Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, the status quo in Iraq is unacceptable, and allowing our

enemies to win is unacceptable, too. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I urge my

colleagues to oppose this House Democrat leadership resolution, H. Con.

Res. 63, for three specific reasons:

First, the language of the resolution is essentially meaningless. Its

passage will place the Congress on the side of the status quo.

I heard the Speaker say a few days ago that it is time for a ``new

direction'' in Iraq. But where is this ``new direction'' in this

resolution? It doesn't demand that all the troops return home. It

doesn't advise the President to send more troops or even to reassign or

relocate one soldier who is in the field today. It simply states, in

essence, the current plan is bad. That may be good politics for some in

this Chamber, but it is highly irresponsible and is certainly no way to

fight a war.

If Congress wants to be a true partner in this fight, we must offer

clear guidance, not mere criticism of the Commander in Chief.

Unfortunately, this resolution is irresponsibly silent on what the

``new direction'' ought to be.

The second reason to oppose this resolution is that it is

fundamentally vague and ambiguous. By only saying that Congress opposes

the President's troop surge proposal of January 10, the resolution does

not differentiate between the positive aspects of what the President

called for on that date and the more controversial elements as well.

For example, I continue to have a tremendous concern over the

President's plan for increasing our military force level in Baghdad to

fight the sectarian violence between the Sunni and Shi'a factions of

the Iraqi population. With the current lack of commitment of some Iraqi

security forces and police forces to deal effectively with this

violence, I am not confident of success of this surge into Baghdad.

Nonetheless, I do think the strategy is correct in calling for

additional American troops to go to Anbar Province to fight al Qaeda

terrorists in that part of Iraq and to add more troops along the Iraq-

Iranian border to interdict the flow of arms and more terrorists.

But, unfortunately, again, this resolution does not differentiate

between these critical elements of the President's strategy and,

therefore, on its face is weak and flawed.

The third reason to oppose this resolution is that it serves to

undercut the morale and the support of our fighting men and women at

the very time they are carrying out their orders. The President's

decision of January 10 is now being implemented. Our troops are already

carrying out this mission in the field.

I know of no instance in our Nation's history when Congress has

passed a resolution disapproving a mission while that mission is in

progress in the field. Can any proponent of this resolution come to the

floor and cite a case where Congress has undertaken this type of action

while a mission is already under way?

Any politician, it seems to me, who openly disapproves of an ongoing

mission in the field only undercuts troop spirit and morale as they

move forward, and that clearly lends support to the aims and the goals

of our enemies. But don't accept my view on this. Listen to Gary

Kurpius, the National Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, who

states that this resolution debate is ``a major distraction to U.S.

forces because it does nothing to improve the morale or strength of

their resolve.''

So while I cannot support this resolution for these reasons, I do

believe there is a ``new direction'' for us, as Republicans and

Democrats, to unite behind and support. H. Con. Res. 45, introduced by

Congressman Frank Wolf, would declare Congress's support for the

numerous recommendations of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, a

distinguished group of Republicans and Democrats that have set forth a

plan of action deserving of administration, congressional, and public

support.

Included in the group's recommendation is the call to establish

milestones of success for military training, government stability,

national reconciliation, which would result in Iraqis taking control of

their country and allowing our troops to withdraw; number two, to

create an Iraq International Support Group to work with the Iraqi

government to achieve these milestones; and, three, to focus U.S.

assistance on training of Iraqi police forces and military personnel

with the goal of completing the training by early 2008 so American

troops can return home.

Contrary to the flawed, simplistic, and purely political resolution

before us, the Wolf resolution offers clear, bipartisan, and

nonpolitical direction for Congress to support and to promote in this

very difficult time in our involvement in Iraq. Therefore, I urge my

colleagues to vote down H. Con. Res. 63 and for the Democrat leadership

in the House to immediately allow H. Con. Res. 45 to be voted in the

full House. Because the status quo in Iraq is unacceptable and victory

for our enemies is also unacceptable.