are currently deployed to the Middle East fighting the war on terrorism. Three thousand of those are from my home State of Oklahoma. These men and women are fighting for their country, not as Democrats or as Republicans, but as Americans.

I was not in Congress nearly 4 years ago when the war in Iraq began, but in the 2 years since I have served here I have not once encountered a colleague who does not support our troops. We have our disagreements over strategy, spending and even the war itself, but when it comes to support for the selfless Americans serving in uniform, we are unanimous.

For anyone, and I repeat, anyone to suggest anything to the contrary just distracts from this serious, serious debate.

□ 1520

As many of my colleagues have already noted, our troops are not the problem. They have done an outstanding job executing the mission that they have been given. The problem is with the administration's strategy. We owe it to the men and women of our Armed Forces to pursue a policy that offers them the best possible chance at success, not a plan that repeats past mistakes.

The President's decision to deploy an additional 21,500 American combat troops to Iraq is not the first time that we have had a surge of troops in this conflict. In April of 2004, January and October of 2005, and again in October of last year, we saw temporary escalations that provided no long-term reductions in violence. I am concerned that this latest plan is a renewed effort

for more of the same that does little to encourage the Iraqis to take responsibility for their own future. As one general told the Iraq Study Group, ''All the troops in the world will not provide security if the Iraqi Government does not make political progress.'' Rather than laying out a plan that establishes solid benchmarks for Iraqi security and the corresponding redeployment of U.S. troops, the President is pursuing a strategy that history shows does not work.

Former Secretary of State and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Colin Powell, Commander of the U.S. Central Command General John Abizaid, Marine Corps Commandant General James Conway, and many other current and former military leaders have said more troops is not the answer. Our Nation's military is already stretched thin. This open-ended plan to increase American troop levels in Iraq would exacerbate the overextension of our Armed Forces and cripple our ability to respond to other crises around the world. Because we don't know what the future holds, we have to be ready for anything.

U.S. and coalition forces successfully removed Saddam Hussein from power, and the world is a better place for it. But we now find ourselves locked in the middle of an Iraqi civil war. The Iraq of today is vastly different from the Iraq we entered nearly 4 years ago, yet our strategy remains the same. We need to succeed in Iraq, but we need to redefine what success really is.

For over a year now I have joined our great chairman, Chairman SKELTON, in his call for solid benchmarks in Iraq. We need a mechanism to measure our progress toward an Iraq that is responsible for its own security. It is in our interest, it is in Iraq's interest, and it is in the interest of the region to ensure that Iraqi personnel are trained and ready to take control sooner rather than later. Realistically, some of the more than 140,000 troops we already have in Iraq to secure the Iranian border would do more to further our goals in Iraq than sending more Americans into Baghdad. And that is a plan, my friends.

At the end of the day, military command decisions rest with the Commander in Chief. This resolution and this debate are not about micromanaging the war or forcing a withdrawal of troops. Public opinion polls should not dictate war strategies. The facts should. And the facts are that surges haven't worked in the past and experts agree it won't work this time.

The President knows we are all in this together. That is why I was very disappointed to see the administration move forward with such a dramatic escalation despite strong bipartisan opposition in Congress. Without a clear mission or effective benchmarks, it is too big of a gamble to take with so many American lives.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my colleague, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), a member of the Armed Services Committee.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman SKELTON for yielding. It has been an honor to serve on his committee.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my strong support for this resolution. Last November the voters in upstate New York spoke loudly and clearly in demanding a change in direction in Iraq, and I will cast my vote in favor of this resolution to fulfill my duty to represent their will.

As a freshman Member of this new Congress, I can think of no higher responsibility than to debate the merits of the President's plan to escalate American involvement in this war in Iraq. And I am pleased to see that every Member of Congress has been given 5 minutes to voice their view and to speak on this measure.

Today's debate is not about what is best for Democrats or best for Republicans. It is about what is best for our troops, for our national security, and for all Americans, as it should be. I believe the sentiments will be reflected in the bipartisan support this resolution will ultimately receive.

As I have traveled throughout my district doing town hall meetings and ''Congress on Your Corner'' to invite comments from my constituents and listen to their issues, I hear a consistent message. People say to me, we need a new direction in Iraq. We need a plan for success. We need to make sure we bring stability to the region; and when will our troops come home? All of these issues I couldn't agree with more strongly. Unfortunately, the President's plan is not a change in direction. It is, rather, more of the same.

As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I have had the unique opportunity to question both Secretary Gates and General Pace and to listen to their testimony on this proposed escalation. At no point has anyone from the administration been able to articulate to me clearly that this is a strategy that will effectively undermine terrorism, promote lasting stability, and be successful in redeploying our troops. What is so clear to so many of our military advisers, former and current military generals, and a majority of this body and the American public at large does not seem to be shared by this administration, that the answers in sustaining peace in Iraq lie in the political, diplomatic, and economic solutions, not in the military ones.

In our hearings I have worked hard to bring to light whether the President has a plan for Iraqi oil revenues and reconstruction contracts to create progress in the economic and political arenas. Both Secretary Gates and General Pace testified that the President's current plan has no chance of success unless there is significant progress in both of these arenas. I call upon the administration to produce a real plan to ensure each of the sectarian groups receives a stake in the oil revenues and a plan for oversight and accountability to reduce fraud and corruption and to disrupt the black market for oil.

Right now only a small portion of the Iraqi oil revenues has been used for reconstruction; yet billions of American dollars have been spent. We need accountability and real answers to ensure the Iraqis leverage the oil revenue effectively to bring all of the parties to the table.

And where is the accountability with the war spending? We need a Truman-style committee to investigate these billions of dollars of no-bid contracts being awarded in Iraq, and we should bring the war funding process completely under the regular appropriation structures.

We have also not seen a plan to transfer the reconstruction contracts to the Iraqis. The Iraqi 20-year-olds should be the ones that are rebuilding the bridges and the roads and the schools and the hospitals, not fighting each other and not attacking our troops.

And where has the progress been made on the political stability? Where is the plan to develop a special envoy and to engage others in the region to bring forth peace and stability?

In my view, the testimony provided in the several hearings that the Armed Services Committee has had have revealed an insufficient commitment to these very targets that both General Pace and Secretary Gates have testified are required for success. Yet the President continues to push forward and send in more troops.

Our men and our women in the military have served admirably and have done everything we have asked them to do. They have fought bravely under daunting circumstances, often at times without the proper equipment that they need. They have made sacrifice after sacrifice in leaving their families and loved ones behind to do the job that we have asked them to do. And how do we repay this sacrifice and patriotism? By continuing to extend their tours indefinitely, cutting their veterans benefits when they return home. The dedication and sacrifice of the men and the women in the Armed Forces deserves responsible leadership. They have given us everything they have, and in turn we must give them a new direction for success.

There are those out there that will use this debate as a partisan wedge. That type of rhetoric undermines the core values of our democracy. In fact, it was Thomas Jefferson who declared that dissent is the highest form of patriotism.

□ 1530

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. EVERETT).

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Speaker, I thank my ranking member, a combat veteran from Vietnam and a great American.

Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today to pay tribute to my ranking member and chairman, and to the service of all men and women who are serving in the Armed Forces and those who have prior service, many who serve in this distinguished body. And thank goodness. I say thank goodness, because I find that in this body we have too few people who have ever worn a uniform, but we have an awful lot of opinions about how to wear a uniform.

We have heard from many of these Members on both sides of the aisle. Some served in Vietnam, some in the first gulf war, and some in the war that we are currently fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. They cite their firsthand experience in serving our country as justification for why they believe we cannot afford to lose the war or why we should not support the Commander in Chief's reinforcement proposal or, in some cases, why we should bring the troops home immediately and cut off funding.

Mr. Speaker, I respect every Member in this Chamber who has served our country with honor and distinction. Each of them brings a different perspective to the debate. However, today I would like to bring another perspective to the debate, and it is that of Army pilot Keith Yoakum from Coffee Springs, Alabama, in my district. Chief Warrant Officer Yoakum was killed February 2 in Iraq when the Apache helicopter he was flying was forced to land during combat operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

While his death is a tragedy, his family is taking comfort in the fact that Chief Warrant Officer Yoakum was doing what he loved, defending the country that he loved. This Army aviator was proud of what he was doing in Iraq, and told his father that there was no other place he would rather be until the war was over.

Much of his pride came from his ability to protect our guys on the ground using his Apache helicopter who were executing the dangerous missions of ridding the neighborhoods of those who wanted to kill his fellow troops as well as innocent Iraqis. However, equally as important was Keith Yoakum's belief that he was making a difference in this fight to make this world a better place for his daughters to live.

Chief Warrant Officer Yoakum is not alone in his belief. The hundreds of soldiers that I have visited with share his view of this war. Whether it was during a solemn sendoff of our brave men and women or an emotional welcome home ceremony, the soldiers I talk to believe in this mission and that we must prevail in this war.

They recognize the dire consequences if we don't succeed in Iraq. If we withdraw prematurely, the terrorists will have an unchecked sanctuary from which they can launch attacks to kill more innocent Americans, similar to what existed in Afghanistan prior to our toppling the Taliban regime in Operation Enduring Freedom. To abandon our fight against the terrorists is to have failed to learn the lessons of 9/11 and to revert to a policy that allowed two decades of escalating violence. That policy resulted in the death of thousands of Americans, as was so well documented by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON).

Mr. Speaker, it is imperative that we defeat this enemy, whose sole desire is to kill Americans anywhere, in any way they can. Today the theater is Iraq. But if we retreat from this war, as those on the other side of the aisle have advocated, then we will fight them in the cities and in the towns. Either way, this war will be fought.

Mr. Speaker, I have a guest essay from my hometown newspaper, the Dothan Eagle, from a war veteran by the name of Wayne Wood, and I would like this complete essay entered into the RECORD after I speak. But first I want to quote a couple of things from it. This is, as I said, from a former combat veteran, Wayne Wood.

''As I watch the current debate over the war in Iraq, I remember sitting in the day room at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, with my buddies and watching the collapse of South Vietnam and Saigon in 1975. I was thinking of, and I know my buddies were thinking of, all the guys we knew who'd gone over to fight for the Vietnamese who didn't come back. We cursed the ARVN soldiers as cowards because they would not stand and fight for their country. We were angry that the sacrifice of these good—no, great—Americans was in vain.

''It was only years later that I learned, to my dismay, that it wasn't the ARVN who betrayed my fellow soldiers' blood, it was their very own elected representatives in Congress who voted to cut funding for the defense of the Republic of South Vietnam.

''We are being told the Iraqi situation is unwinnable. We were told that we had lost the war in Vietnam.

''After Tet in 1968, Walter Cronkite, 'the most trusted man in America,' went on the air and said so. Americans said, 'If Walter says we've lost, it must be so.'

''Now, our media, and others, some in this body, ''tell us the same thing. We are being told of how hopeless the situation is in Iraq. What about the American people? What are the American people supposed to think?

''But the picture I got from former students who have served in Iraq tells another story. They are frustrated that the good things that are happening in Iraq aren't being shown, that the people only see the bad. There's a genuine fear that they won't be allowed to finish the job. Their sacrifice would be in vain.

''From a distance, the situation as shown looks grim. But as a soldier who has seen war up close, I know war is a grim business. I remember the words of Marine General Julian Smith, speaking of the Battle of Tarawa in World War II: 'We were losing, until we won.' ''

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Wood has a number of other examples here, and that is the reason I will include the letter for the RECORD.

NO COMPARISON BETWEEN VIETNAM AND IRAQ WARS

(By Wayne Wood)

As I watch the current debate over the war in Iraq, I remember sitting in the day room at Fort Sill, Okla., with my buddies and watching the collapse of South Vietnam and Saigon in 1975. I was thinking of, and I know my buddies were thinking of, all the guys we knew who'd gone over to fight for the Vietnamese who didn't come back. We cursed the ARVN soldiers as cowards because they would not stand and fight for their country. We were angry that the sacrifice of all those good—no, great—Americans was in vain.

It was only years later that I learned, to my dismay, that it wasn't the ARVN who betrayed my fellow soldiers' blood, it was their very own elected representatives in Congress who voted to cut funding for the defense of the Republic of South Vietnam.

We are being told the Iraq situation is unwinnable. We were told we had lost the war in Vietnam.

After TET in 1968, Walter Cronkite, ''the most trusted man in America,'' went on the air and said so. Americans said, ''If Walter Cronkite says we've lost, it must be so.''

Now, our media tells us the same thing. We are being told of how hopeless the situation is in Iraq. What are the American people supposed to think?

But the picture I get from former students who have served Iraq tells another story. They are frustrated that the good things they see happening in Iraq aren't being shown, that the people only see the bad. There's a genuine fear they won't be allowed to finish the job. Their sacrifice would be in vain.

From a distance, the situation as shown looks grim. But, as a soldier who has seen war up close, I know war is a grim business. I remember the words of Marine Gen. Julian Smith, speaking of the Battle of Tarawa in World War II: ''We were losing until we won!''

Yes, I get saddened when I read the casualty reports and see the pictures of the dead in the Army Times. No one knows better than a soldier that if a nation goes to war, it owes it to the soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines to fight to win so their sacrifice isn't wasted. I think of my own son in uniform. I can only pray for him and be proud that he has ''stepped up to the plate'' to serve his country, particularly in time of war.

Today, politicians and pundits just know we are losing in Iraq. Walter Cronkite and others just knew we'd lost the war in Vietnam after TET. If only we had known that Ho Chi Minh and General Giap didn't know they'd won.

They were about ready to throw in the towel after TET until the anti-war people in America told them otherwise. Well, we left Vietnam and millions of people died in Southeast Asia in the turmoil caused by the power vacuum. Who can tell what might happen if we withdraw from Southwest Asia.

In 1975 it didn't matter to most of America. The deaths were far away and the Viet Cong couldn't cross the ocean to attack us. Nor did they care to.

Unfortunately, we don't have that luxury today. We fight an enemy who will stop at nothing to destroy us and our way of life. If we leave Iraq, they will follow us home and it won't be millions of Cambodians or Vietnamese dying in the killing fields of Southeast Asia, it will be Americans in the streets

of our cities. Can we afford to be so smug in our knowledge?

We may not like the president. We may not like war. We may not like this war or the way it has been conducted. But now that we're in it, this is one war we cannot afford to lose.

In one thing I heartily agree with U.S. Sens. Edward Kennedy and John Kerry: America can certainly not afford another Vietnam in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues, and I urge my colleagues on the other side, if we are not going to cut funding from this war, then bring up Congressman SAM JOHNSON's amendment that says we will neither cut nor restrict funding for this war. I ask my colleagues to stand with Chief Warrant Officer Yoakum and the thousands of other soldiers who believe in their mission and want to see it through to completion, and vote against this resolution. It can only do harm to our troops and bring aid and comfort to the terrorists.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON), a member of the Armed Services Committee.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman.

Mr. Speaker, before I begin my comments, I must admit that it seems that our friends from across the aisle have forgotten what the subject of this debate remains. I was under the impression that we were here to debate a resolution opposing the President's so-called surge plan. Yet I keep hearing commentary that appears to be designed to distract the American public from the real reason that we are gathered for a conversation on our future involvement in Iraq.

Let it be known, Mr. Speaker, that when it comes time to vote, HANK JOHNSON will be voting in favor of House Concurrent Resolution 63.

Now, ''help is on the way.'' Those were the watchwords of a former Presidential campaign 7 years ago. Yet here we are, neck deep into the second term of the Bush-Cheney administration. And when one considers the current state of our military's readiness, our proud military's readiness, one has to wonder, where has the help gone? Where is the help?

□ 1540

If this was the help that was promised us 7 years ago, at the current state of our readiness, I would be reluctant to see what not helping our fine military men and women would mean.

I must point out that I, along with each of my colleagues in this distinguished body, do support our troops. But the issue at hand is whether, unlike campaign promises of the past, we intend to back our rhetoric with action.

We are now engaged in a debate about committing more troops to what can only be described as an ill-conceived, poorly planned, and misguided attempt to bring some sort of stability to a region that has suffered terribly since the President first decided to go it alone and make his stamp upon history, for better or worse.

Although I must admit, it has even become difficult to remember the exact reason the President used to justify his decision to take us to war in Iraq; but allow me to briefly summarize for you the reasons that the President has given the American public in his attempt to justify his decision to go to war.

Number 1, weapons of mass destruction. There were none. Number 2, the nuclear threat. There was none. Number 3, links to al Qaeda. There were none. And yet now, when we debate the wisdom of sending more than 20,000 young men and women into battle in this so-called surge, we are expected to trust an administration which has been so consistently wrong. It is difficult to remember that we are in Iraq fighting for a war whose justification has not yet been justified at all.

So at this point, when we look at the state of the readiness of our military, it has been called into question. Recruiting, the Army has failed to achieve its recruitment goals by 17.8 percent in 2006, and moreover, recruitment quality has suffered. The percentage of Army recruits with high school diplomas has declined. The above-average middle category test scores of our recruits have declined, and the number of recruits scoring in the lowest acceptable middle category has increased. Our retention rates are soft.

We have got over 3,000 killed in Iraq, 20,000-plus wounded; meanwhile we are having problems with our equipment shortfalls, which are glaring in the combat theater, and also for our nondeployed personnel who are in the process of training to be deployed to Iraq and who cannot be properly trained without adequate equipment.

Then we have got the issue of multiple deployments, people having been deployed three and even four times to the theater, but yet this President proposes to send an additional 22,000 troops, plus support personnel, into this civil war in Iraq, where we are simply sitting ducks and falling victim to ever more sophisticated improvised explosive devices, i.e., roadside bombs.

This killing is continuing at exorbitant rates, and so this is what we are here to talk about with this resolution. It is important for the American public to know that we support our military. We definitely want to see them do the job that they must do. However, this troop surge is wrong. Two wrongs do not make a right.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia. I yield 5 minutes to my colleague on the Armed Services Committee, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY).

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, today we are here, exactly 100 days after a historic watershed election in this country, in which the American people spoke loudly and clearly that they wanted a new Congress to rise to its constitutional duty and hold this administration accountable for its war policy in Iraq. The day I was sworn in as a new Member of Congress, I accepted this responsibility, and I rise today in opposition to the President's escalation of the war and in support of H. Con. Res. 63.

Make no mistake about the significance of what is happening this week. America's new Congress will go on record for the first time in opposition to the Bush administration's 4-year legacy of mistakes and misjudgments in Iraq. This will be in sharp contrast to 8 months ago when the prior Congress did exactly the opposite. That Congress lined up in lockstep with a war resolution written by and for the White House.

That resolution completely brushed over the misleading and manipulated intelligence that got us into this conflict, the strain of this war on our brave men and women in uniform, and the drain on our Nation's military readiness that is undercutting critical efforts in Afghanistan and our overall defense infrastructure. Instead of doing their constitutional duty, the 109th Congress instead just rubber-stamped the administration's rhetoric and failing policy.

Opponents of today's resolution are claiming that it will damage our troop's morale. As a member of the Armed Services Committee, I believe the opposite is true.

Let us be very clear about where the 20,000 new troops will come from. President Bush cannot simply dial 911 and 20,000 fresh new troops appear. This escalation can only happen by extending the deployments of soldiers already in Iraq, beyond their promised commitments, or accelerating the arrival of preexisting rotations. Upon close examination, it is clear that the impact of this surge lands squarely on the backs of our men and women in uniform who have already borne an unfair burden.

As we debate this resolution, there are nearly 1,900 men and women from my State of Connecticut, including 962 from Connecticut's National Guard, serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. They have all honored our Nation with their service and sacrifice, and they have done all that has been asked of them and more, and their families have shown awe-inspiring strength in their absence.

Earlier this month, I was forwarded an e-mail from a constituent serving in Iraq which demonstrates the consequences of these unsustainable policies. In it he described how the morale in his unit fell when they found out that their tour was being unexpectedly extended another 4 months. He wrote:

''These guys have seen so much of the fighting here. To see the looks on these soldiers' faces was heartbreaking. A lot of these guys had plans made already with their loved ones, like weddings, trips, or family that traveled from far away to see them get off that

plane. There are children that were all excited, holding signs they made, waiting to see their fathers again only to have that shattered. How much more can soldiers like this take? These guys deserve the right to go home. They earned it.''

Letters like these demonstrate the real impact on our troops from the President's policy. And they are reinforced by the testimony I have heard at Armed Services. Over and over again, we have heard about the deterioration of our military readiness caused by overdeployment of our troops. Consider that today, as a result of the strain of the war, we currently have no active duty or Reserve brigades considered combat-ready in the Continental U.S., leaving our Nation dangerously unprepared and vulnerable if needed to respond to other global threats or domestic emergencies.

Despite the huge costs to our troops and our national defense, the President has opted to aggravate the holes in our defense with a plan to escalate the number of troops in Iraq. And for what?

Yesterday, I read the new classified National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq. What I found in this report was the same as the unclassified version that has been reported in the press; that we have a deteriorating security situation in Iraq whose fundamental causes were identified as political, not military. This finding completely dovetails with the findings of the Iraq Study Group who came to the exact same conclusion.

Instead of absorbing the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group report and the National Intelligence Estimate and surging diplomacy and political solutions, the President instead has opted to escalate the war by sending 21,500 more troops into the middle of a violent sectarian conflict.

Where are the plans to equitably divide oil revenue or revisit the Iraqi Constitution which was left incomplete 2 years ago, or the push to create a real power-sharing arrangement between the Shia and the Sunni? Nowhere do we see any effort to get to the root causes of the violence. Instead, the Bush plan is more of the same, asking our brave troops to do the impossible, settling a sectarian conflict that goes back centuries in time.

President Bush has made his choice. Now it is Congress' turn as a coequal branch of government to make ours.

□ 1550

I firmly believe that the passage of this resolution will go down in history as the first stirrings of life from a Congress that has been in an Iraq stranglehold for 4 long years. It is an honor to be part of this history on behalf of one of the districts that had the courage to vote for change last November 100 days ago, and I will support resolution 63.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania, a member of the Armed Services Committee (Mr. SESTAK).

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Speaker, 1 year ago, I retired from the U.S. Navy after 31 years in our military, serving our Nation during the challenges of peace and in the fury of war, including commanding an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 ships and 15,000 sailors in combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Having worn the cloth of this Nation for so long, I know that our military is a national treasure that cannot be hoarded like miser's gold if it is to be a force for peace and progress, but nor can it be used recklessly. And now, as a Member of the House of Representatives, I am conscious that war is a shared responsibility in our Constitution between the President and Congress, as are the respective responsibilities of the executive and legislative branches to ensure U.S. security, and to provide for our common defense.

My experience leads me to be concerned for U.S. security because of Iraq, a tragic misadventure that does not permit us to best address more important security challenges throughout the world. My experience also says don't double down on a bad military bet by using more troops as the President has proposed, when an increase has not worked before; have confidence in our diplomatic ability to lead regional negotiations for stability, even with Syria and Iran; and, set a date certain for redeploying out of Iraq, this year, to serve as the necessary leverage to have the Iraqis accept the reality of the personal consequence of not assuming responsibility for their nation.

What concerns me about Iraq is the continuing use of our national treasure in what is an inconclusive, open-ended involvement within a country where the long-term benefits do not match what we need to reap, and where the tradeoffs in benefits of not focusing elsewhere is harming our future prosperity, interests, and values.

We need to apply our resources elsewhere in the world, where terrorists come from, including Osama bin Laden, who is still on the loose, or where emerging nations such as in the Western Pacific have growing political and economic interests, and therefore influence, that may challenge ours.

An alternative strategy is just what is needed, because remaining in Iraq means less security and a greater strategic security risk for America. It negatively impacts the readiness of our Armed Forces and hinders our ability to adequately focus on other security priorities here at home and throughout the world, including the global war on terror and regional challenges from Afghanistan, North Korea, and Iran to the Western Pacific and Middle East regions.

The fact is we have fostered a culture of dependence in Iraq, and it is time for Iraqi leaders to be responsible for their own country. They must make the difficult political compromises that will stop the civil war we are refereeing and bring about stability. We cannot do this work for them. Nor is that wonderful phrase I heard often when deployed to that region throughout the years, Anshala, Bugra: God willing, tomorrow, good enough any longer.

So, yes, I will vote for this resolution, because sending more troops to Iraq and remaining there indefinitely will only increase the dependence of the Iraqis on America, both politically and militarily, at a time when they should be shouldering increased responsibility for their country, while impacting our degraded military and strategic security readiness further.

But I also believe we need to go a step further and pursue an alternative strategy, which is why last week I introduced binding legislation setting the end of 2007 for our redeployment from Iraq. The rationale for doing so is clear: Redeployment from Iraq will enhance our security by allowing us to properly address other potential challenges around the world, and by allowing us to resolve the concerns about the readiness of our Armed Forces here at home.

Rather than leading to a spiral of violence, redeploying from Iraq will serve as the necessary catalyst for the Iraqis to assume responsibility for their country, with regional nations then interested in ensuring stability when the United States is outside that country, but remaining with strength in the region. The needed reconciliation will only come about when the Iraqi political leaders are forced to take the difficult political steps needed to cease the violence in their country, such as building coalitions among competing sects, ensuring minority rights, balancing power between provincial and central governments, and sharing oil revenues among all regions in Iraq. And regional nations', particularly Syria's and Iran's, incentives change toward stability when the United States is no longer in the midst of the civil war, and these nations will have to bear the consequences of further strife, with refugee flows to their countries, and the possibility that these relatively allied nations could then be joined into a proxy battle to their detriment, as one is primarily Sunni and the other Shia.

Only by a strategy of setting a date certain, a deliberate timetable for redeployment, are we able to create a catalyst for the political leaders in Iraq to acknowledge and accept that they must undertake the difficult political steps necessary to cease the sectarian violence, as they understand that they otherwise would bear the consequences of not assuming the responsibility for their country.

Iraq is not the central front in terrorism. Rather, it is a result of our leadership forgetting the age-old axiom that ''successful generals win, then they go to war.'' In short, we did not accurately plan before we went into Iraq, and we should redeploy.

The only way is to use our redeployment as the catalyst for Iraqis and other regional nations to accept their responsibilities for a relative peace. U.S. interests in the world do not

include pouring endless amounts of our national treasure of lives and money into elusive, endless goals when there is an alternative strategy, and when we have so much else to achieve in this world.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman from California yielding me this time.

I suppose I speak to you here and declare it first a nonconflict of interest. I was not here on this floor when the original resolution to approve the use of force was made; therefore, I took as my role and responsibility when I came in here to make sure that we did everything in our power to make sure that our policy objectives were indeed followed through and successful.

You know, in the other Chamber, in the original House floor there is a beautiful sculpture sitting up there which is a clock made out of a chariot. The clock is actually the wheel, then there is a chariot. And in that chariot is the muse of history with this tablet in hand writing down what we do on the people's floor, the subject and our actions in history.

Perhaps it is good that that still stays out those doors and down the hallways and is not here today, because when the muse of history records what we are doing today and yesterday and tomorrow, and maybe Friday, that history is going to be written with an element of contempt.

There are some people who have opposed this war from the very beginning; they still oppose it now; and I give them credit to their commitment to consistency, although I don't necessarily agree with their decision. Some of those have also criticized this resolution as also being too weak of a resolution, for indeed the resolution today is a nonbinding resolution. By definition, it means it does nothing. It changes nothing, but allows us all to make statements for media consumption and allows some of those who made the original vote to use force the ability to shirk the responsibility of that particular action.

Yesterday, I had the opportunity of going back to Baltimore and watching a play, ''Wicked.'' And in the play, the main character, the male lead, Fiero, is in love with Elphaba. And she tries to distance herself from him by saying, ''Yeah, but you're thoughtless and shallow.'' And Fiero says, ''I know, but I am a deep shallow.''

This resolution is a deep shallow. It may have words aimed at the White House and the White House action, but regardless of those words, when history is written the finger of accusation will not point to the executive branch, who has been consistent, it is going to point back here to Congress, to our actions.

Our Constitution gives Congress the responsibility of the declaration of war. Instead, we passed a resolution approving force. With a war declaration, there is a commitment to action and to ultimate goals. A resolution of force implies something less, and it allows Members of Congress who did that to say, yes, I agreed with force but I didn't expect it to be used this way. Or, I wasn't really that serious. Or I didn't expect it to be anything more than a little war taking place. It is a process that allows you to be deeply shallow.

This resolution may clear the conscience of some people, it may put political distance between others, but it does noting for soldiers, it does nothing towards a U.S. victory, to benefit this country, or to improve the body politic. Our words, our actions, our votes will be looked on in history with contempt, for they are indeed in this issue deeply shallow.

In conclusion, I would like to describe the good that will come from this resolution for our Armed Forces.

Yes, that about sums it up.

Mr. Speaker, with disdain of the process of this flawed message that is so limited in its scope it does nothing to help those Members on either side of the aisle explain their nuances of their belief or this situation.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HAYES).

□ 1600

Mr. HAYES. I thank the gentleman from California, my friend, Ranking Member DUNCAN HUNTER.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise to vigorously oppose and to speak against the resolution at hand; a resolution that is being watched by friend and foe alike; a resolution that I feel will serve to embolden those who promote and use violence in Iraq, and across the world for that matter; a resolution that sends a message to our troops at home and deployed that we are not supporting the mission that we are conducting.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know of a single Member in this Chamber who is satisfied with the existing situation in Iraq. In fact, with the escalating violence and an increase in terrorist activity, we shouldn't be satisfied with the situation in Afghanistan either. But Iraq has become intensely political, and that is unfortunate. Make no mistake about it, this is the beginning of defunding our military and our national security.

Mr. Speaker, in this age when the Internet and global newscast are an integral part of warfare and propaganda, it is naive to think that the resolution is not being watched and its outcome won't be used to further embolden the resolve of those who use indiscriminate violence to advance their radical agenda.

When you recruit homicide bombers, they need to feel that their ultimate sacrifice is meaningful, and I fear this resolution will be used as an additional recruiting tool to show that our resolve is wavering in the face of their acts.

In some instances, Members have made no secret of their desire to defund the military. Mr. Speaker, it wasn't that long ago that our Nation faced another global war for freedom, it was a different type of war, but a war that was won because we held firm. There were a lot of people who said we couldn't win; they said that pragmatism dictated we would compromise our values and our beliefs. President Ronald Reagan told our Nation that we needed to hold firm because ultimately our values and beliefs would prevail in cold war then, and ''hot war'' now.

President Reagan said, ''The ultimate determinant in the struggle now going on for the world will not be bombs and rockets but a test of wills and ideas, a trial of spiritual resolve, the values we hold, the beliefs we cherish and the ideals to which we are dedicated.'' This quote was in context of the cold war, but it is applicable today in our present hot war against terrorists. This resolution shows a lack of will to win. This resolution hurts our troops and it helps our enemies.

Mr. Speaker, similar to debates from years ago during the cold war, I have heard speakers on the other side say, all we need is a strategy based on diplomacy. Mr. Speaker, I am all for peace and for diplomacy and for cooperation and for working things out, but al Qaeda is not, suicide bombers are not, terrorist executioners are not. That is reality, and our foreign policy has to be based on reality.

Terrorists thrive on poverty, despair, violence and fear. And the bottom line is they cannot afford for freedom and justice to succeed. Conversely, we cannot afford to allow freedom and justice to fail. That is reality, and one-sided diplomacy is not a strategy. Where is the other side's strategy for victory? There is none in this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I have concerns with the situation in Iraq. No one wants to see the Iraqis stabilize the security of their nation more than I do. The reality is we have troops over there in harm's way. Troops from the 82nd Airborne, stationed at Fort Bragg in my district, are part of this surge deployment.

Mr. Speaker, they are watching. I have received their e-mails letting me know in no uncertain terms that they are paying attention to what we are doing today. One soldier wrote to me using this quote from the ancient Athenians, which he thought was appropriate to this debate. This soldier said, ''I will not disgrace the soldier's arms nor abandon the comrade who stands at my side, but whether alone or with many, I will fight to defend things sacred and profane. I will hand down my country not lessened, but larger and better than I have received it.''

As my colleague from South Carolina quoted a soldier in his district yesterday, he said, ''This is my war.'' That is a soldier's attitude and should be our attitude. It is our war against brutal, ruthless terrorists.

I will not support a resolution that tells our soldiers that the United

States Congress is not supporting what they are doing.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that everyone pray for our troops, for their safety and for their victory. May God continue to bless America and the magnificent men and women in uniform who protect her.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my friend for years and my colleague, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. DICKS), who is the vice chairman of the Defense Subcommittee on Appropriations.

Mr. DICKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your kindness.

The resolution that is being considered in the House of Representatives today expresses a very clear message to the American people that it is time to change the direction of our policy in Iraq.

The meetings and communications that I have had with people from the Sixth Congressional District from the State of Washington have made it clear that the people I represent want to hear from Congress. My resolve in this is strengthened by the loss and grief I have heard from families in my district whose loved ones have been lost or injured in this conflict.

I also deplore the mistakes by this administration: failing to deploy enough troops to stabilize Iraq, disbanding the Iraqi Army, failing to provide jobs and economic restoration. Those are but a few.

It has been 4 years since U.S. and Coalition Forces invaded Iraq based on what was faulty intelligence. The premise for our military action against the Saddam Hussein government in Iraq was that he had weapons of mass destruction, and even the President has now acknowledged that this determination resulted from an incorrect interpretation of intelligence information.

With more than 3,000 U.S. military personnel killed and thousands more wounded, people across the Nation, including many Members of Congress, are questioning our continued involvement very seriously and very legitimately, especially since the President has now ignored the advice we know he received from many senior military advisors and has decided to increase the number of military troops deployed to Iraq. It is time for this Congress to speak clearly and forcefully in opposition to this escalation and in support of changing course in Iraq.

In this resolution we are clear that our determination that American forces have accomplished everything they have been asked to do in Iraq courageously and with the professionalism the Nation expects of the best-trained and best-equipped military in the world. These troops have not let us down, to be sure; but in many ways they have been let down by a policy that ignores the reality of their situation, and by a Commander in Chief whose only response to what is unmistakably a civil war in Iraq is to place more American troops in harm's way while sectarian violence plays out in the streets of Baghdad and other Iraqi cities.

Day after day, U.S. service people are being killed and injured by bullets and bombs traded by Shiite and Sunni zealots for reasons that predated our involvement and which will likely endure long beyond the time we finally leave Iraq.

For the past 4 years, I regret that the Republican leadership of Congress has abdicated much of its oversight responsibility for the Iraq war and its funding. To date, the Bush administration has not adequately explained to Congress or the American people the reasons for our continued military involvement in Iraq. In announcing his intention to send more than 21,000 additional troops to Iraq, last month the President said it is time for the Iraqi Government to act, to take charge of their security and to begin to govern themselves.

What we in Congress are saying now is that we believe the Maliki government in Iraq will be more apt to accomplish that goal if we do not send more American troops into Baghdad and if we signal to Iraqis that we are planning for a phased withdrawal from their country. That is what we must do to change the policy that keeps our forces acting as the local police officers on the streets of Baghdad, and to give the Iraqi people greater incentive for taking charge so that our troops can begin to come home. This was a view of the bipartisan Iraqi Study Group, which pointed to a compromise recommendation calling for gradual drawdown of U.S. troops from Iraq.

It is instructive to recall the views expressed by many of the generals on the ground, including General Abizaid, General Casey, General Petraeus, that this conflict cannot be won militarily; it will require a political solution. That political solution requires the involvement of other regional governments, including Syria and Iran.

All Americans, certainly every Member here in the House of Representatives, wants the Iraqi Government to succeed and to become the stable democracy we had hoped to achieve at the outset of our involvement. None of us want Iraq to fall into chaos and to become a haven for terrorists, including al Qaeda. But the current U.S. policy and the proposed escalation of a number of American troops offers little promise, I am convinced, of accomplishing those goals.

Even the recently completed National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq, which the President presumably relies upon, concludes that the war, as it is currently being prosecuted, will not or cannot bring about these results. My colleague, Mr. MURTHA, has also suggested that it will be up to the Iraqi people themselves who will expel what remains of al Qaeda in the country, and I believe there is merit in his argument.

□ 1610

This is an important debate, Mr. Speaker, and one that is perhaps long overdue. We as a new Congress, led by a new Democratic leadership team, must communicate that we are placing a firmer hand on the tiller of this ship of state and that we are demanding greater accountability for both the policy and funding of the Iraq war. This new direction starts with a brief and declarative statement, that ''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,'' but it must be followed by that harder task of guiding our military policy through aggressive oversight and more careful direction of our political and military leadership by all of the relevant committees here in Congress.

That is our task ahead, Mr. Speaker, and as a member of the Defense appropriations subcommittee, I am prepared to do my part.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield to the gentleman from North Carolina, but first I would like to recognize the gentleman from New York (Mr. MCNULTY) for purposes of a unanimous-consent request.

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

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

I strongly support H. Con. Res. 63, opposing the President's proposal to send 21,500 additional American troops into the middle of a civil war in Iraq.

More than 5 years after the worst terrorist attack in the history of our country, the mastermind behind it—Osama bin Laden—is still alive, free, and planning another attack on our country. And the President rarely even mentions his name.

Instead, he pursues a failed policy in Iraq. The number of American soldiers killed in Iraq now exceeds the number of lives taken on September 11, 2001, and this war has now lasted longer than our involvement in World War II.

The President's response is to send more troops. This surge is nothing more than an escalation of the failed policy that has been tried several times already. I couldn't disagree more with the President.

The Bush policy in Iraq will, in my opinion, go down in history as one of the biggest blunders in the history of warfare. Why? Because the terrorist who attacked us is still at large and the situation in Iraq gets worse by the day. Simply put, we went after the wrong guy!

So what should we do now in Iraq? A target date for redeployment of our troops should be set, and their withdrawal from Iraq should begin now. Then the Iraqis who say they support their new government will have the incentive to step forward and volunteer for military service—something they will not do as long as we offer to take all the enemy fire.

As others have said, ''The Iraqis need to demonstrate that they want this new government more than we do.''

It's decision time for the Iraqi people.

The President has submitted a supplemental budget request for almost $100 billion to further fund the war in Iraq. If Congress

does not amend this proposal to include an exit strategy, I will—as I did on the last Iraq war supplemental on March 16th, 2006—vote "no."

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RANGEL). The gentleman may inquire.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I understand at 4:30 we are going to break for some time for the Norwood resolution, which is absolutely appropriate. I just wanted to see if you could give us a split on the time, how much time we have left, we both have Members who are squeezed to get their remarks in, make sure we get an even split on time to half past the hour.

I would like to work with my friend from Missouri to make sure we do that.

Mr. SKELTON. Yes.

I have one remaining speaker, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California has 2 hours and 35 minutes. The gentleman from Missouri has 2 hours and 31 minutes.

Mr. HUNTER. We needed to know how much time we had before the 4:30 break, Mr. Speaker, because we have folks, but if we just have one speaker there, that is fine.

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

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE), who is the Chair of the Subcommittee on Homeland Security on the Appropriations Committee.

(Mr. PRICE of North Carolina asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose the escalation of troop levels, to call for an end to the American occupation of Iraq, and to support the resolution before the House.

The two clauses of this resolution go hand in hand. There should be no doubt about the support from this Congress and indeed from the American people for those who risk their lives to defend this Nation. As a Nation, we have learned to sincerely honor the warrior, even when we disagree with the war.

I have personally been moved by my own interactions with our troops. I have been honored to meet with them here at home, in Iraq, in Afghanistan, in Kosovo, and in numerous other places where they are serving honorably. And I have mourned with their families when their service has led to the ultimate sacrifice. No one who spends time with the members of our Armed Forces can fail to be impressed by the dedication and valor with which they carry out their duty.

In addition to guaranteeing that they have the resources, equipment and compensation they need, supporting our troops also means ensuring that the missions we ask them to perform are viable and well-designed in terms of our national objectives. The President's surge plan does not meet these criteria, and Congress should oppose it.

The question before us today is whether an escalation of as many as 48,000 American troops is the best way to turn things around in Iraq. However, this question is part of a much larger debate that this country and this Chamber must conduct, a debate about the future of the U.S. military mission.

There cannot be a simply military solution to the challenges that we, and the Iraqi people, face in Iraq. The size of our military presence will not make the difference, because any solution to Iraq's problems will still be political, not military.

The recent National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on Iraq confirms this conclusion. The unclassified report noted that even the term ''civil war'' is not grave enough to convey the complexity of the security challenges in Iraq. More to the point, the NIE noted that there were three ''identifiable elements that could help to reverse negative trends'': broader Sunni acceptance of the federalist political structure, Shia and Kurdish concessions to Sunnis, and ''a bottom-up approach to help mend frayed relationships between tribal and religious groups.'' Note that none of these elements can be achieved by military force.

The outgoing commander of Multi-National Forces Iraq, Lieutenant General Peter Chiarelli, recently stated, ''We need to get out of thinking that this is solely a military conflict. All of our Nation's strengths—diplomatic, economic, political—must be leveraged to help the Iraqis find their way through this process.'' Other military leaders have echoed this sentiment.

My colleague from North Carolina, BRAD MILLER, and I have proposed such an approach in our bill, H.R. 645.

Our bill would dramatically strengthen U.S. political and diplomatic efforts. It would send special envoys to the region to encourage Iraq's neighbors to play a more productive role in resolving the conflict and to facilitate a national reconciliation process in Iraq. It would also authorize a program to get would-be insurgents off the streets and into the workforce. And it would provide ongoing support for the development of democratic institutions, particularly at the local level.

While enhancing our political and diplomatic efforts, our bill would de-escalate our military commitment. It would terminate the authorization for the war at the end of this year, and require President Bush to develop an exit strategy for bringing our troops home by that date.

We can no longer ask our troops in Iraq to do the impossible. In fact, their presence is fueling the insurgency and is a magnet for international terrorism. It is time for the American occupation of Iraq to end, and for Iraqi leaders to assume responsibility for their country's future, for better or for worse.

Some have argued that our troops must remain in Iraq to prevent intolerable outcomes. But the outcomes that we have most feared—a civil war, a training ground for terrorists, an ascendant Iran—have already become reality, despite the continuing presence of our troops. While a military presence may delay even worse outcomes, it cannot prevent them. If we are to avoid a regional war or an exponential increase in Iraq's carnage, our best hope is the increased political and diplomatic effort that I have proposed.

Mr. Speaker, how we leave Iraq does matter. A well-planned withdrawal can enhance our ability to protect our troops and prepare Iraqis to assume control. We must not make the same mistake ending the war that we did in beginning it, pursuing a strategy without adequate planning. But we should not hide behind this imperative. We can't allow an exit strategy to prevent or postpone an exit.

I urge my colleagues to consider H.R. 645, which I believe offers the best way to pursue American national security interests in Iraq.

Let me close on a note of caution. The resolution we are debating here today is necessary, but it is not sufficient. The President should hear our message, which expresses the conviction of the majority of the American people that the time to end our occupation of Iraq has come. However, if he doesn't take steps to bring our troops home, the President should be under no illusion that this nonbinding resolution exhausts Congress's role. Rather, it is a first step in holding him accountable and reversing a failed policy that has made our Nation less safe, and has cost us so dearly in blood and treasure.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I thank the chairman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I, too, rise in support of victory in Iraq and in support of our troops. But I also rise to oppose this Democratic defeatist resolution and I hope to provide some historical perspective to help the American people understand what the Democrats plan to do this year.

Make no mistake about it, this resolution is about polls. National polling before November's elections showed a majority of Americans were opposed to cutting off funds for the war but were generally unhappy with events on the ground. Now, this polling data led the Democratic message machine to create a ''we support the troops, don't support the war but won't cut off funding'' position. Much like Majority Leader HOYER's empty promises to allow a Republican alternative to this defeatist resolution, the Democrats are now following polls and slowly, piece by piece, bit by bit, revising their stance on defunding the war.

Due to their majority status, this resolution will pass, and soon after the

passage, I suspect that Congressman MURTHA and others will move to defund the war the same way the Democratic-controlled Congress defunded the Vietnam War over a several-year period. They will do so in a piecemeal fashion with various amendments to appropriation bills, always avoiding the term ''defunding'' at all costs.

□ 1620

Before we have even concluded this debate, our Speaker has already said a vote of disapproval will set the stage for additional Iraq legislation, which will be coming to the House floor. I ask our Speaker, what is your additional Iraq legislation?

The only difference between what the Democrats will soon attempt to do and what they did in the late 1960s and early 1970s is that they will continue to say publicly that they support the troops, instead of speaking, as Senator KERRY did, in front of a congressional committee of the atrocities of the so-called baby killers. The poisonous atmosphere of those times resulted in the military prohibiting all military personnel in the metropolitan Washington area from wearing their uniforms in public out of safety concerns.

Now, two of the most crippling amendments of the Vietnam War were passed in 1969 and 1973. In 1969, Senator John Sherman Cooper of Kentucky cosponsored an amendment prohibiting the use of ground troops in Laos and Thailand. In August of 1973, the Congress passed the Fulbright-Aiken amendment, which cut off all funding for U.S. military forces in or over or from the shore of North Vietnam, South Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia.

President Nixon's approval ratings in 1973 were dismally low, and he was close to resigning as a result of the Watergate scandal, and his weakened position emboldened the Democrats to take extreme actions. I would say that some of their actions may have bordered on treasonous, but they have never been judicially challenged.

Our current President has an approval rating nearly as low now as they did then. Democrats are feeling emboldened to challenge our Commander in Chief during a time of war specifically for political gain.

It has also been said that this nonbinding resolution will not affect troop morale. If so, why not amend this nonbinding resolution to send a copy to every man and woman fighting in Iraq, along with a record of each vote. That is right, we don't get a chance to have any amendments.

What is important here are the President's words and his actions. He has ordered more combat forces to Iraq. He has extended the tours of some forces already in country. Let us be perfectly clear, 14 of the 18 provinces in Iraq are secure. These additional forces will help restore overall order and provide a stable environment for the political process from within which to work. Now, I cannot assure all of my constituents that the recent developments in Iraq will result in a quick or certain victory in Iraq. But I can assure my constituents and my colleagues that Democrats cannot say with absolute certainty that there is no military solution to the war in Iraq.

I must also point out several other recent Democratic statements that I take issue with, like the one from over this weekend, where a Senator with Presidential ambitions said that more than 3,000 lives were wasted. Of course, he clarified his remarks, because he forgot about the secret Democratic memo that this isn't the 1970s any more, and trashing the military is no longer acceptable.

It reminds me of a former Presidential candidate who said that those who joined our Army were only stupid people. Of course, after the polls came in, he clarified his remarks because he saw they were not being taken very well.

Back to the polls, only 15 percent of the public expressed initial support for the first President Bush to invade Iraq in 1991. Many in my own Republican Party vehemently opposed FDR in World War II. During the Civil War, there was a congressional committee that met officially and unofficially on a regular basis to critique President Lincoln's performance in nearly every battle the Union waged. Does history now reflect these?

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the rest of my comments be inserted in the RECORD.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of victory in Iraq and in support of our troops.

I rise to oppose this Democratic defeatist resolution and I hope to provide some historical perspective to help the American people understand what the Democrats plan to do this year.

Make no mistake about it—this resolution is about polls. National polling before November's elections showed a majority of Americans were opposed to cutting off funds for the war, but were generally unhappy with events on the ground.

This polling data led the Democratic message machine to create a ''we support the troops, don't support the war, but won't cut off funding'' position. Much like Majority Leader HOYER's empty promises to allow a Republican alternative to this defeatist resolution, the Democrats are now following polls and slowly, piece by piece, bit by bit, revising their stance on defunding the war.

Due to their majority status, this resolution will pass and soon after the passage, I suspect Congressman MURTHA and others will move to defund the war in the same way the Democratic controlled congress defunded the Vietnam war over a several year period. They will do so in a piecemeal fashion with various amendments to appropriations bills and avoid the term ''defunding'' at all costs. Before we have even concluded this debate, our Speaker has already said, ''A vote of disapproval will set the stage for additional Iraq legislation, which will be coming to the House floor.'' I say to Speaker PELOSI what is your additional Iraq legislation?

This immoral approach will slowly squeeze off funding and support and become a self fulfilling prophecy for the Democratic party—a party fixated on the 2008 election and ''intoxicated'' by their new majority status.

The only difference between what the Democrats will soon attempt to do and what they did in the late 60's and early 70's is they will continue to say publicly they support the troops, as Senator KERRY did in front of a congressional committee, of the atrocities of the so-called ''baby-killers.'' The poisonous atmosphere of those times resulted in the military prohibiting all military personnel in the Metropolitan Washington area from wearing their uniforms in public, out of safety concerns.

Two of the most crippling amendments of the Vietnam war were passed in 1969 and 1973. In 1969, Senator John Sherman Cooper (R–KY) cosponsored an amendment prohibiting the use of ground troops in Laos and Thailand. In August 1973 the Congress passed the Fulbright-Aiken amendment which cut off all funding for U.S. military forces in, or over, or from the shore of North Vietnam, South Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia.

President Nixon's approval ratings in 1973 were dismally low and he was close to resigning as a result of the Watergate scandal. His weakened position emboldened Democrats to take extreme actions. Some of their actions may have bordered on treasonous, but have never been judicially challenged. Our current President has an approval rating nearly as low; and now, as they did then, Democrats are feeling emboldened to challenge our Commander-in-Chief during a time of war, for political gain.

Last week the Democratic-controlled United States Senate attempted to debate various non-binding resolutions about the Iraq war. I must admit I found it interesting to hear Majority Leader REID say that voting on a non-binding resolution would show the American people where they stood on the war. Senator REID and the Democratic leadership of both the House and Senate have made it very clear where they stand on the war—they are opposed to winning the war, claim they were tricked into supporting it and will do anything in their power to cut off all funding to the war.

I encourage Democrats to put forth a bill that eliminates all funding for the Iraq war along with an accompanying statement of nonsupport for the deployed troops. This would show their true colors and allow the Democrats to be intellectually honest.

It has been said this non-binding resolution will not affect troop morale. If so, why not amend this nonbinding resolution to send every man and woman fighting in Iraq a copy of it, along with the recorded vote.

Oh—that's right, no amendments.

This would also stand in stark contrast to their most recent act of hypocrisy—voting to confirm General David Patraeus, wishing him luck and then moving to undercut his efforts soon after he left the Capitol to begin his journey to Iraq.

More importantly, we need to achieve real progress in Iraq. We have come to a critical juncture and must make sure the price that has been paid—the blood of our young men and women—results in victory. To ensure a real and enduring victory, our Commander-in-Chief is moving forward with a new plan. Some in Congress and the media are debating whether it is a new strategy, a new set of

tactics or no change at all. This political posturing is unimportant to the Specialist or Corporal walking point in Baghdad or Al-Anbar province.

What is important are the President's words and his actions. He has ordered more combat forces to Iraq and has extended the tours of some forces already in the country. Their mission is to restore order to the 4 provinces in Iraq that remain volatile. Let us be perfectly clear, 14 of the 18 provinces are secure. These additional forces will help restore overall order and provide a stable environment for the political process within to work.

Today we have received reports from various sources that the radical cleric Al-Sadr may have fled to Iran as a result of the American and Iraqi forces cracking down on his militias and top aides. Iraqi forces are showing up to their appointed duty locations in excess of 70 percent of the time. The Iraqi government is taking the politically difficult step of forcing some Baghdad residents to vacate homes they unlawfully moved into during the war. There is also talk of stricter curfews and closing the borders with Syria and Iran for 30 days—all of this talk coming from the Iraqis.

I cannot assure my constituents these recent developments will result in a quick or certain victory in Iraq. I can assure my constituents and my colleagues that Democrats cannot say with absolute certainty that there is no military solution to Iraq. I also must point out several other recent Democratic statements that I take issue with.

One Senator with Presidential ambitions claimed that the more than 3,000 lives lost in the war had been wasted—he then immediately clarified his remarks because he had forgotten the secret Democrat memo stating that this isn't the 70's and trashing the military is no longer acceptable. This reminds me of a former presidential candidate's comments alleging that only stupid people end up in the Army and in Iraq. Of course, another "clarification" was issued soon after these comments since 2–3 days of polling indicated that the remarks were not well received.

Back to polls—only 15 percent of the public expressed initial support for the first President Bush to invade Iraq in 1991. Many in my own Republican party vehemently opposed FDR in World War II and during the Civil War there was a congressional committee that met officially, and unofficially, on a regular basis to critique President Lincoln's performance in nearly every battle the Union waged.

Does history now reflect that these three conflicts were wrong for America to engage in? I think not. Resolute leaders bucked short term public opinion for the good of the country in the long term. That is why we elect Presidents and that is what we should demand of them.

To date, mistakes have been made and the President has acknowledged them. We must, however, win this war. I believe immediate withdrawal will destabilize the region and cause us to return there in the future, as we have had to do in many regions throughout our history. We cannot fight a war based on polls and emotions. We must take actions that will preserve and enhance our national security now and beyond the next election, the next news cycle or the next opinion poll.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to assume the Democratic time.

I would just comment to the gentleman from Florida that if he would join with us in voting for this resolution, then we will avoid the crises of the Constitution that he talks about and, instead, we will shock this President into giving us a new direction in Iraq.

POINT OF INQUIRY

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, a point of inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California is recognized.

Mr. HUNTER. This is not an unfriendly request. I just want to note one of our Members has a relative's funeral he wants to go to. He has just a few minutes. I know my friend Mr. OBERSTAR is waiting to speak. Is there any chance you could yield to Mr. LOBIONDO so he could get his 4 minutes in before the deadline?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will inquire.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. OBERSTAR.

Mr. OBERSTAR. I am happy to yield to the gentleman from California.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California is recognized.

Mr. HUNTER. I want to thank my friend, Mr. OBERSTAR, very much for that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LOBIONDO).

Mr. LOBIONDO. Mr. OBERSTAR, thank you very much. The circumstances are difficult.

Mr. Speaker, it is more than 5 years that we are into the global war on terror. Since the horrific attacks to our country on September 11, we are fighting a faceless enemy, an unbelievably ruthless enemy, an enemy who is undeterred in their hatreds for our freedoms and our way of life.

We must remain strong in our resolve to defeat the enemy, and it is no accident that our Nation has not been attacked since September 11. It is not because the enemy and its supporters have not wanted to bring destruction to America, it is because we as Americans have remained committed to the defense of our homeland.

It is because we have remained vigilant in working with our international partners to prevent terrorists from being successful, and it is mostly because of our brave men and women in uniform, who have taken the fight to the enemy. Likewise, our commitment to the troops on the battlefield, whether in Iraq or Afghanistan, or wherever the global war on terror may take our brave young men and women, must run deep. Our commitment must include that our soldiers have all the necessary equipment and armor that they need.

Mr. Speaker, I come to the well, to the podium today very troubled. For 3 days, the majority will have us debating the very critical issue of the war in Iraq, but this debate is really without real substance.

This debate is without an alternative strategy that many of us acknowledge we desperately need to be discussing. This debate will not bring about one positive change for our men and women in harm's way, and will rather likely result in the wrong message to many of our soldiers, our partners and, avoidably, the enemy.

I believe this debate is dividing the Congress. I believe this debate is dividing the American people and sending the wrong message to our soldiers in the field, who may question our unwavering support on their behalf. I continue to be awe struck and proud of the valor of our servicemen and -women of Iraq. However, this debate sends a mixed message to them, their families, and the families of those who were lost in the global war on terror. We could have, and we should have had a debate that sends a strong message to support our troops in their commitment, but the majority has chosen against us.

While I do not support the President's latest strategy, I believe the American military should not serve as a referee in the sectarian conflict that has lasted for centuries. It is the responsibility of the Iraqi Government to take a stronger role to set benchmarks and not let the American military and our forces be caught in the middle. This resolution is silent in its requirements to the elected Iraqi Government and to the Iraqi people, and holding their own destiny in their hands.

As a member of the Armed Services Committee, I have listened to the generals and military experts, administration officials, tell us that Iraqi forces are ready for greater responsibilities in securing Iraq. However, after being to Iraq five times myself, and talking with a number of soldiers in the field, the reality on the ground is that Iraqi forces are not being used to the extent that they should at this point. I think that needs to change.

I would like to also say that it is with great regret that I will not be here at the conclusion of the debate this week. Unfortunately, my father-in-law passed away after a battle with cancer, and I will be heading out to the funeral with my wife and the family.

I wanted to be on record before leaving as to what this critical motion means. This debate cannot and should not be the end of what we are talking about, and for the reasons stated before all future debates must be substantive on policies. It is clear to me the majority has a strategy that many have talked about that reflects far beyond just the surge in Iraq and what it may mean, but has implications for funding.

Mr. Speaker, let me make it perfectly clear. I support the troops, but on the basis of the message that this is sending to our partners, to the troops, to their families on this nonsubstantive resolution, I cannot support it.

I will close by saying that I received a call from a father, who has two children that are in Iraq. One felt so strongly that he sent a letter to our local newspaper, Specialist Matthew J. Smith of Hopewell Township, and I have just a few excerpts from his letter. "I personally feel as if I am here

for a great purpose and goal that our Commander in Chief has ordered us to achieve. I have never felt it would be an easy task, nor should those at home living their comfortable lives. Have we forgotten that this great country of ours was not handed to us on a silver platter? I am asking everyone, please don't allow those of us who have died to die in vain. When we have completed the mission and have been successful in defending freedom, we will come home.''

□ 1630

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank the gentleman. I want to thank the gentleman for yielding this time to Mr. LOBIONDO. As this Member gets time in the coming debate, we owe you one.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The House of Representatives extends its deepest sympathy to the gentleman from New Jersey.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the very patient and the very distinguished gentleman from Minnesota, the chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (Mr. OBERSTAR).

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, this is the moment that a majority of Americans who voted last November have been waiting for, a time when Congress does something about Iraq. And that something that the people asked of us is to get us out of Iraq.

The resolution before us will not of itself get U.S. forces out of Iraq, but to paraphrase Winston Churchill, if it is not the end, it is at least the beginning of the end.

Our President is having trouble understanding the message from the American people. It is a simple message that I hear every time I go back home to Minnesota. Time to bring our troops home with honor. The people are telling me our mission in Iraq is accomplished. The President already declared victory. The goals of the U.S. invasion have been met.

Iraq's army was defeated, Saddam Hussein removed from power and brought to judgment. The Iraqi people held elections to establish a new government. Mission accomplished. Time to bring the troops home with honor.

No weapons of mass destruction were found, despite extensive searches. The Iraqis have a government, they have an army, a police force. There is no further purpose of American policy to be served by a continued military presence in Iraq.

What remains in Iraq is religious warfare between Sunni and Shia, with our troops caught in the crossfire. This is not the job our troops signed up for. This is not the war President Bush sold to Congress. People are telling the President, it is time to bring the troops home and to do it with honor.

President Bush has said he is concerned this resolution is prejudging the outcome of our involvement in Iraq. I would say the outcome is not in doubt. We have spent and are continuing to spend $9 billion a month in Iraq; 3,122 of our servicemen and -women have been killed; 23,550-plus have been wounded; tens of thousands more Iraqis killed and wounded. The violence is escalating, our troops are the targets.

I do not think this resolution prejudges anything. The facts speak for themselves. And the people are saying bring the troops home with honor. I did not support this war at its outset. We had Saddam Hussein contained. Al Qaeda was not in Iraq. We had a job to do in Afghanistan. I supported going into Afghanistan to capture Osama bin Laden. But I saw no clear rationale for sending troops into combat in Iraq.

The resolution does offer a statement of support for the troops. Their service is an extraordinary gift. They volunteer to leave their homes and families and risk their lives every day, at the order of the President. All they ask is that we never ask them to go to conflict unless that conflict is absolutely necessary and in the national interest.

Lieutenant General William Odom, in a recent article in The Washington Post said, about the question that we have to continue to fight in order to support the troops, has anyone asked the troops? During their first tours, many may have favored staying the course. But now in their second, third, fourth tours, he writes, many are changing their minds.

We see no evidence of that in the news stories about unhappy troops being sent back to Iraq. The strangest aspect of the rationale, General Odom writes, for continuing the war is the implication that our troops are somehow responsible for deciding to continue the President's course.

That political and moral responsibility belongs to the President, not to the troops. Didn't Harry Truman make it clear that the buck stops in the Oval Office? The President keeps dodging it. Where does it stop, General Odom asks, with Congress? And that is why we are here today to say it is up to us to make a definitive statement with this resolution, a statement that it is time to end the U.S. involvement in Iraq, to bring the troops home with honor. And then if the President does not heed, then we must take more vigorous steps, steps that I voted for in coming to end the U.S. involvement in Vietnam over 32 years ago.

If that is what it takes, then we have to say that the buck stops with us in the Congress to stop the U.S. engagement in Iraq.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3 of House Resolution 157, further proceedings on the concurrent resolution will be postponed.

EXPRESSING SORROW OF THE HOUSE AT THE DEATH OF THE HONORABLE CHARLIE NORWOOD, MEMBER OF CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF GEORGIA

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I offer a privileged resolution (H. Res. 159) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 159

Resolved, That the House has heard with profound sorrow of the death of the Honorable Charlie Norwood, a Representative from the State of Georgia.

Resolved, That a committee of such Members of the House as the Speaker may designate, together with such Members of the Senate as may be joined, be appointed to attend the funeral.

Resolved, That the Sergeant-at-Arms of the House be authorized and directed to take such steps as may be necessary for carrying out the provisions of these resolutions and that the necessary expenses in connection therewith be paid out of applicable accounts of the House.

Resolved, That the Clerk communicate these resolutions to the Senate and transmit a copy thereof to the family of the deceased.

Resolved, That when the House adjourns today, it adjourn as a further mark of respect to the memory of the deceased.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. DEAL) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 minutes of time to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) and thank him for arranging for this resolution to be heard at this time today.

Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 2 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, as we all know, we lost a true champion in the House of Representatives on yesterday: CHARLES NORWOOD from Georgia. CHARLIE, as he was known by most of us here, was truly a friend across party lines and across State lines. He was a true patriot. He served in the dental services in the U.S. Army in the combat zone of Vietnam.

He returned to a private dental practice in Georgia, and then in the election cycle of 1994 was elected to this House of Representatives. He came with a passion for many things. Health care was at the very top of his list. Education was very shortly thereafter. And he worked on both of those issues with all of his heart.

He inspired many people in this House because he was indeed passionate about everything that he did. If he was your friend, you knew he was your friend. If you were on the opposite side of an issue from him, he let you know that as well, but he was still your friend.

All of us watched as we observed what had been diagnosed in 1998 as an incurable disease. And following that diagnosis, he underwent lung transplant surgery. That was a process that most of us probably would have had great difficulty undergoing. But CHARLIE did it with courage. He rebounded with the same kind of determination

and willingness to go forward in spite of the inconveniences that that brought to him.

We saw him with his oxygen tank, and we saw him on his little scooter as he rode around the Capitol on his way over here and back and forth to votes. Throughout it all, he maintained his good humor, he maintained his zest for life. CHARLIE NORWOOD is someone who will truly be missed.

□ 1640

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. DEAL and members of the delegation for bringing this resolution before us as a tribute to our fallen colleague, Mr. NORWOOD.

More than anything else, Congressman NORWOOD was a warrior. He fought for his beliefs with passion and conviction, and he fought for the people of his district and for the people of Georgia who loved him.

He was awarded two Bronze Stars for his bravery on behalf of our Nation during the Vietnam war, and he fought courageously for patient rights right here on the floor of the House of Representatives.

In fact, his last official act was to reintroduce the Patients' Bill of Rights on Monday, a bill he coauthored with JOHN DINGELL. CHARLIE NORWOOD, this good man, this son of Georgia, fought a good fight. He was a warrior to the end.

The thoughts and prayers of all of the Members of Congress, and especially the members of the Georgia delegation, are with his wife Gloria and his two sons, Charles and Carlton, their family and his many grandchildren. I hope they will find comfort in knowing that Congressman CHARLIE NORWOOD made a lasting contribution not just to the State of Georgia, but to the Nation and to all of us as Members of this body. We are more than lucky, we are very blessed to have known him as a friend and as a colleague. He will be deeply missed.

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

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I would yield 3 minutes to our Georgia colleague (Mr. GINGREY).

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, CHARLIE NORWOOD was a very successful dentist in my hometown of Augusta, Georgia. I didn't know CHARLIE at that time because I had long since moved away.

But as a practicing physician in Marietta, Georgia, as an OB/GYN, several years ago I went to the annual meeting of the Georgia OB/GYN Society to hear Dr. CHARLIE NORWOOD talk about the Patients' Bill of Rights. Physicians across Georgia and across this country were concerned with managed care and HMOs and liability and that sort of thing.

And, Mr. Speaker, when I heard Dr. NORWOOD speak to my colleagues, physicians about this issue, and them, in turn, including myself, give him a standing ovation, I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, and I never did tell CHARLIE this, but that was an inspiration to me to want to some day have the opportunity, and thank God that I did, to follow in that walk that he walked.

What a great Member of this body and what a fierce competitor and a fair competitor, Mr. Speaker. As my colleague on the other side of the aisle, the distinguished JOHN LEWIS, knows well, CHARLIE would fight for something he believed in but in a very respectful way. And he thought about others before himself.

An example, Mr. Speaker, is that just in this last election cycle, when CHARLIE was suffering so much, as Representative DEAL has just mentioned, he didn't think about himself. He won his reelection with 67 percent of the vote. And it wasn't that he couldn't campaign because of his illness. He was working all that time for another colleague in a very competitive district. He was essentially running that other campaign. That is the kind of guy CHARLIE NORWOOD was, and the kind of fellow that we will all remember here on both sides of the aisle in this great House of Representatives.

He was a friend, he was a colleague. He was a fighter. He was a fighter for patients' rights. He was a fighter for students, as his work on the Education and Workforce Committee, the Energy and Commerce Committee, he is somebody that we can all emulate.

And I just want to say to his wife Gloria, to his two sons, Carlton and Charles, Jr., and to the four grandchildren and to the Norwood family, we are praying for you. We want to uplift you. We will be with you tomorrow, but we know, as you do, that CHARLIE is in heaven right now, and God has accepted him in open arms and saying, well done, my good and faithful servant.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, to my distinguished colleagues from Georgia and other Members of Congress who are here, this is indeed a sad occasion.

CHARLIE NORWOOD led an extraordinary life. He was a combat veteran. He was a dentist. He pulled himself up by his own bootstraps, truly a son of the South, a son of Georgia.

He is a person that cared about all of the people of Georgia. Let me give you an example, if I may. I remember when I was serving in the Georgia legislature as a State senator, and we needed some help for the Morehouse School of Medicine's National Primary Care Center. The person that led the fight up here to secure the Federal dollars for the Morehouse School of Medicine's Primary National Care Center was CHARLIE NORWOOD. And we thank him for that.

Mr. Speaker, as I think of CHARLIE NORWOOD, and I think of so many of the great debates and the battles that we have had up here that we have shared, I am reminded of a great conversation that took place between two great men, Abraham Lincoln and Robert E. Lee. It was at a time when this Nation was going through its great Civil War and how to fix that. That conversation went like this. Robert E. Lee said, it is not incumbent upon us to complete the task. And Abraham Lincoln said, nor are we free to desist from doing all we possibly can.

That was the essence of CHARLIE NORWOOD. We might not have to complete this task, to make America a better place, but neither are we free to desist from doing all we possibly can.

CHARLIE, we appreciate you. You fought the good fight. You stayed the course. And for you, God has put up an extraordinary crown of righteousness. We thank you, and we thank God for passing our way.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to my colleague from Georgia (Mr. PRICE).

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, America, the State of Georgia and this House of Representatives have lost a great public servant, an uncommon leader, and a proud patriot.

I am profoundly saddened by the passing of Congressman CHARLIE NORWOOD, a gentleman who selflessly served the people of Georgia and this House for more than 12 years.

CHARLIE spent his entire life helping others as a soldier, as a dentist, as a legislator. He served valiantly in the defense of our Nation in the Medical Battalion of the 173rd Airborne Brigade in Vietnam. He returned home to serve his community in Augusta as a dentist. And for 12 years, he was a faithful servant to the people of Georgia in his district as a Member of Congress.

In Congress he was a passionate supporter of our military and of our veterans. He was a tireless advocate for patients and patient centered health reform. And he never forgot for whom he was to work in Washington, his constituents.

Congressman NORWOOD was a dear friend to me. His friendship and his perspective and his guidance in this House are things that I will always cherish. Anyone who knew CHARLIE knew that he was as tough as they come and he always stood up for what he believed in. Rarely, rarely in any walk of life are we privileged to come to know someone who stood for his principles as strongly as CHARLIE NORWOOD. His legacy in the House of Representatives will be one of integrity, one of vigor, and one of loyalty.

Congressman NORWOOD's devotion to this body and to our country will be sorely missed, but his legacy will never be forgotten. And I shall never forget that wry smile and that twinkle in his eye. What a hero.

Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues in expressing our deepest sympathies to CHARLIE's wife Gloria, his family and his friends.

□ 1650

And while we mourn the loss of this great patriot, we celebrate his lifetime

of noble and heroic service and we thank God for giving us the gift of the life of CHARLIE NORWOOD.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2½ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS).

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all of the fine colleagues that we have who are from Georgia for giving each and every one of us a chance to speak. I am not from Georgia, and I know he was your favorite son, but I do want to give this as my chance to honor this very distinguished Member of Congress, CHARLIE NORWOOD.

I rise, Mr. Speaker, today with a heavy heart but also real admiration for the life of this dear colleague of ours, CHARLIE NORWOOD. And my heart as well as all of our hearts go out to his family members, to his community, and to all of the people whose life he has touched.

I had the privilege of serving on the Energy and Commerce Committee with CHARLIE for several years and had the opportunity to work with him on initiatives in the Health Subcommittee. And though he and I come from vastly different places on the ideological spectrum, we were often able to see eye to eye on health policy as two health professionals serving in Congress.

I was proud to work with him in co-chairing the School Health and Safety Caucus, where we used the opportunity to spotlight ways in which we could improve the health of children through school-based initiatives. I was also honored to work with him on legislation to promote children's dental health.

I think we can all agree that CHARLIE will be remembered as reliably conservative, but also as an independent thinker. His leadership on establishing a Patients' Bill of Rights was exemplary of his willingness to go out on a limb for something in which he truly believed. He introduced that bill shortly before I came to Congress, and the momentum for passage of the Patients' Bill of Rights was one of the main reasons that I was eager to serve on this Health Subcommittee, which he belonged to.

I admired his characteristic patient-centered approach to health care policy. It wasn't popular with some of our colleagues, and the President flat-out warned that his bill would be vetoed. But CHARLIE continued forward and was looking forward to an opportunity to finally pass the Patients' Bill of Rights in its original form in this, the 110th Congress.

So I want to take this opportunity to express again my condolences to the Norwood family and to thank them all for the tremendous years, 12 years, of service that they allowed their CHARLIE to serve with us all in Congress. And I thank my colleagues again.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to another Georgia colleague (Mr. LINDER).

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding his time.

I met CHARLIE NORWOOD over 30 years ago. We were both young dentists in Georgia. He was the president of the Georgia Dental Association, and I was a young, newly elected dentist in the Georgia legislature. And his enthusiasm blew me away. Irrespective of what he was talking about, he only had two gears: neutral and full speed ahead. And his enthusiasm would capture you. And the bulldoggedness, the way he would put his teeth on an issue and fight for it without ever backing up was astonishing to me. CHARLIE did not have a coy bone in his body. From the day you met CHARLIE, you knew what he stood for on whatever the issue was.

Respectfully, he and I differed on the Patients' Bill of Rights. We spent many hours talking about it. He was adamant that I was wrong and he was right. But at no point did he ever raise his voice or show any disrespect for a position that I had taken that was different from his.

CHARLIE loved this institution. He loved the give-and-take of it. He loved the formality of it. We talked one day if he ever had any notion of running for the Senate, and he said he would never survive there. He would never survive not getting something done every day.

He treated this institution that he loved with great dignity. When he fought his fights, you knew he was going to fight fair. And for 30-plus years when I have been able to visit with him or know him on this issue or that, I always walked away from each encounter saying what a nice man, what a nice man.

For Gloria and the family, you are in our prayers. A psalmist has written that the Lord is close to the broken-hearted, and those who are crushed in spirit He saves.

May God give you peace.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BARROW).

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

I rise this afternoon to remember one of our fellow delegation members, the Honorable CHARLIE NORWOOD. I know that many Members of this body served with CHARLIE much longer than I did, but unlike them, I think I may be the only Member here with the distinction of once actually having been represented by CHARLIE as one of his constituents.

CHARLIE NORWOOD was an accomplished and a tireless legislator who had stands on issues that ran the political spectrum. And while I may not have agreed with him on every issue, I always admired his spirit, and I say that as a former constituent and as a colleague.

As anyone who knew him will tell you, CHARLIE cared deeply for the State of Georgia and for the people he represented in Congress for over 12 years.

In this Chamber and among this delegation, there is no question that CHARLIE NORWOOD will be missed and his absence will be long felt here in Washington and back home in Georgia.

My prayers remain with Congressman NORWOOD's wife, Gloria, and with their entire family.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the minority leader (Mr. BOEHNER).

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Georgia for yielding.

And I come to remember my good friend and our good friend, CHARLIE NORWOOD.

I met CHARLIE in October of 1994 when he was a candidate for Congress for the first time and had dinner with him one night before we went off on a 16-city tour. I didn't think it would ever end. But at dinner that night, I looked at CHARLIE and I asked, Why are you running for Congress?

And he said, That OSHA, that OSHA, they did this to me and did this to me.

And for every day that CHARLIE NORWOOD served in this Congress, he was all over OSHA, to have rules and regulations that met the straight-face test.

I was the chairman of the Education and the Workforce Committee, and CHARLIE was one of my subcommittee Chairs for the 5 years that I was the chairman. Clearly the most difficult member I have ever had to try to manage. And whether it was the Patients' Bill of Rights, whether it was OSHA, or a host of other issues, when CHARLIE got that bone in his mouth, you could not get it out of his mouth. He was the most dogged, persistent Member I have ever worked with. As a matter of fact, I might even say he might be the most dogged persistent person that I have ever met with because when CHARLIE picked up a cause, he was never going to leave it alone until he accomplished his goal.

And I am sure that CHARLIE is watching over us today, wondering why the Patients' Bill of Rights isn't law. Mr. LINDER just talked about it. CHARLIE fought about this on more occasions than you can ever imagine, as did JOHN and a lot of other Members. But CHARLIE truly believed in that piece of legislation. He put his heart and soul into it.

We are going to miss CHARLIE around here. We are going to miss that dogged persistence that he brought to this floor every day and in the committee rooms every day.

But to Gloria and his family, our prayers are with you.

And, CHARLIE, may your soul rest in peace.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON).

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor CHARLIE NORWOOD, a great servant of the people of Georgia.

By now you have all heard about his life, so I won't spend much time on his extensive biography. But I do want to bring attention to what he would have

wanted us to focus on above and beyond his legislative accomplishments, and that is his family.

□ 1700

I did not get an opportunity to get to know CHARLIE, but I do know enough about him to understand what was most important to him. He was a man of high character and values, and so his family was very important. So I would like to mention and send my deepest condolences to CHARLIE's beautiful wife, Gloria, and his two sons, Charles and Carlton, who enabled him and made it possible for him to serve so honorably, particularly at times when clearly he must have not been feeling well. But he still persisted with his duties and responsibilities as a Congressman.

It takes a lot to just walk these Halls from the office to the Capitol and back again, and he walked as long as he could, and then he started taking his wheelchair. So the man had a spirit to prevail over whatever obstacles might have befallen him. That is a spirit that each one of us can learn from and live by and do the best that we can, like he did.

So in addition to just being a great human being, there were a number of legislative accomplishments. I will not go over those either, but I will say as a member of the Armed Services Committee, that I want to bring attention to his military service. He was awarded the Combat Military Badge and two Bronze Stars for his service in Vietnam. While I did not always or often agree with him on the issues, by all accounts he served his State and his district well.

Georgia and this Nation have lost a great man, and I am honored to have this opportunity to recognize his contributions today.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to yield 3 minutes to our colleague, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND).

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Georgia for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, CHARLIE NORWOOD was a friend of mine, he was a friend of all Georgians, and he was a friend of every freedom loving person in this world, because he fought hard for you.

He was one of the original Republican revolutionaries that was elected in 1994, and he never really lost that spirit, that conservative fever. He agreed with Jefferson that the government that governs least, governs best, and he fought for 12 years in this House to make sure that regulations on business and individuals' lives were at a minimum. In fact, sometimes he called the government's reach into our lives oppressive.

Once CHARLIE was quoted in the Atlanta Journal and Constitution, as saying, ''If I want to put bad wiring in my house and burn my family down, that is my problem, not the government's.''

That was typical of CHARLIE. He was a witty warrior. When he joined me in the Voting Rights Act, trying to modernize section 5, the renewal of the Voting Rights Act, I had come up with two amendments. One of them had to do with putting the whole country under it, going through the same scrutiny.

I met with CHARLIE and CHARLIE said, ''Lynn, I want the modernization amendment to be the Norwood amendment.'' I said, ''That's fine, Charlie, but why?'' He said, ''Because I can do a better job than you can.'' That is the way he felt, and that is exactly the way he was.

That is just one example of why I called CHARLIE my ''foxhole buddy.'' When CHARLIE NORWOOD said he was with you, he was with you until the bitter end. You had his word that he would have your back, and his word was his bond.

His loyalty and love of country defined him throughout his life. The Valdosta High School football star went on to become a dentist who took his skills to the front lines of Vietnam, where he served his fellow soldiers and his Nation with valor. He served in Vietnam for a year and obtained the rank of captain and won two Bronze Stars.

For the next four decades, CHARLIE and his loving wife Gloria made their home Augusta, where they raised two children, Carlton and Charles, and he served his community with a smile on his face when he talked about his grandchildren.

So the thoughts and prayers of all Georgians go out to the Norwood family tonight, to let that family know that we are appreciative of the time that they allowed CHARLIE to come up here and to serve with us, to bring joy to our hearts and thoughts to our minds of what we could do to make this country a better place to live in.

The one thing that I want to close with is this, Mr. Speaker: In all of the discussions that I got into with CHARLIE NORWOOD about legislation he constantly said, ''Lynn, we have got to do what's right.'' That was his motto, to do what was right, and he did. It was an honor to call him friend.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP).

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to stand this afternoon to give some remarks about our colleague and dear friend, CHARLIE NORWOOD.

Shakespeare wrote that all the world is a stage and all the men and women merely players. Each has his entrance and his exit. One man in his time may play many parts.

So it was with CHARLIE. CHARLIE was a son, a son to Charlie Norwood, Sr., and Lola. He was a husband to Gloria. He was a father to Charlie and Carlton and a grandfather. And he was a cousin to two very, very wonderful ladies down in Valdosta who said that they often prayed for Cousin CHARLIE, because they just couldn't understand how he became a Republican.

CHARLIE was a student. CHARLIE got his bachelor's. He studied dentistry. He was a soldier. He served his country. He was in Vietnam. But CHARLIE was a public servant. CHARLIE believed in serving leadership, and he lived it.

CHARLIE really was great, because measured by the standards of Jesus, that he who is great among you shall be your servant, and he who is greatest shall be servant unto all, CHARLIE measured up.

CHARLIE was a fighter. CHARLIE fought hard for any principle in which he believed. He didn't give up, as you heard, on the Patients' Bill of Rights. He was a fierce competitor. I often didn't agree with him, but I had to admire his tenacity, because he was a fighter. And all the way to the end, CHARLIE fought. He fought for life.

We are all blessed, really blessed, to have known CHARLIE. And Gloria was devoted to CHARLIE. She took leave from her duties as a member of the Congressional Club to attend to CHARLIE, to give CHARLIE her best efforts in his last days.

But CHARLIE served well. He really embodied God's minute. I have only just a minute, only 60 seconds in it; forced upon me, can't refuse it; didn't seek it, didn't choose, did it; I must suffer if I lose it, give account if I abuse it; just a tiny little minute, but eternity is in it.

Thank you, CHARLIE. You used your minute well.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON).

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Thank you, Congressman DEAL, for coordinating this tribute to a patriot.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in tribute and remembrance of my dear friend and our colleague CHARLIE NORWOOD. Upon my election 5 years ago, two of the first people to offer guidance to me were CHARLIE and Gloria Norwood. As a Member of Congress from an adjoining district, I learned firsthand of CHARLIE's dedication to the public and his love of America. Gloria has been a model First Lady for the district, enthusiastically assisting CHARLIE in his life of public service.

CHARLIE was a committed health care practitioner, a loving family man and a passionate public servant. He spent his entire life fighting for the people of his beloved Georgia.

True to his character, CHARLIE fought to the end, despite debilitating health conditions. He was always in good spirits, even though we knew he was exerting extraordinary efforts to fully represent his constituents. He reminded me so much of my predecessor, the late Congressman Floyd Spence, a fellow courageous lung transplant recipient.

I had the pleasure of serving with CHARLIE on the Education and Workforce Committee. I am honored to, this

year, be the Republican ranking member on the Workforce Protection Subcommittee, which CHARLIE ably chaired for three terms.

In Congress, CHARLIE was an ardent advocate for health care reform and patients' rights. He was a good friend and strong supporter of the employees of the Savannah River Nuclear Laboratory. I was proud to work closely with him in our efforts to create a MOX facility for the transformation of plutonium waste at the Savannah River site.

□ 1710

CHARLIE is survived by his wife Gloria; his two sons, Charles and Carlton; and four grandchildren. Roxanne and I join with his colleagues in mourning his passing and send our prayers to his family, staff and constituents. May God bless the Norwood family at this time, and may they know that he made a significant and positive difference for America.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 1 minute to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the young lady from California, Speaker NANCY PELOSI.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and having this Special Order to honor the life and service of our colleague Congressman NORWOOD.

It is with great sadness that we received the news first of his illness and then of his passing. We had hoped to have an occasion such as this before he died so he could hear the praise of his colleagues on the floor. I know that many conveyed their good wishes to him personally.

He left us in a very dignified way. He decided that he would be, as he lived, surrounded by his family at home so that he could die in peace.

Congressman NORWOOD, as we all know, as our minority leader mentioned, he had his own particular style, plain spoken, very eloquent, and he was a passionate public servant. He served our country and his own community in Vietnam in service to our country and in the Congress of the United States.

Again, in this Congress he did his best to serve his constituents, his conscience, and his country.

Again, he faced the end of his life and his sickness with great bravery and dignity.

Our thoughts and prayers, I have conveyed to his wife Gloria, but I say again on this floor that our thoughts and prayers are with Gloria and his two sons, Charles and Carlton, and his four grandchildren. I know that I can speak for all Members of Congress when we convey our sympathy to them. I hope that it is a comfort to them that so many people mourn their loss and are praying for them at this sad time.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON).

(Mr. BARTON of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I want to read a part of a letter. It is dated February 8, 2007. It is to myself. It is from Congressman NORWOOD. It is the last official correspondence that I received from him. It says:

''Dear Joe.

''When you receive this letter, you will know of my return to Georgia after my decision to forego further medical treatment in the Washington, D.C., area for my ongoing battle with non-small-cell cancer. Needless to say, I hope things turn out for the best.

''I expect to be unavailable for my duties for the foreseeable future. I do, however, expect my staff to continue working on several issues, even if I can't be there in person.

''I will have my staff working on the Living Organ Kidney Donation Clarification Act (H.R. 710). This bipartisan, bicameral bill addresses the issue of paired transplantation, which is a way to solve the dilemma faced by people who want to become living organ donors for a family member or friend, but are unable to do so because they are biologically incompatible. In the process of kidney-paired donor transplants, a pair consisting of a kidney transplant candidate and an incompatible living donor is matched with another such incompatible pair to enable two transplants that otherwise would not occur. This bill is widely supported, has no known opposition, doesn't cost a dime, will save Medicare money, and will save thousands of lives. I urge you to work with Mr. INSLEE, Chairman DINGELL, and my staff to move this important bill forward.''

I have checked with Chairman DINGELL. He has assured me that he is prepared to move the bill if it is as he says it is. Knowing CHARLIE, always telling the truth, it is. So hopefully, very soon on the floor of this body, we will have the CHARLIE NORWOOD Living Organ Kidney Donation Clarification Act.

There are so many stories, but I want to tell one Norwood story. CHARLIE asked me and now my wife, then my girlfriend, Terri, to go down to the Masters Golf Tournament. I am not golfer and so I discouraged him from asking me. He said you may not like it but Terri will.

So we got to go down to the tournament, and on the first day we went to the tournament, CHARLIE was telling me how plugged in he was with all the folks at the Masters and how many people he knew and really he was really a major figure out there.

So we pulled up to the driveway to go up to the main clubhouse that you have seen on TV, and the guard at the gate said, May I help you? He said, I am Congressman NORWOOD, and I have got Congressman BARTON of Texas, and we want to go up to the clubhouse. The guard said, Well, Congressman, you are not on the list. He said, I am not on the list? And the guard said, No, Congressman, you are not. So I started giving CHARLIE a hard time from the backseat.

I said, CHARLIE, I thought you were a big player around here; you cannot even get up to the clubhouse. So Norwood started giving me a hard time, and I started hoorahing the guard, and he said, Wait a minute; he said you are a Congressman from Texas? And I said, Yes, sir. He said, Congressman NORWOOD, you park right up there by the clubhouse.

So, for that one day, CHARLIE NORWOOD had a better parking spot than Tiger Woods or Arnold Palmer or any of the members of the Masters golf course.

He is in heaven now and my guess is he has got the best parking spot in heaven, too. God bless you, CHARLIE NORWOOD, and God bless you, Gloria, and God bless all your family members. You will dearly, dearly be missed.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN).

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Georgia.

I rise in support of the resolution and to pay tribute to my friend and fellow member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, Dr. CHARLIE NORWOOD.

CHARLIE came to Congress after my first term as part of the class of 1994, and it seems a year did not go by that we did not serve on a committee together.

I honorably served with him at first on the Education and Workforce Committee and then later on the Energy and Commerce Committee.

CHARLIE and I shared a passion for health care issues, and I particularly enjoyed our work together on the Health Subcommittee.

A dentist by training, CHARLIE was devoted to improving the health care system, not only for providers like himself but also for the patients that rely on our health care system to keep them well.

The phrase Patients' Bill of Rights would not have been coined if CHARLIE and our chairman, JOHN DINGELL, had not teamed up to give patients an ability to fight back against the HMOs that too often make health care decisions based on the bottom line, rather than a physician's recommendation.

I note CHARLIE's last legislative act before leaving Washington and returning to Georgia was to reintroduce the Patients' Bill of Rights in this Congress as H.R. 979.

There is no doubt in my mind that this legislation will be CHARLIE's legacy and will honor him and his work in this esteemed Chamber by finally making his vision of patients' rights a reality.

Last July 4 recess, CHARLIE and I joined two other members of the Health Subcommittee as we visited the impressive trauma facilities utilized by our brave military doctors to treat our wounded service personnel in Balad and Baghdad, Iraq and Kabul, Afghanistan.

I knew there was a good reason CHARLIE and I got along, despite being different parties, but I also realized that

trip that CHARLIE and I shared a lot of interests, and one of them in firearms. I met few people with more enthusiasm for firearms than CHARLIE NORWOOD.

In fact, I will mention that how he cared about people, and Chairman DEAL understands that, he presented a book to those of us who went. It has a picture of CHARLIE NORWOOD with a .50-caliber machine gun in a helicopter we were flying in, but CHARLIE was not really happy because he was not sitting behind that .50-caliber machine gun.

CHARLIE was a good doctor and honorable Member of Congress and a great friend. He always thought of others, and I will always remember him for his friendship for these years. Our thoughts are with his family, and his wife Gloria has become a good friend of my wife Helen through the Congressional Spouses, and I will miss CHARLIE, and we all will. We honor his memory and his contributions to our country.

□ 1720

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. BARRETT).

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I too stand in favor of the resolution for my friend CHARLIE NORWOOD.

When I first started running in 2002, CHARLIE was one of the first guys to grab me by the hand, introduce me to people, and be my friend. I remember my first day in Congress CHARLIE coming up to me and said, ''Boy, you just hang with me, I will take good care of you.'' And he did.

He always told me that the Augusta side of Georgia was mine and the North Augusta side of South Carolina was his; that no river or border could keep us apart. And it was true. And the things he did for me, the things he did for South Carolina, for Georgia, for this Nation will always be remembered.

CHARLIE NORWOOD was a good friend of mine, and we will be sad and we will cry, but in heaven they are screaming, ''We love you, Charlie.'' God bless you.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. MARSHALL).

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, I didn't know CHARLIE well; I only met CHARLIE once before I came to Congress and then had a few occasions to work with him in Congress. I certainly knew his reputation. He was a great advocate for veterans and a great advocate for patients' rights and, on some subjects, willing to buck his leadership in order to advance the cause of patients' rights, and it was something I appreciated a great deal.

As CHARLIE grew sicker, from time to time I would seek him out on the floor and ask him how he was doing. He was always upbeat about it, he was always positive about it. He was never down and sad. He would be very frank about what he was able to do and where he was and what his challenges were, but he was always positive about his circumstances. His circumstance was awful, as everybody knows. He fought this disease for years and gradually grew worse, and we were all worried about him.

So one of the things I did just trying to get to know CHARLIE a little better is I went to his Web site and looked up a little bit about him, and was struck by the description that I found of his military service in Vietnam. And I thought I would like to just read that; and many people who are watching this won't have an opportunity to hear this about CHARLIE, though everybody knows, I think, that he served in the military.

But specifically during his tour in Vietnam, CHARLIE NORWOOD participated in experimental military dental practices that became standard procedure for the Armed Forces after the war. He was one of the first participants in the Army outreach program to deliver dentists to forward fire bases in lieu of transferring patients to rear treatment areas. I am not sure if the rest of the dentists and the doctors appreciated that very much; it meant that you were going into harm's way a little bit more than they otherwise would.

NORWOOD also provided some of the first field-based dental treatment of military guard dogs, and assisted in nondental trauma care in Mobile Army Surgical Hospitals, MASH, units. In recognition of his service under combat conditions, he was awarded the Combat Medical Badge and two Bronze Stars. After Vietnam, he was assigned to the Dental Corps at Fort Gordon, Georgia, where he served until his discharge in 1969. NORWOOD was awarded the Association of the Army's Cocklin Award in 1998, and was inducted into the Association's Audie Murphy Society in 1999. He remained a lifelong member of the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Military Order of the World Wars.

CHARLIE's family should be very proud of CHARLIE NORWOOD. As CHARLIE NORWOOD was slowly struggling with the disease that took his life, he had to look back on his life and realize that he helped an awful lot of people in a very positive way. We will miss him.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS).

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, today I mourningly lost not only a colleague but a very close friend. We all know that CHARLIE's unwavering dedication to his constituents and to our Nation inspired us who had the privilege of serving with him. He was known and was well-documented as a principled lawmaker who was absolutely committed to his values and to his work in this people's House. He was never afraid to stand up for his convictions.

But, Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak on a personal note, because CHARLIE and I were elected in 1994, and I see several of my colleagues here that are going to speak after me. My wife Claire and his wife Gloria became friends during the orientation. And while my wife doesn't come back here as often as Gloria was here with CHARLIE, whenever she came back we always made it a point as often as we could to get together with the Norwoods and have dinner. CHARLIE loved to try a lot of different venues: He was a steak man, and we ate steak. He liked Italian food, and we found several Italian places that we ate. He took me to a Korean restaurant. He liked Korean food after being in Asia. And we had great conversations. We talked about the patients' bill of rights; we disagreed. We talked about OSHA; we agreed. And so he and Gloria became good friends of Claire and me, and he even hosted my brother and I down at the Master's one year. My older brother and CHARLIE shared the same birth date, so they had a bond right off the bat.

