I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the resolution before

us. I wish I could do so with the type of certainty that seems to

motivate many of my colleagues on the issue. But such resolute

certainty escapes me. I do not have a military background. In fact, few

of us debating this resolution do.

But each of us can find generals or former generals who will support

virtually every option we wish to put on the table. In the end, as

legislators, we are left with our own council. Hopefully, such council

is informed by briefings, hearings, meetings, and visits to the region.

But we cannot and should not try to place ourselves in the position

of Commander in Chief. Our system of government wisely gives that role

to the Chief Executive.

This is not to say, however, that we should not be having this

discussion. Some have said that simply debating this resolution

emboldens our enemies. Perhaps they are right, but we would not suspend

due process in this country because it might embolden criminals. It is

a price we are willing to pay.

Likewise, debating the merits of war is what democratic nations do.

My own thoughts on the situation in Iraq are as follows: I have little

confidence that a surge in troop levels will change the situation in

Iraq in any substantive fashion. It seems clear that the violence in

Iraq is increasingly sectarian, and inserting more troops in this

atmosphere is unlikely to improve matters very much.

Without a more sincere commitment to step up to the plate from the

Iraqi Government, we are unlikely to make significant progress. But

when all is said and done, we have a Commander in Chief whom we have

authorized to go to war.

Inserting ourselves as legislators into the chain of command by

passing a resolution, nonbinding though it may be, that questions the

President's decision to conduct a mission that is clearly already under

way strikes me as folly.

I urge my colleagues to vote ``no'' on the resolution.