Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution. There are many

flaws in this resolution. One of the most serious is that while it

gives lip-service to a desire to support and protect the troops, it

turns around and disapproves of the plan that is best calculated by the

commanders on the ground to bring order to Baghdad.

This surge is the best way, in the opinion of the commanders, to

clamp down on the insurgency, to protect our troops and ultimately to

lead to victory. I don't see how you can claim to protect and support

the troops while taking away the best option for victory.

That brings up another serious flaw in this resolution: It has no

positive alternative. The resolution seems to say that we should go on

as before, which I thought my colleagues across the aisle said was

unacceptable.

Yet another serious flaw is that Members of Congress, who are many

thousands of miles away from the battlefield, are substituting their

judgment for that of the commanders in the field. This is foolish and

arrogant. This gives rise to a constitutional conflict as well. The

Constitution gives the President the power of Commander in Chief.

President Bush, who was reelected by a vote of the entire American

people just 2 years ago, has the duty and authority to conduct the war

in Iraq.

Congress has the power to declare war and to fund or to not fund war,

but does not have the power to conduct a war. This constitutional

division of powers is vital, because, among other things, a clear chain

of command is better calculated to lead to victory with the least

possible loss of life. War by committee, on the other hand, does not

best serve the interests of our country or our troops.

Because this resolution is so deeply flawed, it will send bad

messages if it is passed. It will send a message to our enemies that we

are weak and unable to complete a difficult task. It will send a

message to our allies that we are undependable. It will send a message

to the families and loved ones of our fallen soldiers and marines, to

our brave men and women who have been disabled and to the troops in the

field, that their sacrifice is in vain because their mission is not

worth our commitment. These messages will be destructive, and I urge my

colleagues not to go down this road.

If America does abandon Iraq, which many of my colleagues across the

aisle want to be the ultimate outcome, destruction will spread across

the entire Middle East and will be more likely to come to our own

shores.

I know that the struggle against terrorism is difficult, but we

cannot give up. Yes, we must learn as we go, and, yes, we must adapt to

changing circumstances. But we must not think that retreat will bring

relief. We and the entire world will pay a terrible price if we go down

that road. This resolution is the first step down that road. I urge the

defeat of this resolution.