Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to House Concurrent

Resolution 63.

This proposal sends a dangerous message to the terrorists in Iraq. It

informs them that they have succeeded in dividing us, that they should

continue training their fighters, rebuilding their resources, and then

they should attack with their full force when we leave.

There is no denying the difficulty of our current situation in Iraq.

Terrible fractures exist along ethnic and religious fault lines. The

need to stabilize Baghdad has never been more apparent.

All these realities are reflected in the President's new way forward,

which is much more than just an increase in troop strength.

On January 10, the President changed the strategy on how we will

fight this war. The President has laid out in great detail a plan for

the Iraqis to take a leading role in their own security, a plan to

isolate violent extremism and protect Iraq's citizens, a plan to make

room for political and economic progress.

Most importantly, though, this is a plan for victory, to stabilize

Iraq, to secure Iraq's democratic future, and then to bring our troops

home.

In testimony before the Senate Armed Forces committee, General David

Petraeus, the commanding officer in Iraq, described the implementation

of the President's plan, as ``a test of wills.''

General Petraeus confirmed that the congressional action against the

President's new plan would only encourage our enemies. Today, the will

of the House of Representatives is being put to the test.

Underpinning the resolution before us today are calls to defund our

military in a time of war. This proposal most certainly does not pass

the test of wills. Rather, it puts us on a path to defeat.

The expulsion of U.S. troops from Iraq is critical to al Qaeda's plan

to spread their deadly jihad beyond September 11, 2001, beyond Iraq's

borders, and into the greater Middle East and the rest of the world.

Failing to achieve victory in Iraq will roll back the clock in the

war on terror, giving al Qaeda the opportunity to establish a base in

the heart of the Arab world, a place to train, rebuild resources, and

plot the demise of American citizens across the globe.

A rapid U.S. withdrawal would lead to chaos, sectarian genocide, and

military intervention by Iraq's neighbors.

We can, as the President has proposed, pass the test of wills and

implement our plan for victory. The alternative to the President's plan

is to retreat from our objectives, setting the stage for regional

conflict in which terrorist agitators like al Qaeda, Hamas and

Hezbollah will thrive.

Radical Islamists have declared war on the United States. This is a

harsh and striking reality. We did not choose to be put in the cross-

hairs of terrorists, and yet we have been for decades.

We do have a choice, however, in whether or not we have the will to

win this war. My choice is to provide for the safety of our citizens

and the security of future generations. My choice is to oppose today's

misguided and dangerous resolution. My choice is to vote ``no,'' and I

urge my colleagues to vote ``no.''