If there is one legacy I think that CHARLIE will leave with all of us, it is the bulldoggedness and the determination with which he pursued legislation. But if there is one other legacy that will be left, it is the way he displayed the courage to fight this disease that he had. And I truly think, Mr. Speaker, that any lesser man would not have lasted as long as he did with the disease that he had.

CHARLIE will be very, very much missed, and our prayers go out to Gloria and the family.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time do we have left.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts). The gentleman from Georgia has 12½ minutes, and the other gentleman from Georgia has 8 minutes.

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

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. I thank the Speaker. And I would ask the gentleman, we have numerous speakers, if there is a possibility of yielding time at some point, we would request it.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. I would be pleased to do so.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. I thank the gentleman.

At this point I would yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT).

Mr. BLUNT. I thank all of my colleagues for the comments they have made today. The job of the whip in the House is supposed to be the job of organizing the Members, and many people think it is the job of convincing Members they should do something they don't really want to do. I will tell you that the Member that it would have been the most impossible to convince to do anything he didn't want to do was CHARLIE NORWOOD. He was here to do what he thought was the right thing to do. It wasn't always what I thought was the right thing, but it was what he thought was the right thing and he was

going to do it. The toughness, the courage, the determination of CHARLIE NORWOOD was extraordinary among an extraordinary group of people. Just this struggle that we have witnessed with CHARLIE's health, a struggle that he faced uncomplainingly as he sat day after day over in that corner recovering from massive surgery, but, as Chairman BARTON showed in the letter he got in recent days, never giving up on the job he was doing for the people he served.

The people that sent him here should be proud, the people who worked with him should be proud. The people of the United States would be proud if they knew the great and tireless job that CHARLIE NORWOOD did for them every day. And I am honored to have had a chance to serve with him and call him my friend.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. COBLE).

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, thank you, sir.

I represent Pinehurst, North Carolina, the golf capital of America. And when I would say that, CHARLIE took great umbrage, he being from Augusta.

On one occasion, CHARLIE overheard someone ask me to describe my district. I replied, ''I represent High Point, the furniture capital of the world; I represent one of the finest zoos in the country near Asheboro.'' And knowing that CHARLIE was listening, I said very condescendingly, ''And, of course, the golf capital of America in Pinehurst.''

CHARLIE jumped up from his chair, this is the sanitized version. He said, ''Now, you son of a gun,'' he said, ''I will let you have the furniture and zoo, but you ain't taking golf.''

I told that story, Mr. Speaker, to the Southern Pines North Carolina Rotary Club, and within one week that story was personally delivered to Doc NORWOOD. And CHARLIE said to me, ''Howard, don't ever talk about anybody. It will come back to bite you.''

CHARLIE NORWOOD, as has been said many times on this floor today, one great guy, one great Congressman who will be sorely missed.

CHARLIE, I won't even say Pinehurst is the greatest golf capital of the world at least for a day or two in remembrance of you.

And condolences to Gloria and the entire Norwood family.

□ 1730

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT).

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, it was truly an honor to know CHARLIE NORWOOD; I admired and respected him. And shortly after I got here to this body I was told by another Member from Georgia, he was sitting by CHARLIE when I was up speaking and he said, Who is that guy? I like him. Well, the feeling was more than mutual.

CHARLIE NORWOOD, what was not to like? His dogged determination, some would say he was stubborn as a mule. But I think CHARLIE might more elegantly say he was persistent until it almost ceased to be a virtue. But with CHARLIE, it was a virtue.

Now, some gave him bad press, along with some others of us that worked together on the Voting Rights Act. Some falsely claimed that CHARLIE and others of us were trying to restrict the usage of the Voting Rights Act when a clear indication, everything CHARLIE did, everything we worked on, everything we talked about behind the scenes was, by golly, the Voting Rights Act has done good for the places it has been applied. It needs to be applied in every district in America until racial disparity has disappeared.

And although we lost on the floor temporarily, I do believe there is Scripture to support people in heaven to know what is going on here on Earth. They rejoice over one soul's salvation, they know that it isn't over yet. As a matter of equal protection, I think we eventually will get it extended to every district where there is racial disparity.

To Gloria, to the Norwood family, all we can say through the Speaker is, thank you for sharing this wonderful gift with us. And to God on high, thank you for sharing this gift with this House of Representatives.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentlelady from North Carolina (Mrs. MYRICK).

Mrs. MYRICK. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, as you have heard some of my other colleagues say, there were a group of us who came in in 1995 together with CHARLIE and got to know him very well and consider him a dear friend.

You have heard all the words, ''perseverance'' and ''doggedness'' and ''determination'' and ''stubborn'' and all those other things that describe CHARLIE, but there are also some other words that describe CHARLIE, and that was ''loyal'' and ''friend,'' because he was a friend to all.

Gloria and CHARLIE and I became very good friends early on. You could always count on him. There was never any question, if you needed CHARLIE, he was there if he believed in what you were doing; if he didn't, he would always forthrightly tell you.

He also displayed that big word ''courage,'' because we saw what he went through as he spent his last 3 years here, and he was always doing his job for his people. The other thing about CHARLIE was integrity. I think you have to look long and far to find someone who had more integrity than CHARLIE NORWOOD; if he gave you his word, he gave you his word.

All of our blessings go to Gloria and his family.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SHADEGG).

Mr. SHADEGG. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to mourn the loss of my friend, CHARLIE NORWOOD, and to pay tribute to him and his record, and to extend my sympathies to his wife and his family.

CHARLIE NORWOOD was an extraordinary human, an extraordinary soldier and an extraordinary United States Congressman, and the Nation is better for his service.

You have heard it said here, over and over and over again, that he was passionate, that he was a fighter for the cause, whether that was in Vietnam, whether that was in his chosen field, dentistry, or whether that was here in the United States Congress.

I worked closely with CHARLIE on the Patients' Bill of Rights. I believed deeply, as CHARLIE did, that individual human beings, patients, were being injured by the practices of managed care companies around the country, and that we needed to do something about that. CHARLIE injected himself in that fight with the kind of passion that CHARLIE brought to every fight. And I worked shoulder to shoulder with CHARLIE in that fight, and Dr. TOM COBURN, and learned what a great individual and what an inspiring principled human being he was.

But the best thing about CHARLIE was the twinkle in his eye. When CHARLIE got into a fight, he would literally light up, and light the room with a twinkle of being able to press forward with his fight and his belief and his passion.

We will all miss him. I consider it a privilege to have known him.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER).

Mr. WICKER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, CHARLIE NORWOOD and I were elected together in 1994, as were the two previous speakers. And we were part of that history-making, majority-making 73-Member class who came to office in 1995.

It didn't take us long to realize that CHARLIE NORWOOD was one of the wisest and steadiest and most dependable Members of that class. He was a conservative, and never wavered from that philosophy. He was trustworthy, as Mrs. MYRICK said.

He was a competitor. When CHARLIE NORWOOD waged battle on this floor on your side, you knew you had a capable comrade at arms. And if he was on the other side, when it was over, you knew you had been in a fight. I remember at the end of the debate on the Patients' Bill of Rights, right along the rail back here, CHARLIE NORWOOD and TOM COBURN embracing after the debate like athletes after a great contest.

Whatever he did, CHARLIE NORWOOD did it cheerfully, and that is one of the main things I will remember about CHARLIE. He was a patriot in every sense of the word. He was a credit to

this House of Representatives. I am proud to have called him my colleague and my friend.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, how much time does the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. DEAL) have?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 30 seconds remaining.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 6 minutes to my colleague from Georgia, and I ask unanimous consent to let the gentleman from Georgia in turn control that 6 minutes and yield to other Members.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. DEAL) now has 6½ minutes.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. I thank the gentleman for his courtesy.

I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. WHITFIELD).

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, all of us join in wishing our condolences to CHARLIE's wife Gloria and his entire family.

Those of us who were elected in 1994 and had the opportunity to know CHARLIE, to work with CHARLIE, and for me personally I had the opportunity to sit next to him on the Energy and Commerce Committee for about 8 years, CHARLIE was many things. He was a soldier in Vietnam, he was a businessman, he was a dentist, he was a great United States Congressman. He also was a Sunday school teacher at Trinity on the Hill Methodist Church in Augusta, Georgia. And I know that that church meant a lot to him because he is asking for donations to that church as a memorial.

Recently I attended a church service in a Methodist church in Kentucky, and the title of the sermon was ''You Can't Make a Success of Life Without Making a Gift of It.'' And when I think of CHARLIE NORWOOD, that is really what I think about: He made a gift of his life. We will miss him. He has made a tremendous impact on all of us. We wish his family the very best.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER. I thank you for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak about my friend, CHARLIE NORWOOD. I have prepared remarks, but I would really like to just relate like others have.

The first time I ran into CHARLIE I was a new freshman in this body. He sat behind me. And when you are brand new here, you are listening and you are trying to figure out what is going on. And when CHARLIE NORWOOD opened his mouth, he was saying things sometimes that others were not, and stood his ground to those things, even though they might be in conflict with both the other side and his party, both. CHARLIE had a way of standing up for his principles.

I also want to talk about Gloria, because Gloria took my wife under her wing and was kind to her. And I can tell you for this last year and a half, literally every week that I have served in this Congress, my wife has asked about CHARLIE's health because she fell in love with Gloria Norwood.

Everyone in this House sends out their hearts to Gloria at the loss of her beloved husband. We were proud to serve with him. He was a great American.

Today I rise to honor my friend and colleague Mr. CHARLIE NORWOOD from Northeastern Georgia who passed away yesterday morning. As a man of strong character and unwavering convictions, his passing is surely a saddening loss to the American people.

CHARLIE NORWOOD served as a brave soldier during Vietnam as part of the Army Dental Corps in the 173rd Airborne Brigade. He was honored for his courageous service with the Combat Medical Badge and two Bronze Stars.

Elected to Congress in 1994, CHARLIE was the first Republican to represent his Northeastern Georgia district since Reconstruction. During his time in Congress he was known for his endless fight for the patients' bill of rights and his fight for stricter immigration policies.

CHARLIE bravely battled cancer and lung disease, and in his final days he returned to Augusta to be with his family. The Norwood family will be in my thoughts and prayers. Please join me, Mr. Speaker, in expressing our deep appreciation for the lifetime of service by CHARLIE NORWOOD and extending our sympathies to his wife, Gloria Wilkinson Norwood, and their family.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to one of our colleagues from Iowa (Mr. KING).

□ 1740

Mr. KING of Iowa. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in profound sorrow and gratitude for the life of CHARLIE NORWOOD. I believe I had known CHARLIE long before I came here to meet him in person. I got to know him through C–SPAN and through the media. When I met him personally, he had matched up identically with the person that I saw through the television screen. CHARLIE had that light within him, as John Shadegg said.

I look back at a time when CHARLIE was not feeling well. He came here whenever it was physically possible for him to do that, and I remember a day when he looked poor, but when he spoke in that microphone right there, that light came back on again and the real CHARLIE NORWOOD again blessed this Chamber with his presence.

America will always be grateful. Gloria, Marilyn and I want you to know that you and your family are in our prayers. We will always look over to this place on this floor where CHARLIE always sat and recognize that as CHARLIE's seat in the people's Chamber.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER).

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express deep sorrow at the passing of our friend and colleague, CHARLIE NORWOOD. While most of us hope to make a difference in this world, CHARLIE NORWOOD certainly did that. He also made a difference in the lives of those who were fortunate enough to have known him.

CHARLIE was steadfast and did what he thought was right. He was an immovable object in the defense of principle, and when met with irresistible force, it wasn't likely that CHARLIE was the one who was moved.

During the development of the Medicare prescription drug benefit, I worked closely with CHARLIE and several of my colleagues to see if there was an alternative plan and how we were going to work this out. CHARLIE's contributions were insightful, they were valuable, and added considerably to the worth of our final product. During that process, he was constantly mindful of two things, and that was the need to help seniors who had no drug coverage and the need to be wise stewards for taxpayers.

Coming to Congress with a medical background, CHARLIE provided a point of view that enhanced any debate he entered. While witnesses before him, at the Health Subcommittee may have cringed at times under his questioning, the responses that were drawn out always added an important dimension to our debates.

CHARLIE will be sorely missed: in Congress, in the Health Subcommittee, but more importantly in all our lives. I give my deepest sympathies to his wife, Gloria, his sons Charles and Carlton, and his constituents.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LATHAM).

Mr. LATHAM. I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank the Speaker for this chance to say just a few words about my dear friend and classmate, CHARLIE NORWOOD.

To Gloria, to the family, we extend our most sincere, deepest condolences. Kathy and I will keep you in our prayers.

I just want to tell one short story about CHARLIE. When we came into Congress together back in 1994 and we had the Contract With America, the first 100 days, one of the very first votes that we had was H.R. 1. That was an amendment to the Constitution to balance the budget. I was standing right back here at the voting machine beside CHARLIE NORWOOD. I voted ''yes.'' CHARLIE put his card in, he voted ''yes,'' and he turned to me and says, You know what. That's what I ran on. I can go home now. I've done my job. I've kept my promise.

That's what CHARLIE NORWOOD was all about. I just want to say, CHARLIE, you're home now, the Augusta, the Georgia that you love, and our thoughts and prayers will always be with you and the great honor that you have given all of us here to serve with you in this great body.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. I would say to my colleague, Mr. LEWIS, I am prepared to close if you would like to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS).

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, CHARLIE NORWOOD, the man from Georgia, not just a citizen of Georgia, not just a citizen of the American South, but a citizen of the world, a man who fought the good fight, who kept the faith. He was a good and decent man, and we will never ever forget his lasting contribution.

We pray for his family, for the people of his congressional district, and we pray for his soul.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to thank my colleague, Mr. LEWIS, for his graciousness, for his assistance in bringing this resolution to the floor, and to express my appreciation to all of our colleagues who have spoken here today. Their eloquence, I hope, conveys to Gloria and to the family the esteem with which we held CHARLIE NORWOOD. Truly the gentleman from Georgia and the blue searsucker suit is going to really be missed here, but his legacy will live on.

It is the responsibility of each of us to make sure that we have the same degree of commitment and passion as CHARLIE NORWOOD did. He set a great example we will all endeavor to follow.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in sadness to note the recent passing of a dear friend and colleague, CHARLIE NORWOOD. I want to extend to his wife Gloria and her sons, and their family, my deepest sympathy for their loss.

I know how much CHARLIE loved his wife Gloria and his family.?

I join my colleagues today on the floor of the House to honor his service in the House of Representatives, and to honor his memory.

CHARLIE and I came to Washington with the class of 1994. We were elected to Congress in the same year and we came with the class that was going to change the way Washington operates.

In the seven terms that I have served with CHARLIE, I gained a lasting friendship and respect for CHARLIE.

CHARLIE certainly made an impact on the House of Representatives. He always fought for the causes for which he believed, and many times we were on the same side.

In the last year of his service, as he was battling illness, he always had a smile for me when I would speak to him. And I know that he had a smile for anyone that came to say hello.

As a man of faith, I know that CHARLIE is in heaven. But for those of us who had the privilege to know him, we will miss him until we meet again.

He was an outstanding Congressman, and he will be missed.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, it is with sorrow, yet fondness, that I speak on the passing of our colleague and friend, CHARLIE NORWOOD. While in Congress, his dedication to Georgians, to patient advocacy, to business ownership and property rights, and to veterans are legendary.

Prior to his service in the House of Representatives, CHARLIE served his country as a Captain in the U.S. Army Dental Corps in Vietnam, and he contributed to his community as a dentist, business owner, and active worshipper in his Methodist Church.

I first learned about CHARLIE in 1994 when he was running for his Georgia district. Struck by his pluckiness and quiet steadfast determination even then, I decided to campaign for him in his district-to-be, and met his wife Gloria. And when he was elected, he immediately became a player in health care legislation, not waiting for reaching the echelons of seniority to make real contributions.

Through all his trials, CHARLIE NORWOOD had a sparkle, an ingenuity how to get things accomplished. His passion would at times translate into defiance at another Member. In particular, I recall such a moment at the Energy & Commerce markup on July 27, 2006 of H.R. 4157, the Better Health Information System Act of 2006, or ''Health IT'' bill. Another Member, Representative MARKEY, was offering some language that would have the effect of governing relations between health care providers and their patients. Well, CHARLIE took great exception to this, and rather angrily erupted to Representative MARKEY that his profession has engaged in the highest ethical standards of patient privacy since the inception of dentistry, and therefore ''I don't need you to legislate my professional ethics.''

In the past couple of years, CHARLIE would ride in his scooter to the Energy & Commerce Committee on which we served together, and to the Floor, for debate and hearings and votes. And notwithstanding his ailing health, I was always touched by his continued friendly, high spirits. CHARLIE, I am honored to have known you. Rest in peace.

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution honoring the life of our friend and a great member of this body, CHARLIE NORWOOD, who passed away after an 8-year battle with a chronic lung disease, and then lung cancer.

Elected in 1994, CHARLIE was a passionate public servant who will be remembered for his dedication to health care issues and his commitment to patients' rights. A dentist by training, he had the unique perspective of understanding how health policy impacted him as a practitioner as well as his patients. His experiences were a driving force in his passionate advocacy for a patients' bill of rights, and he helped lead the effort to pass that legislation.

CHARLIE also served his country in the Army for 3 years, and was a veteran of the Vietnam war. I had the privilege of getting to know CHARLIE when our offices were next door to each other in the Rayburn building and enjoyed our friendly visits and candid conversations. He instantly gained my respect as a hard-working and eager gentleman willing to work across party lines in search of compromIse.

Mr. Speaker, while CHARLIE'S presence will be missed, his valiant spirit will live on and I am grateful for the opportunity to have served with him in this Chamber. I send my condolences and best wishes to his family, and join my colleagues in supporting this resolution.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I am deeply saddened at the loss of a great American. CHARLIE NORWOOD was an honored member of this House of Representatives and will be deeply missed. His work for patient and individual rights showed his intense compassion for the American people.

Congressman NORWOOD was someone who lived the American dream. He went to college, became a dentist, fought for his country in Vietnam, and was a loving husband, father and grandfather. He served his district, state and country with distinction in the United States Congress.

CHARLIE worked to leave the world a better place than it was given to him, and I can say that, because of his service to our country and work for health care issues, he did just that.

Congressman CHARLIE NORWOOD was taken from this earth too soon. My wife Diana and I extend our deepest sympathy to Gloria and the entire Norwood family in this difficult time.

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise with a heavy heart today to remember a friend, and colleague—Representative CHARLIE NORWOOD of Georgia, who passed away yesterday, at his home in Augusta, Georgia.

CHARLIE and I came into Congress as part of the ''Republican Revolution'' in 1994. We shared a common vision with the rest of our classmates of what the Federal Government should be and how it should act. CHARLIE worked diligently to attain this vision while serving his constituents.

During this sorrowful time my thoughts and prayers go out to his family, friends, staff and loved ones. It was an honor serving with CHARLIE, and he will be sorely missed.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a great American and a member of this House. CHARLES NORWOOD was a veteran, dentist, small business owner, and Member of Congress from Georgia.

Congressman NORWOOD, who died on Wednesday, February 14, 2007, was a respected member of this body and respected by all who knew him. His presence will be greatly missed and we all mourn his loss and extend our sincerest condolences to his family and friends.

CHARLES NORWOOD was born July 27, 1941 in Valdosta, Georgia. ''CHARLIE'' as he was known, attended school in Valdosta throughout his first year of high school when his family moved to Tennessee, where he graduated in 1959 from Baylor Military High School in Chattanooga. He received his B.A. from Georgia Southern University in 1964 and a Doctorate in Dental Surgery from Georgetown University Dental School in 1967 where he was elected President of the Dental School Student Body during his senior year.

After completing dental school, CHARLIE NORWOOD enlisted in the United States Army, and was commissioned a Captain in the U.S. Army Dental Corps from 1967 to 1969. He was first assigned to the Army Dental Corps at Sandia Army Base in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In 1968, he was transferred to the Medical Battalion of the 173rd Airborne Brigade in Vietnam.

While in the Dental Corps, CHARLIE pioneered dental practices that became standard procedure after the Vietnam War. In addition to assisting the soldiers, he also provided some of the first field-based dental treatment of military guard dogs. For his distinguished service to our Nation, CHARLIE received the Combat Medical Badge and two Bronze Stars. He was discharged in 1969 after which, he entered the private practice of dentistry in Augusta, Georgia. For many years, ''DOC NORWOOD'' provided great service to all his patients.

In 1994, CHARLIE NORWOOD was elected to represent the Tenth Congressional District of Georgia in the historic 104th Congress. We were classmates because that same year I was elected to represent the citizens of the Eighteenth Congressional District of Texas. CHARLIE represented his district so well that he was reelected by his constituents six times and always by substantial margins.

In Congress, CHARLIE NORWOOD was a strong proponent for health care reform. He introduced legislation calling for a Patient's Bill of Rights. He also championed more and better health care for veterans. In addition to his work in health care reform, NORWOOD introduced legislation and worked on various other public-policy issues.

Throughout his congressional career, CHARLIE NORWOOD served on the Energy and Commerce Committee and the Education and Workforce Committee. He was Vice Chairman of the Subcommittee on Health from 2001 to 2004 and a member of the Energy and Power Subcommittee from 1997 to 2000.

Mr. Speaker, a dear colleague has fallen but he will not be forgotten. We are all saddened by our loss but we are happy to have served with him. Our prayers and condolences are with his family and loved ones. CHARLIE NORWOOD—Vietnam Veteran, dentist, small business owner, and Member of Congress—was a good representative, a good legislator, and a good man. He will be missed.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time has expired.

Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the resolution.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under clause 5(d) of rule XX, it is the Chair's duty to announce to the House that, in light of the death of the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. NORWOOD), the whole number of the House is 434.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on the resolution just adopted.

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

There was no objection.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a joint resolution of the House of the following title:

H.J. Res. 20. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2007, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 106–286, the Chair, on behalf of the President of the Senate, and after consultation with the Majority Leader, appoints the following Members to serve on the Congressional-Executive Commission on the People's Republic of China:

The Senator from Montana (Mr. BAUCUS).

The Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN).

The Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN).

The Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN), Co-Chairman.

The Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN).

IRAQ WAR RESOLUTION

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

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. When proceedings were postponed earlier today, 4 hours and 46 minutes of debate remained on the concurrent resolution.

The gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) has 2 hours and 21 minutes remaining and the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING) has 2 hours and 25 minutes remaining.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself so much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, we are engaged in a long war on radical Islam, a war the President has analogized to the Cold War. Two roads in that war lead to disaster. The first disastrous road would be to abandon the battle, appease, disarm, blame America, and speak to Syria and Iran about what concessions we are going to give them.

The second disastrous course is to stay the course in our utter fixation on Iraq as the only battlefield in the global war on radical Islam. Those who propose that we stay the course, an erroneous course, I might add, give four different reasons:

First, they say that if we do not stay in Iraq and prevail, then terrorists will have a place to gather and plot against us. Mr. Speaker, terrorists can plot against us in the deserts of Somalia. Terrorists are plotting against us in the mountains of North Waziristan, in the mountains of Pakistan. Mr. Speaker, terrorists can plot against us in an apartment building in Hamburg. Even if we prevail in Iraq, terrorists will always be able to find a conference room.

The second reason we are given is that if we do not prevail in Iraq, the terrorists there will follow us home. Well, keep in mind on 9/11, the vast majority of the hijackers came from Saudi Arabia, a country with an apparently stable and obstensibly friendly government. So even if Iraq were stable and friendly, individual Iraqi terrorists might well come to the United States and carry out actions against us. Third, we are told that we have an obligation to the Iraqi people to stay there, to stay the course. We have liberated the Iraqis from Saddam Hussein, a man who killed millions in his war against Iran and against the Kurds. Now we have given the Iraqi people an opportunity to come together. We have bled sufficiently for Iraq.

Finally, we are told that we owe it to those Americans who died in battle to stay in Iraq until Iraq is a model democracy.

□ 1750

I would argue that instead we owe it to those who died to have an intelligent foreign policy that safeguards America. That starts with learning the lessons of the Cold War. Remember the 1960s and the 1970s, when we were told that if we didn't support every escalation in Vietnam, then the Communists would follow us home or, in the parlance of that day, there would be Communists on the beaches of southern California.

Well, we won the Cold War because we pulled out of Vietnam. The short-term outcome in Vietnam was not what we would have liked, but even if we had stayed in Vietnam another decade, it would have been no different. We won the global war on communism because we waged it globally, and we did not become fixated forever on Vietnam.

The time has arrived to pull back from daily battles on the streets of Baghdad. It is time for Iraq to no longer be viewed as the sole or exclusive battlefield in the war on terrorism. It is time instead for us to focus on the one part of the global war on terrorism that could lead to hundreds of thousands of American deaths, and that is Iran's nuclear program. We need to mobilize all of our diplomatic leverage to reshape our policies towards Russia, Europe and China, toward the single goal of putting together a coalition that will put the pressure on Iran necessary to force that country to abandon its nuclear program. We owe this to those who have died in Iraq, and we owe it to the American people.

Finally, we are told that this resolution is nonbinding, meaningless, that the President will ignore it, that the only way we have of affecting policy is to cut off funds, which is constitutionally problematic, since it involves tying in the hands of the Commander in Chief while we have troops in the field. But the very people who say this resolution is meaningless have it in their power to make it meaningful, have it in their power to avoid such constitutionally problematic approaches.

Because if the Republicans will vote for this resolution, they will make it

meaningful, they will make it decisive, the President will not ignore it, we will jolt the President into abandoning his stay the course, escalate the course approach.

Those who vote against this resolution may keep it from being meaningful. But if even a third of the Republican caucus votes for this resolution, then the President will no longer stay the course, he will be jolted, he will work with Congress cooperatively towards a foreign policy that makes sense for our country.

I look forward to having enough votes for this resolution so that it is, indeed, meaningful.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York is recognized as the designee of the minority leader under the rule for the purpose of yielding time.

The gentleman is recognized.

Mr. KING of New York. I thank the Speaker for his recognition and for his usual courtesy.

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

I rise today in opposition to the resolution. I have listened as carefully as I can for the past day and a half of debate, and it becomes clearer and clearer to me that those who were supporting this resolution, for whatever reason, are unwilling to accept the consequences of the words of this resolution, unwilling to accept the consequences of what could happen by the adoption of this resolution.

Yes, the resolution is meaningless. Yes, the resolution has no legal impact, but it does send a terrible message. It sends a terrible message to the world that the United States is losing a sense of resolution, if you will. It also sends a very cruel message, I believe, to the troops in the field, because while the resolution goes out of the way to say it supports the troops, at the very same time it is necessarily undermining the newly appointed commander of those troops. We hear from speaker after speaker who was speaking in support of the resolution that this is more of the same staying the course, this is a policy that cannot work.

But yet the newly designated commander, General Petraeus, who was unanimously confirmed by the United States Senate, is one of the architects of this policy. General Petraeus has stated that this policy can work, that he believes it will work.

Those of us who have been to Iraq and seen the outstanding work that General Petraeus has done, the 101st Airborne, we realize how committed he is. To me it sends such a mixed message to, on the one hand, have him unanimously confirmed as the new commander in the field, and yet at the same time to be attacking his credibility or his competency.

You can't have it both ways. You can't say he is the best man for the job, we have faith in him, and yet say the policy is wrong and it cannot work, and he says it will work and he is the architect of that policy. Think of the message we are sending to the troops. Think of the message we are sending to our allies in our region. Probably most importantly, think of the message we are sending to the enemy of the region.

I just heard the previous gentleman say that those of us who oppose the resolution want to stay the course. I would say that those who are supporting the resolution are the ones who want to stay the course. This is a significant new policy. General Petraeus has said it is a new policy, and it is a new policy.

The gentleman also said that we don't really have to worry about Iraq becoming a haven for terrorists because terrorists can attack us anywhere. He basically said you can do it from an apartment in Hamburg.

I would suggest that if the proponents of the resolution cannot appreciate the distinction between a hotel room in Hamburg and a sovereign state such as Iraq being occupied by terrorists, then they don't realize the impact that Afghanistan had, the fact that the Taliban allowed al Qaeda to have a sanctuary in Afghanistan, how it gave them a strong base of operations to carry out and plot the attacks of September 11.

Now, truly there are terrorists everywhere, Islamist terrorists throughout the world. They are certainly throughout the Middle East, the Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore, they are here in the United States, we know that, in Canada. But the fact is you try to take as many sanctuaries away from them if possible.

Iraq, if we did leave Iraq, and that, I believe, has to be the necessary outcome, the only logical conclusion of where this resolution will ultimately lead us, then we have a situation where we are talking about confronting Iran. Well, the Shiites in Iran will certainly have enormous influence in Iraq. Al Qaeda will have a sanctuary among the Sunnis in Iraq, and then we will have the situation in the north between the Kurds and the Turks. So the fact is no one more than those of us who oppose the resolution realize this is not the only battlefield, but it is a main battlefield.

Certainly al Qaeda believes it is important. That is why we have al Qaeda in Iraq. That is why al Qaeda has been carrying out attacks, that is why al Qaeda was there. That is why we are engaging in Anbar province. By the way, of the 21,000 additional troops, at least 4,000 will be directly confronting al Qaeda in Anbar province.

These are all the issues I feel have not been in any way adequately or sufficiently addressed by the supporters of the resolution. Again, at a time when we have General Petraeus embarking on what I believe is a key turning point in the war, it is really irresponsible to even be considering voting for this resolution.

Now, another point, I know many speakers on my side want to be heard during the time that I will be controlling, but we, I think, have to address the issue of should Congress be getting involved in making strategic battlefield decisions.

I have researched this. I have not found one instance during the history of our country where the United States Congress has injected itself into battlefield decisions.

I was just thinking suppose we did this during World War II, and we had this situation with a small island in the Pacific, Iwo Jima, where almost 7,000 people were killed in less than 6 weeks, almost 26,000 casualties. If we had 24-hour cable news, if we had a sense of disunity in the country, we would be bringing a resolution in the second or third week of the battle saying we already lost 2, 3, 4,000 troops, this one island, how can we have 10 to 15,000 casualties just in the first 2, 3 weeks.

But the fact is we have allowed the President, as Commander in Chief, and that is his constitutional responsibility. We voted for the war in the House. We voted for the war in the Senate. Once we do that, the Commander in Chief, I believe, strongly believe, has the constitutional authority and the right to be deciding exactly the tactical and strategic decisions.

If the Members of Congress want to cut off funding for the war, the fact is some of them may, then the fact is they should say that, not be coming in through the backdoor.

So I would urge my colleagues to realize the consequences of their action. You know, I spoke on the House floor yesterday, and after I was finished the speaker who followed me said I wish that the opponents of the resolution would just stick to the resolution itself.

I am more than willing to debate the resolution. I believe I have. The fact is I can see why they don't want to look at the consequences beyond the narrow language of that resolution, because it will have horrific consequences for the United States. Actions have consequences, words have consequences, and the words of this resolution will have terrible consequences for the United States, terrible consequences for all of us who oppose Islamic terrorism, and terrible consequences for our allies in the region and with whom we need support in the future.

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

□ 1800

Mr. SHERMAN. Madam Speaker, I am proud to be part of a process that shows our troops that America is a functioning democracy, and that we are engaged in discussing a resolution that reflects the views of the vast majority of the American people.

Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, a distinguished Member

of the Congress and of the Appropriations Committee, the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. KILPATRICK).

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

Ms. KILPATRICK. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

I stand here today in support of House Resolution 63, a long time coming, but as it is always said, it is right on time. I stand here to speak for the millions of Americans today who have had enough, who have had enough of this war, its unjust nature, its over $500 billion that has been spent there in Iraq and Afghanistan and not spent in our own country.

I stand here today in support of H. Con. Res. 63 because this war has lasted longer than World War II. My 87-year-old father fought in the Navy at Pearl Harbor during World War II. One of my political mentors, a great man, Mayor Coleman Alexander Young, a former Tuskeegee Airman, fought during World War II. It is time to bring our troops home. It is time for us to change the course.

As we celebrate this Black History Month, the theme of the Congressional Black Caucus during these times are change course, do something different, act, speak, donate, join, confront the crisis, the crisis of the war which is why we are here today, and then continue the legacy that has brought this country to greatness.

Many of my Congressional Black Caucus members have served in the military. JOHN CONYERS, CHARLIE RANGEL, ED TOWNS, BOBBY SCOTT, WILLIAM JEFFERSON, SANFORD BISHOP, all able men who have fought and served in our military over the years.

We come to you, tonight, this evening, as members of the Congressional Black Caucus, proud Americans. We love our country. We serve our people. And we want to remain the strongest Nation in the world.

Who speaks for the American people in this time of crisis? They spoke to us last November when they said enough is enough. The first military man who died in wars for our country's independence was Crispus Attucks, who fought in the Revolutionary War, an African American man who gave his life because he loved this country, could not vote at the time, could not own property, but again he fought in a war because, again, this was the greatest country in the world.

So what do we do today as we discuss H. Con. Res. 63? It is time to engage in a diplomatic solution. We cannot win this war militarily. The generals, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, have spoken out against the escalation. What is the plan, Mr. President? How do we bring our soldiers home, redeploy them on the periphery, and make our country safe, and, at the same time, invest those dollars in Americans' lives, in their children's lives?

Dr. King wrote a book, ''I Have the Strength.'' I have the strength to stand before you today for the American people. I have the strength to let you know that we as a Nation can be all that God wants us to be. That in fighting wars, and wars will come from time to time, this is the time to bring this one to the end.

I will protect and speak out for the over 3,100 families who have lost young men and women, over the tens of thousands who are blinded and amputees, and over the many hundred thousands we do not yet know who will be in need of mental health services as our mental health capacity in this country has been shredded.

Those dollars have to be invested so that we take care of our veterans. I have the strength to stand here before you this evening because it is time, as we debate H. Con. Res. 63, that we rise up as a Nation and speak out and continue our legislative responsibilities, as I stood before you, took my oath of office that I would protect this country, our Constitution, against both domestic and foreign intimidation.

I stand before you tonight as one of 43 members of the Congressional Black Caucus during this African American History Month, who love our country, who want us to invest in America's families. H. Con. Res. 63 will begin that discussion. It will make it available that we might change course, do something different, listen to the American people.

We love our troops. We served in those troops. Our families served. We want the strongest military that we have available. We are now having in Iraq equipment shortages. If we spent over $503 billion, why is it that equipment is not adequate for our soldiers to engage in battle?

Accountability. The Inspector General recently reported $9 billion is unaccounted for. That is $9 billion as part of the $500 billion that could be invested in American families. So I say as I stand here, H. Con. Res. 63, vote ''yes.'' Let's change course.

I am honored and blessed with the understanding of a power greater than that of any singular or even collective Membership of this Congress. That power has allowed Congress to finally debate the most pressing question of our time—the War in Iraq. As I prepared myself to speak in support of H. Con. Res. 63, a very simple and very clear declaration that Congress supports our troops, but we oppose the escalation of this war, I reflected upon the words of one of the greatest warriors for peace this world has ever known, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. A prolific author, Dr. King wrote a book entitled, ''Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?'' In it, Dr. King writes that ''we are faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. Life often leaves us standing bare, naked and dejected with a lost opportunity.'' Congress lost our opportunity for real debate on this war a little more than four years ago. Congress has that opportunity now.

As this is the height of Black History Month, I also speak to America today because of the investment that my ancestor put through 4 centuries of slave labor, 4 centuries of lynchings, 4 centuries of Jim Crow laws, 4 centuries of sitting on the back of the bus, 4 centuries of combined discrimination. And despite 4 centuries of second class citizenship, African Americans have always heeded the call to arms in defense of a country that did not always defend them.

Indeed, when it comes to war, the very first person, black, white, Asian, Pacific Islander, or Native American to die for this country was an African American, Crispus Attucks, who did not even have the right to vote, the right to buy property, the right to be recognized as a human being. He wanted the right to love our country. Like the hundreds of thousands of African Americans who have followed his footsteps in the military, I honor and I appreciate the service of all our women and men in the military of all ethnicities. I support all of the women and men who serve, without glory but with honor, efficiently and effectively protecting all of us, never hesitating to pay the highest price any human being could pay for our freedom.

I speak to America today because Americans have had enough, as best selling author Frank Rich illustrates, of the ''decline and fall of the truth.'' Of what decline and fall do I speak? Of ''Mission accomplished.'' Of ''bring 'em on.'' Of ''shock and awe.'' Of ''dead or alive.'' Of ''uranium coming from Africa.'' Of ''smoking guns becoming mushroom clouds.'' Those Americans who have had enough are not just the Democratic majority. They are not just the senior citizens, the working class women and men who punch a time clock every day, or the liberals of America. They conservatives, my Republican colleagues in Congress and elsewhere, people in the red States and blue States, business owners, military women and men and their families.

My father served this country honorably as a member of our military, as have many of my relatives. Many members of the Congressional Black Caucus have also served this country in our military. Just off of the top of my head, my colleagues Chairman JOHN CONYERS, Chairman CHARLES RANGEL, Congressman ED TOWNS, and Congressman BOBBY SCOTT, among others, have worn the uniform. My political mentor and hero, the late, great mayor of Detroit, Michigan, Coleman Young, was one of General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr.'s understudies as a Tuskeegee Airman as a bombardier and navigator. During the Vietnam war, African Americans served despite the opposition of Dr. King and other groups opposed to the Vietnam war. They did it for the same reason why I serve this country as a Member of Congress—because I love our country.

The investment that began when African Americans set foot in Jamestown, Virginia in 1619 and continues to this very day is the reason why I stand in support of this resolution that is but the first step, to resolve the challenge that is Iraq. I am not a military expert, and I don't pretend to be a military expert. But, as noted genius Albert Einstein once said, ''insanity is doing the same over and over again and expecting different results.'' Over and over, Congress has spent over $503 billion in Iraq. Over and over, America's finest have died, with more than 3,000 women and men, in Iraq. Over and over, women and men are wounded or maimed, some for life, with more than 25,000 today. Today, we still cannot safely fly planes on a reliable basis in and out of Baghdad. This is progress?

Progress is what Americans want. I know that war can be messy, amorphous at times, and brutal. After a war that has lasted more than the United States involvement in World War II, our military women and men deserve progress. Our taxpayers deserve progress. Our current course, and this surge, is not what Americans want, this is not what Congress wants, this is not what I want.

Historians have generally acknowledged that the debate on the war in 1991 was one of the high marks of this institution. Congress did not cede its role then to a popular President. Instead, Congress and the White House worked together to achieve a worthwhile goal. It was difficult. Both sides had to compromise. But guess what? That is how a democracy works.

Unfortunately, Congress did not have this debate over 4 years ago in a war that has now lasted longer than the United States was involved in World War II. Thank God, we have that debate now. Thank God, we have heard the voice of the American people. Thank God and the American people, it is time for a change.

After this debate, after this resolution, I hope that this is the beginning of our country, and our world, to begin to choose between chaos and community. As Dr. King once wrote, "we have a choice today—nonviolent coexistence or violent co annihilation."

Dr. King wrote another book entitled "Strength to Love." It is because I have the strength to love my country, the strength to love our troops, the strength to love the oath I took for this office—that I will protect and defend the Constitution of the United States, against all enemies, foreign and domestic—that I have the strength to support this resolution. We need to be smarter about our policy in Iraq to include diplomatic and political solutions rather than repeating the same military policies that have not worked, but continue to put the finest of our women and men in harm's way. Republicans and Democrats, conservatives and liberals, working together, can arrive at a solution that establishes a stable democracy in Iraq, protects American interests, and increases the role and responsibility of the Iraqi people to fend for themselves.

Instead of "bring them on," I hope that my colleagues agree that Congress can start to "bring them home." I will vote in strong support of H. Con. Res. 63, and hope that Congress can quickly work to bring stronger, binding legislation to the floor soon.

Mr. KING of New York. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. TERRY).

Mr. TERRY. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to H. Con. Res 63. Our troops have made tremendous sacrifices in waging war against Islamic extremists who not only want to deny freedom to their fellow countrymen but remain committed to attacking America and our way of life.

We have lost some of the bravest, most dedicated and committed Americans we have been honored to know, love, and mourn. They deserve the highest honor and respect from this Congress and the American people for their service. Those brave men and women still in harm's way have earned the right to come home as quickly as possible.

This does not mean, however, that we should abandon this mission and leave Iraq to certain failure by prematurely pulling out our troops, nor should we cut military funding or adopt nonbinding resolutions that embolden our enemies and undermine our troop morale.

Now, that last statement has been accused by many speakers on the Democrat side as being a red herring to chase the American public away from the attention of this addition of 20,000 troops. But I read their authored resolution. And the words are that you support and protect members of the Armed Services who are serving, are serving or have served, which means that they will not support our troops, any uniformed member that is newly sent to Iraq, whether it is for training the Iraqi troops, whether to be embedded and help them, or any capacity. So the next logical step from their own wording of this resolution is to cut funding. That is the only way to stop supporting any new military member that goes to Iraq.

So we have to ask, how will they do that? Now, I believe the Iraqi Government needs our assistance to restore security and prevent a descent into anarchy and civil war, or, worse yet, a heightened foreign insurgency that results in terrorist control of that nation.

The situation in the Middle East is a powder keg that will explode if the United States abandons it. The resolution under debate today offers no military or diplomatic solutions apart from expressing disapproval over the plan to increase troops that will help train the Iraqis to go to the front and take more responsibilities to securing Iraq.

The U.S. military personnel will be working closely with and training Iraqi soldiers. Pentagon leaders tell us that embedding these highly trained U.S. troops have been highly effective in making the Iraqi military better.

In anticipation of the American withdrawal, 23 Sunni clerics in Saudi Arabia have already expressed support for sending their Sunni fighters to Iraq as have Shiite clerics from other areas of the Middle East in anticipation of the U.S. leaving Iraq.

□ 1810

The Jordanian ambassador has described it well, saying that it is like the U.S. has stepped on a land mine, only that this is the other type of a land mine that will explode when you take your foot off of it. We will see an explosion if we do as this Democrat resolution sets up and stop supporting our troops and begin withdrawing them.

This Congress must not repeat the mistakes of Vietnam. War should not be conducted by 535 self-proclaimed generals. Politicians should not be dictating troop levels or planning missions. Our duty is to conduct effective and responsible oversight while giving our soldiers and military commanders the resources that they need to get the job done. This resolution specifically says you will not do that.

Premature withdrawal or a forced gradual withdrawal, which this resolution seems to endorse, from Iraq, through cutting funds, may appease those who oppose the war, the base of the authors who wrote this resolution, but it surely will produce more bloodshed and sectarian violence far exceeding the level currently reported by newspapers today.

I am not willing to gamble with those lives of future Americans of our generations to come. This resolution runs away from the best option we have been presented to provide security in Iraq. I am open to alternatives, better plans, including those from our colleagues on the other side. It is just that we are not able to engage in that discussion today.

I will vote ''no'' on this resolution, and hope that the majority of my colleagues will join me.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I gladly yield 5 minutes to my distinguished colleague from Louisiana (Mr. JEFFERSON).

Mr. JEFFERSON. Madam Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity to address an issue of grave importance to our country. I rise in support of the resolution that is before us. The resolution continues to support our troops who are presently fighting in Iraq. But it calls into severe question the wisdom of escalating our military involvement there.

I personally believe that escalating our efforts in Iraq is a tremendous mistake. It is time for us to recognize that there is no military solution to what is happening there. The only solution that will work in Iraq is a political solution. Even those who believe this surge to be an excellent strategy do so because they hope that it will lead to more favorable conditions for a political settlement.

The political solution depends on the Iraqi people themselves deciding to work together to knit their country together and to fight in behalf of their own nascent democracy. The rampant violence in Iraq is the result of a civil conflict in that country, and the Iraqi people must decide whether they will truly have a real representative democracy that includes the Sunnis, the Shiites, and other significant segments of their society.

If the Iraqi Government is to stand up for its own future, we must begin now to make it clear that we will not stay there forever and continue to add our troops. I personally believe that the best way to signal that our commitment is not open ended in this civil war is to start now the withdrawal of some of our troops. However, short of that, this resolution is an important first step toward ensuring that the people of our Nation know that we are changing direction in Iraq, and so that the people of Iraq will know that they must plan a future with the United

States as an important ally, but not as an enforcer of the status quo in their nation.

Madam Speaker, the justifications for the invasion of Iraq have long ago been discredited. There were no weapons of mass destruction. There was no nuclear threat. Every credible source and study has established that there was no connection between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda and the tragic events of 9/11. These were the reasons that were given as justification for our entry into the Iraqi war and that supported the statement that our national interest was at stake. Unfortunately, since the reasons were erroneous, no national interest exists.

Winning a military conflict, even if it were possible, does not create a national interest. Adding more troops to fight under the present conditions on the ground in Iraq cannot create a national interest where none truly exists. Such a strategy will simply add more human targets in a civil war that does not threaten America.

We are straining our troops and our military and financial resources beyond all reasonable limits. We are decimating our National Guard strength at a time when we have more than enough disasters here at home to which we must attend.

At a time when Louisiana needs the support of our National Guard, members of our National Guard are being called to serve in Iraq. At a time when the New Orleans area residents struggle to rebuild following the worst natural disaster in our Nation's history, and following deadly tornadoes just 2 days ago, we need National Guard troops here at home to fight crime in our streets and to keep our people safe. We need the billions of dollars that we are spending on war and the rebuilding of Iraq to wage a war on poverty and ignorance here at home. We need a greater commitment to rebuilding the Gulf Coast communities, including my beloved City of New Orleans.

Madam Speaker, let's not continue to make matters worse at home and abroad by pursuing a policy in Iraq that cannot work, that has not worked and that simply can no longer be justified.

I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution which supports our troops in the field and supports, at the same time, the commonsense objections to escalating our troop presence in Iraq. The people of this great country eloquently expressed their disapproval of the course of this war in the November elections, and on their behalf we should do no less.

Mr. KING of New York. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS), who is a member of the Armed Services Committee and the Homeland Security Committee.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Madam Speaker, I rise today to oppose this resolution. In doing so, I want to say I understand and share in some of the frustrations of those who are disappointed in the course of this conflict.

Over the past few days we have heard passionate debate on both sides of the issue from Democrats and Republicans alike. But I would say to my colleagues, passing this resolution is not the answer to their frustration. Not only is it purely symbolic and offers no productive solution for helping our military succeed, it sends the wrong message to our troops.

Instead of debating a resolution that says what we should not do in Iraq, it seems to me a more reasonable question should be, how should we go forward from here?

In January, the President put forth a plan to send reinforcements to help secure key areas in and around Baghdad and Anbar province in order to achieve a level of security to allow the Iraqi Government and security forces to assume control. As we all know, it may work and it may not.

But if the President, as Commander in Chief, and General Pace truly believe this plan will succeed, then I believe it should be given a chance to work.

Having listened to proponents and critics of the plan, it seems to me its success or failure is dependent on some key factors, including, first, whether our soldiers will be given the latitude to fully perform their duties without political interference; secondly, whether the Iraqi Government will be held accountable to live up to its commitments; and, third, whether the Iraqis will finally take responsibility for their own affairs.

Madam Speaker, the stakes in this debate are high. Iraq, indeed, is now the primary battlefront in the global war on terror, and there are no easy answers.

The House may pass this resolution this week, but in doing so, we will have missed an opportunity for a better and more balanced debate, including the chance to vote on a substitute bill.

Given the sacrifices our Nation has made, I agree the time to see real progress in Iraq is now. We all want our troops to come home safely and as soon as possible. But we also need for them to be successful in order for our Nation to remain secure.

Though our patience is being tested, our men and women in uniform deserve better from us than this purely symbolic resolution. They need our complete and unqualified support.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 5 minutes to the distinguished gentlelady from the U.S. Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN), who currently is the chairlady of our Subcommittee on Insular Affairs of the House Resources Committee. She also serves as a member of the Homeland Security Committee.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I come to the floor of this House today wearing my American Legion auxiliary pin, as I do every day, to honor the men and women of our Armed Forces who have served and continue to give the highest service to this country even today in Afghanistan, Iraq and around the world.

And I rise as a proud American and the representative of the more than 120,000 people of the United States Virgin Islands who love this country and desire nothing more than it be the strongest and best it can be in support of House Concurrent Resolution 63, which expresses our strong support for the members of the U.S. Armed Forces for their honorable and brave service in Iraq, but just as forcefully and clearly states our disapproval of the decision of the President to deploy the over 20,000 additional troops.

□ 1820

I don't take this position lightly, as we currently have over 100 members of the Virgin Islands National Guard serving in that theater today, and having recently lost two members of the Guard as well as four other soldiers who preceded them.

However, Madam Speaker, as the sole Representative of the people of the U.S. Virgin Islands in the Congress, Americans who have fought and died in every war and conflict from the Revolutionary War to this and yet cannot vote for the Commander in Chief, I consider it my solemn duty to express their views on this, the most pressing and important issue facing our country.

Madam Speaker, our fellow Americans spoke loud and clear last November, expressing a desire for a change of direction in Iraq, and by a more than 2-to-1 margin, they presently oppose the President's plan.

It is important, Madam Speaker, that we engage in this important debate today. The American people are demanding that we do so. Far from second-guessing the President's strategy and undermining our troops, as the White House charges, we are fulfilling our constitutional role and doing the responsible thing. The last 4 years have demonstrated that the present course in Iraq is not the correct one, and it is time that we demand that the President listen to other experienced experts and responsible voices that are calling for another approach.

This modest resolution is but the first step in that effort, an effort to support our troops and support our Nation by holding the President and the Department of Defense accountable, by insisting on an exit strategy that extricates our men and women from what is now a civil war, and allows the Iraqi people and their government to take responsibility for their country's welfare.

We are also told by Members on the other side of the aisle, Madam Speaker, that if we change course in Iraq, it will be disastrous for the Iraqi people. But the Iraqis themselves don't think so. Not only do polls show that 78 percent of Iraqis believe that American troops

provoked more violence than they prevented and that nearly three-quarters of Baghdad residents would feel safer if American forces left Iraq, but previous surges have indeed resulted in an escalation of violence, killing greater numbers of Americans as well as Iraqis.

Instead of beating the drums of war, the President should be engaging in diplomacy, as the Iraqi Study Group called for, to pursue our common interest in a stable Iraq, even if it means sitting down with Syria and Iran, as we have done in the past. Peace and the lives of our men and women deserve this effort.

With all of the thousands of Iraqis killed and over 3,100 of our troops having made the ultimate sacrifice, we have paid a far greater price for the decision to invade Iraq without the proper justification or an exit strategy and without adequate preparation, training, and protection for our troops. We have further paid the price of the loss of respect and esteem by the international community and the loss by the people of this country of any confidence that what we are told by the White House is the truth.

While we, sadly, cannot bring back those who have died, we can honor their memory by restoring truth and restoring this country to the high respect, regard, and leadership that the brave men and women of our Armed Forces dedicate and sacrifice their lives to preserve.

House Concurrent Resolution 63 begins that restoration and repair. I urge my colleagues to adopt this resolution.

Mr. KING of New York. Madam Speaker, I would remind the supporters of the resolution that more than 70 percent of the American people, in opinion polls, opposed President Truman's policy in Korea, and that was one of the turning points in the Cold War.

Madam Speaker, I yield 6⅙ minutes to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER), who is a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel and a member of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee.

Mr. WICKER. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding.

Madam Speaker, on December 31, 1776, with the fate of the Revolution in doubt, General George Washington faced a challenge of convincing his soldiers to stay in the fight. With their enlistments over, they wanted to go home. Washington made an impassioned plea and even offered volunteers a bonus. But no one responded. He spoke again, saying that all they held dear was at stake. And finally one man stepped forward. Then others followed.

Public opinion at that time was not on Washington's side. Only a third of the population supported the war for independence. One-third were openly hostile, and another one-third simply did not want to be involved.

We should be grateful that George Washington was not obsessed with public opinion polls.

Only days earlier Thomas Paine had written: ''These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered.''

In the summer of 1863, Colonel Joshua Chamberlain of Maine faced a similar crisis. He had to convince a group of mutineers to stand and fight in a key battle. He promised to plead their case later if they rejoined the ranks. They did, and helped him win the Battle of Gettysburg.

Public opinion at that time was running against President Lincoln and the war. It was lasting longer and costing more than anticipated. In Congress, Democrats demanded the troops be brought home immediately, but Lincoln stood by his convictions and won the war.

It is easy for us to look back on these pivotal moments in our Nation's history without remembering how tough the going was, how reluctant many of our own people were, and how it took strong leadership to bring about victory.

Let's contrast those times with the situation today in Iraq. Clearly the American people are tired and impatient with this war, and many believe we cannot win. Yet troop morale is high. In testimony before Congress last week, the senior enlisted personnel from each service, the National Guard, and the Reserves, said our forces in Iraq believe in what they are doing and that positive things are being accomplished.

But you don't have to take their word for it. The enlistment and reenlistment figures themselves are a testimony to the commitment of our troops. All service branches met and exceeded their goals in both categories in 2006. The command sergeant major of the Marine Corps told our committee that young people join the Marines today to get to the fight. Knowing full well they will go to Iraq, they are signing up with enthusiasm and purpose. It almost takes your breath away to hear the troops who have been there say they continue to believe in our mission and want to see it through to completion.

I hear the same thing from my constituents who have returned from Iraq. They express frustration about the news media's focus on the bad news. Returning troops tell of their successes in helping steer Iraq toward a path of democracy and freedom.

I received an e-mail this week from a Mississippi soldier in Iraq. He said, ''No one wants everybody home more than I do, but we must finish the job. We are doing good things here and taking bad guys out of the game.''

The most important question in today's debate is what message does this resolution send to our military, to the volunteers who have been serving so proudly in harm's way? And make no mistake, they are listening to what we say here and watching what we do here. Will the passage of this resolution give our troops encouragement? I don't think so.

The Americans are conflicted about this war. A CBS poll this week showed that only 44 percent of Americans support this resolution; 45 percent are opposed. That is all the more reason for leaders to lead. Washington and Lincoln were not concerned about public opinion polls. They did what was necessary to succeed, and that is what is called for in the halls of Congress today.

I am convinced that deep in their hearts, most Americans realize we are in a serious global war for survival against an enemy that wants to wipe us off the face of the Earth. When all is said and done, the American people want us to win this war. Success in Iraq is a key element in winning against the terrorists.

Osama bin Laden's chief deputy has urged al Qaeda operatives in Iraq to expel the Americans, extend the ''jihad wave'' to neighboring countries, and 2 weeks ago he spoke of Afghanistan and Iraq as two ''most crucial fields.'' I regret to say that enemies like these will be pleased when this resolution passes.

Madam Speaker, let's send the terrorists a message of strength and resolve. Let's send a message of support and unity and confidence and appreciation to our troops. This resolution sends the wrong message, and I will vote against it.

□ 1830

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to my distinguished friend and colleague, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. WYNN), currently serving as chairman of the Subcommittee on Environmental and Hazardous Materials of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. WYNN. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 63, a bipartisan resolution supporting our troops in Iraq, while opposing the President's troop escalation strategy.

This marks the fourth year of this war. It is time to bring our troops home now. We have not quelled the violence. We have not thwarted al Qaeda. We have not stabilized the region. We have not deterred terrorist radicals. In fact, because of our presence, there are more jihadists in Iraq than there were before.

Thus, I find it inconceivable that the President's response to this situation, 3 years of military failure in Iraq, is to suggest that we add more troops, 20,000 additional troops.

Since the start of the war in 2003, over 3,000 U.S. troops have died, more than 50 from my State of Maryland alone. In addition, 23,000 American soldiers have suffered serious injury and will have post-traumatic consequences.

The President's approach will only result in the loss of more U.S. lives.

Iraq is in the midst of what has become a civil war between Shia and Sunni. There also is internal tribal and gang violence. Our troops can play no constructive role in this environment, except as targets for all sides.

This is not a partisan Democratic issue. Let me be clear. The President's proposed troop escalation runs contrary to the recommendations of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group and military experts such as the Joint Chiefs of Staff. According to a December Washington Post article, the Joint Chiefs have long opposed the increase in troops.

Generals Colin Powell, George Casey, John Abizaid and Barry McCaffrey have all expressed skepticism about the President's surge strategy. Even some of my Republican colleagues will oppose this surge strategy, and for good reason.

Troop buildups in Iraq haven't worked. U.S. troop levels increased by 18,000 from November 2004 to January 2005 in advance of the Iraqi elections, yet insurgent attacks increased. In 2005, the administration increased troop levels by over 20,000 to secure Iraq ahead of its constitutional referendum. The strategy not only failed to quell the violence, but insurgent attacks increased by 29 percent.

Some of my Republican colleagues make an argument that if you support the troops, you must support the mission. They say if we don't defeat radical Islam in Iraq, then where will we do it? Unfortunately, both of these theories are flawed.

Our troops have performed admirably, sacrificing life and limb, often without sound strategy or adequate equipment. And, yes, the goal of peace and stability in the Middle East is admirable, but this mission is misguided. The fact is that despite previous congressional support, this mission was inadequately planned and our troops inadequate equipped. In addition, the administration has cast a blind eye at massive fraud, waste and abuse that has undermined the reconstruction efforts and cheated the American taxpayer.

We are now in the midst of a civil war that we neither understand nor can we resolve. I support the troops, but I cannot support this ill-conceived mission.

As hard as it is for some, we must understand that this is not a World War II type conflict. This is not our great army defeating their great army.

We cannot defeat a radical Islamic insurgency militarily. This does not mean we cannot defeat a radical Islamic insurgency. It does not mean that if we oppose a troop escalation or begin withdrawing our troops that we have failed. Rather, it is a recognition of what the American people already know: We need a new strategy.

This administration operates under the arrogant assumption that only America wants peace in Iraq. In fact, other Arab nations in the region have an even greater desire for peace and stability. They don't want to see their brethren killed. They don't want to see waves of refugees flood their region. Our new strategy should be a diplomatic initiative to bring countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iran and Syria to the table to engage in finding solutions.

Now, I know the war hawks will say diplomatic approaches cannot work. But think about it. It wasn't too long ago that this administration and these war hawks were saying that North Korea was an intractable enemy. Yet today, through diplomatic efforts, we are making appreciable progress. I believe this diplomatic approach can work in Iraq.

We need a dramatic change in strategy. We should begin with the withdrawal of U.S. troops and place more responsibility on the Iraqis to foster their own democracy. Most people, including General John Abizaid, understand that we cannot impose democracy on the Iraqis if they don't want it for themselves. That is why I support the End the War in Iraq Act, which would use the congressional power of the purse to bring this war to an end if the administration cannot or will not do so.

But in addition to beginning a phased withdrawal of U.S. troops, we must pursue an aggressive diplomatic initiative to involve willing Muslim countries in creating a ceasefire first, a peace process second, and the rebuilding of Iraq in the third instance. These countries have a vested interest in promoting peace and stability in the region.

It was said many years ago war is not the answer, and today more war in the form of troop escalation is the absolutely wrong answer. I urge adoption of the resolution.

Mr. KING of New York. Madam Speaker, I remind supporters of the resolution that the newly confirmed commander in Iraq says this is new strategy and it will work, and he is the expert on counterinsurgency.

Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN), the ranking member of the Budget Committee.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Friends and colleagues, I am glad we are having this debate. It is good to debate the most important issue facing our country, the most important issue facing the world. I am glad we are talking about Iraq. We need to have a debate about Iraq.

I have grave concerns about the conduct of this war. I look back at the last 3 or 4 years and I think to myself, boy, I would have done that differently, I would have done this differently; they should have done that, they should have done this. I think we all can look at hindsight and see how things should have been done differently.

Well, here is where we are. The question is, is this the right resolution to pass? I for one don't know if this strategy is going to work or not. I believe our troops are going to do exactly what we ask them to do. I have perfect confidence that the U.S. soldiers, airmen, Army and Marines are going to do exactly what we ask them to do and they will do their jobs.

Where my doubts lie are with the Iraqi Government. Will the Iraqi Government do what we are asking them to do? Will the Iraqi Government do what is needed to do to hold up their end of the bargain? I don't know.

But what I do know is this: If we pass this resolution, this resolution, while our troops are in the middle of implementing this mission, while our troops are over there right now implementing this strategy, and we pass this resolution which says, you know what, we don't think you can succeed; we don't think you can do the job; we don't think you can do what you are being asked to do right now, that is a slap in the face. It is a killer of morale. This is the wrong message to send our troops.

We have to think about the alternatives. We have to think about the consequences of failure. We have to think about the message this sends our troops. We have to think about the message this sends our enemies.

Madam Speaker, by telling the world, by telling Americans and by telling our enemies and our troops we don't think this is going to work, we don't think this can succeed, what message does that send?

And for those who say this won't work and I am voting for this resolution, it is your obligation to tell us how better you can do this, what is your plan, what is your strategy. Because we have to think about the consequences of failure. We have to accept and know that if we just pull out we will have sectarian genocide. We will have a safe haven for terrorists with oil money. We will have a Middle East power struggle that will be very, very ugly, where countries that are very hostile to us, like Iran and Syria, will have the run of the region. We have to look at those consequences.

But more important than anything else, Madam Speaker, is the fact that I just cannot look our soldiers in the eyes, and I am traveling to this region in a few days, I cannot look them in the eyes and tell them that when I was in the comforts of Congress, I sat there high open my pedestal and I told the American people and you that the mission you are about to engage in, the job you are trying hard to do for us, you can't complete it. You are incapable. It won't work. Why bother trying? I can't send that message to our troops.

With that, Madam Speaker, I urge a ''no'' vote. This is the right debate to have, the wrong resolution to pass.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from the great State of Ohio (Mrs.

JONES), currently serving as the chairwoman of the Committee on Ethics and a distinguished member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

□ 1840

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 63. Today through this resolution, we reiterate our support for our troops, these brave men and women, who even when they did not have proper equipment and resources, continued to serve and protect this country. Today we pledge to offer them the same support they have so willingly given us throughout the conflict.

To date, 3,100 soldiers have given their lives in this war and over 20,000 have been injured. I often feel that we gloss over the numbers and forget that each one was an actual person. They were somebody's son, daughter, somebody's mother or father, somebody's brother or sister. They were real people, as real as 19-year-old PVT. Brandon Sloan and 1SG Robert Dowdy, who were the first soldiers from my congressional district to become casualties of this war.

There have been many others, including SGT Michael Wiggins, a graduate of Shaw High School in East Cleveland, killed on January 23; or Charles King, a man described by family and friends as a highly decorated, hardworking soldier, died October 14 of injuries sustained when an improvised device detonated near his vehicle; and Samuel Bowen, who was affectionately called ''Smokey'' and always had a great smile on his face. He was killed when a rocket-propelled grenade exploded near his vehicle.

At his funeral, Specialist Ronald Eaton, a soldier rescued by Bowen, said, Without regard to himself, without regard to the injuries he had sustained, Sam grabbed me and pulled me to safety.

All of these are special stories, but I will share a few more with you about Brandon Sloan and Robert Dowdy.

Brandon Sloan was a special young man who exhibited a unique blend of personality and strength, a loving child who played and enjoyed spending time with other children. Later he became a big brother to his sister Brittany, with whom he shared a close relationship.

He began his education in East Cleveland and remained in the district until his family moved to Euclid. While in East Cleveland, he developed a love for basketball and continued in various athletic pursuits.

In 1996, the family moved to Oakwood in the Bedford School District, and there Brandon became a Bearcat. He confessed his hope in Christ during his high school years and was baptized. Later, he pursued a career in the military where he subsequently gave his life.

MSG Robert Dowdy was a native of Cleveland, a member of the 507th Maintenance Company. He was a loving son and devoted husband, a distance runner, placed second in a 10-kilometer run in El Paso.

Why am I talking about all of these personal things? Because somehow in the course of this discussion, we have taken it away from being personal, about people. We stand here on the floor talking about a surge, or giving life and saying we are not supporting these troops. These families want their babies to come home and so do I.

This past weekend I spoke to the 112th Battalion of the Ohio National Guard. The battalion is the oldest and most decorated military organization in the State of Ohio, with lineage and honors dating back to and including World War I and World War II. These men and women have sacrificed greatly for this country, and now they are being asked to support the President's plan to send 20,000 more troops.

I simply cannot support it. You have heard all the things I said previously. This is not the way. We do not need to send any more Brandons or Robert Dowdys or Michael Kings or Sam Bowens over there to die.

We pledged to take this country in a new direction without regard to the war in Iraq, through greater accountability, oversight, and through stronger diplomatic and political initiatives.

At the services for the 25th Marine Regiment, a Band of Brothers, we lost some 12 young men from Brook Park, and I said to them in my closing words, because these are the words I think these young men are saying to us:

''Please celebrate my life, please have no regrets; we did not spend all the time we wanted, yet the time we had was well spent. We did not reach every rung of that ladder, yet we wrung all that we could from each height.

''We did not sing every song, yet we sang every note of the song we sang, we did not laugh all the time, but when we did we often laughed until we cried or until our stomachs hurt; and when we cried, we cried until our tears ran dry.

''But most of all we loved, and our love is everlasting, if you look for us listen for us, but most of all live for us.

''We have fallen but you can lift us up. Your love, your faith, your support, and your pride was what we needed then; God's love, grace and mercy is what we need now.''

Lift these young men and women who have been killed in Iraq, lift them up and say to the world, no surge, no more young people will be lost in Iraq. Bring our troops home.

Mr. KING of New York. Madam Speaker, I certainly acknowledge the passion of the former speaker on the floor.

I would just say, though, that all of us have suffered casualties and deaths in our districts. Certainly a gentleman from my former district was killed last week. He was a graduate of Duke University. He was offered scholarships to law school. He was an All American lacrosse player, volunteered to serve in the Army, was in his third tour. His family more than ever supports the effort in Iraq, and you can find families on all sides.

I think it is wrong to somehow suggest that those who died, somehow the families want us to vote for this resolution or against it. We can find sufficient numbers on both sides. Certainly in my experience, most of those would oppose the resolution. I certainly would not impose that on anyone else.

Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TURNER), a distinguished member from the Armed Services Committee.

Mr. TURNER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for accommodating me so I might have some time to speak on this issue this evening.

Today, Speaker PELOSI has continued with what is called a debate on the Iraq war, but this is not a debate. The floor here is empty, except for the Members scheduled to come to the floor for the record and comment on the failures or success of the war on terror, the conflict in Iraq, prewar intelligence, the search for weapons of mass destruction, reconstruction efforts, al Qaeda, Saddam Hussein and, yes, George Bush. No real debate.

School children across America who are schooled in debate would not recognize what has happened here today, which should be the intellectual process of argument, because to call these series of speeches a debate is fiction, just as to call the nonbinding resolution proposed by the Speaker as congressional action is fiction.

This resolution has no binding effect on the administration, and it does not even have any binding effect on this body of Congress. This resolution is not a document from which decisions will be made or any action taken. This is not policy. This is not governance. It is, at best, a press conference. It is just talk.

The travesty of this fiction of a debate on the House floor is that there is no plan debated or alternatives for us to consider, only opposition. We do not have on the table a plan, an answer, or an action for us to take.

Now, I was not a Member of Congress when this House was asked in October of 2002 to grant the President authority to go into Iraq, and neither were 66 of my Republican Members of Congress. If they were with me they would fill this well, 66 of us that were not here on the Republican side when the President asked for authority to go into Iraq. However, I believe there are 55 Democratic colleagues who voted to send troops to Iraq who are still here today, and yet even those 55 Members who voted to send troops to Iraq offer no alternative plan. At a minimum you would think if you voted ''yes'' to send troops you would feel responsible and have a plan before publicly disapproving of the President's plan.

Now, there is certainly enough about the administration's handling of the Iraq conflict to disapprove of if we were to have a real debate. There is no question that serious mistakes have been

made in the execution of the Iraqi conflict. But today we will not debate solutions because, unfortunately, this resolution does not provide any.

In the war on terror, we have real enemies who want to kill Americans and our allies. No nonbinding resolution passed on this House floor will change that reality.

This is not a debate but it should be. The risks to our country are great. Our enemies and our men and women in uniform are listening. The only proposal brought forth by the Speaker is a statement of opposition and disapproval.

The House and the administration should work together on a bipartisan plan for winning the war on terror, a plan with a commitment that is not undermined by political expediency or partisan division.

□ 1850

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, at this time I would like to yield 5½ minutes to my distinguished colleague and friend from North Carolina, who currently is chairman of the Oversight Investigation Subcommittee of the House Financial Services Committee, Mr. WATT.

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

Mr. WATT. Madam Speaker, in October of 2002 I worked meticulously with Members of the Congressional Black Caucus to craft a statement of principles that has proven to be so absolutely prophetic. Listen to what our 2002 principle said, and it will put in context why I feel so strongly that this war has taken us in the wrong direction and why this resolution is so necessary and worthy of our support.

First principle: ''We oppose a unilateral first strike action by the United States without a clearly demonstrated and imminent threat of attack on the United States.''

My colleagues, history will record that the President took first strike action, and that there was neither a clearly demonstrated nor an imminent threat of attack on the United States.

Second principle: ''Only Congress has the authority to declare war.''

History will record that Congress delegated that authority to the President, but I say unapologetically that history will also record that I voted against that delegation of authority. I never believed that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction; and, even if it did, I never believed that they posed any imminent threat to the United States.

Third principle: ''Every conceivable diplomatic option must be exhausted.''

History will record that our President instead thumbed his nose at the United Nations and at almost all diplomatic options in his rush to lead us into this foolhardy war.

Fourth principle: ''A unilateral first strike would undermine the moral authority of the United States, destabilize the Middle East region, and undermine the ability of our Nation to address unmet domestic priorities.''

The passage of time has demonstrated and history will record that every single one of these concerns was legitimate and warranted.

Fifth principle: ''Any post-strike plan for maintaining stability in the region would be costly and require a long-term commitment.''

We haven't yet gotten to a level of stability that we are trying to maintain, but the cost of this war today exceeds $500 billion. That is costly and with no end in sight. If we continue to follow the President, the duration of our commitment has no end in sight and no plan to bring home or redeploy our troops.

Increasing the number of troops in Iraq does not make ending the war more foreseeable. Past troop increases in Iraq have paraded under different names than surge, but make no mistake about it, this is not the first time the United States will have increased troop levels, and each time they have been met with greater levels of violence.

From December of 2003 to April 2004, the troop increase paraded under the name ''troop rotation'' and resulted in an increase from 122,000 to 137,000 troops; yet April of 2004 was the second deadliest month for U.S. forces.

From November 2004 to March 2005, the increase paraded under the name ''improving counterinsurgency operations after the Fallujah offensive,'' or ''increasing security after January 2005.'' We increased our troop level to 150,000 troops; the result, no impact on violence increase. And again, September to December of 2005, we went to 160,000 troops, still no decrease in violence.

In most respects, what the President has proposed is business as usual, simply under a different name. It did not work before, and there is no prospect that it will work this time. Madam Speaker, this resolution is one that we should support and bring our troops home.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Resolution. Simply stated, as the Resolution says, I support the troops and I oppose the increase in the number of troops. Simply stated, I support a redeployment of the rest of our troops from Iraq as soon as possible.

But I can't go forward before I review how we got here in the first place. Looking back helps me to put a time perspective on this because this War is now approaching 5 years in duration, a period longer than the Second World War. And looking back also helps me to put a substantive perspective on this that I think is absolutely critical to an understanding of my vote.

It's gut wrenching for me to recall that as early as October 2002—several months before the President proceeded to war in Iraq and long before I was later elected to serve the 2-year term that I have now completed as Chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus—I worked meticulously with every single member of the Congressional Black Caucus to craft a Statement of Principles that have proven to be so absolutely prophetic. Listen to what our 2002 Principles said and it will put in context why I feel so strongly that this War has taken us in the wrong direction and why this Resolution is so necessary and worthy of support:

First 2002 Congressional Black Caucus Principle: "We oppose a unilateral, first-strike action by the United States without a clearly demonstrated and imminent threat of attack on the United States." My colleagues, history will record that the President took first strike action and that there was neither a clearly demonstrated nor an imminent threat of attack on the United States.

Second Principle: "Only Congress has the authority to declare war." History will record that Congress delegated that authority to the President, but I say unapologetically that history will also record that I voted against that delegation of authority. I never believed that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and—perhaps more importantly—even if they did, I never believed that they posed any imminent threat to the United States. Saddam Hussein was a dastardly tyrant and bully toward his own people, but was a coward and no threat to the United States.

Third Principle: "Every conceivable diplomatic option must be exhausted." History will record that our President, instead, thumbed his nose at the United Nations and at almost all diplomatic options in his rush to lead us into this foolhardy war.

Fourth Principle: "A unilateral first strike would undermine the moral authority of the United States, destabilize the Middle East region and undermine the ability of our Nation to address unmet domestic priorities." The passage of time has demonstrated and history will record that every single one of those concerns was legitimate and warranted.

Fifth Principle: "Any post-strike plan for maintaining stability in the region would be costly and require a long-term commitment." We haven't yet gotten to a level of stability that we're trying to maintain, but the cost of this War to date exceeds $500 billion. That's "costly" and with no end in sight. If we continue to follow the President, the duration of our commitment has no end in sight and no plan to bring home or redeploy our troops.

Increasing the number of troops in Iraq does not make ending the War more foreseeable. It will only escalate the number of troops and the prospects of casualties and will likely only increase the resolve of the enemy, the same thing that increases in troop levels have done in the past. Past troop increases in Iraq have paraded under different names than "surge". But, make no mistake about it, this is not the first time the United States will have increased troop levels. And each time they have been met with greater violence.

From December of 2003 to April of 2004, the troop increase paraded under the name "troop rotation" and resulted in an increase from 122,000 to 137,000 troops. Yet April of 2004 was the second deadliest month for U.S. forces.

From November 2004 to March 2005, the increase paraded under the name "improving counterinsurgency operations after the Fallujah offensive" or "increasing security before the January 2005 constitutional elections" and increased troops to 150,000. Result: short term positive impact, but longer term increase in violence and resistance.

Between September and December 2005, troop levels were increased again, taking the

number up to 160,000, around the constitutional referendum and parliamentary elections. The referendum and elections proceeded without major violence, but the increase had little long term impact on sectarian violence.

In most respects, what the President has proposed is business as usual, simply under a different name. It did not work before and there is little prospect that it will work this time.

Madam Speaker, this Resolution is our attempt to make it clear that we do not support a troop increase or an escalation of this War. I intend to vote for the Resolution. I just hope the President is listening.

Mr. KING of New York. Madam Speaker, I would suggest to the gentleman, while he believes this plan has no chance of working and it is the same as previous plans, the fact is the newly confirmed general in Iraq, General Petraeus, who is by all accounts the most significant general we have had in Iraq, who is the author of the counterinsurgency policy, said it is a significant change and it will work. That is why I would say that while the resolution says it supports the troops, you are in effect undermining the new commander by challenging either his credibility or his competency. And that is a terrible message to the troops.

Mr. WATT. Madam Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. KING of New York. I yield to the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. WATT. I am just sick and tired of people telling us that we are unpatriotic and not supporting of the troops.

Mr. KING of New York. Reclaiming my time, I never suggested unpatriotic. I said you are questioning the competency or credibility of the commander in Iraq, who was just confirmed unanimously by the United States Senate.

Madam Speaker, I yield 10 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN).

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. I would just like to say, it was interesting to hear the previous speaker talk about the principles articulated some years ago. They are reminiscent of the arguments I heard on this floor some 20 years ago when Ronald Reagan made the courageous decision to put medium range nuclear weapons into Europe, despite the protest of Europe, despite the protest of many on the other side, despite the fact we were told we were taking a unilateral step.

Sometimes it is difficult to make these decisions, and you can't always guarantee success. And if we always went by that argument, frankly, America would not be where it is today.

Let me begin with a note of bipartisanship, however. It goes without saying that we can all agree that things have not progressed as we wished they would in Iraq. Perhaps we could all agree with the characterization of the Iraq Study Group that the situation in Iraq is grave and deteriorating. I think we can all agree that there was therefore a need for a change in the direction of U.S. policy in Iraq.

Not only has this happened, but we have a new Secretary of Defense and, as was stated on the floor just a moment ago, we have a new commander on the ground in Iraq.

It is at this point, however, that I am somewhat mystified by my friends on the other side of the aisle. Since the resolution of disapproval concerning this change in the direction of U.S. policy contains absolutely no alternative, it follows that its adoption represents a tacit endorsement for the policies which we all agree are not working. It is a simple, logical entailment that criticism of a change in policy without any concrete alternative is tantamount to the endorsement of the status quo. Thus, we find ourselves in the ironic situation that to support this resolution is to condone a policy that virtually everyone agrees has not been working.

We are telling our troops that we are sending a new commander. We are telling them by this resolution that we don't support what the new commander is doing. We are saying by this resolution we don't believe that the new plan will work. We are saying, Godspeed, we support you. But we are sending you on a fool's errand.

If you truly believe that, stand up here and have the guts to stop the program by cutting off the money. Take responsibility for your actions, which the Constitution allows you to do.

Let me suggest to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that the absence of any comprehensible policy objective leaves only one element of the resolution intact: Disapproval of the President. And this, in my estimation, is most unfortunate, for there was one thing on which I wish we could all agree. This should not be about George Bush. It is far more important than that.

Our response to the current state of affairs in Iraq will have dramatic consequences not only for the people in Iraq but for the security of the American people as well.

□ 1900

I believe we must resist the temptation to fight over matters which have long ceased to be of any relevance.

The question of whether we should have initially gone into Iraq is simply not the issue. The fact is that we are there, and that is the unpleasant but essential reality to which we must respond. It is not possible to pretend otherwise or to keep looking backward or to keep quoting things that were said in the past or to suggest that we shouldn't be where we are. We are there. It is of little solace to our troops to say, gee, we made a mistake in putting you there, and therefore we are going to pass a resolution of disapproval of what we are asking you to do now. What sense does that make? What sense at all does that make?

It should be acknowledged that findings concerning the absence of a collaborative relationship between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda are not dispositive of the role of al Qaeda in Iraq. As Peter Berger, the only Westerner to conduct an interview on television with Osama bin Laden puts it, there is one thing that bin Laden and Bush agree on, says Peter Berger: that Iraq has become a central front in the war on terror. Berger, who did not support the decision to invade Iraq, warns of a potential repercussion at war's end that could make the blowback from the Afghan war against the Soviets look like high tea at the Four Seasons. This, in my estimation, is why it is so important that the impression not be given that our hand has been forced by Iraqi insurgents, notably al Qaeda of Mesopotamia.

If we have learned anything from the tragic events of the Khobar Towers, the Embassy bombings in East Africa, and the attack on the USS *Cole*, it is that the fanatics' perception of success only serves to embolden those who seek to kill us.

The extreme nature of this murderous mens rea is illustrated in an article in the London Telegraph which reports, ''A husband and wife arrested in the British terror raids allegedly planned to take their 6-month-old baby on a mid-air suicide mission, using the baby's milk bottle to hide a liquid bomb.'' The story is shocking on many levels, but perhaps so disturbing is that it shatters the belief that mothers and fathers share a common commitment to the future of their children.

We face an enemy which subscribes to an ideology rooted in a nihilistic culture of death. This contemporary version of the ''will to power'' seeks justification for a totalist world view through the abuse of a religion to camouflage its deeper roots.

As Paul Berman has chronicled in ''Terrorism and Liberalism,'' this fascist-like ideology arising out of the revisionism of Sayyid al Qutb taught that there was no middle ground and no possibility of compromise. Bin Laden became interested in a radical distortion of Islam from the fiery taped sermons of Abdullah Azzam, a disciple of al Qutb, and came to share Qutb's grim view of the world and used it to justify mass murder.

By the late 1980s, following the crackdown by the Egyptian Government on the extreme Islamist groups in response to the assassination of Sadat in 1981, many of the Islamic militants went into exile. It was through the presence of Egyptian Islamist teachers in Saudi Arabia that bin Laden and other al Qaeda members were influenced; most notably, Ayman al-Zawahiri, a leader in the Egypt Islamic jihad.

Another avenue by which this totalist ideology was introduced to the Middle East via the Vichy Government of France during World War II, which despite its short shelf-life, infected the French mandated territory of Syria-Lebanon. It was during this time that the ideological foundations of the

Baathist Party were laid and a Nazi regime headed by Rahid Ali was set up in Iraq. During this same period, the mufti of Jerusalem was wined and dined by none other than Hitler himself.

The point is that there were some very dark influences on this region of the world which are still playing themselves out today. We cannot believe that our absence from this area will solve problems and allow us to retreat.

We must make no mistake about their intentions: They seek to kill us. Ayman al-Zawahiri, al Qaeda's second in command, has left us with no ambiguity on the matter when he states that they have the right to kill 4 million Americans, 2 million of them children, and to exile twice as many and wound and cripple hundreds of thousands. No, we must not give such people a misapprehension about any misguided notions they may have about their providential place in history.

Although our ultimate objective in Iraq is to hand over power in an orderly fashion to a duly constituted government, the manner in which we do so is of the highest order of importance. That is what I don't hear from the other side. It is not just the question of peace being the absence of war, it is what we will have in the aftermath. What kind of a world will we have in the Middle East? Will it be safer for our children and our grandchildren? Will the implications of our decisions be heard in history as something of which we will be proud, or will it be just that we got tired of the effort?

And if we believe that by absenting ourselves from the area, that solves problems, it has never been the case. It wasn't the case when we got out of Lebanon following the attack on our marines; it was not the case when we basically got out of the area after the USS *Cole*.

Again, independent of the origins of al Qaeda's presence in Iraq, the relevant point is how al Qaeda itself perceives the war there. It is their potential reaction to our Iraqi policy which has most relevance. In this regard, the intercepted letter sent by al-Zawahiri to al-Zarqawi is most important and has been mentioned on this floor many times. He said, We must think for a long time about our next steps and how we want to attain it, and it is my humble opinion that the jihad in Iraq requires several incremental goals.

The first stage: Expel Americans from Iraq.

The second stage: Establish an Islamic authority or emirate, and then develop it and support it until it achieves the level of caliphate over as much territory as you can spread its power in Iraq and Sunni areas in order to fill the void stemming from the departure of the Americans.

The third stage: Extend the jihad wave to the secular countries of neighboring Iraq.

The fourth stage: Go after Israel.

It is, therefore, clear that regardless of how we might wish the situation to be, wishful thinking, as described in this resolution, is not a basis for policy.

Al Qaeda is present in Iraq, and they perceive it to be a central front in the war. It is simply not possible for us to pretend otherwise, as much as we would like it. This resolution does nothing to help us in this war against Islamic fascism. In fact, it goes in the opposite direction.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I believe that the statements made earlier by our good friend from North Carolina was right to the point. Unilateralism was our policy. We told the world, We don't need you. And what are we doing now? We are practically begging the world to come and help us with this mess that we created.

Diplomacy? Look at the success of the multilateralism that we have now advocated in our dealings with North Korea. But that was not the case with Iraq, and this is why we are having this problem.

Madam Speaker, I gladly yield 5 minutes to my good friend, the gentleman from Missouri, who currently chairs the Subcommittee on Information and Policy, and I am very, very happy to introduce the gentleman for 5 minutes (Mr. CLAY).

Mr. CLAY. I thank the gentleman from American Samoa for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise to declare my absolute and unwavering opposition to the President's plan to escalate this tragic and unnecessary war.

Four years ago, I stood on the floor of this House to oppose the original force authorization resolution. At the time, some of my colleagues cautioned me that I was taking a risk by opposing the President and failing to support the war against terrorism. But I took that position because I believed then and still believe today that great nations do not start wars as a matter of policy, they exercise diplomacy and negotiation to avert threats and achieve security.

□ 1910

The evidence that the administration presented did not clearly establish any imminent threat to our national security. I was convinced that invading Iraq, without international support and without unequivocal evidence that Iraq was involved in 9/11, would dangerously drain our military strength, distract us from fighting the very real terrorist threat, and ultimately weaken our credibility around the world. Now we can see that the world in Iraq has emboldened our enemies and provoked the scorn of our allies.

Madam Speaker, standing here 4 years later, I can only wish that my assumptions were wrong, that invading Iraq was somehow vital to our national security. We were told that there were weapons of mass destruction, and now we know there were no WMDs. We were told that Iraqi oil revenue would pay for this war, and now we know that that was only a pipe dream that has cost American taxpayers over $400 billion. We were told that our troops would be greeted as liberators, and now we know that was only wishful thinking based on neocon fantasies and not the facts.

Today, American troops are embroiled in a bloody quagmire that has already resulted in over 26,000 American casualties. And now, just this past week, the Defense Department Inspector General reported that senior administration officials engaged in a deliberate misinformation campaign about al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein. Now we have learned that officials in our government deliberately distributed altered intelligence assessments. Such a misinformation campaign is unconscionable and a greater threat to our national security than any act of terrorism.

We are all familiar with the historian's observation that great nations are not conquered by outside forces until the nation has destroyed itself from within. I implore my colleagues to heed the lessons of history. Do not allow the politics of deception to distort reality.

This administration is denying the facts. It has repeatedly misled the Congress and the American people and undermined our Nation's integrity throughout the world. Now the President is asking Congress to register more support for a policy failure. Escalating the military violence in Iraq by injecting 21,000 more U.S. troops into a civil war reflects nothing more than this administration's obstinate refusal to face present realities.

A vast majority of Americans want a responsible end to this war as soon as possible. They want our troops redeployed, they want us to alleviate the suffering of innocent Iraqis, and they want us to finally tell the Iraqi people that they must be engaged in their country's destiny. The future of Iraq must ultimately be determined by them, not by us.

I want to conclude by quoting a good friend of mine and a fellow colleague, the distinguished chairman of the Armed Forces Committee, IKE SKELTON. In a recent statement he said, ''Only the Iraqis can change the situation there and bring lasting security to their nation. I remain convinced that a gradual and responsible redeployment of U.S. forces is the best way to help the Iraqis take responsibility for their security and to restore the full strength of our military.''

Mr. KING of New York. Madam Speaker, I would just advise the supporters of the resolution that while Mr. CLAY and others did oppose the war, and I certainly commend them for their consistency, the fact is the Democratic leader at the time and many of the Democratic leaders in the House and the Senate strongly supported the war resolution in October of 2002, both in the House and the Senate.

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

Mr. KING of New York. I yield to the gentleman from Missouri.

Mr. CLAY. Sure, we had Democrats on this side supporting it. It didn't make it right. It certainly didn't make it right. We were given false information. This Congress and the country was given false information.

Mr. KING of New York. Reclaiming my time, both former President Clinton and others have said that he saw the same intelligence as President Bush did.

With that, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DAVID DAVIS), a newly elected Member.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to the resolution but in support of our troops.

According to former Congressman, Senator, and Secretary of State Daniel Webster, ''God grants liberty only to those who love it and are always ready to guard and defend it.'' That was true in the mid 1800s and it is still true today.

I represent the First District of Tennessee. Tennessee is known as the Volunteer State because of our heavy involvement in the Mexican War and the willingness of our men and women down through history to volunteer for service to our country.

Right now, there are brave men and women in our armed services who are sacrificing for our freedom. The people of the First District of Tennessee and I are indeed indebted for their service and we thank these brave soldiers and we pray for them and their families.

There are some who would want to limit their discussion to Iraq, while in fact we are involved in a global war on terror. We must be committed to win this war on terror that was started by radical Islamic extremists. This war did not start on September 11. We have been in a war for many years.

Many of you will recall the Iranian hostage crisis, 1979, 52 Americans held hostage, 444 days.

As we move forward in history, the Beirut bombings, 1983. Two hundred forty-one of our brave marine soldiers were killed.

Then we had the first bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993.

Then we had the USS *Cole* in 2000. Seventeen Americans killed.

Then finally, September 11, 2001, 3,000 Americans killed.

This war didn't start on September 11 and this war is not with Iraq. This is a war with radical Islam. We are involved to win a battle with terrorists who hate us, who hate our freedoms and who quite frankly hate our religion. The extremists have engaged us in battle. We owe it to our fellow citizens to see that we have nothing less than total victory.

Congress should not micromanage this war. We have one Commander in Chief. It is fine to disagree and to point out mistakes, but this resolution is a step to weaken the morale of our troops and it will embolden our enemies. We cannot allow this to become another Vietnam situation, a situation where politicians tried to manage the war.

My emotions run high as I remember that era. My first cousin, Fred Gouge, was laid to rest just 1 week ago. Fred was wounded in that war in Vietnam, a war that was micromanaged by politicians. Because of that conflict, he spent the better part of the last 40 years in a wheelchair. He received a Purple Heart for his service. He was a war hero, just like the men and women of our military are right now.

We cannot afford to ignore the advice of General Petraeus, who was recently unanimously approved by the Senate, and the advice of his commanders. I would ask, Madam Speaker, what message does a nonbinding resolution really send? This resolution says that this Congress will support our troops who have defended our freedoms, or who are currently serving in harm's way, but that is little comfort for those brave men and women who would be called upon to protect us and our families in the future. This nonbinding resolution is only playing politics with our brave soldiers, their lives and our future as a nation. To suggest that we can support the troops but not be in the battle to win is ridiculous and shortsighted.

I can remember as a child watching many different western television shows. Growing up, I don't know of many my age that didn't want to be the cowboy in the Wild West. After seeing many of these stories, you realize that when the hero is in trouble, they sound the alarm, or blow the trumpet, and in races the cavalry to join their brothers in arms to win the fight.

Madam Speaker, the trumpet has been sounded. It is time for the cavalry to join our brothers and sisters in arms to gain victory in this global war on terror. As the trumpet has been sounded, we have politicians in Washington who want to sit on their hands and not send in the troops.

Looking at the latest news, as additional forces are moving in, radical Islamic leaders like al-Sadr are fleeing for their strongholds. It has been reported that he has left Iraq for his own protection. The additional troops are already having a positive impact on the region. We have the ability to win this war on terrorism, and we must win this war to protect America today and for our future generations.

Madam Speaker, that is why I will join many of my colleagues in voting ''no'' on this resolution.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I could not agree more with my good friend in just quoting Daniel Webster. ''God grants liberty to those who love it.'' The problem that I have right now is that I don't know if the people among the Shiites and the Sunnis love liberty that much to want to make sacrifices. The point of the matter is Saddam Hussein tortured and murdered over 300,000 Shiites. One mass grave contained 30,000 dead bodies. So we have got a real serious problem here.

I gladly yield 5 minutes to the distinguished lady from the State of Texas, the chairlady of the Transportation and Infrastructure subcommittee on environment.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, the American people want a new direction in Iraq and I expect Congress to act accordingly. They really do think that this is a democracy and that this is representative government.

□ 1920

It has been almost 4 years since this administration declared the end of major combat in Iraq. He declared mission accomplished. Since this declaration, we have seen more than 3,000 of our military killed in combat, and more than 22,000 injured.

We cannot forget that these are not just numbers. These are our sons and daughters and grandsons and granddaughters. They are now more than 3,000 men and women who will never return home to be with their families. Many are so young, at 18, 19 and 20 years old, their lives have ended before they ever really began.

