Mr. Speaker, over the last 2 days Republicans who support

the President's troop escalation plan have had two main message points.

The first is that the resolution opposing the President's plan is

nonbinding and meaningless, and the second is that the resolution will

be the ``end of civilization,'' to borrow a term from a columnist. They

cannot have it both ways.

What we are doing over these 3 days of debate is having a real

discussion about changing the course of the war in Iraq. For those who

support the Bush-Cheney escalation, this debate serves as a prime

opportunity to explain why they think this escalation will work when

four other surges have not worked.

It is a shame that some have ignored the merits of the resolution and

focused on political calculation. In fact, several Republicans sent out

a letter saying this debate should not even be about the Iraq war

today. If we let Democrats force us into a debate on the surge or the

current situation in Iraq, we lose.

Far from it, Mr. Speaker. No one will lose by having a debate. In

fact, our great democracy benefits and the American people win by

knowing that we are charting a new direction.