

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, Shia against Sunni, Sunni against Shia, 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 Shia 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 Shia are willing to fight Shia 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 co-equal 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 assump-

tions: 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 Sad-

dam 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. 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 re-

main, 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 op-

tion. 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. GILCREST), himself a former Marine, always a Marine, who served during Vietnam and was wounded for this country.

Mr. GILCREST. 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 Delawarrians, 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 soldiers, 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 Hussein: "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 gentleman 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 micro-manage 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 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." (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 at-

tacks. 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. Armey 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 non-binding 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 provoked 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 fiancée 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 unpopular 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 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 IRAQI 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 maneuvering.

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 capital, 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 Iraqis 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' 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, Muqtada 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 pre-emptive 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 sheer 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."

We are 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 jumpsuit 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 peo-

ple, 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 war. 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.

□ 1410

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 un-

certainty, 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 equipment 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 gentleman 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 gentleman 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 non-binding 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 of 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 delatoid auxiliary 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 come 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 micro-manage 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 secu-

rity 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 war-mongering.

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 peace-keeping 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 re-

ceives 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.

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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 non-deployed 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 wonder-

ful 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 nothing 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 draw-down 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 non-binding resolution will not affect troop morale. If so, why not amend this non-binding 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 con-

stituents 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 ful-

filling 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 non-support 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 Petraeus, 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