I started my professional career as a psychiatric nurse at the Dallas Veterans Administration Hospital, and I observed firsthand the physical and psychological trauma that the returning young people faced from the Vietnam war.

It is a long-term battle for them and their families as they learn to live with these disabilities. We are in a war with no end in sight, and now we are talking about troop escalation. How many more young lives are we going to lose? How many more soldiers will face long-term disabilities, life-long disabilities? The experts have weighed in on this issue, and they have said we are making a mistake to escalate.

The President sent a group of experts to design a new course for Iraq. The President's experts did not recommend additional troops. In fact, they recommended the very opposite.

Madam Speaker, it is time to listen to the experts and the commanders on the ground. Our troops are faced with an impossible task of policing a civil war. Each day we hear of sectarian attacks and bombings. Our troops are caught in the middle with no real strategy to end this violence. A great American military cannot be a substitute for a weak Iraqi government.

We need to focus on diplomatic solutions and training Iraq's security forces so they can take care of themselves and patrol their own country. With this escalation, we are just compounding the problem. We should concentrate on training the Iraqi security forces. They must know that this is not going to be an open-ended situation.

Madam Speaker, my constituents in north Texas continue to grieve the loss of their sons and daughters. They are

concerned for our troop safety and they are demanding answers. The war is costing us too many lives and too much money, $1 billion a week. At an overall cost of $500 billion, we will be paying the cost of this war for decades to come.

In my congressional district in Dallas, Texas, our share of the cost will be $1 billion. In Dallas this would have provided 400,000 children with health care or paid for 23,000 additional police officers. For our Nation's 300 million Americans, their share will be $1,300 a piece.

Accountability of Iraq war spending has been appalling. Does there exist any accountability? Last week we began the congressional hearings regarding contracting fraud. Apparently there is $12 billion unaccounted for. Contractors were being paid with large bags of cash.

This is truly an embarrassment and the height of irresponsibility as thousands of American children go to bed hungry tonight. Many are children of our troops, and now we are talking about spending more money and adding more troops. We need to end this, redeployment needs to start now.

Madam Speaker, we have before us a bipartisan resolution opposing the escalation of troops in Iraq. However, this debate is only the first step. The ultimate goal is to bring our troops home safely and swiftly. It is time for the President to listen to the American people and his advisers and refrain from changing the leadership when they disagree with him.

The best way to support our troops serving in Iraq is to say ''no'' to the President's escalation of this war. An outstanding general said recently that stubbornness cannot be mistaken as leadership and cliches cannot be called policy.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. KING of New York. Madam Speaker, various supporters of the resolution can point to this general or that general. I would point to the general who was most recently confirmed and unanimously confirmed by the United States Senate, who is the author of this plan. I will stand by him.

Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LATHAM).

Mr. LATHAM. I thank the gentleman from New York for allowing me this time.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to share everyone's frustration with the mistakes that have been made in Iraq, and the fact that progress has not been made as fast as we would all have liked. I would say, though, before you cast your vote on this resolution, I think it is only fair to remind Members of this Chamber that the main thrust of this resolution focuses only on one of at least 10 of the recommendations the administration is carrying out based upon the work of the Iraq Study Group. Others include shifting our primary mission to training and equipping Iraqi security units and embedding more U.S. soldiers in the Iraqi military.

The administration has also pledged to hold the Iraqi Government accountable to its commitments to take primary responsibility for security in all of Iraq's provinces by November, establishing a fair constitutional amendment process, reforming de-Baathification laws, creating a fair oil revenue sharing arrangement and holding local elections.

Let me also remind the Democratic majority that when the Iraq Study Group announced its recommendations, the Democratic leaders publicly stated they hoped the President would embrace the report. But when the administration proposed carrying out policy recommendations by the study group, which included a surge in troops, the Democrats backed away and took the cynical approach, oppose and criticize, rather than to offer to work for real solutions.

Some Members of this body will use this week's nonbinding resolution to run away from the vote that they cast in 2003. I will suggest to you that history will judge this Congress in a manner many of you have not considered. In my judgment, every Member who votes in favor of this resolution is endorsing the Democratic Party's decision to manage the war from Capitol Hill.

After all, as the debate on this resolution got under way this week, the Democrat leadership in this House made it perfectly clear that the resolution is just the first effort by the majority to begin a Democratic-led legislative micromanagement of this war.

It is said that Colin Powell advised the President on Iraq, if you break it, you own it. So I want to tell the Democratic majority that with this resolution, your plan to micromanage this war through your legislative initiatives, you are taking possession of this war.

With this resolution, you are taking over the day-to-day management of this conflict, and at the same time taking the onus off of the President. Let me say that again. You are now responsible for the outcome of this war.

The Democratic majority has determined that solutions to our most complicated conflicts can be solved through nonbinding resolutions, and I predict forcing the President's hand by cutting off the funding for our men and women in uniform, just like they did in Vietnam. Our soldiers fought gallantly in Vietnam as they do today in Iraq, but the legislative micromanagement by the U.S. Congress during the Vietnam era, and in decisions to cut funding for our military mission in Southeast Asia, only tied the hands of our warriors, but it not only tied the hands of our warriors, it demoralized our men and women in uniform for decades.

Ladies and gentlemen, the new majority has not learned from the mistakes of the past, but has arrogantly concluded that House Democrats can take command and control of our strategy and our troops in Iraq from the floor of this Chamber. Keep in mind, now that the Democratic leadership has assumed the role of Commanders in Chief, the consequences of failures are now also theirs. Just as the North Vietnamese changed their strategy and were emboldened by the misguided actions of the Congress, so too will the enemies of freedom in Iraq be emboldened by this and subsequent resolutions by this Congress.

Furthermore, if the majority party's political rhetoric corresponds with their legislative agenda on Iraq, you can rest assured that the humanitarian disaster will be yours. The jihadist victory will be yours. The rogue state coalition of Iran and Syria will be yours.

□ 1930

A genocidal Sunni-Shiite-Arab civil war will be yours. You will have handed al Qaeda victory and empowered its homicidal leaders. Again with this resolution, the Democratic majority has seized control of this conflict. And again, remember what Colin Powell said: If you break it you own it.

History will not focus on your voting for the resolution authorizing the force, but they will long remember you unleashing the hell that is going to come in Iraq by voting for this resolution.

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

Madam Speaker, I would say in response to the gentleman's comments, we gladly accept the responsibility. That responsibility was truly exhibited in the election in November. This is the reason why we are taking action. I think this resolution, every bit, is part of that accepting the responsibility and the will of the American people who have spoken in the November election. I just want to note that.

Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON), who is currently chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Economic Development in the Transportation Committee.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time. I thank him for the disproportionate service of his own constituents in this war.

As the House prepares to consider a bill for the first full House vote in two centuries for the taxpaying American citizens who live in the Nation's Capital, that have fought in all our wars, I dedicate these words to the first D.C. resident to die in the Iraq war, 21-year-old National Guard Specialist Darryl Dent of the 54th Transportation Company, and to the other residents of the District of Columbia who have died in this war without a vote in this House.

Like the soldiers from every State and territory, Specialist Dent did not have the luxury of equivocation. He

acted, so must we. With uncommon bravery, loss of life, and unique injuries, our troops have acted. So must we.

The resolution before us asks quite simply: Whose side are we on? Do we support our troops best by committing another 20,000 to a war where only they must act and only they are accountable? Do we support our troops by sending more of them to another battle of Baghdad while the insurgents scatter to return as before, unless, of course, our troops are to be permanently deployed in the cross-hairs of a civil war?

Do we support our troops by sending 20,000 more whose lives will be in the hands of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, the man we are asked to believe will help put down the militias responsible for civil war conditions, although their leaders are part of his government?

Madam Speaker, the vote this resolution seeks is about our troops more than about the war. Four years of worsening insurgency have rendered a verdict of its own on the war, that even great powers cannot alone win another country's civil war without its leadership and without diplomacy.

Yet another verdict on this war has been rendered by the migration of 2 million Iraqis; among them, the physicians and other professionals who will be desperately needed in postwar Iraq. The 50,000 monthly who flee for safety have created the largest refugee crisis in the Mideast since 1948.

No, Madam Speaker, dispatching 20,000 more American troops to Iraq is not about the war, it is about those troops and the troops that are already there. Most tragically, this war will be remembered for citizen soldiers like Specialist Darryl Dent, the largest number to be uprooted from family and job since World War II.

Recently more than 60 percent of the fatalities were National Guard soldiers who typify average Americans, computer operators, teachers, police officers, who joined to serve at home but were always ready and willing to serve anywhere.

By what right do we call on them again, some for the second or the third time? Devoted though they remain, declining enrollment has had to be bolstered by increasing incentives to preserve the volunteer, all-volunteer military. Here in the capital, the Guard's unique mission to protect the Federal presence is at risk, just as those called away from every State have weakened homeland protection and security.

As Mississippi and Louisiana Guards were serving in Iraq, Guard units from every State except Hawaii plus 7,500 active duty soldiers were necessary during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. By what right do we surge troops into Iraq? Are we about to throw more citizen soldiers and weekend warriors with truncated training into a war with results like those of 2005?

Reserve and Guard were 10 percent of the fatalities during major combat in March and April of 2003. By August of 2005, 57 percent of U.S. fatalities were reservists that year. How can we ask our troops to give yet again? They have given to the preemptive war against weapons of mass destruction that did not exist. They have given as the war morphed into a war for democracy that is not yet in sight.

The question before us, my friend, is not what will the President do or even what will we do. The question before us is what more can we ask our troops to do after 4 years of repetitive brave combat duties?

The question answers itself. Let the troops pass the baton to the Iraqis. Bring our troops home to their children, their families, their mortgages, and, yes, to all of us.

Mr. KING of New York. Madam Speaker, I would suggest that the lives of our troops are in the hands of General Petraeus, and his credibility is undermined by this resolution.

Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD).

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

Mr. LAHOOD. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution. More importantly, I rise today to express my support for our Commander in Chief and the men and women serving in the Armed Forces. It is simply not possible to claim that you support the troops while completely disavowing their mission.

Our troops in Iraq put their mission first, above all else, even their own safety. How can we even consider passing a resolution stating that we do not support providing them the manpower that they need to accomplish their mission? How does this support the morale? How does this show them that we have confidence in their abilities?

As we all know, this resolution has no real legal authority, it is preemptive, purely political, without taking the difficult step of offering an alternative proposal. At first I thought this debate was simply political theater, 3 days of speeches and sound bites.

But now we are learning this resolution is simply the first step. The gentleman from Virginia quoted in The Washington Post yesterday, saying: This is just the bark, this resolution is the bark, the real bite will be in 2 weeks when they trot out a continuing resolution or appropriation bill that will cut off the funds to the troops.

I hope you are all relishing the opportunity to support that appropriation to cut off the troops. This is the bark. The next the step is to cut off the funds.

I supported the original resolution authorizing force. I have served on the Intelligence Committee for 8 years, and I believe we have done the right thing. I believe our troops have done the right thing.

Saddam is gone. He has been tried and executed; 12 million Iraqis, over 70 percent of the people, have voted for their own leadership. The army and the police are being trained. Schools and hospitals are being built and opened. Coalition forces have done the best they can under extraordinary circumstances.

Iraqis need to continue to take control of the security. And in every discussion we have had with the Commander in Chief, he has been on the phone talking to the Prime Minister, persuading him that the American people are becoming impatient, that he has to take control of his government, he has to stand up an army, he has to stand up a police force.

I believe the Commander in Chief, the President, will hold the Prime Minister's feet to the fire and hold the Iraqi Government accountable so that they can begin to take full control of the responsibilities.

I think when that happens we will have achieved a great deal. I will not vote for this resolution that does nothing but show our enemies that the House of Representatives does not support our military. This ignores the more than 3,100 men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice. We turn our backs on the 3,100 when we pass a resolution like this.

□ 1940

And we also turn our backs on those that are doing the hard work in Iraq today. When I have had opportunities to visit those who have served from my district, who have come back, I have not heard one word of complaining, not one word of whining, no wringing of hands, only an opportunity to serve.

And so I urge my colleagues to stand up for the troops, stand up for the military, stand up for those who have done the hard work. Stand up for those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. Vote down this resolution and send the message that we stand with those who stand for freedom and hope and opportunity.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I submit it is not General Petraeus that we are questioning here. It is the decision of our Commander in Chief, our President, his decision to deploy some 20,000 troops, additional troops to this mess that we created in Iraq. We planned and carried out this war on the cheap, saying we only needed 140,000 when in fact the experts said we needed at least 250,000 or 300,000 to complete and do the job. That didn't happen. So why do you think that adding another 20,000 troops is going to make that much difference? That is what is at issue and I think this is what we need to debate on.

Madam Speaker, I gladly yield 5 minutes to my good friend from North Carolina, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, a member of the Armed Services Committee.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) for yielding this time to me, and thank the Speaker for convening this very important debate this evening.

Madam Speaker, I come to the floor this evening to express my unconditional support for H. Con. Res. 63. I also come to the floor this evening to thank the leadership, to thank Speaker NANCY PELOSI and the majority leader, and Chairman IKE SKELTON for their leadership on this issue, and thank them very much for scheduling this debate. I am confident that the American people are also appreciative of this debate.

Madam Speaker, 4 years ago, shortly before I was elected to this body, the President of the United States convinced this Congress that dictator Saddam Hussein had in his possession weapons of mass destruction, and that he was prepared to use those weapons against our country. The world now knows that he was wrong, and history will decide whether that intelligence was manipulated or whether it was an honest mistake.

But this evening, Madam Speaker, the invasion we all know, happened. We captured Baghdad, and we arrested Saddam Hussein, and he has now been convicted and executed. But the search for weapons of mass destruction revealed that there were no weapons whatsoever.

Our aim then turned to helping the Iraqi people create a democratic government with free and fair elections, a constitution was ratified, and elected representatives are now making decisions on what is best for their country. The Iraqi Government has a security force in place, and we are assisting in training them to defend their country.

In 4 years of fighting the brave men and women of our Armed Forces have accomplished every mission put before them. They have performed admirably and completed all that is possible militarily possible in Iraq. There is an intractable problem on the ground in Iraq. The tensions between the sectarian groups are centuries old. We all know that, and our continued presence is exacerbating those tensions. It is no longer a military problem, but a political problem best resolved through diplomacy.

It is clear, Madam Speaker, that a continued open-ended military action is not in the best interest of our country. It is not in the best interest of the Iraqi people or the citizens of the Persian Gulf region. We have reached the point where we need to turn Iraq over to the Iraqis. Iraqis know that, so that the Iraqis will know that the U.S. is not an occupying force.

Since the invasion we have lost 3,000 lives. We have heard that for the last 2 days. And so many of those injuries are permanent. The financial cost of this war exceeds $400 billion. The President is now seeking another $245 billion to finance the war over the next 18 months.

Madam Speaker, if those funds were invested in rural America, there is no question that we would improve thousands of lives in our own country.

Our military and their families are tremendously strained. Some troops are on their fourth and fifth deployments. Military personnel costs are skyrocketing. Further strains on our Armed Forces will leave this country unprepared for a wide range of threats that now exist. At a cost to the American taxpayer of nearly $2 billion a week, we simply will not have the resources needed to prepare for the wide variety of future threats that our country may have to face and for our domestic needs at home.

America has a problem and we must fix it. This debate this evening is the first step in a new direction. Our goals in Iraq have been accomplished, and it is now time to begin bringing our troops home. Now is not the time for escalation. Surges have not helped before, and they will not help now.

The time has come to redeploy and reset our force to begin addressing our other challenges around the world and give us an opportunity to repair our relationships with our allies and refocus on the war on terror.

Mr. KING of New York. Madam Speaker, I would say to my good friend from American Samoa that one of the reasons why I do refer to General Petraeus is he is one of those who put this plan together and he says it will work, and for people to belittle his plan or to ridicule it or to adopt for the first time in history a resolution attacking his strategic plan is an attack on either his credibility or his competency. You can't have it both ways.

Madam Speaker, I yield 7 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS), who has been to Iraq 15 times.

Mr. SHAYS. Madam Speaker, it is good we are having this debate. As a 20-year veteran of this place, I am, frankly, impressed with the heartfelt and articulate statements from both sides of the aisle. On matters of war and peace, it is imperative we do what is right for our country, as we see it, and then live personally with the consequences.

Critics of the war in Iraq wanted new leadership at the Department of Defense, new military leadership on the ground, and a new plan to stabilize Iraq and bring our troops home.

We have a new Defense Secretary, Robert Gates, new Commanding General of Multinational Forces, David Petraeus, who everyone acknowledged is as perfect a person for this job as we could find, and a new strategy to clean up, hold and rebuild the neighborhoods with a short-term buildup of our forces.

The Democratic majority in the House has introduced a resolution condemning this strategy, expressing disapproval, without offering any alternatives. Ironically, they offer a stay the course resolution.

The majority is clear on what it is against, but does not say what it is for, leaving us with what exists right now, the status quo.

The resolution sends the wrong message to the President, to our troops, and to our enemies. It will not get my vote.

We need a resolution to help resolve this conflict, not a symbolic resolution that gives no guidance on how we can help stabilize Iraq and bring our troops home.

Working with Congressman FRANK WOLF and others, we helped create the Iraq Study Group, bipartisan experts led by Jim Baker and Lee Hamilton who offered fresh eyes on Iraq and offered specific recommendations.

The Iraq Study Group made three recommendations, transfer responsibility for police patrolling the streets from American troops to Iraqi security forces; two, encourage Sunnis and Shias to resolve their differences or face the consequences, American troops leaving; and, three, conduct a robust diplomatic effort with all of Iraq's neighbors to engage them in the country's future.

The White House has implemented the first and second of those recommendations but, regretfully, not the third.

The Study Group provided a road map resoundingly endorsed by members from both political parties. It is a missed opportunity that the resolution we are debating this week does not incorporate these three recommendations.

I know there are many Americans who are concerned about a short-term increase in troops to secure and regain control of Baghdad. I understand their concern. Two years ago I believed this strategy had a better than even chance to work. Today it is less likely to succeed, but it is still the best opportunity we have.

□ 1950

But this strategy will only work if Iraqi troops do their part; Sunni and Shia politicians resolve their differences, meeting benchmarks against firm timelines like they did in 2005; and the U.S. and Iraq engage in a diplomatic surge with all of Iraq's neighbors, including Syria and Iran.

We also need to be prepared with plan B if this plan fails. It seems to me plan B involves taking our troops out of harm's way, removing them from the urban areas, and placing them along the borders so Iraq's neighbors, Syria, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan, and Turkey, are not tempted to enter Iraq.

And if plan B fails, we will have no choice but to leave, having been defeated, having lost to the Islamist terrorists who have made it very clear this is just the beginning.

In essence, our troops deserve to know we have a plan to win. If we do not have a plan to win, we need a plan to leave. The resolution before the House neither helps us succeed nor gives us guidance on when and how to leave. It is counterproductive.

It is so counterproductive, for 535 Members of the House of Representatives and Senate to micromanage the war. It is the responsibility of the administration to conduct the war effort. It is Congress's responsibility to conduct tough oversight, hold the administration accountable for the implementation of the war.

Having chaired 14 hearings on the operations in Iraq and been to Iraq 15 times to conduct on-the-ground oversight, I will continue to ask the administration the tough questions and to provide, to the best of my ability, my observations and recommendations.

Regretfully, too few Members of Congress have fully considered the consequence of leaving Iraq prematurely. The Iraq Study Group warned, ''If the situation in Iraq continues to deteriorate, the consequence could be severe for Iraq, the United States, the region, and the world.'' This is what members of the Iraq Study Group said on a bipartisan basis, Republicans and Democrats united.

The ultimate goal for me is to bring our troops home without leaving Iraq in chaos. This is still achievable if Republicans and Democrats, the White House and Congress, agree on a bipartisan solution and then carry it out with steely resolve. Officially endorsing the recommendations of that Iraq Study Group and acting on them is the best way to make this happen.

The only way we should leave Iraq is the same way we went in: together.

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

I just want to note with interest also in my good friend from New York's observations, on this side of the aisle we are in no way trying to criticize or humiliate the integrity of the great general that is now leading our forces in Iraq. In fact, I have the utmost respect for General Petraeus. He received his doctoral dissertation from Princeton University on counterinsurgency; and that is why, as the former commander of the 101st Airborne Division, he was so successful as a general up in Mosul. So I think we need to have that framework understood with my good friend from New York. We are not questioning the integrity of the good general, General Petraeus. It is the decision made by our President, who is the Commander in Chief, that we are debating about in this great debate that we are having this evening.

Madam Speaker, I want to yield 5½ minutes to my good friend, the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE), a distinguished member of the Financial Services Committee.

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman so much for yielding.

First of all, I must humbly acknowledge what a difficult situation we face in Iraq, and I respect the passionate debate on both sides. And I must concede that I don't really have a cohesive, comprehensive plan for fixing Iraq. And, indeed, the Iraq Study Group has indicated that really no one can guarantee that any course of action in Iraq at this point will stop sectarian warfare, growing violence, or the slide toward chaos.

Our intelligence community recently found that the violence in Iraq is now a self-sustaining sectarian struggle. Our military leaders have indicated that a prolonged occupation cannot prevent what already exists: little political accommodation, hardening sectarian divisions, and a growing civil war.

It has been asked what the majority is for. Well, I can tell you that I am for standing down from these policies in Iraq that have been based primarily on fear and pride. Fear can be false evidence appearing real, and fear is one of the most destructive afflictions that can affect the human mind, and often, as we have seen, feeds aggression. Pride, of course, is one of the seven deadly sins, and it is an excessive belief in one's own abilities and is often called the sin from which all others arise. Oh, we are going to be great liberators.

Fear can appear and make you see a false reality. As the ancient author Lactantius said, ''Where fear is present, wisdom cannot be.''

In 2003 America's fear of weapons of mass destruction, Saddam Hussein, and al Qaeda bolstered arguments for going to war. Fear outraced the facts, and 4 years later our troops find themselves in a civil war.

Today this debate, this call for an escalation, is led by fear. We hear the dire predictions about withdrawing from Iraq: Oh, if we leave, civil war and bloodshed will continue. Sadly, the reality is if we stay, civil war and bloodshed will continue. Pride blinds our actions just as much as fear, and some have said that ego is the defender of fear. A requirement of pride, indeed a symptom, is that each challenge to our pride drives us harder to improve our illusions and keep up appearances. Oh, we are going to achieve victory. Oh, we have got to maintain the morale and pride of the forces. Oh, if we don't succeed, we don't support our troops. And if we send more troops, we are sending the wrong message. A very precarious warning about pride that I think we are all familiar with is that ''pride cometh before a fall.'' In order for us to consider what our real interests in Iraq and the Middle East are, we have to get past stoking fear and pride.

Fact: The U.S. is not going to impose democracy on Iraq by military force. And no matter how proud we are, no matter how much we may wish, no matter when we leave, the U.S. will leave an Iraq that is in pieces, not at peace. The U.S. alone cannot stabilize the Middle East. Will our pride prevent us from reaching out and being honest brokers and invite others in the region, such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, to help stabilize Iraq? It is said that the punishment for pride is being broken on the wheel, and our budget and military readiness is being broken on the wheel.

There are a lot of things I would like to see in Iraq, Madam Speaker: more political and economic opportunities for women, respect for law, the emerging of democratic institutions. But as the Iraq Study Group noted, achieving the goal of having an Iraq that can govern itself, sustain itself, and defend itself will require much time and depend primarily on the actions of the Iraqi people, not American troops.

Mr. KING of New York. Madam Speaker, again I would suggest to these supporters of the resolution that the President's key advisers, including the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Pace, and the new commander in Iraq, General Petraeus, strongly support this increase in troops.

Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Washington State (Mr. REICHERT).

Mr. REICHERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York for yielding.

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

□ 2000

Let us just think about where we are today as a country, about the global war we are in with people with intent to kill Americans and how that affects our strategy in Iraq. When considering this, we must consider our Nation's history and other difficult times of war.

There have been many bleak moments in America's history, battles we have been engaged in where American victory was far from certain.

In 1942, hell bent on dominating the world with his ideology, Adolph Hitler and the Third Reich systematically marched through Europe, taking the most basic freedoms from the Jewish people and killing millions. The United States entered World War II reluctantly and we were not ready for the hurdles we faced.

Don't forget, there were times when victory was far from certain. The outlook was grim. Many Americans and Europeans alive today can remember how bleak those times were as the war drug on and on and on. But we didn't give up. We persevered, because we knew there was too much at stake.

Eighty years before World War II, in 1862, President Lincoln faced a war that most believed could not be won. He faced vocal and unrelenting criticism for his resolve to win the Civil War. When the war began, Lincoln called for 74,000 troops for 90 days; 74,000 troops for 90 days. And history has showed us that Lincoln greatly underestimated the resources needed, because, as we know, over 620,000 soldiers were killed during that war.

At a time in our history when it might have been politically expedient to win the Civil War without first achieving victory, President Lincoln pressed on, constantly seeking a new strategy, until he found one that worked because so much was at stake.

Perhaps some of the resolve Lincoln displayed came from lessons he learned 15 years earlier when he entered a smaller battle. In 1848, Abraham Lincoln was an often criticized young

freshman Member of this body, the House of Representatives, and was facing a difficult point in his career. Lincoln criticized the reasons President Polk gave for getting us into the Mexican-American War, a war that began before Lincoln came to office, a position that I can identify with today as I stand here.

Then-Congressman Lincoln voted for a resolution that stated the Mexican-American War was ''unnecessarily and unconstitutionally'' initiated by President Polk. Lincoln thought the war was nothing more than a political move to grab land from the Mexican people.

My friends, it is legitimate and in fact our duty to question the reasons why our country goes to war, and Abraham Lincoln showed us that. However, he also showed us something else. Abraham Lincoln made an incredibly important distinction that we can learn from today.

A Lincoln biographer, Doris Kearns Goodwin, writes that after being criticized for that vote ''Lincoln sought to clarify his position, arguing that although he had challenged the instigation of the war he had never voted against supplies for the soldiers.''

This is an important point to make again. Lincoln sought to clarify his position, arguing that although he had challenged the instigation of the war he had never voted against supplies for the soldiers. Lincoln knew the damage of condemning a war while claiming to support the troops. Yet that is what this resolution before us does today.

During the American Revolution, the men and women who had become this country's first citizens were declared by the King of England to be in rebellion. The King sent soldiers across the Atlantic to quell the uprising.

In every war, it is the average citizen who stands up and fights for his neighbor's freedom. It is the same today. In response to the King of England's attack, again it was the average citizen who raised his hand, volunteered, stood up and fought for our freedom. A bookstore owner, the manager of an iron foundry and a land surveyor all stood and fought for our freedom. Those men were Henry Knox, Nathaniel Green and George Washington.

During America's War for Independence, it was not clear if we would prevail then. We lost battle after battle. Troops deserted the battlefields. General Washington and his deputies persevered, continuing to engage the enemy until the tide turned, because so much was at stake.

We are the United States of America today and we are free because General Washington refused to quit. We are the United States of America today and we are free because Abraham Lincoln refused to quit. And we are the United States of America today and we are free because Roosevelt and Truman refused to quit. And we are the United States of America today and we are free because of the sacrifice of the men and women in uniform who put their lives on the line in Iraq, Afghanistan and all around the world, preserving our freedom.

Today, the United States is engaged in another war, and just as before we face an enemy that wants to destroy our way of life. Just as before we face an enemy that thinks it is winning. Just as before our country is divided. Just as before we are making mistakes. Just as before we face a moment of truth about what to do next. And just as before the consequences of losing are devastating.

The enemy is clear about what their intentions are by what they say and what they do. Al Qaeda and the global movement that it has spawned have made it clear they want nuclear and biological weapons. It is clear they want to kill us, Americans. Osama bin Laden has called acquiring nuclear weapons a ''religious duty.'' The fact is we are engaged in a global war with people intent on killing Americans, and regardless of how we got into Iraq, Iraq is now the central front of that war.

And yet while we debate this nonbinding resolution, what is really at stake is winning or losing. Like Lincoln, I was not in this office as the war began. I understand the arguments. I understand the questions. I have been asking questions, too, as an elected official in this body for the past 2 years, as a concerned citizen, and before that, as a veteran. I understand that there are many who think we should never have entered Iraq. We now know there was faulty intelligence that led to that decision.

But the war is upon us nonetheless. I am elected to deal with what is happening now. Will we succeed? Will we win? Just as at other moments in our history, those questions stand unanswered. The consequences of declaring an end to the war in Iraq without victory would be felt for decades. Our enemies around the world would be emboldened. Iran and al Qaeda would declare victory. Our allies in Iraq would certainly face bloodshed, and our allies around the world would question our resolve to help protect them.

Sergeant Eddie Jeffers is a U.S. Army infantryman serving in Ramadi, Iraq. Sergeant Jeffers has a firsthand appreciation for what is at stake in Iraq and our presence there and what it means to the Iraqi people.

He writes, ''We are the hope of the Iraqi people. They want what everyone else wants in life: Safety, security, somewhere to call home. They want a country that is safe to raise their children in. They want to live on, rebuild and prosper. And America has given them that opportunity, but only if we stay true to the cause and see it to its end. But the country must unite in this endeavor. We cannot place the burden on our military alone. We must all stand and fight, whether in uniform or not. Right now the burden is all on the American soldier. Right now hope rides alone. But it can change. It must change, because there is only failure and darkness ahead for us as a country, as a people, if it doesn't.''

Sergeant Jeffers' words hit at the heart of our present challenge in Iraq. Our current strategy in Iraq is failing, and yet failure is not an option. In November, the American people told us they wanted a new strategy, not because they wanted to lose, but because they wanted to win. Now we have a new strategy before us.

Is this new plan going to work? I don't know. No one in this body who is voting on this resolution knows.

□ 2010

What I do know is that we must find a way to achieve victory, and simply saying ''no'' to a new plan without offering up an alternative will not work and sends a terrible message to our enemies and our soldiers.

This is an historic war. America is engaged in a war for our freedoms on a scale that we have never experienced before. I understand the dissension, the questions and the uncertainty.

I understand the cost is high and the way is often unclear. I have served in law enforcement for 33 years. I understand the loss. I have lost partners and friends in the line of duty. I understand the cost of freedom and the sacrifices that must be made. The sacrifices are hard, they are tragic and they are never forgotten, but we must remain focused and not let those sacrifices be in vain.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this resolution. Lincoln warned us against tying a criticism of the war to support for our troops. Let us send a message to our enemies and our troops alike that we will always support our young men and women who put their lives on the line for our freedom.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as I may consume at this time.

Mr. Speaker, I support House Concurrent Resolution 63, and I want to thank our chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON); also, our chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS); and especially the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES), my good friend and colleague, as original cosponsors of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) and Mr. Richard Solomon of the United States Institute of Peace for their initiative and leadership to establish what is commonly known today as the Iraq Study Group, composed of nationally recognized leaders from both political parties, and co-chaired by former Secretary of State James Baker and former Congressman and director of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars Mr. Lee Hamilton.

The Iraq Study Group conducted for well over eight months a most comprehensive review, in my humble opinion, of the crisis that we are now faced

with in Iraq, and I sincerely hope that in the weeks and months to come that we here in this body will review seriously its recommendations for a resolution to the conflict in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, almost 5 years ago, as a member of the House International Relations Committee, I voted in support of the resolution which authorized our President to use military force against Saddam Hussein and his military regime, for the most critical reason presented by our President, our Vice President, our Secretary of Defense, and our National Security Adviser, that Saddam Hussein had in his possession supposedly nuclear weapons. Our Nation's own national security was severely at risk, imminent danger. These were the phrases that were used. And besides for other reasons, the nuclear issue was the linchpin, in my humble opinion, that convinced many of us on both sides of the aisle to approve the resolution to allow our President to wage war against Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, our Nation, and especially the American people, have now come to realize that Saddam Hussein never had in his possession nuclear weapons, due to faulty intelligence and misleading statements made by top officials of this administration in order to totally change the atmosphere to have the public believe that our number one public enemy was Saddam Hussein and not Osama bin Laden.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues, how in the world did we end up in Iraq and we have now caused more tension in the Middle East than ever before?

As I recalled, Mr. Speaker, our Nation was attacked by some 18 terrorists, 14 Saudi Arabians, one Egyptian, two from the United Arab Emirates, and one Lebanese, on September 11, 2001. None of these terrorists came from Iran or Iraq. Most of them were from Saudi Arabia, and they were members of a terrorist organization that we now know as al Qaeda, and the leader of this terrorist group is Osama bin Laden.

Our Nation was attacked on September 11, 2001. Most of the nations around the world not only sympathized with us but supported us, but the Congress gave authority to our President to go after Osama bin Laden and his al Qaeda organization that was under the protective custody of the Taliban, which at the time controlled Afghanistan and certain parts of Pakistan.

It is critically important, I submit, Mr. Speaker, that our colleagues and the American people need to be reminded on what prompted our President, as Commander in Chief, and this Congress, what actions our Nation took after our country was attacked on September 11, 2001.

Our government leaders properly identified al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden as the perpetrators of the attacks on September 11, 2001, and our President and the Congress acted accordingly to summon our military forces to wage war against Osama bin Laden and his al Qaeda organization that was under the protection of the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Well, we got rid of the Taliban, and we were successful in establishing a democratic government for the people and the leaders of Afghanistan, but we did not, and I repeat we did not, complete our mission of either killing or capturing the leader who was responsible for the attack against our country on September 11, 2001.

The terrorist leader's name is Osama bin Laden, and after almost 6 years now, the most powerful country in the world militarily, Osama bin Laden still has not been killed or captured, let alone the fact that we did not complete our commitment in resources and force structure to sustain Afghanistan's newly established democratic government.

Now, there is a new escalation of Taliban presence in Afghanistan and its ability to wage military operations against us and our NATO allies, and the situation in Afghanistan is now becoming more like Iraq, needing more troops and resources to fight the Taliban again.

The critical question of why our country decided to wage war against Saddam Hussein is one that will be a matter of public debate for years to come, but suffice it to say, one, Saddam Hussein did not attack us on September 11, 2001. It was Osama bin Laden and his al Qaeda organization that was based in Afghanistan and parts of Pakistan.

Two, our President and his top officials had misled the American people and the Congress to state that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons. I honestly believe that this issue alone was the catalyst and what prompted Congress to give the President military authority to force Saddam Hussein to comply with U.N. resolutions and to also locate and destroy his alleged supply of nuclear weapons.

Three, we may have won the war in Iraq by eventually capturing Saddam Hussein, but we have caused more tension and conflict among the rival factions between the Shiites, comprised of 60 percent of this country's population of 26 million, and the Sunnis, which make up some 20 percent of the population, and the remainder the Kurds which, for the most part, is not involved in this conflict at this point in time.

I must include, Mr. Speaker, the name of former Army Chief of Staff General Eric Shinseki as part of the debate and discussion, if you will. General Shinseki, in my mind, was among the first of our military leaders who, for making an honest statement as a professional soldier concerning the situation in Iraq, was publicly criticized and humiliated by civilian superiors within the Department of Defense.

In response to questions by members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, General Shinseki was asked how many troops it would require to take control of Iraq, and his response was something in the order of several hundred thousand soldiers. Here was a soldier who fought and was wounded while engaged in combat in Vietnam, a most respected officer who served with honor and distinction for some 35 years in defense of our Nation. Needless to say, Mr. Speaker, I must say, General Shinseki's professional assessment of the mismanagement and ill-planning of this war in Iraq could not have been more accurate, given the sad state of affairs we find our country is in now when dealing with Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution before us is plain and simple. It is a clear statement to the American people and to the world that Congress absolutely supports the efforts of all the men and women who proudly serve in the Armed Forces of the United States. It also sends a very simple message to President Bush that his recent decision to send an additional number of some 20,000 troops to the war effort in Iraq is not going to change the serious security problems and the civil war that is now in place between the Sunni and the Shiite factions.

Mr. Speaker, we have fulfilled our mission, our military mission, by capturing Saddam Hussein who, of course, now recently was hung by the authorities with the new Iraq Government. It is up to the Iraq people and their leaders now to determine for themselves a political solution to the rights and privileges of the three major factions: the Sunnis, the Shiites and the Kurds.

It is a fact that 60 percent of the population in Iraq is Shiite. Prime Minister Maliki is a Shiite, and interestingly enough, the President is a Kurd.

□ 2020

Now the question is how and in what way the Sunnis are going to be part of this newly established government. And there is no denial, Mr. Speaker, that for the future the new government will be dominated by Shiites, an unintended consequence of our decision to wage war against Saddam Hussein, who was a member of the Sunni faction, which made up only 20 percent of the population of Iraq. But Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, Egypt and the rest of the Muslim world is Sunni. Eighty-five percent of the Muslim world is Sunni, we have to understand that, and Iran and the Shiite factions in Iraq make up only 15 percent.

I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, and I want to quote again my good friend's quotation from Daniel Webster: God grants liberty to those who love it, but I say they must also be willing to die for it.

The civil war now taking place between the Sunnis and the Shiites is a war not for seeking liberty and freedom, but it is a religious war that has been going on for the past 1,400 years. There are never winners in religious wars, Mr. Speaker. And no force, not even the most powerful nation of this

world is going to change the hearts and minds of the Sunnis and the Shiites unless they themselves do so willingly and do it in a political way.

Mr. Speaker, I honestly believe that our troops now there and an additional number of 20,000 more soldiers that President Bush has ordered for deployment in Iraq are going to get caught in the crossfire of the civil war that is now going on between the Sunnis and the Shiites, a war that can only be resolved only among the Iraqi factions themselves and not with our military presence there.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from New Jersey, my good friend chairman of our Subcommittee in Africa and Global Health, Mr. PAYNE, so that he may be able to control the time on this side of the aisle.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BECERRA). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 10 seconds to note that the Iraq Study Group specifically said the United States should significantly increase the number of U.S. military personnel, including combat troops embedded in and supporting Iraqi units.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS).

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, as a Vietnam veteran who served three tours during Vietnam and flew 116 combat missions over there in B–52s, I rise to oppose this resolution.

I am sure I don't speak for every Vietnam veteran, but I am sure I speak for a lot of them when I say that when we served in combat we detested the politicians in Washington who undermined our efforts to win, politicians who criticized the war effort, politicians who sought to micro-manage the war, politicians who set the rules of engagement from thousands of miles away.

These politicians were anything but helpful. They undermined our efforts and our morale. They made us fight with one hand tied behind our backs. They demoralized our forces and our allies and our families. And, their words and political efforts grated on our families back home.

Mr. Speaker, it was wrong then and it is wrong now. Our troops need and deserve our full support.

I don't question the proponents of this resolution's patriotism. I question their judgment. What we are debating this week is called a nonbinding resolution. What that really means is that this is nothing more than a political statement. It is designed to send a message to the voters and to the media to score political points, I guess. But this resolution is not about President Bush or failures of his administration, this is about America, it is about our future, it is about our kids and our grandkids. And, unfortunately for them, this resolution offers no plan to win the war, no plan for the future.

For months we have heard the other side criticize the President for offering a stay-the-course strategy in Iraq. Now that the President has offered a new strategy, the other side wants the status quo, to stay the course. The American people want a new direction in Iraq, but not a retreat or a defeat.

This is a stay-the-course resolution. It opposes sending in reinforcements to help achieve victory, as the Iraq Study Group suggested that we do on page 73 of their report.

Now, I am not suggesting that the military is the only solution to winning the Iraq war. It is only one leg in a three-legged stool, which also should include diplomatic, political, economic efforts as well. But it is absolutely an indispensable part of the solution. To undermine the military effort is wrong and will guarantee defeat.

The left wants us to fight a politically correct war. They believe that if we stop fighting the war will end. They are wrong.

Some of us met with ambassadors from the Middle East yesterday. The ambassadors voiced strong opposition to withdrawing troops from Iraq. They said to do so before the Iraqi Government is able to sustain itself would lead to catastrophe, catastrophe in Iraq and catastrophe in the region. They are right. If we stop fighting, the consequence will be disastrous. Our terrorist enemies will be greatly emboldened and empowered. Countless Iraqis will be slaughtered. Genocide will occur. The terrorists will become even a bigger threat to the region, destabilizing and possibly igniting a regional war, and they will surely follow us home to fight here. And our allies will never trust our resolve again.

If we don't defeat the Islamic terrorists in Iraq, then let me ask you, where will we do so?

Mr. Speaker, the world is watching the Pelosi Congress. Will we show them that our determination to succeed is stronger than the terrorists? If this war is lost, it won't be lost by our magnificent troops in the field, it will be lost in the Halls of this Congress by politicians who want to micromanage our military. And that is why I ask my colleagues to consider the consequences of this vote and this war.

The long-term consequences are momentous. What will it mean for your kids and grandkids? What kind of world will they inherit? What will it mean for the Middle East? What will it mean for our allies in the Middle East? What will it mean for the future of our great country?

Make no mistake about this. This resolution will harm our troops who are sacrificing for the cause of freedom. It opposes sending in reinforcements to troops in battle. Our troops deserve and need our support. The arm chair generals in Congress who have never served in combat say, We will not abandon you, while they undermine our troops and their mission, while they deny them reinforcements.

This vote is a vote for failure in Iraq and chaos. We should insist on victory in Iraq. This resolution does not support victory, it supports failure. We must defeat the terrorists, we must protect America from Islamic terrorists. Defeat this resolution.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5½ minutes to the gentleman from New York, Representative ED TOWNS.

Mr. TOWNS. I thank the gentleman from New Jersey for yielding time to me, and to say that I thank the leadership of this House. I thank Speaker NANCY PELOSI and I thank IKE SKELTON for bringing this resolution forward.

You know, I served in the military, and I have great admiration and respect for the military, and I also cannot understand why people are saying that if you support this resolution you are not supporting the troops. I can't make that connection because I support the troops, but I must admit I also support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, 4 years have passed since this administration began its ill-fated war in Iraq. No weapons of mass destruction have been found, no coalition of nations has fought in the war, and the American people are still waiting for a plan for a real war against terrorism.

Though Saddam Hussein is now dead, this fact alone has not been worth nearly $400 billion in taxpayer funds, the loss of 3,000 lives, and 26,000 casualties. What message does this send to the American people? I have been hearing this all day long coming from the minority side.

Let me tell you what the message is that we are sending to the American people: That our priorities are upside down, and we need to fix them.

□ 2030

I have opposed this war from the very beginning, because I was concerned that we would come to this point where we would spend all the money on the war and not have the resources to do the things to keep our Nation and to make our Nation strong.

Almost all the speakers on the other side expressed their support for the troops. I want you to know that on this side we also express our support for the troops. This administration has asked us to cut funding for children, for children's health insurance. We were asked to cut critical funds for Medicaid and Medicare, a loss of dollars that may cripple our public health system. Many of our hospitals are actually closing, and we are asked to provide token funding so No Child Left Behind becomes ''most children now are left behind.''

This war and its budgetary requirements are squeezing the American people, and I say that enough is enough. But, no, the administration is asking

for 20,000 more combat troops and approximately 15,000 support troops. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that it will cost approximately $13 billion.

This administration has had troop surges in the past; this is not new. What is different about this troop surge? It is more of the same, just more targets we are sending.

In October, the administration sent more combat troops into Baghdad to attempt to end the growing violence; however, the violence in Baghdad has only grown worse. Now the United States military is caught up in a very violent civil war, something they are neither trained nor equipped to deal with. Sending additional troops to Iraq actually makes things worse for Iraqi civilians and for our troops.

Our military is already stretched too thin. Many soldiers are doing two and three and four tours of duty. The administration now plans to send additional troops into a city almost the size of New York City, and they may have to go house to house in order to keep warring sides from killing each other.

What message does this send to the American people when we tell them we have no more money for children's health insurance, no more money for Medicaid, no more money for Medicare, no more money for senior programs and no more money for children's education? And how do you think the American people will react to more fatalities and more wounded? How long will Congress keep supporting a war that has nothing to do with ending terrorism?

I ask the question tonight, how long will this administration keep ignoring the real needs of the American people? It is time for America to withdraw from Iraq and focus on the real business of the American people: better health care, more jobs, education for all of our children. We should not send an additional 21,500 troops. That only means we are sending additional targets into the area.

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I would say to my good friend from New York, the message this resolution sends to the troops in the field is that the resolution challenges and opposes the mission that their group commander is asking them to carry out, and to me that has to undermine their morale.

Mr. TOWNS. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. KING of New York. I will yield to the gentleman.

Mr. TOWNS. Let me say to you that I read the resolution, and I don't know how you can arrive at that conclusion.

Mr. KING of New York. Reclaiming my time, the reason I am saying that is, you are opposing the 21,000 troop increase, and that is the policy of General Petraeus, who is the new commander in the field. That is the policy he is asking his troops to carry out, and you are opposing the very policy the new commander says can work and will work.

With that, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. BROWN).

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. I thank the gentleman from New York for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, as President Bush and his top military advisers implement the new plan for victory in Iraq, we must be united in a common goal for victory, and we should never forget that our enemy is listening to this debate, just as our troops are listening to every word of every Member of this Congress.

As many of my colleagues have done, I have personally visited Iraq. I have seen the progress and I have seen the good job that our brave men and women are doing for us and for the people of Iraq.

We have achieved some major accomplishments in Iraq. Women are now able to vote in real elections for the first time in their lives. Iraqi citizens are now able to protest and let their opinions be heard in public, and Iraq is a self-governing nation, free of tyranny.

I was proud to sit down and share a meal with many soldiers from South Carolina's First District. And the question many of our soldiers kept asking me was, why are none of the good stories making it back to the folks at home?

Mr. Speaker, I think that many of us today are trying to share some of the good stories and recognize some of the positive things that our brave men and women in Iraq are doing for us.

South Carolina's First District has a high proportion of active and retired military personnel and are directly impacted by the war in the Middle East. At the Charleston Air Force Base, the C–17 aircraft that come and go are a direct link in the supply chain that assist our brave soldiers fighting for us in Iraq.

At Force Protection in Ladson, South Carolina, they continue to build the Buffalo and the Cougar vehicles that save the lives of our soldiers against the mines and IED attacks every day.

Last year on Memorial Day, in my capacity as chairman of the Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Health, I was fortunate enough to be the guest speaker at an American cemetery in Normandy, France, which overlooks Omaha Beach.

Our brave soldiers during World War II were in France not to fight the French, but to fight the occupying Nazis. Today our soldiers are not in Iraq and Afghanistan to fight the citizens of those countries, but are there to fight the insurgents in Iraq and the Taliban in Afghanistan.

In listening to the debate over the past few days, it reminded me of my visit and reading some of the names of the brave soldiers that fought our Nation's war during World War II.

Mr. Speaker, there are over 9,300 buried in Normandy. Those brave souls fought in a war against the forces of evil then, just as our soldiers in Iraq are fighting against the forces of evil today.

What would have happened if Franklin Delano Roosevelt pulled our troops out of France after the casualties we took storming the beaches of Normandy? If Franklin Delano Roosevelt was alive today, what would he think of this debate which empowers and energizes our enemies and demoralizes our brave fighting men and women? What would America have done if the Congress enacted a nonbinding resolution to pull our troops out of France after D–Day? What kind of world would we be living in today?

Iraq is directly tied to the future security of our Nation, and consequently, failure in Iraq is not an option.

I do not believe we have already lost in Iraq, but we will lose if we don't give the troops what they need to win. I remain hopeful that the Democrats and Republicans can unite around a new policy, clearly defining our troops' mission for the sake of our national security.

Mr. Speaker, I support President Bush and his vision for the new strategy for victory in Iraq. I cannot in good faith support this resolution because it sends our soldiers the message that the United States Congress believes that they cannot succeed in their mission. It is much easier to complain, while offering no real ideas or alternatives. This resolution is all bark and no bite.

I will conclude with a quote from a good friend and someone I am proud to have as my constituent, Medal of Honor recipient and retired Major General James Livingston. ''Today we have a choice of fighting the enemy in Iraq. If we do not take them on in Iraq, then we will be forced to fight the enemy here on our homeland.''

Mr. Speaker, I strongly oppose this resolution.

□ 2040

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida, Representative CORRINE BROWN.

(Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the resolution which requires our support for our brave troops and the American military, yet also expresses disapproval of President Bush's decision to deploy additional troops to the area.

My colleagues, the most serious vote any Member of Congress will ever take will be to send men and women to war. I support the troops 100 percent. Yet when you have your head in the lion's mouth, how do you get it out?

I did not vote for the war when it came before the House of Representatives back in 2002. I never supported

this war. Yet, I do not blame my colleagues who did because their vote was based on false, twisted information provided by President Bush. From the very beginning of this conflict, President Bush has intentionally misled the American public by supplying them with false grounds for going to war, and now he is inventing reasons for us to stay there.

As President Bush begins to lay out his case for expanding this terrible war into Iran, we see the false rhetoric, the same war drumbeats in the background, drumming up support for the attack on Iran. Since we have never found a link between al Qaeda and Iraq, we are trying to hide our failure to control the civil war in Iraq by blaming Iran for supplying weapons to Iraqi insurgents. There is no proof and no one is certain this is under the direction of the Iranian leadership. Again, the President is telling the American people this is true, but why should we believe him? I know what the Bush administration is capable of doing. They will use any means necessary to achieve their ends, even if it means doctoring up the information supplied to Congress and to the international community to wage a war over oil.

They have provided all the justifications, all the sanctimony, frightening the American people into supporting a $600 billion war in Iraq, supposedly to deter terror, but in reality it is having the opposite effect. My colleagues, this war needs to come to an end. The American people want the troops home. This was the message sent loud and clear to the Bush administration during the November elections. Yet they for some reason just didn't get the message. Nearly 70 percent of the American people want us out of Iraq. Yet, President Bush continues to ignore that. We have already spent over half a trillion dollars over there. Let me repeat. $600 billion. There was even a period between 2003 and 2004 when our military was carrying huge wraps of $100 bills over to Iraq.

Look at this cruise ship. I want you to imagine a cruise ship full of $100 bills. We sent it over to Iraq. Now, let me tell you something, folks. A billion dollars is even a lot of money here in Washington. $100 bills, a billion dollars. Let me tell you what that would pay for our veterans. $1.7 billion would fund over 1.5 million veterans in category 8 that we are not funding today. Let me repeat. Over 1.5 million veterans we could serve if we could recoup just $1 billion, and we have sent over about $9 billion that we cannot account for.

Folks, I am going to give the Bush administration an F, and I am going to give the past Congress an F for giving him a blank check.

We all have the opportunity to have a serious vote for our troops and a vote for the American people. I say vote ''yes'' on the resolution.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BECERRA). Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to emphasize the fact that, until now, this debate has been, I think, very up-front and I hope we can keep it at that level. I would also say, I wonder if it is the position of the Democratic Party that Iran is not funding and supplying the insurgents in Iraq, because I think that was determined far before President Bush's administration made any comments about it.

With that, I would yield 7 minutes to my distinguished colleague and friend on the Homeland Security Committee, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT).

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, this has been a long debate. But two points must be absolutely clear at the outset. First, it is imperative that we continue to support our troops on the ground. Our servicemembers deployed to Iraq have done a magnificent job. They have performed their missions admirably, effectively, and with valor. They have done everything we have asked them to do. They have made sacrifices as have their families. They deserve our unqualified support. And as a Member of Congress, I strongly disagree with some of my colleagues who have suggested cutting off funds for our troops serving in Iraq.

A second point to be made here is that immediate withdrawal from Iraq, which has likewise been advocated by some members on the other side of the aisle, is also a bad idea. The Iraq Study Group has said that ''it would be wrong for the United States to abandon the country through a precipitate withdrawal of troops and support.'' The National Intelligence Estimate of January 2007 says that ''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.''

Religious conflict aside, there is another reason for avoiding immediate withdrawal, and that is simply that al Qaeda and its affiliated groups still operate in Iraq. Ayman al-Zawahiri, Osama bin Laden's chief deputy, considers their efforts in Iraq to be ''crucial'' towards furthering al Qaeda objectives in the region. Thus, these groups are aggressively pursuing terrorism within the borders of that country, commiting acts of violence against Shias, Kurds and anyone else who dares to disagree with them.

By instigating this mayhem and bloodshed in Iraq, al Qaeda hopes to realize its supreme goal, to destabilize the government, assume control over the country and its oil wealth and eventually install a Taliban-style government in Baghdad. This is not good for the United States. It is not good for Iraq. And it is not good for the region. That is why I oppose immediate withdrawal.

That being said, and understanding the need for Congress to debate the issue of the war, I am disappointed in the way this debate has taken shape. The majority has given much time for us to express our views, but it has limited the options that might be employed to make this legislation more effective. They allowed no amendments either from Republicans or from their own Democratic colleagues. They refused to permit any substitutes. They even denied us a motion to recommit.

By putting before us this highly restrictive rule, the other side has effectively foreclosed dialogue on other measures that might have added substance to the debate. While both Democrats and Republicans utilize the Iraq Study Group findings to justify their positions, the majority leadership has refused to consider my colleague from Virginia's legislation, Mr. FRANK WOLF, his legislation, H. Con. Res. 45, which would implement some of the most significant recommendations of the Iraq Study Group's report. This legislation would emphasize the need for U.S. forces to accelerate the training of their Iraqi counterparts, would establish milestones for success in Iraq, and would promote diplomatic initiatives in order to advance stability in the country and in the region.

□ 2050

Yet no debate on such a bill and no opportunity to offer an amendment consistent with those objectives was tolerated by the majority. What does this say about their commitment to fulfilling the objectives recommended by the Iraq Study Group's report? You know, we are all speaking about this report, but we are simply not voting on it. That is wrong.

I stand before you today in my second term in Congress as someone who has tried to understand the Iraq war from many different viewpoints. I have talked with my constituents both pro and con about the war. I have listened to military and intelligence briefings. I have visited Iraq. I have studied the Iraq Study Group report. I have read journal articles, academic studies and news clips on the subject, all to increase my professional awareness of what is going on over there.

But I do not just see this from a professional perspective. The Iraq war has had personal consequences for me as well. One of my staffers, Jason Lane, is a Reservist who has been called to active duty and is deployed there right now.

I have talked with the troops who have served there. I have visited the wounded in hospitals and most painfully attended the funerals of those who gave to this country what Abraham Lincoln called the last full measure of devotion. I attended one of those funerals just last Friday.

From all of this, I must admit, I have my concerns about the efficacy of the President's troop surge. I believe that it is far more important that the Iraqis

show the political will to achieve reconciliation and end the sectarian violence that is slowly but surely strangling their capital and their country.

As their Prime Minister, Maliki said on November 27, 2006, ''The crisis is political, and ones who can stop the cycle of aggravation and the bloodletting of innocents are the politicians.''

Success in Iraq is essential to achieving America's foreign policy objectives, and it is in America's best interest to ensure that Iraq can sustain, govern and defend itself. But I believe in holding Prime Minister Maliki to his word. We cannot and will not abandon our troops who are currently on the ground in Iraq.

We must make sure that our forces effectively engage al Qaeda, as opposed to mediating a Sunni-Shia conflict that is the responsibility of the Iraqi government to resolve. We all know these are the challenges facing this Congress, and these are challenges that must be met in a bipartisan manner.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND).

Mr. KIND. I thank my friend for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I do rise in support of the resolution before us. It is a very simple and straightforward resolution. It expresses our support and gratitude to our troops and our disapproval with the President's escalation plan in Iraq. I have believed for some time now that we are in desperate need of a new direction and not an escalation in Iraq.

It is not like we are confronted with a new plan by the President here today. We have tried three troop surges in the last 2 years alone, without the desired result. I don't know what the President sees or hears today that leads him to believe that the fourth time is a charm.

No, from the beginning, this has been the wrong war at the wrong time for the wrong reasons. We now know that Saddam Hussein did not, in fact, possess weapons of mass destruction. He had no involvement in the attacks on September 11. He had no links with al Qaeda. I believe then, as I do today, that while he may have been potentially dangerous, he was eminently containable.

But I too must share some responsibility for having supported the Iraq resolution in the fall of 2002. I did so while believing the President when he stated that the goal was disarmament and not regime change, that war would be a last resort and not a convenient option, that he would work through the U.N. Security Council and with the international community rather than taking unilateral action.

But I also believed that it was important at that time to get weapons inspection teams back in Iraq to search for weapons and to keep an eye on Saddam so he didn't develop capability to do harm. I also believe that we could not accomplish that goal without a threat of credible force hanging over Saddam's head.

When, in fact, we did accomplish it and got inspection teams back in with unfettered access, I was sitting through administration briefings asking them if we were cooperating with them and directing them to suspected sites. Of course we were, they said, but they are not finding anything.

That is when that pit in my stomach first formed, that perhaps Saddam did what he said he did all along, and that is disarm. That is when I, along with my friend and colleague, SHERROD BROWN, drafted a letter signed by 150 of our colleagues in January of 2003 asking the President to give the inspection teams time to do their job and not rush in because they were not finding anything.

But instead of heeding our advice, he ordered the inspection teams out, sent our troops in with insufficient forces to secure the peace, with no plan for the day after, with no clear objectives and with no exit strategy, all contrary to the Powell Doctrine. Now we are where we are today with over $500 billion already spent, over 3,000 lives lost, over 23,000 injured who have returned home. And we are faced with no good options.

Yes, we do need a new direction and not an escalation. It is time for us to turn over responsibility for security to the Iraqi people so we can begin a redeployment of our forces, first within the country, let us get them off the front lines and off the main streets of Baghdad, where they can still play a support role, but which could also lead to a redeployment eventually out of country. We can then refocus our energies on the real national security threat, and that is dismantling the al Qaeda global network that we face, making sure we don't lose Afghanistan, making sure the Taliban doesn't reconstitute themselves and making sure that we bring those who are directly responsible for September 11 to justice, like Osama bin Laden, who is still at large and roaming free today. Ultimately, this conflict cannot be solved militarily, but only by tough political compromises between the Sunnis, Shia and Kurds. We cannot do this for them.

We also need to get the Arab League involved, because they can help with reconstruction, they can help with security, and they can help add legitimacy to the Iraqi government. It is not in their interest to see the Sunni-Shia conflict spread outside of the Iraq borders and sweep the region, which is a very real threat today. Nor is it in Iran and Syria's interests to be on the opposite sides of a civil war that may break out in Iraq. That is what a plan, a new direction should look like, one that we should be pursuing, rather than just more of the same, stay the course.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity on three occasions to visit our military command and our troops in the field in Iraq. I also visited our troops during the height of our military engagement in the Balkans. Nothing has made me prouder to be an American than seeing our troops in action, because they are so very good. They are well motivated, they are well trained. They are the best our Nation has to offer.

I have had 18 military funerals in my Congressional district alone, most of which I personally attended. If I don't have to attend another military funeral, if I don't have to pick up the phone to call another grieving family, I will be one of the happiest people in the world. They are a constant reminder of the human toll this is having, not only with our troops but with their families and our communities. There is not a day that goes by when I am not concerned about the safety and welfare of our troops.

That is exactly why we should be debating this resolution, because it is imperative that war is a last resort, that we as policymakers do everything we can to get the policy right because of the impact it has on our troops, their family, and our communities. It is important that we give them a mission with which they can succeed.

It is time to stop asking our troops to babysit a civil war. It is time to ask the Iraqis to stand up. It is time to support this resolution and give the President a clear indication of where this Congress stands.

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

Before yielding to the gentleman from Georgia, Mr. DEAL, I would just like to comment on my colleague from Wisconsin and say to have lost 18 of his constituents is heart wrenching, and I know that his statement is heartfelt.

But, in fact, we are involved in the Arab League. We have involved five of the states surrounding, and every one of the ambassadors from this Arab League said, we didn't want you to go in, but you cannot leave.

I would just say to the gentleman as well that we asked, critics asked you and others for a new team and a new plan. You have a new team, and you do have a new plan. The new plan is not the surge in troops. The new plan is coming into the neighborhoods in Baghdad with Iraqis, embedded American troops, cleaning them up, and holding them.

Mr. KIND. Will the gentleman yield for a brief comment?

Mr. SHAYS. A brief comment.

Mr. KIND. I was at the same meeting and I heard the same message from the ambassadors in the region. No one here is advocating an immediate withdrawal, just a different direction and a different strategy rather than what has failed in the past.

Mr. SHAYS. Reclaiming my time, what we do have is a new plan, and it is not the surge, it is cleaning up the neighborhoods and holding them with Iraqi troops embedded with American troops.

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

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to oppose this resolution, and I

readily admit that I don't know for sure what the best policy is in this fight against radical Islamic groups. With all due respect, I don't think any other Member of this body does either. Much of what we have heard this week are words based on emotions, and not facts.

In the midst of such uncertainty, I do believe there are certain opinions that are factually sound. Number one, the greatest weapon our enemy has is the loss of resolve on the part of the American people. Two, what this Congress does significantly affects that resolve of the American people. Three, this resolution is a major signal that America has lost its resolve.

If we succumb to an attitude of defeat, then defeat is what will occur. I will simply ask, if we don't want to engage radical Islam in Iraq, then where? If we don't want to engage radical Islam now, then when?

□ 2100

If we cannot answer these questions, be assured that our enemy will provide us with the answers. I am not willing to vote for a resolution that I believe does just that. It is true that the Iraqis must truly step forward and want to govern themselves. President Bush has set out markers by which they will be measured. We should hold them to these reasonable standards.

Tonight I stand with our troops, and I thank them and their families for their service.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky, a member of the Appropriations Committee (Mr. CHANDLER).

Mr. CHANDLER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from New Jersey for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, as we debate this resolution on Iraq, we are reminded of the uncertain world in which we live. While the 5-year anniversary of 9/11 has passed, the memories of that day are still with us, as are the actions of this administration that led us into this war.

Following 9/11, our country missed an important opportunity that will forever change our history. Instead of building coalitions and using that support to maximize our strength, we alienated much of the world. We lost sight of the simple truth: A respected America is a more secure America.

But this administration insisted on going it alone in Iraq. They refused to let U.N. inspectors complete their work, and they launched an invasion without the support of the international community. We are now faced with lasting repercussions of that decision. And it appears the President still has not learned from that mistake.

Once again, the President is going it alone with his call for more than 20,000 additional troops in Iraq. He does not have the support of the international community, and he has lost the support of many in the military, the Congress, and, most importantly, the American people.

I fear, Mr. Speaker, the President is once again missing an important opportunity. He is missing his chance to send a strong message to the Iraqi people that we will no longer police their civil war, and that it is time for them to assume responsibility for their own country so that our troops can be removed from harm's way.

In my judgment, this war is beyond the scope of our men and women in uniform. The situation in Iraq is in dire need of a diplomatic solution. Sure, we need to be ready to take down al Qaeda training camps in the region, but we do not need to be refereeing age-old religious disputes.

This is an untenable situation and unfair to our brave troops who have become targets of insurgents. If we are going to support our troops in every way possible, it is vital that we not only support them with the supplies and armor that they need, we must also ensure that they are being deployed in such a way that they have a realistic chance of success. We must make certain that the funds we are sending to Iraq are going to our troops and not into the pockets of no-bid contractors and war profiteers.

Mr. Speaker, I support this resolution, because I support our men and women in uniform. I have heard speakers on the other side say that this debate will demoralize our troops. Well, I submit that nothing can demoralize our troops more than having them police a civil war. And that is what this administration is asking them to do.

All of us in this body believe in the spread of democracy and freedom. But that grand responsibility cannot solely rest on the shoulders of our troops. It must rest on the shoulders of free nations across this world. And it must rest on the shared sacrifice of all citizens of this country.

No doubt we have real enemies. They are the Islamist jihadists, and they must be opposed. These same enemies are shared by all free nations. But escalating the war in Iraq is not the right approach to defeat the jihadists. It is an approach that will cost more American lives and mire us even further in the Iraqi civil war.

We can win the long-term struggle if we are smart, if we focus on the real enemy, if we build our alliances properly, and if we do not let our own pride get in the way.

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I would say to supporters of the resolution that General Petraeus himself, in answer to a question from Senator LIEBERMAN, he said that resolutions such as this will affect the morale of the troops that he has been asked to lead in battle.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 7 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS).

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution. What this debate is really all about is whether you wish to make a statement in support of our new strategy in Iraq or whether you oppose this new plan.

By simply supporting this resolution, you are saying you want to leave Iraq as soon as possible. I am not willing to do this. I am willing to support the administration and to give our military and our troops the benefit of the doubt, and I will vote against this resolution because I want to give this new strategy a chance, a simple chance to succeed.

My colleagues, let me repeat. If you vote for this resolution, then you are saying you do not wish to give the military and General Petraeus a chance to succeed. In fact, this resolution declares the new strategy in Iraq is a failure before it has even had a chance to be implemented.

This is inconsistent with the unanimous vote the Senate gave to the man selected to carry out this strategy, General Petraeus. Everyone agrees he is the best man. This resolution is undercutting the general and our troops at the very time they need our support.

Now, many will argue that there has been ample opportunity to succeed and that we have failed at this point. Certainly mistakes have been made and a change of strategy is long overdue. However, what should this strategy be? Should the U.S. immediately pull out of Iraq, leaving the terrorists emboldened and potentially put more Americans at risk?

The advocates for this resolution have no answer. In fact, they beg the very question, What happens when we leave? What happens in Iraq if we leave precipitously? And what do we do if it turns into a Middle East conflagration?

If Shiite Iran succeeds in exerting its influence through Shiite Iraq, it will threaten to spill over the sectarian violence across the Middle East and elsewhere. Now here is how the head of the Arab League views this potential conflict. This is what he said. ''If this happens we will enter hell itself.''

The supporters of the resolution keep talking about the past, but they do not talk about the future and how we are going to solve this problem without creating a more serious problem.

Edmund Burke, the great conservative leader from Britain, this is how he put it: It is not a question of how we got into this situation, but how do we get out. They have no answers, and by not answering this latter question they are begging the question.

Now, this is circular reasoning. It is one in which a premise presupposes the conclusion in some way. In a course of logic, this is called the core relative. So this resolution is faulty reasoning.

□ 2110

Any professor of logic would simply recognize the false choice. We need this new strategy that General Petraeus is implementing so that we can hand over this country to the constitutionally elected government. My colleagues, this can be done and will be done soon one way or the other.

Any new strategy must be accompanied by a set of strategic benchmarks designed to measure progress in Iraq and to hold the administration and the Iraqi Government accountable for their role in achieving this success.

Mr. Speaker, I ask to include in the RECORD a list of these benchmarks that I recommend be part of this new strategy to allow our troops to come home.

Why not consider a resolution that incorporates these benchmarks?

But I do offer a warning to the administration. We must have benchmarks that demonstrate our progress in Iraq. I, for one, and many others, cannot support continued funding without measurable benchmarks. And we need to know if we are making progress; and if we are not, then we can employ other tactics and different measures, all of which will lead to the Iraqi Government taking on the responsibility for their own country.

My colleagues, the political easy thing to do is to vote for this faulty resolution because you are not willing to give a final chance for success and you have no ideas on achieving success. The harder, political vote is ''no,'' and that is what I intend to do.

If I have a few more moments, I just want to bring to my colleagues' attention a quote that has been declassified from bin Laden's deputy. And if you will bear with me and follow this quote. ''It is my humble opinion that the jihad in Iraq requires several incremental goals: The first stage, expel the Americans from Iraq; the second stage, establish Islamic authority, and then develop it and support it until it achieves the level of a caliphate; the third stage, extend the jihad wave to the secular countries neighboring Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Iran; the fourth stage, it may coincide with what came before, the clash with Israel because Israel was established only to challenge a new Islamic entity.''

My colleagues, that is what is at stake. The war in Iraq is a central front in the global war on terrorism and a central battleground for Islamic militant extremists in this worldwide mission to simply destroy all Western democracy. And you don't have to take my word for it. You can see this declassified deputy to bin Laden, his opinion.

Mr. Speaker, I will vote against this resolution. While no proposal guarantees success, a precipitous withdrawal of U.S. support would guarantee failure. The stakes are too high to fail in Iraq. It remains in America's strategic interests to ensure regional stability in the Middle East and to deny terrorists a safe haven in Iraq.

Certainly mistakes have been made and a change of strategy is long overdue. However, what should this change of strategy be? Should the U.S. immediately pull out of Iraq, leave the terrorists emboldened and potentially put more Americans at risk? Or do we need a new strategy to win the war and finish the job? I think the latter.

Instead of a politically motivated resolution, my colleagues and I have developed a strategy for victory in Iraq. We need to establish measurable benchmarks for success in Iraq while expressing unwavering support for our troops.

Any new strategy must be accompanied by a set of strategic benchmarks designed to measure progress in Iraq and to hold the Bush administration and the Iraqi Government accountable for their role in achieving success. Threatening to reduce the future commitment of American troops and economic aid if they are not implemented, we must enforce these benchmarks. It is important to stress that an open-ended American military commitment is both unwise and dangerous. In the business world, no successful enterprise gives enormous sums of money without accountability, and nor should we.

The military benchmarks I would like to see utilized include:

Measuring the level of Iraqi government cooperation with the U.S. Military;

Iraqi progress in removing terrorists and others from its own security forces;

Identifying the level of combat experience for all Iraqi Army battalions; and

Tracking the expenditure of funds supporting Iraqi defense forces.

The political benchmarks include:

Advancing a strategy to promote tolerance and co-existence among Iraqis;

Providing fair access to all Iraqi resources;

Promoting the rule of law;

Reforming the judicial system to ensure equal application of the law; and

Measuring cooperation and coordination of neighboring countries in stabilizing Iraq.

Why not consider a resolution that incorporates these benchmarks?

This resolution sends an inappropriate message to our troops. This resolution declares the new strategy in Iraq a failure before it even has the chance to be implemented. This is inconsistent with the unanimous vote the other body gave to the man designated to carry the strategy out, General Petraeus. Congress is undercutting General Petraeus and our troops at the very time they need our support.

As cochair of the Congressional Air Force Caucus, I joined in leading a delegation of members to Iraq. This trip provided valuable insight into our operations and conditions on the ground. The situation in Iraq poses multiple problems—Sunni al Qaeda terrorists, committed Baathists who are largely Sunni, Shiite militias, and Shiite interference from Iran. This is truly an unholy brew.

The war in Iraq is a central front in the global war on terrorism and a central battleground for Islamist militant extremists in their worldwide mission to destroy democracy. But don't take my word for it. Take the words from a declassified letter from bin Laden's deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri.

It is my humble opinion that the Jihad in Iraq requires several incremental goals: The first stage: Expel the Americans from Iraq. The second stage: Establish an Islamic authority . . . then develop it and support it until it achieves the level of a caliphate . . . 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 Islamic extremists view victory in Iraq as paramount to their establishment of a worldwide Islamic kingdom. Here is what Osama bin Laden has to say about Iraq from a 2006 audiotape—''The epicenter of these wars is Baghdad, the seat of the caliphate rule. Their defeat in Iraq will mean defeat in all their wars and a beginning to the receding of their Zionist-Crusader tide against us.''

Sectarian violence rages in Iraq, fanned by Iran and Syria, and this could well spill over throughout the region. Look at these charts. They show the sectarian divide in Iraq among Shiites, Sunnis, and Kurds; and the other shows the regional divide between Sunnis and Shiites.

If Shiite Iran succeeds in exerting its influence through Shiite Iraq, it will threaten the spillover of sectarian violence throughout the Middle East and elsewhere. Here is how Amr Mousa, head of the Arab League, views this potential Iranian-backed Shiite conflict with the Sunni nations—''We will enter hell itself.''

The Islamist terrorist threat is real and directly connected to defeating the insurgents in Iraq. Democrat plans to abandon Iraq will not make this threat disappear.

America cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of the past by withdrawing from a direct confrontation with radical Islamist terrorists. They will continue to intensify their attacks against America, just as they did following other attacks such as in:

1979: 66 American diplomats taken hostage and held in Iran for 444 days.

1983: A truck bomb kills 241 marines at their barracks in Beirut.

1988: Pan Am 103 bombing kills 270, including 189 Americans, over Lockerbie, Scotland.

1993: Six killed in first World Trade Center bombing by militant Islamic terrorists.

1996: 19 U.S. service members are killed in Khobar Towers bombing.

1998: 225 people killed in bombings at the U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya.

2000: Al Qaeda's attack on the destroyer USS. *Cole* kills 17 American sailors.

2001: Al Qaeda hijackers fly planes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, while passengers force a fourth to crash in Pennsylvania. Total number killed: 2,973.

It is vital that we succeed in Iraq for these reasons: A stable Iraq dedicated to the rule of law will weaken extremism in the Middle East; we cannot allow terrorists to gain a safe haven in that nation; and curbing Iran's regional ambitions.

But I do offer a warning. We must have benchmarks that demonstrate our progress in Iraq. I for one cannot support continued funding without measurable benchmarks and we need to know if we are making progress. If we are not, then we can take other tactics and different measures. All of which will lead to the Iraqi Government taking on the responsibility for their own country.

In conclusion Mr. Speaker, one thing is for certain: The men and women fighting in Iraq must never be used as a political tool. They deserve our unmitigated support. They do not deserve political posturing. We must continue to provide the troops with the support they need to be safe and successful. I urge all my colleagues to oppose this resolution and seek a real resolution that includes military, political, and social benchmarks for success.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to mention, logic was mentioned, and I recall in studying logic, with the square of opposition, that you

do not do something over and over again and come out with a different conclusion.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MOORE), a member of the Budget and Financial Services Committee.

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight in support of the resolution.

I wrote to the President on May 24 of last year and told the President in this letter: Mr. President, I voted for the use of force resolution based upon what later proved to be flawed intelligence about the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

I am glad Saddam Hussein is gone. He was a vicious dictator who killed thousands and thousands of innocent people. At that time, in May of last year, there were 2,400 dead Americans as a result of our intervention in Iraq. Now there are more than 3,100 dead Americans, 700 more than just 9 months ago.

We have done militarily all we can do in Iraq. We need to ask and tell the Iraqi Government, this new Iraqi Government, to step up to the plate and assume responsibility for the protection of their people and their country, Iraq. We need to give them incentive, powerful incentive to step up to the plate and assume responsibility.

Sometimes new governments are like some people. If you tell them you will do something for them, they stand back and let you do it and do it and do it and never, never assume responsibility.

We saved the Iraqi people from Saddam Hussein, but we can't save the Iraqi people from the Iraqi people if they won't put aside centuries of religious differences and support their new government. I am talking about the Shia and the Sunnis for more than 1,000 years have been fighting.

Mr. Speaker, I want to read an e-mail I received from a constituent last week. This is from a young lady who is serving presently in Iraq.

''I am a soldier currently deployed to Iraq. Our company is on the verge of an extension. Although we all are proud to serve our country, we also want to go home. Most of us have been gone from home for over a year. If or when we get extended, we wouldn't have seen our families for almost 2 years.

''With the news of the possible extension, the soldiers' morale went down. The families at home are stressed and that can and will stress a soldier out. Some soldiers had to go home on emergency leave because their families are falling apart.

''We watch the news here all the time and most of the time we can't believe what we hear and see. We see soldiers dying left and right, but what are they dying for? Most of us don't even know what we are over here fighting for anymore.

''I guess I just wanted to tell the side of a soldier because no one else will do it.''

And I say to Mr. President, please listen to Congress. Please listen to the American people, and please listen to these soldiers.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BECERRA). The Chair would once again remind Members to direct their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I would just comment on the remarks of my good friend, the gentleman from Kansas, as to troops that he has heard from. I know I have visited Iraq a number of times. I visit Reserves, National Guard, regular troops, active duty, and I have never seen morale higher in any Armed Forces.

I speak with troops when they come home to my district. I go to the wakes and funerals of those who die from my district. And I think we can pick and choose as to what we say. I would say the overwhelming majority I have spoken to do support and know exactly why they are there.

But again, I just lost a constituent the other day. His family certainly is honored by his service. It was his third tour. He went back for a third tour. So he certainly understood what was going on.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlelady from Tennessee, a member of the Homeland Security Committee (Mrs. BLACKBURN).

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, as I rise I do want to say a special thank you to our troops who are deployed tonight, to those that are from Tennessee's Seventh Congressional District, many of those from Fort Campbell, and our National Guardsmen, our Reservists, certainly to our veterans.

I can think of no more wonderful gift to give those and to leave for those you love than the gift of freedom. And certainly, on Valentine's Day, on Valentine's evening that is an important, important thought for us to have. And I appreciate all of our men and women and the efforts that they make to keep this Nation free, and to be certain that our children and our grandchildren have the opportunity to grow up in freedom and to enjoy the America that we have enjoyed.

As we have talked about this resolution, the 97 words that exist in this very short resolution, we have talked about it from different angles, how a nonbinding resolution and a no confidence resolution affects our troops, the thoughts that went into creating this resolution. And one of the questions that I continually come back to that actually was posed to me by some of the veterans in my district, is whose side are you on? When you offer a resolution like this, whose side are you on?

And the other question that keeps coming back is who are you listening to?

Certainly, I would hope that we would all be standing on the side of freedom. I would hope that we would all be standing on the side of our troops. And I do hope that we would all be listening to our commanders in the field.

There has been some mention this evening of General David Petraeus, who this weekend took control of command in Iraq. And I will give you some of his quotes, some of the things that he has had to say in the last few days as he is over there and working those. And I quote from him. ''Our job in the months ahead, supporting and working with Iraqi forces, will improve our security so that the Iraqi Government can resolve the tough issues it faces, and so that the economy and basic services can be improved. These tasks are achievable. This mission is doable.''

□ 2120

Indeed, those on the ground believe this is doable. We know that it is doable, and we know in the global war on terror we have to win. We cannot lose. We have to win. The civilized world depends on defeating terrorists and winning.

We also know that Iraqis are making progress. There has been some debate and some mention tonight about progress not being made in Iraq. And, Mr. Speaker, I will offer to you that indeed you are not going to hear this on the 6 o'clock news, the 10 o'clock, 11 o'clock news around the country because the major media outlets just don't want to report it. But we are finding out that while this body sets aside a political debate that some think will benefit them, what we see is our troops in the field in Iraq are making progress. They understand their mission. They know what they are about every day. We see that even just in the last few days, when you are talking about Baghdad, three Iraqi Army brigades are now deploying to Baghdad to reinforce the six Iraqi Army brigades and nine National Police brigades that are already there. These are steps that are taking place. This is progress that the Iraqi people are making on behalf of their quest for freedom. These are their steps, these are their steps toward freedom and toward leadership.

How dare we discount that? How dare we not recognize that? How dare we not encourage that? And how dare we take steps to embolden and encourage the enemy who would seek to strike them down?

Mr. Speaker, we should be very, very careful whom we listen to, and we should be very thoughtful as we answer the question, Whose side are you on?

I am so grateful, Mr. Speaker, that those that have gone before us chose to be on the side of freedom.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that the Iraqis are deciding now to start to defend themselves. I think it is wonderful. I wish it had happened a number of years ago.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5¼ minutes to the gentlewoman from South Dakota, a member of the Veterans Affairs Committee, Representative Stephanie Herseth.

Ms. HERSETH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join so many other proud and patriotic Members of this body, including a number of our military veterans, in support of this bipartisan resolution.

Just over a year ago when I was in Iraq on my second trip to the region, I shared the optimism and the assessment of many that, following three consecutive elections in 2005 with increasing turnout among Iraqi voters in each, 2006 would be a key transitional year militarily, politically, and economically.

However, a year ago this month, the sectarian strife in Iraq began to worsen, and our inadequate planning for possible and likely scenarios that could unfold in this war continued to catch up with us and continued to narrow our strategic options. As initial and important political developments did eventually unfold throughout last summer, sectarian violence did not abate but intensified, particularly in Baghdad. In response, U.S. forces were part of as many as four different efforts to enhance security in the capital in order to ease the path toward further essential political compromise. None of these efforts proved successful because of the limitations of the Iraqi security forces and police and the restrictions imposed by Iraqi Government leaders.

I had serious concerns when the President proposed last month to increase the number of troops in Iraq, and I hold them still today. I have serious concerns regarding the ability of Iraqi security forces not only to act as a reliable partner in the efforts to secure Baghdad, but to take on and maintain the lead in such efforts, concerns echoed in the most recent National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq.

I have serious concerns regarding whether this plan is sufficiently different from previous efforts to secure the Iraqi capital, particularly when Prime Minister al-Maliki's initial proposal presented to the President in December did not envision additional U.S. troops as part of the effort. I have serious concerns about the further erosion of the commitment of our coalition partners and other allies, if indeed Iraq is the central front of our battle against terrorism.

Now, there is no doubt that al Qaeda in Iraq and elsewhere poses a real and serious threat to our security in the Middle East and to our national security here at home. But the security situation in Iraq has evolved to include a complex civil war, described as ''a self-sustaining intersectarian struggle'' by the NIE, for which additional U.S. troops should not be on the front line to resolve.

The Iraqi Government needs to understand they are on borrowed time and they must take greater control of the future of their own country through political reconciliation to quell the sectarian violence. Iraq's neighbors and the international community must be more engaged diplomatically to end the sectarian strife so as to prevent the spread of it and the instability in the region that would result.

Moreover, as recent oversight hearings have revealed, such a large escalation of both combat and support troops undoubtedly will have an impact on our overall military readiness. And despite their unwavering commitment to serve when called, there may be serious consequences for National Guard and Reservists, as redeployments of full units will be required to implement the troop surge, according to Secretary of Defense Robert Gates.

So after carefully reviewing the President's proposal to increase the number of U.S. troops in Iraq, hearing testimony from senior members of the military, and analyzing the public statements of combatant commanders, and speaking with many of those from my home State of South Dakota who have served or who have loved ones who are serving in the war on terror, I conclude we should not stay this course. I remain unconvinced that sending additional troops to Iraq is the best way forward. Some who support the escalation have described it as ''our last best chance to win.'' To me, that is a clear acknowledgment that the President's plan further narrows rather than expands our strategic options.

And let me add this: This is an issue that demands a bipartisan approach, and it is most unfortunate that the administration has made a decision that dismisses the recommendations of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group. I believe this bipartisan, narrowly crafted resolution reflects the public's and Congress' assessment that increasing our military's combat role, especially in the midst of an intensifying sectarian struggle, is not the answer.

For those who would attack this limited resolution and the debate surrounding it or to suggest and ask, Whose side are you on, I would refer them to the comments of Secretary Gates from his testimony in the House Armed Services Committee last week in which he said that the troops are ''sophisticated enough to understand that . . . the debate's really about . . . the path forward in Iraq. They understand that the debate is being carried on by patriotic people who care about them and who care about their mission.''

Lastly, I want to reemphasize the first part of today's important resolution. Congress and the American people will continue to support and protect members of the U.S. Armed Forces who are serving or who have served bravely and honorably in Iraq. We have a new generation of veterans returning from Iraq. As a subcommittee Chair on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, I will work with all of my colleagues to ensure that the tens of thousands of young people coming home, some after their second, third, and fourth tours, many with severe and debilitating physical and mental wounds, return to the democracy which they fought to protect, with a government that recognizes their service and sacrifice with more than just words of gratitude, but with action that fulfills our Nation's collective duty and obligation to them as veterans who take their place alongside the other fighting men and women who have kept America free and safe.

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I was remiss before in not commending the gentleman from New Jersey on his knowledge of logic and philosophy. I should have known he would get us on that one.

With that, I also note that the Iraq Study Group said that the United States should significantly increase the number of U.S. military personnel, including combat troops.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Indiana, a member of the Homeland Security Committee (Mr. SOUDER).

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, I thank our leader from the Homeland Security Committee for yielding.

No congressional decision is more difficult than a vote related to war, and this vote is no different. It is especially difficult when you disagree with the President of your own political party.

I voted to support this war because I believe Iraq presented a direct threat to the United States. Iraq had, was developing, and was attempting to develop weapons of mass destruction.

□ 2130

Iraq was, at a minimum, cooperating with the funding and harboring of terrorists committed to our destruction. Saddam Hussein was repeatedly defying U.N. resolutions, contesting no-fly zones and blocking WMD inspectors. Our intelligence estimates, never 100 percent accurate, in any case, apparently overstated the immediate risk.

But the basic facts remain the same. Knowing what we know now, perhaps we could have waited another 6 to 12 months, which would have given us valuable time to solidify position in Afghanistan. But the decision to go to war was still the right decision, just possibly premature.

I would not have supported this war had the initial selling point been a goal of establishing democracy in Iraq. Advancing freedom has always been an ideological goal of our Nation ever since our founding. We have long supported, from the days of Jefferson and Monroe, the causes of dissident freedom fighters. We did this in occupied Eastern Europe, in Saddam's Iraq and Soviet-occupied Afghanistan.

But there is a difference between aiding people fighting for freedom and doing most of the fighting for them. I stated from the beginning that after removing the direct threat of the Saddam government, it would be in our national security interests if a republican form of government, a unity government respecting the rights of others, could be established in Iraq. If this government of diverse Iraqis could prevail,

it would be a model for the entire region. We needed to give them a chance for self-governance. But, and this is a big qualifier, it would ultimately be their decision, not ours.

On the news we often see Iraqis saying that Americans need to do this or that to provide security. Men and women from Fort Wayne and the rest of Indiana and America can do most of the fighting for the freedom of Iraq only for so long. It is the Iraqis' country.

We should have known this would not be easy. It is self-evident that democracy in the Muslim world is not common now nor in the past. A little bit hubris and more humility when we sent our soldiers into this conflict would have been helpful. This is not just hindsight. For example, the distinguished senior Senator from Indiana, Senator RICHARD LUGAR, raised concerns over and over again that preplanning was insufficient.

Certain basic arguments being made by the administration are simply not accurate. To insist that the war in Iraq is not a civil war when the entire world and the Americans all understand that it is, continues to undermine the credibility of those who make it.

From the beginning, it had elements of a civil war. The Sunnis had persecuted the majority Shia as well as the Kurds. Vengeance was inevitable. The United States correctly demanded that the sectarian militias be eliminated from the Iraqi national police and the military. I, like many other Members, was asked by the administration to deliver such messages to Iraqi government officials during my visits to Iraq.

Our government knew full well that a civil war was going on, even among people we selected to run the government. We had hoped that the early smaller scale civil war could be countered by a strong central government. It is now a large scale civil war, eroding the already limited power of the Iraqi Government. It is now absurd to deny it is a civil war.

Making exaggerated statements of progress in Iraq also does not pass the basic credibility test. While we have made sporadic progress, a school or a project here and there, it is apparent to any Member of Congress who visited Iraq a number of years ago and again recently visited that security has deteriorated.

Baby boomer Americans especially tend to see everything as Vietnam. A government that denies basic realities has little hope of persuading even its friends. We want our government to tell the truth, pleasant or not. These facts are foundational to the fundamental question currently before us.

It is not whether a surge can root out terrorists. Our brave men and women can do this in door-to-door bloody combat, if necessary, and we may be able with extra troops to stabilize some areas temporarily. But then what? The President has also said that unlike past efforts, this time we will hold our gains. With whom? With what?

This is the basic underlying issue. Assuming some militias are defeated and others just melt away, how do we plan to keep them from coming back? Is the surge permanent? Even if it were so, far fewer troops are required to root out terrorists than to hold gains. Will we need tens of thousands of additional soldiers to hold any gains?

The obvious premise offered by the President is that the Iraqis themselves can hold the gains. Based upon everything we have seen to date, other than in isolated cases, there is no evidence that the Iraqis will fight and die to defend their central government. I have repeatedly heard from returning soldiers that when the gunfire starts the Iraqis by and large disappear. They only seem dedicated when Shia get to kill Sunnis and vice versa.

By being bogged down as the main security force in Iraq and increasingly hostile cities, we are undermining our long-term potential to fight the war on terror.

For years, we have now been utilizing our National Guard and our Reserves as if they were regular military. Many are about to enter their second 12-month-plus tour of duty in combat, something historically many regular military veterans did not do. Because of the heavy usage, we are starting to short training funds and repair funds for those units. We are finding that employers are getting increasingly nervous about disruptions to their firms. Family objections are becoming more intense. Recruiters are running into increasing resistance.

As for our overused regular military, they are facing near exhaustion. What will be the long-term impact on these forces? What impact will this continued burning up of huge sums of military dollars do to our long-term ability to fight?

It has been said many times by defenders of this surge that Iraq is the place the enemy has chosen to fight, and this is the place that we must fight. That is partly true. Hezbollah has chosen to fight us on many fronts. Iran is a threat itself, not just in funding Iraq. Terrorists attacked in Madrid, London, Afghanistan, Pakistan and many other places throughout the world, and they continue to try to attack us in the United States. Iraq is not the only place terrorists have chosen to fight.

Furthermore, we face threats from North Korea, as the new Castro, Hugo Chavez, presents other challenges. We are sobered by the recent destruction of a satellite by China, potentially the most significant threat we face.

If we burn up the support of the American people, our military's ability to recruit, the usage of our Guard and Reserves in Iraq, how do we defend ourselves elsewhere?

It is not that this effort in Iraq is a failure, as some liberals claim. We have seen the governments in Libya and Pakistan significantly alter their ways when it comes to supporting terrorists. Hostile governments that harbor terrorists have to ask themselves whether it is worth the risk of military action by the United States, something Iran appears to be debating. And, most importantly, this fact is indisputable: Since 9/11, terrorists have not succeeded in any attacks on American soil.

Because of the bravery and valor of our soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq, we have disrupted the terrorists' ability to gather and plan new methods of attacking us. If they surface, we get them.

During this period, we have had time to make significant progress in homeland security. While you may have heard that our Southwest border is not exactly airtight, progress certainly has been made. Every month we make additional progress. Our airports are more secure. Our ports are more secure. The PATRIOT Act has given us the ability to track and hunt down terrorists. We have improved both inside the U.S. and around the world our ability to track finances, communications and movement of terrorists.

The sacrifice of our brave men and women in the military and their families bought the United States Government valuable time to further prepare our domestic and worldwide ability to cope with terrorism. We will never achieve 100 percent success. But the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq took the battle to them, rather than requiring us to fight at home.

But we cannot sustain this intense effort indefinitely. Complete victory over terrorism is unlikely ever to occur. Sometimes you have to reposition and prepare for the broader battle, not exhaust yourself on just one front and then risk defeat in the overall conflict.

I beseech our President, Secretary Gates, Secretary Rice and others, never to give up the war on terrorism, but to understand that without significant tactical drawdowns in Iraq our entire counterterrorism and military efforts are threatened. Our Nation can ill afford another decade of defeatism and retreat that seized the United States after Vietnam.

All this said, I am going to vote ''no'' on the resolution. The resolution is no surge protection. The battle has already begun. Most of us have individually clearly stated our views and continue to do so.

For the United States Congress as a corporate body to deliver a public rebuke to the Commander in Chief during a battle that is already commenced would potentially put our soldiers at additional risk and confuse the world.

It is one thing for us to argue about strategy and tactics. It is another to have Congress openly defy the President. The world already knows we have deep divisions in America. The terrorists already know we disagree. But they also need to know that when the

fight starts, as Americans we stand united.

The fact is while I do not believe that the surge will succeed, none of us actually knows that it will not work. At this point it seems to me that our position as a Congress should be to encourage success in this mission. We need to support the Iraqis as they take increasing responsibility. What the world should see from us at least is shared hope for victory, not defeatism.

But the President does need to understand that opposition to the surge is not just among Democrats. It is even among his strongest supporters. Some of us who deeply share his passion to fight terrorism fear that he is potentially endangering his past successes, as well as our Nation's ability to continue the war on terror beyond this administration.

