Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition to

this two-sentence non-binding resolution which demoralizes our troops

in the field while providing aid to our enemy during a time of on-going

conflict. These brave men and women deserve the full support of their

government, not second-guessing from politicians in Washington, DC.

Instead of discussions regarding appropriate funding levels to support

our troops, the Democratic majority has chosen to rebuke the conduct of

the war while it is still occurring. This is reckless and ill-advised.

This resolution encourages our enemies to continue provoking our

fighting men and women. America's enemies around the world are closely

watching what we say and do today. By passing this non-binding

resolution, Members of Congress are sending a vote of no confidence to

our troops in the field and a message of surrender to our enemies.

I strongly believe it is not the place of politicians in Washington

to devise military tactics and strategy. Congress must not tie the

hands of our military commanders in the field. You cannot fight a war

by committee, thousands of miles away. The responsibility of conducting

America's military strategy and the tactics of our armed forces should

be left to our military commanders on the ground.

The plan to increase the number of additional troops to the mission

in Iraq should be given a chance to succeed. These 20,000 additional

soldiers will assist the Iraqi government in its new, Iraqi-inspired

security plan. As Prime Minister Maliki said, ``This is 100 percent an

Iraqi plan under an Iraqi Command.''

The majority of U.S. forces will be deployed to Baghdad to assist in

maintaining control of areas cleared of terrorists and insurgents. As

our military commanders in the field have repeatedly told us, part of

the problem in securing Baghdad comes from the fact that many of the

insurgents lie in wait until American troops move to another area only

to emerge and retake precious territory gained by hard battle. By

having additional troops in the field, the Iraqis will have a better

chance to capture all of the insurgents, including those who stay

hidden, waiting to attack again.

Our commanders on the ground have given this plan a green light, and

I will defer to them to make military decisions. We should keep in mind

our top commander in Iraq, Lt. Gen. David Petraeus, has warned against

passing this very type of resolution. Our troops have said they want

the chance to finish the mission that has been started.

Our troops do not want Congress to conduct this war. As one soldier

posted to a blog on February 5, 2007, ``Proposing to legislate the

conduct of this long war looks worse than cut and run. It feels like

the betrayal of the families who bear the burdens.''

Congress should not tell our soldiers how to conduct a war any more

than Congress should tell a lawyer how to argue a case or a doctor how

to perform a surgery. Congress's place is to support our troops by

providing the funding they need to finish the mission that was started.

If my colleagues are so strongly opposed to the mission in Iraq, they

can vote to cut the funding of our soldiers in harm's way.

We must recognize the War on Terror requires perseverance and

patience. American patience, however, is not infinite. The lack of

visible progress in Iraq is deeply troubling. The Iraqi conflict has a

crucial role in the war against al Qaeda. American troops are stemming

the tide of a worsening situation. Failure in Iraq is simply not an

option. It is important we in Congress demonstrate quickly our ability

to win in Iraq before the situation gets worse.

This may well represent the Administration's last chance to

demonstrate sustainable progress is securing the country. It is equally

important; however, that Iraqis take ownership for their own country.

Our troops, in whatever number, are not there permanently. The Iraqis

must take an active role in shaping their country's future. Americans

took control of America after the American Revolution; the Iraqis must

do the same. The Iraqis must be made to recognize the need for Iraqis

to control the future of their nation. Iraq's future should not be

determined by Americans, only the Iraqis can and should do that.

In closing, I believe in and support our American troops. They have

made tremendous progress in Iraq and should be commended for the

actions towards making Iraq a country for the Iraqis. Since the

declaration of the Global War on Terror, our brave men and women have

worked hard to stem the tide of a worsening situation. Because of them,

elections have been held in both Afghanistan and Iraq; the terrorist

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi has been killed, former Iraqi dictator Saddam

Hussein was captured, tried and executed, and more than three-quarters

of al Qaeda's known leaders and associates have been detained or

killed.

At the same time, Iraqis must assume responsibility for their

country. Americans will not stay in Iraq forever; Iraqis must assume

control of their country. We must recognize the War on Terror requires

perseverance and patience. American patience, however, is not infinite.

The Iraqi conflict has a crucial role in the war against al Qaeda and

American troops are stemming the tide of a worsening situation.

However, I believe the Iraqi people must take an active role in shaping

their country's future. Iraq's future should not be determined by

Americans, only the Iraqis can and should do that.