Mr. Speaker, I rise, reluctantly, in opposition to this

resolution. I say ``reluctantly'' because I had hoped to be able to

vote in favor of something positive, a fresh perspective, a new idea, a

new pathway to success, anything to encourage and foster a positive

outcome in the Iraq conflict. But this resolution offers none of these

things. It is a simple, almost meaningless, nonbinding statement of

disapproval that provides no constructive resolve on this daunting, yet

critical mission.

My opposition is both procedural and substantive. I am extremely

disappointed that we only have this one simplistic, inadequate

statement before us for consideration. No alternatives, no other ideas,

no solutions. The situation in Iraq is complicated, and the American

people deserve far more from Congress than a resolution that

essentially calls for the status quo.

The resolution opposes the troop surge called for by the Commander in

Chief, but fails to offer or even allow for consideration of any

alternatives aimed at achieving success in Iraq, nor does it offer an

alternative aimed at a reduction of troops.

There are other ideas out there worthy of consideration and

discussion, yet we are not debating those, including those suggested by

the bipartisan Iraq Study Group. For example, the study group concluded

that there is no single action that the military can take that, by

itself, can bring about success in Iraq. I agree with that assessment.

Regardless of a troop surge, I believe a positive outcome in Iraq

requires regional cooperation and positive engagement with all of

Iraq's neighboring states.

A case can be made for a troop surge, but even more, we need a surge

in diplomacy to create an environment conducive for a lasting peace

throughout the Middle East. The history of the region is too diverse,

too complex, and too tumultuous to expect progress without an

integrated diplomatic effort and multinational support. Of course, this

simple resolution before us offers no perspective on these matters.

In a few weeks, this body will have the opportunity to vote on

funding for ongoing operations in Iraq. Forget today's resolution; the

vote on the supplemental funding bill is where the real debate will

occur, and the policies will be laid forth. Make no mistake, a cutoff

of funds and a premature withdrawal of troops from Iraq will produce

even greater sectarian violence, further deterioration of security

conditions, and would foment a terrorist breeding ground for radical

Islamists. We, the Members of Congress, must give our troops the

resources they need to carry out their critical mission to a successful

conclusion.

In closing, let me say that we all unequivocally support the troops

who are serving and who have served in Iraq, and we all deeply

appreciate their efforts to carry out their duties. Every day I think

about the 3,000-plus American troops who have died in Iraq and

Afghanistan, and I pray for their families, as well as for our troops

that are there now. I think about the thousands more who have been

injured, and the tens of thousands of innocent Iraqi citizens who have

been killed or injured as a result of this conflict. We must do all we

can to ensure that those casualties were not suffered in vain. Above

all, we must seek to end this conflict and stop the casualties.

Simply put, the resolution we are debating offers no path to success,

and that is why I oppose it.