I hope and pray that the surge succeeds. But if it does not, we need to try a dramatically different approach that does not totally abandon Iraq, the region or the war on terror.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to yield 5½ minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS), a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, September 11, 2001, was a day I will never forget. From my office window I saw the smoke rise from the Pentagon shortly before my staff, several constituents and I were evacuated. A few hours later, I would learn that a young naval petty officer from my district named Nahamon Lyons was among the casualties in that attack on the Pentagon. Picking up the phone and calling his mom, Mrs. Jewel Lyons, back in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, was one of the most difficult calls I have ever had to make.

□ 2140

There was no one who wants to put an end to terrorism more than I do. That is why I supported our President when he chose to send U.S. military forces to Afghanistan to go after those who attacked our Nation on 9/11.

I met with the President at his invitation in the White House on September 26, 2002, to hear his case for a preemptive strike in Iraq. I kept my notes from that important meeting, and this is what the President told us. He said that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction; he said that Saddam Hussein trains terrorists on weapons of mass destruction; and he said that if military force is used it will be fierce, swift and tough. We now know that none of that information was accurate.

I do not know whether the President intentionally misled our Nation or received bad intelligence. Perhaps we will never know, but regardless, both possibilities trouble me.

Had I known that the information the President shared with me on September 26, 2002, was not accurate, I would have never given him the authority to use force in Iraq. At worst, the President misled us, and at best, our intelligence failed us.

There is not a more difficult decision Members of Congress must make than whether to send our brave men and women in uniform into harm's way. And when we are asked to make those decisions, we must know that our intelligence is correct.

We have all been personally touched by this war. I have a brother-in-law in the United States Air Force who is currently serving in the Middle East. My first cousin was in Iraq when his wife gave birth to their first child.

I have also traveled to Walter Reed Medical Center and met with countless soldiers who have suffered life-altering injuries in combat, many from my home State of Arkansas. The most recent was a U.S. Marine, Staff Sergeant Marcus Wilson of Dermott, Arkansas, who recently lost his leg in Iraq.

And I have visited with too many families of soldiers who are not coming home.

On August 11, 2004, I visited Iraq when the 39th Infantry Brigade of Arkansas had over 3,000 soldiers stationed there, and if the President gets his way with this escalation of the war, they will be back in Iraq by early next year.

Let me be clear on one very important point. I strongly believe that as long as we have troops in harm's way we must support them. I also want to see to it that our government keeps its promises to our military veterans.

When we invaded Iraq, the President said we were doing so with the intent of removing the evil regime of Saddam Hussein from power and to find and eliminate his weapons of mass destruction. We have since learned that there were no weapons of mass destruction, and not only has Saddam's evil regime come to an end, but he has now been put to death.

So I ask, why are we still there? We now find ourselves spending nearly $9 billion a month to try and force our way of life on a people who live a long way from Arkansas.

Had I known then what I know now, I would never have voted to give the President authority to use force in Iraq and, instead, would have directed the full strength of our military to Afghanistan to go after Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda, those who actually attacked our Nation on 9/11.

It is my duty as a U.S. Congressman to demand accountability from this administration, accountability for the decisions that are being made in Iraq, accountability for how these decisions are carried out, and accountability for how our hardworking taxpayers money is being spent.

Sending 21,000 new troops into Iraq is not a new direction. It is simply an escalation of the war.

I am not advocating that we leave Iraq tonight, but we must begin to accelerate the training of the Iraqi Army and police force and replace American soldiers on the front lines of this war with Iraqis.

I rise this evening in support of this resolution to stop the escalation of this war. We can no longer tolerate more of the same, and we must demand from this President, our Commander in Chief, a new strategy and a new direction in Iraq.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair must again remind all Members that it is not in order to engage in personalities towards the President.

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

Mr. Speaker, during the debate on Iraq yesterday, we heard many times from some of our Democratic colleagues that they had no intention of defunding our troops in Iraq. Some even expressed outrage and indignation when some of our Republican Members made mention of their plans for defunding the troops. However, defunding plans clearly demonstrate their policy is to withdraw from the global war against Islamic militant extremists by surrendering to the enemy in Iraq.

We are faced with two options in Iraq, Mr. Speaker, to move forward or to retreat. Some of my Democrat colleagues appear to be united in opposing any effort to adopt a more vigorous strategy in Iraq and, instead, are ready to retreat. This resolution is but the first step in that direction.

Despite denials, the evidence is that the effort to cut the funding of our troops in Iraq and, in turn, for all of our efforts there are well underway.

Several bills have already been introduced by Democrat Members to compel a withdrawal. Let me read the titles and the provisions.

H.R. 508, to require the United States military disengagement from Iraq, which mandates a withdrawal of U.S. forces within 6 months of the enactment of this act and which cuts off funding for any deployment or continued deployment of forces in Iraq. Let me emphasize that again. It cuts off funding for any deployment, not just an increase, not just sending reinforcements, but for any deployment of U.S. forces in Iraq, including those already there, and it even limits the number of embassy personnel.

Also, H.R. 438, to prohibit an escalation in the number of members of the United States Armed Forces in Iraq, which states that funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the Department of Defense under any provision of law may not be obligated or expended to increase the number of members of the United States Armed Forces serving in Iraq.

H.R. 746, to provide for the safe and orderly withdrawal of United States military forces and Department of Defense contractors from Iraq, which mandates the beginning of the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq within 30 days of the enactment of this act and complete the withdrawal no later than 180 days later. It also prohibits

funds to increase the number of Armed Forces serving in Iraq or to extend the deployment of those already there.

Or H.J. Res. 18, to redeploy U.S. forces from Iraq, which states that the deployment of United States forces in Iraq by the direction of Congress is hereby terminated, and the forces involved are to be redeployed at the earliest practical date.

When we offered a proposal to prohibit the cutting off of funds for our troops, that is what we wanted to do on our side of the aisle, a proposal to prohibit cutting off of funding of our troops in harm's way, the Democratic leadership blocked it from coming to the floor. Why? Well, based on the bills that I just mentioned, the only explanation I would think is that they fear that their caucus would indeed vote to cut off funding for our troops and leave them to face the enemy without the necessary resources.

So, within this context, they offer this nonbinding resolution which the Democrat leadership claims to support the troops. But how can such a claim be credible? Because in the second paragraph of the resolution, it opposes sending the reinforcements that our troops in Iraq need to confront the enemy.

□ 2150

Our commanders in the field say they need the reinforcements in order to address the security situation in Iraq. My stepson Douglas Lehtinen and my daughter-in-law, Lindsay, served in Iraq as Marine officers. Lindsay will soon serve in just a few weeks in Afghanistan. They understand the difference between saying we support our troops but we don't support your mission. It is the mission that matters.

Some of our colleagues seek to deny our troops that level of support, that level of backup which could be the difference for Dougie, for Lindsay, for so many others between death and survival.

This resolution seeks to substitute the assessment of the military commanders with the views of lawmakers. We claim to know more than the commanders.

Rather than focusing on the strategic policy issue, the Democratic leadership has drafted a resolution that undermines tactical military matters and seeks to override the decisions of our military commanders and the position articulated by General Petraeus. They do not want to discuss the grave consequences of withdrawal and surrender. They do not want to discuss the nature of the enemy, the Islamist militant extremists who seek to destroy us, who like vultures descend on us to prey on our weakness.

Some of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle seek to focus on the abstract rather than on the reality. They believe that security will come from withdrawal and surrender. On the contrary, retreat guarantees that the Islamic militants will intensify their efforts against us. All we need to do is focus on bin Laden's own words.

In his 1996 Declaration of Jihad and other statements that he made, he repeatedly pointed to America's weakness being its low threshold for pain. As evidence, bin Laden pointed to the U.S. withdrawal from Somalia in 1993 because of casualties from the attacks of al Qaeda and its allies. Bin Laden said of our retreat from Mogadishu, ''The extent of your impotence and weakness became very clear.''

Bin Laden and the global Islamic militant network continued to test our resolve throughout the 1990s and today. They launched multiple attacks against U.S. targets with little response on our part. Then came the deplorable attacks on 9/11.

But they won't stop there, Mr. Speaker. They won't stop in Iraq, they won't stop in Afghanistan. They have made it abundantly clear that they will not stop until they dominate the world. Just listen to the words of bin Laden.

He said, ''The jihad in Palestine,'' referring to the attacks against Israel, ''and in Iraq is a personal duty incumbent upon the residents of the two countries alone. But if they are unable to carry it out, this duty is incumbent upon the residents of the adjacent countries, and so on and so forth, until the circle includes all the Muslim countries.''

And to focus on what al Qaeda leader al-Zawahiri said in December of last year just a few months ago, ''Iraq, Allah permitting, is the gateway to the liberation of Palestine and the restoration of the Islamic caliphate.''

Or those of Iran's Ahmadinejad when he said in January of this year, ''We must prepare ourselves to rule the world.''

This follows statements made in October of 2005 when Ahmadinejad said, ''Undoubtedly, I say that we will soon experience a world without the United States and will breathe in the brilliant time of Islamic sovereignty over today's world.''

It is echoed by other Iranian leaders who have threatened the U.S. and moderate Arab governments who say that, ''Anyone who recognizes Israel will burn in the fire of the Islamic nations. They will burn in their fury,'' and who have expressed their commitment to bringing America to its knees.

The Islamist militant extremist network have proven time and time again that this is not mere rhetoric. U.S. allies in the Middle East understand this reality. They understand the critical role that Iraq plays in the global war against Islamic militant extremists.

For example, Jordan's King Abdullah, a courageous leader who continues to demonstrate his country's and his people's commitment to peace, to security, and to democratic reform, summarized the situation we are facing in the following way. He said, ''My concern is political, revolving around Iran, around Iran's political involvement inside Iraq, its relation with Syria and Hezbollah, and the strengthening of this political strategic alliance. This would create a scenario where you have these four: Iran, Iraq, influenced by Iraq, Syria, and Hezbollah, who have a strategic objective that would create a major conflict. Our argument to the United States,'' he continues, ''is that a capable, independent, secure Iraq is the best way of containing Iran. The Iranians realize that the way to have success against the West is by them succeeding in Iraq. So Iraq is the battleground of the West against Iran.''

These are the words of our ally King Abdullah of Jordan. Yet some of our colleagues choose to believe that one can reason with our enemies.

Since this resolution provides no concrete alternative, some have expressed support for new diplomatic initiatives. However, I must ask my colleagues: With whom? Do they propose engaging with rogue regimes such as Iran and Syria? These rogue regimes are part of the problem, not part of the solution.

Some of our colleagues may say that diplomatic engagement is the key to our success. But I ask them, how are we to engage our allies in the region to help foster security and reconciliation in Iraq if by our withdrawal and surrender we leave them to fend for themselves against enemies in the region who have been strengthened by our retreat? How is diplomacy to be effective in such an abstract context?

We cannot expect to achieve success if we are operating from a position of weakness.

The so-called diplomatic alternative offered by some is no alternative at all. The resolution before us and the bills that have been introduced is a compelling argument, they believe, for a withdrawal from Iraq, but it adds to a policy of surrender.

Some may try to hide that fact by constantly repeating the empty words that they support the troops. But supporting our troops cannot be reconciled by refusing them the reinforcements that they need or with the retreat in the face of the enemy.

The hopelessness with which these measures spring is alien to our American spirit. That spirit has sustained us through many dark times, Mr. Speaker, throughout our history. This hopeful spirit springs directly from the hearts of the American people who have never given up faith in their belief, in their country, in their sons and daughters in uniform facing our enemies overseas.

Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of our revolution over two centuries ago when our country faced almost impossible odds and many counseled for retreat, Thomas Payne summoned forth the words that apply directly to the debate in this Chamber when he said, ''These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will in this crisis shrink from the service of their country, but he that stands by it now deserves the love and

the thanks of every man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered, yet we have this consolation with us: That the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph.''

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues therefore to reject this resolution.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I recognize the gentleman, a member of the Rules and Agriculture Committees, from California, Representative DENNIS CARDOZA, for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, I believe in a robust military and a strong national defense; however, I oppose this escalation, because I do not believe that it will make America safer or improve security in Iraq.

At this hour, sending more American forces cannot reasonably be expected to resolve a civil war rooted in over 14 centuries of deep-seated historical division. I oppose the escalation because I believe that we must recognize Iraq for what it is, not what we want it to be.

Our best hope lies not with increasing Iraqi dependence on us, but rather in handing over responsibility to them. This ultimate success or failure is the endeavor that now lies in the hands of them, not us.

□ 2200

Our goal in Iraq must reflect reality. Our objective should be to protect the ethnic minorities and religious minorities from further oppression and genocide, and to maintain a strong deterrent against the spread of a broader war in the Middle East. None of these ends is served, however, by simply escalating the failed strategy that has gotten us to this point today.

Like most Americans, I am deeply dismayed by this administration's inept prosecution of this war. At almost every turn, the President and his team have been intolerant and dismissive to outside advice, the consequences of which have been dire. The President sent our men and women into battle absent a real plan and lacking the tools they need to protect themselves. By pushing our allies aside, the President has isolated America from the world. We are now bearing the burden of this war virtually alone. It did not have to come to this.

From the beginning, responsible critics who genuinely desire success in Iraq have offered the President and his team sensible strategies for changing course. Almost 3 years ago, I proposed a plan to the President that offered a responsible path forward. I am still waiting to this day for a response.

President Roosevelt during World War II, President Truman during Korea and the dawn of the Cold War, President Kennedy during the Cuban missile crisis, and President Reagan at the twilight of the Cold War all successfully guided the ship of state through the roughest of seas. That caliber of leadership has been sorely lacking during this challenging time for our Nation. This President's inability to admit and correct mistakes has not served our Nation or our troops well. Now Iraq has descended into a bloody civil war that cannot be resolved by the American military. The Sunni-Shia divide goes back 1,400 years. Twenty thousand more American troops cannot reverse 14 centuries of division and hate in that country.

According to a recent poll, 71 percent of Iraqis want us to leave. Sixty-one percent of Iraqis support attacking U.S. troops. To argue that increasing our presence in Iraq will lessen the violence defies common sense. The American people and our military did not sign up for refereeing a civil war halfway across our planet. History has taught us that outside powers are ill-equipped to influence or resolve civil wars in foreign lands.

I am also deeply troubled that the war in Iraq has undermined our efforts to address urgent threats in the war on terrorism, note notably in Afghanistan. After failing to kill Osama bin Laden at Tora Bora, the administration turned its attention to Iraq, allowing the Taliban to regain lost ground.

I believe we must refocus our efforts on the following objectives:

Stopping the spread of a wider war in the Middle East.

Preventing a humanitarian crisis in Iraq.

Protecting the ethnic and religious groups, such as Assyrian Christians, who are vulnerable to persecution.

And we must redouble our efforts to snuff out the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Let me close, Mr. Speaker, by paying homage to our men and women in uniform. Some have alleged that this debate is inconsistent with support for our troops. Those who insist that Congress should remain silent on this issue are very familiar with that word ''silence.'' Many have remained silent when it comes time to supporting care for our veterans and their families as well. Many have stood idly by for years as our troops went into battle lacking the equipment and body armor they needed. Most of all, far too many have been invisible when it comes to genuinely supporting our servicemen and women by insisting on an effective plan to conclude and win this conflict. Simply repeating the word ''victory'' does not equal a plan, or support for our men and women in uniform.

I want to conclude by thanking those serving in harm's way. These brave men and women are America's finest. They have done everything that has been asked of them and more. Let us honor them by thanking them for a job well done and pursuing a policy that is worthy of their sacrifice.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE), a member of our Foreign Affairs Committee, for 10 minutes.

Mr. POE. Thank you, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I appreciate your leadership and the time you have given me to talk about this really important resolution, the resolution of retreat from combat.

You know, we in this House, in this warm House tonight at 5 minutes after the hour of 10 o'clock, we view this resolution from our own personal opinions. But maybe we should view something, and this resolution in particular, from a historical standpoint, for history has no opinion but is a teacher of hard facts of retrospect.

You know, this debate is not new to Congress. Years ago, after 5 long years of war, this Nation found itself at war with the greatest empire on Earth, Great Britain. The war of independence was not going well in 1781 and 1782. It looked bleak. The Commander in Chief, George Washington, had lost most of the battles he was engaged in. Public opinion was at an all-time low during the war. There were even mutinies in the Army from the Pennsylvania volunteers and the New Jersey volunteers. There was talk in the press of even reuniting with Great Britain, of all things, forming a truce and going back to be with the British. There were preachers of gloom, doom, despair and defeatism. There were generals on the battlefield that didn't like the way George Washington was handling himself as Commander in Chief and preaching to the public and their troops, We can't beat the British.

The debate was not new to this House, Mr. Speaker. Congress wanted to cut funding. The Continental Congress wanted to cut funding for the American Army and they not only wanted to do so, they did slash funds. Congress even in this time of bleak war reduced the size of the Continental Army. For the first and only time during the long war, George Washington left the field of battle and came to Congress and made the case for winning the war and not giving up, not surrendering, not reuniting with Great Britain.

And he made the comments. He said, ''We should never despair. Our situation before has been very unpromising. But it has changed for the better. So it will be again.''

It's a good thing the Commander in Chief did not listen to the gloom, doom and despair of the Continental Congress in 1781. Then, as now, victory was the only option. Victory is simple. You defeat the enemy wherever they are.

So George Washington and a handful of barefoot soldiers at Yorktown defeated who the skeptics and cynics said could never be defeated—the British. The consequences of loss in 1782 would have been somewhat staggering.

Mr. Speaker, the flag that flies behind you now would have been the Union Jack instead of the Stars and Stripes, and this country, this people, this free people, would have been much different had we not won the war and stayed the course.

The consequences of abandoning our troops in the field by not giving them more troops would be joy to the terrorists that hate us and want to kill us. I

am sure the terrorists throughout the world would vote ''yes'' for this resolution of retreat and surrender, and those of us who want to defeat the terrorists should vote ''no.'' Our troops on the battlefield need to know help is coming. Like most Members of Congress in this House, they know people and they know people in their congressional districts that have died for this country in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, I carry with me the names of the fallen in my congressional district. The first one that fell was Sergeant Russell Slay, 1 day after I was elected in 2004. There are 17 names on these sheets of paper, all of them volunteers from southeast Texas, who went to Iraq and Afghanistan to fight terrorists, as they say in southeast Texas. Their names, Mr. Speaker, are more than names. They are real people.

Sergeant Slay died November 9, 2004, from Humble, Texas.

Lance Corporal Wesley Canning, November 10, 2004. He was from Friendswood, Texas.

Lance Corporal Fred Maciel, January 26, 2005, from Spring, Texas.

Private First Class Wesley Riggs, May of 2005 from Beach City, Texas.

Lance Corporal Robert Martinez, Splendora, Texas. He died December 1, 2005, at the age of 21.

Staff Sergeant Michael Durbin, January 25, 2006, from Spring, Texas.

Walter Moss, Jr. He was a tech sergeant from Houston, Texas. March 30, 2006.

Private First Class Kristian Menchaca, June 16, 2006, at the age of 23, from Houston, Texas.

Staff Sergeant Benjamin Williams, June 20, 2006, from Orange, Texas. He was 30.

Staff Sergeant Alberto Sanchez, Jr., at the age of 33, he was killed in Iraq on June 24, 2006, and from Houston.

Lance Corporal Ryan Miller, September 14, 2006, from Pearland, Texas. He was 20.

Staff Sergeant Edward Reynolds at the age of 28 was killed September 26, 2006, from Houston, Texas.

Captain David Fraser, killed in Iraq on November 26, 2006, at the age of 25, and he was from Houston.

Lance Corporal Luke Yepsen, December 14, 2006, at the age of 20, from Kingwood, Texas.

Specialist Dustin Donica, December 28, 2006, from Spring, Texas, at the age of 22.

Specialist Ryan Berg, January 9, 2007, at the age of 18 from Sabine Pass, Texas. Ryan Berg enlisted on his 18th birthday to join the United States Marine Corps.

And Staff Sergeant Terrence Dunn just a few days ago, February 7, 2007, from Houston, Texas.

Seventeen names from one congressional district, Mr. Speaker. There are names of over 3,000. And it seems to me that we owe it to these individuals, these American patriots, to send them the help that they need so that their lives meant more than just dying while the rest of the country decided to run away. We should finish what we have started. We should win this battle. We should fight the terrorists. We should look them in the eye and tell them, We're not going away until our job is done.

This resolution does not promote American unity to finish the job. This resolution does not hold in honor the names on this list, these real people, killed for this country and all volunteers. And they, like the ones that died in the Continental Army 200 years ago, died for a reason. The families that I have talked to believe in what their sons and daughters died for, and that was for fighting these evil people. We call them terrorists, these extremists, that hate us and will kill us if they have the chance.

So, I think history has taught us a lesson, that this Congress 200 years ago was faced with a choice and decided to take the funds away from George Washington. Fortunately, he was able to reunite the country and win that independence. And I hope that we reunite this country and finish the job and win this battle that we are fighting in a land far, far away for the same reason, and that are fighting people that are terrorists and hate us and people that are extreme in their beliefs in their hatred for America.

Because like I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, the flag that flies behind you is important. It is important that it is not the Union Jack or some other flag, and we owe it all to the military, the volunteers, the young men and women that have served recently and have served in our past for this country.

□ 2215

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 7 minutes to the distinguished chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE).

Mr. PAYNE. I appreciated having the opportunity to control the time in the past several hours, and perhaps might request from the chairman perhaps an additional 2 minutes as I respond and wrap up.

Mr. Speaker, let me say that I listened with great interest to the George Washington story, and there is no question that there were tough times. But George Washington had some pretty intelligent advisers. You know, the people who signed the Declaration of Independence, he had people like Adams and Washington. You had people like Crispus Attucks, the first person to die in the Revolutionary War and in the Boston Massacre on May 4, 1770.

You had people who participated in the Boston Tea Party because they said taxation without representation is tyranny. It was Christmas Eve in Pennsylvania when George Washington came across the Delaware and attacked the Hessian soldiers on Christmas Eve because they were unaware that this attack was coming. George Washington came from New Jersey, Morristown, Newark, and went on through and did have a victory.

But let me say the difference, when George Washington was fighting, there was a clear and present issue. We were fighting for independence. We knew exactly what it was. We were being held bondage by the British, that Union Jack.

But what do we have here? We have, following 9/11, support from practically every country in the world. But then we went on and Osama bin Laden said he did the bombing, he took credit for it, the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and the final plane that was brought down on the way to the Capitol and the White House.

Then we said that we were going into Iraq. First of all, it was because there were weapons of mass destruction. Then it was the fact that we had to have a regime change. At one point we talked about we had to remove Saddam Hussein.

We kept looking for reasons, and that is a big difference. We had the preemptive strike, and then we tried to come up with the reason that we were doing it, and it continued to change, one reason after another.

There is a great sense of sadness among those of us who foresaw over 4 years ago the tragedy that is now unfolding in Iraq. On October 8 and 9, 2002, I stood right here in this very well at the House of Representatives, and I managed the time those 2 days in opposition to the preemptive first strike for Iraq. It was in the 107th Congress, and now we are in the 110th Congress, and the war that we assumed would be swift and certain now continues to rage.

I am looking over the remarks I made at that time. It saddens me that the argument of those of us who oppose the war fell on deaf ears. At that time, I stated that a unilateral first strike would undermine the moral authority of the United States of America. I stated that results of substantial losses of life will occur, that there will be a destabilization of the Middle East region and undermine the ability of our Nation to address unmet domestic priorities.

It saddens me beyond words that 3,122 Americans had to sacrifice their lives and over 23,000 have been wounded for a war that did not have to be fought. Included in this number are 50 fatalities from my home State of New Jersey and 366 wounded. Estimates are up towards 100,000 Iraqi men, women and children have been killed.

After the administration has been proven wrong on every prediction from the length of the war to weapons of mass destruction to the strength of the insurgency, we are now being asked to trust their judgment on a new strategy, which would put 20,000 more American lives on the line. This plan will not provide lasting security for Iraqis. It is not what the American people have asked for in November.

Haven't we learned anything from our mistakes yet?

Recent so-called short-term troop surges in Iraq have not stopped the violence from getting worse. There is nothing to suggest that this time will be any different.

For example, we had Operation Together Forward from June to October 2006. In June, the Bush administration announced a new plan for securing Baghdad by increasing the presence of Iraqi security forces. That plan failed, so in July, the White House announced that additional American troops would be sent into Baghdad.

By October, a U.S. military spokesman, General William Caldwell, acknowledged that the operation and troop Increases was a failure and had not met our overall expectations of sustaining a reduction in the level of violence. Regardless of how the administration intends to increase the troops in Iraq, the result will be the same.

There is additional strain on our military personnel and their families, and personal lives will be upset by unexpectedly early deployments of family members or unexpected delays in their homecoming. This is an additional burden to our military families that they should not have to bear.

By extending operations, we undertake a strategic risk. Our ability to meet potential future challenges is strained under the current operational demands. Increasing these demands only increase the risk to our future capacity.

I had the privilege of serving in the past as a congressional delegate to the United Nations. I strongly believe in the power of democracy. If we had allowed the United Nations inspectors to complete their work before the war instead of suddenly ordering them out of Iraq, I believe things would have turned out much differently. Instead, the administration proceeded full speed ahead towards war, as they disseminated faulty intelligence and relied on scare tactics to garner support.

I believe the time has come to begin an orderly withdrawal of American forces from Iraq. This approach would send a message to the Iraqis that they must take more responsibility for their own security and would reduce the strain on the American military.

The administration should listen to the Baker-Hamilton commission, which has offered a stinging assessment of virtually every aspect of the U.S. venture in Iraq and called for a reshaping of the American presence and a new Middle East diplomacy initiative to prevent the country from sliding into anarchy.

I conclude by saying I have heard my colleagues on the other side warn about Iraq falling into chaos and dangers of the United States losing our standing in the world. Sadly, Iraq already is in total chaos, and, unfortunately, the United States, a country we all love, has suffered much loss and prestige around the world.

In the debate before the war those of us who predicted the outcome did not prevail. I pledge with my colleagues to listen this time to vote against escalation of the war and support this resolution.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I am pleased to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS), a graduate of West Point.

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, leaving the Capitol last night, I came across a sign on the Seventh Street Bridge overpass that said, ''Democrats, get a peace plan.''

Clearly, someone felt that this nonbinding resolution does not get us any closer to peace, and some, myself included, would argue that this resolution takes us further away from our goal of securing the peace. Retreat, surrender, leaving, disengagement, that is the view of some politicians in Washington, DC, making decisions on combat operations overseas. If there is any clear comparison to Vietnam, this legislation is it.

Here is the Republican plan for peace, victory. In the 1980s, it was a peace through strength that was a military I was proud to serve in. Our last best chance for victory is by supporting the decisions of the commanders in the field. Their current request is to reinforce the Iraqi military and police who will take the lead in military action against all insurgents and al Qaeda in Iraq.

We are to ensure reconstruction continues to empower Iraq's security forces and newly elected leadership to be prepared to fully assume their destiny, and to leave, when asked, by a sovereign country of Iraq.

It is our national security interest to support moderate Arab states. Moderate Arab states that are democratic observe the rule of law, support women's rights, and are allies with us in the war on international jihadist terrorists. We have an opportunity for Iraq to be a moderate Arab state and an ally.

However, we can be assured if we leave early that the radicals will take over after an ensuing and huge bloodbath and will forever be an enemy to the United States. During the buildup to the Iraqi constitutional elections, I wore a flag pin representing both Iraq and the United States of America.

As I have traveled about my district in the past weeks, I have put the pin back as a sign of solidarity with a sovereign and free Iraq. What this resolution does is sever this alliance. This commitment emboldens our adversaries. It tells the world we are unable to go the distance and keep our commitment to do the right thing.

Well, I will not accept defeat, and especially from political armchair quarterbacks. The military commanders in the field have asked for reenforcements. This appeal may be our last best hope for a free democratic Iraq willing to be able to protect their citizens and support us in the war on terrorism.

Are we politicians sitting safe and secure in Washington, DC, going to say no to this request? Surely not.

Throughout our history, a debate such as this has occurred on the floor of the House and across the Nation. Monday was the 198th anniversary of the birth of our 16th President, Abraham Lincoln. At his tomb I read this quote from the Gettysburg Address, which I believe is applicable today. ''It is for the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who have fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain . . . ''

Instead of fighting, we are arguing amongst ourselves. We ought to commit our country to finish the task at hand. We should be united in the cause and to pray to God, the Creator of all, to bless our efforts here, the efforts of our military, the government of Iraq, her people, and, yes, even our enemies.

I want to end with another quote from Abraham Lincoln. In his farewell address to Springfield as President-Elect, he said: ''Today I leave you; I go to assume a task more difficult than that which devolved upon General Washington. Unless the great God who assisted him shall be with me and aid me, I must fail. But if the same omniscient mind, and Almighty arm that directed and protected him, shall guide and support me, I shall not fail, I shall succeed. Let us all pray that the God of our Father may not forsake us now. To him I commend you all. Permit me to ask that with equal security and faith, you all will invoke His wisdom and guidance for me.''

May God bless our President and military leaders. May God bless our men and women in uniform who volunteered to protect our Nation from harm, and may God bless the United States of America.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia, a member of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Mr. BARROW.

Mr. BARROW. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, since taking a seat in this body over 2 years ago, I have supported our President's efforts in the war on terror at every turn. I have been to Iraq. I have visited those wounded there, and I have spoken with family members who have sacrificed more for their country than most people could stand.

I have carefully considered the President's plan. I have listened to his reasons, and I have tried to understand them. But the inescapable conclusion

is this. While there are differences between the President's new strategy and his prior conduct of the war, the similarities still outweigh the differences. The President's new plan is not a new strategy. Instead, it represents more of the same strategy that has gotten us to where we are today. If we are going to defeat terrorism in Iraq, we simply cannot afford to keep doing more of the same.

Congress cannot manage a war, and it should not try. Instead, Congress' job is to demand accountability from those charged with the conduct of the war effort, and so far Congress has failed to do that job.

This resolution, however imperfect, is intended to bring about some accountability on the part of those charged with the conduct of the war effort, and it says of the President's plan, thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting.

The President's plan is found wanting because he doesn't explain how this escalation in the number of American troops can make any difference in a war plan that depends on redeploying so many more Iraqi troops. We have been given no credible explanation as to why 21,000 more American troops can accomplish what the 130,000 already on the ground cannot accomplish.

The President's plan is found wanting because it calls for completely new rules of engagement.

□ 2230

The President's plan is found wanting because it calls for new rules of engagement, with no explanation as to why such rules of engagement were not allowed in the past when they would have done the most good.

The question before us is not whether the President's new plan represents a better chance of success in Iraq. The real question is whether the chances for success it represents is a good enough chance to be worth the sacrifices that our soldiers will have to make to implement it.

A 1 percent increase in the chances of success may be better than no increase, but our troops deserve a better plan that that. Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that this plan represents the change in strategy that we need in Iraq, nor does it offer a good enough chance for success to be worth the sacrifices that it will cost. And that is why I will support the resolution.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5½ minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS).

(Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS of Tennessee asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of our military men and women. I will strongly support our soldiers serving in harm's way in Iraq and Afghanistan. I support all off our veterans, men and women who have served our country with great honor and distinction, and because of my support for our military men and women, I also rise in support of this resolution.

I support this resolution because I see no evidence that an increase in troops will lead to anything other than more lost American lives. I do not think a troop surge will bring stability to Baghdad. I do not think the surge will enable the Iraqis to stand up and defend themselves, and I do not think the surge will end the religious and ethnic strife that has existed in the Middle East for centuries.

So here we are this week debating the President's proposal to send more troops into Baghdad. And as expected, the rhetoric from our friends on the right has at times been shameful. To suggest that Democrats and Republicans who support this embolden the enemy, that they are defeatist, and that we do not support the troops, and that we want to micromanage the war, and that we do not want to preserve freedom and liberty in our great country puzzles me.

It seems to me our friends on the right do not like discourse, they don't like questions, and they do not like meaningful discussions. They do not want us to question the President's strategy, instead they want us to follow him like sheep down a tragic street that dead-ends in failure.

Attempts to use fear and insults to quiet the administration's critics are distasteful and quite frankly hurt America. Why do those who oppose this resolution want to discourage the type of action that led to the founding of our Nation? The very actions that allowed the United States to continue evolving towards that never ending goal of a more perfect union.

Our country derives its strengths from the diversity of views and ideas that comes from its people. If we disagree with the President's proposal, it is our duty, particularly as Members of Congress, to say so. I maintain that is the highest of patriotism, and I am not the only one who thinks so.

The President Theodore Roosevelt said, referring to the Presidency, and I quote him, ''That there should be full liberty to tell the truth about his acts, and that this means that it is exactly necessary to blame him when he does wrong as to praise him when he does right. Any other attitude in any American citizen is both base and servile. To announce that there must be no criticism of the President or that to stand with the President right or wrong is not only unpatriotic and servile, but it is morally treasonable to the American public.''

I do not know about the majority of Republicans in Congress, but I agree with Teddy. Our actions this week do not dishearten the troops, nor reflect a lack of support for our troops. Defense Secretary Gates and General Pace both testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee that a resolution disagreeing with the President's proposal would not dishearten the troops.

In my opinion, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff may have a little better idea of troop morale than Members of Congress. I strongly disagree with the notion that our actions this week embolden the enemy. If our lack of support for the President's plan emboldens the enemy, then public opinion polls also embolden the enemy, since polls show the majority of Americans disagree with the administration's policy in Iraq. And if this is the case, why do not we see condemnation of the American people for their views? It is because politically those who oppose this resolution know they cannot criticize the American public, but can criticize those of us who serve here in Congress.

If the actions of the House and American people embolden the enemy, then we need to consider everyone's comments. Iraq's prime minister al-Maliki recently said that the Bush administration's description of the Iraqi government's being on borrowed time, listen, gives a morale boost to the terrorists. The prime minister of Iraq is accusing the administration of doing the same thing that many of us are being accused of doing in this House chamber. How shameful. Let's get real.

I contend that the American people, the Democrats, the Republicans, and that President Bush loves America. The discussion we are having in Congress this week is an extension of the cure for America, because we all want what we think is best for our country. And what do we want? Success. We want security.

In order for us to have success and security we must force the Iraqi people to fight for their own country. In my opinion, the way we do this is not by adding more troops to the kill zone in Baghdad, but rather take our troops out of the kill zone and force the Iraqis to step up their efforts.

We should put our troops in a position to support the Iraqis when they need us. This way the pressure is on the Iraqis, not on our fighting men and women. The idea that we are going to cut and run from the Middle East and allow terrorists to control Iraq is false and has no basis in reality or in history.

We did not leave Germany after World War II, we did not leave Korea after that war, and we will not leave the Middle East after our soldiers' responsibilities in Iraq have ended. We did not leave the Middle East after the Persian Gulf War and we will not leave the Middle East now.

Mr. Speaker, the French did not win the Revolutionary War for us and we cannot win this peace for the Iraqis; they have to win it for themselves.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, if I could ask how the allocation of time is being handled, because our next speaker I would like to recognize for 11 minutes. But we have been told that we need to wait to even out the distribution of time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ELLISON). The gentlewoman from Florida has 5¼ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Massachusetts has 13¾ minutes remaining.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO).

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, the approaching vote on this resolution has caused me and I am sure many of my colleagues to give serious and considerable thought to the most difficult issue that faces America today.

Like many of my friends on both sides of the aisle, and like many Americans I am opposed to increasing our troop presence in Iraq. I am sure we have all asked ourselves individually what we would do if we were in the oval office at this time.

If I were in the oval office, if I were Commander in Chief, I would tell the Iraqis something similar to what Benjamin Franklin told a woman who asked him as he came out of the negotiations on the Continental Congress, Dr. Franklin, what have you given us? He answered, a Republic if you can keep it.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we have with our blood and treasure already won a great victory when we deposed a dictator and helped the Iraqis set up a fledgling democracy. Frankly, I believe it is up to them to keep it.

Mr. Speaker, the fall of Saddam has helped create a situation in the Middle East that we did not anticipate but one that can be exploited. I believe that the ethnic and sectarian earthquake inside and across the broader Middle East is underway. I believe the fault lines in this conflict can be seen moving today, not just in Iraq, but in Lebanon, Iran and elsewhere.

If I were Commander in Chief, I would do what I could to exploit the situation. I believe it can be exploited, but not if we are acting as a referee in what has become a civil war. I believe that prolonging or increasing the U.S. presence in Iraq will virtually guarantee this fault line will move in a way not advantageous to us.

Sure, if I was President, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you unequivocally I would not be sending an extra 20,000 soldiers. But I am not President of the United States, I am not Commander in Chief, I am a Member of Congress. And while I have every right as a Member of Congress to voice my concerns and objections to what I see as flaws in the strategies this President may choose to employ, neither I nor this Congress has the right to micromanage a war.

Mr. Speaker, our Constitution vests sole authority of the U.S. military in the President of the United States, not in 435 Congressmen or 100 Senators. Our Founding Fathers empowered the President, not the Congress, with the authority precisely to avoid the kind of group micromanagement of our military strategy that we are seeing on this floor today.

I differ with the President on many things, Mr. Speaker. Indeed one of them is the recently announced surge strategy. But while I am concerned about the wisdom of the strategic military decision, Congress does not have the authority nor the ability to manage this war or any other by committee.

I fear that this resolution is just the beginning of a long-term attempt by Congress to become the micromanager of the conflict in Iraq. As many Members have correctly noted, this resolution is nonbinding, but it has been described by its authors as just the bark from the Congressional dog. The bite will come as they say during the appropriations process.

As I said at the beginning, Mr. Speaker, for a time this resolution posed a dilemma for me. But after hours of listening to the debate, reading the Constitution, it helped me to decide how to vote, there is no longer a doubt in my mind. I accept the wisdom of the Founding Fathers and bend to the constraints of the document that we swear to uphold and defend.

I hope that Members of both sides will think carefully about the precedent that this debate will set for the future, for future Presidents, future wars, future soldiers. I would ask them to join me in opposing this ill-conceived resolution.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA).

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to welcome this much needed debate, on perhaps one of the greatest challenges facing our generation, our country, this war in Iraq. I intend to support this nonbinding resolution not because I believe it is perfect, rather in fact I feel it is probably imperfect.

But I am supporting it because I hope this will be the beginning of a rational, bipartisan dialogue for a new direction to be employed together with the House of Representatives, with the Congress working together with the President.

For after all, Mr. Speaker, we are the people's House. The choices that we have before us today are more than simply cut and run or stay the course. For after all, we know a long time ago that was nothing more than a sound bite, and the American public understood that it was nothing more than a political sound bite. We are a wonderful country. We have tremendous resources, ingenuity, and we have credibility notwithstanding our difficulties today throughout the world.

And therefore, as the world's greatest super power, we have resources and means in which we can offer alternative choices to bring together people, not only in the Middle East, but allies throughout the world that supported us in the past.

Everyone who has talked about this nonbinding resolution talks about the cost. We all talk about their support for our men and women in uniform, our support to continue to ensure that they are properly funded and to ensure that we always, always remember the current costs that have been expended, over 3,000 lives, over 23,000 that have been injured, and a fiscal accountability that has gotten lost in the checks and balances of the Congress, a war that initially was advertised to cost us $60 billion is now in excess of $379 billion, $8 billion a month, with a supplemental request for another $235 billion.

Mr. Speaker, we do not need nor should we micromanage the war. But we should, as an equal branch of Government, require and demand accountability. That is why I stood up on this floor 2 weeks ago supporting the Blue Dog Accountability Act to ensure that we have an opportunity to review on a regular basis the conduct of the war, the no-bid contracts, the single sourcing, putting our troops in harm's way without adequate armament.

Let us not forget, for almost 4 years our President and the course that he conducted and the case he has made has had a blank check, literally a blank check to conduct this effort as he saw fit.

□ 2245

And it has only been in the last 6 months when it became abundantly clear in the last year that it was determined that a new course or a new direction would be needed. But, unfortunately, so much of this new course that the President offered last month is more of the same and, unfortunately, too little too late.

I told the President that I was doubtful on this surge. Why? Because we have had previous surges, back in August of last year a surge in Baghdad with six brigades that was promised by the Iraqi Army. They delivered two. They weren't very good. We neutralized Sadr City. Maliki got political pressure placed on him. We were asked to leave.

Unless we have a robust political effort that accompanies this surge, I fear, unfortunately, more of the same will occur, which is why I asked the Secretary of State last week what is plan B?

We are, whether we like it or not, in the middle of a sectarian civil war. And unfortunately, the folks that we are trying to referee are more concerned about how power is distributed and how oil revenues are distributed as opposed to instituting a democracy in the Middle East. And therefore, we need a new direction.

Have we not learned the lessons that many of us remember from the Vietnam War? Secretary Powell knew those lessons well. Remember what Secretary Powell advised our President? He says, Iraq, Mr. President, is like a Pottery Barn. We break it, we own it. Unfortunately, how true those words have come.

But Secretary Powell knew from his experience as a general that the Powell doctrine invoked four principles, one, to have overwhelming support of the Nation; two, in fact, to ensure that we

had a broad international coalition; three, that we went in with overwhelming force; and, four, that we had an exit strategy. None of those are in evidence.

So let me close. I believe that a new direction is evident. I believe America is less safe today than it was before the 9/11 attacks. And as violence in Iraq climbs and the costs continue to soar, we need a new direction in Iraq in a bipartisan fashion.

I ask my colleagues to work on this bipartisan manner, evaluating the facts, not on rhetoric, to create a real plan for security in Iraq, stability in the Middle East, and let's not forget Afghanistan, the problems that exist in Lebanon today, and let's come together as a nation. Our troops deserve better.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I applaud the gentleman from California for his insightful and thoughtful remarks and particularly his observation that this is not about micromanaging the war. This is about accountability.

And I daresay that if over the course of the past two previous Congresses that there was oversight and that there was more monitoring, we would not find ourselves in this unhappy moment.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana, a new Member of the House, a valued member of the Committee on Veterans Affairs and Financial Services, Mr. DONNELLY.

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. Speaker, we all want success in Iraq. We want a stable region. We want safety and security for our troops and peace in the Middle East.

Our service men and women are the finest in the world, the best trained, the most dedicated. They are incredibly fine soldiers and people. They deserve a clear mission in Iraq. They deserve to have all the protective equipment and armor needed to keep them safe. They deserve to have all the funding required, and they deserve to have the best leadership in the field and the finest military planning from Washington.

What our brave troops do not deserve is Washington's bungling. We had bad intelligence at the start, a flawed occupation plan that failed to send enough troops, despite the best advice of the Army's Chief of Staff at that time, and Washington failed to properly plan for critical logistics such as electricity and infrastructure. These mistakes have put our troops in much greater danger.

With these issues in mind, I sent a letter to the Administration over 1 month ago asking for specific answers as to how this surge would increase our chances for success in Iraq. I was very hopeful for positive solutions. I also asked at that time what specific benchmarks we could look at to indicate whether or not we were making progress. As of this date, I have yet to receive any answer from the Administration.

I have spoken to veterans in Winamac and in Osceola, Indiana, to constituents in restaurants and churches and to concerned Hoosiers throughout my district. I have also met with Iraq Study Group cochairman, Lee Hamilton, with military representatives, and with my valued colleagues. What I have heard consistently is that our brave troops should not be placed in the middle of what is increasingly becoming a very dangerous civil war.

Our fighting troops have been placed in an almost impossible situation. They are trying to bring stability to Iraqi cities and provinces where a fierce and bloody religious war rages between the Sunnis and the Shiites. Our service men and women from Michigan City and South Bend and Logansport cannot end this vicious cycle of death. Only the Iraqis can do that. The Iraqi Government and people have to want peace and stability for their country as much as we want it for them.

If the proposed surge increased our chances of succeeding in Iraq, I would support it wholeheartedly. However, I fear this surge will not lead to an Iraq that will be stable over the long term, but instead will simply put over 21,500 more American troops into harm's way. There will not be stability until the Shiites and Sunnis decide that the price of the death and destruction they inflict upon each other is no longer worth the cost. The Iraqis have to make this decision, and sending 21,500 more of our finest citizens will not cause the Iraqis to make that decision any quicker. In fact, it might only delay that day of decision for them.

Two recent surges by American troops did not bring additional security to Iraq, and I do not see how placing more troops in the most dangerous areas of the country at this point will calm things down. Our troops deserve America's full support, full funding, and all the equipment and materials they need to remain safe and battle ready. The time has come for the Iraq Government and its troops to step up and to seek peace with each other. Our obligation in Congress is to provide common-sense judgment that guarantees complete support for our troops and a plan that provides a path toward peace and stability.

I do not see, and I have not been shown, how this surge will further our chances for success. For the above stated reasons, I will be voting for House Concurrent Resolution 63. May God bless America and our troops serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and everywhere else throughout the world.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I would ask where we stand in terms of the time allocation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ELLISON). The gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT) has 3¼ minutes. The gentlelady from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) has 2 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am going to reserve the balance of our time to have it for the further allocation of the remainder of the evening.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. At the beginning of the debate, the Chair provisionally allocated 5 hours to the leaders or their designees in approximation of the amount of the controlled debate that might be conducted before midnight.

It appears at this point that all of that 10-hour allotment will be consumed before midnight. The Chair will try to achieve parity between the two sides by allocating 20 minutes for each side at this time, but wants each side to know that all pending balances of time will lapse at midnight.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. GOHMERT. The Speaker has indicated that he will allocate the remaining time 20 minutes a side, but the time will expire at midnight. I would ask if it would make sense, since 20 minutes gets us to 11:35, why not just take 65 minutes, or actually you have got 3¼ and you have got 2, so it would be an hour, and give each side 30 minutes a side, and then we don't have to keep playing this game and redo this and waste 10 minutes trying to reallocate the time. That is my inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would advise Members that the distribution of debate time takes into account the difference between the time remaining until midnight and the time consumed in debate.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, my next speaker will be allocated 11 minutes of time, so if this is the proper time to have him be recognized for 11 minutes without interruption, I would like to recognize Mr. FRANKS, a member of the Armed Services Committee for 11 minutes.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, if I can inquire of my friend and colleague on the other side, I have a speaker that has been waiting here. Understanding that I have 3½ minutes left before the reallocation, I would like to give her an opportunity to address the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 23½ minutes remaining.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. If the gentleman would yield. We have been waiting on our side as well for such a long time, and if my good friend from Massachusetts would allow Mr. FRANKS to give his statement, and then we can continue.

I would like to recognize Mr. FRANKS, a member of the Armed Services Committee for 11 minutes, and I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, today, as we embrace the grave responsibility of debating an issue that will have profound impact on future American generations, it seems very appropriate to remind ourselves of the ideal that gave birth to this Nation in the first place. We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal and endowed by their Creator

with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Whether we realize it or not, most of the important discussions in this Chamber, including the one in this moment, center around whether we still believe those words.

In these hours, America finds herself at war with an expressively dangerous ideology that is the antithesis of those words and everything that is the American ideal. What concerns me most is that this war between an ideology committed to the absolute death to destroy freedom and subjugate the entire world, and the world's free people who still remain primarily asleep.

Mr. Speaker, this ideological war did not begin on 9/11. It began many years ago when certain Muslim extremists embraced a divergent Islamist dogma that dictates that all infidels must die. It was called then as it should be called now, jihad.

Thomas Jefferson was the first American President to send U.S. military force to war against Islamist jihad. The Marine hymn begins, ''From the halls of Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli,'' the latter being a reference to Jefferson's war against the Islamist Barbary pirates based in Tripoli, in present day Libya.

This is the same jihadist ideology that murdered Israeli athletes in 1972, that took American hostages in Iran, that murdered Marines in their barracks in 1983, that bombed the World Trade Center in 1993, Riyadh in 1995, the Khobar Towers in 1996, the embassy in 1998, the USS *Cole* in 2000, and that brutally murdered scores of little schoolchildren on opening day in Beslan, Russia.

And then, Mr. Speaker, this same dark ideology massacred nearly 3,000 Americans on September 11.

The ideology and practice of Islamist jihad is decapitating humanitarians with hacksaws on television while the victims scream for mercy, cowardly hiding behind women and children while launching rockets deliberately targeting innocent civilians, continually breaking treaties of peace, and forcing children to blow themselves to pieces to affect the murder of other innocents, and this, as their own mothers leap for joy as they do.

□ 2300

As we anticipate future actions of jihadists, we should all consider very carefully. Al Qaeda's al-Zawahiri said: ''The jihad movement is growing and rising. It reached its peak with the two blessed raids on New York and Washington. And now it is waging a great heroic battle in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, and even the crusaders' own homes.''

Al-Manar said on BBC: ''Let the entire world hear me. Our hostility to the Great Satan, America, is absolute. Regardless of how the world has changed after September 11, death to America will remain our reverberating and powerful slogan: Death to America.''

Al-Zarqawi said of America's leaders: ''They are aware that if the Islamic giant wakes up, it will not be satisfied with less than the gates of Rome, Washington, Paris, and London.''

Al-Muhajir, Osama bin Laden's latest lieutenant in Iraq, said: ''The fire has not and will not be put out and our swords, which have been colored with your blood, are thirsty for more of your rotting heads.''

Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah, said, ''We have discovered how to hit the Jews where they are most vulnerable. The Jews love life; so that is what we shall take away from them. We are going to win because they love life and we love death.''

And then, Mr. Speaker, we hear a Democrat Member of this body say, ''The savagery of terrorists is not relevant.'' Even the most senior Democrat in this House is quoted as saying ''I don't take sides for or against Hezbollah or for or against Israel.''

Mr. Speaker, a blind relativism that deliberately ignores all truth and equates merciless terrorism with free nations defending themselves and their innocent citizens is more dangerous to humanity than terrorism itself, and it is proof that liberals completely misunderstand the enemy that we face.

Osama bin Laden's deputy, al-Zawahiri, made clear shortly after 9/11 in his book ''Knights Under the Prophet's Banner,'' al Qaeda's most important short-term strategic goal is to seize control of a state, or part of a state, somewhere in the Muslim world. He wrote, quote, ''Confronting the enemies of Islam and launching jihad against them require a Muslim authority established on Muslim land. Without achieving this, our actions will mean nothing.''

Mr. Speaker, such a jihadist state would be the ideal launching pad for future attacks on the West.

Bin Laden himself once again has stated: ''The whole world is watching this war and the two adversaries. It is either victory and glory or misery and humiliation.''

Mr. Speaker, the terrorists regard Iraq as the central front in their war against humanity. And if we are to understand our enemy and this war, we must understand that Iraq is the central front in our war against jihad. Our courageous and noble soldiers understand that very well and our enemy definitely understands that.

Osama bin Laden himself has said, ''The most important and serious issue today for the world is this Third World War . . . It is raging in the land of the two rivers, Iraq. The world's millstone and pillar is in Baghdad, the capital of the caliphate.''

Mr. Speaker, if Democrats are correct that the struggle in Iraq is not crucial to the winning of the war against Islamist jihad, then for God's sake I wish they would explain that to the terrorists.

Brink Lindsey has put it all so succinctly. He said, ''Here is the grim truth: We are only one act of madness away from a social cataclysm unlike anything our country has ever known. After a handful of such acts, who knows what kind of civilization breakdown might be in store?''

Mr. Speaker, we simply can no longer deny that we are fighting a war against an insidiously dangerous and evil ideology that is bent on the destruction of the Western world, and they would like nothing better than to decapitate this country by detonating a nuclear blast 100 yards from here. And to allow jihadists to declare victory in Iraq will only serve to hasten such a day.

Mr. Speaker, the free nations of the world once had opportunity to address the insidious rise of the Nazi ideology in its formative years when it could have been dispatched without great cost. But they delayed, and the result was atomic bombs falling on cities, 50 million people dead worldwide, and the swastika's shadow nearly plunging this planet into Cimmerian night.

Winston Churchill's words of warning far preceded such tragic events. He said, ''If you will not fight when you can easily win without bloodshed, if you will not fight when your victory will be sure and not too costly, you may come to the moment when you will have to fight with all the odds against you and only a precarious chance of survival. There may be a worse moment. You may have to fight when there is no hope of victory because it is still better to perish than to live as slaves.''

If so-called enlightened Germans fell prey to the Nazi ideology, why do we not believe Third World Muslims can also fall prey in large numbers to this jihadist ideology? History does indeed repeat itself, Mr. Speaker, and each time the price goes up.

Jihadists believe they have a critical advantage over free people in the world. They believe their will is far stronger than ours and that they need only to persevere to break our resolve. Mr. Speaker, the message of this resolution has only encouraged them in that belief.

So today in this Chamber, we each have some grave questions to ask ourselves, and the answers will profoundly affect future American generations. We need to ask ourselves first, not whether the Nation should have gone to war but whether the Nation should lose this war.

Will jihadists break the will of the world's free people or not? Will they be able to hide long enough to gain access to nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction? If we do allow nations like Iran to gain nuclear weapons, what will we tell our children when they face nuclear jihad, perhaps even in this generation? If liberals in this body are willing to see freedom defeated in Iraq, are they willing to take responsibility for what will almost certainly follow? If this entire Nation was riveted and heartbroken when two airplanes hit two buildings in New York, how will we

feel when an entire American city is in nuclear flames?

If Speaker PELOSI and other Democrats are willing to vote against monitoring terrorist conversations on the telephone, or tracking their financial transactions, or protecting our border from terrorist insurgency, or effectively interrogating terrorists in custody, or sending reinforcements to our troops on the battlefield, then the question that cries for an answer is what are they willing to do to defeat Islamic terrorism? What is their plan?

Mr. Speaker, there is no substitute for victory. If we surrender Iraq to Islamist jihadists, we will supercharge their recruitment efforts in the Middle East and all over the planet, and our children will pay an unspeakable price, and history will condemn this generation for unspeakable irresponsibility in the face of such an obvious threat to human peace.

So, Mr. Speaker, before we vote on this resolution, may we consider carefully the words of Abraham Lincoln as he sought to steel the resolve of Americans in another great and historic struggle. He said, ''Fellow citizens, we cannot escape history. We of this Congress and this administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance or insignificance can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the last generation.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I would now yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. BEAN), a member of the Financial Services Committee.

Ms. BEAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the gentleman from Massachusetts, for yielding.

I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 63 and in opposition to the proposed troop surge in Iraq.

When I visited Iraq in 2005, like the soldiers I met there, I was hopeful that democratic elections would allow Iraq to move forward as a unified sovereign nation. While the elections demonstrated a commitment from the Iraqi people to do that, the situation on the ground has instead worsened, sectarian violence has increased, and the escalating death toll for American and Allied troops and the Iraqi people demand serious scrutiny of our strategy in Iraq.

When I met with the President's military and national security advisers last month to learn about their new plan, I anticipated that a new course would be proposed. Regrettably, this surge does not constitute a new course.

We have tried multiple troop surges. After the most recent surge last summer, conducted in Baghdad, the U.S. military declared that it had ''not met our overall expectations of sustaining a reduction in levels of violence.'' In fact, attacks increased by 22 percent, and already after 20 percent of the current surge has been deployed, violence has not decreased.

Instead of sending more troops, our military mission in Iraq must shift from attempting to secure Iraq to better equipping and training the Iraqi Security Forces so they can secure their own country. Like most Americans, I have supported the President's objective that we will stand down as the Iraqis stand up. We have already trained nearly 325,000 Iraqi Security Forces toward that end.

For 4 years Americans have seen the brave men and women of our Armed Forces perform their duty courageously. We have seen over 3,100 American husbands, wives, mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters make the ultimate sacrifice, including 116 servicemen and women from my State of Illinois. We have seen $400 billion in hard-earned tax dollars invested in this effort to support those fighting. What we haven't seen is real accountability for results.

That is why I have joined my colleagues in the Blue Dog Coalition to introduce the Iraq War Cost Accountability Resolution. This resolution requires accountability in four ways: spending accountability; contractual accountability; budget accountability; and, importantly, Iraqi accountability.

To ensure spending accountability, this resolution requires the Department of Defense Inspector General to provide an accounting of all military and reconstruction spending and to report to Congress every 90 days, including how and where our tax dollars are being spent, transparency in contracting and procurement methods, and levels of participation from other countries, additional funding required, and, importantly, sanctions applied for fraud, abuse, and war profiteering.

To enforce contractual accountability, a select committee akin to the Truman Committee would be created to investigate the awarding of contracts and their execution to protect our tax dollars. To provide budget accountability, this resolution requires funding requests for the war in Iraq in fiscal 2008 and beyond must come through the regular appropriations process, not continued emergency supplementals. And to demand Iraqi accountability, the administration should firmly condition further American financial and military support upon steady and measurable improvement in Iraqi progress towards principal responsibility for internal security in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, increasing the number of troops without increasing the level of accountability perpetuates the same policy that has led to this crisis in Iraq.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support both of these resolutions. Instead of sending more troops, let us provide the high degree of accountability that the American people demand and that our valiant men and women serving in Iraq deserve.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 7 minutes to Dr. GINGREY of Georgia.

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

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of our troops who are faithfully serving our Nation in harm's way. Therefore, I must oppose this resolution brought to the floor by the Democrats because it offers no plan, no strategy, and no hope for victory. In fact, it does nothing but risk demoralizing our troops.

Mr. Speaker, let me start by saying that Republicans and Democrats alike recognize mistakes have been made in Iraq and neither side of the aisle is happy with where we are today. But rather than offering solutions to move us forward or engage in a productive debate on alternative strategies, the Democrats have decided to propose what certainly seems to be a politically motivated resolution.

I ask, Mr. Speaker, what are we really accomplishing with this resolution? The answer is nothing. With this shameless stunt, the Democrats are locking down this body for 36 hours maybe in hopes of scoring political points by criticizing the President. But by using our troops as pawns in an attempt to gain political leverage, this resolution serves only to weaken troop morale while giving hope and comfort to the enemy.

□ 2315

In doing so, Mr. Speaker, the Democrats have done nothing to end the war or help our troops achieve victory.

Mr. Speaker, seeing as the Democrats have hijacked the Floor all week to debate this resolution, surely they must have an alternative to the President's plan. I will bet the American people are as eager as I am to hear about this new plan for success, their plan. Certainly my constituents in the Eleventh District of Georgia are waiting.

So what is their magic alternative? Mr. Speaker, here it is. It is the same on both sides. They don't have one. We have heard from members of the Democratic team threaten to cut funding, to cap troop levels or to compel a forced withdrawal. But where are those ideas in this resolution? I have read through its two brief paragraphs and I can assure you they aren't to be found.

Sadly, the Democrats lack the political will to fully engage in a meaningful debate on Iraq policy. They have refused to allow a vote on funding for the war which would give Members an opportunity to show support for our troops with actions and not empty words.

Simply put, Mr. Speaker, the Democratic leadership is afraid to ask their Members to put their money where their mouths are and either vote yes or no to fund our troops and the mission. Isn't this why they have denied Republicans an opportunity to offer an alternative bill, or even a motion to recommit? They were for that last Thursday,

before being against it tonight. Sound familiar?

Apparently, Mr. Speaker, calls for funding cuts and troop withdrawals are good enough for newspaper headlines, but they are not good enough for votes on this House floor. Let me remind my colleagues that sound bites for the nightly news will do nothing to win this war against terror.

Mr. Speaker, America has a long tradition of standing on the right side of this fight for freedom, even when it is a difficult stand to make, and the right course of action today is to stand by the Iraqi people until their government, their police and military can ensure the security of their own nation.

As in any war, there have been setbacks in Iraq. But as in past wars, we will move forward with victory as our goal. This Democratic resolution is a thinly veiled attempt to sound the retreat. That amounts to an unacceptable act of playing politics with our national security.

Mr. Speaker, as you have heard over the past 2 days, this is a serious debate, with very serious ramifications. It is not simply a simple resolution as the Democrats would like to characterize it. But on one hand, we have a shot at victory. We have an opportunity to push back the cause of radical terrorism. On the other hand, we have a two paragraph, nonbinding resolution that is essentially a vote of no confidence in the commander in chief.

This is not the time for our majority party to cave in to their anti-war supporters of the liberal left and play politics with the security of the United States. This is a time for bold leadership and bold plans. Sadly, Mr. Speaker, neither is on display here today.

I hope for the sake of the American people, our troops and freedom-loving nations around this world, that this resolution's flimsy words are not taken as a substitute for America's long tradition and commitment to achieving victory.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to point out to my colleagues this poster on my left. These brave soldiers, Paul Saylor from Breman, Georgia; Justin Johnson from Rome, Georgia; Lieutenant Tyler Brown, a Georgia Tech graduate, the president of the student body; and Hayes Clayton, III, from Marietta, Georgia, all died for their country.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot turn our backs on them. We cannot say to their moms and dads, their brothers and sisters, their wives and their children, that we supported sending them into harm's way and they gave their lives for their country, and now we are saying it was for naught, it was for nothing, it was not worth it. We can't let that happen.

Mr. Speaker, I want my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join with me in voting down this meaningless resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of our troops, who are faithfully serving our Nation in harm's way. Therefore, I must oppose this resolution brought to the floor by the Democrats because it offers no plan, no strategy, and no hope for victory. In fact, it does nothing but risk demoralizing our troops.

Mr. Speaker, let me start by saying that Republicans and Democrats alike recognize mistakes have been made in Iraq, and neither side of the aisle is happy with where we are today. But rather than offering solutions to move us forward, or engaging in a productive debate on alternative strategies, the Democrats have decided to propose what certainly seems to be a politically motivated non-binding resolution.

I ask, Mr. Speaker, what are we really accomplishing with this resolution? The answer is nothing. The Democrats are locking down this body for 36 hours—maybe in hopes of scoring political points by criticizing the President. But by using, our troops as pawns in an attempt to gain political leverage, this resolution serves only to weaken troop morale, while giving hope and comfort to the enemy.

And in doing so, Mr. Speaker, the Democrats have done nothing to end the war or to help our troops achieve victory.

Mr. Speaker, since the Democrats have hijacked the floor all week to debate this resolution, surely they must have an alternative to the President's plan. I'll bet the American people are as eager as I am to hear about this new plan for success. Certainly my constituents in the 11th District of Georgia are.

So what is their magic alternative? As far as I can tell, Mr. Speaker, they don't have one.

We've heard members of the Democrat team threaten to cut funding, cap troop levels, or compel a forced withdrawal. But where are those ideas in this resolution? I've read through its two brief paragraphs, and I can assure you—they aren't to be found.

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Simply put, Mr. Speaker, the Democrat leadership is afraid to ask their members to put their money where their mouths are and vote "yes" or "no" to fund our troops and their mission.

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Apparently, Mr. Speaker, calls for funding cuts and troop withdrawal are good enough for newspaper headlines, but not for votes on the House floor. Let me remind my colleagues that sound bytes for the nightly news will do nothing to win this war on terror.

VICTORY

I can tell you one thing the Democrats aren't discussing here today, and that's victory. Victory in Iraq will result in a nation that can defend itself, govern itself, sustain itself, and be an ally against terrorism rather than a safe haven for terrorists. Victory should be the focus of our debate today, because victory is the goal of our military's efforts. One of my Democrat colleagues said yesterday that "we have given war a chance." Well, Mr. Speaker, I retort that we must now, at this darkest hour, give victory a chance, rather than appeasement!

So I implore someone to please tell me how this resolution achieves any advancement toward victory.

Mr. Speaker, the President has offered a new idea that can help us achieve our goals in Iraq, so we can foster a more stable Middle East and yes, then bring our troops home to a grateful nation and the comfort of their families. This "new way forward" isn't perfect, nor will it make every Member of this body happy, but it is a reasonable plan which offers perhaps our last best chance to silence the insurgency, allow the Iraqi political apparatus to thrive, and help the region realize greater security and stability.

WHAT WOULD VICTORY ACCOMPLISH?

Mr. Speaker, when I look at this resolution, I feel as though I need to remind my colleagues on both sides of the aisle just what is at stake in this debate—and what is at stake with our victory or defeat in Iraq.

Victory in Iraq will deliver a blow to the cause of terrorism in the Middle East and across the world. Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups are hoping the U.S. will give up in Iraq, because that would make it easier for them to recruit, plan, and execute deadly acts of terrorism across the Middle East and even here in America. Victory, on the other hand, will deliver a tremendous blow to their unconscionable plans.

While all of us may worry about the next election, today's debate should focus on the next generation, and how the Congress will achieve security for the American people.

How soon we forget what it takes to keep our Nation safe, Mr. Speaker. Is it an accident that we have not had a terrorist attack on U.S. soil since 9/11? No! It is because our leaders have consistently stood up to the terrorists in word and action to show that the U.S. will not tolerate their ideology.

The war on terror rages today, and America can't give up our fight in Iraq, because it is crucial to our triumph over global terrorism.

CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE

Mr. Speaker, let me discuss in very clear terms the consequences of failure in Iraq.

Failure in Iraq—which is what this non-binding resolution will lead to—would mean: the collapse of a democratic Iraqi government, likely leading to mass killings and genocide in the nation. Al Qaeda and other terrorists groups would use this defeat to boost recruitment, and would use Iraq as a staging ground for deadly attacks—paid for with Iraqi oil revenue. Iran and Syria would exert tremendous influence over the region, an extremely dangerous proposition when you consider Iran's nuclear ambitions and Syria's continued disruption of the democratic process in Lebanon. Israel would be pushed into the sea, and the opportunity for democracy and freedom across the Middle East would be dealt a crippling, indeed deadly, blow.

These are the consequences of defeat. And these are the reasons we can't abandon our Iraqi friends just because we face difficult times. Instead, we must find bold solutions and have the will to carry them out.

Who said "when the going gets tough, the tough get going?" Maybe the Marines; certainly not the "Out of Iraq" House caucus.

MORE THAN A TROOP SURGE

Mr. Speaker, the Democrats' would have you believe the President's plan amounts to nothing more than a thoughtless troop surge. While a temporary troop increase is critical to the plan's success, the "new way forward" is a comprehensive plan that offers an array of

solutions vetted by our nation's top military minds and the Iraqi government.

GO IRAQI

For example, the plan includes elements of the ''Go Iraqi'' strategy advocated by Armed Services Ranking Member DUNCAN HUNTER and supported by many in this body—including myself—who serve on the Armed Services Committee.

We know we need more troops in Baghdad. The ''Go Iraqi'' strategy will make many of those troops Iraqi, including the redeployment of three Iraqi brigades to Baghdad. This achieves several important goals: it allows Iraqi units to become battle-hardened, which in turn allows U.S. troops to redeploy as Iraqi troops take their place; it shows the Iraqi people that their military is capable of protecting and defending the nation; and it builds rapport between the military and the people it is charged with protecting.

IRAQI PROMISES: MADE AND KEPT

The President's new plan was contingent on several promises from Prime Minister Maliki, and it is critically important that these promises are kept. So far, the Iraqi government has been true to its word, and we are making progress.

Prime Minister Maliki has pledged that he will institute new rules of engagement to give Iraqi commanders greater control of their forces and the ability to crack down on all militias, regardless of their religious sect. This may be the single most important aspect of the new strategy, as militias loyal to Muqtada al-Sadr will no longer operate unfettered and can be increasingly neutralized.

This new plan also recognizes that unemployment rates in Iraq are between 14 and 18 percent, which fuels participation in militias and death squads.

An essential part of the ''new way forward,'' therefore, requires economic development assistance, including a $10 billion commitment made by the Iraqi government.

New oil legislation will decrease fuel shortages, and there will be a more equitable distribution of oil revenues. The ''new way forward'' also calls for passing de-Ba'athification legislation, and holding provincial elections in the near future.

It is a shame that we are not debating any of these new ideas here today.

THE PLAN IS WORKING

Mr. Speaker, while the Democrats would have you believe the President's plan is doomed to failure, a January 19th Associated Press article indicates that the plan is already working.

The article notes, ''The arrest of a high-level aide to radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr in Baghdad came a day after Sadr's Mahdi Army fighters said they were under siege in their Sadr City stronghold as U.S. and Iraqi troops killed or seized key commanders. Further, two commanders of the Shiite militia said Prime Minister Maliki has stopped protecting the group.''

There are also reports that al-Sadr himself, accompanied by his military commanders, has fled the country for neighboring Iran.

And to address concerns voiced last evening by my friend from New York, Mr. WEINER, about how the new plan did nothing to address incursions by extremists along the Iranian border, Prime Minister Maliki has announced plans to seal the border with both Iran and Syria, ostensibly to keep al-Sadr out of the country.

SUPPORT FROM GENERALS

So Mr. Speaker, we are seeing results. And our Generals in charge say they need this new plan in order to achieve victory.

General Casey has consistently stated he will ask for the troops needed to accomplish our mission, something he says this new plan can achieve. In fact, General Petraeus stated in a recent Senate Armed Services Committee Hearing that he could not take over his new job and succeed without additional troops.

Mr. Speaker, I for one am more inclined to listen to our military commanders focused on winning this war than to the Democrat leadership focused, it seems, on winning something else.

SUPPORT FROM TROOPS

I am also inclined to listen to our troops. Mr. Speaker, as I have visited our men and women in uniform serving in Iraq, they have impressed upon me their dedication to achieving victory. And they know that cutting and running won't get the job done.

Captain Jim Modlin of Oceanport, New Jersey recently told the Washington Post that ''Pulling out now would be . . . worse than going forward with no changes. Sectarian violence would be rampant, democracy would cease to exist, and the rule of law would be decimated. It's not ''stay the course'' or ''cut and run'' or other political catchphrases. There are people's lives there . . . a simple solution just isn't possible.

Another soldier posted on a military blog that ''If the Democrats block these troops, we're screwed. We need them. We are as effective as we can be right now, but with more personnel we could be doing a lot more.''

SUPPORT FROM VETERANS

Mr. Speaker, our veterans have also voiced strong support for a meaningful discussion on Iraq.

Gary Kurpius, a Vietnam veteran and leader of the VFW recently stated, ''We have to let our generals be generals and wage this war as only they are trained to do . . . My generation learned the hard way that when military decisions are second-guessed by opinion polls or overruled by politicians, it is the common soldiers and families who pay the price.''

Yet against this tide of support, the Democrats it seems have decided to put politics front-and-center. So we debate not a solution for victory, but two paragraphs aimed at criticizing the President.

STAND BY OUR TROOPS

Mr. Speaker, America has a long tradition of standing on the right side of the fight for freedom, even when it is a difficult stand to make. And the right course of action today is to stand by the Iraqis until their government, police, and military can ensure the security of their own nation.

As in any war, there have been setbacks; but as in past wars, we will move forward with victory as our goal. This Democrat resolution is a thinly-veiled attempt to sound the retreat, and that amounts to the unacceptable act of playing politics with our national security.

Mr. Speaker, as you can tell, this is a serious debate with very serious ramifications.

On one hand, we have a shot at victory, an opportunity to push back the cause of radical terrorism. On the other hand, we have a two-paragraph non-binding resolution that is a vote of no confidence in our Commander in Chief. The potential impact this will have on troop morale and the overall success of the mission could truly be devastating.

This is not the time for our majority party to kowtow to their anti-war supporters of the liberal left and play politics with the security of the United States of America.

This is the time for bold leadership, and bold plans. Sadly, Mr. Speaker, neither is on display here today.

I hope—for the sake of the American people, our troops, and freedom-loving nations around the world—that this resolution's flimsy words are not taken as a substitute for America's long tradition of—and commitment to—achieving victory.

We owe it to them, their moms and dads, wives and children, brother and sisters.

I ask all of my colleagues to join me in voting ''no'' on this resolution.

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

Mr. Speaker, I would commend to my friends and colleagues who spoke previously that they take the time and review the National Intelligence Estimate that was released by the Bush administration in September of 2006, because the American intelligence agencies found that the American invasion and occupation of Iraq has helped spawn a new generation of Islamic radicalism and that the overall terrorist threat has grown. What we want to accomplish is to defeat terrorism, but we are not doing it with this strategy.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. ELLSWORTH), a new Member of the House and a member of the Committee on Armed Services.

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

Mr. ELLSWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, every day I am inspired by the unwavering will and determination of our fighting men and women who continue to serve with valor in Iraq and Afghanistan. Their commitment to serving our country represents the very best America has to offer and we owe them our debt of gratitude.

Mr. Speaker, I, too, wondered how this resolution would affect our troops. In recent hearings of the House Armed Services Committee, of which I am a member, when asked about the impact of this debate on our troops, General Peter Pace, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a man I hold in very high regard, said, ''From the standpoint of our troops, I believe that they understand how our legislature works and that they understand there's going to be this kind of debate.'' But most importantly he told us, ''There is no doubt in my mind that the dialogue here in Washington strengthens our democracy. Period.''

Mr. Speaker, I had two Iraqi war veterans in my office this afternoon and I asked them about this resolution. They said, ''Congressman, let me tell you

what the guys over there think about. They think about doing their job, they think about staying alive, and they think about getting home to their families.''

General Pace and these soldiers are right. Our democracy is strengthened when we engage in vigorous debate about solutions to the challenges that we face, and there is not a more pressing, more important challenge before us than this war right now.

But let me be perfectly clear: I strongly and I unequivocally support our troops, and I challenge anybody that questions my patriotism. As a result, we must provide the equipment and the resources that our troops on the ground need to meet their mission safely. Their safety should never be compromised by our disagreements here in Washington, D.C.

Despite our differences, I believe the President is sincere in his desire to bring a successful end to the war in Iraq, but he has failed to convince me that sending these 21,000 additional troops represents a new or successful strategy. We went to Iraq under a failed plan in 2003, and we can't afford to take the same failed path.

More importantly, we owe our fighting men and women better than what we are giving them. We need to know the goals for success are well-defined; that benchmarks are in place for both the Iraqis and for America; and that the Iraqi government will live up to their end of the bargain. So far they have not, and there is no indication that says they will now.

For too long, Mr. Speaker, our country has gone without questioning whether there is a better way forward in Iraq, and before we send these 21,000 men and women into harm's way, we must ask ourselves these questions. And I remind you, I asked General Pace these questions myself and asked him to look me in the eye and answer these. Does this plan produce less violence and fewer roadside bombs? Does it ensure our military can meet the other threats to our security and homeland across the country? Does it move us closer to the day when our fighting men and women can come home and America is at peace? I don't believe this plan answers any of those in the affirmative or with a yes.

Over the last few weeks, I have listened to generals, I have heard from constituents and talked to military families, and after countless hours of consideration, my gut tells me that I can't believe that this plan is the answer.

Unfortunately, this plan still gives no clear indication of the consequence if the Iraqis fail to meet their commitment that they made to us over the last few years. To date, our military has done everything we have called on them to do. Yet the Iraqi leaders have not lived up to their commitments.

I believe the time has come for the Iraqi government to step up and halt the sectarian violence, find the political will to solve their own problems and take charge of their own destiny. That is ultimately the key to finding a successful conclusion to this war and bringing our brave men and women home.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WILSON), another new Member and a valued member of the House Committee on Financial Services.

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Thank you, Mr. DELAHUNT.

Mr. Speaker, the costs keep climbing. Thousands of our young brave men and women have been killed. Next month we enter the fifth year of this war, a war that has lasted longer than World War I or World War II. Hundreds of billions of dollars of taxpayer money has been spent, and some of that money seems to have just disappeared into the desert air. The costs keep climbing, and nobody, not a single Republican or Democrat, can deny that.

The question before us now is clear: Should we escalate this war and send 21,500 more of our sons and daughters to referee a civil war in Iraq? The American people have spoken out for change, and many of us here have listened carefully. But escalating this war does not reflect the hard reality at home or on the ground in Iraq.

Saying ''support our troops'' is easy, but actually standing up for our troops overseas and their families here at home demands so much more from us. We must ask the tough questions and provide real support, instead of empty rhetoric.

Supporting our troops requires that we protect their bodies and lives with the best armor available. Supporting our troops means equipping them with the most reliable weapons and effective training. Supporting our troops does not stop when they come home from the war. It is the Nation's solemn obligation to care for those who have given so much. Supporting our troops means we must ask ourselves the hard question, should we send more of our sons and daughters into the constant crossfire of Iraq's civil war? The answer is no.

Mr. Speaker, it comes down to supporting our troops. In addition to the best armor, the proper respect and the right benefits, our troops deserve the right plan. In fact, nothing matters more than the right plan. Our heroic soldiers have done everything that we have asked them to do. Without a realistic plan to guide them, we cannot say that we are supporting our troops.

While sacrificing health care for children and pharmaceutical needs for our seniors, this administration has shipped 363 tons of cash on pallets to Iraq. When it got there, the American officials turned it over to Iraqis, without any idea of where they were spending it or what they were doing with it. That defies common sense. It should not be a surprise that nearly $9 billion are missing.

Again, Mr. Speaker, the costs keep climbing. As high as the cost is in dollars, it pales compared to the high price many of our military families have had to pay. Our troops are overstretched, their families are overstressed, and there is no relief in sight. Every one of our active duty military brigades have served at least a year long in Iraq or Afghanistan. When a mother or father or husband or wife is abroad for a year, it places tremendous strain on the family. Too many families have been torn apart by this war. The cost of broken families will never be entered into an accountant's ledger, but the cost is too high, and it just keeps climbing.

This month, one young man from my district was killed in Iraq. I know that this country will feel his loss. He left behind his parents, his wife and an infant son, Mr. Speaker, that he never had a chance to meet. I feel their loss deeply, and I ask all of my colleagues to remember that every man and woman that has been killed in Iraq cannot be replaced and leaves behind many people who depended on them.

The resolution before us today could not be any more clear. It states that the Congress will continue to support and protect our troops. I will never vote for any legislation that will endanger our troops in the field, and we will never vote to cut off funding that will help to compromise the safety of our men and women in uniform. But escalating this war and sending 21,500 more troops to referee a civil war is not the answer.

□ 2330

The American people have spoken and they demand that we support our troops with a real change in direction. As the voice of the people, Congress will make sure that this administration finally takes notice.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his concern and respect for the families and the soldiers that serve. He should know that there are many that are serving today in Iraq that agree with you.

Let me quote from a private in Baghdad who was shot at and who is enduring the vagaries and the vicissitudes of living every day in hell. This is what he had to say in a paper just recently.

''We can go get into a firefight and empty our ammo, but it doesn't accomplish much. This isn't our war. We're just in the middle.'' And that is Private First Class Zach Clausen.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. SHULER).

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight in support of this resolution because for 4 years this administration has driven us down the wrong road in Iraq. The administration's newest proposal does nothing more than accelerate our pace further and further away from our obligation of stabilizing Iraq and getting our troops home.

Our men and women in uniform have performed bravely and done everything

asked of them. Yet, 4 years into this conflict, we have our troops driving unarmored humvees in enemy territory.

Meanwhile, our government cannot account for roughly $12 billion allocated for the war in Iraq. With that $12 billion, we could have made the following purchases for our men and women in harm's way: 80,000 armor kits for humvees; 16,000 armored security vehicles; 20 million bulletproof vests; 40 million helmets. That money is gone. It disappeared in a cloud of waste, fraud and incompetence that has engulfed this war from the beginning.

In the words of Three Star General Greg Newbold, ''Members of Congress, from both parties, defaulted in fulfilling their constitutional responsibility for oversight.''

Now, this administration wants Congress to rubber stamp an escalation and continuation of those same failed policies. Well, that time is over.

My fellow Blue Dogs and I have made a public commitment to root out war profiteering. We demand oversight. We demand accountability. We demand transparency. The Blue Dogs and I will do everything in our power to make sure when we say we are funding our troops, the money actually gets to our troops.

Mr. Speaker, our military defeated a terrible dictator. This is what they were asked to do, but for 4 years now, we have asked those same troops to rebuild a Nation, and we have asked them to do this without a plan.

Now, this administration has asked us to send over 20,000 more military troops to continue trying to rebuild Iraq, still with no plan. Mr. Speaker, that is wrong.

I believe it is the patriotic responsibility of every Member of Congress to ask those tough questions. I promised the people of Western North Carolina that I would ask those questions. I have been to the White House, I have been to the Pentagon, and I have been to the hearings, and I am not satisfied with the answers I am getting.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution we are debating is not a binding resolution, but the grief felt by families who have lost loved ones is binding. The physical and mental struggles of our returning troops are binding. The devastation caused to innocent people by the violence in Iraq is binding.

It is a moral outrage to continue sending troops into harm's way without a plan for success.

This administration must realize that military might alone is not enough to secure Iraq and end the civil war.

Victory in Iraq requires more than bullets and bombs. It requires the cooperation of the Iraqi government, increased regional diplomacy, and competent leadership at home.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (MR. ELLISON). The Chair allocates an additional 5 minutes per side at this time.

The gentlewoman from Florida is recognized.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 10 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE).

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman very much for the time and for her charity and her leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor this evening with a whirlwind of senses and emotions. I am disappointed. I am disappointed by the emptiness and the hypocrisy of this resolution.

Our men and women in the field, valiantly serving to protect our freedom, they deserve more than this. They deserve a real debate that honors the job that they are doing.

Instead, what we have this week is a resolution that is eight short lines, eight lines, that in their entirety stab at the motives and undermine the difficult work that our patriot military is doing. I am so disappointed in a majority party that has no more respect for our military than that.

This debate has been called historic, and historic it is. It is historic in its hypocrisy. If you truly believe that this is not winnable with what has been proposed, then it is incumbent upon you to do everything that you can do to stop it and stop it now. Doing anything less belies your duty and your responsibility.

This resolution says we support you but we are going to hang you out to dry, and this from the folks who say they want a new direction. What a disgrace to the integrity of this body. How disappointing.

I am saddened. I am saddened by the apparent fact that everything done by the majority is absolutely political, all form, no substance. Is there nothing above politics? Surely the defense of our Nation and the preservation of freedom should be above politics.

How did a once proud party, the party of FDR, who said, ''We have nothing to fear but fear itself,'' and the party of JFK, who said, ''Let every Nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, to assure the survival and the success of liberty,'' how did a once proud party drop to such a depth? How very sad.

I am astounded by the seeming lack of desire to study and to call upon historical events for a basis upon which to develop policy. America is a great and a good Nation, and we are great and good because we have been blessed to have been led by men and women who until now did their level best to utilize all the information available.

I urge my colleagues to be true to the oath that we took just a few weeks ago. Don't you remember, we stood right here and said, ''I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic?'' All enemies, foreign and domestic.

What is a glimpse of the recent history of our current enemy? 1983, a truck bomb kills 241 Marines in their barracks in Beirut; 1993, six killed in the first World Trade Center bombing; 2000, al Qaeda's attack on the destroyer USS *Cole*, killing 17 American sailors; and then September 11, 2001, al Qaeda's hijackers fly planes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, while passengers on a fourth plane bring it to a crash landing in Pennsylvania, total number killed, 2,973.

Since then, there have been attacks in England and Spain and elsewhere, and just last summer, Scotland Yard in Britain arrested a couple who planned to destroy 10 civilian planes over the Atlantic. They were going to use their 8-month-old baby to disguise the bomb material as baby food. We as a Nation are ill-prepared for the ferocity and the hatred of people who will kill their own baby in order to get a chance to kill us.

American public policy failed to grasp the scope of the threat posed by radical Islam until September 11, 2001. On September 11, we reaped the consequences of decades of inaction against the very real threat posed by militant Islam.

These are extremely challenging times. Some would credibly suggest that these are more difficult times than we have faced since World War II, with the demographics of our society, the changing nature of the world and globalization and the nature of our competitors, all overshadowed by the nature of our avowed enemy, those who have publicly stated their goal to see the end of the Western world and America and who are working to secure the means to accomplish that goal.

I am perplexed. I am perplexed by the apparent inability of many in Congress to grasp this fundamental fact. We are currently facing an enemy who is calculating, patient, indiscriminate and murderous, an enemy actively waging war against us.

That is not just an opinion. That is not just my opinion. That is their stated purpose and fact.

In their own words, Osama bin Laden said, ''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.''

Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman said, ''Oh, you Muslims everywhere, sever the ties of their Nation, tear them apart, ruin their economy, instigate against their corporations, destroy their embassies, attack their interests, sink their ships, and shoot down their airplanes. Kill them in land, at sea, and in the air, kill them wherever you find them.''

So the impact of this resolution, Mr. Speaker, is to give aid and comfort to the enemy and to dishearten our own military.

In a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on January 23, General David Petraeus, now commanding officer in Iraq, agreed that a resolution of disapproval for this new strategy would ''give the enemy encouragement.''

What are the consequences of failure? The consequences of failure would be catastrophic to the region, to the United States, and yes, to the world. The consequence of the next step of this majority party plan is defeat. They may say it is inevitable or unavoidable, but it is, nonetheless, a strategy for defeat.

What message does that send to our allies around the world? What will the Chinese think of our commitment to Taiwan? Will the North Korean, the Iranians, the Syrians, the Venezuelans, will they be more cautious or will they be bolder after an American defeat?

It is inconceivable to me how a remarkably weakened United States in the eyes of the world is a good thing for us or will result in a less emboldened Iran or North Korea or al Qaeda. The consequences of failure are clearly unacceptable.

So I am disappointed, I am saddened, I am astounded and I am perplexed, but I am also enthusiastic and I am optimistic, Mr. Speaker. I am enthusiastic in my support of our valiant men and women who defend our freedom day in and day out, and I am optimistic because I believe so strongly in the United States and in her people, and I am optimistic because I am certain that they will appreciate and recognize the consequences of this debate and the remarkable differences in our approach and our desire to defend America.

Thomas Paine said, ''He that would make his own liberty secure, must guard even his enemy from oppression; for if he violates this duty, he establishes a precedent that will reach to himself.''

So, Mr. Speaker, let us honor our troops. Let us honor all who work for freedom on our behalf. Let us work together for liberty. Let us recall and recommit ourselves to our oath and our duty to defend our blessed Nation. It is that action, and that action alone, with the grace of God, that will ensure the wonder and the survival of our great Nation.

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Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia, a member of the House Appropriations Committee, Mr. BISHOP.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I support the troops, their families, and those who have sacrificed so much in this war. But like others who supported the Iraq efforts in the past, I have serious reservations about the President's new way forward.

On Friday, this House will vote on a resolution asking Members to support our troops but oppose the President's plan to send 21,500 more troops to Iraq. For me, this will be a sobering moment. I have spent many days agonizing over the issue, and I do not take lightly the judgment to rebuke the decision of the President, our Commander in Chief. But I have sent off and welcomed home thousands of soldiers at Fort Benning. I have seen the anguish on the faces of families as they watch their loved ones march off towards the uncertainty and peril that awaited them in Iraq and Afghanistan. I have seen the troops return home to those same families, their faces reflecting the elation, relief, and joy of seeing their loved ones safe at home. I have seen the veterans return with Purple Hearts, having lost arms, legs, and suffering from the mental trauma that results from war and the adverse impacts on their families. I have also stood and listened to Taps played over the bodies of too many who have returned in flag-draped coffins. Mr. Speaker, it is time for a change.

The situation in Iraq has become very grave. Like General Schoomaker and countless others, I believe we should not surge without a purpose, and that purpose should be measurable in its outcome. Thus far, the President has not set forth a clear marker against which the purpose and the outcome can be measured. Previous increases in troop strength have not brought a reduction in violence or quelling of sectarian strife. Rather, the problems have intensified, casualties have increased, and political situations show more cracks, corruption, and signs of instability every day.

There are those who say we should not oppose the President's plan without presenting an alternative. I think that may be a fair challenge, but there is another way. We need a new strategy that is based on redeployment rather than further military engagement, one that is centered on handing Iraq back to the Iraqis. As Congressman MURTHA has stated: Iraq cannot make the political progress necessary for its stability and security until U.S. forces redeploy. To achieve stability in Iraq and the region, we must redeploy from Iraq.

Why, you might ask? 91 percent of the Sunnis, 74 percent of the Shia want us out. 70 percent of Americans want us out. 72 percent of Americans who served in Iraq last year believe that we should be out by now. 61 percent of Iraqis approve of attacks on U.S. led forces. They see us as occupiers and want us out. The longer we stay, the more troops we send, the more violence we see, and the more we help recruiting of radical extremists. So we must redeploy first from Saddam's palaces in Baghdad, then from the cities, the factories, and universities. We must give the country back to the Iraqis and let them govern themselves and rebuild.

Next, we must execute a robust and diplomatic effort, and we must regain our credibility by denouncing aspirations for permanent bases. We must shut down Guantanamo and bulldoze Abu Ghraib prison. These are black eyes on the face of our international credibility. We must articulate clearly a policy of no torture, no exceptions. Then, we must engage dialogue with Iraq and all of its neighbors to promote investment of resources and cooperation for security by the other Arab countries in the region.

Most importantly, we need to repair and restore our strategic military reserves that have already been stressed to the breaking point. Because of the large force already in Iraq, Army ground forces here at home are not mission ready. This is because of both equipment and personnel shortages. The National Guard that remains at home is woefully unready to meet their statutory obligations based on natural disasters, wildfires, terrorism, and other threats to the homeland. The large presence in Iraq has drained readiness and equipment and personnel from the rest of our military. The surge will cost us dearly in billions of dollars and time, and we desperately need to repair, to reconstitute, and to reset our forces to face other significant threats at home and around the world.

We cannot stay the course we are on. We must change. Support our troops and our long-term national security by voting for this resolution.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of the time to the gentleman from Rhode Island, a member of the House Appropriations Committee and a valued member of the caucus, Mr. PATRICK KENNEDY.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, my uncle said a generation ago: If we examine the history of the conflict, we find the dismal story repeated time after time. Every time, at every crisis, we have denied that anything was wrong; sent more troops; and issued more confident communiques. Every time, we have been assured that this one last step would bring victory. And every time, the predictions and promises have failed and been forgotten, and the demand has been made once again for just one more step up the ladder. And once again the President tells us that we are going to win; victory is coming.''

My Uncle Robert Kennedy made this statement in March of 1968. It took another 5 years and 37,455 American lives before a United States President was withdrawing Americans out of Vietnam and stopping that war.

I am here tonight to say that the American people and this Congress are going to say ''no'' to this President when it comes to repeating that mistake.

There are those who will disparage this amendment and who say that this is a nonbinding resolution. But this resolution says that we are going to reject this President's doubling down on the gambling of American lives, and this foolish policy which has sent over 3,125 soldiers to their deaths, over 23,417 wounded soldiers back home, and hundreds of thousands of innocent Iraqis to their graves and countless more also injured.

We are saying in this resolution that we either have to start digging ourselves out of this hole, or we are going to start rueing the day when we have failed to act tonight to start changing course.

This administration's bullheaded insistence, bullheaded insistence on ideology over strategy is what has gotten us into this mess, and now that same stubbornness is counseling us to send still more soldiers and more Marines into an Iraqi civil war.

Our service men and women have been heroic. They have been confronted with repeated civilian failures of leadership, ill equipped and under equipped, and yet in increasingly untenable positions they have been unflinching and have been uncomplaining in their shouldering of every burden we have asked of them, and they have done it with dignity and professionalism. But it is not right. It is not right to ask them, to ask the military to bear the burden of the responsibility of solving someone else's civil war. It is not right, and it won't work.

Instead of closing our eyes and crossing our fingers and giving this President a rubber stamp for an endless civil war in Iraq, we should be beginning to move our country back to a commonsense policy of strength through leadership.

Our choice tonight is clear: Keep digging, or climb our way out of this hole. I think this Congress will decide to start climbing our way out.

And there will be many who will say, what will we do then? I will say, well, maybe we will propose to fence off the funds as many have suggested. That will be a debate for another day. That will be a debate for another day whether we will fence off the funds. But tonight will be the debate, and tomorrow will be the decision as to whether we will vote to go in that direction.

