Madam Speaker, the Iraq war is the single greatest issue

facing the American people today, and we must get the job done. Which

is why I rise today in opposition to H. Con. Res. 63.

My prayers go out to Nevada's 26 families who have lost loved ones in

this war and the other over-3,000 American citizens that have paid the

ultimate sacrifice. I continue to pray for those who are in the war

zone today around the world and for the families here at home.

Yes, a lot of mistakes have been made, but it is easy on Monday

morning to look back and criticize. This war on terrorism is not in the

textbooks. It is a war that must continually be reassessed, realigned,

and restructured, because war is not perfect.

I want to bring the troops home just as soon as possible, as soon as

the region is secured. There are no guarantees, but I believe the

quickest way to bring our sons and daughters home is to send additional

troops for a short period of time.

Madam Speaker, I oppose this resolution for three major reasons:

Number one, the impact on troops' morale.

Number two, there are no solutions today. This resolution sticks with

staying the course.

And, number three, I believe this resolution puts us in the pathway

of cutting off funds desperately needed for our troops.

First, on the morale: I have had the honor to be in the Middle East,

in Southeast Asia, in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan on three occasions, I

believe more times than anyone in our delegation from Nevada. I have

looked in the eyes of these young men and women of all ages in the

deserts of Iraq, in Bethesda, and in Walter Reed Army Hospital.

To a person, morale is at an all-time high. But what I do hear

consistently from these folks is they are afraid that Washington has

looked the other way. They don't want to be the last man killed, and

they are afraid the funds are going to be reduced and cut off.

And, you know, I even disagree with Secretary Gates and his

perspective, and certainly with the Democrats with their approach that

this debate does not send the wrong message. I believe that you are

wrong. It does.

I received this e-mail just this week from a soldier I spent

Christmas Eve with in Baghdad this past Christmas. And he said,

``Congressman, every day we are burdened with stories in the media of

the American people wanting to cut and run, with slanted coverage of

atrocities and the argument that it is possible to support the troops

but not the war. I disagree, Congressman. Someone that supports me by

extension supports my efforts to accomplish my mission.''

Madam Speaker, I hope this Congress heeds his words.

Another young man from Nevada visited the Capitol last year, wanted a

tour of the Capitol, is proud of his uniform, because he was a soldier

serving in the Middle East. But he was afraid he would be scorned, not

unlike our family and friends that were scorned when they returned from

Vietnam.

Through this resolution we are going to continue to send the wrong

message to those who humbly protect our Nation.

The second reason, there are no solutions in this resolution. My

father taught me a long time ago that before you complain you need to

have a solution to the problem.

The Democrats have not presented the American people with a solution,

only a resolution that endorses stay the course, which, as we saw in

November, is unacceptable to the American people. This is not about

leadership. This is unacceptable. I am open for ideas and suggestions

as we fight this war on terror, but we must, we must win this war.

The third reason, this resolution opens the door to cutting funds

desperately needed by our troops. The Democrats have said it time and

time again. They are talking about cutting funds for body armor, for

food, for military equipment and supplies.

This resolution, and their assertion this resolution simultaneously

offers support for soldiers but not the President's plan, is

disingenuous. I am deeply concerned that this resolution merely opens

the door for Congress to move forward cutting off funds for our troops.

We have heard it this week, and simply had the Democrats allowed the

Republicans to add one sentence that we would guarantee we would not

reduce the funds, would have changed the whole outcome of this

resolution.

Madam Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity, but this resolution is

a resolution of hypocrisy. The American people spoke in November and

said we must not stay the course. I cannot support this resolution, and

I don't believe the American people do.