So you can say it is a meaningless, nonbinding resolution all you want, but it is the first conversation as to which direction we are going to go, and that is the direction we have to decide, and I vote that we go in the direction of starting to move our way and our troops out of Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, "if we examine the history of the conflict, we find the dismal story repeated time after time. Every time—at every crisis—we have denied that anything was wrong; sent more troops; and issued more confident communiques. Every time, we have been assured that this one last step would bring victory. And every time, the predictions and promises have failed and been forgotten, and the demand has been made again for just one more step up the ladder. . . . And once again the President tells us that 'we are going to win'; 'victory' is coming."

My uncle, Robert Kennedy, spoke these words in March 1968, It took another 5 years and another 37,455 American lives before a U.S. President finally withdrew American troops from Vietnam.

I will not stand by, the American people will not stand by, and allow the President to repeat that mistake.

Some disparage this resolution because it's nonbinding. But with due respect, I couldn't disagree more. This resolution represents a fundamental policy choice by this Congress.

It's about whether you agree with doubling down the President's high stakes gamble with American lives.

This resolution poses a simple choice. After 4 years, after 3,125 deaths, after more than 23,417 wounded, are we digging our hole in Iraq even deeper, or are we strong enough to start climbing out?

We need a stronger America, a more secure America and that begins with a rejection of the failed strategy in Iraq.

It has now been nearly 4 years since the President declared that in Iraq, our mission was accomplished.

Four years of disintegration. Four years of unfounded insistence that the turning point is right around the corner.

Are we digging deeper, or climbing out?

We have watched a child hug their parents tight on the tarmac—only to have to let go as Morn or Dad is deployed for the second, third, or even fourth time.

We have stood at the graveside with a grieving family as a Gold Star mother accepts a folded American flag.

We have visited our Nation's newest veterans in the hospital, their bodies and minds scarred by the horrors of war.

Are we digging deeper, or climbing out?

Each day we all see, with our own eyes, the carnage and the chaos that has become the norm in Iraq.

The administration's bull-headed insistence on ideology over strategy has led us to where we are today. And now, that same stubbornness is counseling some to send still more of our soldiers and marines into an Iraqi civil war.

Our current course is failing in Iraq. It's failing the bigger struggle against our terrorist enemies. It's failing our troops and their families. And it's failing our core values as Americans.

I won't settle for that failure. We must change course. We must begin to climb out of the hole in Iraq.

Democrats, Republicans, generals, and most importantly, the American people now see that it is time for a new plan; it is time to embrace a new approach.

Our service men and women have been heroic. Confronted with repeated civilian failures of leadership, underequipped, and in an increasingly untenable position, our troops have not flinched, they have not complained, they have shouldered every burden we ask of them with dignity and professionalism.

But it is not right to place upon our military the responsibility of solving someone else's civil war. It's not right, and it won't work.

Instead of closing our eyes, crossing our fingers, and giving the President a rubber stamp for endless war in Iraq, we should begin moving our country back to a commonsense policy of strength through leadership.

Our strong leaders of the last century, like Presidents Roosevelt, Truman, Kennedy, and Reagan, recognized that while American military might was important, American values were our greatest strength.

We rallied the world in the Second World War and defeated the Soviets in the cold war on the strength of our Nation's democratic ideals. For the entire 20th century, we led by our example, and by the force of our principles.

While military action will continue to be a necessary component of our current struggle, ultimate victory against this generation of enemies will similarly be won not on the battlefield, but in the minds of millions around the world. That victory is impossible while we are in the middle of Iraq's civil war.

Our choice today is clear. Keep digging or climb out? If we decide to begin climbing out, as I think we will, there are debates yet to come about the best way to do that—whether we should fence off funds to prevent an escalation, for example. I look forward to those conversations. But today is a more fundamental question about the direction of our country.

We can withdraw from Iraq without withdrawing from the fight. We can be strong enough to climb out of that hole. For our troops, for their families, and for our Nation's strength and security, I urge a "yes" vote.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ELLISON). The Chair will recognize both sides for 2 additional minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to consume the remaining 2 minutes. And I would like to say to all Members that although the debate tonight may have seemed uncivil at times, this is the wonderful process that we have here in democracy in this wonderful country, my adopted homeland. And my colleague from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT) and I disagree on so many issues, and yet we understand that this is indeed the greatest country in the world. We want peace and stability to all oppressed people throughout the world.

I happen to believe that the mission of the United States of America and the mission of the men and women who wear our Nation's uniform is a noble one. It is noble to stand up for freedom and for democracy; it is noble to fight against the radical Islamic Jihadists, who I believe do want to destroy our country, who want to destroy our allies like Israel, and want to destroy our way of life. I believe that the mission is just and I think that those who say we cannot stay the course, then how could they be against the decision of the President to send reinforcements? Because the decision of the President says that staying the course is not the right motion for the United States to make. We want to change the course. We want a new way forward. And the way forward is to send reinforcements to those brave men and women who are wearing proudly our Nation's uniform, who are standing in harm's way, and we want to give them everything that they need to succeed in their mission.

I have been to Iraq as have many Members and I have come to understand what their mission has been and they say, "Don't just say we support our troops. Say you support our mission. Don't leave us out there in the field."

And as I said in my previous remarks, Mr. Speaker, this is going to be an escalation and we will soon be cutting off funding for our troops and leave them in harm's way. That is a dangerous path.

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

Mr. DELAHUNT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I agree with my friend and colleague from Florida. This is a special country

and a special Nation and our men and women who are serving us in Iraq are special to us, to all of us.

The article that I alluded to earlier and mentioned the name of Private Clausen, I would like to quote from other soldiers who are in Baghdad currently who are fighting, are in the combat, and their observations, and I would encourage my colleagues on both sides to listen to their words. They get it. They understand. They know what is happening on the ground. They know the reality of Iraq.

Lieutenant Antonio Hardy. These are his words:

''To be honest, it's going to be like this for a long time to come, no matter what we do. I think some people in America don't want to know about all this violence, about all the killings. The people back home are shielded from it. They get it sugar-coated.''

Sergeant Herbert Gill:

''What is victory supposed to look like? Every time we turn around and go into a new area, there's somebody waiting to kill us. Once more raids start happening, they'll melt away. And then 2 or 3 months later, when we leave and we say it's a success, they'll come back.''

Our troops get it.

I referred earlier to Private Zack Clausen. Let me repeat his words: ''We can get into a firefight and empty our ammo, but it doesn't accomplish much. This is not our war—we're in the middle.''

Listen to these voices. These are not the voices that come and appear before us in congressional hearings. These are our brothers, our children, our sons, our daughters that are serving every day in Baghdad. Let's listen to the troops.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a profound debt of gratitude for our men and women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Our brave soldiers are remarkable. They find themselves in a foreign land with regional conflicts that date back over a thousand years. However, they don't run and hide. They fight. They risk their lives helping to encourage and teach the Iraqis to take over their own destiny.

Our Nation's sons and daughters deserve nothing short of unconditional gratitude and support from their government and the American people. As long as I am in Congress, our soldiers will have an ally.

As a veteran, and a father, I will always fight to protect those who defend their country. I will fight for equipment and supplies. I will fight for their safety and protection. I will make sure they return home to their loved ones as quickly as possible. And I pledge they will NOT be forgotten once they return home.

But I will not support sending over 20,000 more young men and women into a fight without a plan to win and get them home. We cannot send more Americans into harm's way to instill a peace that the Iraqis are not willing to seek for themselves.

The solutions now are political not military. The Iraq Study Group urged the president to pursue a diplomatic solution alongside our military efforts.

But this president has decided to ignore the diplomatic side of the equation. This administration has squandered their credibility by losing billions in reconstruction funds, failing to adequately equip our troops, and failing to develop a clear plan for reconstruction in Iraq.

It is time for the Iraqi people to stand up and for the United States to begin a phased redeployment to protect American interests and take our troops out of the direct line of fire.

In closing, this war has created a new generation of veterans with new disabilities not seen in past wars. Adding insult to injury, the president's recent budget proposal lacks adequate funding for our veterans returning home. Researching post-traumatic stress disorder, improving suicide prevention, and providing adequate funding for prosthetics are crucial budget needs to serve our new veterans.

On a recent trip to the Walter Reed Army Medical Center, I met with several of our wounded soldiers. I pledge to them—and to all our men and women in uniform—that your country will take care of you. And I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in fervent support of the brave men and women of our Armed Forces currently serving in Iraq. While American soldiers and Marines courageously risk their lives to confront a determined enemy in Iraq, the Democrat leadership in Congress offers this resolution. The spineless resolution under consideration would undermine our military commanders' plan for victory in this ongoing struggle.

This act of political posturing strikes me as inconsistent with pledges of support for our troops. We cannot simultaneously claim to support the troops while calling into question the validity of their mission. The question, Madam Speaker, quite simply, is this: to fund or not to fund. If this Congress intends to provide our service men and women with the funds they need to achieve their mission, and we must, it follows that funding ought to go hand-in-hand with resolute commitment in support of their current mission.

If not this plan, what plan? Before you answer that, recognize that Congress is not, and has never been, tasked with administering a war. No successful war in the history of mankind has ever been managed by the legislative branch of any government. And no credible alternative for victory in Iraq has emerged from any member of this institution.

I find it curious that not a single Senator opposed the confirmation of General Petraeus as Commanding General of our troops in Iraq. General Petraeus is the coauthor of the Army's new official counterinsurgency doctrine that this resolution seeks to undermine. Yet, only weeks later, this body seeks to pull the rug out from under General Petraeus through this resolution. Such political posturing is shameful, but unfortunately it is anything but petty, as the consequences could be deadly.

Members of Congress may be able to convince themselves of all sorts of contradictory positions and logical inconsistencies through double-speak, but our service members know weakness when they see it. Thank God our troops are men and women of resolve and integrity. If you want to endanger even more Americans in the field and usher in an American defeat in Iraq, the surest way to do so is to demonstrate a lack of commitment from this House, and therein embolden the enemies our troops are battling right now.

I don't believe that's what anybody in this body wants, so I urge my colleagues to consider the consequences of support for this ill-conceived resolution. This is a time of war, one that is not of our choosing. Militant Islamists have been at war with America for decades, and they have grown more dangerous each year, as we tragically learned a little more than five years ago.

With overwhelming bipartisan determination, we voted to authorize military action in Iraq in 2002. Retreat from our current mission would communicate to Al Qaeda and jihadists around the world that the United States is fainthearted, and we could expect more horrific attacks on American soil than we saw on 9/11.

Let me be clear—I am troubled by the last year's increased level of violence in Iraq; we all are. But this resolution can only exacerbate the problem. Our service men and women deserve better from us. And we, Madam Speaker, regardless of party, are better than this.

May God bless our troops.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3 of House Resolution 157, further proceedings on the concurrent resolution will be postponed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Mr. WELCH of Vermont (during consideration of H. Con. Res. 63) from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110–13) on the resolution (H. Res. 161) providing for consideration of motions to suspend the rules, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. CRAMER (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for February 13, on account of a death in the family.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Member (at the request of Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. GINGREY, for 5 minutes, February 16.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Mrs. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a joint resolution of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.J. Res. 20. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2007, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 159, the House stands adjourned until 10 a.m. today, as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Honorable CHARLIE NORWOOD.

Thereupon (at 12 o'clock and 1 minute a.m.), pursuant to House Resolution 159, the House adjourned as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Honorable CHARLIE NORWOOD until today, Thursday, February 15, 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:

602. A letter from the Director, Office of Legislative Affairs, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's final rule — Deposit Insurance Assessments—Designated Reserve Ratio (RIN: 3064-AD02) — received December 29, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

603. A letter from the Director, Office of Legislative Affairs, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's final rule — Assessments (RIN: 3064-AD03) — received December 29, 2006, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

604. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — General rule for taxable year of deduction (Rev. Rul. 2007-3) received January 3, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

605. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Classification of Certain Foreign Entities [Notice 2007-10] received January 7, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

606. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Closing agreements (Rev. Proc. 2007-17) received January 3, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. ARCURI: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 161. Resolution providing for considertion of motions to suspend the rules (Rept. 110–13). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. WAXMAN (for himself, Mrs. EMERSON, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. EMANUEL, and Ms. HIRONO):

H.R. 1038. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for the licensing of comparable and interchangeable biological products, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself, Mr. LUCAS, Ms. FALLIN, and Mr. BOREN):

H.R. 1039. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resources study regarding the suitability and feasibility of designating the John Hope Franklin Greenwood Memorial/Museum of Reconciliation and other sites in Tulsa, Oklahoma, relating to the 1921 Tulsa race riot as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. BURGESS (for himself, Mrs. DRAKE, and Mrs. MYRICK):

H.R. 1040. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide taxpayers a flat tax alternative to the current income tax system; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. SMITH of New Jersey (for himself, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, and Mr. DELAHUNT):

H.R. 1041. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide an enhanced funding process to ensure an adequate level of funding for veterans health care programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to establish standards of access to care for veterans seeking health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. HENSARLING:

H.R. 1042. A bill to extend trade promotion authority; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. JONES of Ohio (for herself, Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mr. EMANUEL, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. PASCRELL, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. DAVIS of Alabama, Mr. TURNER, Mr. HOLT, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. PAUL, Mr. EHLERS, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. MILLER of North Carolina, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. ROSS, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. HERSETH, Ms. CARSON, and Mr. FILNER):

H.R. 1043. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the rehabilitation credit and the low-income housing credit; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BAKER (for himself, Mr. MELANCON, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. MCCRERY, and Mr. JINDAL):

H.R. 1044. A bill to improve the disaster loan program of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business.

By Mr. BOSWELL (for himself and Mr. REGULA):

H.R. 1045. A bill to designate the Federal building located at 210 Walnut Street in Des Moines, Iowa, as the ''Neal Smith Federal Building''; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. BURGESS:

H.R. 1046. A bill to amend titles XI and XVIII of the Social Security Act to modernize the quality improvement organization (QIO) program; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CLAY:

H.R. 1047. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to determine the suitability and feasibility of designating the Soldiers' Memorial Military Museum located in St. Louis, Missouri, as a unit of the National Park System; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. FERGUSON:

H.R. 1048. A bill to establish a program to transfer surplus computers of Federal agencies to schools, nonprofit community-based educational organizations, and families of members of the Armed Forces who are deployed, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey (for himself, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. FEENEY, Mr. PRICE of Georgia, Mr. PAUL, Mr. GINGREY, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. CARTER, Mr. GOODE, Mrs. MYRICK, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. AKIN, Mr. ROYCE, and Mr. NEUGEBAUER):

H.R. 1049. A bill to reduce the unintended costs and burdens that the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 imposes on United States businesses, while maintaining that Act's goals of bolstering confidence in the integrity of publicly held companies; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Ms. LEE:

H.R. 1050. A bill to establish a living wage, jobs for all policy for all peoples in the United States and its territories, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and Labor, and in addition to the Committees on the Budget, Armed Services, and Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. HOLT (for himself, Mr. REGULA, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mrs. BIGGERT, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. WOLF, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Mr. EMANUEL, Mr. MANZULLO, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. PUTNAM, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. BERMAN, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. LEE, Mr. LIPINSKI, Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. STARK, and Ms. SUTTON):

H.R. 1051. A bill to direct the Secretary of Education to establish and maintain a public website through which individuals may find a complete database of available scholarships, fellowships, and other programs of financial assistance in the study of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. JEFFERSON (for himself, Mr. MELANCON, Ms. KILPATRICK, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Ms. LEE, Mr. CLAY, Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD, Mr. WATT, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. WYNN, Ms. NORTON, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, and Mrs. CHRISTENSEN):

H.R. 1052. A bill to provide an option to proceed with an action in any Federal court to recover actual damages for physical or property damage in a major disaster that proximately results from the failure or negligence of the Army Corps of Engineers in

the design, construction, or maintenance of a project for which the Corps is legally responsible; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California (for himself, Mr. CAMPBELL of California, and Mr. CALVERT):

H.R. 1053. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Transportation to carry out certain transportation projects in the State of California to relieve congestion on State Route 91; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 1054. A bill to amend the District of Columbia Home Rule Act to eliminate Congressional review of newly-passed District laws; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. PALLONE (for himself, Ms. SOLIS, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Ms. SCHWARTZ, Mr. ROTHMAN, Mr. INSLEE, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. WOOLSEY, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. WEINER, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. WAXMAN, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Ms. CASTOR, Mr. ACKERMAN, Mr. HOLT, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. SIRES, Mr. PASCRELL, Mrs. TAUSCHER, Mr. HONDA, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. CLAY, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. OLVER, Ms. KILPATRICK, Mr. NADLER, Mr. WYNN, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. DOYLE, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mr. FARR):

H.R. 1055. A bill to amend the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act of 1986 to strike a provision relating to modifications in reporting frequency; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. PAUL (for himself, Mr. FEENEY, Mr. RUSH, and Mr. SENSENBRENNER):

H.R. 1056. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow individuals a credit against income tax for tuition and related expenses for public and nonpublic elementary and secondary education; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. PAUL (for himself, Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland, Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey, and Mr. SENSENBRENNER):

H.R. 1057. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a credit against income tax for amounts contributed to charitable organizations which provide elementary or secondary school scholarships and for contributions of, and for, instructional materials and materials for extracurricular activities; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. PAUL (for himself and Mr. MCCOTTER):

H.R. 1058. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow the Hope Scholarship Credit to be used for elementary and secondary expenses; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. PAUL:

H.R. 1059. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a tax credit for elementary and secondary school teachers; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. PAUL:

H.R. 1060. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a tax credit for professional school personnel in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and grades 1 through 12; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. SLAUGHTER (for herself, Mr. MCHUGH, Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota, and Mr. MANZULLO):

H.R. 1061. A bill to implement the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative and other registered traveler programs of the Department of Homeland Security; to the Committee on Homeland Security, and in addition to the Committees on Foreign Affairs, and the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. ROGERS of Michigan:

H. Con. Res. 65. Concurrent resolution disagreeing with the plan announced by the President on January 10, 2007, to increase by more than 20,000 the number of United States combat troops in Iraq, and urging the President instead to consider options and alternatives for achieving success in Iraq; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. DEAL of Georgia:

H. Res. 159. A resolution expressing the condolences of the House of Representatives on the death of the Honorable Charlie Norwood, a Representative of the State of Georgia; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. GORDON (for himself and Mr. HALL of Texas):

H. Res. 160. A resolution providing amounts for the expenses of the Committee on Science and Technology in the One Hundred Tenth Congress; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. COHEN (for himself, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Ms. LEE, Mrs. JONES of Ohio, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. TOWNS, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. LEVIN, Ms. NORTON, Mrs. SCHMIDT, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. SERRANO, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Ms. KILPATRICK, Mr. MEEK of Florida, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. EMANUEL, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD, Ms. CARSON, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. HARE, and Mr. HOLDEN):

H. Res. 162. A resolution recognizing the contributions of the Negro Baseball Leagues and their players; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Ms. DELAURO (for herself, Mr. OLVER, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, and Mr. FATTAH):

H. Res. 163. A resolution urging the collective judgment of both Congress and the President regarding the use of military force by the United States; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. TANCREDO:

H. Res. 164. A resolution encouraging the Federal Government and State and municipal governments, universities, companies, and other institutions in the United States, and all Americans to divest from companies that do business with Sudan; to the Committee on Financial Services.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 37: Mr. MILLER of Florida.

H.R. 91: Mr. MILLER of Florida.

H.R. 156: Mr. EMANUEL, Ms. NORTON, and Ms. BORDALLO.

H.R. 180: Mr. BERMAN, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. RUSH, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, and Mrs. CHRISTENSEN.

H.R. 201: Mr. STARK.

H.R. 207: Mr. HARE.

H.R. 251: Ms. MATSUI.

H.R. 279: Mrs. BLACKBURN.

H.R. 297: Mr. SHAYS.

H.R. 325: Mr. RANGEL.

H.R. 327: Mr. RAMSTAD, Mr. COHEN, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. ACKERMAN, and Mr. VISCLOSKY.

H.R. 333: Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia and Mr. ALLEN.

H.R. 358: Mr. CRAMER, Mr. GOHMERT, and Mr. PEARCE.

H.R. 400: Ms. HARMAN and Mr. KILDEE.

H.R. 403: Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota.

H.R. 462: Mr. PAUL and Mr. ISRAEL.

H.R. 488: Mr. ACKERMAN.

H.R. 489: Mrs. MUSGRAVE.

H.R. 493: Ms. SUTTON and Mr. STUPAK.

H.R. 503: Mrs. NAPOLITANO and Mrs. DAVIS of California.

H.R. 539: Mr. KING of New York, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. ALLEN, and Mr. CALVERT.

H.R. 545: Ms. BORDALLO.

H.R. 566: Mr. ELLISON.

H.R. 570: Mr. SOUDER and Mr. HOEKSTRA.

H.R. 581: Mr. NEUGEBAUER and Mr. SHADEGG.

H.R. 584: Mr. LANTOS, Ms. CARSON, and Mr. BOSWELL.

H.R. 588: Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. HOLT, Mr. INSLEE, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, and Mr. BOREN.

H.R. 592: Mr. TOWNS, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. ORTIZ.

H.R. 594: Ms. BALDWIN and Ms. SUTTON.

H.R. 620: Mr. CHANDLER, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, and Mr. ROTHMAN.

H.R. 628: Mr. SAXTON, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey, Mrs. DRAKE, Mr. CALVERT, and Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee.

H.R. 656: Mr. CARNEY.

H.R. 677: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 678: Ms. HIRONO.

H.R. 693: Mr. WYNN, Mr. RUSH, Mr. CLAY, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. MEEK of Florida, Mr. SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. LEE, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Ms. KILPATRICK, Mr. JEFFERSON, and Mrs. JONES of Ohio.

H.R. 695: Mr. DAVIS of Illinois and Mr. COURTNEY.

H.R. 698: Mr. WHITFIELD, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. COBLE, Ms. BALDWIN, and Ms. FOXX.

H.R. 699: Mr. BUYER, Mr. PLATTS, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. YOUNG of Florida, and Mr. WICKER.

H.R. 787: Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 801: Ms. HIRONO, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mr. PETRI.

H.R. 808: Mr. BOSWELL and Mr. OBERSTAR.

H.R. 811: Mr. LAHOOD.

H.R. 813: Mr. DREIER, Mr. ROYCE, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. CALVERT, and Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California.

H.R. 840: Mr. HINOJOSA and Mr. MCHUGH.

H.R. 852: Ms. MATSUI.

H.R. 870: Mr. UPTON.

H.R. 878: Mr. MCDERMOTT and Ms. SHEA-PORTER.

H.R. 884: Mr. SOUDER.

H.R. 886: Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. REICHERT, and Mr. SMITH of Washington.

H.R. 890: Ms. HIRONO, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. HARE, Mr. CAPUANO, Ms. WOOLSEY, Ms. CASTOR, and Ms. WATSON.

H.R. 942: Ms. MATSUI.

H.R. 957: Mr. BLUNT, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. KIRK, Mr. CANTOR, Mr. BERMAN, and Mr. FORTUÑO.

H.R. 971: Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. COBLE, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. ROSS, and Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas.

H.R. 976: Mr. MCKEON, Mr. PATRICK MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. SKELTON, Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas, and Mr. HERGER.

H.R. 984: Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut.

H.R. 985: Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut.

H.R. 997: Mr. PUTNAM, Mr. BILBRAY, and Mr. TANCREDO.

H.R. 1010: Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. PORTER, Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland, and Mr. TIERNEY.

H.R. 1012: Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee.

H.R. 1026: Mr. POMEROY.

H. Con. Res. 45: Mr. INGLIS of South Carolina and Mr. SHAYS.

H. Con. Res. 48: Mr. MCCOTTER, and Mr. KIRK.

H. Res. 42: Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. SKELTON, and Mr. MARCHANT.

H. Res. 53: Mrs. JONES of Ohio.

H. Res. 55: Mr. ALLEN, Mr. KUCINICH, and Mr. SCHIFF.

H. Res. 64: Mr. KLEIN of Florida and Mr. MCNULTY.

H. Res. 79: Mr. KLINE of Minnesota and Mr. WAMP.

H. Res. 87: Mr. PUTNAM.

H. Res. 98: Mr. WEXLER, Mr. MILLER of North Carolina, Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, and Mr. SMITH of New Jersey.

H. Res. 118: Mr. SKELTON, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California, and Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.

H. Res. 121: Mr. ACKERMAN, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. ROTHMAN, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. FOSSELLA, and Mr. CROWLEY.

H. Res. 135: Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas and Mr. CLYBURN.

H. Res. 136: Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. REYES, Mrs. CAPPS, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Mr. DOYLE, Ms. BORDALLO, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. SKELTON, Mr. SHULER, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. HINOJOSA, Ms. ESHOO, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, and Ms. KILPATRICK.

H. Res. 149: Mr. HARE, Mr. ROTHMAN, Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. SESTAK, and Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California.

United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 110th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 153 WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2007 No. 28

Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the Honorable AMY KLOBUCHAR, a Senator from the State of Minnesota.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal Lord God, creator of summer and winter, teach us to appreciate life's seasons. May the snow and ice that surround us today remind us of our dependence on You in life's sunshine and shadows.

Sustain our Senators during this national season of challenge and uncertainty. Teach them that the One who designed the seasons can order their steps and direct their destinies. Meet their deepest needs with Your great power and love. Strengthen their resolve to press on in their efforts to do Your will.

As they grapple with complex issues, give them the peace of knowing that You are already working on solutions. Help them never to forget that You alone are the source of security, peace, and hope throughout the seasons of our years. We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable AMY KLOBUCHAR led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD.)

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 14, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable AMY KLOBUCHAR, a Senator from the State of Minnesota, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Madam President, today following whatever time the leaders might utilize, the Senate will be in morning business for 1 hour, with the time equally divided and Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

Yesterday, cloture was invoked on the continuing funding resolution by a vote of 71 to 26. We need to run the 30 hours postcloture. Then all time will expire at 8:52 this evening.

Following morning business, we will resume consideration of the funding resolution.

I have had discussions with the Republican leader about other matters which we might consider prior to adjourning for the February recess. Among those would be several judicial nominations on which I have acknowledged on previous occasions we would be able to secure a time agreement. Members will be apprised of the likelihood or the possibility of votes today.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I would like to say that this 110th Congress, when we came here, Democrats and Republicans alike had a real problem because the last Congress only funded the Government until February 15. With cooperation between Democrats and Republicans, difficult negotiations took place, but it was a situation where Senators COCHRAN and BYRD, who lead us in the Appropriations Committee, working with Chairman OBEY on the other side of the Capitol, together with all ranking members and all chairs of the subcommittees on both sides, worked through these difficult issues. And they were difficult. We had not enough money to do all that is necessary to be done, but we got it done without a single earmark. I know this was difficult.

There are issues that are so troubling. There is a Senator on the other side of the aisle, JOHNNY ISAKSON from Georgia. I don't know how you could find a nicer person in the world than JOHNNY ISAKSON. He is pleasant. He always has a smile on his face. He has an issue that is really important to him concerning children and health—something that should be in this bill. It is not.

KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON, the senior Senator from Texas, has an issue dealing with BRAC that has bipartisan support. There are bases that we legislated closure for, and communities are having difficult times as a result of these base closures doing all that needs to be done, and we promised them money to allow these closures to go forward without as much concern and real hardship. But there wasn't anything we could do. If we had a single amendment on this bill, it had to go back for conference.

As a result of that, it would mean that very likely we couldn't complete this by tomorrow night at midnight. I have made commitments to a number of people that we are going to take care of these things in the supplemental which should be here the last week in March, and I am going to do

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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everything I can to make sure the process on the supplemental is as open and free as people think it should be. We will be as patient as we can be to work our way through this. I have told the distinguished Republican leader that vehicle will be open to amendments.

So I think we have done very good work. Legislation is the art of compromise and consensus building, and I appreciate very much the Republicans supporting this. There were some who didn't and I understand that and I understand why. What we did yesterday in invoking cloture on this bill is a step forward to allowing us to get the country's financial affairs in order. I have talked to Senator BYRD. I have spoken to Senator COCHRAN. I have spoken to the distinguished Republican leader. We are all going to do our very utmost this year to get appropriations bills done. We are going to be able to do that now that this CR is going to be out of the way either today early on or, if we can't work anything out, when the time expires tonight.

So, again, I want to express my appreciation publicly to everyone who worked on this matter. There were people who voted against the bill who were a part of the process of working things out. I have spent time on this issue with the senior Senator from New Mexico. I have spent a lot of time with him. He and I did that Energy and Water Subcommittee for many years as chairman and ranking member. We went back and forth. He didn't get everything he wanted, but he got quite a bit. I am not going to go through the whole rollcall of others with whom we worked on this to try to make it as easy a slide as possible. But anyway I am glad it is done. It is good for the country.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 574

Mr. REID. Madam President, I know there are Senators wishing to speak, but I just want to say a few more words on a different subject. First of all, S. 574 is at the desk and due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the bill by title for a second time.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 574) to express the sense of Congress on Iraq.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I object to any further proceedings with respect to this bill.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard. The bill will be placed on the calendar.

(The remarks of Mr. REID pertaining to the introduction of S. 579 and S. 588 are located in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 60 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, and the time equally divided between the two sides.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator COBURN be recognized for up to 1 hour at 3:15 p.m. today, not to exceed the 1-hour time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Texas is recognized.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Colorado, Mr. SALAZAR, be recognized following my remarks.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

STATE OF THE ECONOMY

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, on Monday the distinguished majority leader took to the floor and bemoaned the state of our economy, calling our economic future bleak. As surprised as I was by those comments, I thought it was even more important to come down to the floor and to respond and to provide, I think, a much different picture than that depicted by the distinguished majority leader.

It is ironic the same date those comments were made, the Associated Press reported a story that leads with this paragraph:

The deficit for the first four months of the current budget year is down sharply from the same period a year ago as the government continues to benefit from record levels of tax collections.

The Treasury Department reported Monday that the deficit for the budget year that began October 1 was down 57.2 percent from the same period a year ago.

That same article goes on to say:

The continued strong growth in revenues reflects the record profits corporations have been recording in recent years and the low levels of unemployment, which means more Americans are working and paying taxes.

If this is ''bleak'' economic news, I would love to see what good economic news might look like.

I have a few charts that provide a more accurate picture of exactly where we stand in terms of the American economy today. This first chart demonstrates for 21 consecutive quarters we have seen the U.S. economy grow, including the latest quarter where the economy grew by 3.5 percent.

We have seen since August 2003, employment has expanded over 41 consecutive months—creating 7.4 million new jobs in America. This timeframe is not accidental. In 2003, we passed some of the tax relief which is largely responsible for giving the American worker greater incentive to work hard and to save their money and invest it in their small business, thus creating jobs and opportunity for all Americans. This has created the sort of freedom that is always demonstrated in the strength of our burgeoning economy. It is as a result of not Government action per se but, rather, the freedom we have given the economy and the hard-working American taxpayer to keep more of what they earn and creating an incentive for them to work hard and be able to earn more to support their family and their way of life.

The third chart demonstrates the economic picture is not as the distinguished majority leader said, ''bleak'' but demonstrates that revenue to the Federal Treasury has exceeded all historical precedent. Indeed, this last projection is that in 2007 we will see it increase by 18.5 percent, and you can see above the line on this chart that represents historical averages. Each of the following years leading up to 2012 will exceed that historical average. Again, the economy is stronger than ever and continues to grow because of our current low tax and progrowth policies.

Unfortunately, this is a lesson that Washington sometimes forgets because when given the opportunity, the instinct of Washington is to increase Federal revenue by increasing taxes. I don't think you need to know much about human nature to know that high taxes decrease the incentive we all have to work hard. What that does is actually have a wet-blanket effect on the economy and on the ability of small businesses and employers to create jobs which create the kind of economic growth and the kind of revenue our tax system generates as a result of strong economic activity.

I am worried that even with the current continuing resolution that is in the Senate now that cuts $3.1 billion from defense spending at a time when we are trying to bring our troops home from Europe and Asia and to provide them a place to come home to, that the solution offered by the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Appropriations is ''Don't worry, we will add that money back in when we get to the supplemental appropriations bill.''

The problem with that is the $3.1 billion that has been spent out of the current continuing resolution or Omnibus appropriations bill on things other than our military, that money has now been spent on other programs that are favored by the new majority. What they are saying is, instead of spending $3.1 billion, we will spend $6.2 billion—the $3.1 on things other than defense, but we will come back later and make the defense budget whole but in a way that aggravates the budget deficit.

Of course, the consequence of that kind of spending policy which has a tendency to aggravate the deficit lays the groundwork for our colleagues on the other side to say, the American people are not taxed enough. We need to actually raise taxes in order to generate more revenue to pay for this additional spending.

This is exactly the kind of response we do not need. As demonstrated by the charts, as demonstrated by the booming economy, we have, as a result of the low tax policy and the progrowth policies of the last 6 years, the American economy could not be stronger or better.

I hope we will all be edified by this factual data demonstrated on the charts and that the misimpression that the distinguished majority leader was under when he called the economy bleak will be now disabused. I hope he will see from the charts and from my comments—not because I said it but because this is what the facts demonstrate—the low tax and progrowth policies we have had over the last 6 years have served the American people very well and that 7.4 million new jobs have been created in America since August 2003. That, indeed, should be what we are all about.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Idaho is recognized.

Mr. CRAIG. The Senator from Colorado is going to speak a little longer, but he has agreed I can interject myself but for a moment.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is recognized.

A VALENTINE TO MY FAMILY

Mr. CRAIG. Madam President, today is an essential day in my life. It is not just Valentines Day. It happens to be the anniversary of the first date I had with my wife Suzanne. Am I a romantic? Well, maybe just a little bit.

Little did I know then that one day we would be celebrating the first date as a married couple with three children and nine grandchildren.

Over the years, I have taken to the Senate to announce the news of our growing family and I ask my colleagues' indulgence again today to send a special valentine to the two most recent additions to our family.

Born November 20 of 2004, a beautiful granddaughter named Lily Terese Craig. On April 18 of 2006, another beautiful grandchild, Damon Oliver Craig, was born into our family. It is a thrill to be a granddad to these wonderful children. It has been a great joy to hold them, to love them, to see them around, and to watch them grow.

My wife Suzanne and I look forward to many happy experiences with Lily and Damon and the rest of our crew. Often we come to the Senate to talk about momentous and meaningful events, but there is no more important event than when grandchildren enter our lives.

Let me thank my colleagues. Let me thank my colleague from Colorado for letting me share with all how much we enjoy these new lives in our family on this Valentines Day.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Colorado is recognized.

Mr. SALAZAR. Madam President, let me congratulate my good friend from Idaho, Senator CRAIG and Suzanne and their grandchildren, Lily and Damon. I wish your family the very best. The family in Idaho, obviously, is where the roots are. Our families are so important to all of us, and we appreciate the Senator coming to the floor and sharing that special valentine message not only with the family but with the Nation and our colleagues in the Senate.

FORGOTTEN AMERICA

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I come to the Senate to speak about the forgotten America. That is the rural America which is a wide expanse of the geographic area of these United States. When I came to the Senate 2 years ago, I gave my maiden speech about forgotten America, the rural parts of our country which have been in decline decade after decade after decade.

I did so because if you look at my own history, I come from a place that is 300 miles to the south of Denver, a place that has the name of Conejos, in English meaning rabbit county. It is one of the four poorest counties in the United States of America. In that county, as in so many counties across America, you see the kinds of problems that describe the two Americas we have. We have the America of prosperity, much of that part of America lying within the metropolitan areas of our great Nation, and we have the other America, the forgotten America, the America that struggles on the vine every day to stay alive, the part of America that has great disparity in terms of the kind of health care and the kind of education and the kind of economic opportunity that exists for them.

In my own State of Colorado, there were 64 counties, and out of the 64 counties, even in the great boom of the 1990s when unemployment was nonexistent and our economy was growing at a very rapid pace, most of those counties were withering on the vine. They were declining in population. Their population was aging. They were struggling with health care. They were struggling with a whole host of issues that affect those communities.

Out of the 64 counties in Colorado during the period of 2000 to 2005, 21 of them actually declined in population. That is a third of my State that was actually declining in population. The fact is that same statistic can apply for many other States, including Nebraska, the Dakotas, Idaho, and most of our States around the country.

I am very hopeful, as we move forward in the 110th Congress, that under the great leadership of Senator TOM HARKIN from Iowa, we will be able to put together a farm bill that will help revitalize rural America and will help us put the spotlight on what has been the forgotten America.

Even as we start the process of moving forward and addressing the issues set forth in the 10 titles of the farm bill, we already see some statistics that to all of us should be alarming. At a hearing we had earlier this week, there was testimony provided to us that the per capita investment in rural America is about $550 less than it is in urban communities. That is because the formulas we have for community development block grants and other investments the Federal Government makes to help communities ends up, in a very disappointing way, affecting rural communities in these negative ways. I am hopeful, as we move forward with the farm bill, we will be able to correct some of these disparities and create new opportunities for rural America.

We will see one of those opportunities created with our efforts to grow our way to energy independence. The fact of the matter is, both Democrats and Republicans, progressives and conservatives, are coming together to recognize the fact that growing our way to energy independence is a matter of national security, a matter of economic security, and a matter of environmental security. I am tremendously optimistic about what we can do with the new farm bill.

Mr. President, today I speak briefly about two pieces of legislation I have introduced or will soon be introducing that are part of that agenda to try to help rural America. The first, a bipartisan legislation that creates a rural leasing institute. It is legislation which I am proudly sponsoring with Senator PRYOR, my good friend and former attorney general from Arkansas and Senator CHAMBLISS and Senator ISAKSON.

This legislation creates a rural policing institute to make sure our law enforcement in rural communities has a similar kind of opportunity that law enforcement has in the major metropolitan areas. In my State of Colorado, we have about 14,000 peace officers. I had the great honor as the attorney general of that State to serve as the chairman of the board that certified all the law enforcement officers in my State for a period of 6 years. There is a big difference between the kind of training rural law enforcement officers get and the kind of training provided to law enforcement areas in the metropolitan communities. Of the 14,000 peace officers in Colorado, 7,000 of the people work in departments that have fewer than 15 officers. They cannot afford the kind of training to protect themselves and to protect the public safety that other larger metropolitan police organizations can afford.

Therefore, our effort to move forward with this rural policing institute is to

allow our national Government to provide training opportunities to the thousands upon thousands of police officers who live in rural communities and who work every day to protect the public safety of their communities.

I hope our colleagues will join in the passage of this legislation. Last year, this legislation enjoyed the unanimous support of the Senate. I am hopeful we will again have that same kind of support.

In conclusion, let me say that the forgotten America is, indeed, much of rural America. It is that part of rural America which we know is so important to us because of the values we find there, the bedrock values of what America is all about. It is a pioneering spirit of the West. It is the place where the food security of our Nation so depends.

If you walk into my office, for many years I have had on my desk a sigh that says: No farms, no food. No farms, no food. I would hope, as we make that statement—as I make that statement—we recognize we should never compromise the food security of the United States of America. We, obviously, have done that in a very negative and disastrous way with respect to our energy dependence on foreign countries today. We ought not to do the same thing with food security.

Our ability to revitalize rural America and to enact a farm bill that will help us revitalize rural America is very much at the heart of how we take care of this forgotten America.

(The remarks of Mr. SALAZAR pertaining to the introduction of S. 583 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum and ask unanimous consent that the time be equally divided.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MENENDEZ). Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I rise to speak on the continuing resolution before the Senate, H. J. Res. 20, to point out some of the flaws in the bill. Because we have the potential for a Government shutdown, I believe it is my responsibility to vote for the legislation.

I am reluctant to be in the position of voting for a $463 billion spending bill with no capability for amendment. We passed appropriations bills out of the Senate last year. They reflected the Senate's priorities. Yet this measure changes many of the priorities that were set in last year's bills, and we haven't had the opportunity for hearings, committee markups, or to offer any amendments from the floor. That is not the way the Senate has done business, certainly not the Appropriations Committee. The Appropriations Committee has been quite bipartisan throughout the time I have been a member.

I don't like to see this type of precedent being set. The last time Republicans took over from Democrats, there were 11 appropriations bills not yet finished. We didn't do a continuing resolution and fill up the tree so there couldn't be amendments. We did an Omnibus appropriations bill. We debated it for 6 days. We timed it so that people had full access to amendments and the process. We had 100 amendments. That was 2003. I am very concerned about this type of process. But we are now 1 day before the end of the previous continuing resolution, which means we could see a Government shutdown if we can't come to agreement.

I said last week that we had time for amendments and to confer with the House. The amendment I put forward with 27 cosponsors, the Hutchison-Inhofe amendment, would have fully restored the $3.1 billion that was taken out of military construction that was preparation for the movement of troops home from overseas, as well as many other base changes that were going to be made. I asked for the restoration of that with 27 cosponsors, and my amendment was ruled out of order.

I know there was bipartisan support for those many military construction projects. And since I am the ranking member and previously the chairman of that subcommittee, I know how important they are. I know they were so important that the chairman of all the services, plus the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, wrote a letter saying: Please do not fund with a continuing resolution the military construction projects because there will not be enough to fully cover our needs. The Secretary of Defense said the same thing.

We are not going to be able to do what is right for our military because $3 billion was taken out of the Senate-passed appropriations bill and converted to other projects. It was spread around throughout the other agencies, and the military construction was the pay-for. I tried to correct that, and I have to say that the distinguished majority leader did make an effort to work with the House to make my amendment in order. He was not able to do that. I accept that, and I accept that he tried. I do believe he tried. I think Senator REID did make an effort. But we have a process here which is not one anyone can be proud of; that is, a $463 billion spending bill, taking $3 billion away from military construction, putting it into other priorities, and not allowing amendments. It is not right, and I protested.

I am going to vote for the bill. I think we have to do it.

I am very concerned about the NASA funding. There is money taken out of the ongoing, very important priority of getting the crew return vehicle that is the successor to the shuttle online on time. I cannot imagine we would take money out of that program, which was done in this bill, which would potentially delay us years down the road from having the crew return vehicle that is set to replace the shuttle. The shuttle is set to go out of existence in 2010, possibly 2011. We need the shuttle to finish the space station. But the Administrator, Michael Griffin, has said we need to retire the shuttle as soon as possible. We have to finish the space station. The new crew return vehicle will not be able to carry big parts up to the space station. It will not be heavy enough. But we need to close the gap so we don't have a time when the United States is not able to send people into space, and that is what is going to happen if the crew return vehicle is not able to be produced when the shuttle goes out of existence.

I think we are putting NASA in jeopardy. I met with Senator BILL NELSON, the chairman of the NASA Subcommittee, of which I am ranking member. We met with Michael Griffin and members of the staff of the Appropriations Committee who assured Michael Griffin he would have the ability to transfer money out of other accounts to go there. But I am concerned about it. Why was the money moved out of that account in the first place? That doesn't seem like the proper way to do business. But we are going to watch that very carefully.

Senator NELSON and I are very bipartisan in our approach to NASA. We both believe it is most important for us to have human spaceflight capabilities for the United States of America. It is a national security issue as well as a scientific issue that we stay in the forefront of science, and the lead we have had by going into space early is unmatched by any other country. Our lead is so important for our national security and the dominance we have had in space. The ability we have had to guide missiles from space is a phenomenal advantage America has been able to achieve by conquering space. If we don't have the ability to put humans in space for some period of time—3 to 5 years—what are we going to do? Are we going to go and beg the Russians? Who knows, by 2010 or 2011, whether the Russians would even give us space on their shuttles, much less give us the accommodations we would need and perhaps the secrecy we would need.

I am concerned about this bill. If we were not facing a potential shutoff of the Government and many important programs, including benefits to veterans and military pay, I would vote no, just as I did vote against cloture because I thought we still had time to do this right. We should have had time

to do it right, but we didn't, so we are faced with the Hobson's choice of shutting down the Government or trying to do this bill in the right way with no amendments. I don't consider it a good choice.

Mr. President, I will vote for the bill. I do not think this is the Senate's finest hour. I do believe the Senate majority leader made an effort. I think he heard the merits of our bipartisan amendment with 27 sponsors. I hope he will, as he has promised, work with us to get the full funding of these military construction projects in the supplemental appropriations bill. However, we have the chance right now. I hate to give up the bird in the hand for one that might see some delays, that might see many changes. I will be right on top of it. As the ranking member of this subcommittee, I will certainly expect that we have the ability to amend the appropriations bill that comes forward as a supplemental, just as we have always had in this body. I hope we will not have to worry that we are going to have a filled up amendment tree and cloture filed on the supplemental appropriations bill.

We can do business the right way in the Senate. We have for most of the years of this great institution. I will be disappointed if we start seeing us bring bills to the floor and not allow amendments—there is no reason to have 100 Members if that is the way we are going to do business. We could just have 51 or we could just have 1 if all the decisions are going to be made in that fashion.

That is not what the Constitution intended, and I hope it is certainly not what the new majority intends as a way to do business.

I am going to hold out hope that the word is kept, that we can have the amendment process, that we can fund the military construction projects that are so important for quality of life and training capabilities for the great men and women who are serving our country and putting themselves forward to give up their lives, if necessary, for freedom for future generations of Americans.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is now closed.

MAKING FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2007

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate resumes consideration of H.J. Res. 20, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res 20) making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2007, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Reid amendment No. 237, to change an effective date.

Reid amendment No. 238 (to amendment No. 237), of a technical nature.

Motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Appropriations, with instructions to report back forthwith, with Reid amendment No. 239, to change an effective date.

Reid amendment No. 240 (to the instructions of the motion to recommit), of a technical nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

ALTERNATIVE MINIMUM TAX

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I think it was 48 hours ago I opened a discussion with my fellow Senators on the alternative minimum tax. As I pointed out at that time, it is generally recognized that the alternative minimum tax is a policy failure.

Created in 1969, in response to the discovery that 155 wealthy taxpayers—and let me emphasize that I am talking about 155 wealthy taxpayers—were able to eliminate their entire tax liabilities through legal means, the AMT has now evolved into a place where, because it wasn't indexed, it has captured more than 3 million middle-class Americans as of 2004. The AMT was never supposed to affect anyone except the very wealthy people.

I am using 2004 numbers because 2004 is the most recent year we have completed data. Three million people in that year were hit by AMT, even though since 2001 we have had in place a tax policy that no additional people should be hit by the alternative minimum tax.

At the time I was visiting with my colleagues 2 days ago, I cited the widespread observation that the most significant structural flaw afflicting the AMT is the failure to index its rates and exemptions for inflation. This failure, then—and I alluded to this a minute ago—has resulted in the gradual encroachment of the alternative minimum tax to hit middle-class taxpayers who were never intended to pay this tax.

Despite the widespread agreement that something needs to be done with the alternative minimum tax, agreement on what exactly to do is not so widespread. A major factor in the disagreement relates to the massive amount of money the alternative minimum tax brings to the Federal Government. In 2004, from these 3 million taxpayers hit by this tax, more than $12.8 billion was paid into the Federal Treasury. If we don't extend the most recent alternative minimum tax hold-harmless that actually expired at the end of 2006, the amount paid by those 3 million taxpayers is expected to balloon to a much greater amount. And, of course, when you go beyond that, into the long-term budget forecast, it is going to continue to grow and grow, with middle-class taxpayers paying a tax that was meant to be for 155 wealthy people.

When forecasters put their projections together, they are working under the assumption that the hold-harmless that was extended in last year's tax bill will not be extended because they base their assumptions on current law. This means the hold-harmless provisions ended December 31, 2006, and money being earned right now is going to hit millions more people.

People who guesstimate how much money comes into the Federal Treasury—and we have people both in the executive branch and the legislative branch who have that as their responsibility, so we can make good tax policy—take into consideration what is current law, and they are planning on these millions of middle-class taxpayers paying this alternative minimum tax, even though they were never intended to pay it. Because of this, budget planners make the assumption that revenues will be much higher than everyone who is frustrated with the AMT thinks that amount of money ought to be, as well as the number of people who are going to be paying it.

The reason for that is the alternative minimum tax tremendously balloons the revenue base, as it is projected to increase revenues as a percentage of gross domestic product. There is a great deal of evidence to support this.

On a side note, a senior, well-respected tax lawyer on the other side of the aisle in the other body took exception to my use of the term ''ballooning.'' The staffer wrote an article and criticized me for that term. Well, I am not used to staff writing articles criticizing Members of Congress, so I happened to respond to that staffer's criticism through my own staff. The essence of the senior staffer's criticism was that the term ''ballooning'' ignored the accounting for the interaction of bipartisan tax relief with AMT costs. As we pointed out, ballooning revenue from the AMT occurs in the outyears, whether the bipartisan tax relief is extended or made permanent. I will talk more about that in a few minutes.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has consistently forecast this ballooning year after year. This chart which I have before me now for you to look at, reproduced from the Congressional Budget Office's long-term budget outlook, was published in December 2005 and shows how Federal revenues are expected to push through the 30-year historical average and then keep going up.

You can take that historical average back 30 or 40 years for sure, and maybe longer than that, but the historical average is here and current law is actually going to bring in this much revenue, and that includes the ballooning of the alternative minimum tax.

I want to note that although the Tax Increase Prevention and Reconciliation Act of 2005 was signed into law after this analysis was published, the 2006 tax bill extended the AMT hold-harmless through December 31 last year, and this chart shows Federal revenues all the way through to the year 2050. It is important to note the long-term effects then of the alternative minimum tax on the revenue base.

There may be some doubters who hesitate to attribute this ballooning of revenues to the alternative minimum tax, but this chart illustrates the drastic expansion of the AMT under current law over the next 43 years. Over the next 43 years. This is also from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office. You can clearly see that the share of households subjected to the alternative minimum tax is alarmingly around 65 percent.

Let's go through that again. You can see from the new chart which I have put up here that the share of households subjected to the alternative minimum tax increases by the year 2050 to about 65 percent of taxpayers. The reason why this 65 percent—or even going back to here, or even back to here—is significant is because, as I told you 48 hours ago, and as I tell my colleagues now, this alternative minimum tax was put in the tax law to hit wealthy taxpayers, 155 at that year, who didn't pay any tax whatsoever.

It was felt that everybody, particularly wealthy people living in this country and who benefit from this country, ought to pay some sort of a tax. It was never intended to hit this percentage of taxpayers, or this percentage of taxpayers, and surely not this percentage of taxpayers. And if we do nothing, it is going to be 65 percent. I don't know what the population of this country is going to be in 43 years, but I know that 65 percent of the population in 2050 will be more, quite obviously more than the 155 taxpayers the AMT was intended to target.

This chart also shows how the AMT will consume a greater and greater share of the total individual income tax liability. The Congressional Budget Office report states:

> By 2050, roughly 15 percent of the individual income tax liability would be generated by the alternative minimum tax compared with about 2 percent today.

This is what will happen if we don't do anything. This is going to happen. The analysis done by the Congressional Budget Office clearly shows an upcoming ballooning of Federal revenues, accompanied by a corresponding bloating of the share of households and the share of total liability attributed to a tax that was only intended to hit 155 people 39 years ago.

A particularly wrongheaded argument that has been advocated is that the Bush tax cuts are responsible for increases in the number of people hit by the alternative minimum tax. Some think the Bush tax cuts are increasing some people's income so much that they are subject to the alternative minimum tax and that making the tax cuts permanent will only make those problems worse. This sort of reasoning is deceptive and could not be more wrong. First, the analysis that I presented—done by the Congressional Budget Office—looks forward all the way to 2050, and the Bush tax cuts under current law sunset in 2010. As I previously said, the AMT's greatest flaw is that it is not indexed for inflation, and inflation is going to continue whether the Bush tax cuts are extended or not. Inflation is going to be there.

This next chart from the Congressional Budget Office illustrates how the alternative minimum tax will continue to be a money machine, regardless of any other factors. The bottom line illustrates individual income tax liabilities if the Bush tax cuts are made permanent and the AMT is modified, the middle line illustrates current law with the permanence of the Bush tax cuts, and the very top line—current law. If the Bush tax cuts are allowed to sunset and the AMT is allowed to grow and consume our middle class, the AMT will still balloon revenues anyway. Any argument that making the Bush tax cuts permanent will worsen our AMT problem is completely false, and this chart proves that. The AMT is a problem all by itself.

As I said earlier, the problem with all of the projections showing the AMT ballooning revenues is that these projections are used to put together budgets. This means the central problem in dealing with the AMT is money. There are some people who say we can only solve the AMT problem if offsetting revenue can be found to replace the money that the AMT is currently forecast to collect. Anyone who says this sees the forecasts showing revenue being pushed up as a percentage of GDP—and they are high-tax people and yet higher tax people to satisfy them—and they want to keep it there. These arguments are especially ridiculous when one considers that the alternative minimum tax was never meant to collect so much revenue and collect it from the people who are going to end up paying it, the middle class people, if we don't do something about it.

As a policy instrument, the alternative minimum tax has been and continues to be a complete failure, as I discussed 48 hours ago. The alternative minimum tax was originally conceived as a means to ensure that extremely wealthy taxpayers were not able to game the system and to avoid their entire tax liability. In 1969, the alternative minimum tax was calculated to hit only one out of a half a million people. There is absolutely no way anyone can call the AMT anything close to a success. The alternative minimum tax has even failed in its objective: to ensure that no citizen, regardless of how wealthy, was able to completely avoid paying at least a little bit of Federal income tax because we have this anomaly.

In 2004, the Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service, Mark Everson, informed the Finance Committee that the same number of taxpayers, as a percentage of the tax-filing population at large, continues to pay no Federal income tax.

So even to hit the people who were supposed to be hit, there are people in a tax situation, legally, able to avoid not only the regular income tax but to avoid the alternative minimum tax. So it is a failure by its own reason for existence.

According to an IRS analysis of the tax year 2003 data, we had 2,366 taxpayers with incomes above $200,000 or more who did not use the medical or dental expense deduction and had no income tax.

The AMT has failed in every way except for the ability to raise very large sums of money, and it was never intended to be a tax-producing machine. It was only intended to hit people who were not going to pay any income tax and ought to pay a little bit for the privilege of living in America. While it may be hard for some to turn down taxpayers' money, whether we are supposed to collect it or not, no one seems to have trouble spending it. This means that some want the taxpayer to pay the price for a tax that was designed poorly and through the comedy of errors was allowed to flourish.

It is simply unfair to expect taxpayers to pay a tax they were never intended to pay—and that means middle class America. And it is even more unfair to expect them to continue paying for that tax once we get rid of it. The reform or repeal of the AMT should not be offset because it is money we were never supposed to collect in the first place.

The way to solve this problem is to look on the other side of the ledger, the spending side. Budget planners need to take off their rose-colored glasses when looking at long-term revenue projections that include a tax by middle class people who were never intended to pay that tax, the alternative minimum tax, and to read the fine print. In general, it is a good idea to spend money within your means. That is true in this case as well. If we start trying to spend revenues we expect to collect in the future because of the AMT, from people who were never expected to pay it, it was never supposed to come in the first place, we will be living beyond our means. We need to stop assuming that record levels of revenue are available to be spent and to recognize that the AMT is a phony revenue source.

As we consider how to deal with the AMT, we must first remember that we do not have the option of not dealing with it unless we want to kill the middle class. The problems will only get worse every year and make any solutions more difficult. We must also be clear that the revenue the AMT would not collect as a result of repeal or reform should not be offset as a condition for repeal or reform. We should not call

it lost revenue because it is revenue that the middle class was never expected to pay. Making the offsetting of the AMT's ill-gotten gains a condition of the AMT fix is to punish the American taxpayers for an ill-conceived and poorly executed policy that has been a total failure.

Aside from not increasing the proportion of wealthy taxpayers who pay income taxes, the AMT is projected to balloon Federal revenues over historical averages and to become a greater source of revenue than even the regular income tax. Budget forecasters need to recognize that the AMT is not a legitimate source of revenue, and Congress needs to be disciplined enough to show restraint on spending so that an AMT solution doesn't boil down to the replacement of one misguided policy by another misguided policy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following my remarks, Senator BROWN of Ohio and Senator CHAMBLISS of Georgia be recognized.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

IRANIAN THREAT

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, at this moment of challenge for our Nation, the vantage point of this august Chamber, we look onto a world filled with danger, deeply complex threats against our troops and our national interests abroad, and genuine risks to our security at home. Keeping our Nation strong and our people safe requires that we employ the best and smartest strategies available.

In confronting enemies and threats we are fortunate to possess a great many assets, all of which we must wisely deploy, including our military, diplomatic, economic, and cultural assets. Our strongest asset remains the democracy that we are privileged to take part in as Members of the Senate and as representatives of our constituents. Our democratic institutions, under our Constitution, balance one another and check against excesses and concentrations of power that help us wrestle with difficult challenges in an open and forthright way. This constitutional framework is not an obstacle to pursuing our national security but the example that we should project to the world. Our democracy, with its tradition of accountable power and open debate, is America at its best. That is what we need, America at our best, as we deliberately and resolutely confront the threat posed by the Iranian regime.

Make no mistake, Iran poses a threat to our allies and our interests in the region and beyond, including the United States. The Iranian President has held a conference denying the Holocaust and has issued bellicose statement after bellicose statement calling for Israel and the United States to be wiped off the map. His statements are even more disturbing and urgent when viewed in the context of the regime's quest to acquire nuclear weapons. The regime also uses its influence and resources in the region to support terrorist elements that attack Israel. Hezbollah's attack on Israel this summer, using Iranian weapons, clearly demonstrates Iran's malevolent influence, even beyond its borders.

We also have evidence, although it is by no means conclusive, of attacks using Iranian-supplied or manufactured weaponry against our own American soldiers. As I have long said, and will continue to say, U.S. policy must be clear and unequivocal. We cannot, we should not, we must not permit Iran to build or acquire nuclear weapons. In dealing with this threat, as I have also said for a long time, no option can be taken off the table. But America must proceed deliberately and wisely, and we must proceed as a unified nation. The smartest and strongest policy will be one forged through the institutions of our democracy. That is the genius of our American system and our constitutional duty.

We have witnessed these past 6 years, until the most recent election of a new Congress by the American people, the cost of congressional dereliction of its oversight duty—a vital role entrusted to Congress by our constituents and enshrined in and even required by our Constitution. So we are here today because the price that has been paid in blood and treasure through the rush to war in Iraq and the incompetence of its execution and managing the aftermath, in the excesses of military contracting abuses and the inadequate supply of body armor and armored vehicles on the ground, have led to a loss of confidence in this administration among our allies and the American people.

Therefore, we cannot and we must not allow recent history to repeat itself. We continue to experience the consequences of unchecked Presidential action. Sunlight is the best disinfectant but this President was allowed, for too long, to commit blunder after blunder under cover of darkness provided by an allied Republican Congress.

In dealing with the threats posed by the Iranian regime, which has gained its expanding influence in Iraq and the region as a result of the administration's policies, President Bush must not be allowed to act without the authority and oversight of Congress. It would be a mistake of historical proportion if the administration thought that the 2002 resolution authorizing force against Iraq was a blank check for the use of force against Iran without further congressional authorization. Nor should the President think that the 2001 resolution authorizing force after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 in any way authorizes force against Iran.

If the administration believes that any—any—use of force against Iran is necessary, the President must come to Congress to seek that authority.

I am deeply concerned by the recent statements coming out of the Bush administration. The administration has asserted evidence of the Iranian regime's complicity at the highest levels for attacks within Iraq. Yet, at the same time, GEN Peter Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, questions these assertions—in particular, the culpability and intentions of the Irani Government. In this delicate situation, while making disturbing comments, the administration has also announced it is sending a third aircraft carrier to the gulf. The President owes an ongoing consultation to this Congress and owes straight talk to the country. We have to get this right. The Congress should debate our current course, including the current silent-treatment policy toward our adversaries.

I believe we can better understand how to deal with an adversary such as Iran if we have some direct contact with them. I think that can give us valuable information and better leverage to hold over the Iranian regime. And if we ever must, with congressional agreement, take drastic action, we should make clear to the world that we have exhausted every other possibility.

I welcome the agreement announced yesterday between the United States and North Korea. It demonstrates the central value of using every tool in our arsenal to achieve our objectives. I only wish the administration had pursued this course 6 years ago when an agreement with North Korea was within reach. The wasted time has allowed North Korea to develop nuclear weapons in the interim.

Failure to use diplomacy has damaged our national security interests. The important step forward our country has made with North Korea raises the obvious question: Why will the President refuse to have any kind of process involving Iran, as I and others have urged? The United States engaged in talks with North Korea within a multilateral process but also had ongoing bilateral discussions. We should have such a process of direct engagement with Iran as recommended by many, including the Iraq Study Group. We need friends and allies to stand with us in this long war against terrorism and extremism and to contain and alter the regimes that harbor and support those who would harm us. During the Cold War, we spoke to the Soviet Union while thousands of missiles were pointed at our cities, while its leaders threatened to bury us, while the regime sowed discord and military uprisings and actions against us and our allies. That was a smart strategy used by Republican and Democratic Presidents alike, even though it was often a difficult one.

As we discuss potential evidence of Iranian complicity in supplying arms to insurgents along with the refusal to suspend their nuclear ambitions, we need to deliver a strong message to Iran that we will not stand by and tolerate this behavior. However, we need

to deliver that message forcefully through direct talks. The lives of American soldiers are at risk, and we should not outsource our discussions with the Iranians on this and other issues. When I say no option should be taken off the table, I include diplomacy.

Currently, our intelligence on Iran is of uncertain quality. We need to examine the facts closely and carefully. No action can or should be taken without explicit congressional authorization. And knowing what we know now, this body needs a steady stream of real, verifiable intelligence. We in the Congress cannot do our part in deciding what needs to be done if we do not know what is happening, and it does not appear that the administration has any real grasp on the facts on the ground, even after all these years. The public unclassified sections of the NIE recently issued made it very clear in their conclusions that sectarian violence would still exist in Iraq absent Iran.

So we have a lot to sort out. We have all learned lessons from the conflict in Iraq, and we have to apply those lessons to any allegations that are being raised about Iran because what we are hearing has too familiar a ring, and we must be on guard that we never again make decisions on the basis of intelligence that turns out to be faulty. If we find evidence of potential Iranian complicity, we will take appropriate action, but that requires a partnership to defend and protect America's national security interests between the Congress and the President.

Oversight will also lead to a consensus approach that brings together the best judgment and strategies of our Nation and will examine the consequences of action, the reality of any perceived or alleged threat, and the consequences of taking action. I sometimes fear that the word ''consequence'' has been taken out of the vocabulary of this administration. We have to look over the horizon. We have to make hard choices among difficult options.

So there are no easy answers to the complex situations we confront in the world today. But if we do face threats, the congressional consultation and authorization will bring the American people into the debate. Whatever steps, if any, may be required should be taken by our Nation, not just by our President. We must act as Americans, not as members of one party or another. Our Nation has been divided by a failed policy and the relentless pursuit of it. We are facing that again with the escalation policy the President is pursuing today.

Mr. President, if we face up to our constitutional responsibilities as the Congress, if we conduct the oversight that is required, if we exercise our checks and balances, then we are likely to reach a better conclusion than we have thus far. We must be tough and smart, deliberative and wise, and we must look at all of our assets, not just the brave men and women who wear the uniform of our country. To implement the best policy, we should start by employing our best values: the democratic values that give strength to our Nation and our cause and that serve as an example and beacon to people who wish to live in peace and freedom and prosperity around the world.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio is recognized.

BUILDING ECONOMIC SECURITY

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, today before the Senate Banking Committee, the Federal Reserve Chairman testified that the economy is doing well. I was joined by my friend, the Senator from New Jersey, Mr. MENENDEZ, who is in the chair. He told us that consumer spending is up, productivity is up, and that the labor market will stay healthy. At the very moment that the Chairman delivered a rosy prediction for our Nation's economy, an AP story broke that Chrysler is cutting 13,000 jobs. One hundred of those jobs are in Cleveland. Those aren't just numbers; those are 100 families.

Two weeks ago, before the same Senate Banking Committee, the Treasury Secretary testified that the economy was doing well. He repeated many times that the GDP had grown in excess of 3 percent. Earlier that same morning, at the Senate Agriculture Committee, Rhonda Stewart, a single mother from Hamilton, OH, testified that despite working full time, caring for her 9-year-old son Wyatt, and even serving as president of the PTA and a leader in the Boy Scouts, she and her son must rely on food stamps to survive. At the end of each month, she told us, she must forgo dinner so her son can eat because the food stamps just don't go far enough.

Worker productivity is up, profits are up, the stock market is doing well, and millionaires are enjoying exorbitant tax breaks. Thirteen thousand more workers are about to lose their jobs, and a single mother working full time, involved in her community, doing her best, can't afford to eat dinner. There is a clear disconnect between the corporate-driven myopia of this administration on our Nation's economy and the real-world economic conditions working families in Ohio struggle through every day.

Our middle class is shrinking in large part because our policies in Washington have betrayed the values of working families across our country, which is why we must revamp our economic and trade policies so that we invest in our middle class. We must shrink income inequality, grow our business community, and create good-paying jobs. We must establish trade policy that builds our economic security. That is not what we have now.

Job loss does not just affect the worker or even just the worker's family; job loss, especially job loss in the thousands, devastates communities. It hurts the local business owners—the drugstore, the grocery store, the neighborhood restaurant. When people are out of work, they can't support their local economy, which forces owners to close, in too many cases, their small businesses. That means lost revenues to the community, which hurts schools, which hurts fire departments, which hurts police departments. The trade policies we set in Washington and negotiated across the globe have a direct impact on places such as Toledo and Steubenville, Cleveland and Lima, Zanesville and Portsmouth.

We hear the word ''protectionist'' thrown around by those who insist on more of the same failed trade policies. It is considered ''protectionist'' by some of them to fight for labor and environmental standards, but they call it free trade when we pass trade agreements to protect drug company patents and Hollywood DVDs. If we can protect intellectual property, as we should, if we can protect intellectual property rights with enforceable provisions in trade agreements, we can certainly do the same for labor and environmental and food safety standards. It is not a question of if we trade, it is how we trade and who benefits from that trade.

While it is unclear whether the administration will ever acknowledge that our trade policy has failed, it is very clear that this Congress is already at work. Republicans and Democrats are working cooperatively to revamp our trade policy. We are working cooperatively to raise the minimum wage. We will work cooperatively to make education more affordable for middle-class families and to lower the cost of prescription drugs for our Nation's seniors, and we will work cooperatively to invest in new technology and new industry.

In my State of Ohio, we have a talented and hard-working labor force and an entrepreneurial spirit second to none that needs only the investment dollars, predictable tax policy, and commitment from our Government to realize our economic potential.

Oberlin College, in the county in which I live, Lorain County, has the largest building on any university campus in the country fully powered by solar energy. However, the builder had to buy the solar panels from Germany and Japan because we do not make enough of them in our country.

Through investment and alternative energy, we can not only create jobs, we can grow industry, and we can grow industry through biomedical research and development. Now is the time for Government to do its part and direct our priorities from favoring the wealthiest 1 percent to growing our Nation's middle class.

Mr. President, on a personal note, I would like to take this opportunity to wish my wife Connie, who is home in Ohio under several feet of snow, a happy Valentines Day.

Connie, I am blessed to have you as my wife.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CARDIN). The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

SCHIP FUNDING

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I would like to wish my colleague a happy Valentines Day, also. I am sorry his wife is under all that snow. It is 70 degrees in south Georgia, so you should come south this year.

I rise today to bring to the attention of this body once again an amendment Senator ISAKSON and I filed to the continuing resolution. The amendment is very simple. It is very straightforward. We have a program called SCHIP that everybody in this body is familiar with, and it has been a very valuable program to every State in the country because what it does is provide children all across America who are above the Medicaid limit but not able to afford health insurance the opportunity to be covered by medical insurance. It is called the SCHIP program, and it is exactly what it says it is: health insurance assistance for children.

Unfortunately, the money that is block-granted under this program has created some shortfalls in several States. The shortfalls vary with the timing of the shortfalls, and the reasoning for the shortfalls differs in each of the States where we are about to run out of money for these children and then these children will no longer have health insurance coverage.

The amendment that Senator ISAKSON and I have proposed will come up with an alternative that allows those States which have an excess amount of money to put that money into a pool of money from which the 13 States that have a shortfall in the SCHIP program.

Mr. President, in this amendment, for the 13 States that will have a shortfall, we take money from States that have an excess amount of money, money they cannot possibly use in their SCHIP program because this program expired at the end of this fiscal year. We allow them plenty of room for any emergency-type situation that might arise between now and the end of the fiscal year, and we give them the funding they need to cover the children in their States. We utilize that money to fund the shortfalls in States such as Georgia, where 273,000 children participate in SCHIP.

Frankly, the main reason we have a shortfall in Georgia is because following Hurricane Katrina last year we had an influx of some 40,000 children who came from the hurricane-devastated areas of Louisiana and Mississippi into Georgia. They are now participating in the SCHIP program, and they should be allowed to have that coverage.

We now have the opportunity, in this Senate—whether it is today when we vote on the continuing resolution, whether it is tomorrow or whether it is Friday—to look after these children who are very soon going to have this insurance safety net jerked out from under them. I implore my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to encourage the Democratic leadership to allow the amendment to come forward, let us have a vote on this amendment to make sure all of these children who participate in the SCHIP program in Georgia as well as the other 13 States that are going to experience a shortfall between now and the time we reauthorize this program before the end of the year, can continue to have that health care coverage they deserve and that they so badly need. It is a very simple request we are making of the Democratic leadership that we allow this amendment to come forward.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent Senator CARDIN be recognized at 3 p.m., and when Senator SANDERS is recognized today, he be permitted to speak up to 20 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BROWN. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont is recognized for 20 minutes.

THE BUDGET

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, the Federal budget is more than a long list of numbers which, in this case, adds up to about $2.9 trillion. The Federal budget, similar to any family budget or any company budget, is a statement of values and priorities. In fact, the Federal budget, in many ways, is a statement of what our country is all about.

We would all find it irresponsible and strange if a family we knew spent all of its money on an expensive vacation but forgot to put aside money for the mortgage or the rent and suddenly the family and their kids found themselves out on the street. We would say: My goodness, that is irresponsible. The family was spending money where they shouldn't have been and not spending it where they should.

Preparing the Federal budget and analyzing the Federal budget is exactly the same process. It is about spending the money of the people of the United States of America. It is about deciding where we should spend it and where we should not spend it. It is looking at the American people as a family. It is about taking a hard look at the needs of our people and prioritizing the budget in an intelligent and a rational way.

Let me take a quick glance at the economic reality facing the middle class, the working families of our country, tens and tens of millions of Americans and their kids.

Since President Bush has been in office, more than 5 million Americans have slipped into poverty, including over 1 million children. Not only does the United States of America have the highest rate of poverty of any major country on Earth, we also shamefully have the highest rate of childhood poverty in the industrialized world, with almost 18 percent of our children living in poverty. Today, 37 million Americans live in poverty and 13 million are children.

Last year, in the richest Nation in the history of the world, 35 million of our fellow Americans struggled to put food on the table. The Agriculture Department recently reported that the number of the poorest, hungriest Americans keep rising. In America today, hunger is a growing problem.

We have a crisis in our Nation in terms of affordable housing. Millions of working families in my State of Vermont and all over this country are paying 50 to 60 percent of their limited incomes for housing. And there are, as we well know, other families who are either living in their cars or living out on the streets—in some cases, with their children—in America.

Last year, there were 1.2 million home foreclosures in this country, an increase of 42 percent since 2005.

The cost of energy has rapidly risen since President Bush has been in office. Oil prices have more than doubled and gasoline prices have gone up by 70 percent since January of 2001. This increase in energy prices, in gas prices, is putting a huge strain on people from all over this country, including workers from rural States such as Vermont, who have to travel long distances to get to their jobs.

As is well known, many middle-class families in our country today are finding it increasingly difficult to afford the escalating costs of a college education with average tuition and other costs increasing rapidly with the result that many families are now saying: We can't send our kids to college, while other young people are graduating college deeply in debt.

In America today, millions of our workers are working longer hours for lower wages, and median income for working-age families has declined for 5 years in a row. Today, incredible as it may sound, the personal savings rate is below zero, which has not happened since the Great Depression. In other words, all over this country working people and people in the middle class are purchasing groceries, they are purchasing gas at the pump, they are purchasing other basic necessities through their credit cards and, in the process, are going deeper and deeper into debt.

Over the last 6 years, we have lost in this country 3 million manufacturing jobs, often good-paying manufacturing jobs, including 10,000 in my small State of Vermont. Many of the new jobs that are available to those displaced workers, if they are lucky enough to find new jobs, will pay wages and benefits substantially lower than the jobs they have lost.

It is no secret that in America today our health care system is disintegrating. There is little dispute about that. Health care costs are soaring. Today, we have 46.6 million Americans with zero health insurance, an increase of 6.8 million since President Bush has been in office.

Today, 3 million fewer American workers have pension coverage than when President Bush took office and

half of private-sector American workers have no pension coverage whatsoever.

Throughout our country, American workers who now work the longest hours of any people in the industrialized world—husbands working long hours, wives working long hours, people being stressed out by having to work so hard to earn the living they need to pay for their basic needs—are finding it harder and harder to come up with jobs, to get jobs which provide them a decent amount of vacation time. The 2-week vacation is something many workers no longer can have in this country.

While the middle class is shrinking and while poverty is increasing in our country, there is another reality taking place. That is that the wealthiest 1 percent, the people at the very top of the economic ladder, have not had it so good since the 1920s. The middle class is shrinking, poverty is increasing, and the people on the top are doing phenomenally well.

According to Forbes magazine, the selective net worth of the wealthiest 400 Americans increased by $120 billion last year to $1.25 trillion; 400 families, $1.25 trillion in worth. The 400 wealthiest Americans are worth an unbelievable amount of money and their wealth is soaring.

Sadly, however, the United States today has the most unfair distribution of wealth and income of any major country and the gap between the very wealthy and everyone else is growing wider. This was a country formed around egalitarian principles—we are all in it together. When one goes up, others go up. Yet what we are seeing today in an almost unprecedented way is the people on the top making out like bandits, earning huge increases in their incomes, in their wealth, while the middle class shrinks and poverty is increasing.

Today the wealthiest 13,000 families in our country own nearly as much income as do the bottom 20 million families. That is 13,000 compared to 20 million. And the wealthiest 1 percent own more wealth than the bottom 90 percent.

I have given a brief sketch of the economy in terms of how it impacts the middle class and working families of our country. Let me, within that context of what is happening to tens of millions of Americans, take a look at the President's budget.

At a time of a major health care crisis, with more and more Americans uninsured or underinsured, the President's budget would cut Medicare and Medicaid by $280 billion over the next decade, lowering the quality of health care for approximately 43 million senior citizens and people with disabilities who depend on Medicare and more than 50 million Americans who rely on Medicaid.

At a time when our childcare and early childhood education system are totally inadequate to meet the needs of working parents, the Bush budget reduces the number of children receiving childcare assistance by 300,000. Childcare in crisis. The President's response: Deny childcare to 300,000 children.

In addition, the President's budget provides a $100 million cut for the Head Start program at a time when only about one-half of the children eligible for this important and excellent program actually participate in it due to a lack of funding. Huge numbers of kids cannot get into Head Start. The President's response: Cut Head Start funding.

While hunger in this country, as I mentioned earlier, is shamefully increasing, the President's budget denies food stamps to 280,000 families and eliminates nutrition assistance to over 400,000 senior citizens, mothers, and newborn children.

We are in a war in Iraq. We are in a war in Afghanistan. The number of our veterans is increasing. Twenty-two thousand have been wounded, many seriously. Many will come back to this country with post-traumatic stress disorder. Yet the President has significantly cut funding for the VA over a period of years, and some years ago made hundreds of thousands of veterans ineligible to get VA health care.

In this great country, with so many people struggling desperately to keep their heads above water, we should not be cutting back on health care. We should not be cutting back on nutritional benefits. We should not be cutting back on Head Start, affordable housing, the needs of our veterans, and educational opportunities for middle-class families. That is what we should not be doing.

This is especially true when the President's budget provides $739 billion in tax breaks over the next decade to households with incomes exceeding $1 million per year. The average tax break for this group of millionaires will total $162,000 by the year 2012.

Let me be very blunt. In my view it is wrong, in my view it is immoral to give huge tax breaks to millionaires and billionaires—the people who need them the least—while cutting back on the needs of the middle-class and working families of our country. That is wrong.

Is this budget, the President's budget, a reflection of the values of the people of our country? I do not believe that. I do not believe ordinary Americans think it is right and appropriate to give tax breaks to billionaires and then provide inadequately for our veterans, for our children, and for our seniors. That is not, in my view, what America is about.

We are told over and over again we do not have the money to reduce childhood poverty in this country. We are told we do not have the funds to wipe out the disgrace of hunger in America. We are told we do not have enough money to make sure the young people who graduate from high school in this country, who are excited about going to college, will be able to do so without coming out deeply in debt.

We do not have the money to help those families. Yet—yet—while we turn our backs on the middle-class and working families of our country, it appears we have plenty of money for the millionaires and billionaires of this country. We have tens of billions, in fact, to shower on those who need it the least, yet we have nothing, and we are cutting back on the programs, for those who need it most.

Included in the President's budget, amazingly, is the complete repeal of the estate tax which would take effect at the end of 2010. As you know, the complete repeal of this tax would benefit only the top two-tenths of 1 percent of the American people. Let me repeat that. The complete repeal of the estate tax would benefit solely the upper two-tenths of 1 percent of the American population.

These are families, of course, who already are millionaires and billionaires, and these are families who in the current economy have been doing exceedingly well. In other words, 99.8 percent of Americans would not benefit by one nickel from the complete repeal of the estate tax, as proposed by the President.

According to the President's budget, this repeal of the estate tax would reduce receipts for the Treasury by more than $91 billion over the next 5 years and more than $442 billion over the next decade. But the long-term damage to our fiscal solvency is even worse.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, repealing the estate tax would cost over $1 trillion from 2012 to 2021—over $1 trillion. In other words, if the President's plan to permanently repeal the estate tax succeeds, the children and family members of the very few most privileged families in America will reap a massive tax break. Instead of closing the gap between the rich and the poor, instead of addressing the huge national debt and deficit problems we have, we make both situations worse by fully repealing the estate tax.

I have brought with me a few charts to demonstrate who are the winners and losers in the President's budget. Obviously, fortunes go up and down, and we do not know what anyone is going to be worth tomorrow, let alone in the coming years. And the estimates I am giving to you and the charts I am using are based on two reports.

The first is an April 2006 report by United for a Fair Economy and Public Citizen, entitled ''Spending Millions to Save Billions,'' reflecting the financial position of the wealthiest 400 Americans in this country as compiled by Forbes magazine from the year 2005.

The second is a May 30, 2006 report from the House Government Reform Committee, entitled ''Estimated Tax Savings of Oil Company CEOs.''

Of course, no one can predict what the numbers will be in the years to

come. But these are the best figures available to us at this time.

Let me go to the first chart. The granddaddy of all of the winners under the Bush budget is none other than the heirs to the Wal-Mart fortune. If the estate tax was completely repealed, the entire Walton family would receive an estimated tax break of $32.7 billion—that is with a ''B''—$32.7 billion in tax relief for one family which today happens to be one of the wealthiest families in this country already.

Meanwhile, in contrast, the President's budget proposes to cut Medicaid by $28 billion over the next decade, driving up the cost of health care for tens of millions of Americans. In other words, while one of the wealthiest families in this country gets a tax break of over $30 billion, tens of millions of Americans—children, seniors—will suffer. Now, that may make sense to someone, that may appear to be fair to someone, but it sure does not make sense to me. In other words, if the President's proposed budget passes, millions of Americans will lose, including some of the most vulnerable people in our country, while one very wealthy family wins.

A second major beneficiary of the President's tax cuts is the heirs of the Mars candy bar fortune. Now, I like Snickers as much as anybody. And I do not want to be seen here as attacking Snickers, one of the basic food groups of American society. But the family that owns Mars is slated to receive an estimated $11.7 billion tax break if the estate tax is fully repealed.

Mr. President, $11.7 billion for the Mars family. They are winners. Yet, who are the losers? As I mentioned earlier, all over this country there are waiting lines for veterans to get into VA hospitals. We are not keeping our promises to the veterans. Veterans lose while one family wins big time. I think that is wrong.

Another major winner in the President's budget is the Cox family. They are the heirs to the Cox cable fortune. They will gain $9.7 billion if the estate tax is repealed. Meanwhile, while the Cox family would receive almost $10 billion in tax breaks, the President wants to cut funding for education by $1.5 billion.

The President keeps talking about No Child Left Behind while his budget continues to leave, in fact, millions of children behind. In Vermont and all over this country, school districts are struggling with grossly inadequate funding for special education, which the President also wants to cut. We do not have the money to fund special education to improve public education in America. We do not have that money. But we do have $9.7 billion for one family, the Mars family.

Another major beneficiary of the President's budget is the Nordstrom family, owners of the upscale department store chain. By repealing the estate tax, the Nordstrom family stands to receive an estimated $826 million tax break, according to the April 2006 report from United for a Fair Economy. Tax breaks of over $800 million for an enormously wealthy family, and yet we see a $630 million cut in the President's budget for the Community Services Block Grant Program.

As you know, the Community Services Block Grant Program provides the infrastructure necessary to deliver services to 15 million of the lowest income people in our country. These are people who are hungry. When they are hungry, they go to the community action program. When they are homeless, they go to the community action program. When they do not have any money to buy food, they go to the community action program. We are going to cut back on that program, but we do have $826 million in tax breaks for the Nordstrom family.

Another major beneficiary of the Bush budget is the family of Ernest Gallo, who would receive a $468 million tax break—$468 million. Meanwhile, the President proposes to cut $420 million from the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, the LIHEAP program.

According to the latest available data, 5.4 million senior citizens on fixed incomes and low-income families with kids receive help paying their heating bills through this program each and every year. In the State of Vermont, trust me, it gets very cold, and we have a lot of people in Vermont and throughout this country who are dependent upon the LIHEAP program. But, as a nation, the President suggests: No, no, we have to cut $420 million from LIHEAP, which impacts the lives of low-income senior citizens. But—guess what—we do have $468 million available as a tax break for the Gallo family.

The former CEO of ExxonMobil does very well from the President's tax breaks. As some will remember, while the cost of gas at the pumps was soaring, while the profits of ExxonMobil were soaring, the company decided, in its wisdom and generosity, to provide a $400 million retirement package for their departing CEO, Mr. Lee Raymond. Now the President wants to reward Mr. Raymond by providing his estate with an estimated $164 million tax break. On the other hand, there is a program called the Commodities Supplemental Food Program which provides a package of high-quality, nutritious food to some 480,000 seniors, mothers, and children. The President wants to eliminate this program. He is saying to the 4,000 seniors in Vermont who benefit from this program, the almost half a million seniors, mothers, and kids who benefit from this package of food once a month: We in America don't have enough money to provide for you who are hungry, for you who are old. We can't do it. But if you are the former CEO of ExxonMobil, if you have a $400 million bonus at the end of your career, guess what. Your family will get a $164 million tax break.

As a member of the Senate Budget Committee, it appears to me that the choice we as a Congress are facing and that the American people are facing is pretty clear. Do we continue to shower huge tax breaks on millionaires and billionaires, people who are already doing phenomenally well, while we cut back on the needs of the middle-class working families and the most vulnerable people in this country? It all comes down to the phrase ''which side are we on.'' Are we on the side of those people who make huge campaign contributions to Congress and the White House, or are we on the side of tens of millions of working families, struggling hard to keep their heads above water?

That is the choice we face. As a member of the Budget Committee, I think the answer is pretty obvious. I will not be voting to provide a tax break to the heirs of the Wal-Mart fortune. Rather, I will be fighting to substantially increase financial aid for low- and middle-class families so that every American, regardless of income, can receive a college education. I will not support another tax cut for the former CEO of ExxonMobil and his family. Instead, I will be voting to give support to working families all over this country who are desperately seeking quality and affordable childcare.

If, as a nation, we are serious about addressing the long neglected needs of the middle-class and working people and creating a fairer and more egalitarian society, we have to invest in education, health care, housing, and our infrastructure. We have to deal with the crisis of global warming and sustainable energy, as well as many other areas. We also have to reduce our national debt. Given that reality, Congress must develop the courage to stand up to the big money interests, to the wealthiest families. We must roll back the tax breaks given to the wealthiest 1 percent, and we must demand that fortunate people rejoin American society and understand that like everybody else in this country, they are part of America and not a special breed. If we are to keep faith with our children, our seniors, our veterans, and with those people who have no health insurance, we can do no less. I look forward to working with my colleagues to make sure we do just that.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to speak of an issue of great concern in my State of Alaska but also a concern we are seeing across the Nation, and this is access to health

care and, more specifically, access to the professionals who provide for our very important health care needs.

In just 20 years, 20 percent of the U.S. population will be 65 years or older, a percentage larger than any other time in our Nation's history. And just as this aging population places the highest demand on our health care system, the Council on Graduate Medical Education states that there will be a national shortage of over 100,000 physicians in this country. Other experts look at it from a bit more dire perspective and predict a shortage closer to 200,000 physicians. If that becomes a reality, 84 million patients will be left without a doctor's care.

A dozen States already report physician shortages. Across the country, patients are experiencing, or soon will face, shortages in many physician specialties, including cardiology, radiology, and several pediatric and surgical subspecialties. Demand for doctors is accelerating more rapidly than the supply, and yet the number of our medical school graduates has remained virtually flat for over a quarter of a century.

During that same time period, the median tuition and fees at medical schools have increased by 750 percent in private schools and by nearly 900 percent in public schools.

To add to that, much of the Nation's physician workforce also is graying. They are simply getting older. They are heading for retirement. A third of the Nation's 750,000 active post residency physicians are older than 55 and likely to retire just as this boomer population generation moves into its time of greatest medical need. By the year 2020, physicians are expected to hang up their stethoscopes at a rate nearly 2½ times the retirement rate of today.

A looming doctor shortage threatens to create a national health care crisis by further limiting access to physicians, jeopardizing quality and accelerating cost increases. People are waiting for weeks to get appointments, and emergency departments have lines that fall out the door, literally. Many will go without care entirely, and we know the consequence then in terms of the pressures on the health care system when they go without care. In rural America, patients have long gone without care. In fact, the shortage of physicians, especially primary care physicians, in rural areas of the United States represents one of the most intractable health policy problems of the past century. As a result, rural patients are often denied both access to care and quality of care. One-fifth of the U.S. population lives in rural America.

Yet only 9 percent of the Nation's physicians are practicing in these areas. Over 50 million of these rural Americans live in areas that have a shortage of physicians to meet their basic needs.

Additionally, physician recruitment to rural America has also been a problem. The high cost of medical school is in large part to blame. Most students, very severely in debt after medical school, are forced away from primary care and forced into more lucrative speciality medicine. Rural areas and their community health centers across the Nation report a declining ability to recruit primary care physicians.

Alaska, as my colleagues have heard me say on the floor of the Senate many times, geographically is huge. It is a State larger than Texas, California, and Montana combined. In Alaska, ''rural'' really takes on a new meaning. The physician shortage crisis in Alaska has long been magnified. Health care delivery in the State is extremely difficult because, in part, there are fewer roads than in any other State. Even Rhode Island has more roads than Alaska. This means that for the vast majority of communities in Alaska, our medical supplies, our patients, and our providers all must travel by air, which adds to the cost.

Alaska's population is growing, especially its elderly population, which is the second fastest growing in the Nation.

People don't typically think of Alaska as having a fair number of seniors, but our senior population is growing at a very rapid rate. However, Alaska's physician workforce, as others across the Nation, is aging. The number of new residents is not keeping up with attrition. Mr. President, 118 physicians in Anchorage alone are expected to retire in the next 10 years.

Currently, Alaska has the sixth lowest ratio of physicians to population in the United States. Outside of Anchorage, the ratio is the worst in the Nation. To put it into perspective, if Alaska were to reach its national average of physicians to population, if we were to reach it by the year 2025, we would need a net increase of 980 physicians statewide or 49 more physicians per year.

For some in States where their population base is significant, they might say 980 physicians between now and 2025 isn't that bad. We only have about 650,000 people in the State of Alaska. For us to find 980 physicians, or 49 more physicians per year, is a tall order.

In Anchorage, many specialties are in serious or in critical shortage, including general internal medicine, neurology, neurosurgery, rheumatology, and infectious diseases. Patients wait for months to be accepted as new patients for general internal medicine. Others have to be flown to Seattle for some critical specialties.

I need to repeat this because we are not just talking about ''I don't like this particular doctor, and I want to find somebody else.'' We don't have the physicians to see the patients, so a patient will wait for months for an appointment or the other alternative is to fly outside to Seattle.

There is a bright spot, though, on the horizon. Even though Alaska has only one residency training program—and I should also mention we don't have any medical schools in the State of Alaska—our one residency training program trains 12 family medicine residents each year—clearly a number that is far fewer than our population needs. Seventy-seven percent of the residents choose to stay in Alaska—the highest rate of return in the Nation. We know why it is. We figure we have an awful lot to offer those who come to the State, but the problem is drawing them to the State in the first place.

In the last Congress, with great fanfare, we provided a Medicare prescription drug benefit. But the question I was asking at that time is, What good is a prescription drug benefit if there is no physician to write prescriptions? In the 21st century, we cannot, as a Government, permit such dire access to care to continue. I do believe the situation is intolerable. We cannot sit by while potentially millions of patients go without care. That is why I am proposing a three-pronged plan to alleviate the Nation's rural health care access crisis.

Earlier in the year, I introduced the Rural Physician Relief Act. This is legislation which would provide tax incentives for physicians to practice in our most rural and frontier locations in the country. Today, I am announcing a second step on improving access to health care. Soon, I will introduce the Physician Shortage Elimination Act. This is a strong step in improving access to our health system. Later, as the third prong of my plan, I will introduce comprehensive legislation for improving the plight of the uninsured.

To get to the Physician Shortage Elimination Act, it essentially does four things:

First and foremost, it doubles the funding for the National Health Service Corps. This program has operated with 37 years of excellence, providing primary care services to our most vulnerable populations. It is a solution to the many students who find the exorbitant cost of medical school prohibitively expensive. However, the program is just too small to meet the great need in underserved America. Right now, over 4,000 National Health Service Corps clinicians provide primary care to nearly 6 million people nationwide who otherwise would likely have gone without care. Tragically, this still leaves some 50 million people with extremely diminished access to health care. In fact, the American Association of Medical Colleges said the current program only meets 12 percent of the needs of the underserved. Yet this program is so popular with medical students that 80 percent of its applicants in a typical year must be turned away.

This National Health Service Corps has a proven track record. Let us build on its success. Doubling our investment in the National Health Service Corps is the most prudent, most cost-effective and expeditious way to meet the current needs and future needs of

America's underserved. In fact, the former president of the AAMC stated that the National Health Service Corps:

> . . . is ideally positioned to alleviate the shortage of physicians in many medically underserved areas but has only had sufficient funding to accommodate only a fraction of those young physicians who are prepared to practice in those areas.

The second part of the bill will improve and expand current medical residency programs. Half of all physicians practice medicine within 100 miles of their residency. This means the residents who train in rural or underserved areas are likely to remain in those areas. The small Alaska Family Residency Program, which is a program designed to help meet the needs in rural Alaska, is a great example of this. Of the 55 graduates, 75 percent have stayed in Alaska upon completing their residency—the highest return rate of any graduate medical program in the country. Unfortunately, it is too small to meet the large needs of rural Alaska.

Rural and underserved residency programs must be allowed to flourish. We have arcane barriers, and we have artificial caps on residency programs that need to be removed. Students must be allowed to learn their craft in the most rural and underserved areas of the Nation. My legislation will prevent residency programs from being penalized for training in locations where the need is greatest, such as the Indian Health Service locations. Additionally, it will remove barriers that prevent programs from developing rural training rotations and rural experiences in their curriculum. All the experts agree that this is likely one of the most effective ways to prepare students for a rural practice.

Further, the legislation will reauthorize the Centers of Excellence Program and the Health Careers Opportunity Program. This did not receive funding for 2006, but these are important programs, and they target disadvantaged and minority students from as young as kindergarten on through high school. They target these young people to develop an interest in the health professions. The programs nurture the youth in rural and underserved areas, and they create a pipeline to careers in the health professions. This concept of ''growing your own,'' if you will, is the most effective way of achieving long-term retention in most rural locations.

Finally, my legislation will bolster the cornerstone of health care in rural America, which is the community health center. Community health centers provide quality community-based health care for millions of America's medically underserved and uninsured. This bill will help them do their job. It will expand residency programs and primary care services offered by community health service centers and offer grants to health centers to assist them in recruitment, technical assistance, and physician mentoring programs.

Mr. President, as a person coming from a rural area, you know a strong commitment to our community health centers is a smart, cost-effective way of maximizing our health care dollars for our neediest populations.

The prognosis for quality of health care in America right now does not look good. The prognosis is poor. Fifty million Americans in underserved areas across the Nation today already must do without care. Soon, we will have greater problems. We will have even greater physician shortages, which will mean another 84 million patients will be left without a physician's care.

We must act here in Congress. I ask my colleagues to take a look at the legislation we are introducing, the Physician Shortage Elimination Act, and see if this isn't something we can join together to work on so we can continue to provide the level of care Americans across the country, in both rural and urban areas, deserve and expect.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SANDERS). The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 4:30 p.m., the Senate go into executive session to consider Executive Calendar No. 25, the nomination of Nora Barry Fischer to be a U.S. district judge; that there be 10 minutes for debate on that nomination equally divided between the chairman and ranking member of the Judiciary Committee and 5 minutes under the control of Senator CASEY; that at 4:45 p.m., the Senate vote on the nomination; that the motion to reconsider be laid on the table, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then return to legislative session and resume consideration of H. J. Res. 20; that all amendments and motions be withdrawn, the joint resolution be read a third time, and the Senate vote on final passage, with the preceding all occurring without any intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Maryland is recognized.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DARFUR

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, the people of the Darfur region of Sudan are crying out for help during their time of despair. It is time for the U.S. Government to exercise greater international leadership and take greater strides to stave off a humanitarian disaster.

Darfur has been identified as genocide and the international community is permitting it to continue. This is not acceptable.

It is not enough to posture and threaten the government in Khartoum. It is time to exercise moral leadership and exercise more muscular diplomacy in an area where so little has been accomplished for so many.

The conflict in Darfur has been raging for 4 years. Since 2003, the Sudanese Government and its allied Janjaweed militia have been fighting the rebel Sudanese Liberation Army—SLA, and the Justice and Equality Movement—JEM. The SLA and the JEM claimed their aim was to force the Sudanese Government to address the underdevelopment and political marginalization in the region.

In response, the government and the Janjaweed targeted the region's civilian population and the ethnic groups from which the rebels draw their support.

Since the fighting began, over 200,000 people have been killed. Approximately 3 million people have fled to internal displacement camps within Darfur, or to neighboring Chad and the Central African Republic—C.A.R. None of these options have shielded them from violence as the Janjaweed has patrolled outside the camps and Sudanese warplanes have attacked inside Chad and C.A.R.

In the face of these horrendous conditions, an estimated 14,000 aid workers risk their lives to provide basic human services and comfort to one-third of the population in Darfur. The majority of these aid workers are Sudanese nationals who have banded together to create an unprecedented relief operation.

For its part, the United States provides approximately $1 billion in food aid to the Darfur region. This contribution is one of the few positive developments for the people in Darfur as we have been able to increase the daily nutritional intake. Nonetheless, the violence rages and many aid agencies working in Darfur are unable to gain access to vast areas because of the fighting.

Thus far only the African Union—AU—has responded to the call to protect civilians. Unfortunately, the AU troops have been deployed in a slow and limited manner.

The Darfur region is roughly 160,000 square miles, and the AU force is far too small to cover this vast territory. The AU should be commended for shouldering the burden this long.

In August 2006, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1706, to expand the mandate of the U.N. mission in Sudan—UNIMIS—to include Darfur. The resolution ''invites the consent of the Sudanese Government'' to allow U.N. forces into Darfur and ''authorizes use of 'all necessary means' to protect U.N. personnel and civilians under threat of physical violence.''

Resolution 1706 calls for a total of 27,000 armed personnel for Sudan. The breakdown includes the 7,000 AU soldiers, 17,000 U.N. blue helmets and 3,000 police officers. This is a significant mission by the United Nations and one

that underscores significant international concern about Darfur.

Without question, U.N. Resolution 1706 caused concern and then foot dragging by the Khartoum Government. Khartoum is wary of a robust U.N. troop presence on its soil for two reasons. First, it fears the investigators from the International Criminal Court—ICC—who will have greater latitude under a U.N. presence. Second, it fears the presence of the U.N. will force them to follow through on the oil revenue sharing agreement with the southern Sudanese.

Khartoum views a U.N. presence as a surrender of sovereignty. However, what it really fears is the ICC investigators being able to gather evidence within its borders. Since the ICC accepted the responsibility of looking into genocide in Sudan, Khartoum has maneuvered mightily to keep its investigators away, out of the country.

Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir has resisted the U.N. force since its inception. As he has done repeatedly throughout the Darfur crisis, he commits and later reneges on commitments and pledges of cooperation in Darfur. For this reason, former U.N. General Secretary, Kofi Annan, gave us a viable Plan A to implement the U.N. force in Sudan.

Plan A implements a hybrid U.N.–AU force which the government of Sudan initially agreed to.

Plan A is a workable option and a win-win for everybody. Unfortunately, President al-Bashir has back pedaled from his initial embrace of Mr. Annan's plan. On November 18, 2006, it was reported Sudan's U.N. ambassador declared ''there will be no U.N. peacekeepers in Darfur.''

The ambassador's comments came as Sudanese war planes and Sudanese-backed militias staged fresh attacks in neighboring Chad and the Central African Republic.

It is imperative the United States and the international community reinvigorate diplomacy with Sudan in order to move Khartoum to reason. This is what I would describe as the administration's potential Plan B.

The immediate next steps for Darfur are complex, yet achievable. These include securing a cease fire and protecting humanitarian relief corridors, establishing the hybrid U.N.–AU peacekeeping operation and advancing the political dialogue in Darfur.

Additionally, President Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice must place Sudan higher on the U.S.-Chinese agenda. Sudan produces some 500,000 and 600,000 barrels of oil per day. China purchases 80 percent of this oil and invests heavily into Sudan's oil producing infrastructure.

As China continues its diplomatic and economic courtship of African nations, she should be clear about how she intends to deal with despotic and authoritarian governments. The international community has worked hard over the past 20 years for greater progress on democracy and human issues in Africa. Having China thumb its nose at these accomplishments would set a bad precedent for Africa and should have consequences in the West.

China should be afforded an opportunity to become part of the solution in addressing Sudan's humanitarian concerns.

Diplomacy and economic leverage should be applied to Sudan with the cooperation of China.

The United States has clearly shown what can be accomplished through sustained and concerted diplomatic efforts. After 21 years of fighting we were able to persuade Khartoum to negotiate with the Sudanese People's Liberation Front—SPLF.

This administration was able to marshal international humanitarian support and the attention of the world to what is happening in Darfur. The United States must provide the vision and the leadership to protect innocent civilians in Darfur.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I believe under the unanimous consent agreement I am recognized until 4:15; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. COBURN. I will try not to take that much time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

(A portion of the remarks of Mr. COBURN are printed in today's RECORD under ''Morning Business.'')

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I want to turn to the bill in front of us and make a few remarks about how things change, but they never change. We had an election this last fall. The election was based on changing the control so we can control the spending, so we can secure the future, so we can eliminate wasteful Washington spending. I would put forth that the bill in front of us is more of the same—actually I want to guard the words I use—more of the same lack of clarity, lack of transparency and game playing that Congress has been known for the last 25 to 30 years.

The bill before us manipulates the numbers. The bill before us is untruthful about the costs. The bill before us is put on the floor of the Senate without any debate to bring forth transparency. No amendments are going to be offered to bring forth transparency. No amendments are going to be offered to offset the cost. This $3.1 billion expense is going to go directly to our grandchildren because what is not spent for military construction and BRAC costs will be added to the supplemental which we are going to be taking up in March. We are going to be taking up more of the same games, so what you got for what you thought was change is not a change at all. It is just a change in name only. It is important for the American people to understand it is not Republican or Democrat, it is short-term vision versus long-term vision for our country.

We have a bill before us on the floor of the Senate that does a lot of things—a lot we should have gotten done. There is no question. The majority is within its rights to do what it has done. The predicate that Senator REID used, that it was used on the Democrats before—there was no complaint with that. It has been done. It is not a good process. But what we are seeing is not what was promised. We thought we bought a new car, and what we bought, what the American people bought, was a car that had been wrecked and repainted and sold as new.

I want to talk about several of the problems, things that are wrong with this bill. I want to raise the question why should we not fix it now. I will start first with the BRAC money—$3.1 billion to move tens of thousands of troops out of Germany, back here. It is not going to happen. The money may come with the omnibus but not in time to achieve the savings that we were hoping to achieve through the BRAC process. So there is a double cost. One is, if we took that money and we spent it to grow the Government—debatable. It is not debatable that some of the things that are funded with that are not good—but are they the priority? We are going to grow the Government, No. 1, and then we are going to take that money and put it on the supplemental bill.

A supplemental bill is a bill that comes forward outside the budget parameters, so therefore any of the money spent doesn't have to be within the budget limits. That money goes directly to the credit card of your grandkids. There is $3.1 billion. Then we are going to lose the benefits through delay of the BRAC closure process which is going to be another $3 to $5 billion. So by playing the same games Washington has been known for for years, we are going to add $7 or $8 billion more to the debt of our grandchildren.

If you thought things changed, they didn't. They changed in name only. This game with this maneuver in it is a sham for our grandkids and anybody else who thinks we are going to be fiscally responsible with your money.

The second thing it does is it destroys some of the help that was out there to help the most vulnerable. There was a provision in the new Ryan White AIDS bill that saves the life of newborn babies. We know it works. The two States that have done it have reduced HIV infection in newborn children by about 98 percent—for $85: $10 to test and $75 to treat newborn children.

In New York they used to have 500 babies a year born who were infected with HIV. Last year they had seven. Why? Because women who did not know their status were given an opportunity to opt out of being tested. If they didn't want to be tested, they

didn't have to be. But if they did, they were given an opportunity to get tested. And if they didn't want to be tested, their baby was tested, so if, in fact, they were carrying HIV, we could prevent, 99 percent of the time, those children from becoming infected with HIV.

The money was taken out in this bill. This is a chart for the infections, perinatal infections. Just in these States alone, for which we have a record, these are going to be the preventable cases of newborn baby AIDS that are going to not happen because of what this bill does. Thousands of babies are going to get infected with HIV because we are taking away the incentives. In terms of this bill, it is small numbers, $30 million—incentives to get States doing what New York and Connecticut have done.

Shame on us, shame on us, to claim we care and then to take this and eliminate it. They went so far as to talk to the administration about this, hoping that they would have a letter coming that would say we don't want the money. In fact, they want the money. It is in the President's budget. He wants the money. Why? Because it actually does something. Your dollars actually go to make a difference. How do they make a difference? Not only do they save the life, the cost to treat a baby over their life—their life expectancy is only 25 years if they get HIV. But that is a quarter of a million dollars versus $85, and the vast majority of that money is going to be paid by the American taxpayers. So shame on us. Shame on us for doing that. These are, just in these States alone, the number of children who are going to get infected with HIV without this program going forward.

Another amendment I wanted to offer so we could offer ways to try to change these things is to delay the CR for 2 weeks and let's have the debate about these issues, but we are not going to be allowed to even offer an amendment to continue it for 2 more weeks so we can actually debate it. That is the majority's right. I respect their right. It was probably done to them before I got here. It doesn't mean it is the correct process for our country to solve the big fiscal problems that are in front of us.

One of the items which BARACK OBAMA and I got through the last Congress in coordination with several key Members in the House was the Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006. What that act says is by January 1 of next year, you as the American taxpayer are going to start finding out how we are spending the money. The whole idea behind it is if you know, we are going to be held to a higher standard. We are going to be held more accountable. Also the idea behind it is if you know the American people are going to know, maybe you won't do some of the things for your buddies you are up here doing.

But in this bill there are 40 reports that are demanded of the administration that aren't available to you, that have nothing to do with national security. I can't even get them. The President pro tempore of the Senate right now can't get them unless he sits on the appropriations subcommittees of those reports coming back. That is not transparency. What that is is working in the dark so the American people don't know what is going on. I have an amendment that says those reports ought to be made public to the American people. It is their money. It is our money. But we have—here we go—an appropriations bill that has 40 reports from the Federal Government agencies to report back to Congress. Yet the Senator from Vermont and the Senator from Oklahoma cannot see those reports, and neither can you. What is that all about? Why shouldn't you be able to see those reports? You should be able to. But that amendment is denied under this process. More of the same. More work done in darkness without the light of day for the American people to see what is going on in their Government with their money. They should reject that. We all should reject that. But change comes slowly.

The reason I am out here talking about it is I think the American people ought to know what is going on in this bill. Yes, the threat is if we don't pass this, the Government will shut down. The Government doesn't have to shut down. We could continue this for 2 weeks, but we are playing the game. Who will look worse if you vote against it. What the American people care about is whether we have an open and transparent government. That is what I am about: making sure we know the cost of what we are doing, making sure we know who is responsible, and holding those accountable when they are not doing what is in the best long-term interest of our country rather than what is in the best short-term political interest of either political party or any individual Member of Congress.

Another amendment I was going to offer but have been precluded from doing so is we have thousands of people waiting for assistance with their drugs for HIV. As a matter of fact, there are several hundred, 350-some in South Carolina alone who don't have any money, are not getting treated, their HIV is progressing, they are going to AIDS, and they are going to die. That number is in the thousands across the country right now, and although we have increased the AIDS drug assistance program, we haven't increased it enough to where we are taking care of those who do not have any other resource with which to get the medicines to save their lives. That amendment is foregone. We can't do that, not available.

Another amendment I had, which is certainly necessary—and we have had the Senators from North Dakota and South Dakota talking about it—is the fact that we have had a disaster in the Central Plains of this country, in western Oklahoma and many other agricultural areas, where we have a tremendous need—an agricultural disaster by any means that we have addressed before. We tried to address it before we went home, but we didn't want to pay for it. So that didn't go anywhere. That is going to go somewhere when the supplemental comes. It will be a part of the supplemental package that comes out of the Appropriations Committee and we will pay $4 billion or $5 billion or $6 billion. It won't be paid for, we will charge it to our kids, and we will help these farmers. There is $1 billion in my amendment that is paid for—paid for; we don't have to charge it to our grandchildren—that will help immediately those farmers who have suffered through this tremendous drought in the Central Plains. We can not offer that amendment. We can not help the people who need us to help right now because we are playing games. We are playing the same old political games that were played when the Republicans were in charge. This isn't a new day; this is just a new manager under the same scams. It is a scam, and the American people need to know it is a scam in terms of their money.

Finally, the money we are stealing from the BRAC, a portion of that we are giving to the Global AIDS Fund. We are the largest contributor to the Global AIDS Fund—$300 million. We are going to bump that to $750 million, except there is no accountability in the Global AIDS Fund. The Boston Globe recently released a report on some inside auditor work inside the Global AIDS Fund showing the slush funds, showing the money that has been wasted. Yet we can't have access to those reports. We are the largest contributor, but we are denied access. I have an amendment that says if they want the money, then they have to show us the internal transparent workings of that organization, since we are the largest contributor. That is denied. That is common sense. If you were giving money to a charity and they were wasting it, you would want to know how they were spending your money.

As a matter of fact, we make charities in this country show how they are spending their money. We actually audit them. We are precluded from knowing how $750 million of your money is going to be spent. And the waste we have found out about in that program is denying the very people we are hoping to help, those innocent young African children who are infected with HIV, with their medicines every day.

So the way to have great government is to have transparency. The way to get rid of wasteful Washington spending is to have transparency. The way to lower the taxes on everybody in this country is to get rid of the waste, fraud, abuse, and duplication that is present within our Government. This bill does none of that. What this bill does is spend more of your money and with sleight of hand and under the cover of darkness transfer billions to

our grandkids that they have shut out now but will ask for again when we have a supplemental and, consequently, our children will be directly impacted.

If you are born in this country today—if you go talk to David Walker, the Comptroller General, who is a nonpolitical person; he is a straight shooter; he knows what we are facing is an impending crisis in this country and that we are on a crash course toward fiscal bankruptcy. But here is what we know. If you are born today in this country, you have a birth tax of $453,000. That is what your share is of the unfunded liabilities we refuse to fix that we are adding to with this bill—we are going to add $10 billion to $12 billion actually with this bill when the new supplemental comes out—that is my prediction—at a minimum, $3 billion, probably $10 billion to $12 billion. What we are doing is going to add to that birth tax.

What is the great thing about our country? The great thing about our country is it was built on the sacrifice of one generation creating opportunity for the next. This bill does the opposite of that. This bill steals from the next generation to take care of us now. There is no long-term thinking in this bill; there is only short-term thinking. Is it partially my fault we are here? Sure. I will take that. But the process and the false claims that we are under a new day, that we are under a new fiscal paradigm, is hogwash. There is no fiscal responsibility in this bill. This bill actually claims that it eliminates all the earmarks. Nothing could be further from the truth. As a matter of fact, hopefully today, I understand, the President is going to say they are not going to honor the unwritten earmarks. There is $17 billion worth of unwritten earmarks that will continue in this bill the way this bill is written.

Now, they get to claim in the press that they have a little section in the bill that says none of the earmarks in this bill carry the force of law. Well, that doesn't do anything. None of those earmarks carried the force of law last year. None of those earmarks next year will carry the force of law. It does nothing to eliminate those earmarks from continuing to be spent. We know what earmarks are. We know how they create conflicts of interest within this body and within the lobbying community and individuals throughout this country. They ought to be gone. None of them should be honored, unless they are in the bill and people are willing to stand up and defend those and they have been vetted by the committees of this Congress.

So bear in mind as I vote against this bill, it is not because I want to shut the Government down; it is because it is a vote saying it is more of the same, American people. You didn't get what you bargained for, again. Hold us accountable, come ask the questions, and don't take the spin. The fact is there is a $453,000 birth tax for every child who is born this year in this country, and it is going to grow by over $1,000 with this bill. So it is going to go to $454,000. Now, imagine what you have to earn a year to pay the interest on that.

The fastest growing portion of our Government budget—what is it? It is not health care. It is interest. It is interest on the debt, and we have perpetuated that with this bill.

I know none of my amendments will be made in order, but I am inclined to show the ridiculousness of this process. So with notice to the Presiding Officer, who I expect to object, as is his right as a Senator from Vermont, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendments be set aside and my amendment No. 234 be called up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

In my capacity as a Senator from Vermont, I do object.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I have another unanimous consent request, which is that the pending amendments be set aside and that amendment No. 235, the AIDS Drug Assistance Program, be called up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as a Senator from Vermont, I object.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that my amendment No. 236 be called up and the pending amendments be set aside. This is an amendment that will allow us to continue to discuss this for 2 weeks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as a Senator from Vermont, I object.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that my amendment No. 250, which allows all report requests by the Appropriations Committee—40 of them—be made public, that the pending amendments be set aside and that it be called up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as a Senator from Vermont, I object.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendments be set aside and my amendment No. 251 that will apply $1 billion for the farmers who are in dire need in this country today be called up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as a Senator from Vermont, I object.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendments be set aside and my amendment No. 252, which asks for the transparency of our contributions into the Global AIDS Fund be called up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as a Senator from Vermont, I object.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I went through that exercise, and I know the Senator from Vermont does not disagree with all those amendments, but he is doing what he has been instructed by the majority to do. The fact is we could have a debate, we could delay this for 2 weeks, and we could make this bill far better. We could decide not to spend an additional $3.1 billion of our grandkids' money if we allowed a true debate.

In the last Congress I took a lot of criticism for going after my party on fiscal issues. I am not going to quit going after my party on fiscal issues, but I will tell my colleagues, I am certainly not going to quit when the majority party claims—falsely claims—to be doing something in the best interests of this country in terms of fiscal responsibility when, in fact, they are not.

There is no question what I have laid out here today is factual. There is no question that what we are seeing is more of the same in Washington. It is time for it to stop. It is time for the American public to hold everybody accountable, and we ought to be about America, not the Democratic Party or the Republican Party. We ought to be nonpartisan for the long-term future of this country. We ought to be nonpartisan in order to restore the idea of sacrifice and service for the next generation, rather than taking it for us today.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WARNER. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MCCASKILL). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, parliamentary inquiry: My understanding is that the matter before the Senate at this time is the continuing resolution and that Senators may address aspects of that resolution at this point in time; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, the Senate has before it the continuing resolution which is an absolutely essential piece of legislation to permit our Government to go forward. We are about to have a vote, I understand, at 4:45 in relation to that resolution. The resolution has been consistent with the rules and precedent of the Senate, put before the Senate in such a way as to make extremely restrictive the ability to amend that resolution.

Nevertheless, a group of Senators have felt ever so strongly about our initiative, which is contained in S. Con. Res. 7, a document that was filed at the desk in connection with the debate on Iraq. We feel very strongly that the program announced by the President on January 20 of this year contained therein aspects to which we could not give our full concurrence. There is a range of differences of opinion between our group, and when I say ''our group,'' they have identified themselves from time to time as being cosponsors and other Members of the Senate.

Speaking for myself, I felt the plan, as announced on January 20, did not speak to the clarity I thought necessary, to say this operation should be highly dependent on the Iraqi-trained military and other security forces.

Our Nation, together with coalition partners over the period of this long conflict—in the not-too-distant future months or so it will begin a fifth year—have invested heavily in dollars and sacrifice and otherwise to train the Iraqi forces to take on their own security obligations. The figure ''over 300,000'' has been frequently referred to in briefings and otherwise, that we have thus far, in one way or another, trained and equipped.

As a member of the Committee on Armed Services in the course of briefings and, indeed, in the Intelligence Committee, both of which I serve on, it has been represented through the years, most particularly the last 2 to 2½ years, there has been a steady improvement in the quality and the professionalism of these Iraqi forces.

Now, 2½ years is a long time to train a military person. In the United States, we have prided ourselves since the days of World War II in taking a 17- or 18-year-old individual and training that individual to be a fighting person in 6, 8, 9 months and then some training with a unit and therein to a combat situation. Throughout our history, they have discharged themselves with the highest degree of professionalism. Many of the forces we currently have in Iraq have followed that pattern of less than a year's training. How well we know the courage with which the men and women of the Armed Forces of the United States, with the strong support of their families, have fought, suffered severe wounds, and died to enable the Iraqi people to have their freedom, to have a nation which is regarded as a sovereign nation today, to have a government elected by themselves.

I find it highly perplexing that in that cadre of some 300,000, there are not those elements that could have been utilized to a far greater degree in this campaign.

We have heard reports—within the last 2 days I received confirmation—that those Iraqi contingents, those troop commitments to this surge plan which is now in operation still fall short of the level of numbers in the commitment to have them in place.

Nevertheless, given the magnitude of that force, in our resolution, we specifically say the President should charge—we use the word ''charge''—hold them accountable for taking the lead, for taking the point, for bearing the principal burden of this operation called ''surge'' in Iraq as enunciated by the President on January 20. Therein, rests this Senator's grave concern about the utilization of 21,500—and even a somewhat larger force than originally announced—in this operation.

We gathered together individuals of honest thinking, clear thinking—not by political motivation—and have tried to continuously push our resolution before this Senate such that each and every Senator could express his or her agreement, concurrence, or disagreement. We have not yet succeeded, but we are going to continue to press on. There is some representation—I don't know whether it is final—that the Senate may see after we come back from this recess the measure that will be presumably passed by the House this week and presented in what I'm told could well be an identical form. We feel very strongly our resolution, S. Con. Res. 7, without any changes in it, should be brought up as a substitute amendment, but at the present time, given the few minutes remaining, I see my distinguished colleague who has joined me in this effort, the distinguished Senator from Nebraska, Mr. BEN NELSON. We have put forward this S. Con. Res. 7, which requires the funding for the Government.

At this time, I ask the pending amendment be set aside so I may offer amendment numbered 259 which is our S. Con. Res. 7, in identical form, which is pending at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as a Senator from Missouri, I object on behalf of the request of the leadership.

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, I receive that with a great deal of disappointment because I felt, in this critical period of time as this operation in Baghdad is getting underway, the constructive recommendations to the President, as embraced in our resolution, should be brought before this Senate for full discussion. I see my colleague.

I yield the floor.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, what is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. House Joint Resolution 20.

Mr. MCCAIN. I ask for the regular order and I ask to be recognized.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, I come to the Senate to comment on H.J. Res. 20, making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2007 which, as I understand, is the pending business before the Senate.

I think most of us agree that funding the Federal Government should be done through the regular order, not through a patchwork of continuing resolutions. The reality is that all but two Federal agencies are being funded through a measure to which no Member is being permitted to offer, debate or vote on a single amendment. That is wrong. We are not the House of Representatives. We are not the other body, I say to my colleagues. We are the Senate, a deliberative body. I hope the Senate leadership on both sides will work to ensure we do not repeat this fate.

I have been in this body for a little over 20 years. I have watched, over those 20 years, an increasing use of parliamentary procedures—the so-called filling up the tree and motions for cloture filed at the same time the legislation is before the Senate increase to an ever-accelerating process.

I was very disturbed about that process being exercised when my side of the aisle was in the leadership, and I am even more concerned as I watch the new majority conduct business in the Senate. I could submit for the record the fact of literally every measure before the Senate that at the same time a cloture motion is proposed, the tree is filled.

The Senate is here to debate and amend. The other body, understandably, has different rules. Given the mechanisms that are being put in place by the majority side, what is the difference? It seems to me that 20 years ago—and I would ask my friend from Virginia, who has been here considerably longer than I have—the routine was a piece of legislation would be before the Senate, there would be amendments proposed, debated, with second-degree amendments, if necessary. And the process was something where literally every Member of the Senate, if a Member so chose, could come to the floor and debate and amend and improve the legislation, if that was a Member's desire.

Where are we now? We file cloture. We vote on cloture. We stand around for 30 hours or so. And then we vote up or down. This is a very dangerous process we are going through. So now we are examining a bill which funds all but two Federal agencies in a measure which no Member is permitted to offer, debate or vote on a single amendment. That is not why I came here. That is not why. We are sent here—we are sent here—to express the views and ambitions and hopes and dreams of our constituents.

I have been in discussion with several other Members about how this trend continues to accelerate and literally deprive this institution from being described as not the greatest deliberative body in the world but a deliberative body.

And I say to the leadership, please sit down and work these things out. Have a reasonable number of amendments. Have debate. Agree to time agreements. Agree to time agreements. I had several amendments to this bill for which I would have agreed to an hour time agreement, which would have been plenty of time to debate the amendments and render the Senate's judgment, which I would have respected whether it succeeded or failed.

Now, there are many of us who are very unhappy because we think we could have improved this legislation, which covers all but two—two—Federal agencies of the entire Federal Government. And we are going to consider an up-or-down vote on it. That is not right. It is not fair to the American people. And it is not fair to the hallowed traditions of this institution.

I do not know exactly what to do about it. But there are some of us who

are looking for ways, perhaps, to express our dissatisfaction on this issue. In all deference to my dear friend from Virginia, all I asked for on this issue of the ''surge'' or ''change in strategy'' in Iraq was 2 hours of debate on our amendment, with a time agreement and a vote. I do not think that is a lot to ask. I do not think that is a great deal. I do not think that is a huge request. The two leaders sitting down together could have—and, by the way, I know my friend from Virginia supported that. I am not in any way denigrating——

Mr. WARNER. If the Senator will yield?

Mr. McCAIN. Yes.

Mr. WARNER. I would have it reflected in our colloquy that I did support that because it has always been my understanding, this being the greatest deliberative body in the world's organization, legislatures should have that as a fundamental precedent.

I supported the Senator, much to the risk—and I was defamed from coast to coast—but I stood by the Senator's right to have his amendment, along with mine, considered by this body.

Mr. McCAIN. I thank my friend from Virginia. And let the record be clear, the Senator from Virginia supported the proposition that we would consider more than one amendment.

Now, I am absolutely convinced—I hate to keep going on this aspect of it because I wish to discuss the continuing appropriations bill before us—but we could have sat down and said: OK, we will have four amendments, a certain amount of time on each amendment for debate. Time agreements would have been entered into, and then everybody could have had their say or certainly the majority of the Senate would have agreed to that.

Instead, unfortunately, we ended up without addressing the issue in a comprehensive fashion, in fact at all, because of the process that went through. But equally as important—equally as important—I say to my friend from Virginia—and I would ask him, when he first came here, would he have ever seen a situation where the entire funding of the Federal Government was in a measure before this body without a single amendment being allowed to it?

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to engage in a brief colloquy with the Senator from Virginia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, I——

Mr. McCAIN. For the record, you might want to say how many years you have been here.

Mr. WARNER. I certainly recall, over a period of 29 years, the importance of the continuing resolution and the greater utilization, regrettably, of the necessity for leaders on both sides to resort to that. But I would have to say to my good friend, the imperative of the ability for our Government to function requires the flow of money. And unless this particular continuing resolution is acted upon by this body within the next few days, it will, indeed, impair the ability of our Government to function. So we have to take into consideration those things.

Madam President, might I ask my friend, our good friend from Nebraska was to have had 2 minutes to rejoin in my effort to get the amendment up. At some point, might he be recognized and——

Mr. McCAIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that without losing the floor, my friend from Nebraska be recognized for 3 minutes to make a statement on the issue which has been raised by the Senator from Virginia, which I heartily disagree with.

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, I thank my friend from Arizona for his usual good humor and courtesy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Madam President, I thank my friends from Virginia and Arizona for the courtesy being extended to me and I appreciate their forbearance.

Madam President, the Senate is about to embark on a weeklong recess in the next couple days, and I would be remiss to allow this week to end without at least trying with my colleague from Virginia one more time to get the Senate to consider our resolution on the Iraq troop surge.

For days we have seen Senators deliver speeches on this floor, some for a vote, others against allowing a vote. We have heard great calls to action, and we have heard that doing nothing would be better than doing something. We even had Senators participate in an exercise to block an up-or-down vote on a resolution, some for reasons they think were certainly important.

But I am not a believer in doing nothing, and I believe the Senate has an obligation to lead. I have said that before, and I will say it again. The Senate is not only a deliberative body, but it is a governing body and has oversight interests. Each Senator, as a Member of the body, has an obligation to lead.

I would like to commend my colleagues, the Senator from Virginia and the Senator from Maine, for exhibiting great leadership and courage in forging this resolution that includes many important issues that need to be covered in a vote of this magnitude. Both of my colleagues and others have overcome fierce political pressures, including the Presiding Officer. But we have come together to do the right thing.

I would like to thank my colleagues, the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, from Michigan, my colleague from Nebraska, and the other Senators who have signed on in support of our resolution. Together, we are able to begin the process of oversight, the process of leadership, the process of living up to our obligations.

And we are here today to try to continue to do the right thing. The House of Representatives is engaged in a historic debate today over a resolution that does, in part, what our resolution does. It expresses opposition to the President's planned surge of troops in Iraq.

Although their resolution and our resolution come at it from different directions and points of view, in essence, they have some similarity. But I would prefer the Senate to take up the Warner-Nelson-Collins resolution because we have spent considerable time and energy drafting a complete and comprehensive resolution that includes many of the priorities Senators have expressed over the duration of that war.

Our resolution includes the need to establish benchmarks for the Iraqi Government to meet in order to continue involvement of the United States in Iraq. It includes the desire to continue fighting the terrorists in Anbar Province. It expresses clear opposition to the President's proposal to deposit 21,000 troops at the crossroads of civil war in Baghdad.

The House resolution does express opposition to the President's plan, but it does not include these other important measures which we think are very important.

So I hope we can resolve our differences and vote on this resolution in a timely fashion. The American public deserves an up-or-down down vote on this most important issue of today. The time is now to express our opposition to the troop surge and the use of American soldiers to stop civil war in Iraq.

Thank you, Madam President. And I thank my colleague and friend from Arizona and my colleague and friend from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, if I might be recognized to thank my colleague from Nebraska and then thank our colleague for his courtesy.

Mr. McCAIN. Madam President, I have to insist on the regular order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona is recognized.

Mr. WARNER. I thank my colleague from Arizona.

Mr. McCAIN. I thank my colleagues.

Madam President, I understand at 4:15 we are turning to a judge. I ask unanimous consent for an additional 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ALLARD. Madam President, before we do that, I was under the impression I might be able to speak for about 5 minutes or so at around 4:15. If I could add another 5 minutes at the end of that so we each have 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time for executive session is not until 4:30.

Mr. ALLARD. Meaning we have time? OK.

Mr. McCAIN. We have time.

Mr. ALLARD. Thank you, Madam President.

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank the Chair. I was misinformed.

Madam President, I will not go on, on this issue, but I believe we need to, as a body, sit down and try to fix this unfortunate situation where we are not allowing amendments nor sufficient examination of legislation before the body.

Madam President, there is one silver lining to the measure pending before us. It is largely free of wasteful earmarking and porkbarrel spending. This is the first time during my years in Congress I have witnessed such an occurrence. Compare this to the last fiscal year, 2006. According to data compiled by the Congressional Research Service, the appropriations bills and accompanying reports for the last fiscal year included $64 billion in earmarks—the largest earmarked funding in history.

So again, this CR, which does not have an accompanying report where historically 95 percent of earmarks are included, is a welcomed change. I can only urge the Appropriations Committee to let this be a guide for future appropriations measures when it comes to earmarks: Do not include them and do not waste the taxpayers' dollars.

I was pleased to join with several of my colleagues in writing the President last week to urge his leadership on this issue and ensure his administration understands clearly and fully that it is under absolutely no obligation to continue to fund earmarks that were included in past committee reports or urged by Members of Congress or their staff. As stated by the President in his State of the Union Address last month, when it comes to earmarking, ''The time has come to end this practice.'' Now it is up to the administration to abide by the President's directive, and I assure you, we will be watching.

Also, last week, Senator COBURN and I received a response from the Department of Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman in response to our letter of the previous week stating our serious concerns about reports that the Department may be planning ''business as usual'' and would fund conference report earmarks.

Fortunately, the Secretary has clarified his Department's position and will only fund programs or activities that, in his words, are ''meritorious and effective'' and ''support and advance the Department's missions and objectives . . . ''

I ask unanimous consent that copies of our correspondence with the Secretary be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibits 1 and 2.)

Despite what I have described as a positive consequence of this CR, the measure is imperfect and, like many of my colleagues, I believe we should have had an opportunity to improve it. I am particularly concerned about underfunding the Base Realignment Closure, BRAC, account, and was pleased to join in cosponsoring the amendment filed by Senators HUTCHISON and INHOFE to fund the account at the amount requested by the President and the amount we authorized for 2007.

The 55 percent cut to the BRAC account, submitted without any type of justification or explanation, seriously jeopardizes the Department of Defense's ability to meet a statutory deadline to complete all BRAC actions by 2011. Congress imposed this 6-year deadline specifically to limit the negative impact on the military units and local communities around the country affected by BRAC. Congress intended that a concentrated period of investment would accelerate the economic development and recovery of communities affected by BRAC. This callous decision to deny funds to the Department at this critical juncture directly harms these communities as much as it does the military units placed in limbo by the sudden denial of funds.

The administration noted in its recent response to the CR that the BRAC cut will ''reduce BRAC savings, delay or postpone scheduled redeployments of military personnel and their families from overseas locations to the United States, and negatively impact many communities throughout the country that have begun making specific plans in response to BRAC.''

Surely our colleagues who developed this CR proposal did not intend to cause additional harm to the local communities that are already trying to cope and recover from the BRAC decisions. Quoting Congressman DAVID OBEY, chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, about the CR, ''I don't expect people to love this proposal, I don't love this proposal, and we probably have made some wrong choices.''

So, why are we in the Senate not allowed an opportunity to correct an obvious mistake?

I've heard from the other side of the aisle during debate of H.J. Res. 20 that they understand this problem and that they plan to correct this $3.1 billion BRAC underfunding in the fiscal year 2007 emergency supplemental request of $93.4 billion. What kind of solution is that? Supplemental funds have been requested by the President for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. These funds are critically needed to purchase equipment for force protection and IED defeat initiatives. These funds will be used to train and equip Iraqi security forces. Since when is BRAC an emergency related to the global war on terror?

Furthermore, we are having this discussion because my colleagues who developed the resolution share with us the common goal to reduce overall Government expenditures. In that spirit, what critical warfighting requirement will we cut in the supplemental to pay for the BRAC increase they propose? What do we deny to our frontline fighting troops? While I have heard the idea of funding BRAC in the supplemental, I have not heard one idea on how to pay for it. Do they instead advocate for an increase to the supplemental? Why not just provide the funds to BRAC by offsets in the pending measure before us, as proposed by the Hutchison amendment? We should be addressing full fiscal year 2007 funding for BRAC in this CR. Using budget gimmicks and shell games in a supplemental, which could have devastating results for the military and local communities, is not the way to provide appropriations for critical military requirements.

Finally, I want to associate myself with the remarks of my colleague, Dr. COBURN. He has been on the floor several times to discuss the very serious ramifications of the provision in this bill that will prohibit funding for what is known as the ''baby AIDS'' program. I've often commented that we need to start making tough fiscal decisions around here among competing priorities. But I have yet to hear anyone defend or even attempt to explain the decision that was made to prohibit funding for this critical program.

I completely agree with Dr. COBURN. This funding prohibition is regrettable, and may have far reaching and devastating consequences for those helpless babies who could otherwise be given a better chance at having and keeping healthy lives.

I yield the floor.

EXHIBIT 1

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY,
Washington, DC, February 2, 2007.

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL PROGRAM SECRETARIAL OFFICERS

From: Jeffrey Kupfer, Chief of Staff, Office of the Secretary.

Re: FY 2007 Funding.

As you know, the House of Representatives recently passed H.J. Res. 20, which would provide funding for the Department of Energy's programs through the remainder of FY 2007. Even though the Senate has not yet acted on that legislation, we must begin to evaluate how we would operate if it is enacted into law.

One important matter that must be addressed in implementing H.J. Res. 20 is how we will handle the matter of earmarks. As President Bush noted in his recent State of the Union address, special interest funding earmarks often are included in committee reports that are never voted on by Congress or presented to the President for approval, and these earmarks cost the taxpayers billions of dollars each year across the Federal Government.

There is no House or Senate committee report accompanying H.J. Res. 20, and therefore there are no committee earmarks for the funding it would provide. Furthermore, section 112 of this proposed legislation states that ''[a]ny language specifying an earmark in a committee report or statement of managers accompanying an appropriations Act for fiscal year 2006 shall have no legal effect with respect to funds appropriated by this division.'' Nonetheless, I understand some of your offices have begun to receive requests from some Congressional offices, asking that the Department continue to fund programs or activities that received earmarked funds in prior years.

Because the funding provided by H.J. Res. 20 will not be subject to nonstatutory earmarks and the President's policy on earmarks is clear, we must ensure that the Department only funds programs or activities that are meritorious; the Department itself is responsible for making those determinations. As a result, and at the Secretary's direction, any proposal by a recipient of an earmark in prior years who seeks continued funding in FY 2007 needs to be carefully reviewed and evaluated. Only those with meritorious proposals or programs that effectively support and advance the Department's missions and objectives, and who have submitted appropriate advance documentation justifying their request, should receive FY 2007 funding. Of course, all funding-related decisions and actions must be made in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

If H.J. Res. 20 is enacted into law, I will ask each of you to submit a report containing your recommendations about which, if any, earmarks from prior Congressional committee reports you believe should continue to receive funding in FY 2007. No final decisions are to be made concerning those potential recipients until after you have submitted your report and received further guidance from the Secretary's Office. The Office of the Chief Financial Officer will provide instructions on the timing and the content of your report.

EXHIBIT 2

THE SECRETARY OF ENERGY,
Washington, DC, February 7, 2007.

Hon. JOHN S. MCCAIN,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR MCCAIN: Thank you for your February 2, 2007 letter concerning H.J. Res. 20. In your letter, you inquire whether the Department of Energy (DOE) intends to continue funding earmarks that have appeared in committee reports accompanying prior year appropriations bills. You note that a recent press report, citing unnamed sources, states that DOE has told Congressional appropriators it will continue to fund earmarks despite H.J. Res. 20 language that says agencies are not bound to continue funding prior year earmarks.

The press story cited in your letter does not accurately reflect DOE policy or the direction that has been given to DOE program offices. Late last week, the Department's Chief of Staff issued a memorandum to all Program Secretarial Officers concerning how they should evaluate earmarks that appeared in Congressional committee reports accompanying prior year appropriations bills. A copy of that memorandum is enclosed.

Among other things, the memorandum states that DOE officials must carefully review any requests for continued funding of prior year earmarks. Only those project sponsors "with meritorious proposals or programs that effectively support and advance the Department's missions and objectives, and who have submitted appropriate advance documentation justifying their request, should receive FY 2007 funding." This means that DOE may continue funding some programs or activities that have received earmarked funds in prior years, but only if the programs or activities are meritorious and effective. DOE is prepared to be fully accountable for making those decisions.

As you know, H.J. Res. 20 has not yet been enacted into law. We hope that Congress will act quickly on that legislation so that necessary funds will be provided for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2007, not only for DOE but for many other federal agencies as well. If you have any further questions, please call me or Jill L. Sigal, Assistant. Secretary for Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs, at 202–586–5450.

Sincerely,

SAMUEL W. BODMAN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. ALLARD. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I may make some introductory remarks on S. 589, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. ALLARD pertaining to the introduction of S. 589 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. ALLARD. I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, what is the regular order?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We are to proceed to executive session at this time.

Mr. INHOFE. I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized for 5 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, there is a vote coming up on the resolution. We already had one vote on a cloture motion. I have to say publicly one more time the reason I have so vigorously opposed this whole concept, and it is because in a very partisan way, in a very partisan manner, the Democrats were successful in taking out the money that would have implemented the fifth and last BRAC round.

BRAC is the Base Closure and Realignment Commission. In this BRAC round, we would have saved $20 billion by 2012, but by delaying it a year, the costs are going to be far greater. There is $5.7 billion to implement BRAC, and the Democrats took out effectively $4.1 billion and then put $1 billion back—$3.1 billion out. That means we cannot implement these BRAC policies and actually effect the savings.

The problem I have with this is they say this is going to come out of the emergency supplemental, we will get it all taken out of that. That means it comes out of money that otherwise would have gone to our fighting troops in Iraq. This is not what I want to happen. Right now, we are underfunded over there. We have great needs in armored vehicles, operating costs, and training costs for Iraqi security forces, and this translates into American lives.

To have $3.1 billion come out of this BRAC process to me is unconscionable when we are at war. This means the units that were planning to return stateside will have to remain abroad. It means the temporary and old housing will continue to be used, further increasing the upkeep in costs. And it means it is going to cost a lot more to implement it. Each week that goes by, each time it is delayed, it is going to cost additional money.

Here is the other problem we have, if we stop and think. All the communities that are surrounding our various military establishments have participated in the BRAC process and have said: If you will do this and expand this base, we will put in free housing, we will do health care for the children of our military people. All these very generous contributions which are made by the private sector very likely will not even be made.

It is not too late to change our mind. I just wish I could reach a number of people here to convince the leadership, such as my good friend from North Dakota. I know he is interested in accommodating the BRAC needs. If we could just get this one amendment in to allow us to do the military construction and to pull that out of the continuing resolution, it would be appreciated very much by our troops who are fighting a very difficult battle.

I will make my one last appeal. We cannot take the $3.1 billion out and adequately support the military operation.

I yield the floor.

FUNDING FOR IRAQ: REFUGEES

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, I commend Senator LEAHY, chairman of the Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee, for including an additional $20 million for Iraqi refugees in the continuing resolution.

More than 3 million Iraqis have been displaced from their homes, and many of them have fled the country. America has a special obligation to help them and the neighboring countries in meeting their needs.

The UNHCR has made an international appeal for $60 million to deal with this emerging crisis, and the United States plans to provide $20 million to that appeal.

Our invasion of Iraq led to this crisis, and we have a clear responsibility to do more to ease it. We should provide at least half the funding for this $60 million appeal to help this growing refugee population.

I believe $10 million of the funds in this bill should be for the UNHCR appeal, in an effort to raise the total U.S. contribution to $30 million. Is that the chairman's intent?

Mr. LEAHY. Yes, it is. Senator KENNEDY, who is the chairman of the Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Refugees, makes an important point. I believe that the United States should contribute half of the funds, and I will work with Senator KENNEDY and with the State Department to ensure that those funds are provided. I agree that

America should show greater leadership by providing at least half the funds for this appeal.

NDIIPP

Mr. STEVENS. Madam President, I have come to the floor to engage in a colloquy with the ranking member of the Committee on Rules and Administration, Senator BENNETT of Utah.

In 2000, Dr. James Billington, the Librarian of Congress, came to many Members of this Chamber with an urgent request. He wanted to begin preserving important cultural works which existed only in digital format.

Soon after, Congress approved the creation of the National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program, which is also referred to as ''NDIIPP.''

Those of us in Congress secured $100 million over 10 years to start this program. With the Library's guidance, NDIIPP quickly became a broad-based coalition of Federal agencies, universities, non-profit organizations, and companies in the science and technology industries.

Today, the NDIIPP partnership includes 67 public and private organizations nationwide. But the future of this effort is in serious jeopardy.

The House-passed fiscal year 2007 continuing resolution rescinds $47 million in NDIIPP funds—effectively destroying a program essential to our increasingly digital world.

If funding for NDIIPP is not restored, the Library of Congress risks losing the resources which have already been invested—and the important work already completed—with regard to digital preservation.

The Library's partners in the private sector have committed $37 million in matching funds to this effort. If NDIIPP is eliminated, these funds will also be lost.

NDIIPP is essential to our ability to identify, preserve, and provide access to digital content. This program is helping to ensure future generations will be able to access information needed for research and policymaking.

Madam President, our choice is clear. A number of digital works have already disappeared. Many Web sites launched before 2000, for instance, were never preserved and will never be recovered. If funding for NDIIPP is eliminated, many future works will likewise be lost forever. If funding for NDIIPP is restored, we can help ensure these works do not suffer a similar fate.

This project holds great possibilities, and I will work with my colleagues to assure it receives the funding it deserves.

Mr. BENNETT. I agree with the Senator from Alaska. Funding intended for NDIIPP serves a vital purpose for our Nation. I will work with the Senator and our colleagues to restore these funds.

There is a wide assumption that digital materials will be available tomorrow and that we can put off taking measures to preserve them until sometime in the future. That is not the case. The average life of a Web site is 44 days and material not saved today will be gone tomorrow. Geospatial information, including records of land elevation, weather patterns, water levels, LANDSAT imagery, State and local maps and other statistical information about an area exist almost exclusively in digital format today. If these materials are not actively preserved, the vital information they contain will be lost. Outside of efforts being undertaken by government agencies such as the Library of Congress and its public and private sector partners, little is being done to preserve digitally created materials for the future use of the Congress. The expense is great, the technologies necessary for long term preservation of digital information are in their infancy and the risks of loss are not widely known or understood. The legislators of the future will have access to only what we actively preserve today.

Mr. STEVENS. I thank the Senator from Utah for his commitment to this important program.

REVISED CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2007

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I rise to offer for the RECORD the Budget Committee's official scoring of H.J. Res. 20, making revised continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2007.

The pending long-term continuing resolution appropriations bill for fiscal year 2007, as passed by the House, provides discretionary budget authority for fiscal year 2007 of $463.5 billion.

When combined with discretionary budget authority levels included in the 2007 Defense and Department of Homeland Security conference reports, total 2007 nonemergency budget authority is $872.7 billion. This level is $60 million below both the Appropriations Committee's 302(a) allocation pursuant to the deeming resolution (Sec. 7035 of P.L 109–234) and the President's requested level.

When funding levels contained in the bill are combined with nonemergency budget authority levels included in previously enacted bills, all subcommittees are at their 302(b) allocation with the exception of the Homeland Security Subcommittee, which is $60 million below its allocation. No points of order lie against the bill as passed by the House.

I commend the distinguished chairman of the Appropriations Committee for bringing this legislation before the Senate. I ask unanimous consent that the table displaying the Budget Committee scoring of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

H.J. RES. 20, REVISED CONTINUING RESOLUTION FOR 2007

[Fiscal Year 2007; $ millions]

	General Purpose
House-passed bill:	
Budget Authority	$463,456
Outlays	532,456
Previously-enacted bills:	
Defense:	
Budget Authority	377,357
Outlays	394,446
Department of Homeland Security:	
Budget Authority	31,905
Outlays	38,714
Total:	
Budget Authority	872,718
Outlays	965,616

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I rise today to speak on two matters concerning the 2007 continuing resolution.

First, as the chairman of the Interior Subcommittee, I want to let my colleagues know exactly what this continuing resolution means for the agencies within my subcommittee's jurisdiction.

Second, I want to touch briefly on the appropriations process and why it is so important that Congress pass individual appropriations bills.

Let me go through some funding highlights for the agencies and programs under my subcommittee's purview:

The President recently announced his new, National Parks Centennial Initiative. This will provide up to $3 billion over the next 10 years to improve our national parks in preparation for their centennial in 2016. This continuing resolution contains the first $40 million of the $100 million installment the President requested in his 2008 budget.

The amount provided in the continuing resolution for basic operations at our national parks is $1.758 billion, a $40 million increase over last year's level.

The continuing resolution also contains an increase of $70 million in the Forest Service firefighting account. Of that amount, $51 million is provided for basic fire suppression activities.

We have added $19 million to the hazardous fuels reduction account so that important preventive work can continue as well.

The continuing resolution provides an additional $125 million for the Indian Health Service so that the critical medical care so desperately needed in Indian country can be made available.

There is also $60 million for basic operational needs for the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management. Together, these agencies manage a conservation and recreation network that spans more than 550 million acres.

Finally, I would like to point out that under this continuing resolution, EPA's Clean Water State Revolving Fund will receive nearly $1.1 billion. That is $200 million more than the 2006 level, which will be used to help local communities meet their wastewater infrastructure needs.

But while there are some funding increases in this continuing resolution, the fact that we are now considering this on the floor today—over 4 months into fiscal year 2007—underscores the

problem with not going through the regular appropriations process.

This resolution essentially provides the same level of funding as fiscal year 2006, with a few exceptions. But this means that dozens of programs and projects did not receive an increase over 2006 levels or did not receive funding at all.

There are, however, a few bright spots in what has otherwise been tough times.

For instance, there is an increase of $3.6 billion in veterans health care and $1.2 billion to help care for our brave military personnel and their families; over a billion dollars for State and local law enforcement assistance grants; $399 million for the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program, SCAAP, the same as fiscal year 2006; $1.2 billion for Ryan White CARE grants, an increase of $75.8 million to fund at the newly authorized level; $4.5 billion for Global HIV/AIDS, an increase of $1.3 billion; a $502 million increase for section 8 tenant-based housing vouchers and the first increase in the maximum Pell grant in 4 years, from the current $4,050 to $4,310; and full funding of the Transportation Reauthorization bill for fiscal year 2007.

Yet many programs will not receive increases. For example, in California there is no increase for CalFed. This program plays an important role in increasing California's water supply, restoring fisheries and delta levees, and improving the water quality of the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta.

Additionally, programs of a critical nature in my State that I fought hard to secure funding for will not receive the resources they deserve. These include State agricultural pest detection, Perchlorate cleanup efforts, and important flood control projects.

That is why it is so significant that Congress does its job to fully consider and approve each individual appropriations bill. This is the best way to ensure that needed projects and programs are funded adequately.

For this reason, I am glad to serve on the Appropriations Committee under the leadership of the Senator from West Virginia. Under his direction, I believe we will pass all 12 bills for fiscal year 2008. First, however, we must dispose of the leftover business from last Congress.

The Chairman is proceeding the best he can, and I believe we need to support this effort and get this done. I urge my colleagues to vote for the passage of this continuing resolution.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, this joint funding resolution is not what anyone wanted. We are in this position because the last Congress failed to do its job. We had no choice. We were determined to stay within strict spending limits while trying to address compelling needs. I believe we have done the best we can do. We were able to take care of the most important priorities facing the nation without going over our spending limits.

In the Commerce, Justice, Science chapter of this resolution, we were able to increase funding for the Department of Justice by $1.4 billion over last year to ensure there were no cuts to the FBI and the war against terror. We provided the FBI with a $333 million increase over the old CR which fully funds the FBI, U.S. attorneys and the Bureau of Prisons. More importantly, the additional $1.4 billion eliminates the cuts to State and local law enforcement proposed in the President's budget. At a time when crime rates are going back up according to the most recent FBI crime statistics, we fully fund the COPS program, as well as programs to fight gangs and sexual predators. Protecting our neighborhoods and communities remains our No. 1 priority and this extra funding is proof of our commitment to make America safer.

We were also able to make a down payment on our innovation and competitiveness agenda. We added $335 million to the National Science Foundation's research account to increase our commitment to basic research that will lead to new breakthroughs in science, technology and future innovation to keep America competitive in the global economy. In addition, we added $38 million to the National Institute of Standards and Technology to increase research grants and an additional $12 million to modernize their laboratory facilities. Finally, we gave the Patent and Trademark Office the full $1.7 billion called for in the President's fiscal year 2007 budget request and ensured that all patent fees stay with the Patent Office.

While I would have liked to have increased funding for NASA, there was simply not enough extra funding available for us to do so. Within the limits of NASA's fiscal year 2006 operating plan, we added an extra $460 million to exploration while protecting other critical NASA programs in science and aeronautics. With only 7 months left in this fiscal year, I believe NASA will be able to manage their programs in exploration with minimal impact to the overall schedule.

This bill cuts $3.3 billion in Military Constructions funds required to implement the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure round. By putting the entire year's BRAC Military Construction program on hold, the current situation has caused adverse disruptions to important military planning. In Maryland alone, the Defense Department is unable to execute over $300 million worth of projects, preventing the construction of badly needed facilities that directly support our warfighters. This delay also has a huge impact on the economy of the State of Maryland, in the construction industry and other key support industries. Finally, the continuing resolution blocks critical projects required to implement the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure, BRAC, recommendations, jeopardizing the ability of our military installations to complete required BRAC actions on time.

I, along with the other members of the Maryland congressional delegation, have sent a letter to the Chairmen and ranking members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committee, urging them to fully fund BRAC Military Construction in the fiscal year 2007 emergency supplemental spending bill. Both the House and Senate majority leaders have pledged their support for our effort. I will fight to add this vital funding to the emergency supplemental when it comes before the Senate in March.

So while this bill is not what anyone wanted, it is the best we could do considering what we were left with. I will support this continuing resolution and I will fight to do better next year.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Madam President, I rise today to clarify an issue of concern to communities in my home state of Florida, particularly to those who have been affected by natural disasters in recent years.

The continuing resolution, H.J. Res. 20, contains a revision to the formula for funding the critical section 8 tenant-based rental assistance voucher program. Inefficiencies in the voucher funding formula in place since 2004 have resulted in the loss of vouchers for an estimated 150,000 families nationwide. My understanding is that the revised formula will provide sufficient funding for the number of families assisted last year, and provides a $100 million pool to assist agencies who experience unusual circumstances during the transition.

However, due to the devastating hurricanes in 2004 and 2005, several of our Florida communities helped unusually low numbers of families last year. This is because the hurricanes devastated their housing stock they simply did not have the apartments and houses to rent. In some areas, the amount of need did not decline; there was simply a shortage of affordable housing options.

I rise to confirm my understanding that the section 8 funds for housing assistance payments already allocated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD, to a local housing authority will remain accessible.

If my understanding is correct, housing authorities may continue to use the funds in their possession, along with their fiscal year 2007 funds, to lease up to the authorized level of units under contract. This will ensure that our hurricane damaged communities and others who have seen losses in recent years due to unforeseen circumstances or the dislocations that have occurred since 2004 will be able to recover. As our communities rebuild, I want to make sure that our housing agencies will continue to have access to the available resources needed to serve low-income families.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, today I will vote in favor of the continuing resolution not because it is

perfect but because it is the responsible course of action for Congress to bring some fiscal sanity back to our Federal budget. The alternative, letting Government come to a screeching halt and blocking services to millions of Americans, is unacceptable.

The resolution we vote on today was drafted under the guidance of a Republican Congress and Republican President. Yet that same Congress, the 109th, refused to make difficult fiscal decisions and instead simply passed the buck to the current 110th Congress. So today we meet our constitutional responsibility to determine the Nation's budget and provide funding for programs that millions of hard-working Americans rely on to make ends meet.

Perhaps most unfortunate, today we are voting for appropriating funds for fiscal year 2007 that for most agencies are the same as fiscal year 2006 levels. In addition, it concerns me that this resolution gives too much power to Federal agencies. Under the formula prescribed in this resolution, each agency seemingly has wide discretion to determine which specific programs get slashed and which receive additional funds. I fear this widespread Federal discretion could have a negative impact on programs critical to Maryland, like the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Small Watersheds Programs, the consolidation of the FDA Headquarters at White Oak, and the Ocean City hurricane protection project, to name only a few. I encourage the agencies to do the right thing and allocate appropriate funds for programs with track records of success because Congress will be watching.

Despite the shortcomings in this resolution, it does include some modest increases for important programs. In Maryland, scientists at the National Institutes of Health are on the cutting edge of unlocking some of our most complicated and devastating diseases. The additional $620 million that this resolution allocates to NIH may lead to a groundbreaking cure or vaccine.

We must continue to do more to make a college education a reality for all families, and I am pleased to see that Pell grants will be expanded to help students afford college. In Maryland, the cost of receiving a public education has increased by nearly 40 percent at some State universities. A college education is key to achieving the American dream, and we must continue to make sure all children regardless of what zip code they live in or how much money their parents make have that opportunity.

Although some of Maryland's environmental programs might be affected, the increased funding in the Clean Water State Revolving Fund will enable Maryland communities to continue upgrading sewage treatment plants to help cleanup the Chesapeake Bay. This is a step in the right direction.

Maryland's transportation systems will also receive a much-needed boost, with an additional $86 million in highway funds and $14 million more for transit funds. Amtrak will also receive much-needed funding so it can continue to help thousands of Marylanders get to work each day.

Again, this continuing resolution is far from perfect, and the circumstances under which we are passing it are far from ideal. It is unfortunate that this Congress was forced to finish the work of the prior Congress, but it is our responsibility to do so. Therefore, I support the continuing resolution and encourage my colleagues to do the same.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF NORA BARRY FISCHER TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Nora Barry Fischer, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Pennsylvania.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, Nora Barry Fischer is an accomplished and well-respected attorney with over 30 years of legal experience. She is nominated to a seat on the United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania. She received her law degree from Notre Dame University Law School, and graduated magna cum laude from St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, with a B.A. in history and humanistic studies. She has been an attorney with the law firm of Meyer, Darragh, Buckler, Bebenek & Eck, where she quickly rose through the ranks. She is currently a partner with the Pittsburgh law firm of Pietragallo, Bosick & Gordon, cochairing the firm's Defense Litigation Group. Ms. Fischer brings courtroom experience to the bench, having tried over 55 cases in State and Federal courts across the country. She has also served as a special master in state court and an arbitrator in Federal court on pro bono cases. She has been president of the Academy of Trial Lawyers of Allegheny County, served on the Executive Women's Council of Pittsburgh, and worked with the Alleghany County Bar Association to provide legal services to the underserved.

I thank Senator CASEY for expediting his consideration of this nomination. As a courtesy to Senator SPECTER, I asked the former majority leader to proceed to this nomination in December last year. Regrettably, Senator FRIST chose not to do so and Senator SPECTER's chairmanship of the Judiciary Committee ended without this nomination having been confirmed. I am glad that, at long last, the Senate has turned its attention to this nomination and is granting its consent. I thank Majority Leader REID for acting promptly.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SPECTER. Madam President, I have sought recognition to speak in favor of the pending nomination of a distinguished Pennsylvania lawyer, Mrs. Nora Barry Fischer, who is to be considered for the position of a U.S. district judge for the Western District of Pennsylvania.

Senator CASEY and I strongly endorse her confirmation. She is a Pennsylvania native with a distinguished academic record. She graduated magna cum laude from St. Mary's College with a B.A. degree in 1973 and received a law degree from Notre Dame Law School in 1976. She has had a distinguished law practice with the Pittsburgh firm of Meyer, Darragh, Buckler, Bebenek & Eck and later at Pietragallo, Bosick & Gordon. She served as an administrative partner in charge of recruitment and training and served as co-chair of the Defense Litigation Practice, which is Pietragallo Bosick's largest practice group. As Special Master for the Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County, she handled conciliations, nonjury and jury trials by consent of the parties, which gives her a leg up on analogous judicial duties.

Mrs. Fischer is the recipient of a number of awards. The Pennsylvania Bar Association's Commission on Women in the Profession awarded her the Anne X. Alpern Award for her efforts to promote women in the law. The Pennsylvania Bar Association also recognized Mrs. Fischer for her work as co-chair of the Task Force on Health Care Delivery in Pennsylvania. She was named the recipient of the 2006 Professionalism Award by the Civil Litigation Section of the Allegheny County Bar Association for her faithful adherence to the highest standards of legal professionalism. She has been recognized as a Pennsylvania Super Lawyer and as one of the Top 50 Women Super Lawyers in Pennsylvania.

The American Bar Association has unanimously rated Mrs. Fischer ''well qualified'' to serve as a federal district court judge.

She is precisely the type of nominee we are looking for, and I believe she will do very well in this very important position.

Madam President, in the absence of any other Senator seeking recognition, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, am I correct that there is a vote ordered at 4:45 p.m.?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. DORGAN. And is the time between now and 4:45 p.m. allocated?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It is divided between the chairman and ranking member of the Judiciary Committee.

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, if the chairman of the Judiciary Committee is not here to take the time, let me take a moment. If he shows up, I certainly will yield to him.

Mr. SPECTER. Madam President, I will be glad to yield to the Senator from North Dakota, especially since he called me the chairman.

Mr. DORGAN. I was talking about the chairman who was about to show up, Senator LEAHY.

Mr. SPECTER. I withdraw my consent.

BRAC

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, I wish to make a point. My colleague from Oklahoma was talking about the BRAC funding. I think everybody here supports the BRAC funding. I certainly do. It is not a part of this agreement, but it is not, as the Senator from Oklahoma suggested, the Democrats' fault.

Just so people understand, we inherited a heck of a mess. We inherited a huge mess. What was the mess? The fact is, last year, 10 of the appropriations bills never got to the floor of the Senate. We never got here. They never had any discussion on them. Had that happened, we would have had those appropriations bills passed and signed into law, and we wouldn't be discussing these issues.

As a result of inheriting an unbelievable mess, we had to put together something between the House and the Senate. Let me make this point: That which was done between the House and the Senate included discussions with Republicans and Democrats on every single subcommittee. We engaged the staff of the Republicans and the Democrats as this was put together.

I wanted to make that point. We inherited a mess. We have tried to make the most of it.

This BRAC issue is going to get resolved. I support resolving it. The President is going to ask us for, apparently, $100 billion in the coming couple of weeks.

Mr. INHOFE. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. DORGAN. Let me finish my thought.

He is going to ask for $150 billion above that next year with respect to Iraq and Afghanistan.

The point I am making is this: I understand that not just the Senator from Oklahoma but any number of Senators might come and say: I wish this had been in it, I wish that had been in it. I personally wish a number of items had happened that didn't happen in this continuing resolution. But I was involved in working on it as chairman of the Appropriations Energy and Water Subcommittee. Last year, I was ranking member of the Appropriations Interior Subcommittee. That bill didn't get to the floor of the Senate. The Energy and water bill didn't get to the floor of the Senate. The bill that would have carried the BRAC funding didn't get to the floor of the Senate. Why not? Don't blame that on Democrats. We didn't control this Chamber last year.

But I don't come to blame one side or the other. I only come to say we have tried to make the best of a bad situation. We were left with quite a mess. How did we make the best of this? We worked with the House and the Senate—bicameral; we worked with the staff of the Republicans and the staff of the Democrats, bipartisan—to try to see if we could put together something that would allow us to put the fiscal year 2007 appropriations bills behind us and move ahead, because we need to move immediately now to begin to put together the fiscal year 2008 appropriations bills. We need to do that now.

So I only make the point that that is why we are here. No one likes it. We have done the best we could to make the best out of a bad situation.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, will the Senator yield for a very friendly question?

Mr. DORGAN. I will be happy to yield.

Mr. INHOFE. We had authorized $5.7 billion to be spent this year on the BRAC process and $4.1 billion was taken out, with $1 billion put back. My question to you is: Can we have that made up without taking it out of a supplemental that would be pulling it out of other wartime activities? I would say that probably would work. That is my concern.

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, reclaiming my time, it is not going to be taken out of other funding in a supplemental. It will be added to a supplemental, I presume. The President has proposed sending us $250 billion in emergency funding in two tranches, the first for this fiscal year and the second for the next fiscal year. My assumption is that everyone here believes those BRAC funds need to be dealt with and will be dealt with in a supplemental, not by taking it away from other military expenditures.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Nora Barry Fischer, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Pennsylvania.

Mr. DORGAN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN), the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUYE), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) are necessarily absent.

Mr. LOTT. The following Senator was necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. THOMAS).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OBAMA). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 96, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 47 Ex.]

YEAS—96

Akaka	Domenici	McConnell
Alexander	Dorgan	Menendez
Allard	Durbin	Mikulski
Baucus	Ensign	Murkowski
Bayh	Enzi	Murray
Bennett	Feingold	Nelson (FL)
Bingaman	Feinstein	Nelson (NE)
Bond	Graham	Obama
Boxer	Grassley	Pryor
Brown	Gregg	Reed
Brownback	Hagel	Reid
Bunning	Harkin	Roberts
Burr	Hatch	Rockefeller
Byrd	Hutchison	Salazar
Cantwell	Inhofe	Sanders
Cardin	Isakson	Schumer
Carper	Kennedy	Sessions
Casey	Kerry	Shelby
Chambliss	Klobuchar	Smith
Clinton	Kohl	Snowe
Coburn	Kyl	Specter
Cochran	Landrieu	Stabenow
Coleman	Lautenberg	Stevens
Collins	Leahy	Sununu
Conrad	Levin	Tester
Corker	Lieberman	Thune
Cornyn	Lincoln	Vitter
Craig	Lott	Voinovich
Crapo	Lugar	Warner
DeMint	Martinez	Webb
Dodd	McCain	Whitehouse
Dole	McCaskill	Wyden

NOT VOTING—4

Biden	Johnson
Inouye	Thomas

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid on the table.

The President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I was pleased that today a fellow Pennsylvanian, Nora Barry Fischer, was confirmed by the U.S. Senate to serve on the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania. I was also happy to help expedite her nomination before the Judiciary Committee to help ensure a speedy consideration by the full Senate.

Ms. Fischer is a native of Homestead, PA, and a graduate of Notre Dame Law School. In private practice, she has gained extensive experience in litigation and mediation. Ms. Fischer will bring a wealth of knowledge to the bench, and I am confident that she will serve western Pennsylvania and the Nation well.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will return to legislative session.

MAKING FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2007—CONTINUED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all pending amendments on H.J. Res. 20 are withdrawn.

The clerk will read the resolution for a third time.

The joint resolution (H.J. Res. 20) was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Shall the joint resolution pass?

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second? There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN), the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUYE), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) are necessarily absent.

Mr. LOTT. The following Senator was necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. THOMAS).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 81, nays 15, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 48 Leg.]

YEAS—81

Akaka	Dodd	McCaskill
Alexander	Domenici	McConnell
Allard	Dorgan	Menendez
Baucus	Durbin	Mikulski
Bayh	Feingold	Murkowski
Bennett	Feinstein	Murray
Bingaman	Grassley	Nelson (FL)
Bond	Gregg	Nelson (NE)
Boxer	Harkin	Obama
Brown	Hatch	Pryor
Bunning	Hutchison	Reed
Burr	Isakson	Reid
Byrd	Kennedy	Rockefeller
Cantwell	Kerry	Salazar
Cardin	Klobuchar	Sanders
Carper	Kohl	Schumer
Casey	Kyl	Shelby
Chambliss	Landrieu	Specter
Clinton	Lautenberg	Stabenow
Cochran	Leahy	Stevens
Coleman	Levin	Sununu
Collins	Lieberman	Tester
Conrad	Lincoln	Thune
Corker	Lott	Vitter
Cornyn	Lugar	Webb
Craig	Martinez	Whitehouse
Crapo	McCain	Wyden

NAYS—15

Brownback	Enzi	Sessions
Coburn	Graham	Smith
DeMint	Hagel	Snowe
Dole	Inhofe	Voinovich
Ensign	Roberts	Warner

NOT VOTING—4

Biden	Johnson
Inouye	Thomas

The joint resolution (H.J. Res. 20) was passed.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote, and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, may I inquire as to the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is currently no pending business.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SCHIP FUNDING

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I rise to thank the majority leader for his cooperation on an issue regarding an amendment that I had on the continuing resolution relative to the SCHIP problem that exists not just in my State of Georgia, but in 13 States where we have a shortfall in Federal funding that is going to require, if we don't take action, a number of children all across America to be removed from the SCHIP rolls, and their health insurance will be terminated. The majority leader has agreed that during the break we are going to work among our staffs—Senator ISAKSON and I have been in conversation with his staff already—and we are going to continue to work with him, as well as with others.

This is not a problem unique to Georgia. We are going to seek to come to a compromise on this issue. In about 10 days to 2 weeks or so, we will have a cure or a fix for this problem that exists out there regarding the shortfall on SCHIP.

To Senator REID, I say thank you for his cooperation on this and his commitment to working together with us to find a solution for the children all across America to make sure these children do remain insured. I say to my colleague from Georgia, Senator ISAKSON, thanks for his hard work and commitment on this issue as we have worked very closely together.

I yield back the remainder of my time, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I ask to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CELEBRATING THE LEGACY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, since 1915, an oil portrait of Abraham Lincoln has hong in the chambers of the Nevada Assembly. The painting of our 16th President serves as a reminder of Nevada's entrance to the Union during his remarkable administration and of the special place his leadership will always hold in our State's history.

I want to pay tribute today to that man who rose to the highest office in our country at one of the most turbulent times in our history. He is an example to all of a good, decent, honorable man, who contributed more to the freedom we cherish today than we may ever fully understand.

February 12 was the 198th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth in a log cabin in Kentucky. We all learned about ''Honest Abe'' in grade school and his role in guiding this Nation through the Civil War.

But at the very essence of Abraham Lincoln was a man of great conviction who showed incomparable humility, a tested sense of morality, and an ability to rise above personal pettiness. Learning about Abraham Lincoln's life is a humbling lesson in leadership.

He was self-educated and had none of the advantages of a formal education. He taught himself the law and never stopped learning along the way. Whether it was studying history, philosophy, or military strategy, what Lincoln lacked in classroom time, he made up for in focus and determination.

And while moral fiber can be taught, that doesn't mean it will have its desired effect. It is said that trials don't build character, they reveal it. Abraham Lincoln had so many trials. His tremendous character was revealed time and again. The stories are endless, but I want to share a few examples of what a giant of a man President Lincoln really was.

During his days practicing law, Lincoln would often ride the legal circuit, which meant that he traveled with a band of lawyers and judges across Illinois to try cases in every corner of the State. Lincoln was admired and loved by his colleagues for his skill as a lawyer, and his gift for telling stories was legendary. It was during this time that fellow lawyers noted Lincoln's heartfelt conviction that no man was better than he. One lawyer pointed out:

> He arrogated to himself no superiority over anyone. . . .

This sense of equality would remain consistent throughout Lincoln's life—as a man and a public servant—and would extend to other character strengths he exhibited. Lincoln was humble—to an astonishing degree. In 1855, Lincoln withdrew his name for a seat in the U.S. Senate. Although he had the greater number of votes, it became apparent that, if either he or the other anti-slavery candidate did not succumb, the cause of slavery would be the true victor. Much to the dismay of his loyal supporters, Lincoln advised the floor manager to drop his name, handing Lyman Trumball the win. Lincoln showed no hard feelings and shook Trumball's hand at his victory party.

Six months later, Lincoln suffered another blow to his morale when he believed that he was part of an important patent test case. Unbeknownst to him, he was not part of the case, but he continued to prepare as if he were. When he approached the lawyers involved with the case, one of them, Edwin Stanton, drew the other aside and asked why he had brought the ''. . . long armed Ape here . . . he does not know any thing and can do you no

good.'' Stanton treated Lincoln poorly in the days that followed, but six years later, Lincoln asked Stanton to be his Secretary of War.

Lincoln's ability to put aside such losses—which for most people would be terrible ego blows—was inspiring. Not only did he move forward, but he wasn't blinded by hate or rage and he didn't seek revenge. Instead, he recognized the need to surround himself with the best people who would make the greatest contributions to the mission at hand.

Lincoln's decision on who would join his cabinet was the perfect example of what his assistant, John Nicolay, described as ''one of great courage and self-reliance.'' Lincoln did not fill these positions with friends and loyal supporters who would agree with him and thought as he did. According to Lincoln:

> We needed the strongest men of the party in the Cabinet. We needed to hold our own people together. I had looked the party over and concluded that these were the very strongest men. Then I had no right to deprive the country of their services.

It took great strength of character to understand that—especially when three of those men were his rivals for the Republican nomination for the presidency. These men: William Seward, Salmon Chase, and Edward Bates, were stunned by their losses to Lincoln in the primary and each maintained that he was the best man for the post well after their losses. When Lincoln embraced them for the cabinet positions, they still looked down on him as the lesser choice for president. However, Lincoln was wonderfully gifted at transforming rivals to admirers.

Seward, who Lincoln named his Secretary of State, slowly came to recognize the President's strong leadership abilities. He called the President's nobility ''almost superhuman.'' Seward was not alone.

But not everyone grew gradually fond of the President, as many saw his promise and brilliance immediately. Nevada's first senator William Stewart, whose seat I occupy today, described Lincoln's greatness.

> President Lincoln was the greatest man this hemisphere has produced. Without schooling he wrote the best English; without education in rhetoric or logic he was the most conclusive reasoner; without the slightest pretension to oratory he was the most persuasive speaker of his time. He was the kindest, most benevolent and humane man of his generation. Whoever may be second as a scholar, as a statesman and as a friend of humanity, Lincoln must be first.

Lincoln also touched the hearts of the soldiers who served under him. After one of his many visits to the troops on the battlefield, one soldier wrote home that as the President passed them, his smile ''was a real reflection of his honest, kindly, heart; but deeper, under the surface of that marked and not all uncomely face, were the unmistakable signs of care and anxiety . . . In fact, his popularity in the army is and has been universal.''

Lincoln's honest, kindly heart—that the soldier referenced—was also apparent in his loyalty and willingness to take responsibility for his actions. Lincoln would not let a subordinate take the fall for a decision he had made. In 1862, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton was the victim of an especially aggressive, brutal personal attack. He was accused of not providing all the backup troops to counter what turned out to be a battle of great loss to the Union. Lincoln took the unprecedented step of convening a Union meeting with all the government departments. The audience, gathered in front of the Capitol, was comparable in size to that of a crowd at an inauguration. He explained that, ''The Secretary of War is not to blame for not giving when he had none to give. I believe he is a brave and able man, and I stand here, as justice requires me to do, to take upon myself what has been charged on the Secretary of War.'' What a humbling story. This is what Harry Truman meant when he said, ''The buck stops here.''

Equal to his loyalty was Abraham Lincoln's courage. The Emancipation Proclamation was described by one supporter as ''. . . the greatest act of justice, statesmanship, and civilization, of the last four hundred years.'' The Executive Order, signed by President Lincoln, declared the freedom of all slaves in those areas of the rebellious Confederacy that had not already returned to Union control. By the summer of 1865, an estimated four million slaves had been freed. Hannah Johnson, the mother of a Northern Black soldier, wrote to President Lincoln about the Emancipation Proclamation, stating:

> When you are dead and in Heaven, in a thousand years that action of yours will make the Angels sing your praises.

No doubt there are angels still singing, just 144 years later.

Lincoln never considered himself a champion for the slave. His priority was upholding and defending the Union and the Constitution upon which it stood. However, it was his vision and steady leadership that ultimately brought down slavery in the United States. With this transformation also came the respect and admiration of black abolitionist Frederick Douglass. Douglass has been a frequent critic of the President's, trashing him publicly many times. However, the two agreed on the need to recruit and build black regiments to fight in the war. It was a controversial move, but Lincoln understood the impact that the soldiers would have on the rebellion. Douglass went to the White House to meet with Lincoln about some of the inequalities among black and white soldiers. Just as he had won over countless rivals in the past, Lincoln's ''humane spirit,'' as Douglass called it, won him over as well. The two formed a relationship, and Douglass came to greatly admire Abraham Lincoln.

I wanted to talk about Abraham Lincoln because there is a timeless lesson in his style of leadership and his moral fiber. Today, we face a politically divided government and country. However, the issues are not as dire as the Civil War that took the lives of what today would be five million people. The United States is not on the brink of extinction. But we have an opportunity to rise above the political games and the pettiness to make progress on some of the major issues facing our Nation. We should all strive to show some of the humility, moral conviction, courage, and honesty by which Abraham Lincoln lived his life. This Nation paid a grave price in the name of freedom under his watch. Not only did freedom survive but it flourished, and he led us to new and greater heights.

Abraham Lincoln lost his life in the name of that freedom. After being shot in the back of the head, Lincoln struggled for 9 hours between life and death. The Nation—north and south—mourned for this beloved man, but those most inconsolable were the men who had first been Lincoln's rivals and who had later become his closest friends and advisors. There is no greater praise than that of Secretary of War Edwin Stanton whose tribute from Lincoln's deathbed has proven true, ''Now he belongs to the ages.''

President Lincoln told an Ohio regiment in 1864:

> It is not merely for to-day, but for all time to come that we should perpetuate for our children's children this great and free government, which we have enjoyed all our lives.

I invite my colleagues to join me in honoring the legacy of one of our greatest Presidents by working together and challenging each other to lead as he did.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. OBAMA. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. Cantwell). Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. OBAMA. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE CONGRESSMAN CHARLIE NORWOOD

Mr. COBURN. Madam President, I want to take a few minutes first to talk about someone who was a very dear friend whom I think was emblematic of what our forefathers thought about when they thought about a U.S. Congressman. His name was CHARLIE

NORWOOD. He died yesterday. CHARLIE was a ''tell it like it is'' guy. His motivations were always altruistic. They were never self-centered.

He had never been in politics. He was a dentist, and he got fed up. He came here and had a tremendous impact in terms of his voice of common sense, reason, and compassion. The House of Representatives is going to miss that voice, but more important, the American people are going to miss one of the few voices of common sense that we have in Congress today. He leaves a wife, Gloria, and two sons, all supportive of his sacrifice to serve here.

There are a lot of stories told about CHARLIE. I won't go into that. He was always fun to be around. He was always invigorating. And he never quit believing in this wonderful thing we call the American dream.

He fought hard for what he thought was right on immigration. He recognized that if we build a wall, it is not to keep people in; that the opportunities here are so great, what has been created by our Founders and grew through the years is so tremendous, that we ought to continue to take advantage of it.

What I really liked about him was that he was a true citizen legislator. He abandoned his practice and his easy life and came to do the hard work of representing the people of Georgia with common sense and down-home, plain family values. He will be sorely missed. But he leaves a legacy, a legacy to everybody who is out there today who thinks we need to change the Congress of the United States. The legacy he leaves is this: If you are willing to sacrifice and get into the fray, you can come here and make a difference. That is what he proved. His life was not that of a career politician—although that is a wonderful service, and we have dedicated people throughout both Houses of Congress who have dedicated their lives to public service. But he brought a freshness and he brought ideas because his experience was what everybody else in the country was experiencing, not what is experienced among the political elite in this country.

The challenge that CHARLIE leaves for all of us who are not in Congress, who do not like things the way they are, is to actually get involved. That legacy will live on for a long time—I know in his district in Georgia, and also through the State of Georgia—but also for those of us who will continue to remember him and the sacrifices he made.

HARD WORK YIELDS WISE INVESTMENTS FOR AMERICA

Mr. BYRD. Madam President, the Senate today gave final Congressional approval to a comprehensive $463.5 billion funding resolution. The vote today was the culmination of many weeks of determined effort by Senators and Members of the House from both parties, and from their talented staffs.

I take a moment to thank Senators for their support for this legislation, and to the members of the Appropriations Committee, Democratic Senators and Republican Senators, for their determination and effort to reach this milestone.

This was not easy legislation to craft. Members and staff took on the difficult task of wrapping the funding of every domestic department and agency into a single bill, without Congressional earmarks and within very austere budget limitations. It was one of the most complex processes that the Appropriations Committee has undertaken in recent memory. But it was a challenge that we met in a smart, innovative way.

I thank the Appropriations Committee staff: Staff Director Terry Sauvain; Deputy Staff Director Charles Kieffer; Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA clerk Galen Fountain; Commerce, Justice, Science clerk Paul Carliner; Defense clerk Charlie Houy; Energy and Water clerk Doug Clapp; Financial Services clerk Marianne Upton; Interior clerk Peter Kiefhaber; Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education clerk Ellen Murray; Legislative Branch clerk Nancy Olkewicz; Military Construction and Veterans Affairs clerk Christina Evans; State and Foreign Operations clerk Tim Rieser; and Transportation and Housing and Urban Development clerk Peter Rogoff; their associate staffs; Communications Director Tom Gavin and Communications Coordinator Cindy Huber; Deputy Chief Clerk Elnora Harvey; and professional staff members Jack Conway and Bob Knisely. Senators know the value of a strong staff, and this staff is, in my opinion, the best on Capitol Hill. Each of these men and women devoted long hours to this legislation. But it was not just a commitment of time; it also was the application of their years of experience and their dedication to this country that helped to craft this funding resolution and help see it through the Senate.

This was a bipartisan effort, and I want to pay tribute to Senator THAD COCHRAN, the ranking member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, his staff director Bruce Evans, and the Republican subcommittee staffs. They were partners in producing this balanced funding legislation, and their ideas and input were invaluable.

Not only was the writing of this legislation a bipartisan process, but it also was a bicameral one. House Appropriations Chairman DAVE OBEY and his staff, and Ranking Member JERRY LEWIS and his staff, were integral to the success of this legislation.

This final funding package is an example of how the Congress can work together, without regard to party lines or partisan positions. this legislation focuses not on Democratic priorities or Republican priorities, but rather on national priorities of health care; law enforcement and counterterrorism efforts; education, medical care for our troops and our veterans; and energy independence. We invest resources wisely in an effort to meet the country's needs today while building the foundation for a stronger America tomorrow.

I thank Senators for their support of this legislation, and I look forward to continuing this bipartisan effort on the Fiscal 2008 appropriations legislation.

CENTRALIA HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL TEAM

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I rise today to congratulate the Centralia High School boy's basketball team for 100 years of remarkable success.

The Centralia High Orphans have earned the distinction of being one of the ''winningest'' high school basketball teams in America. The Centralia basketball program began its winning career with a 2-and-2 record in its inaugural 1906–1907 season, less than a decade after the sport had been invented. In this their 100th season, the Orphans have amassed more than 1,975 career wins.

During the past 100 years, Centralia High has witnessed many legendary coaches and players. Coach Arthur Trout led the team to three State championships as well as an impressive 1941 season of 44 wins and only 2 losses. Coach Trout has an honored place in Centralia High's history where the new school gym bears his name today. Even now, many fans fondly recall the Orphans' all-time leading scorer, Dwight ''Dike'' Eddleman, who played for the team in the 1940s. Eddleman went on to letter in three sports at the University of Illinois, won the silver medal in the high jump at the 1948 Paris Olympics, and played in the NBA. Other Orphans that represented Centralia in the NBA include Bobby Joe Mason, Ken McBride, and Dick Garrett.

I am proud to be able to offer my congratulations to the Centralia High basketball team, Coach Randy Lincoln, and the town of Centralia, IL on reaching their 100th season, and I look forward to cherring on many more successful seasons of Orphans basketball in the future.

TRIBUTE TO CAMPBELLSVILLE UNIVERSITY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I rise today to honor a great Kentucky institution, Campbellsville University, as it celebrates 100 years of academic excellence.

Campbellsville University was originally founded in 1906 as the Russell Creek Academy and has proven itself to be an outstanding institution of higher education over the last 100 years. It has had an immeasurable impact on thousands of young men and women and has helped add to the academic excellence of our fine Commonwealth.

In the beginning, the Russell Creek Academy began with training departments for teacher and pastor training. In 1907 the Russell Creek Academy provided classes in music, art, and a diploma program for an enrollment of 200 students. Campbellsville University has now grown to 2,300 students as of last fall, with 38 undergraduate programs and 9 graduate programs, all while encompassing 75 acres of beautiful land near Campbellsville, KY.

To make sure that the university will continue to grow and progress for the next 100 years as it has this past century, many improvements are being made across the campus to add to its beauty and improve life for students. For instance, great progress is being made on the 800-seat Ransdell Chapel and the new Heilman Student Center. With the new School of Nursing, new tennis courts and the 48-bed addition to the Resident Village, Campbellsville University is looking forward to many new projects to keep up the demand and growth of this institution.

Academically, the School of Nursing program began this year and is off to a great start. Campbellsville University has also expanded its master of business administration program, moving along with the technological revolution by offering the program online in addition to the traditional MBA classes that the University has offered and been so well-known for over the years.

The students enrolled at Campbellsville University are proudly preparing a time capsule to commemorate this centennial celebration that will be opened in another 100 years, in 2107. The capsule will enable students 100 years from now to look at a time before they became students at Campbellsville University and compare its first 100 years to the next.

According to Dr. Michael V. Carter, the school's president, ''at Campbellsville University, faculty encourage students to grow stronger spiritually and find their true purpose in life, which is the greatest discovery of all.'' I hope that the history and tradition of this great school, encapsulated in the time capsule that they are preparing, will aid in that discovery for the students of today and a century to come.

Madam President, I ask that the entire Senate join me in congratulating Campbellsville University on this auspicious occasion; with 100 years of excellence in education behind us, we look forward to the next 100 with high hopes and anticipation.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SPECIALIST RAYMOND ''NEAL'' MITCHELL, III

Mrs. LINCOLN. Madam President, I wish to pay tribute to the life of Army SPC Raymond ''Neal'' Mitchell III. Specialist Mitchell gave his life serving our Nation in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Although he may no longer be with us, his legacy and spirit will live on through the lives he touched and the example he set for others.

Originally from Tennessee, Specialist Mitchell moved to West Memphis, AR, in 2002 to live with his grandparents and attend West Memphis Christian School. While going to school, Mitchell helped his grandparents with the business they had operated for more than 18 years. Teachers at West Memphis Christian School remember Specialist Mitchell for the tremendous strides they witnessed him make as a student and as a person. The quiet young man they knew came out of his shell and became involved in the school and the community. Specialist Mitchell clearly valued the company of friends and family and considered returning one day to coach baseball. Upon graduating in 2004, he enrolled at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro before enlisting in the U.S. Army in 2005.

While serving in the Army, Specialist Mitchell became an infantry man. Despite the ever-present danger, he courageously devoted his skills where he felt they were needed most—becoming the point man, or lookout, for his patrol. When asked why he became a point man he said, ''I'm not the best shot . . . but I'm the fastest.'' It was a testament to his bravery, desire to serve his country and devotion to his fellow soldiers. In August 2006, his unit deployed to Baghdad where he served as a driver and gunner for humvees while on patrol. Over Thanksgiving he had the opportunity to return home on a 2-week leave from Iraq. During his leave, he spent time with his family in Tennessee and had a chance to visit his old school in West Memphis. He told his grandmother that after completing his service in the Army, he planned to go back to Arkansas State University and try out for the baseball team.

Tragically, Specialist Mitchell died on January 6, 2007, from wounds sustained during routine security operations in Baghdad. On January 15, he was laid to rest in Smyrna, TN, with full military honors. He was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart.

The loss of someone so young and full of life, and loved by so many is a tragic reminder of the terrible consequences of war. While I could never find the words to adequately express the sorrow felt by friends and family of Neal Mitchell, I hope they can find some solace knowing that he lived his life with passion and with love. My thoughts and prayers are with his family members, friends, and all those who knew and loved him.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CONGRESSMAN CHARLIE NORWOOD

Mr. GRAHAM. Madam President, I wanted to take this opportunity to say a few words about my close friend and colleague who passed away yesterday, Congressman CHARLIE NORWOOD.

There is no doubt that with the death of CHARLIE NORWOOD the State of Georgia has lost one of her favorite sons. We were elected to serve in the House of Representatives the same year and represented adjoining districts in Georgia and South Carolina.

CHARLIE was a dear friend of mine.

I have never met anyone in politics with more passion about what they believe than CHARLIE NORWOOD. He was a great representative for the people for the people of the 10th district of Georgia, and in his years of service he made a real difference in the Congress.

There is no doubt CHARLIE's leadership, his wisdom, and his wit will be sorely missed.

Now is the time to keep CHARLIE's family in our prayers. But we should also celebrate a life well-lived. Knowing CHARLIE NORWOOD like I do, I am confident he would not have wanted it any other way.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. BROWNBACK. Madam President, due to inclement weather resulting in flight delays around the country on February 13, I was regrettably unable to arrive in Washington before the Senate voted on the motion to invoke closure on H.J. Res. 20. Regarding vote No. 46, I would not have voted in favor of the motion to invoke cloture on H.J. Res. 20. My vote would not have altered the result of this motion.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

REGINALD JONES

Mr. MENENDEZ Madam President, I rise today to join with my colleague, Senator FRANK R. LAUTENBERG, and our House colleague Congressman DONALD PAYNE in honoring Reginald Jones, a distinguished and inspiring figure in African-American history. In recognition of Black History Month, we gathered with residents of New Jersey to pay tribute to Mr. Jones on Saturday, February 10, 2007, at the Newark Museum in Newark, NJ, during ''A Salute to Heroes.''

Raised in Newark, NJ, Reginald Jones has dedicated his life to serving our great Nation. First, as a proud marine, he defended the freedoms and liberties we all hold dear as Americans.

It was while stationed in Guantanamo Bay that Reginald discovered boxing, a sport which led him to win the bronze medal at the 1971 Pan-Am Games in Cali, Colombia. In 1972, Reggie was selected as a member of the U.S. Olympic Team in Munich, Germany. In a boxing match that led to many changes in the sport, Reginald, a light middleweight, found himself in the ring with Valerie Tebugov of the Soviet Union. Judging discrepancies did not allow Reginald to advance to medal rounds, but Reginald received a good sportsmanship award for the dignity he displayed throughout the games, which he fondly recalled in a Star Ledger article as an ''opportunity to make many friends.''

Now, as a caseworker with the New Jersey Division of Children and Families Services for more than 20 years,

Reginald continues to serve our Nation, caring for and watching over the neediest children, ensuring that future generations have access to the same opportunities that helped Reggie reach his goals.

There is no doubt Reginald Jones is an exemplary leader and a profoundly committed individual who is a true role model for the Nation. Therefore, I am pleased to pay tribute to Reginald Jones, and know my colleagues will join in wishing him continued success.

TOMMIE SMITH

Madam President, I also rise today to join with my colleague, Senator FRANK R. LAUTENBERG, and our House colleague Congressman DONALD PAYNE to honor Tommie Smith, a distinguished and inspiring figure in African-American history. In recognition of Black History Month we gathered with residents of New Jersey to pay tribute to Dr. Smith on Saturday, February 10, 2007, at the Newark Museum in Newark, NJ, during ''A Salute to Heroes.''

Tommie Smith was born to Richard and Dora Smith on June 6, 1944, in Clarksville, TX. The 7th of his family's 12 children, he moved to California at a young age. His father was a sharecropper, and Tommie used to pick cotton at neighboring farms to help with the family finances.

During high school he excelled at football, basketball, and track. He received his bachelor of arts degree from San Jose State University in social science, with double minors in military science and physical education, and his masters degree in sociology from Goddard Cambridge in Boston, MA. As a sophomore college student, Tommie began breaking world records in track and went on to tie or break a total of 13 world records. He is the only man in the history of track and field to hold 11 world records simultaneously.

In 1968, Tommie was selected for the U.S. Olympic team for track and field. The 19th Olympiad, held in Mexico City, witnessed Tommie Smith breaking the world and Olympic records for the 200-meter race with a time of 19.83 seconds. On October 16, 1968, as the ''Star Spangled Banner'' played, Tommie stood on the victory podium, draped with his Olympic gold medal, shoeless, and together with his teammate, John Carlos, raised a clenched fist, covered in a black leather glove, in what has come to be recognized as a historic stand for ''power, liberation and solidarity.'' Both Tommie and John were members of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. This silent act received both cheers and jeers, and Tommie was suspended by the U.S. Olympic Committee and ordered to leave Mexico. But Tommie Smith was not dissuaded from his commitment to championing the cause of oppressed people.

After the Olympics, Tommie returned to San Jose State University. Upon graduation, Tommie played professional football with the Cincinnati Bengals for 3 years. But teaching and coaching were his true calling, and he later became a track coach at Oberlin College, in Ohio, where he also taught sociology, and at Santa Monica College, in California. Now a resident of Georgia, Tommie has dedicated his time to speaking to students across the country, urging them to stand up for what they believe in and to have ''faith and hope.''

Since 1968, Tommie Smith has been recognized for his actions in defense of civil rights and for his athletic prowess by various organizations including the National Track & Field Hall of Fame, the California Black Sports Hall of Fame, the County of Los Angeles and the State of Texas. He was honored with the 2004 dedication of the Tommie Smith gymnasium in Saint-Ouen, France, and a 2005 honorary doctorate degree of humane letters from San Jose State University.

There is no doubt Tommie Smith is an exemplary leader and a profoundly committed individual who is a true role model for the Nation. Therefore, I am pleased to pay tribute to Tommie Smith, and I know my colleagues will join in wishing him continued success.

COMMEMORATING ARIZONA'S STATEHOOD

Mr. KYL. Madam President, 95 years ago today Arizona became the 48th State in the Union when, on February 14, 1912, President William Taft signed the Arizona Statehood Act.

Today, just as almost a century ago, Americans are drawn to Arizona's economic opportunity, culture, and natural beauty. At the time of statehood, Arizona's population numbered in the hundreds of thousands, but it was growing quickly, from around 200,000 in 1910 to over 330,000 in 1920. Today, it is the Nation's fastest growing State, with a population of more than 6 million.

Tourists flock to the State for its cultural heritage and scenic beauty. Arizona is home to four national parks and many other national monuments and historic sites. Many who visit these sites are heeding the advice of Theodore Roosevelt, who said of the Grand Canyon, ''You cannot improve on it. But what you can do is to keep it for your children, your children's children, and all who come after you, as the one great sight which every American should see.''

From its days as a rough Wild West territory to the dynamic State it is today, Arizona's beauty and culture has captivated those who have experienced it. I wish the State a happy birthday.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

KANSAS AIR NATIONAL GUARD

• Mr. BROWNBACK. Madam President, I wish to acknowledge the accomplishments of the Kansas Air National Guard, specifically the 190th Air Refueling Wing which celebrates its 50th anniversary on February 23, 2007. The enormous sacrifice and dedication of these heroic men and women reflects well on themselves, the 190th Air Refueling Wing, and the Kansas Air National Guard. They truly make all Kansans proud.

This outstanding military organization began as the 117th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron located at the Hutchinson Naval Air Station in Hutchinson, KS. The unit was federally recognized on February 23, 1957. Over the course of its 50-year history, the 190th has flown the F–80, B–57A, B–57G, RB–57, EB–57, KC–135A, KC–135D, KC–135E and currently the KC–135R. The unit was stationed at Hutchinson Naval Air Station—later the Hutchinson Air National Guard Base—until 1967 when the unit was transferred to Forbes Air Force Base in Topeka, KS.

The 190th Air Refueling Wing at Forbes Field continues to be a leader in the Air National Guard. The unit recently received two prestigious awards—the Spaatz trophy—awarded to the overall outstanding Air National Guard Flying Wing—and the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award. We owe these brave servicemen, servicewomen, and their families a debt of gratitude. I thank them for their 50 years of service and extend my best wishes to them for the next 50 years and beyond.•

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 12:03 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

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.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

At 4:00 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 437. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 500 West Eisenhower Street in Rio Grande City, Texas, as the ''Lino Perez, Jr. Post Office''.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 437. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 500 West Eisenhower Street in Rio Grande City, Texas, as the ''Lino Perez, Jr. Post Office''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 574. A bill to express the sense of Congress on Iraq.

EXECUTIVE REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The following executive report of a nomination was submitted:

By Mr. KENNEDY for the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.
*Leon R. Sequeira, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Labor.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. REID (for himself, Mr. HATCH, Mrs. CLINTON, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. WARNER, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. REED, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. LAUTENBERG):

S. 579. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize the Director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences to make grants for the development and operation of research centers regarding environmental factors that may be related to the etiology of breast cancer; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. HATCH:

S. 580. A bill to amend the National Trails System Act to require the Secretary of the Interior to update the feasibility and suitability studies of four national historic trails, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. FEINGOLD:

S. 581. A bill to amend the Buy American Act to increase the requirement for American-made content, to tighten the waiver provisions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. SMITH (for himself, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. REED, and Mr. ALEXANDER):

S. 582. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to classify automatic fire sprinkler systems as 5-year property for purposes of depreciation; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SALAZAR:

S. 583. A bill to create a competitive grant program for States to enable the States to award salary bonuses to highly qualified elementary school or secondary school teachers who teach, or commit to teach, for at least 3 academic years in a school served by a rural local educational agency; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. LINCOLN (for herself, Mr. SMITH, and Ms. LANDRIEU):

S. 584. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the rehabilitation credit and the low-income housing credit; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. DORGAN (for himself, Mr. INHOFE, and Mr. HARKIN):

S. 585. A bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint and issue coins in commemoration of Native Americans and the important contributions made by Indian tribes and individual Native Americans to the development of the United States and the history of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. BINGAMAN:

S. 586. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide grants to promote positive health behaviors in women and children; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Mr. LEVIN):

S. 587. A bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the Model T Ford Automobile and the 100th anniversary of the Highland Park Plant, Michigan, the birthplace of the assembly line, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. NELSON of Florida (for himself, Mr. REID, and Mr. BIDEN):

S. 588. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to increase the Medicare caps on graduate medical education positions for States with a shortage of residents; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ALLARD:

S. 589. A bill to provide for the transfer of certain Federal property to the United States Paralympics, Incorporated, a subsidiary of the United States Olympic Committee; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. SMITH (for himself, Mr. SALAZAR, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. KERRY, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Ms. CANTWELL, and Ms. LANDRIEU):

S. 590. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the investment tax credit with respect to solar energy property and qualified fuel cell property, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CHAMBLISS (for himself, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. ROBERTS, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. COCHRAN, and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 591. A bill to amend the Food Stamp Act of 1977 to adjust for inflation the allowable amounts of financial resources of eligible households and to exclude from countable financial resources certain retirement and education accounts; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Ms. COLLINS:

S. 592. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a manufacturer's jobs credit, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BURR (for himself, Mr. REED, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. DOLE, and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 593. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a grant program to provide supportive services in permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. SANDERS, and Ms. MIKULSKI):

S. 594. A bill to limit the use, sale, and transfer of cluster munitions; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. LAUTENBERG (for himself, Mrs. BOXER, and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. 595. A bill to amend the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act of 1986 to strike a provision relating to modifications in reporting frequency; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. GREGG (for himself and Mr. SMITH):

S. 596. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to provide for the regulation of Internet pharmacies; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. SNOWE, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. KYL, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. DODD, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. WARNER, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. THOMAS, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. BURR, Mr. BROWNBACK, and Mr. SUNUNU):

S. 597. A bill to extend the special postage stamp for breast cancer research for 2 years; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. KERRY (for himself, Ms. SNOWE, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. VITTER, and Mr. LIEBERMAN):

S. 598. A bill to require reporting regarding the disaster loan program of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Ms. SNOWE (for herself, Ms. LANDRIEU, and Mr. VITTER):

S. 599. A bill to improve the disaster loan program of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. SMITH (for himself, Mr. DODD, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. VITTER, and Mr. BINGAMAN):

S. 600. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish the School-Based Health Clinic program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BAYH (for himself, Mr. COBURN, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. KERRY, Mr. CARPER, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. BROWN, Ms. STABENOW, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. KENNEDY):

S. 601. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to require broker reporting of customer's basis in securities transactions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. BROWN (for himself and Mr. VOINOVICH):

S. Res. 81. A resolution recognizing the 45th anniversary of John Hershel Glenn, Jr.'s historic achievement in becoming the first United States astronaut to orbit the Earth; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 21

At the request of Mr. REID, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 21, a bill to expand access to preventive health care services that help reduce unintended pregnancy, reduce abortions,

and improve access to women's health care.

S. 57

At the request of Mr. INOUYE, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 57, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to deem certain service in the organized military forces of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines and the Philippine Scouts to have been active service for purposes of benefits under programs administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

S. 80

At the request of Mr. STEVENS, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 80, a bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide for 8 weeks of paid leave for Federal employees giving birth and for other purposes.

S. 206

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) and the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) were added as cosponsors of S. 206, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions.

S. 223

At the request of Mr. FEINGOLD, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 223, a bill to require Senate candidates to file designations, statements, and reports in electronic form.

S. 236

At the request of Mr. FEINGOLD, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 236, a bill to require reports to Congress on Federal agency use of data mining.

S. 254

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the names of the Senator from Utah (Mr. BENNETT) and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. ALLARD) were added as cosponsors of S. 254, a bill to award posthumously a Congressional gold medal to Constantino Brumidi.

S. 316

At the request of Mr. KOHL, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 316, a bill to prohibit brand name drug companies from compensating generic drug companies to delay the entry of a generic drug into the market.

S. 329

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the names of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. BUNNING) and the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CONRAD) were added as cosponsors of S. 329, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide coverage for cardiac rehabilitation and pulmonary rehabilitation services.

S. 388

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. BROWNBACK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 388, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide a national standard in accordance with which nonresidents of a State may carry concealed firearms in the State.

S. 423

At the request of Mr. AKAKA, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 423, a bill to increase, effective as of December 1, 2007, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans.

S. 436

At the request of Mr. FEINGOLD, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 436, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reform the system of public financing for Presidential elections, and for other purposes.

S. 479

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) were added as cosponsors of S. 479, a bill to reduce the incidence of suicide among veterans.

S. 505

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WEBB) was added as a cosponsor of S. 505, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the above-the-line deduction for teacher classroom supplies and to expand such deduction to include qualified professional development expenses.

S. 518

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 518, a bill to amend the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 to require the Statistics Commissioner to collect information from coeducational secondary schools on such schools' athletic programs.

S. 543

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 543, a bill to improve Medicare beneficiary access by extending the 60 percent compliance threshold used to determine whether a hospital or unit of a hospital is an inpatient rehabilitation facility under the Medicare program.

S. 556

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN), the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) and the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) were added as cosponsors of S. 556, a bill to reauthorize the Head Start Act, and for other purposes.

S. 558

At the request of Mr. DOMENICI, the names of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. BINGAMAN) and the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) were added as cosponsors of S. 558, a bill to provide parity between health insurance coverage of mental health benefits and benefits for medical and surgical services.

S. 565

At the request of Mr. BINGAMAN, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 565, a bill to expand and enhance postbaccalaureate opportunities at Hispanic-serving institutions, and for other purposes.

S. 572

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 572, a bill to ensure that Federal student loans are delivered as efficiently as possible in order to provide more grant aid to students.

S. 573

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 573, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act and the Public Health Service Act to improve the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of heart disease, stroke, and other cardiovascular diseases in women.

S. CON. RES. 10

At the request of Mrs. CLINTON, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 10, a concurrent resolution honoring and praising the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People on the occasion of its 98th anniversary.

AMENDMENT NO. 234

At the request of Mr. COBURN, the names of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. BROWNBACK) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 234 intended to be proposed to H.J. Res. 20, a joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2007, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 235

At the request of Mr. COBURN, the names of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 235 intended to be proposed to H.J. Res. 20, a joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2007, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 259

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VOINOVICH) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 259 intended to be proposed to H.J. Res. 20, a joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2007, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. REID (for himself, Mr. HATCH, Mrs. CLINTON, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. WARNER, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. REED, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. LAUTENBERG):

S. 579. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize the Director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences to make grants for the development and operation of research centers regarding environmental factors that may be related to the etiology of breast cancer; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am pleased to be joined by Senators HATCH, CLINTON, MURKOWSKI, SANDERS, and SNOWE in introducing the Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act of 2007. On behalf of the millions of Americans who are affected by breast cancer, I urge all my Senate colleagues to support this important bill.

Many of us are familiar with breast cancer's serious toll on the Nation. Approximately 3 million women are living with the disease today, including an estimated 1 million who have not yet been diagnosed. Moreover, anyone's mother, daughter, wife, sister, or friend is at risk. It is thought that breast cancer will strike one in eight American women in her lifetime, with a new case diagnosed every 2 minutes. That means almost 275,000 new cases are expected to be diagnosed annually, including over 1,600 in Nevada. More than 40,000 lives are lost to the disease every year.

Deanna Jensen, a lifelong Nevadan and tireless activist for breast cancer research, was one of those lives. Sadly, Deanna passed away this year after her own heroic battle against breast cancer. Although the loss is most painfully felt by her loved ones, her legacy can be a reminder to us all that there are real people and real stories behind the impersonal statistics.

There are many more women across the country whose stories go unrecognized. But they deserve more than recognition and appreciation. They deserve answers to the same questions that many patients must surely ask themselves: Why me? Why do I have breast cancer?

The search for those answers is the driving force behind the Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act. Unfortunately, we still do not know what causes breast cancer, despite the remarkable progress achieved so far. Scientists have identified some risk factors, but those factors can explain fewer than 30 percent of cases. Because many women, and men, have no family history or known genetic links to breast cancer, it is generally believed that the environment plays a role in the development of breast cancer. However, we still do not understand the extent of that role.

We do know that environmental toxins could be partly responsible for America's high breast cancer rate. Studies have explored the effect of isolated environmental factors, such as diet, pesticides, and even electromagnetic fields. In most cases, the results have been inconclusive. Furthermore, there are many other factors that are suspected to play a role that have yet to be studied.

What is needed is not just a boost in the research investment on the role of the environment in the development of breast cancer, which has been very limited so far. We also need a comprehensive, national strategy to fully and effectively explore these issues. The Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act would address both needs, thereby spurring on promising research. The resulting discoveries could be crucial to improving our knowledge of this complex illness, which could lead to new treatments and perhaps a cure one day.

Specifically, the Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act will authorize $40 million each year for five years to establish multi-institutional, multi-disciplinary Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Centers of Excellence. Each Center would include institutions with different areas of expertise working together to tackle the same problems from different angles, as well as collaborating with community organizations in the area. Modeled after the tremendously successful Breast Cancer Research Program at the Department of Defense, grants would be awarded under a competitive, peer-reviewed process that involves patient advocates.

Small studies sponsored by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences are already underway to study the prenatal-to-adult environmental exposures that may predispose a woman to breast cancer. This is a promising step in the right direction, but it is only a down payment on the task at hand. Moreover, the research strategy for these grants does not follow the nationally-focused, collaborative, and comprehensive model as outlined by the Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act. Now, more than ever, we need to see the Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act signed into law.

If we miss promising research opportunities because Congress has failed to act, millions more and their families will face difficult questions about breast cancer. Every day, many of these Americans, like Deanna Jensen, rise to the challenge of fighting back against breast cancer. I encourage Congress to heed the national call to action as well.

In the 109th Congress, 66 of my Senate colleagues and 262 members of the House of Representatives joined me in doing so. I hope that my colleagues in the 110th Congress will support the Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 579

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH; AWARDS FOR DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATION OF RESEARCH CENTERS REGARDING ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS RELATED TO BREAST CANCER.

Part A of title IV of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 281 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 404H. RESEARCH CENTERS REGARDING ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS RELATED TO BREAST CANCER.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting through the Director of NIH, based on recommendations from the Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Panel established under subsection (b) (referred to in this section as the 'Panel'), shall make grants to public or nonprofit private entities for the development and operation of collaborative, multi-institutional centers for the purpose of conducting multidisciplinary and multi-institutional research on environmental factors that may be related to the etiology of breast cancer. Each such center shall be known as a Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Center of Excellence.

''(b) BREAST CANCER AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH PANEL.—

''(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish within the National Institutes of Health a Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Panel.

''(2) COMPOSITION.—The Panel shall be composed of—

''(A) 9 members to be appointed by the Secretary, of which—

''(i) six members shall be appointed from among physicians and other health professionals, who—

''(I) are not officers or employees of the United States;

''(II) represent multiple disciplines, including clinical, basic, and public health sciences;

''(III) represent different geographical regions of the United States;

''(IV) are from practice settings, academia, or other research settings; and

''(V) are experienced in peer review; and

''(ii) three members shall be appointed from the general public who are representatives of individuals who have had breast cancer and who represent a constituency; and

''(B) such nonvoting, ex officio members as the Secretary determines to be appropriate.

''(3) CHAIRPERSON.—The members of the Panel appointed under paragraph (2)(A) shall select a chairperson from among such members.

''(4) MEETINGS.—The Panel shall meet at the call of the chairperson or upon the request of the Director of NIH, but in no case less often than once each year.

''(5) DUTIES.—The Panel shall—

''(A) develop a comprehensive strategy concerning collaborative centers that would—

''(i) result in innovative approaches to study unexplored or underexplored areas of the environment and breast cancer;

''(ii) outline key research questions, methodologies, and knowledge gaps concerning environmental factors that may be related to the etiology of breast cancer;

''(iii) outline key issues concerning environmental factors that may be related to the etiology of breast cancer; and

''(iv) result in an overall strategy to address environmental factors related to breast cancer;

''(B) make recommendations to the Secretary with respect to the mechanisms, peer review criteria, and allocations under this section;

''(C) assist in the overall program evaluation; and

''(D) make recommendations for the dissemination of information on program process.

''(c) COLLABORATION WITH COMMUNITY.—Each center under subsection (a) shall include community organizations in the geographic area served by the center, including those that represent women with breast cancer, as integral collaborators involved at all levels of the decision-making and research in such center.

''(d) COORDINATION OF CENTERS; REPORTS.—The Director of NIH shall, as appropriate, provide for the coordination of information among centers under subsection (a) and ensure regular communication between such centers, and may require the periodic preparation of reports on the activities of the centers and the submission of the reports to the Director.

''(e) REQUIRED CONSORTIUM.—Each center under subsection (a) shall be formed from a consortium of cooperating institutions and community groups, meeting such requirements as may be prescribed by the Director of NIH. Each center shall require collaboration among highly accomplished scientists, other health professionals and advocates of diverse backgrounds from various areas of expertise.

''(f) DURATION OF SUPPORT.—Support of a center under subsection (a) may be for a period not exceeding 5 years. Such period may be extended for one or more additional periods not exceeding 5 years if the operations of such center have been reviewed by an appropriate technical and scientific peer review group established by the Director of NIH and if such group has recommended to the Director that such period be extended.

''(g) GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF CENTERS.—The Director of NIH shall, to the extent practicable, provide for an equitable geographical distribution of centers under this section.

''(h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—For the purpose of carrying out this section, there is authorized to be appropriated $40,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2008 through 2012. Such authorization is in addition to any other authorization of appropriations that is available for such purpose.''.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I am pleased to introduce today along with my colleagues, Senators HARRY REID, JOHN WARNER, HILLARY CLINTON, OLYMPIA SNOWE, LISA MURKOWSKI, and BERNIE SANDERS, the Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act of 2007.

The American Cancer Society estimates that a woman in the United States has a one in eight chance of developing invasive breast cancer during her lifetime. This risk was about 1 in 11 in 1975. All women are at risk for breast cancer. About 90 percent of women who develop breast cancer do not have a family history of the disease. The most recent available statistics show that 40 percent of all women diagnosed with invasive breast cancer died from the disease within 20 years. These are frightening statistics.

Furthermore, the disease is not limited by gender—in 2007, approximately 1,750 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed among men in the United States. In my home State of Utah, as indicated by the Utah Cancer Registry, breast cancer has the highest incidence rate of the ten leading cancer types. This disease has an impact on nearly every American's life.

Breast cancer death rates have been dropping steadily since 1991; however, challenges still remain. The bottom line is that we still do not know what causes this disease, or how to prevent it. Although scientists have discovered some risk factors for breast cancer, the known risk factors account for only a small percentage about 30 percent—of breast cancer cases. There are no proven interventions to prevent breast cancer and there is no cure.

There is general belief within the scientific community that the environment plays a role in the development of breast cancer, but the extent of that role has been less-examined. Research has investigated the effect of isolated environmental factors such as diet, pesticides, and electromagnetic fields; but, in most cases, there has been no conclusive evidence. Some scientists hypothesize that certain subgroups of women have genetic variants that may make them more susceptible to adverse environmental exposures.

In addition, a large study of twins demonstrated that the majority of breast cancers cannot be explained by inherited factors. The incidence of breast cancer in Western industrialized countries, such as the United States, is much higher than the incidence in Africa and Asia. When women migrate from a country with low incidence to a country with high incidence, their daughters experience the breast cancer risk of the new country's population. The discrepancy in incidence among various countries suggests that some of the differences in incidence may be explained by environmental exposures.

In-depth study of these potential risks could provide invaluable information in understanding the causes of breast cancer, and could lead to new prevention strategies. Clearly, more research needs to be done to determine the impact of environmental factors on breast cancer.

My colleagues and I are introducing the Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act of 2007 to address this palpable need for research. It creates a national strategy to conduct research into the possible links between breast cancer and the environment. The time to address these frightening statistics is now.

Specifically, the bill authorizes the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to award grants for the development and operation of up to eight centers for the purpose of conducting research on environmental factors that may be related to breast cancer. These centers will work across institutions, across disciplines, and with community organizations to study environmental factors that may cause breast cancer.

This legislation is modeled after the highly successful and promising Department of Defense Breast Cancer Research Program (DOD BCRP), which operates under a competitive, peer-reviewed grant-making process that involves consumers.

Isolated studies have been conducted to look at suspected environmental links to breast cancer; but these studies are only a small step toward the broad strategic research that is required. What is needed is a collaborative, comprehensive, nationally-focused strategy to address this oversight a strategy like the one outlined in this bill.

It is important to note that while we have made progress in the fight against breast cancer, we are still a long way from prevention or a cure—breast cancer remains the leading cause of cancer death among women worldwide. Studies have shown that environmental factors that cause breast cancer may exist, but conclusive evidence is scarce. This bill will go a long way in helping the scientific community explore environmental triggers of breast cancer.

The Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act had strong bipartisan support in the 109th Congress, with 66 Senate cosponsors. In the House of Representatives, 262 Members supported the legislation.

I urge my colleagues to think of breast cancer patients and their loved ones, and support this important bill. This Federal commitment is critical for the overall, national strategy and the long-term investments required to discover the environmental causes of breast cancer so that we can better prevent it, treat it more effectively, and, ultimately, cure it.

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, today I am proud to introduce the Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act with Senator REID and colleagues from both sides of the aisle.

This legislation would allow us to investigate the links between environmental exposures and breast cancer. Improving our ability to investigate the connection between pollutants and cancer incidence is the first step in improving our overall response to environmental health concerns. Environmental hazards manifest themselves in unexpected cancers, tumors, and other diseases in ways that we are only now beginning to understand.

Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death for women in the United States, and 3 million women in the United States are currently living with the disease 1 million of whom have not yet been diagnosed. Each year, over 13,000 women in New York State are diagnosed with this disease. Every one of us has been affected by breast cancer, whether it is through our own personal battle or our experiences offering love and support to our friends, our mothers, and our sisters.

Since 2001, I have sought to raise awareness of the need for increased research into the connections between

environmental factors and the incidence of chronic diseases like breast cancer. I have worked closely with advocates from New York on this issue, and hosted a field hearing of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee in Long Island to discuss breast cancer and other environmental health concerns.

The bill that we are introducing today will expand the available resources for our scientists and expedite research in this area. The Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act will create Centers of Excellence to engage in multidisciplinary research, carried out in collaboration with the community, and learn more about how environmental factors may be linked to the more than 200,000 breast cancer cases diagnosed each year.

I am hopeful that in the not-too-distant future, the incidence of breast cancer will be dramatically reduced, and in the handful of new cases that appear, we will be able to provide high-quality, highly effective treatment and save women's lives. But in order to achieve those goals, we need to learn more about all the causes of breast cancer, including the environmental factors that contribute to this disease.

Last year, the Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act was reported unanimously out of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. I will work with my colleagues there to once again move it through the committee process quickly, so that we can pass this essential legislation in this session of Congress.

By Mr. HATCH:

S. 580. A bill to amend the National Trails System Act to require the Secretary of the Interior to update the feasibility and suitability studies of four national historic trails, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Pioneer National Historic Trails Studies Act which would update the feasibility and suitability studies of four national historic trails and allow possible additions to them. The trails in question are the Oregon, the Mormon, the Pony Express, and the California National Historic Trails.

In 1978, the Oregon and Mormon trails were established by the National Trails System Act which defined these trails as ''point A to point B,'' limiting them to one beginning point and one final destination. At that time, The Mormon Pioneer National Historic trail was defined as the route Brigham Young took in 1846 through Iowa and then to the Salt Lake Valley in 1847. The Oregon Trail was defined narrowly as the route taken by settlers from Independence, MO, to Oregon City from 1841 to 1848. It was limited to a single trail with only three variants as well. Unfortunately, we have come to realize that this rigid definition precludes designation of some very important historical sites.

Congress passed an amendment for the establishment of the California and Pony Express National Historic Trails in 1992. This amendment broadened the statute to include the possibility of trail variants for the California Trail and provided a more accurate depiction of the original trail. The legislation I am introducing today will provide additional authority for variation to these four trails to provide a more accurate depiction of history.

To those of us in the West, these trails are the highways of our history. With this legislation, I hope to capture the important stories made along the variations of these main trails. Since the enactment of the National Trails System Act in 1978, there has been a great deal of support to broaden the Act to include these side roads of the trails.

Not every pioneer embarked on their journey from Omaha, NE, or Independence, MO and not every great or tragic event took place along the main routes. Tens of thousands of settlers began from other starting points. These trail variations and alternate routes show the ingenuity and adaptability of the pioneers as they were forced to contend with inclement weather, lack of water, difficult terrain, and hostile Native American tribes.

The Act requires comprehensive management for the historic trails. In 1981, such plans were completed for the Mormon and Oregon trails. Since that time, however, endless hours of research by the Park Service and trails organizations have produced a more complete picture of the westward expansion. The National Park Service has determined, however, that legislation is required to update the trails with this newfound history.

That is why I am introducing this legislation today. This bill would authorize the study of further important additions to the California, Mormon Pioneer, Oregon, and Pony Express National Historic Trails and allow for a more complete story to be told of our history of the West.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 580

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. REVISION OF FEASIBILITY AND SUITABILITY STUDIES OF EXISTING NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAILS.

Section 5 of the National Trails System Act (16 U.S.C. 1244) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(g) REVISION OF FEASIBILITY AND SUITABILITY STUDIES OF EXISTING NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAILS.—

''(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

''(A) ROUTE.—The term 'route' includes a trail segment commonly known as a cutoff.

''(B) SHARED ROUTE.—The term 'shared route' means a route that was a segment of more than one historic trail, including a route shared with an existing national historic trail.

''(2) REQUIREMENTS FOR REVISION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior shall revise the feasibility and suitability studies for certain national trails for consideration of possible additions to the trails.

''(B) STUDY REQUIREMENTS AND OBJECTIVES.—The study requirements and objectives specified in subsection (b) shall apply to a study required by this subsection.

''(C) COMPLETION AND SUBMISSION OF STUDY.—A study listed in this subsection shall be completed and submitted to Congress not later than 3 complete fiscal years from the date funds are made available for the study.

''(3) OREGON NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL.—

''(A) STUDY REQUIRED.—The Secretary of the Interior shall undertake a study of the routes of the Oregon Trail listed in subparagraph (B) and generally depicted on the map entitled 'Western Emigrant Trails 1830/1870' and dated 1991/1993, and of such other routes of the Oregon Trail that the Secretary considers appropriate, to determine the feasibility and suitability of designation of one or more of the routes as components of the Oregon National Historic Trail.

''(B) COVERED ROUTES.—The routes to be studied under subparagraph (A) shall include the following:

''(i) Whitman Mission route.

''(ii) Upper Columbia River.

''(iii) Cowlitz River route.

''(iv) Meek cutoff.

''(v) Free Emigrant Road.

''(vi) North Alternate Oregon Trail.

''(vii) Goodale's cutoff.

''(viii) North Side alternate route.

''(ix) Cutoff to Barlow road.

''(x) Naches Pass Trail.

''(4) PONY EXPRESS NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL.—The Secretary of the Interior shall undertake a study of the approximately 20-mile southern alternative route of the Pony Express Trail from Wathena, Kansas, to Troy, Kansas, and such other routes of the Pony Express Trail that the Secretary considers appropriate, to determine the feasibility and suitability of designation of one or more of the routes as components of the Pony Express National Historic Trail.

''(5) CALIFORNIA NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL.—

''(A) STUDY REQUIRED.—The Secretary of the Interior shall undertake a study of the Missouri Valley, central, and western routes of the California Trail listed in subparagraph (B) and generally depicted on the map entitled 'Western Emigrant Trails 1830/1870' and dated 1991/1993, and of such other and shared Missouri Valley, central, and western routes that the Secretary considers appropriate, to determine the feasibility and suitability of designation of one or more of the routes as components of the California National Historic Trail.

''(B) COVERED ROUTES.—The routes to be studied under subparagraph (A) shall include the following:

''(i) MISSOURI VALLEY ROUTES.—

''(I) Blue Mills-Independence Road.

''(II) Westport Landing Road.

''(III) Westport-Lawrence Road.

''(IV) Fort Leavenworth-Blue River route.

''(V) Road to Amazonia.

''(VI) Union Ferry Route.

''(VII) Old Wyoming-Nebraska City cutoff.

''(VIII) Lower Plattsmouth Route.

''(IX) Lower Bellevue Route.

''(X) Woodbury cutoff.

''(XI) Blue Ridge cutoff.

''(XII) Westport Road.

''(XIII) Gum Springs-Fort Leavenworth route.

''(XIV) Atchison/Independence Creek routes.

''(XV) Fort Leavenworth-Kansas River route.

''(XVI) Nebraska City cutoff routes.

''(XVII) Minersville-Nebraska City Road.

''(XVIII) Upper Plattsmouth route.

''(XIX) Upper Bellevue route.

''(ii) CENTRAL ROUTES.—

''(I) Cherokee Trail, including splits.

''(II) Weber Canyon route of Hastings cutoff.

''(III) Bishop Creek cutoff.

''(IV) McAuley cutoff.

''(V) Diamond Springs cutoff.

''(VI) Secret Pass.

''(VII) Greenhorn cutoff.

''(VIII) Central Overland Trail.

''(iii) WESTERN ROUTES.—

''(I) Bidwell-Bartleson route.

''(II) Georgetown/Dagget Pass Trail.

''(III) Big Trees Road.

''(IV) Grizzly Flat cutoff.

''(V) Nevada City Road.

''(VI) Yreka Trail.

''(VII) Henness Pass route.

''(VIII) Johnson cutoff.

''(IX) Luther Pass Trail.

''(X) Volcano Road.

''(XI) Sacramento-Coloma Wagon Road.

''(XII) Burnett cutoff.

''(XIII) Placer County Road to Auburn.

''(6) MORMON PIONEER NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL.—

''(A) STUDY REQUIRED.—The Secretary of the Interior shall undertake a study of the routes of the Mormon Pioneer Trail listed in subparagraph (B) and generally depicted in the map entitled 'Western Emigrant Trails 1830/1870' and dated 1991/1993, and of such other routes of the Mormon Pioneer Trail that the Secretary considers appropriate, to determine the feasibility and suitability of designation of one or more of the routes as components of the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail.

''(B) COVERED ROUTES.—The routes to be studied under subparagraph (A) shall include the following:

''(i) 1846 Subsequent routes A and B (Lucas and Clarke Counties, Iowa).

''(ii) 1856–57 Handcart route (Iowa City to Council Bluffs).

''(iii) Keokuk route (Iowa).

''(iv) 1847 Alternative Elkhorn and Loup River Crossings in Nebraska.

''(v) Fort Leavenworth Road; Ox Bow route and alternates in Kansas and Missouri (Oregon and California Trail routes used by Mormon emigrants).

''(vi) 1850 Golden Pass Road in Utah.

''(7) SHARED CALIFORNIA AND OREGON TRAIL ROUTES.—

''(A) STUDY REQUIRED.—The Secretary of the Interior shall undertake a study of the shared routes of the California Trail and Oregon Trail listed in subparagraph (B) and generally depicted on the map entitled 'Western Emigrant Trails 1830/1870' and dated 1991/1993, and of such other shared routes that the Secretary considers appropriate, to determine the feasibility and suitability of designation of one or more of the routes as shared components of the California National Historic Trail and the Oregon National Historic Trail.

''(B) COVERED ROUTES.—The routes to be studied under subparagraph (A) shall include the following:

''(i) St. Joe Road.

''(ii) Council Bluffs Road.

''(iii) Sublette cutoff.

''(iv) Applegate route.

''(v) Old Fort Kearny Road (Oxbow Trail).

''(vi) Childs cutoff.

''(vii) Raft River to Applegate.''.

By Mr. FEINGOLD:

S. 581. A bill to amend the Buy American Act to increase the requirement for American-made content, to tighten the waiver provisions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, today I am introducing legislation to help American workers and companies.

The bill that I am introducing, the Buy American Improvement Act, focuses on the Federal Government's responsibility to support domestic manufacturers and workers and on the role of Federal procurement policy in achieving this goal. The reintroduction of this bill, which I first introduced in 2003, is part of my ongoing efforts to stem the flow of manufacturing jobs abroad.

The Buy American Act of 1933 is the primary statute that governs Federal procurement. The name of this law accurately describes its purpose: to ensure that the Federal Government supports domestic companies and domestic workers by buying American-made goods. Regrettably, this law contains a number of loopholes that make it too easy for government agencies to buy foreign-made goods.

My bill, the Buy American Improvement Act, would strengthen the existing law by tightening its waiver provisions. Currently, the heads of Federal departments and agencies are given broad discretion to waive the Act and buy foreign goods with little or no accountability. We should ensure that the Federal Government makes every effort to give Federal contracts to companies that will perform the work domestically. We should also ensure that certain types of industries do not leave the United States completely, thus making the Federal Government dependent on foreign sources for goods, such as plane or ship parts, that our military may need to acquire on short notice.

I have often heard my colleagues say on this floor that American-made goods are the best in the world. I could not agree more. Regrettably, nearly 90,000 good-paying manufacturing jobs have left my State since 2000. And the country has lost around 3 million manufacturing jobs since January 2001. This hemorrhaging of jobs shows that Congress needs to do more to support domestic manufacturers and their employees. One way to do this is to ensure that the Federal Government makes every effort to buy American-made goods.

There are five primary waivers to the Buy American Act, and my bill addresses four of them. The first of these waivers allows an agency head to buy foreign goods if complying with the Act would be ''inconsistent with the public interest.'' I am concerned that this waiver, which includes no definition for what is ''inconsistent with the public interest,'' is actually a gaping loophole that gives too much discretion to department secretaries and agency heads. My bill would modify this waiver provision to prohibit it from being invoked by an agency or department head after a request for proposals, or RFP, has been published in the Federal Register. Once the bidding process has begun, the Federal Government should not be able to pull an RFP by saying that it is in the ''public interest'' to do so. This determination, sometimes referred to as the Buy American Act's national security waiver, should be made well in advance of placing a contract up for bid. To do otherwise pulls the rug out from under companies that are spending valuable time and resources to prepare a bid for a Federal contract.

The Buy American Act may also be waived if the head of the agency determines that the cost of the lowestpriced domestic product is ''unreasonable,'' and a system of price differentials is used to assist in making this determination. My bill would modify this waiver to require that preference be given to the American company if that company's bid is substantially similar to the lowest foreign bid or if the American company is the only domestic source for the item to be procured.

I have a long record of supporting efforts to help taxpayers get the most bang for their buck and opposing wasteful Federal spending. I don't think anyone can argue that supporting American jobs is ''wasteful.'' We owe it to American manufacturers and their employees to make sure they get a fair shake. I would not support awarding a contract to an American company that is price gouging, but we should make every effort to ensure that domestic sources for goods needed by the Federal Government do not dry up because American companies have been slightly underbid by foreign competitors.

The Buy American Act also includes a waiver for goods bought by the Federal Government that will be used outside of the United States. There is no question that there are occasions when the Federal Government needs to procure items quickly for use outside the United States. However, there may be items that are bought on a regular basis and used at foreign military bases or United States embassies, for example, that could reasonably be procured from domestic sources and shipped to the location where they will be used. My bill would require Federal agencies to compare the difference in cost for obtaining articles that are used on a regular basis outside the U.S., or that are not needed immediately, between an overseas versus a domestic source—including the cost of shipping—before awarding the contract to the company that will do the work overseas.

The Buy American Act's domestic source requirements may also be waived if the articles to be procured are not available from domestic sources ''in sufficient and reasonably available commercial quantities and of

a satisfactory quality.'' My bill would require that an agency or department head, prior to issuing such as waiver, determine whether domestic production can be initiated to meet the procurement needs and whether a comparable article, material, or supply is available domestically.

My bill would also strengthen the Buy American Act in four other ways. It would, for the first time, make the Buy American requirement applicable to the United States Congress. The current definition of a Federal agency in the Act specifically exempts the Senate, the House, and the Architect of the Capitol, and activities under the direction of the Architect. I believe that Congress should lead by example and comply with the Buy American Act, a requirement that we have imposed on executive agencies.

Secondly, my bill would increase the minimum American content standard for qualification under the Act from the current 50 percent to 75 percent. The definition of what qualifies as an American-made product has been a source of much debate. To me, it seems clear that ''American-made'' means manufactured in this country. This classification is a source of pride for manufacturing workers around our country. The current 50 percent standard should be raised to a minimum of 75 percent.

In addition, my bill would put in place for the next five years the expanded reporting requirement that I authored which was first enacted as part of the fiscal year 2004 omnibus spending bill and was included again by this body as an amendment to the recent minimum wage bill. Prior to the enactment of these provisions, only the Department of Defense was required to report to Congress on its use of Buy American waivers and purchases of foreign goods. It is virtually impossible to get hard numbers on the Federal Government's purchases of foreign—and domestic—made goods and to ensure that there is disclosure and accountability in the waiver process. This reporting requirement seeks to hold agencies accountable by requiring agencies to report on their foreign-made purchases and make that information available to Congress and the American public.

The annual report to be submitted by agency heads will be required to include the following information: the dollar value of any items purchased that were manufactured outside of the United States; an itemized list of all applicable waivers granted with respect to such items under the Buy American Act, including the type of waiver used; and a summary of the total procurement funds spent by the Federal agency on goods manufactured in the United States versus on goods manufactured overseas. In addition, my bill also requires that the heads of all Federal agencies make these annual reports publicly available on the Internet.

Finally, my bill would require the Government Accountability Office to report to Congress with recommendations for defining the terms ''inconsistent with the public interest'' and ''unreasonable cost'' for purposes of invoking the corresponding waivers in the Act. I am concerned that both of these terms lack definitions, and that they can be very broadly interpreted by agency or department heads. GAO would be required to make recommendations for statutory definitions of both of these terms, as well as for establishing a consistent waiver process that can be used by all Federal agencies.

The gaping loopholes in the Buy American Act and the trade agreements and defense procurement agreements that contain additional waivers of domestic source restrictions have combined to weaken our domestic manufacturing base by allowing—and sometimes actually encouraging—the Federal Government to buy foreign-made goods. Congress can and should do more to support American companies and American workers. We must strengthen the Buy American Act and we must stop entering into bad trade agreements that send our jobs overseas and undermine our own domestic preference laws.

By strengthening Federal procurement policy, we can help to bolster our domestic manufacturers during these difficult times. As I have repeatedly noted, Congress cannot simply stand on the sidelines while tens of thousands of American manufacturing jobs have been and continue to be shipped overseas. While there may be no single solution to this problem one way in which Congress should act is by strengthening the Buy American Act.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 581

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Buy American Improvement Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. REQUIREMENTS FOR WAIVERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2 of the Buy American Act (41 U.S.C. 10a) is amended—

(1) by striking ''Notwithstanding'' and inserting the following:

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(b) SPECIAL RULES.—The following rules shall apply in carrying out the provisions of subsection (a):

''(1) PUBLIC INTEREST WAIVER.—A determination that it is not in the public interest to enter into a contract in accordance with this Act may not be made after a notice of solicitation of offers for the contract is published in accordance with section 18 of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy Act (41 U.S.C. 416) and section 8(e) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(e)).

''(2) DOMESTIC BIDDER.—A Federal agency entering into a contract shall give preference to a company submitting an offer on the contract that manufactures in the United States the article, material, or supply for which the offer is solicited, if—

''(A) that company's offer is substantially the same as an offer made by a company that does not manufacture the article, material, or supply in the United States; or

''(B) that company is the only company that manufactures in the United States the article, material, or supply for which the offer is solicited.

''(3) USE OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (a) shall apply without regard to whether the articles, materials, or supplies to be acquired are for use outside the United States if the articles, materials, or supplies are not needed on an urgent basis or if they are acquired on a regular basis.

''(B) COST ANALYSIS.—In any case in which the articles, materials, or supplies are to be acquired for use outside the United States and are not needed on an urgent basis, before entering into a contract an analysis shall be made of the difference in the cost of acquiring the articles, materials, or supplies from a company manufacturing the articles, materials, or supplies in the United States (including the cost of shipping) and the cost of acquiring the articles, materials, or supplies from a company manufacturing the articles, materials, or supplies outside the United States (including the cost of shipping).

''(4) DOMESTIC AVAILABILITY.—The head of a Federal agency may not make a determination under subsection (a) that an article, material, or supply is not mined, produced, or manufactured, as the case may be, in the United States in sufficient and reasonably available commercial quantities and of satisfactory quality, unless the head of the agency has conducted a study and, on the basis of such study, determined that—

''(A) domestic production cannot be initiated to meet the procurement needs; and

''(B) a comparable article, material, or supply is not available from a company in the United States.

''(c) REPORTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the end of each of fiscal years 2007 through 2011, the head of each Federal agency shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives a report on the amount of the acquisitions made by the agency in that fiscal year of articles, materials, or supplies purchased from entities that manufacture the articles, materials, or supplies outside of the United States.

''(2) CONTENTS OF REPORT.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall separately include, for the fiscal year covered by such report—

''(A) the dollar value of any articles, materials, or supplies that were manufactured outside the United States;

''(B) an itemized list of all waivers granted with respect to such articles, materials, or supplies under this Act, and a citation to the treaty, international agreement, or other law under which each waiver was granted;

''(C) if any articles, materials, or supplies were acquired from entities that manufacture articles, materials, or supplies outside the United States, the specific exception under this section that was used to purchase such articles, materials, or supplies; and

''(D) a summary of—

''(i) the total procurement funds expended on articles, materials, and supplies manufactured inside the United States; and

''(ii) the total procurement funds expended on articles, materials, and supplies manufactured outside the United States.

''(3) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The head of each Federal agency submitting a report under paragraph (1) shall make the report publicly available to the maximum extent practicable.

''(4) EXCEPTION FOR INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY.—This subsection shall not apply to acquisitions made by an agency, or component thereof, that is an element of the intelligence community as specified in, or designated under, section 3(4) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 401a(4)).''.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—Section 1 of the Buy American Act (41 U.S.C. 10c) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(c) FEDERAL AGENCY.—The term 'Federal agency' means any executive agency (as defined in section 4(1) of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy Act (41 U.S.C. 403(1))) or any establishment in the legislative or judicial branch of the Federal Government.

''(d) SUBSTANTIALLY ALL.—Articles, materials, or supplies shall be treated as made substantially all from articles, materials, or supplies mined, produced, or manufactured in the United States, if the cost of the domestic components of such articles, materials, or supplies exceeds 75 percent of the total cost of all components of such articles, materials, or supplies.''.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Section 2 of the Buy American Act (41 U.S.C. 10a) is amended by striking ''department or independent establishment'' and inserting ''Federal agency''.

(2) Section 3 of such Act (41 U.S.C. 10b) is amended—

(A) in subsection (a), by striking ''department or independent establishment'' and inserting ''Federal agency''; and

(B) in subsection (b), by striking ''department, bureau, agency, or independent establishment'' and inserting ''Federal agency''.

(3) Section 633 of the National Military Establishment Appropriation Act, 1950 (41 U.S.C. 10d) is amended by striking ''department or independent establishment'' and inserting ''Federal agency''.

SEC. 3. GAO REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

(a) REPORT ON SCOPE OF WAIVERS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall report to Congress recommendations to be used in determining, for purposes of applying the waiver provision of section 2(a) of the Buy American Act, as redesignated by section 2(a) of this Act, whether acquiring articles, materials, and supplies mined, produced, or manufactured in the United States would—

(1) involve unreasonable cost; or

(2) be inconsistent with the public interest.

(b) RECOMMENDATIONS.—The report described in subsection (a) shall include recommendations—

(1) for a statutory definition of unreasonable cost and for standards for determining inconsistency with the public interest; and

(2) for establishing procedures for applying the waiver provisions of the Buy American Act that can be consistently applied.

By Mr. SMITH (for himself, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. REED, and Mr. ALEXANDER):

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, today Senator ROCKEFELLER and I are introducing the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act of 2007. This legislation would reduce the tremendous economic and human losses that fire inflicts on the National economy and the quality of life.

In 2005, fire departments responded to about 1.6 million fires. These fires resulted in about 3,500 deaths and almost 18,000 civilian injuries. Fire also caused over $10 billion in direct property damages in 2005.

Fire sprinklers can dramatically decrease loss of life and injury as a result of fires. The National Fire Protection Association has no record of a fire killing more than two people in a completely sprinklered public assembly, educational, institutional, or residential building where the system was properly installed and fully operational. Fire sprinklers also mitigate economic losses resulting from fires. Fire sprinklers are responsible for a 70-percent reduction in property damage from fires in public assembly, educational, residential, commercial, industrial, and manufacturing buildings.

The Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act will provide an incentive for businesses to protect their buildings with fire sprinklers. Under current law, the cost of retrofitting an existing building with automatic fire sprinklers generally would be depreciated over a 39-year period. Our legislation would reduce the depreciation period to 5 years, greatly reducing the economic burden of retrofitting a building.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of this legislation be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 582

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds that—

(1) the publication of the original study and comprehensive list of recommendations in America Burning, written in 1974, requesting advances in fire prevention through the installation of automatic sprinkler systems in existing buildings have yet to be fully implemented;

(2) fire departments responded to approximately 1,600,000 fires in 2005;

(3) there were 3,675 non-terrorist related deaths in the United States and almost 17,925 civilian injuries resulting from fire in 2005;

(4) 87 firefighters were killed in 2005;

(5) fire caused $10,672,000,000 in direct property damage in 2005, and sprinklers are responsible for a 70 percent reduction in property damage from fires in public assembly, educational, residential, commercial, industrial and manufacturing buildings;

(6) fire departments respond to a fire every 20 seconds, a fire breaks out in a structure every 61 seconds and in a residential structure every 79 seconds in the United States;

(7) the Station Nightclub in West Warwick, Rhode Island, did not contain an automated sprinkler system and burned down, killing 99 people on February 20, 2003;

(8) due to an automated sprinkler system, not a single person was injured from a fire beginning in the Fine Line Music Café in Minneapolis after the use of pyrotechnics on February 17, 2003;

(9) the National Fire Protection Association has no record of a fire killing more than 2 people in a completely sprinklered public assembly, educational, institutional or residential building where the system was properly installed and fully operational;

(10) sprinkler systems dramatically improve the chances of survival of those who cannot save themselves, specifically older adults, young children and people with disabilities;

(11) the financial cost of upgrading fire counter measures in buildings built prior to fire safety codes is prohibitive for most property owners;

(12) many State and local governments lack any requirements for older structures to contain automatic sprinkler systems;

(13) under the present straight-line method of depreciation, there is a disincentive for building safety improvements due to an extremely low rate of return on investment; and

(14) the Nation is in need of incentives for the voluntary installation and retrofitting of buildings with automated sprinkler systems to save the lives of countless individuals and responding firefighters as well as drastically reduce the costs from property damage.

SEC. 3. CLASSIFICATION OF AUTOMATIC FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subparagraph (B) of section 168(e)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to 5-year property) is amended by striking ''and'' at the end of clause (v), by striking the period at the end of clause (vi) and inserting '', and'', and by inserting after clause (vi) the following:

''(vii) any automatic fire sprinkler system placed in service after the date of the enactment of this clause in a building structure which was placed in service before such date of enactment.''.

(b) ALTERNATIVE SYSTEM.—The table contained in section 168(g)(3)(B) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to special rule for certain property assigned to classes) is amended by inserting after the item relating to subparagraph (B)(iii) the following:

''(B)(vii) ..... 7''.

(c) DEFINITION OF AUTOMATIC FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEM.—Subsection (i) of section 168 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(18) AUTOMATED FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEM.—The term 'automated fire sprinkler system' means those sprinkler systems classified under one or more of the following publications of the National Fire Protection Association—

''(A) NFPA 13, Installation of Sprinkler Systems,

''(B) NFPA 13 D, Installation of Sprinkler Systems in One and Two Family Dwellings and Manufactured Homes, and

''(C) NFPA 13 R, Installation of Sprinkler Systems in Residential Occupancies up to and Including Four Stories in Height.''.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to property placed in service after the date of the enactment of this Act.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, today I rise to join my colleague Mr. SMITH in the introduction of the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act. Two years ago, we first introduced this legislation to help provide businesses with an important tax incentive to install life-saving sprinkler systems, believing that the legislation would be one way to keep our Nation's citizens, and the firefighters who dedicate their lives to fire safety, free from unnecessary fire-related injury. At that time, I could not imagine that in 2007 West Virginia would suffer one of the worst fire-related tragedies in many years. In January of this year, a fire at the Emmons Junior Apartment Building in Huntington, WV, took the lives of nine individuals, including three teenagers

who were all siblings and another unrelated child who was only seven years old. My heart goes out to those families and to a devastated community. We later learned that the complex was built in 1924 and was not equipped with a sprinkler system. I cannot help thinking that if the tax incentives provided by this legislation were already in effect, many businesses including those operating apartment complexes might have had enough financial incentive to allow them to make the decision to install life-saving sprinkler systems.

Fire safety is a national problem. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) indicates that in 2005 there were over 1.6 million fires reported in the United States, which caused 3,675 civilian deaths, 17,925 civilian injuries, and $10.7 billion in property damage. As a result, 80,100 firefighters were injured and another 87 died responding to these fires in an effort to protect the lives of their fellow citizens. High-rise buildings and other living facilities that were built under older codes often lack adequate fire safety protection and leave vulnerable those citizens who cannot as easily save themselves from a fire, such as older adults, young children, and people with disabilities. There were 511,000 structure fires in 2005, and 381,000 of those occurred in family home structures including dwellings, duplexes, manufactured homes, apartments, townhouses, rowhouses, and condominiums. These home structure fires accounted for 82 percent of civilian fire-related fatalities and $6.7 billion in direct property damage.

Protecting our citizens and first-responders from these fire-related injuries and fatalities is of the utmost importance, and a real way to improve fire safety exists in the use of automatic sprinkler systems. These devices react quickly and save lives by dramatically reducing the heat, flames and smoke produced in a fire. The NFPA reports that when sprinklers are present, the chances of dying in a fire are reduced by between 50 and 75 percent and average property loss is cut by one-half to two-thirds. The NFPA also has no record of a fire killing more than two people in a building where a sprinkler system was properly installed and fully operational.

The benefits of fire sprinkler systems are overwhelming, even for business owners, but one thing that inhibits their implementation is cost. Under current law, installations in residential rental property and non-residential real property must be deducted over a 27.5- or 39-year period, respectively. The financial cost of upgrading existing structures with fire safety measures is prohibitive for most property owners, and under our present straight-line method of depreciation, there is disincentive for building safety improvements due to an extremely low rate of return on investment. This legislation, by amending the internal revenue code to classify automatic fire sprinkler systems as depreciable over a 5-year period, would mitigate the expense of retrofitting older buildings with costly automated sprinkler systems. It helps businesses make the choice to take advantage of fire safety systems that have been proven to have life-saving results.

I again express my support for the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act as a way to promote the use of fire sprinkler systems that are now an invaluable asset in our efforts to protect citizens and firefighters from fire-related death and injury. This proposal has been endorsed by firefighters, the insurance industry, and general contractors, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

By Mr. SALAZAR:

S. 583. A bill to create a competitive grant program for States to enable the States to award salary bonuses to highly qualified elementary school or secondary school teachers who teach, or commit to teach, for at least 3 academic years in a school served by a rural local educational agency; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, the second piece of legislation I am introducing has to do with education. We know rural school districts have a very hard time in terms of retaining teachers. The national teacher turnover rate across the country is about 15 percent, but in rural districts it is as high as 30 to 40 percent. Thirty to forty percent of teachers in rural school districts are turning over.

So what I hope to do with the Colorado Teacher Retention Act is to help with a competitive State program that would allow rural school districts to provide bonuses for highly qualified teachers who commit to teaching in rural schools for at least 3 years. It would simply provide an opportunity for rural schools to have the kind of excellence in teaching they so deserve.

By Mr. BINGAMAN:

S. 586. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide grants to promote positive health behaviors in women and children; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, the legislation I am introducing today, entitled the ''Community Health Workers Act of 2007,'' would improve access to health education and outreach services to women and children in medically underserved areas, including the U.S. border region along New Mexico.

Lack of access to adequate health care and health education is a significant problem on the southern New Mexico border. While the access problem is in part due to a lack of insurance, it is also attributable to non-financial barriers to access. These barriers include a shortage of physicians and other health professionals, and hospitals; inadequate transportation; a shortage of bilingual health information and health providers; and culturally insensitive systems of care.

This legislation would help to address the issue of access by providing $15 million per year for a three year period in grants to State, local, and tribal organizations, including community health centers and public health departments, for the purpose of hiring community health workers to provide health education, outreach, and referrals to women and families who otherwise would have little or no contact with health care services.

Recognizing factors such as poverty and language and cultural differences that often serve as barriers to health care access in medically underserved populations, community health workers are in a unique position to improve health outcomes and quality of care for groups that have traditionally lacked access to adequate services. They often serve as ''community specialists'' and are members of the communities in which they work. As such they can effectively serve hard-to-reach populations.

A shining example of how community health workers serve their communities, a group of so-called ''Promotoras'' in Dona Ana County were quickly mobilized during a recent flood emergency in rural New Mexico. These community health workers assisted in the disaster recovery efforts by partnering with FEMA to find, inform and register flood victims for Federal disaster assistance. Their personal networks and knowledge of the local culture, language, needs, assets, and barriers greatly enhanced FEMA's community outreach efforts. The Promotoras of Dona Ana County demonstrate the important role community health workers could play in communities across the nation, including increasing the effectiveness of new initiatives in homeland security and emergency preparedness, and in implementing risk communication strategies.

The positive benefits of the community health worker model also have been documented in research studies. Research has shown that community health workers have been effective in increasing the utilization of health preventive services such as cancer screenings and medical follow up for elevated blood pressure and improving enrollment in publicly funded health insurance programs. In the case of uninsured children, a study by Dr. Glenn Flores, ''Community-Based Case Management in Insuring Uninsured Latino Children,'' published in the December 2005 issue of Pediatrics found that uninsured children who received community-based case management were eight times more likely to obtain health insurance coverage than other children involved in the study because case workers were employed to address typical barriers to access, including insufficient knowledge about application processes and eligibility criteria, language barriers and family mobility

issues, among others. This study confirms that community health workers could be highly effective in reducing the numbers of uninsured children, especially those who are at greatest risk for being uninsured. Preliminary investigation of a community health workers project in New Mexico similarly suggests that community health workers could be useful in improving enrollment in Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program, or ''SCHIP.''

According to a 2003 Institute of Medicine, IOM, report entitled, ''Unequal Treatment: Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Healthcare,'' community health workers offer promise as a community-based resource to increase racial and ethnic minorities' access to health care and to serve as a liaison between healthcare providers and the communities they serve.

Although the community health worker model is valued in the New Mexico border region as well as other parts of the country that encounter challenges of meeting the health care needs of medically underserved populations, these programs often have difficulty securing adequate financial resources to maintain and expand upon their services. As a result, many of these programs are significantly limited in their ability to meet the ongoing and emerging health demands of their communities.

The 10M report also noted that ''programs to support the use of community health workers . . . especially among medically underserved and racial and ethnic minority populations, should be expanded, evaluated, and replicated.''

I am introducing this legislation to increase resources for a model that has shown significant promise for increasing access to quality health care and health education for families in medically underserved communities.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 586

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Community Health Workers Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Chronic diseases, defined as any condition that requires regular medical attention or medication, are the leading cause of death and disability for women in the United States across racial and ethnic groups.

(2) According to the National Vital Statistics Report of 2001, the 5 leading causes of death among Hispanic, American Indian, and African-American women are heart disease, cancer, diabetes, cerebrovascular disease, and unintentional injuries.

(3) Unhealthy behaviors alone lead to more than 50 percent of premature deaths in the United States.

(4) Poor diet, physical inactivity, tobacco use, and alcohol and drug abuse are the health risk behaviors that most often lead to disease, premature death, and disability, and are particularly prevalent among many groups of minority women.

(5) Over 60 percent of Hispanic and African-American women are classified as overweight and over 30 percent are classified as obese. Over 60 percent of American Indian women are classified as obese.

(6) American Indian women have the highest mortality rates related to alcohol and drug use of all women in the United States.

(7) High poverty rates coupled with barriers to health preventive services and medical care contribute to racial and ethnic disparities in health factors, including premature death, life expectancy, risk factors associated with major diseases, and the extent and severity of illnesses.

(8) There is increasing evidence that early life experiences are associated with adult chronic disease and that prevention and intervention services provided within the community and the home may lessen the impact of chronic outcomes, while strengthening families and communities.

(9) Community health workers, who are primarily women, can be a critical component in conducting health promotion and disease prevention efforts in medically underserved populations.

(10) Recognizing the difficult barriers confronting medically underserved communities (poverty, geographic isolation, language and cultural differences, lack of transportation, low literacy, and lack of access to services), community health workers are in a unique position to reduce preventable morbidity and mortality, improve the quality of life, and increase the utilization of available preventive health services for community members.

(11) Research has shown that community health workers have been effective in significantly increasing health insurance coverage, screening and medical follow-up visits among residents with limited access or underutilization of health care services.

(12) States on the United States-Mexico border have high percentages of impoverished and ethnic minority populations: border States accommodate 60 percent of the total Hispanic population and 23 percent of the total population below 200 percent poverty in the United States.

SEC. 3. GRANTS TO PROMOTE POSITIVE HEALTH BEHAVIORS IN WOMEN.

Part P of title III of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 280g et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 399S. GRANTS TO PROMOTE POSITIVE HEALTH BEHAVIORS IN WOMEN.

''(a) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary, in collaboration with the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other Federal officials determined appropriate by the Secretary, is authorized to award grants to States or local or tribal units, to promote positive health behaviors for women and children in target populations, especially racial and ethnic minority women and children in medically underserved communities.

''(b) USE OF FUNDS.—Grants awarded pursuant to subsection (a) may be used to support community health workers—

''(1) to educate, guide, and provide outreach in a community setting regarding health problems prevalent among women and children and especially among racial and ethnic minority women and children;

''(2) to educate, guide, and provide experiential learning opportunities that target behavioral risk factors including—

''(A) poor nutrition;

''(B) physical inactivity;

''(C) being overweight or obese;

''(D) tobacco use;

''(E) alcohol and substance use;

''(F) injury and violence;

''(G) risky sexual behavior; and

''(H) mental health problems;

''(3) to educate and guide regarding effective strategies to promote positive health behaviors within the family;

''(4) to educate and provide outreach regarding enrollment in health insurance including the State Children's Health Insurance Program under title XXI of the Social Security Act, Medicare under title XVIII of such Act and Medicaid under title XIX of such Act;

''(5) to promote community wellness and awareness; and

''(6) to educate and refer target populations to appropriate health care agencies and community-based programs and organizations in order to increase access to quality health care services, including preventive health services.

''(c) APPLICATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Each State or local or tribal unit (including federally recognized tribes and Alaska native villages) that desires to receive a grant under subsection (a) shall submit an application to the Secretary, at such time, in such manner, and accompanied by such additional information as the Secretary may require.

''(2) CONTENTS.—Each application submitted pursuant to paragraph (1) shall—

''(A) describe the activities for which assistance under this section is sought;

''(B) contain an assurance that with respect to each community health worker program receiving funds under the grant awarded, such program provides training and supervision to community health workers to enable such workers to provide authorized program services;

''(C) contain an assurance that the applicant will evaluate the effectiveness of community health worker programs receiving funds under the grant;

''(D) contain an assurance that each community health worker program receiving funds under the grant will provide services in the cultural context most appropriate for the individuals served by the program;

''(E) contain a plan to document and disseminate project description and results to other States and organizations as identified by the Secretary; and

''(F) describe plans to enhance the capacity of individuals to utilize health services and health-related social services under Federal, State, and local programs by—

''(i) assisting individuals in establishing eligibility under the programs and in receiving the services or other benefits of the programs; and

''(ii) providing other services as the Secretary determines to be appropriate, that may include transportation and translation services.

''(d) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under subsection (a), the Secretary shall give priority to those applicants—

''(1) who propose to target geographic areas—

''(A) with a high percentage of residents who are eligible for health insurance but are uninsured or underinsured;

''(B) with a high percentage of families for whom English is not their primary language; and

''(C) that encompass the United States-Mexico border region;

''(2) with experience in providing health or health-related social services to individuals who are underserved with respect to such services; and

''(3) with documented community activity and experience with community health workers.

''(e) COLLABORATION WITH ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS.—The Secretary shall encourage community health worker programs receiving funds under this section to collaborate with academic institutions. Nothing in this section shall be construed to require such collaboration.

''(f) QUALITY ASSURANCE AND COST-EFFECTIVENESS.—The Secretary shall establish guidelines for assuring the quality of the training and supervision of community health workers under the programs funded under this section and for assuring the cost-effectiveness of such programs.

''(g) MONITORING.—The Secretary shall monitor community health worker programs identified in approved applications and shall determine whether such programs are in compliance with the guidelines established under subsection (f).

''(h) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary may provide technical assistance to community health worker programs identified in approved applications with respect to planning, developing, and operating programs under the grant.

''(i) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 4 years after the date on which the Secretary first awards grants under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report regarding the grant project.

''(2) CONTENTS.—The report required under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

''(A) A description of the programs for which grant funds were used.

''(B) The number of individuals served.

''(C) An evaluation of—

''(i) the effectiveness of these programs;

''(ii) the cost of these programs; and

''(iii) the impact of the project on the health outcomes of the community residents.

''(D) Recommendations for sustaining the community health worker programs developed or assisted under this section.

''(E) Recommendations regarding training to enhance career opportunities for community health workers.

''(j) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER.—The term 'community health worker' means an individual who promotes health or nutrition within the community in which the individual resides—

''(A) by serving as a liaison between communities and health care agencies;

''(B) by providing guidance and social assistance to community residents;

''(C) by enhancing community residents' ability to effectively communicate with health care providers;

''(D) by providing culturally and linguistically appropriate health or nutrition education;

''(E) by advocating for individual and community health or nutrition needs; and

''(F) by providing referral and followup services.

''(2) COMMUNITY SETTING.—The term 'community setting' means a home or a community organization located in the neighborhood in which a participant resides.

''(3) MEDICALLY UNDERSERVED COMMUNITY.—The term 'medically underserved community' means a community identified by a State—

''(A) that has a substantial number of individuals who are members of a medically underserved population, as defined by section 330(b)(3); and

''(B) a significant portion of which is a health professional shortage area as designated under section 332.

''(4) SUPPORT.—The term 'support' means the provision of training, supervision, and materials needed to effectively deliver the services described in subsection (b), reimbursement for services, and other benefits.

''(5) TARGET POPULATION.—The term 'target population' means women of reproductive age, regardless of their current childbearing status and children under 21 years of age.

''(k) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $15,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2008, 2009, and 2010.''.

By Mr. NELSON of Florida (for himself, Mr. REID, and Mr. BIDEN):

S. 588. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to increase the Medicare caps on graduate medical education positions for States with a shortage of residents; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I am pleased to be joined by my colleague Senate Majority Leader HARRY REID as we introduce the Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2007. The bill would enhance America's health care infrastructure by expanding the number of Medicare-supported physician residency training positions in States with a shortage of residents.

Over the past several years, a number of studies have concluded that this country is facing, or soon will face, physician shortages. The Council on Graduate Medical Education (COGME) and the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) recently issued reports, which concluded that our Nation will likely lack an adequate number of physicians to meet patient demand by the year 2020.

By expanding the number of Medicare-supported physician residency training positions in our Nation's teaching hospitals, we can help stabilize America's health care infrastructure and alleviate physician shortages. Unfortunately, in 1997, the Balanced Budget Act (BBA) ''capped'' the number of residents that each teaching hospital could claim for Medicare payment purposes. In general, Medicare does not reimburse hospitals for residents they train that are above the capped number of residency slots.

There are no exceptions that allow hospitals to permanently adjust their caps. For example, the cap on physician training positions does not adjust for population growth. In many States, including Florida, populations continue to grow both in size and age and physician shortages are occurring or soon will occur. Ten years ago, Florida's ratio of physicians to population was above the national average. Today, Florida is among the States seeing the slowest growth in physician supply. A major reason for the slow growth in Florida is the lack of physician residents.

A recent study by the AAMC ranks Florida 44th among States with federally funded medical residency positions, with 16 residents per 100,000 people. This problem will worsen over time because Florida's population continues to grow and Federal funding for graduate medical education slots has been capped and cannot grow to reflect the need.

Because physicians tend to remain in the region where they complete their medical training, increasing the number of residency cap positions in States with a shortage will help to ensure an adequate physician workforce. According to a study by the AAMC, 47 percent of physicians are practicing in the State in which they did their training. Florida's record of retention is even better than the national average. The same study shows that approximately 60 percent of physicians who trained in Florida stay in Florida to practice medicine after their residency.

Today we are introducing the Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2007 to enhance America's health care infrastructure by expanding the number of resident physician training positions in States with a shortage of resident physicians. Specifically, the bill authorizes the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to increase the cap on the number of Medicare-supported residency training positions at teaching hospitals in States where there are shortages of resident physicians. A State is considered to have a shortage of resident physicians if its ratio of resident physicians per 100,000 population is below the national median level. Under our bill, teaching hospitals in approximately 24 States would be eligible for increases in their resident caps.

We believe this legislation is a critical first step towards ensuring an adequate supply of physicians in our health care system. We urge all of our colleagues, from both sides of the aisle, to join us in this effort.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 588

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. INCREASING THE MEDICARE CAPS ON GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION POSITIONS FOR STATES WITH A SHORTAGE OF RESIDENTS.

(a) DIRECT GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION.—Section 1886(h)(4)(F) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ww(h)(4)(F)) is amended—

(1) in clause (i), by inserting ''clause (iii) and'' after ''subject to''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new clause:

''(iii) INCREASE IN CAPS ON GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION POSITIONS FOR STATES WITH A SHORTAGE OF RESIDENTS.—

''(I) IN GENERAL.—For cost reporting periods beginning on or after the date that is 16 months after the date of enactment of the Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2007, the Secretary shall increase the otherwise applicable limit on the total number of full-time equivalent residents in the field of allopathic or osteopathic medicine determined under clause (i) with respect to a qualifying hospital in an eligible State by an amount determined appropriate by the Secretary. Such increase shall be phased-in over

a period of 5 cost reporting periods beginning with the first cost reporting period in which the increase is applied under the previous sentence to the hospital. For each eligible State the aggregate number of such increases shall be—

''(aa) not less than 15; and

''(bb) not greater than the State resident cap increase.

''(II) QUALIFYING HOSPITAL.—In this clause, the term 'qualifying hospital' means a hospital located in an eligible State that the Secretary determines should receive an increase under this clause in the otherwise applicable limit on the total number of full-time equivalent residents in the field of allopathic or osteopathic medicine.

''(III) ELIGIBLE STATE.—In this clause, the term 'eligible State' means a State for which the National median medical resident ratio exceeds the State medical resident ratio.

''(IV) STATE RESIDENT CAP INCREASE.—In this clause, the term 'State resident cap increase' means, with respect to a State, ¼ of the product of—

''(aa) the difference between the National median medical resident ratio and the State medical resident ratio; and

''(bb) the State population (as determined for purposes of subclause (VI)).

''(V) NATIONAL MEDIAN MEDICAL RESIDENT RATIO.—In this clause, the term 'National median medical resident ratio' means the median of all State medical resident ratios.

''(VI) STATE MEDICAL RESIDENT RATIO.—In this clause, the term 'State medical resident ratio' means, with respect to any State, the ratio of full-time equivalent residents in the State in approved medical residency training programs as of the date of enactment of the Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2007 to the population of the State as of such date, as determined by the Secretary.

''(VII) STATE.—In this clause, the term 'State' means a State and the District of Columbia.

''(VIII) CONSIDERATIONS IN DETERMINING RESIDENT CAP INCREASES.—In determining whether a hospital is a qualifying hospital, and how much of an increase in the resident cap a qualifying hospital shall receive under subclause (I), the Secretary shall take into consideration the demonstrated likelihood of the hospital filling resident positions that would be made available as a result of such increase within the first 3 cost reporting periods beginning on or after the date that is 16 months after the date of enactment of the Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act of 2007. The Secretary shall also take into consideration whether the new resident positions will be in primary care, preventive medicine, or geriatrics programs.''.

(b) INDIRECT MEDICAL EDUCATION.—Section 1886(d)(5)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395ww(d)(5)(B)) is amended by adding at the end the following new clause:

''(x) Clause (iii) of subsection (h)(4)(F) shall apply to clause (v) in the same manner and for the same period as such clause (iii) applies to clause (i) of such subsection.''.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am introducing a bill today dealing with resident physician shortages. This bill will expand the number of Medicare-supported physician residency training positions in States all over the country which face a shortage of doctors.

This legislation is important because we know that the cities where doctors are trained are often the cities where they stay. For example, Nevada currently has 199 physicians in training and will be eligible for an additional 93 positions under this bill.

As Nevada continues to grow, so do our health needs. The two bills I am introducing today will help ensure communities across Nevada that they have the doctors they need and the quality of care they deserve.

By Mr. ALLARD:

S. 589. A bill to provide for the transfer of certain Federal property to the United States Paralympics, Incorporated, a subsidiary of the United States Olympic Committee; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce important legislation in support of America's Paralympic programs.

The Paralympics are an important facet of our modern Olympic tradition and serve as an integral part of the rehabilitation of the mind, body, and soul. Training programs provided by Paralympic organizations enable disabled athletes to overcome obstacles on and off the field. Through training, performance, and competition, these athletes regain independence and renew their spirit.

The roots of the Paralympic movement originally stem from disabled veteran's returning from war. After World War II, British soldiers began participating in Paralympic games. These games provided a way for disabled soldiers to compete competitively in athletics. This practice quickly spread to the United States, and this country is now leading the way in advancing the movement. Today thousands of athletes with physical disabilities compete internationally, proudly representing their countries.

Tremendous advancements in modern medicine and the adaptation of athletic equipment have allowed Paralympic athletes to physically compete in a variety of sports and live the Olympic dream. By continuing to support the development of the Paralympic movement at all levels, as this bill does, we are able to take advantage of these numerous scientific and medical advancements to truly improve quality of life for our wounded veterans.

Today I am introducing legislation to facilitate the transfer of unused Federal property in Colorado Springs, CO, to the United States Olympic Committee and specifically Paralympics Incorporated. The transfer of this property allows the current United States Olympic Committee complex in Colorado Springs to expand and provides the U.S. Paralympic Team with further room to grow their programs.

To a large degree, this expansion will afford greater opportunities to Paralympics athletes, especially our Nation's military veterans.

Colorado Springs and the Pikes Peak region are unique. Home to a robust veteran's population, this region also serves as the national headquarters of the Unites States Olympic Committee. This makes the area a natural fit for championing and advancing the Paralympic movement.

Proponents for the disabled estimate that approximately 10 percent of the more than 500-person U.S. team to the Paralympics in 2012 will be comprised of veteran's of the global war on terrorism. This is a tremendous increase considering there were no war veterans participating in either the 2004 or 2006 games.

Providing for the transfer of this property will give the United States Olympic Commitee the necessary facilities to work with local and national veteran's service organizations, the Department of Defense, as well as the Department of Veterans Affairs in order to allow for greater opportunities for disabled veterans to participate in the Paralympics, particularly those returning home from war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I am not alone. National and local organizations recognize the importance of these programs and vocally support my efforts, including: the Colorado American Legion, the Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce, the National Sports Center for the Disabled, and the Pikes Peak Chapter of Military Officers Association of America.

I ask my colleagues to join me in cheering on the Olympic spirit that lives in all of us by supporting our Nation's disabled veterans and Paralympic athletes.

I ask unanimous consent to print the following letters in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

THE CHAMBER,
Colorado Springs, CO, February 14, 2007.

Hon. WAYNE ALLARD,
U.S. Senator, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR ALLARD: We are writing to express our strong support of your efforts to transfer the Federal Building at 1520 East Willamette in Colorado Springs to the United State Paralympic Committee.

As you know, The Greater Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce has an active and steadfast relationship with the United States Olympic Committee. In addition, our membership provides a strong support system to our military in the region. We are most impressed with the USOC's Paralympics Organization that provides such a valuable initiative to our injured soldiers coming back from serving and protecting our country.

The stature and pride associated with The United States Olympic Committee's presence in the Colorado Springs area has always been an important part of our cultural and economic significance. Combining that with the mission of helping our soldiers recover and succeed in the Paralympics venue would be another critical investment in our people and our region.

We wholly and enthusiastically support your efforts to add to our nation's viability in the Paralympics movement and to increase our region's prominence in that movement. Thank you for your vigorous dedication in moving this effort forward.

Sincerely,

WILL TEMBY,
Chief Executive Officer.

NATIONAL SPORTS CENTER
FOR THE DISABLED,
January 24, 2007.

Hon. WAYNE ALLARD,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR ALLARD: On behalf of the National Sports Center for the Disabled of Winter Park, Colorado, I would like to thank you for introducing legislation to transfer Federal property to the United States Paralympics, Inc. and the United States Olympic Committee. This property will significantly add to the U.S. Paralympics' ongoing efforts to provide sport programs for individuals with disabilities.

In recent years, the number of young men and women with newly acquired disabilities from military service has increased considerably. Learning to live with a disability is an experience that many find difficult. Recognizing that physical activity can play a tremendous role in encouraging healthy and independent lives, the U.S. Paralympics has made remarkable efforts to provide sport programs for such individuals. As chief executive officer for the National Sport Center for the Disabled, I have witnessed firsthand the benefits of physical activity on the lives of the disabled. It is clear that sport programs have tremendous therapeutic value and encourage healthy, independent lives.

As military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan continue, the need for such programs is greater than ever. This property in Colorado Springs, Colorado will greatly enhance the U.S. Paralympics' ability to continue sport training programs for our soldiers with newly acquired disabilities as they return home and begin the rehabilitation process.

I ardently support your legislation to transfer Federal property to the U.S. Olympic Committee and U.S. Paralympics for sport programs for the disabled, and I thank you for recognizing this need as so many active duty and retired military personnel begin to adjust to life with a disability.

Sincerely,
CRAIG POLLITT, PRESIDENT/CHIEF
EXECUTIVE OFFICER.

PIKES PEAK CHAPTER,
MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOC. OF AMERICA,
Colorado Springs, CO, January 24, 2007.

U.S. OLYMPIC COMMITTEE,
Olympic Plaza,
Colorado Springs, CO.

DEAR U.S. OLYMPIC COMMITTEE: The members of the Pikes Peak Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America would like to express our strongest support for your efforts to transfer the Federal Property near the U.S. Olympic Training Center to your Olympic Committee. Understanding that U.S. Olympic Committee will use this property in the training of United States Paralympics, we see this as a wonderful opportunity to help athletes with physical disabilities. As many veterans take part in this training and competition and it adds so much to their lives, we strongly urge the Olympic Committee to pursue the acquisition of this property for the Paralympics.

Feel free to contact me at 719–590–9522 for further details.

Sincerely,
THOMAS M. DASCHBACH,
Colonel USAF (Ret),
President, Pikes Peak Chapter.

By Mr. SMITH (for himself, Mr. SALAZAR, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. KERRY, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Ms. CANTWELL, and Ms. LANDRIEU):

S. 590. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the investment tax credit with respect to solar energy property and qualified fuel cell property, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce legislation to spur investment in and deployment of fuel cells and solar energy systems. I am joined today by my colleague, Senator SALAZAR, and eleven other Senators in introducing this important bill to encourage the development if these clean energy facilities.

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 created new commercial and residential investment tax credits that have helped stimulate market growth for these innovative technologies. Those tax credits, which were extended in 2006, are set to expire at the end of 2008. However, in order to drive down future production costs and encourage the development of these facilities, this bill provides for an eight-year extension of the investment tax credits for solar and fuel cell facilities. It also provides for the accelerated depreciation of commercial solar and fuel cell projects.

The long-term extension is needed within these industries because these emerging energy technologies have longer planning horizons than traditional power plants. A long-term extension will also help developers secure the financing for these facilities.

There are numerous benefits of extending these investment tax credits. It is estimated that an eight-year extension of the tax credits will displace over 4 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and save consumers over $32 billion. An estimated 70,000 new jobs will be created in the solar and fuel cell industries and over $50 billion in economic investment will be made in these industries. In addition, distributed generation facilities can serve remote sites and help address transmission congestion issues.

Home-grown energy technologies and sources help reduce our dependence on foreign sources of energy. Moreover, both solar equipment and fuel cells provide zero emissions energy. I would urge my colleagues to join us in providing America's entrepreneurs and households with these important tax incentives. Together, we can reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and restore our nation's leading role in these important industries.

By Mr. CHAMBLISS (for himself, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. ROBERTS, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. COCHRAN, and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 591. A bill to amend the Food Stamp Act of 1977 to adjust for inflation the allowable amounts of financial resources of eligible households and to exclude from countable financial resources certain retirement and education accounts; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Food Stamp Savings and Investment Act of 2007, a bill that would improve the food stamp program which is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. For fiscal year 2005, the food stamp program touched an average of over 25 million people in this country every month.

Our nutrition assistance programs, anchored by the food stamp program, play a key role in ensuring that needy Americans have access to the food they need to lead healthy, productive lives. I know from the school teachers in my family the importance of good nutrition, especially for our children's development. Moreover, the food for nutrition programs comes from U.S. farmers which helps agriculture. Finally, food assistance programs are an important part of this country's safety net. Not long ago, the Nation witnessed the food stamp program's effective emergency response to evacuees from hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The U.S. food assistance programs are good for families, good for farmers and good for America.

The food stamp program not only helps by providing food and emergency aid, it helps America's needy families on their path to independence and self-sufficiency. The goals of the 1996 welfare reform were spelled out in the title, to increase ''personal responsibility and work opportunity.'' In essence, Congress asked our nation's families on welfare to take personal responsibility for themselves and join the workforce, and many of those families did. In the ten years since welfare reform was passed by Congress and signed by President Clinton, fewer families receive cash welfare, and more welfare families are working. According to the Congressional Research Service, from 1996 to 2005, the number of food stamp households with children who received cash welfare payments decreased by 57 percent, and the number who reported earned income increased 41 percent. Many families have transitioned from welfare to work, and the Food Stamp program should do more to encourage this continuing transition.

States have done a great job addressing food stamp error rates. From fiscal year 2000 to fiscal year 2005, while average monthly participation increased to a near historical high of almost 26 million people, the combined error rates of over payments and under payments fell 34 percent to a historical low of 5.84 percent.

In the 2002 farm bill, Congress gave States many options to administer the food stamp program easier. Most States have taken advantage of these options and the program serves both taxpayers and recipients better today than in the past. However, there is room to improve. For many working families with low income, there are some aspects of the food stamp program that may reduce their ability to escape the cycle of poverty. For example, food stamp asset rules conflict

with families' ability to save for their future. The asset limit of $2,000 for liquid assets for most food stamp recipients has not changed for more than 20 years. When indexed for inflation, the asset limit would be almost $4,000 today. This bill would index the asset limit to inflation. A higher asset limit should help families build up savings in order to achieve financial independence and prepare for a rainy day or get an education and eventually end their need to receive food stamps.

In addition, food stamp rules discourage working families from utilizing all the financial investment tools encouraged by the tax code for working Americans. This bill would exempt savings plans for retirement and education from being counted toward the asset when determining eligibility, provisions included in the Bush Administration's farm bill proposal.

The core ideas underlying this bill enjoy broad support across the political spectrum. Examples of organizations that have voiced support for reforming asset limits in order to encourage savings include: The Heritage Foundation; the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities; the New America Foundation; the Corporation for Enterprise Development; and, the Center for Law and Social Policy.

Reforming food stamp asset limits has the potential to help needy families break the cycle of poverty and achieve long-term financial independence. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I am pleased today to join my friend and colleague, the senior Senator from Georgia, as a cosponsor of legislation to provide some needed improvements to the Food Stamp Program's eligibility rules.

Senator CHAMBLISS' legislation, the Food Stamp Personal Savings and Investment Act of 2007, would exempt retirement accounts and educational savings accounts from the current asset limits test in the Food Stamp Program. Additionally, this bill would index the current asset limit to inflation.

For most households, the current asset limit in the Food Stamp Program is $2000; $3000 for households with an elderly individual or an individual with a disability. This limit has not been raised in over 20 years, making it inconsistent with the economic challenges faced by today's low-income working families in America.

In addition, current Food Stamp Program resources rules are inconsistent. Many types of retirement accounts and all educational savings accounts are counted against the asset limit, meaning that a working mother who has recently become unemployed but managed to save $2500 for her daughter's college education is actually ineligible for food stamps. This forces otherwise eligible households to have to choose between liquidating such savings, which in many cases are also subject to a financial penalty, or going without needed food assistance.

It is clear that current Food Stamp Program rules actually discourage people from planning responsibly for their futures and deny them a helping hand at a time when they need it most. It makes no sense for the government to force families that are suffering through periods of unemployment to spend down the savings which represent their only source of security in times of hardship. In essence we require people to trade-off their minimal savings for meager food stamp benefits that equal an average of one dollar per meal per person.

If our true goal is to provide low-income families with a hand up—to help make a better life for themselves and their children—then we must enact policies that actually encourage them to build the resources that are necessary to get out of poverty and remove the barriers to saving that exist in current law. Exempting retirement and educational savings accounts from the Food Stamp Program's asset limits test will help do that.

Similarly, adjusting the current asset limit so that it rises with inflation will provide a more reasonable, less-restrictive threshold that, though modest, will at least prevent further erosion in the current asset limits. I'm hopeful that we can do more than just indexing the current limit, which is too restrictive. I hope that we can first increase the asset limits and then index them annually to inflation. But Senator CHAMBLISS' bill is a good start, and I commend him for seeking to address this problem.

Taken together, these are common sense changes that are needed throughout our federal anti-poverty programs to allow low-income Americans who are currently discouraged from saving to invest in their futures. The Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry obviously has no jurisdiction over other anti-poverty programs, but we can start by removing the unrealistic and damaging limits that currently exist within the Food Stamp Program.

I should also make clear that this is not the only change needed to improve upon the Food Stamp Program. We clearly must do more to help those who suffer from food insecurity in this country, and there are a number of other improvements that we should make to our federal food assistance programs to help low-income families put food on their tables.

This legislation is a good start to the larger objective of simplifying and strengthening our food assistance programs to make them more responsive and relevant to helping meet the needs of today's low-income American families. I commend Senator CHAMBLISS for introducing this bill, am happy to cosponsor it and look forward to continuing to work with him to promote economic and food security and stability for low-income Americans and families.

By Ms. COLLINS:

S. 592. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a manufacturer's jobs credit, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce legislation, the ''Growing Our Manufacturing Employment Act, or ''GoME,'' which is aimed at reinvigorating the manufacturing sector, boosting the level of domestic manufacturing, and preventing the further loss of manufacturing jobs.

Few issues are as important to the American people than the availability of good jobs in their communities. Manufacturing jobs have long provided quality employment for generations of Americans. But in recent years, employment in the manufacturing sector has dropped, and over 3 million manufacturing jobs have been lost since the year 2000.

Few States have been hit harder by the loss of manufacturing jobs than my home State of Maine. According to the National Association of Manufacturers, Maine has lost 22,000 manufacturing jobs—nearly 28 percent of our total—since the beginning of this decade. These jobs once provided lifelong employment to Mainers in towns like Millinocket, Wilton, Waterville, Fort Kent, Dexter, Westbrook, and Sanford. Here is but one example of the tragic results of this ongoing trend, from my home State of Maine: For 60 years, Moosehead Manufacturing produced furniture of the highest quality—beautiful designs and quality materials combined with expert craftsmanship. Last week, Moosehead closed its doors. More than 120 skilled workers have lost their jobs. A traditional Maine business, built from the ground up by a Maine family, is gone.

Why are American manufacturing jobs disappearing? Three years ago, the National Association of Manufacturers released a study showing that American manufacturers face ''structural costs'' that makes it 22 percent more expensive to manufacture goods here than overseas. Last fall, NAM updated this study, and found that these costs are escalating, with American manufacturers now facing a cost differential 31 percent higher than our nine leading trading partners.

While it would surprise no one that U.S. manufacturers face a higher cost-of-doing business than manufacturers in countries like China and Mexico, it would be a mistake to assume that wage rates alone explain this difference. They do not. In fact, the productivity of American workers is unrivaled, allowing American workers to receive more value, in wages, for the goods they produce. As the original NAM study states, if wages were the only factor, then ''U.S. manufacturers would be much more dominant . . . in the global markets than the current trade situation suggests.''

It is other ''structural costs'' that make it more expensive to manufacture goods in the U.S. relative to the

cost elsewhere. Indeed, the NAM study shows that most of the ''structural costs'' facing American manufacturers are higher than those facing manufacturers in industrialized nations like Japan, Germany, and France. This fact illustrates the critical impact these high ''structural costs'' have on our ability to compete.

In essence, these costs have the same effect as imposing a 31 percent additional tax on making goods here rather than overseas. To stay in business, American manufacturers must somehow do more with less, move operations overseas, or get out of manufacturing altogether. The end result is fewer jobs, a weaker economy, and a manufacturing sector in crisis.

I believe a healthy manufacturing base is essential to our Nation's future. Not only is manufacturing a key source of skilled, high-paying jobs, but also it is crucial to our economic and national security that we have the ability to manufacture the goods we need right here in this country. For all these reasons, I am proposing the ''Growing Our Manufacturing Employment Act.''

This bill would help to lessen the 31 percent cost differential that American manufacturers face by providing a variety of tax incentives. For example, a jobs tax credit would be provided to manufacturers that employ displaced workers who are receiving benefits under the Trade Adjustment Act, as well as those who are receiving benefits under the Alternative TAA program. That would help get those workers back to work. In Maine alone over 4,700 workers have been deemed eligible for benefits under TAA since November of 2002, and nationally, the number is nearly 600,000.

The jobs credit I am proposing in this bill would only be available to manufacturers that increase their employment level. The availability of this credit would provide a powerful incentive to hire workers who are receiving benefits because they are displaced.

This bill is designed to ensure that only companies that are helping to build America's manufacturing base obtain its benefits. It has both a carrot and a stick approach. Companies that move jobs offshore will see their benefits under this proposal reduced, and companies that chose to ''invert'' their corporate structure to avoid U.S. taxes will not be eligible for this credit at all.

As important as it is to assist workers who are eligible for benefits under TAA and ATAA, however, this alone is not enough to address the crisis facing American manufacturers. That is why my bill also includes a 5-year extension of the research and development tax credit we passed last year. R&D is critical to our manufacturers, because it is the basis of the breakthroughs we need to keep our economy on the cutting edge. The credit also creates jobs—it can only be claimed on R&D performed in the United States, and 75 percent of each dollar claimed goes to cover salaries of employees engaged in R&D. But despite its importance, the R&D tax credit is scheduled to sunset at the end of this year. Extending this credit would be a powerful tool that will help manufacturers keep their operations in America, and help offset the cost disparity American manufacturers face.

I am hopeful that, working together on this and other proposals, we can take the important steps needed to strengthen American manufacturers, preserve our manufacturing capacity, and most of all, help ensure that hard-working Americans have the jobs they need and deserve.

By Mr. BURR (for himself, Mr. REED, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. DOLE, and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 593. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a grant program to provide supportive services in permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleague, Senator BURR, to introduce the Services for Ending Long-Term Homelessness Act (SELHA).

It is estimated that two to three million Americans experience a period of homelessness in a given year. While the majority of these individuals find themselves homeless for a brief period of time, a growing segment are experiencing prolonged periods of homelessness. Roughly 200,000 to 250,000 Americans fall under the category of chronically homeless.

In March 2003, former Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson issued a report that defined the issues and challenges facing the chronically homeless and developed a comprehensive approach to bringing the appropriate services and treatments to this population of individuals who typically fall outside of mainstream support programs.

Similarly, the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health recommended the development of a comprehensive plan to facilitate access to permanent supportive housing for individuals and families who are chronically homeless. However, affordable housing, alone, is not enough for many chronically homeless to achieve stability. This population also needs flexible, mobile, and individualized support services to sustain them in housing.

The legislation we are introducing today is critical to the development and implementation of more effective strategies to combat chronic homelessness through improved service delivery and coordination across Federal agencies serving this population. It directs the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to coordinate their efforts not only with the Department of Housing and Urban Development, but with other Federal departments as well as with various agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services that provide supportive services.

Mr. President, SELHA is an important bipartisan measure designed to help improve coordination and ensure access to the range of supportive services that the growing number of chronically homeless Americans need to get back on their feet. Our bill brings together permanent supportive housing and services, the essential tools to enable these individuals to begin to take the steps necessary to become productive and active members of our communities again.

I look forward to working with my colleagues toward expeditious passage of this legislation.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. SANDERS, and Ms. MIKULSKI):

S. 594. A bill to limit the use, sale, and transfer of cluster munitions; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise with Senator LEAHY, Senator SANDERS, and Senator MIKULSKI to introduce legislation to address the continuing threat posed by cluster bombs to innocent civilians around the world.

Our legislation places common sense restrictions on the use of cluster bombs. It prevents any funds from being spent to use, sell or transfer cluster munitions: that have a failure rate of more than one percent; unless the rules of engagement or the agreement applicable to the sale or transfer of such cluster munitions specify that: the cluster munitions will only be used against clearly defined military targets and; will not be used where civilians are known to be present or in areas normally inhabited by civilians.

The bill also requires the President to submit a report to the appropriate Congressional committees on the plan, including estimated costs, by either the United States Government or the government to which U.S. cluster bombs are sold or transferred to clean up unexploded cluster bombs.

Finally, the bill includes a national security waiver that allows the President to waive the prohibition on the use, sale, or transfer of cluster bombs with a failure rate of more than one percent, if he determines it is vital to protect the security of the United States.

The human death toll and injury from these weapons are felt everyday. Innocent children think they are picking up a play toy in the field and suddenly their arm is blown off.

Last November, the International Committee for the Red Cross called for a ban on the use of cluster bombs in highly populated areas. They joined other leading organizations who have also decried the indiscriminate use of these weapons: Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the Friends Committee on National Legislation,

Handicap International, and Landmine Action.

Several countries, including Belgium, Germany, and Norway have either instituted a ban or a moratorium on the use and procurement of cluster bombs. More than 30 countries are actively calling for increased international controls on the weapon.

And next week, Norway will host an international conference to explore the possibility of a international treaty to ban certain types of cluster munitions and provide support for the victims of the weapons.

We need to adjust our policies for their use and can do so easily.

Every year, hundreds of civilians are killed and many more are injured due to unexploded cluster bombs.

From the fields of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, through the streets of Kosovo and Iraq, to the arid hills of Afghanistan and the playgrounds of Lebanon, these lethal relics of war continue to cripple life, hope, and peace.

Cluster munitions are large bombs, rockets, or artillery shells that contain up to hundreds of small submunitions, or individual ''bomblets.''

They are intended for attacking enemy troop formations and armor covering over a half mile radius.

Yet, in practice, they pose a real threat to the safety of civilians when used in populated areas because they leave hundreds of unexploded bombs over a very large area and they are often inaccurate.

The non-profit group Handicap International studied the effects of cluster bombs in 24 countries and regions, including Afghanistan, Chechnya, Laos, and Lebanon.

Its report found that civilians make up 98 percent of those killed or injured by cluster bombs. 27 percent of the casualties are children.

As the report shows, cluster bombs end up in streets and cities where men and women go to work and do their shopping.

They end up in groves of trees and fields where children play.

They end up in homes where families live.

In some cases, up to 40 percent of cluster bombs fail to explode, posing a particular danger to civilians long after the conflict has ended.

This is particularly and sadly true of children because bomblets are no bigger than a D battery and in some cases resemble a tennis ball.

Children, outside with their friends and relatives, come across these cluster bombs, pick them up because they look a ball, and start playing with them.

A terrible result often follows as these stories demonstrate.

On March 25, 2003 Abdallah Yaqoob was sleeping in his bed in his family's home in Basra, Iraq when he was hit by shrapnel from a cluster munition strike that hit his neighborhood.

He lost his arm, and his abdomen was severely injured. Abdallah was hit by British L20A1/M85 munition.

Falah Hassan, 13, was injured by an unexploded ground-launched submunition in Iraq on March 26, 2003.

The explosion severed his right hand and spread shrapnel through his body. He lost his left index finger and soft tissue in his lower limbs. Source: Bonnie Docherty/Human Rights Watch.

Hassan Hammade, a 13 year old Lebanese boy, lost four fingers and sustained injuries to his stomach and shoulder after he picked up an unexploded cluster bomb in front of an orange tree.

He said, ''I started playing with it and it blew up. I didn't know it was a cluster bomb—it just looked like a burned out piece of metal.'' Source: Christian Science Monitor.

All the children are too scared to go out now, we just play on the main roads or in our homes.

These unexploded cluster bombs become, in essence, de facto landmines.

Instead of targeting troop formations and enemy armor, unexploded bomblets target innocent civilians, seriously maiming or killing their victims.

This runs counter to our values and counter to the laws of war.

Make no mistake, the impact of unexploded cluster bombs on civilian populations has been devastating.

In Laos alone there are between 9 and 27 million unexploded cluster bombs, leftovers from U.S. bombing campaigns in the 1960s and 1970s. Approximately 11,000 people, 30 percent of them children, have been killed or injured since the war ended. Source: International Committee for the Red Cross.

In the first Gulf War, 61,000 cluster bombs were used containing 20 million bomblets. Since 1991, unexploded bomblets have killed 1,600 innocent men, women, and children and injured more than 2,500.

In Afghanistan in 2001, 1,228 cluster bombs with 248,056 bomblets were used. Between October 2001 and November 2002, 127 civilians were killed by them, 70 percent of them under the age of 18.

In Iraq in 2003, 13,000 cluster bombs with nearly 2 million bomblets were used. Combining the first and second Gulf Wars, the total number of unexploded bomblets in the region is approximately 1.2 million.

An estimated 1,220 Kuwaitis and 400 Iraqi civilians have been killed since 1991. Source: Human Rights Watch.

What gives rise, in part, to my bill are recent developments in Lebanon over alleged use of cluster bombs by Israel.

It is estimated that Israel dropped 4 million bomblets in southern Lebanon and 1 million of these bomblets failed to explode.

As Lebanese children and families have returned to their homes and begin to rebuild, they have been exposed to the danger of these unexploded bomblets lying in the rubble.

22 people, including six children have been killed and 133, including 47 children, injured.

One United Nations official estimates that 40 percent of the cluster bombs launched by Israel in Southern Lebanon failed to explode.

So far, more than 58,000 unexploded bomblets in Lebanon have been destroyed but it will take 12 to 15 months to complete the effort. Source: United Nations humanitarian coordinator for Lebanon.

Looking at these figures it is clear that several countries are awash with unexploded bomblets.

The number is indeed staggering and the consequences are real.

Each death that results from an unexploded American bomblet weakens American diplomacy and American values.

How are we supposed to win the hearts and minds of civilians in these countries when we leave behind such deadly weapons that indiscriminately kill boys and girls?

How are we supposed to speed up reconstruction efforts—building homes, schools, hospitals, clinics, and ensuring electricity and water supplies—when populated areas are littered with these bombs?

Simply put, unexploded cluster bombs fuel anger and resentment and make security, stabilization, and reconstruction efforts that much harder.

And it is not just a humanitarian problem, it is a military problem.

By showering targets with cluster bombs, we ensure that our troops will face thousands of unexploded bomblets as they move forward.

This will force them to change course and slow the mission.

During the Iraq war, U.S. troops would fire six rockets containing 4,000 bomblets to eliminate one artillery piece in a civilian neighborhood. With a 16 percent dud rate, approximately 640 duds were left behind. Source: Human Rights Watch.

As an August 2003 Wall Street Journal article noted: ''Unexploded bomblets render significant swaths of battlefield off-limits to advancing U.S. troops.''

In fact, during the first Gulf War, unexploded cluster munitions killed 22 U.S. troops—6 percent of total U.S. fatalities—and injured 58.

Former Secretary of Defense William Cohen recognized the threat cluster bombs posed to civilians and U.S. troops alike and issued a memorandum which became known as the Cohen Policy.

It stated that beginning in fiscal year 2005, all new cluster bomb would have a failure rate of less than one percent.

This was an important step forward but we must remember that we still have 5.5 million cluster bombs in our arsenals containing 728.5 million bomblets. That is, we are still prepared to use an enormous amount of cluster bombs that have significant failure rates. That is unacceptable.

Let me be clear. While this legislation prohibits the sale, use, or transfer of cluster bombs with a failure rate of more than one percent, it does include a national security waiver to allow the President to waive the restriction.

Instead of exercising the waiver, I would hope that administration would work with Congress to extend the Cohen Policy to the entire U.S. cluster bomb arsenal.

During the 1990s, a comprehensive pact was forged to protect civilians from land mines worldwide. The United States and the international community have since spent millions to remove mines in post-conflict regions.

There is no question there should be a similar program for cluster bombs.

Simply put, this legislation will save lives—civilians and soldiers alike—and will help save the reputation of the United States.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 594

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Cluster Munitions Civilian Protection Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. LIMITATION ON THE USE, SALE, OR TRANSFER OF CLUSTER MUNITIONS.

No funds appropriated or otherwise available to any Federal department or agency may be obligated or expended to use, sell, or transfer any cluster munitions unless—

(1) the submunitions of the cluster munitions have a 99 percent or higher functioning rate;

(2) the policy applicable to the use, or the agreement applicable to the sale or transfer, of such cluster munitions specifies that the cluster munitions will only be used against clearly defined military targets and will not be used where civilians are known to be present or in areas normally inhabited by civilians; and

(3) not later than 30 days after such cluster munitions are used, the President submits to the appropriate congressional committees a plan, including estimated costs, for cleaning up any such cluster munitions and submunitions which fail to explode and continue to pose a hazard to civilians that is prepared, as applicable—

(A) by the head of such Federal department or agency in the event such cluster munitions are to be used by the United States Government; or

(B) by the government of the country to which the United States Government sold or transferred such cluster munitions.

SEC. 3. PRESIDENTIAL WAIVER.

The President may waive the requirement under section 2(1) if, prior to the use, sale, or transfer of cluster munitions, the President—

(1) certifies that it is vital to protect the security of the United States; and

(2) not later than 30 days after making such certification, submits to the appropriate congressional committees a report, in classified form if necessary, describing in detail—

(A) the steps that will be taken to protect civilians; and

(B) the failure rate of the cluster munitions that will be used, sold, or transferred and whether such munitions are fitted with self-destruct or self-neutralization devices.

SEC. 4. APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.

In this Act, the term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am very pleased to cosponsor this legislation on cluster munitions with my friend from California, Senator FEINSTEIN. I commend her for the determination she has shown to prevent future harm to innocent people from these weapons.

The problem of cluster munitions, which overwhelmingly maim and kill civilians, has been known for many years. Perhaps the most egregious example is Laos, where millions of these tiny explosives were dropped by United States military aircraft during the Vietnam war. Over three decades later they continue to cause horrific casualties among local villagers and unsuspecting children.

I have urged the Pentagon to address this problem for nearly a decade.

While they have acknowledged the problem, they have not yet taken sufficient steps to solve it. We used large numbers of cluster munitions in the invasion of Iraq, including in densely inhabited, urban areas, and many civilians paid and continue to pay a terrible price.

Israel used these weapons extensively in Lebanon, including cluster munitions supplied by the United States, and again it has been civilians who have suffered disproportionately.

Cluster munitions, like any weapon, have military utility. They can be effective against armor or other military infrastructure. But they are, in effect, indiscriminate, because they are scattered by the thousands over wide areas.

Many of them—between 1 and 40 percent depending on the type and the condition of the terrain—fail to explode on contact and remain on the surface of the ground as hazardous duds indefinitely, no different from landmines.

The duds are exploded by whoever comes into contact with them. Often it is a child who thinks it is a toy. The consequences are disastrous—lifelong disfigurement and disability, or death.

No one suggests that it is possible to completely avoid civilian casualties in war. Innocent casualties are an inevitable, tragic consequence of all wars. But this legislation should not be necessary. Weapons that are so disproportionately hazardous to civilians should of course be subject to strict controls on their use.

The Feinstein-Leahy bill does not prohibit the use or export of cluster munitions. Rather, it would set a standard for reliability that is the same as what the Pentagon now requires for new procurements of these weapons.

The President may waive this requirement if he certifies that doing so is vital to protect the security of the United States, and he submits a report describing the steps that will be taken to protect civilians and the failure rate of the cluster munitions to be used or sold.

Our bill, which is not aimed at any particular country because this is a global problem, would also require that cluster munitions be used only against military targets and not where civilians are known to be present or in areas normally inhabited by civilians.

This is a moral issue and it is an issue of our own self-interest. Using or selling weapons that are so indiscriminate in their effect without strict controls on their use is immoral. It is immoral.

Anyone who has seen the horrific consequences of children with an arm or a leg blown off, or a part of their face, or their lifeless body cut to pieces by shrapnel, knows that.

It is also contrary to our own interest to be using or selling weapons which cause such appalling casualties of people who are not the enemy. It fuels anger and resentment we can ill afford among the very people whose support we need.

Again, I am pleased to join with the Senator from California. This is a thoughtful, much needed response to a serious humanitarian problem.

It is also timely because other governments, following the leadership of Norway, Austria and others, are meeting in Oslo later this month to begin discussions on an international treaty to curtail the use and export of cluster munitions that pose unacceptable risks to civilians.

The United States should play a visible, constructive role in those negotiations and it is our hope that this legislation will contribute to that process.

By Mr. LAUTENBERG (for himself, Mrs. BOXER, and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. 595. A bill to amend the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act of 1986 to strike a provision relating to modifications in reporting frequency; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce legislation that would preserve the public's right to know about toxic chemical releases and waste management where they live.

The legislation would overturn the Environmental Protection Agency's recent action to undermine the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) program—which I helped create in 1986—by allowing facilities that release up to 2,000 pounds of a toxic chemical to simply provide notice of a chemical's presence at the facility, rather than disclose the actual amounts released to the land, air, and water. The 2,000 pounds standard represents a four-fold increase of the current reporting threshold. EPA finalized another change to the TRI program that will reduce the information available to the public regarding the waste management of some of the most toxic chemicals that accumulate

in the environment, including lead and mercury.

These changes would eliminate detailed reporting for one or more chemicals at thousands of facilities in communities around the country, including hundreds of facilities in New Jersey, and could eliminate entirely the disclosure of the releases of more than a dozen potentially dangerous chemicals. According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), citizens living in 75 U.S. counties could have no numerical TRI information about local toxic pollution under the changes made by EPA. Furthermore, GAO estimates that 3,565 facilities—including 101 in New Jersey—would no longer have to report any quantitative information about their chemical releases and waste management practices to the TRI.

The EPA had also proposed to require reports on chemical emissions only every other year, instead of the current annual requirement. Under that plan, communities would have no knowledge of what chemicals have been released into their neighborhoods, or how those wastes were otherwise managed every other year. Additionally, companies would have an incentive to concentrate their most egregious releases of toxic chemicals into the environment in years which are not reported. EPA withdrew this particular part of their proposal, but there is no guarantee that they will not pursue this avenue in the future.

I strongly oppose all of these rule changes; and the legislation I am introducing will overturn the changes EPA has made, and prevent them from making the third change that they considered.

I firmly believe that it is unacceptable for the EPA to reduce the amount of information available to the public about chemicals—including mercury, lead benzene, chromium, and other carcinogens—stored nearby or released into their community. When Congress passed the original Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act in 1986, as a response to the 1984 Union Carbide chemical disaster in Bhopal, India, some accountability was finally established in the chemical industry. And now, the EPA has weakened the rules and reduced the amount of information available to the public on these critical issues. For instance, in my home State of New Jersey, a chemical facility that released 2,000 pounds of arsenic via air emissions in 2003 would no longer be required to disclose this pollution to the general public. Fourteen facilities that released a combined 8,600 pounds of carcinogenic styrene would no longer have to report these emissions in detail.

While the EPA touts the benefits of its proposal as ''burden reduction'' for industry, I strongly believe that the benefit of annual, detailed reporting vastly outweighs any reduction in burden that will be provided to industry. In fact, according to GAO's estimates, the average cost savings for facilities no longer required to report their release of toxic chemicals or waste management practices would be approximately $2.46 per day.

There are constructive ways to improve the TRI program, and lessen the burdens on industry, without reducing the amount of information available to the public. These include improving the system for electronic reporting, and offering technical assistance to help businesses comply with the requirements.

The bill I introduce today, with Senator BOXER and Senator MENENDEZ as original co-sponsors, would codify the previous requirement that facilities with chemical releases of more than 500 pounds of any standard TRI chemical must disclose the details of their releases. Releases in amounts less than 500 pounds could continue to use the less detailed reporting form. Second, it would codify the current prohibition on using the less detailed form for the most persistent chemicals, including lead and mercury—those the EPA has classified as ''chemicals of special concern.'' Finally, it would prevent EPA from making the frequency of reporting less than every year.

I would also like to thank my Congressional colleagues in the House of Representatives, FRANK PALLONE of New Jersey, and HILDA SOLIS of California, with whom I have been pleased to work on this issue. Representatives PALLONE and SOLIS are introducing the companion of this bill in the House; I now look forward to continuing to work with them and my colleagues in the Senate to ensure its passage.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 595

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Toxic Right-to-Know Protection Act''.

SEC. 2. MODIFICATIONS IN REPORTING FREQUENCY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 313 of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act of 1986 (42 U.S.C. 11023) is amended—

(1) by striking subsection (i); and

(2) by redesignating subsections (j) through (l) as subsections (i) through (k), respectively.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Sections 322(h)(2) and 326(a)(1)(B)(iv) of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act of 1986 (42 U.S.C. 11042(h)(2), 11046(a)(1)(B)(iv)) are amended by striking ''313(j)'' each place it appears and inserting ''313(i)''.

SEC. 3. REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO TOXICS RELEASE INVENTORY.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law—

(1) the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (referred to in this section as the ''Administrator'') shall establish the eligibility threshold regarding the use of a form A certification statement under the Toxics Release Inventory Program established under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act of 1986 (42 U.S.C. 11001 et seq.) at not greater than 500 pounds for nonpersistent bioaccumulative and toxic chemicals; and

(2) the use of a form A certification statement described in paragraph (1), or any equivalent successor to the statement, shall be prohibited with respect to any chemical identified by the Administrator as a chemical of special concern under section 372.28 of title 40, Code of Federal Regulations (or a successor regulation).

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. SNOWE, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. KYL, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. DODD, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. WARNER, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. THOMAS, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. BURR, Mr. BROWNBACK, and Mr. SUNUNU):

S. 597. A bill to extend the special postage stamp for breast cancer research for 2 years; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President. I rise today with Senator HUTCHISON to introduce legislation to reauthorize the extraordinarily successful Breast Cancer Research Stamp for two additional years.

Without Congressional action, this important stamp will expire on December 31 of this year.

This stamp deserves to be extended as it has proven to be highly effective.

Since 1998, over 747 million breast cancer research stamps have been sold—raising $53.76 million for breast cancer research.

California continues to be one of the leading contributors, purchasing over 47 million stamps with $3.6 million going to research—almost 15 percent of the nationwide contribution.

Furthermore, in September 2005, the General Accounting Office (GAO) released a report showing that the Breast Cancer Research Stamp has been a success and an effective fund-raiser in the effort to increase funds to fight the disease.

The report also indicated that ''grants funded by NIH and DOD using Breast Cancer Research Stamp proceeds have produced significant findings in breast cancer research.''

The National Institutes for Health and the Department of Defense have received approximately $36.7 million and $15.7 million, respectively, putting these research dollars to good use by funding innovative advances in breast cancer research.

For example, a 2002 Department of Defense Concept Award enabled researchers to develop Medical Hyperspectral Imaging (MHSI) technology. This method of imaging helps surgeons determine if they have removed all cancerous tissue during breast cancer surgery.

Thanks to breakthroughs in cancer research, more and more people are becoming cancer survivors rather than cancer victims. Every dollar we continue to raise will help save lives.

One cannot calculate in dollars and cents how the stamp has focused public awareness on this terrible disease and the need for additional research funding.

There is still so much more to do because this disease has far reaching effects on our nation: breast cancer is the second most commonly diagnosed cancer among women after skin cancer. More than three million women are living with breast cancer in the U.S. today, one million of who have yet to be diagnosed. Though much less common, over 1,700 men were diagnosed with breast cancer last year.

This legislations would: extend the authorization of the Breast Cancer Research stamp for two additional years—until December 31, 2009; allow the stamp to continue to have a surcharge of up to 25 percent above the value of a first-class stamp with the surplus revenues going to breast cancer research; not affect any other semi-postal proposals under consideration by the U.S. Postal Service.

I urge my colleagues to join me and Senator HUTCHISON in passing this important legislation to extend the Breast Cancer Research Stamp for another two years.

Until a cure is found, the money from the sale of this unique postal stamp will continue to focus public awareness on this devastating disease and provide hope to breast cancer survivors.

We ask for unanimous consent that the text of the legislation directly follow this statement in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 597

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. 2-YEAR EXTENSION OF POSTAGE STAMP FOR BREAST CANCER RESEARCH.

Section 414(h) of title 39, United States Code, is amended by striking ''2007'' and inserting ''2009''.

By Mr. KERRY (for himself, Ms. SNOWE, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. VITTER, and Mr. LIEBERMAN):

S. 598. A bill to require reporting regarding the disaster loan program of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the ''Small Business Disaster Loan Reporting Act of 2007,'' which will require the Small Business Administration to update its disaster response plan and to submit detailed disaster loan reports to the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee. This bill is a bipartisan effort, and I thank Ranking Member SNOWE as well as Senators LANDRIEU, VITTER, and LIEBERMAN for their efforts in bringing this bill together.

In the months since Hurricane Katrina, Rita and Wilma, I have worked with other members of the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship to improve the SBA's disaster loan program. We have introduced numerous drafts of this legislation, and each time our reform proposals have been blocked by the administration. While we continue to work toward passing this comprehensive reforms bill, we need to address some of the provisions that will assist Congress in assessing how the SBA's disaster loan program is operating in the present.

SBA Administrator Steve Preston appeared before the House Committee on Small Business this morning and admitted that although the SBA has implemented widespread reforms in its operational approach to processing and disbursing disaster loans, there is no plan on paper to speak of that can be provided to Congress. To provide disaster victims with a quick and effective response in the aftermath of future disasters, we must continue to evaluate the SBA's programs, building upon successes and making improvements when we identify agency flaws. It is imperative that the SBA review its disaster response plan in preparation for the 2007 hurricane season, and this bill requires the SBA to do so and to submit its changes to our Committee and the House Small Business Committee for review.

Last February, while thousands of Gulf Coast hurricane victims sat waiting for promised disaster relief to arrive, the SBA nearly ran out of money twice for its Disaster Assistance program. It required two emergency acts of Congress to keep the program running. Despite knowing about these funding issues well in advance, the SBA chose not to disclose the problem to its authorizing Committee until just before the issue came to a head. With greater coordination and transparency, Congress can work with the SBA to ensure that this essential disaster response program does not run the risk of shutting down. This bill requires the SBA to provide the Committee with detailed monthly and daily reports to update us on the program's lending volumes as well as funding levels. It also requires the SBA to notify its oversight committees when it will be seeking supplemental funding. Making the disaster loan program transparent for our review is crucial in creating a system that provides timely and valuable assistance to victims of disasters, and this legislation will help to do that.

The SBA's failure to act quickly and effectively in response to the devastation of the 2005 hurricanes was unacceptable, but as we have learned from the continuing devastation in those areas, long-term disaster assistance for our small businesses also requires attention to federal procurement requirements. Small businesses need to play a leading role in rebuilding these areas. This legislation requires the SBA to report to Congress the number of contracts awarded to small businesses following disaster declarations, because continued assistance and government contracts for small businesses in these areas help to empower entrepreneurs to make their homes and cities vibrant once again.

This bill will improve the SBA disaster loan program in allowing better congressional oversight to ensure the agency is giving entrepreneurs the tools they need to make a difference in their communities after a disaster.

By Ms. SNOWE (for herself, Ms. LANDRIEU, and Mr. VITTER):

S. 599. A bill to improve the disaster loan program of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce with Senator LANDRIEU and Senator VITTER the ''Private Disaster Loans Act of 2007.'' This legislation streamlines the current disaster loan program and allows private banks to make loans to disaster victims.

As ranking member of the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I am committed to providing the Small Business Administration, SBA, with the tools necessary to help small businesses and homeowners recover in the wake of a disaster. With the SBA at the forefront of disaster relief efforts, Congress must support the agency to ensure that this country's 25 million small businesses have a resource they can depend on when disaster strikes. It is essential that we create a program to utilize existing infrastructure and provide immediate, much-needed aid to disaster victims.

I have made reforming and improving the disaster loan program a top priority. The legislation I am introducing today, the Private Disaster Loans Act of 2007, is designed to remedy some of the problems that prevented or delayed disaster victims from receiving immediate and necessary funding following the 2005 gulf coast hurricanes. Homeowners and businesses are the bedrock of communities across this Nation, and keeping them healthy, happy, and economically viable will enhance and improve the disaster recovery process. My bill is an important step in the right direction.

The creation of private disaster loan program will give the SBA the opportunity to work with private banks to improve the lending process in the wake of another devastating disaster, as in the case of September 11 or the 2005 gulf coast hurricanes. Because these private disaster loans will be made by qualified private lenders, borrowers will have an efficient alternative for accessing disaster assistance instead of depending solely on the SBA.

Under my proposal, the maximum PDL loan size will be $2 million, with a

maximum SBA guaranty of 85 percent, no matter the size of the loan. The maximum term will be 25 years if collateral is involved; otherwise, the maximum term for uncollateralized loans will be 15 years. These loans can be used for any purposes that are authorized under the standard SBA disaster loan program.

There will be no SBA guaranty fee for PDLs. In addition, there will be a loan origination fee paid to lenders by the SBA using authorized funds appropriated for the standard disaster loan program.

The size standard used to determine a borrower's eligibility for the PDL program will be the standard currently used in the 7(a) or 504 loan program. This will provide greater flexibility to the lenders and foster more incentive for use of the program.

For documenting each loan, lenders would be allowed to use their own documents, subject to SBA approval, and would also be permitted to create an internet, or electronic, application process.

As we learned all too well after the 2005 gulf coast hurricanes, it is critical for our Government agencies to be as prepared as possible when disaster strikes. As we move forward during the 110th Congress, I look forward to working with my colleagues in Congress to get this vital legislation passed, and to support the SBA in its continuing mission to assist the country's small business community.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 599

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Private Disaster Loans Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. PRIVATE DISASTER LOANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 7 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (c) and (d) as subsections (d) and (e), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after subsection (b) the following:

''(c) PRIVATE DISASTER LOANS.—

''(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection—

''(A) the term 'disaster area' means a county, parish, or similar unit of general local government in which a disaster was declared under subsection (b);

''(B) the term 'eligible small business concern' means a business concern that is—

''(i) a small business concern, as defined in this Act; or

''(ii) a small business concern, as defined in section 103 of the Small Business Investment Act of 1958; and

''(C) the term 'qualified private lender' means any privately-owned bank or other lending institution that the Administrator determines meets the criteria established under paragraph (9).

''(2) AUTHORIZATION.—The Administrator may guarantee timely payment of principal and interest, as scheduled on any loan issued by a qualified private lender to an eligible small business concern located in a disaster area.

''(3) USE OF LOANS.—A loan guaranteed by the Administrator under this subsection may be used for any purpose authorized under subsection (b).

''(4) ONLINE APPLICATIONS.—

''(A) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Administrator may establish, directly or through an agreement with another entity, an online application process for loans guaranteed under this subsection.

''(B) OTHER FEDERAL ASSISTANCE.—The Administrator may coordinate with the head of any other appropriate Federal agency so that any application submitted through an online application process established under this paragraph may be considered for any other Federal assistance program for disaster relief.

''(C) CONSULTATION.—In establishing an online application process under this paragraph, the Administrator shall consult with appropriate persons from the public and private sectors, including private lenders.

''(5) MAXIMUM AMOUNTS.—

''(A) GUARANTEE PERCENTAGE.—The Administrator may guarantee not more than 85 percent of a loan under this subsection.

''(B) LOAN AMOUNTS.—The maximum amount of a loan guaranteed under this subsection shall be $2,000,000.

''(6) LOAN TERM.—The longest term of a loan for a loan guaranteed under this subsection shall be—

''(A) 15 years for any loan that is issued without collateral; and

''(B) 25 years for any loan that is issued with collateral.

''(7) FEES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator may not collect a guarantee fee under this subsection.

''(B) ORIGINATION FEE.—The Administrator may pay a qualified private lender an origination fee for a loan guaranteed under this subsection in an amount agreed upon in advance between the qualified private lender and the Administrator.

''(8) DOCUMENTATION.—A qualified private lender may use its own loan documentation for a loan guaranteed by the Administrator, to the extent authorized by the Administrator. The ability of a lender to use its own loan documentation for a loan offered under this subsection shall not be considered part of the criteria for becoming a qualified private lender under the regulations promulgated under paragraph (9).

''(9) IMPLEMENTATION REGULATIONS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the Private Disaster Loans Act of 2007, the Administrator shall issue final regulations establishing permanent criteria for qualified private lenders.

''(B) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of the Private Disaster Loans Act of 2007, the Administrator shall submit a report on the progress of the regulations required by subparagraph (A) to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate and the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives.

''(10) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Amounts necessary to carry out this subsection shall be made available from amounts appropriated to the Administration under subsection (b).

''(B) AUTHORITY TO REDUCE INTEREST RATES.—Funds appropriated to the Administration to carry out this subsection, may be used by the Administrator, to the extent available, to reduce the applicable rate of interest for a loan guaranteed under this subsection by not more than 3 percentage points.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to disasters declared under section 7(b)(2) of the Small Business Act (631 U.S.C. 636(b)(2)) before, on, or after the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.

The Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 631 et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 4(c)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''7(c)(2)'' and inserting ''7(d)(2)''; and

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by striking ''7(c)(2)'' and inserting ''7(d)(2)''; and

(ii) by striking ''7(e),''; and

(2) in section 7(b), in the undesignated matter following paragraph (3)—

(A) by striking ''That the provisions of paragraph (1) of subsection (c)'' and inserting ''That the provisions of paragraph (1) of subsection (d)''; and

(B) by striking ''Notwithstanding the provisions of any other law the interest rate on the Administration's share of any loan made under subsection (b) except as provided in subsection (c),'' and inserting ''Notwithstanding any other provision of law, and except as provided in subsection (d), the interest rate on the Administration's share of any loan made under subsection (b)''.

By Mr. SMITH (for himself, Mr. DODD, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. VITTER, and Mr. BINGAMAN):

S. 600. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish the School-Based Health Clinic program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, today, I am honored to introduce the School Based Health Clinic Act of 2007. I developed this legislation in partnership with parents and healthcare advocates, all of whom are affiliated with Oregon's vibrant school based health center network. This important legislation will create a federal authorization to support the work of school based health centers (SBHCs) across the Nation. I am pleased to be joined by my colleagues, Senators DODD, SNOWE, COLLINS, KENNEDY, VITTER and BINGAMAN.

Currently, there are approximately 1700 SBHCs operating across the country, and Oregon is home to 44 of them. These special health clinics—with the input of parents, school personnel, healthcare providers and other youth advocate—provide vital primary and mental healthcare services to all children, regardless of their income or insurance status. Communities around the country are beginning to realize the enormous benefits of SBHCs, not only to the health of children, but to the broader healthcare system. Study after study show that SBHCs can help curtail inappropriate emergency room use, reduce Medicaid expenditures and prevent costly hospitalizations. Findings such as these have convinced me that Congress should be supporting programs like SBHCs that provide convenient points of access to basic healthcare services.

Along with Community Health Centers, SBHCs serve as an invaluable

component of the Nation's healthcare safety net. Sadly, more than nine million children in the U.S. still lack any form of health insurance coverage. As a consequence, they face enormous challenges in accessing primary, preventive and mental health services. Even those children who are fortunate to have consistent health coverage face access barriers, which may result in increased absences or undiagnosed health conditions. SBHCs help tear down those barriers so that all children—regardless of insurance or socioeconomic status—have access to a comprehensive range of health services.

What truly sets SBHCs apart is their unique model of delivering care. Working with parents, school personnel and other community based programs, they provide direct care in a manner that helps foster the development of positive behaviors and long-term healthy lifestyles. They also play an important role in helping students achieve their full academic potential. An Oregon survey found that 75 percent of SBHC users would have missed one or more classes if they had to seek treatment in a traditional care setting. Clearly, SBHCs play a vital role not only in keeping children healthy, but in supporting their long-term educational success. We cannot expect children to excel in the classroom if they are forced to miss school to seek treatment from a traditional healthcare provider.

Despite the enormous value they add to our nation's educational and healthcare systems, SBHCs receive little to no federal support. Most of their funding comes from state and local resources, patient revenue and private contributions. However, as budgets tighten and deficits grow larger, SBHCs find themselves competing alongside other programs for limited public health dollars. Many have been forced to scale back services or close altogether.

Some SBHCs have been fortunate to receive limited support through the Federal Community Health Center (CHC) program, if they are affiliated with or operated by a center. While this relationship has proven beneficial, over time it has placed an increasing demand on CHC's source of revenue and has limited the ability of SBHCs to cultivate the resources needed to expand into other vulnerable and underserved areas.

To realize their full potential, the Federal Government needs to establish a separate authorization for SBHCs. Even a small amount of Federal support can serve as much needed seed money to attract funding from other sources. In Oregon, centers have been able to generate as much as $3 to $4 dollars in funding from other public and private sources with every $1 of State general revenue. This clearly underscores the value of the SBHC-model of service delivery to the government. My legislation is asking for only a $50 million annual appropriation to support the work of SBHCs—an investment that could lead to a return many times over.

As Congress prepares to consider the reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program this year, my colleagues and I have turned our attention to finding innovative and effective ways we can support the health and well-being of our Nation's children. I am hopeful that along with that important piece of legislation, we also can generate the support to pass the School Based Health Clinics Establishment Act. I believe we must support a variety of means of healthcare access so that all children are able to receive the care they need to stay healthy and well-prepared to excel in their educational pursuits.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, today, Senator SMITH and I are introducing the School-Based Health Clinic Establishment Act of 2007. This legislation will assist in the operation of school-based health clinics (SBHCs) which provide comprehensive and accessible primary health care services to medically underserved youth.

Why is this legislation needed? Let's look at the facts. We have more than eight million children in this country who have no health insurance. According to recent data released by the Department of Health and Human Services, between 2003–2005, the percentage of high school students who reported smoking cigarettes was around 23 percent. In 2005, 30 percent of students in grades 11–12 reported binge drinking, which is five or more alcoholic drinks in a row. Twenty-two percent of students in grades 11 and 12 reported using marijuana in the past month.

In addition, the same Department of Health and Human Services report found that the United States spends more on health per capita than any other country. The report, ''Health, United States 2006,'' specifically stated that ''much of this spending is for care that controls or reduces the impact of chronic diseases and conditions affecting an aging population.'' Fewer dollars are spent on preventative care for our children.

Another fact I would like to bring to your attention is one found in a document released today by the United Nations Children's Fund. The U.N. Children's Fund report found that the United States ranks last in child health and safety, with the highest rates of relative child poverty and teenage obesity.''

The points I have just made should not only shock us, but should be a wake-up call to each member of this body and to the American people that we need to take action and we need to take it now.

With the introduction of the School-Based Health Clinic Establishment Act of 2007, Senator SMITH and I are seeking to change the data I have outlined. School-based health clinics, where available, have a demonstrated record of improving the health care of our nation's youth. A study by Johns Hopkins University found that SBHCs reduced inappropriate emergency room use and increased primary care utilization, which resulted in fewer hospitalizations for those who used SBHCs. SBHCs also save money. For example, the Emory University School of Public Health attributed a reduction in Medicaid expenditures related to inpatient care and emergency department registration to the use of SBHCs.

In Connecticut, we have 73 school-based health clinics. The SBHCs have provided health care to many elementary, middle, and high school students who would not have access to care if SBHCs did not exist. The Connecticut clinics provide an array of services such as comprehensive physical and mental health assessments, dental care, asthma treatment, and conflict resolution.

The bill we are introducing today will help enable school-based health clinics to continue providing these much needed services. Although these clinics function totally in accordance with state laws and regulations, the federal government needs to provide funding so these clinics can continue to be a key component of our health care delivery system.

This year, we will be working on the reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). The program was created to provide health care to millions of children who were previously uninsured. SCHIP is an outstanding program. I believe the ''School-Based Health Clinic Establishment Act of 2007'' would be a good complement to SCHIP.

The School-Based Health Clinic Establishment Act of 2007 is an important step in making sure that the next time the United Nations Children's Fund issues their rankings on children's quality of life, that the United States is no longer listed in last place. I look forward to working with Sen. Smith and my colleagues to see that this legislation is not only passed by this body soon, but that it is signed into law.

By Mr. BAYH (for himself, Mr. COBURN, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. KERRY, Mr. CARPER, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. BROWN, Ms. STABENOW, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. KENNEDY):

S. 601. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to require broker reporting of customer's basis in securities transactions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. BAYH. Mr. President, today Senator TOM COBURN, Representatives RAHM EMANUEL and WALTER JONES and I, in the House of Representatives, are re-introducing bipartisan legislation to close the capital gains tax gap. The legislation, entitled the Simplification Through Additional Reporting Tax

(START) Act of 2007, will require brokerage houses and mutual fund companies to track and report cost basis information to their customers and the IRS. In the Senate, the legislation has 15 original co-sponsors: Senators COBURN, BIDEN, BROWN, CARPER, CLINTON, DURBIN, FEINSTEIN, KENNEDY, KERRY, LEAHY, LEVIN, LIEBERMAN, OBAMA, KLOBUCHAR, SCHUMER, and STABENOW. The House version has seven co-sponsors. The legislation is based upon a recommendation made by the National Taxpayer Advocate, the organization created as part of the 1998 IRS Restructuring and Reform Act whose explicit purpose is to make recommendations to Congress to simplify the tax code.

As you can see from the members that are supporting this proposal, addressing the issue of the tax gap is not a partisan issue. Taxpayers who pay the right amount each year should not be subsidizing those who don't. According to the National Taxpayer Advocate, Nina Olson, honest taxpayers are paying an additional $2700 in taxes to subsidize dishonest taxpayers.

It is also an issue of fairness. Middle-class Americans cannot underpay their taxes because their employers submit wage information reports, called W–2s, to the IRS. If a factory worker in Kokomo, Indiana underreports his income, the IRS is going to know about it because his employer sent his wage report to the IRS. By contrast, taxpayers who rely on stocks and bonds for their income are on the honor system to report their income accurately because the IRS receives virtually no information on what taxpayers paid for their investment. A $17 billion capital gains tax gap is ample proof that there are some taxpayers that are doing some Enron accounting when it comes to paying their capital gains taxes.

This is also an economic issue—we are failing to collect, at a minimum, $345 billion in taxes that are legally owed each year. In light of our economic challenges—a national debt approaching $9 trillion, the eve of the Baby Boomer retirement only a year away—Democrats and Republicans need to come together and address this issue as a first step toward solving our longer-term fiscal challenges. This bill is only a small part of the solution but hopefully this will pave the way for other practical solutions that not only close the tax gap but also simplify the tax code.

The START Act of 2007 requires brokerage houses and mutual fund companies to track and report the purchase price of a security, plus any adjustments, to their customers and the IRS. This simple change will allow taxpayers to have accurate information regarding their investments, saving them considerable time and effort when they file their taxes and have to figure out how much they owe each year in capital gains taxes. For the average taxpayer with capital gains, simply filling out the capital gains tax form adds 12 hours to the tax return filing process—more than a full work day. According to a recent GAO report, over one-third of taxpayers with capital gains or losses are not paying the right amount in taxes.

The problem involves people who are cheating the system and underpaying the amount of capital gains taxes that they owe, but also involves honest taxpayers who are simply overwhelmed by the complexity of the tax code and make mistakes. A principal reason for the complexity involved in paying capital gains taxes is the need to obtain what is called ''adjusted cost basis'' information, a technical term for the purchase price of an investment, plus any necessary changes. This bill closes the loophole that dishonest taxpayers are using, but also offers a hand to taxpayers who spend hours simply trying to fill out the capital gains portion of their tax return.

The bill will also help the IRS enforce the law and close the capital gains loophole. For the first time, the IRS will have the ability to see both sides of the picture, the purchase price and the sell price of a security. For decades, the IRS has only had half the picture. The IRS receives information about the price of a security when it is sold, but doesn't receive any information about the purchase price of the security.

This loophole has resulted in the Federal Government being short-changed by $17 billion per year in capital gains taxes owed but not paid. With the passage of this bill, the capital gains reporting loophole will be eliminated.

I first introduced this proposal in the 109th Congress and, unfortunately, no action was taken on the bill. However, over the course of the past year, this proposal gained significant momentum, in part due to work done by the non-partisan General Accountability Office (GAO) and the Joint Committee on Taxation. Both of these organizations evaluated this proposal and made a recommendation to Congress that it be adopted.

There has also been significant activity in the Congress. Last year alone, Congress held 7 hearings on the tax gap and Sen. COBURN's Homeland Security subcommittee held one of those hearings that specifically focused on this proposal. During that hearing, IRS Commissioner Mark Everson recommended this approach. The proposal also has support from non-profit taxpayer groups, such as the Citizens for Tax Justice.

In addition to the bipartisan support our bill enjoys in the House and Senate, last week President Bush included this proposal in his budget submission. With the introduction of the President's proposal, the Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association, the preeminent association representing the securities and bond industry, publicly stated that the proposal was ''very constructive.''

In conclusion, this should be an issue that honorable members from both sides of the aisle can agree needs to be addressed. Democrats and Republicans will fight endlessly about what tax rates should be, but I believe all members should agree on the principle that all taxpayers should pay what you owe. We should also all agree that we need to reduce our deficit, simplify the tax-filing process, and promote a fair and equitable tax system. The START Act of 2007 is intended to make progress on all of these goals. I hope it can start a civil conversation about ways to improve our tax system. I look forward to working with all interested parties to craft a workable proposal that provides some needed relief to our overburdened taxpayers.

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, I rise to speak in favor of a bill I am proud to introduce today with Senators BAYH and COBURN to help close the tax gap by improving the reporting of capital gains income. This bill requires brokerage firms and mutual fund companies to track and report the adjusted cost basis of their clients' stock, bond, and mutual fund investments.

This bill is a simple, commonsense solution to a serious problem. Many taxpayers have a hard enough time filing their taxes. One of the most complex parts of an individual's tax return is the schedule for capital gains income. And what makes capital gains particularly difficult is the challenge of figuring out the adjusted basis of a security that has been sold.

Many taxpayers lack the proper records or knowledge to calculate adjusted basis for a stock that has split or been exchanged as part of a company's merger or acquisition. And right now, the IRS does not have the ability to monitor the accuracy of taxpayer calculations. As a result, there is a clear risk of error or fraud. In some cases, taxpayers may end up paying too much in taxes. More often, they report too little income and thus pay too little in taxes.

In 2001, the IRS estimated that underreporting cost the Treasury $11 billion annually. Today the loss is even greater.

Because the IRS fails to collect these funds, the rest of us have to pay higher taxes than we should. Most people pay their taxes honestly and follow the law to the best of their ability. But a small number of tax frauds—who often owe great amounts of taxes—cheat the system. And it's hard now for the IRS to stop them.

This bill makes it easier to stop these cases of fraud and it helps reduce the amount of Federal tax dollars owed that the IRS fails to collect each year. Brokerage firms and mutual fund companies will be required to keep track of a taxpayer's cost basis and to report that information to the IRS. This will make it easier for honest taxpayers to calculate their taxable capital gain, and harder for dishonest taxpayers to lie about it. Based on information from

the Taxpayer Advocate, reporting to the IRS can improve compliance of capital gains reporting from an estimated 50 percent today to 90 percent.

Fortunately, this new reporting requirement will not pose an undue burden to the financial firms affected. First, the firms will have plenty of time to put the necessary systems in place since the reporting requirement will not take effect until 2009, and then will only apply to securities acquired starting in 2009. Second, technology has made tracking by financial firms simple and efficient. More than 80 percent of all retail accounts already subscribe to a national reporting service for transferring basis information at a nominal cost per account. Finally, in cases where it is impossible to track basis, the Treasury Secretary and the IRS may develop regulations to require alternative information.

It is estimated that $345 billion of Federal taxes goes uncollected each year. This bill doesn't solve that full problem, but it is a step in the right direction. It reduces the Federal deficit without raising taxes or cutting spending. It simplifies the tax filing process and reduces the chance of error or fraud. It applies what we know about the clear benefits of automatic reporting to the IRS—which is required now for wage income—to capital gains income as well.

This bill makes sense. It's good policy. And I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting it and in helping to improve our tax code.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 81—RECOGNIZING THE 45TH ANNIVERSARY OF JOHN HERSHEL GLENN, JR.'S HISTORIC ACHIEVEMENT IN BECOMING THE FIRST UNITED STATES ASTRONAUT TO ORBIT THE EARTH

Mr. BROWN (for himself and Mr. VOINOVICH) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 81

Whereas John Herschel Glenn, Jr. was born on July 18, 1921, in Cambridge, Ohio, and grew up in New Concord, a small college town a few miles from the larger city of Zanesville, Ohio;

Whereas John Glenn attended New Concord High School and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in engineering from Muskingum College, which also awarded him an honorary Doctor of Science degree in engineering;

Whereas John Glenn enlisted in the Naval Aviation Cadet Program shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor and was commissioned in the United States Marine Corps in 1943;

Whereas John Glenn served in combat in the South Pacific and also requested combat duty during the Korean conflict;

Whereas John Glenn was a dedicated military officer, flying 149 missions during 2 wars;

Whereas John Glenn received many honors for his military service, among them the Distinguished Flying Cross on 6 occasions, the Air Medal with 18 Clusters, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, the American Campaign Medal, the World War II Victory Medal, the China Service Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, and the Korean Service Medal;

Whereas John Glenn served several years as a test pilot on Navy and Marine Corps jet fighters and attack aircraft;

Whereas, as a test pilot, John Glenn set a transcontinental speed record in 1957 by completing the first flight to average supersonic speeds from Los Angeles to New York;

Whereas John Glenn was a pioneer in the realm of space exploration and was selected in 1959 as one of the original 7 astronauts in the United States space program, entering the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Project Mercury;

Whereas John Glenn was assigned to the NASA Space Task Group at Langley Research Center in Hampton, Virginia;

Whereas, in 1962, the Space Task Group was moved to Houston, Texas, and became part of the NASA Manned Spacecraft Center;

Whereas, on February 20, 1962, John Glenn piloted the Mercury-Atlas 6 ''Friendship 7'' spacecraft on the first manned orbital mission of the United States;

Whereas, after launching from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, John Glenn completed a 3-orbit mission around the planet, reaching an approximate maximum altitude of 162 statute miles and an approximate orbital velocity of 17,500 miles per hour;

Whereas John Glenn landed Friendship 7 approximately 5 hours later, 800 miles southeast of the Kennedy Space Center near Grand Turk Island;

Whereas, with that pioneering flight, John Glenn joined his colleagues Alan Shepard and Virgil Grissom in realizing the dream of space exploration and engaging the minds and imaginations of his and future generations in the vast potential of space exploration;

Whereas, after retiring from the space program, John Glenn continued his public service as a distinguished member of the Senate, in which he served for 24 years;

Whereas John Glenn has continued his public service through his work at the John Glenn Institute at Ohio State University, which was established to foster public involvement in the policy-making process, raise public awareness about key policy issues, and encourage continuous improvement in the management of public enterprise;

Whereas, in March 1999, Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley appointed John Glenn as Chair of the newly formed National Commission on Mathematics and Science Teaching for the 21st Century;

Whereas the Commission played a pivotal role in improving the quality of teaching in mathematics and science in the United States;

Whereas, in 1998, John Glenn returned to space after 36 years as a member of the crew of the space shuttle Discovery, serving as a payload specialist and as a subject for basic research on how weightlessness affects the body of an older person; and

Whereas, combined with his previous missions, John Glenn logged over 218 hours in space: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) honors the 45th anniversary of John Hershel Glenn, Jr.'s landmark mission piloting the first manned orbital mission of the United States; and

(2) recognizes the profound importance of John Glenn's achievement as a catalyst to space exploration and scientific advancement in the United States.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 14, 2007, at 3 p.m., in closed session to receive a briefing on Iranian activities in Iraq.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 14, 2007, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing on ''The Semiannual Monetary Policy Report to the Congress.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to hold a hearing during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 14, 2007, at 10 a.m., in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building. The purpose of the hearing is to evaluate overseas sweatshop abuses, their impact on U.S. workers, and the need for anti-sweatshop legislation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to hold a hearing during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 14, 2007, at 2:30 p.m., in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building, for an oversight hearing on the coast guard deepwater acquisition program.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet in executive session during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February, 14, 2007 at 9:30 a.m. in SD–430.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet to conduct a hearing on ''Judicial Security and Independence'' for Wednesday, February 14, 2007 at 10 a.m. in Hart Senate Office Building Room 216.

Witness List

The Honorable Anthony M. Kennedy, Associate Justice, United States Supreme Court, Washington, DC.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Rules and Administration be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 14, 2007, at 11:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing on Senate Committee Budget requests.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 14, 2007 at 2:30 p.m. to hold a closed hearing.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONGRATULATING ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY'S SESQUICENTENNIAL

Mr. OBAMA. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 53, and that the Senate then proceed to its consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 53) congratulating Illinois State University as it marks its sesquicentennial.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. OBAMA. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table; that any statements relating thereto be printed in the RECORD, without further intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 53) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 53

Whereas Illinois State University marks its sesquicentennial with a year-long celebration, beginning with Founders Day on February 15, 2007;

Whereas Illinois State University is the oldest public university in the State of Illinois;

Whereas Illinois State University has 34 academic departments and offers more than 160 programs of study in the College of Applied Science and Technology, the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Business, the College of Education, the College of Fine Arts, and the Mennonite College of Nursing;

Whereas Illinois State University is 1 of the 10 largest producers of teachers in the Nation, and nearly 1 in 7 Illinois teachers holds a degree from Illinois State University;

Whereas Milner Library at Illinois State University contains more than 3 million holdings and special collections;

Whereas Illinois State University is ranked nationally as one of the 100 ''best values'' in public higher education; and

Whereas Illinois State University participates in the American Democracy Project, an initiative that prepares students to engage in a competitive global society: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate congratulates Illinois State University as it marks its sesquicentennial.

AMENDING SENATE RESOLUTION 400 OF THE 94TH CONGRESS

Mr. OBAMA. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 16, S. Res. 50.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 50) amending Senate Resolution 400 (94th Congress) to make amendments arising from the enactment of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 and to make other amendments.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. OBAMA. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating thereto be printed in the RECORD, without intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 50) was agreed to, as follows:

S. RES. 50

Resolved,

SECTION 1. AMENDMENTS TO SENATE RESOLUTION 400 (94TH CONGRESS) ARISING FROM ENACTMENT OF INTELLIGENCE REFORM AND TERRORISM PREVENTION ACT OF 2004.

Senate Resolution 400, agreed to May 19, 1976 (94th Congress), is amended—

(1) in section 3—

(A) in subsection (a)—

(i) by redesignating paragraphs (2), (3), and (4), as paragraphs (3), (4), and (5), respectively;

(ii) by striking paragraph (1) and inserting the following new paragraphs:

''(1) The Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the Director of National Intelligence.

''(2) The Central Intelligence Agency and the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.''; and

(iii) in paragraph (5), as so redesignated—

(I) by redesignating subparagraphs (B) through (G) as subparagraphs (C) through (H), respectively;

(II) by striking subparagraph (A) and inserting the following new subparagraphs:

''(A) The Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the Director of National Intelligence.

''(B) The Central Intelligence Agency and the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.''; and

(III) in subparagraph (H), as so redesignated—

(aa) by striking ''clause (A), (B), or (C)'' and inserting ''clause (A), (B), (C), or (D)''; and

(bb) by striking ''clause (D), (E), or (F)'' both places it appears and inserting ''clause (E), (F), or (G)''; and

(B) in subsection (b)(1), by striking ''clause (1) or (4)(A)'' and inserting ''clause (1), (2), (5)(A), or (5)(B)'';

(2) in section 4(b), by inserting ''the Director of National Intelligence,'' before ''the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency'';

(3) in section 6, by striking ''the Director of Central Intelligence'' both places it appears and inserting ''the Director of National Intelligence''; and

(4) in section 12—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (2) through (6) as paragraphs (3) through (7), respectively; and

(B) by striking paragraph (1) and inserting the following new paragraphs:

''(1) The activities of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the Director of National Intelligence.

''(2) The activities of the Central Intelligence Agency and the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.''.

SEC. 2. TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS TO SENATE RESOLUTION 400 (94TH CONGRESS) RELATING TO REDESIGNATION OF SELECT COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS AND CONDUCT AS SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS.

Senate Resolution 400, agreed to May 19, 1976 (94th Congress), is amended—

(1) in section 6, by striking ''the Select Committee on Standards and Conduct'' and inserting ''the Select Committee on Ethics''; and

(2) in section 8—

(A) in subsection (d), by striking ''the Select Committee on Standards and Conduct'' and inserting ''the Select Committee on Ethics''; and

(B) in subsection (e), by striking ''the Select Committee on Standards and Conduct'' both places it appears and inserting ''the Select Committee on Ethics''.

SEC. 3. TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS TO SENATE RESOLUTION 400 (94TH CONGRESS) RELATING TO REMOVING REFERENCE TO THE INTELLIGENCE DIVISION OF THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION.

Senate Resolution 400, agreed to May 19, 1976 (94th Congress), is amended by striking '', including all activities of the Intelligence Division'' in—

(1) paragraph (5)(F) of section 3(a), as redesignated by section 1(1)(A)(i); and

(2) paragraph (7) of section 12, as redesignated by section 1(4)(A).

SEC. 4. TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS TO SENATE RESOLUTION 400 (94TH CONGRESS) RELATING TO REFERENCES TO SENATE RULES.

Senate Resolution 400, agreed to May 19, 1976 (94th Congress), is amended—

(1) in section 2(b), by striking ''paragraph 6(f)'' and inserting ''paragraph 4(e)(1)''; and

(2) in section 8(b)(5)—

(A) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''section 133(f) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946'' and inserting ''paragraph 5 of rule XVII of the Standing Rules of the Senate''; and

(B) in the flush text after subparagraph (C), by striking ''section 133(f) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946'' and inserting ''paragraph 5 of rule XVII of the Standing Rules of the Senate''.

SEC. 5. OTHER TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS TO SENATE RESOLUTION 400 (94TH CONGRESS).

Section 3(b)(3) of Senate Resolution 400, agreed to May 19, 1976 (94th Congress), is amended by striking ''the session'' and inserting ''in session''.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2007

Mr. OBAMA. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m., Thursday, February 15; that on Thursday, following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, and the time for the two leaders reserved for their use later in the day; that there then be a period of morning business until 10:20 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein and with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees; that at 10:20 a.m., the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Executive Calendar Nos. 24 and 26, that debate run concurrently until 10:30 a.m., with the time equally divided and controlled between the chairman and ranking member of the Judiciary Committee or their designees; that at 10:30 a.m., the Senate proceed to vote on Executive Calendar No. 24, to be followed immediately by a vote on Executive Calendar No. 26; that upon conclusion of the votes, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table and the President immediately notified of the Senate's action; that the Senate then resume legislative session and proceed to a period of morning business, Senator LEAHY to be recognized for up to 1 hour, to be followed by an hour under the control of the Republican leader or his designee, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10:00 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. OBAMA. If there is no further business to come before the Senate today, I ask unanimous consent the Senate stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:05 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, February 15, 2007, at 10 a.m.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate Wednesday, February 14, 2007:

THE JUDICIARY

NORA BARRY FISCHER, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

PAYING TRIBUTE TO CHESTER RICHARDSON

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 14, 2007

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Chester Richardson who passed away on January 2, 2007.

Chester made a profound impact on the Las Vegas community during his lifetime. Chester possessed a vast knowledge of the gaming industry, expertise obtained while working as the surveillance manager of the Luxor Hotel and Casino as well as his experiences as vice-chairman of the Southern Nevada workforce Investment Board, chairman of the SNWIB Programs/Performances committee, and chairman of the SNWIB Youth Council.

Chester also dedicated his life to his community. He was instrumental in the development of the first drug abuse prevention community based organization in northern Nevada, was a field investigator for the Reno/Sparks NAACP Branch investigating labor complaints and served four terms as the local NACCP election chairman. Chester was very much involved in designing a successful affirmative action plan and began the elimination of the Rule of Three in the State legislature. Chester also assisted local businesses in obtaining over $300,000 in micro business loans. His other accomplishments include serving as the Nevada General Secretary and as the first Grand Worthy Patron of the Nevada International Free and Accepted Modern Masons. Chester was also an associate minister for the Second Baptist Church in Las Vegas.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor the life and the legacy of Chester Richardson. His dedication to service and community was truly exemplary and should serve as an example to us all. Chester will be profoundly missed.

INTRODUCING THE TEACHER TAX CUT ACT AND THE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS TAX RELIEF ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 14, 2007

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce two pieces of legislation that raise the pay of teachers and other educators by cutting their taxes. I am sure that all my colleagues agree that it is long past time to begin treating those who have dedicated their lives to educating America's children with the respect they deserve. Compared to other professionals, educators are under-appreciated and under-paid. This must change if America is to have the finest education system in the world.

Quality education is impossible without quality teaching. If we continue to undervalue educators, it will become harder to attract, and keep, good people in the education profession. While educators' pay is primarily a local issue, Congress can, and should, help raise educators' take home pay by reducing educators' taxes.

This is why I am introducing the Teachers Tax Cut Act. This legislation provides every teacher in America with a $3,000 tax credit. I am also introducing the Professional Educators Tax Relief Act, which extends the $3,000 tax credit to counselors, librarians, and all school personnel involved in any aspect of the K–12 academic program.

The Teacher Tax Cut Act and the Professional Educators Tax Relief Act increase the salaries of teachers and other education professionals without raising federal expenditures. By raising the take-home pay of professional educators, these bills encourage highly qualified people to enter, and remain in, education. These bills also let America's professional educators know that the American people and the Congress respect their work.

I hope all my colleagues join me in supporting our nation's teachers and other professional educators by cosponsoring the Teacher Tax Cut Act and the Professional Educators Tax Relief Act.

SACRED HEART MEDICAL CENTER DELIVERS HIGH QUALITY HEALTH CARE

HON. CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 14, 2007

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Sacred Heart Medical Center for being rated as a top performer in the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Premier Hospital Quality Incentive project.

Sacred Heart Medical Center has been providing quality health care to the people of Eastern Washington for more than 120 years. Their mission to provide a community of healing, collaborate with caregivers, and uphold a commitment to excellence guides the kind of care they provide every day.

As a top performer, Sacred Heart Medical Center was evaluated on their performance and outcome measures in five clinical areas—acute myocardial infarction (heart attack), heart failure, coronary artery bypass graft (CABO), pneumonia, and hip and knee replacement.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend Sacred Heart Medical Center for setting the standard for clinical excellence, and for providing excellent health care to the Eastern Washington community. I invite my colleagues to join me in congratulating the doctors and employees of Sacred Heart Medical Center on this great achievement.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MAXWELL BRUNER, JR.

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 14, 2007

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, it is an honor for me to rise today to recognize the life of Northwest Florida's beloved Maxwell Bruner, Jr.

Mr. Bruner is survived by his wife, Linda, eight children, ten grandchildren, and sister and brother-in-law, Burt and Barbara Bruner Godwin. To his family and friends, I would like to offer my sincere condolences. Northwest Florida has suffered a great loss.

Born on July 12, 1931, in Ashford, Alabama, Max Bruner, Jr., grew up during the Great Depression on the farms in southeast Alabama. He was the son of a farmer and local businessman. It was not until after his graduation from Auburn University, where his interest in politics and government grew, that he made his way to Fort Walton Beach, Florida, in 1957—a place where his footsteps would be planted and never washed away.

Mr. Bruner was an active member in the business, civic, and church communities, and entered into the Okaloosa County School District as an assistant principal, quickly rising to principal at Fort Walton Elementary School. In 1963, Max Bruner became principal of the newly integrated Eglin School. Okaloosa County School District became one of the first districts in the South that integrated schools. After two years, Mr. Bruner was elected Superintendent of Schools. Voted in for five consecutive terms, he made a significant impact on the Okaloosa County School District and molded it into the success it is today.

His passion for change and commitment to excellence came at a time when it was needed the most. Facilities were overcrowded, which forced schools to hold double sessions and hold classes in churches. In a time when schools were segregated and students not given the opportunity they deserved, Max Bruner ensured that they received the proper materials. He established a $40 million construction plan and developed educational programs to accommodate every learning level, including the gifted and disabled. He knew the importance of education and believed that all students must be given the opportunity to learn. Maxwell Bruner worked tirelessly for the advancement of the local public school system and transformed the Okaloosa School District into one of the best in the state of Florida.

To some Max Bruner will be remembered as an educator, and to others, a warrior. To some he will be remembered as a loyal Auburn fan, and to others, a comrade in the United States Air Force. He will long be remembered by his family and friends as a loving and compassionate father, grandfather, husband, and companion; and we will all remember his energy, motivation, and generosity. From his humble beginnings as a child

to a man who had such a profound impact on society, Mr. Bruner touched a number of lives; all who knew Max Bruner are forever grateful for his presence in their lives, and will forever be inspired by his life.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am proud to honor the life of Maxwell Bruner, Jr., and his living legacy.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO HARRY NOONAN

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 14, 2007

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Harry Noonan and recognize him for his exemplary service in defense of freedom and posthumously award him with the Jubilee of Liberty Medal.

On June 6, 1944, the United States and its allies embarked on the largest air, land, and sea invasion ever undertaken. This massive effort included 5,000 ships, 10,000 airplanes, and over 150,000 American, British, Canadian, Free French, and Polish Troops. During the 50th anniversary of this historic event, the French Government awarded the Jubilee of Liberty Medal to American servicemen for their participation in the Battle of Normandy.

Harry served in the United States Army, 194th Glider Infantry Regiment in Normandy, Northern France, and the Rhineland. For his heroism and valor, Harry was awarded the Purple Heart, the Bronze Service Arrowhead, and the European African Middle Eastern Campaign Service Medal.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor the life of Harry Noonan who passed away on February 13, 2007. His service and dedication to this country exemplified the sacrifices of the ''Greatest Generation.'' He was truly a great American patriot.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HOPE PLUS SCHOLARSHIP ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 14, 2007

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce the Hope Plus Scholarship Act, which expands the Hope Education Scholarship credit to cover K–12 education expenses. Under this bill, parents could use the Hope Scholarship to pay for private or religious school tuition or to offset the cost of home schooling. In addition, under the bill, all Americans could use the Hope Scholarship to make cash or in-kind donations to public schools. Thus, the Hope Scholarship could help working parents send their child to a private school, while other patents could take advantage of the Hope credit to help purchase new computers for their children's local public school.

Reducing taxes so that Americans can devote more of their own resources to education is the best way to improve America's schools, since individuals are more likely than federal bureaucrats to insist that schools be accountable for student performance. When the federal government controls the education dollar, schools will be held accountable for their compliance with bureaucratic paperwork requirements and mandates that have little to do with actual education. Federal rules and regulations also divert valuable resources away from classroom instruction.

The only way to reform America's education system is through restoring control of the education dollar to the American people so they can ensure schools provide their children a quality education. I therefore ask all of my colleagues to help improve education by returning education resources to the American people by cosponsoring the Hope Plus Scholarship Act.

ARCHBISHOP GEORGE NIEDERAUER'S EDITORIAL ON GLOBAL POVERTY

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 14, 2007

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I would like to use this opportunity to direct the attention of my colleagues to a very important opinion piece written by the Archbishop George H. Niederauer, Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of San Francisco and chair of the Communications Committee of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, which last October sponsored a national conference on global poverty. As a champion of the poor and a well-respected constituent, I value his commitment to eliminating global poverty and his mission to translate faith into action.

I emphatically agree with the Archbishop's position outlined in this article, that ending global poverty is one of the great challenges of our time and we have a moral obligation, as a civilized nation, to help eliminate the scourge of extreme poverty. As the Archbishop points out, foreign policy is indeed a moral endeavor. The United States, in keeping with its core humanitarian values, must be a model for other countries by promoting sustainable development. While we know that poverty does not cause extremism, the United must use all of the tools at its disposal to limit the breeding grounds for terrorists seeking to take advantage of the millions of economically deprived human beings in the world today. We must work with our partners in the faith-based community, non-governmental organizations, and development activists to end suffering, hunger, and death.

THE MORAL SCANDAL OF GLOBAL POVERTY

(By George H. Niederauer)

It's easy to forget that more than a billion people survive on a $1 a day when we live in the world's richest country. Whether in the fields of Africa, the factories of Asia or the streets of our own cities, we often pay scant attention to the abject poverty that degrades our fellow human beings. Ending global poverty is one of the great challenges of our time that requires urgent political will and solidarity with our brothers and sisters around the world.

Catholic leaders, economists, international-development experts and activists from several countries will meet in San Francisco tomorrow and Saturday to explore strategies for addressing the Moral Scandal that is global poverty. We come together to raise awareness, mobilize resources and reflect on how putting faith into action can build a more just world. As Catholics, we pray that we can embrace the hungry, the sick and the suffering as Jesus called us to do with compassion and love. As engaged citizens who understand that foreign policy and budgets are moral endeavors that reflect our values, we call on our leaders to do more to help the world's poor.

Our gathering will help build national momentum for the Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty, an effort led by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services, which engages citizens to advocate for policies that increase development aid, offer debt relief to poor countries and ensure that trade agreements benefit more than the wealthy. Guided by Catholic social tradition that teaches us to have a ''preferential option for the poor,'' we know that upholding the dignity of all human life does not end at our borders. When our neighbors in other countries suffer, we too are diminished. What we do to the least among us, we do to Christ himself.

In the San Francisco Bay area, the Catholic community strives through its social service agencies to relieve the suffering of local poverty, and funds international anti-poverty and development programs through Catholic Relief Services. Local Catholic priests, nuns and lay people are working in some of the poorest countries to ease the burden of extreme poverty. We also work with people of other faiths in efforts to increase awareness and understanding about global poverty and to encourage our legislators to make greater efforts to address this crucial problem. In 2000, the United States and other nations signed the U.N. ''Millennium Development Goals'' to halve extreme poverty, increase development aid to 0.7 percent of gross national income, stop the spread of HIV/AIDS and provide universal primary education by 2015. The United States still falls near the bottom of the list when aid by developed countries is measured as a percent of gross national product.

Some ask why we should care about starvation or disease in remote corners of the globe. Along with being the right thing to do, retreating from this cause is also not practical. The forces of globalization have made nations, and their destinies, more interconnected than ever before. As the world's largest economy, the United States has considerable influence to galvanize resources for the poor, push to end curable diseases in Africa and be a model for other countries when it comes to development.

Each year, governments spend billions of dollars on sophisticated weapons. The technological creativity and energy it takes to build these systems should be matched by the best of our minds and hearts in fighting the enemy of poverty that kills 50,000 people every day, far more than even the ravages of war. A robust development agenda that helps uplift and support the poorest countries can also limit the appeal of terrorists who exploit political instability, desperation and poverty to recruit converts to extremist ideologies. Nothing can justify terrorism, but we can also build a world in which terrorism finds fewer places to breed.

As daunting as the challenge of ending global poverty may seem, this is not an unreachable goal. Renowned poverty expert, Jeffrey Sachs of Columbia University, who will deliver the keynote address at our gathering, has identified practical steps such as increasing crop productivity and soil efficiency, providing nutritious school meals and helping poor countries reform internal agencies. We know that governments alone can't solve this problem. Faith-based groups,

nonprofit agencies, academics and activists must work together with a renewed sense of urgency. Anything less will lead to more suffering, hunger and death. That's not an option the poor of the world should be expected to endure any longer.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate on February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place, and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled, and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, February 15, 2007 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

FEBRUARY 16

10 a.m.
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
To hold hearings to examine paying for college in the future relating to higher education, higher cost and higher student debt.
SD–430

FEBRUARY 27

9:30 a.m.
Veterans' Affairs
To hold joint hearings with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of the Disabled American Veterans.
345 CHOB

10 a.m.
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
To hold hearings to examine the need for Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulation of tobacco products.
SD–430

Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Infrastructure, Safety and Security Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine S. 294, to reauthorize Amtrak.
SR–253

2 p.m.
Judiciary
To hold hearings to examine the John R. Justice Prosecutors and Defenders Incentive Act of 2007 relating to strengthening the criminal justice system.
SD–226

2:30 p.m.
Appropriations
To hold hearings to examine the Supplemental Request for fiscal year 2007.
SD–106

FEBRUARY 28

10 a.m.
Small Business and Entrepreneurship
To hold hearings to examine the President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2008 for the Small Business Administration.
SR–428A

2:30 p.m.
Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Science and Space Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine the President's budget request for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).
SR–253

MARCH 1

9:30 a.m.
Veterans' Affairs
Administration adjudication process.
To hold an oversight hearing to examine the Veterans
SR–418

10 a.m.
Commerce, Science, and Transportation
To hold hearings to examine universal service.
SR–253

MARCH 6

9:30 a.m.
Veterans' Affairs
To hold joint hearings with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.
345 CHOB

MARCH 8

9:30 a.m.
Veterans' Affairs
To hold joint hearings with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of the Paralyzed Veterans of America, Jewish War Veterans, and Blinded Veterans Association.
SD–106

MARCH 29

9:30 a.m.
Veterans' Affairs
To hold joint hearings with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of AMVETS, Ex-POWs, Military Order of the Purple Heart, and Fleet Reserve Association.
SD–106

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S1929–S1982

Measures Introduced: Twenty-three bills and one resolution were introduced, as follows: S. 579–601, and S. Res. 81. **Page S1958**

Measures Passed:

Continuing Appropriations: By 81 yeas to 15 nays (Vote No. 48), Senate passed H.J. Res. 20, making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2007, after taking action on the following amendments proposed thereto: **Pages S1933–51, S1953**

Withdrawn:

Reid Amendment No. 237, to change an effective date. **Pages S1933, S1953**

Reid Amendment No. 238 (to Amendment No. 237), of a technical nature. **Pages S1933, S1953**

During consideration of this measure on Tuesday, February 13, 2007, Senate also took the following action:

The following fell when Senate invoked cloture on the bill:

Reid Motion to recommit (No. 239) the bill to the Committee on Appropriations, with instructions to report back forthwith, with an amendment, to change an effective date. **Pages S1933, S1953**

Reid Amendment No. 240 (to the instructions of the motion to recommit), of a technical nature. **Pages S1933, S1953**

Reid Amendment No. 241 (to Amendment No. 240), of a technical nature. **Page S1953**

Illinois State University Sesquicentennial: Committee on Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 53, congratulating Illinois State University as it marks its sesquicentennial, and the resolution was then agreed to. **Page S1981**

Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act Amendments: Senate agreed to S. Res. 50, amending Senate Resolution 400 (94th Congress) to make amendments arising from the enactment of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 and to make other amendments. **Page S1981**

Nominations—Agreement: A unanimous-consent-time agreement was reached providing that at 10:20 a.m., on Thursday, February 15, 2007, Senate begin consideration of the nominations of Norman Randy Smith, of Idaho, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit, and Marcia Morales Howard, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida; that debate run concurrently until 10:30 a.m., with the time equally divided and controlled between the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee on the Judiciary, or their designees; that at 10:30 a.m., Senate vote on the confirmations of the nominations. **Page S1982**

Nomination Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nomination:

By unanimous vote of 96 yeas (Vote No. EX. 47), Nora Barry Fischer, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Pennsylvania. **Pages S1951–52, S1982**

Messages from the House: **Page S1957**

Messages Referred: **Page S1957**

Measures Placed on the Calendar: **Page S1958**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Page S1958**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S1958–59**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S1960–80**

Additional Statements: **Page S1957**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Pages S1980–81**

Record Votes: Two record votes were taken today. (Total—48) **Pages S1952, S1953**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 12 noon, and adjourned at 6:05 p.m., until 10 a.m., on Thursday, February 15, 2007.

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

IRANIAN ACTIVITIES

Committee on Armed Services: Committee met in closed session to receive a briefing regarding Iranian activities in Iraq from Eric S. Edelman, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy; Lieutenant General Douglas E.

Lute, USA, Director for Operations, J–3, The Joint Staff; Lieutenant General Michael D. Maples, USA, Director, Defense Intelligence Agency; and David Satterfield, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of State, Coordinator for Iraq, Department of State.

MONETARY POLICY REPORT

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the semiannual Monetary Policy Report to the Congress, after receiving testimony from Ben S. Bernanke, Chairman, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

TAX COMPLIANCE

Committee on the Budget: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the President's fiscal year 2008 budget proposals on tax compliance, after receiving testimony from Mark W. Everson, Commissioner, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury.

OVERSEAS SWEATSHOP ABUSES

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Interstate Commerce, Trade, and Tourism concluded a hearing to examine overseas sweatshop abuses, focusing on their impact on U.S. workers and the need for anti-sweatshop legislation, including S. 367, to amend the Tariff Act of 1930 to prohibit the import, export, and sale of goods made with sweatshop labor, after receiving testimony from David J. Socolow, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Trenton; Betty Fuentes, International Labor Rights Fund, and Daniel T. Griswold, Cato Institute, both of Washington, D.C.; Sheikh Nazma, and Charles Kernaghan, both of the National Labor Committee, New York, New York; James D. English, United Steelworkers, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Steven A. Jesseph, Worldwide Responsible Apparel Production, Arlington, Virginia.

DEEPWATER PROGRAM

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries and Coast Guard concluded an oversight hearing to examine recent setbacks to the Coast Guard Deepwater Program, focusing on efforts to improve management and address certain operations challenges, after receiving testimony from Admiral Thad W. Allen, Commandant, and Captain Kevin P. Jarvis, (Ret.), both of the U.S. Coast Guard, and Richard L. Skinner, Inspector General, all of the Department of Homeland Security; Stephen L. Caldwell, Acting Director, Homeland Security and Justice Issues, Government Accountability Office; Leo S. Mackay, Lockheed Martin Maritime Systems and Sensors, Arlington, Virginia; and Philip A. Teel, Northrop Grumman Ship Systems, Pascagoula, Mississippi.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Committee ordered favorably reported the following business items:

S. 558, to provide parity between health insurance coverage of mental health benefits and benefits for medical and surgical services, with an amendment;

S. 556, to reauthorize the Head Start Act; and

The nomination of Leon R. Sequeira, of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary of Labor.

JUDICIAL SECURITY AND INDEPENDENCE

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee concluded a hearing to examine judicial security and independence, including S. 378, to amend title 18, United States Code, to protect judges, prosecutors, witnesses, victims, and their family members, S. 197, to authorize salary adjustments for justices and judges of the United States for fiscal year 2007, S. 344, to permit the televising of Supreme Court proceedings, and S. 352, to provide for media coverage of Federal court proceedings, after receiving testimony from Associate Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, United States Supreme Court.

COMMITTEE FUNDING RESOLUTIONS

Committee on Rules and Administration: Committee concluded a hearing on proposed legislation authorizing expenditures by the Select Committee on Intelligence, the Committee on Foreign Relations, and the Committee on Finance, after receiving testimony from Senators Rockefeller, Bond, Lugar, and Grassley.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee held closed hearings on intelligence matters, receiving testimony from officials of the intelligence community.

Committee recessed subject to the call.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 24 public bills, H.R. 1038–1061; and 6 resolutions, H. Con. Res. 65; and H. Res. 159–160, 162–164 were introduced. **Pages H1667–68**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H1668–69**

Report Filed: A report was filed today as follows:

H. Res. 161, providing for consideration of motions to suspend the rules (H. Rept. 110–13). **Page H1667**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein she appointed Representative Capuano to act as Speaker Pro Tempore for today. **Page H1567**

Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the guest Chaplain, Rev. Carl Toti, Senior Pastor, Trinity Church, Lubbock, Texas. **Page H1567**

Disapproving of the decision of the President announced on January 10, 2007, to deploy more than 20,000 additional United States combat troops to Iraq: The House continued debate on H. Con. Res. 63, to disapprove of the decision of the President announced on January 10, 2007, to deploy more than 20,000 additional United States combat troops to Iraq. Further proceedings were postponed. **Pages H1571–H1614, H1623–66**

H. Res. 157, the rule providing for consideration of the resolution, was agreed to on Tuesday, February 13.

In Memory of the late Honorable Charlie Norwood of Georgia: The House agreed to H. Res. 159, expressing the condolences of the House on the death of the Honorable Charlie Norwood, a Representative from the State of Georgia. **Pages H1614–23**

Whole Number of the House: The Chair announced to the House that, in light of the adoption of H. Res. 159, the whole number of the House is adjusted to 434. **Page H1623**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate today appears on page H1623.

Quorum Calls—Votes: There were no yea-and-nay-votes, and there were no recorded votes. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and at 12:01 a.m., Thursday, February 15th, pursuant to the provisions of H. Res. 159, it stands adjourned in memory of the late Honorable Charlie Norwood.

Committee Meetings

USDA FARM BILL PROPOSALS

Committee on Agriculture: Held a hearing to review the proposals of the USDA for the 2007 Farm bill. Testimony was heard from Mike Johanns, Secretary of Agriculture.

Prior to the hearing, the Committee met for organizational purposes.

The Committee approved an Oversight Plan for the 110th Congress.

FY 2008 NATIONAL DEFENSE BUDGET REQUEST—DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

Committee on Armed Services: Held a hearing on the Fiscal Year 2008 National Defense Budget request from the Department of the Army. Testimony was heard from the following officials of the Department of the Army: Francis J. Harvey, Secretary; and GEN Peter Schoomaker, USA, Chief of Staff.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND AND THE GLOBAL TERROR THREAT

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities held a hearing on the challenges for the Special Operations Command (SOCOM) posed by the global terrorist threat. Testimony was heard from Jarret Brachman, Director of Research, Combating Terrorism Center, U.S. Military Academy, Department of the Army; and public witnesses.

MEMBERS DAY

Committee on the Budget: Held a hearing on Members Day. Testimony was heard from Representatives Peterson of Minnesota, Goodlatte, Cardoza, Dicks, Carson, Ehlers, Holt, Boyda of Kansas, Buchanan, Larsen of Washington, Wolf, Hayes, Higgins, Turner, Christensen, Filner, Oberstar, Honda, Altmire, Walz of Minnesota, Ellsworth, Boozman, Watson and Bishop of Utah.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES; OVERSIGHT PLAN

Committee on Education and Labor: Ordered reported the following bills: H.R. 800, Employee Free Choice Act; and H.R. 493, as amended, Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2007.

The Committee approved an Oversight Plan for the 110th Congress.

UNINSURED CHILDREN

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Health held a hearing entitled "Covering the Uninsured Through the Eyes of a Child." Testimony was

heard from Chris L. Peterson, Specialist in Social Legislation, Domestic Social Policy Division, CRS, Library of Congress; and public witnesses.

ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PROCESS—NEXT STEPS

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia held a hearing on Next Steps in Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY DIRECTORATE—UNDERSTANDING BUDGET AND STRATEGIC AGENDA

Committee on Homeland Security: Subcommittee on Emerging Threats, Cybersecurity, Preparedness, and Response Threats, Cybersecurity, and Science and Technology held a hearing entitled ''Understanding the Budget and Strategic Agenda of the Science and Technology Directorate.'' Testimony was heard from the following officials of the Department of Homeland Security: ADM Jay Cohen, Under Secretary, Science and Technology; and Richard Williams, Chief Financial Officer for Science and Technology.

DHS INTELLIGENCE AND TECHNOLOGY BUDGET—FISCAL YEAR 2008

Committe on Homeland Security: Subcommittee on Intelligence, Information Sharing, and Terrorism Risk Assessment, hearing entitled ''The President's Proposed FY 2008 Budget for the Department of Homeland Security: The Office of Intelligence and Analysis.'' Testimony was heard from Charles E. Allen, Chief Intelligence Officer, Office of Intelligence and Analysis, Department of Homeland Security.

PROPOSED IMMIGRATION FEE INCREASE

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security and International Law held a hearing on Proposed Immigration Fee Increase. Testimony was heard from Emilio T. Gonzalez, Director, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security.

EXECUTIVE BRANCH REFORM ACT; WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION ENHANCEMENT ACT; OVERSIGHT PLAN

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Ordered reported, as amended, the following bills: H.R. 984, Executive Branch Reform Act of 2007; and H.R. 985, Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2007.

The Committee also approved an Oversight Plan for the 110th Congress.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUIREMENTS

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census, and National Archives held a hearing on The State of FOIA: Assessing Agency Efforts to Meet FOIA Requirements. Testimony was heard from Linda Koontz, Director, Information Management, GAO; Melanie Ann Pustay, Acting Director, Office of Information and Privacy, Department of Justice.

CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Committee on Rules: Granted, by a vote of 8 to 4, a rule providing that the bill (H.R. 976) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax relief for small businesses, and for other purposes, may be considered under suspension of the rules at any time on the legislative day of Friday, February 16, 2007.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT BUDGET; OVERSIGHT PLAN

Committee on Science and Technology: Held a hearing on the Administration's FY 2008 Research and Development Budget Proposal. Testimony was heard from John H. Murburger, III, Director, Office of Science and Technology.

The Committee also approved an Oversight Plan for the 110th Congress.

SBA'S RESPONSE TO 2005 GULF COAST HURRICANES

Committee on Small Business: Held a hearing entitled ''The Small Business Administration's Response to the 2005 Gulf Coast Hurricanes.'' Testimony was heard from Representatives Melancon and Baker; Steven Preston, Administrator, SBA; William Shear, Director, Financial Markets and Community Investment, GAO; Bryan McDonald, Director, Governor's Office of Recovery and Renewal, State of Mississippi; and public witnesses.

FAA'S BUDGET

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Subcommittee on Aviation held a hearing on the President's Fiscal Year 2008 Federal Aviation Administration's Budget. Testimony was heard from the following officials of the Department of Transportation: Marion C. Blakey, Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration; and Calvin L. Scovel, III, Inspector General; and Gerald Dillingham, Director, Physical Infrastructure Issues, GAO.

AGENCY BUDGET AND PRIORITIES FISCAL YEAR 2008

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Subcommittee on Water Resources and the Environment

held a hearing entitled ''Agency Budgets and Priorities for FY 2008.'' Testimony was heard from the following officials of the Department of the Army: John Paul Woodley, Jr., Assistant Secretary, Civil Works; and LTG Carl A. Strock, USA, Chief of Engineers, Corps of Engineers; Collister Johnson, Jr., Administrator, Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation; Tom Kilgore, Chief Executive Officer, TVA; and Arlen Lancaster, Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA.

VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH BUDGET

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Subcommittee on Health held a hearing on Department of Veterans Affairs Fiscal Year 2008 Health Budget. Testimony was heard from Michael J. Kussman, M.D., Acting Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; representatives of veterans organizations; and public witnesses.

U.S. TRADE AGENDA

Committee on Ways and Means: Held a hearing on the direction and content of U.S. Trade Agenda. Testimony was heard from Susan C. Schwab, U.S. Trade Representative.

SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY BACKLOGS

Committee on Ways and Means: Subcommittee on Social Security held a hearing on Social Security Administration (SSA) disability claims backlogs. Testimony was heard from Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner, SSA; Sylvester J. Schieber, Chairman, Social Security Advisory Board; and public witnesses.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2007

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Armed Services: to hold hearings to examine the current and future readiness of the Army and Marine Corps; there is a possibility of a closed session in SR–222 following the open session, 9:30 a.m., SH–216.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Aviation Operations, Safety, and Security, to hold hearings to examine the Administration's proposal to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration (Part 1), 9:30 a.m., SR–253.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: to hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2008 for the Department of the Interior, 9:30 a.m., SD–366.

Committee on Finance: to hold hearings to examine the Administration trade agenda for 2007, 10 a.m., SD–215.

Committee on Foreign Relations: to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Ryan C. Crocker, of Washington, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Iraq, and William B. Wood, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 9:15 a.m., SD–628.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: business meeting to consider S. 4, to make the United States more secure by implementing unfinished recommendations of the 9/11 Commission to fight the war on terror more effectively, to improve homeland security, S. 343, to extend the District of Columbia College Access Act of 1999, S. 457, to extend the date on which the National Security Personnel System will first apply to certain defense laboratories, a proposed bill to preserve existing judgeships on the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, S. 550, to preserve existing judgeships on the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, S. 171, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 301 Commerce Street in Commerce, Oklahoma, as the ''Mickey Mantle Post Office Building'', S. 194 and H.R. 49, bills to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1300 North Frontage Road West in Vail, Colorado, as the ''Gerald R. Ford, Jr. Post Office Building'', S. 219 and H.R. 335, bills to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 152 North 5th Street in Laramie, Wyoming, as the ''Gale W. McGee Post Office'', S. 303, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 324 Main Street in Grambling, Louisiana, shall be known and designated as the ''Coach Eddie Robinson Post Office Building'', S. 412 and H.R. 521, bills to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2633 11th Street in Rock Island, Illinois, as the ''Lane Evans Post Office Building'', H.R. 433, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1700 Main Street in Little Rock, Arkansas, as the ''Scipio A. Jones Post Office Building'', H.R. 514, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 16150 Aviation Loop Drive in Brooksville, Florida, as the ''Sergeant Lea Robert Mills Brooksville Aviation Branch Post Office'', and H.R. 577, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3903 South Congress Avenue in Austin, Texas, as the ''Sergeant Henry Ybarra III Post Office Building'', 9 a.m., SD–342.

Committee on Indian Affairs: to hold an oversight hearing to examine the President's budget request for fiscal year 2008 for tribal programs, 9:30 a.m., SR–485.

Committee on the Judiciary: business meeting to consider the nomination of Beryl A. Howell, of the District of Columbia, and Dabney Langhorne Friedrich, of Virginia, both to be a Member of the United States Sentencing Commission, S. 316, to prohibit brand name drug companies from compensating generic drug companies to delay the entry of a generic drug into the market, S. 236, to require reports to Congress on Federal agency use of data mining, S. 378, to amend title 18, United States Code, to protect judges, prosecutors, witnesses, victims, and their family members, S. 442, to provide for loan repayment for prosecutors and public defenders, S. Res. 41, honoring and the life and recognizing the accomplishments of Tom Mooney, president of the Ohio Federation of Teachers, S. Res. 47, honoring the life and achievements of George C. Springer, Sr., the Northeast regional

director and a former vice president of the American Federation of Teachers, S. Res. 49, recognizing and celebrating the 50th anniversary of the entry of Alaska into the Union as the 49th State, S. Res. 53, congratulating Illinois State University as it marks its sesquicentennial, and S. Res. 69, recognizing the African-American spiritual as a national treasure, 10 a.m., S–216, Capitol.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH–219.

Special Committee on Aging: to hold hearings to examine those Americans born between 1946 and 1964 (baby boomers), focusing on the federal budget and senior citizens, 10 a.m., SD–562.

House

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies, on Secretary of Agriculture, 10 a.m., 2362A Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Defense, on Defense Fiscal Year 2007 Supplemental Request, 10 a.m., 2359 Rayburn, and on Fiscal Year 2007 Supplemental Requests for Iraq and Afghan Security Forces Fund, 1:30 p.m., H–140 Capitol.

Subcommittee on Homeland Security, on Coast Guard Iraq Operations, Port Security and Deepwater, 10 a.m., 2362B Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, (Panel) Overview on America's Workers and Education for the 21st Century, 9:30 a.m., 2212 Rayburn, and (Panel II) Overview on Health Care Access and the Aging of America, 2 p.m., 2359 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans' Affairs, and Related Agencies, on Long-Term Health Care Challenges, 10 a.m., 2358 Rayburn, and on Secretary of Veterans' Affairs, 1 p.m., 2358 Rayburn.

Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Military Personnel, hearing on overview of recruiting and retention, 2 p.m., 2212 Rayburn.

Committee on the Budget, hearing on the U.S. Department of Agriculture Fiscal Year 2008 Budget Priorities, 2 p.m., 210 Cannon.

Committee on Financial Services, hearing on Monetary Policy and the State of the Economy, 10 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, to mark up the following: H. Res. 98, Honoring the life and achievements of the late Dr. John Garang de Mabior and reaffirming the continued commitment of the House of Representatives to a just and lasting peace in the Republic of Sudan; H.R. 957, To amend the Iran Sanctions Act to expand and clarify the entities against which sanctions may be imposed; H.R. 987, NATO Freedom Consolidation Act of 2007; H.R. 1003, To amend the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 to reauthorize the United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy; H. Res. 107, Calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Israeli soldiers held captive by Hamas and Hezbollah; H. Res. 149, Supporting the goals of International Women's Day; and H. Res. 64, Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the Government of Bangladesh should immediately drop all pending charges against Bangladeshi journalist Salah Uddin Shoaib Choudhury, 9:45 a.m; followed by a hearing on Afghanistan on the Brink: Where Do We Go From Here? 10 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and the Global Environment, hearing on Protecting the Human Rights of Comfort Women, 1:30 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, Committee, hearing entitled ''Lessons Learned and Grading Goals: The Department of Homeland Security of 2007,'' 9 a.m., 311 Cannon.

Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Courts, the Internet and Intellectual Property, oversight hearing on American Innovation at Risk: The Case for Patent Reform, 2 p.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security, hearing entitled ''Making Communities Safer: Youth Violence and Gang Interventions that Work,'' 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, hearing entitled ''Iraq Reconstruction: An Overview,'' 10 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census and National Archives, hearing entitled ''The State FOIA: Assessing Agency Efforts to Meet FOIA Requirements,'' 2 p.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Science and Technology, Subcommittee on Technology and Innovation, hearing on The National Institute of Standards and Technology's Role in Supporting Economic Competitiveness in the 21st Century, 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, hearing entitled ''The Development of Short Sea Shipping in the United States,'' 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs, hearing on Filipino Veterans, 10 a.m., 334 Cannon.

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, VA Inspector General—Budget and Best Practices, 3 p.m., 334 Cannon.

Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Trade, hearing on the U.S.-China trade relationship, 10 a.m., 1100 Longworth.

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, executive, briefing on Hot-Spots, 11:30 a.m.; and, executive, hearing on Iran's Involvement in Iraq, 2:30 p.m., H–405 Capitol.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

10 a.m., Thursday, February 15

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: After the transaction of any morning business (not to extend beyond 10:20 a.m.), Senate will begin consideration of the nominations of Norman Randy Smith, of Idaho, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit, and Marcia Morales Howard, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida, and at approximately 10:30 a.m. vote on confirmation of the nominations, respectively; following which, Senate will resume morning business.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Thursday, February 15

House Chamber

Program for Thursday: To be announced.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

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