Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlelady for

yielding and for her service to the country.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in a different position than the majority

of this body. You see, I am one of the 54 newly elected Members of this

Congress. We did not have the opportunity to debate and vote on the

authority to use military force in Iraq.

Madam Speaker, I want to have an honest debate, not for political

gain and not one that questions anyone's patriotism, because I believe

everyone in this body wants to move this country in the right

direction.

But I believe the right direction means that we move forward, not

backwards. On this floor today is a nonbinding resolution that I

believe moves us backwards. This resolution offers no hope to the

American people. It offers no plan of action, no new strategy with the

prospect of achieving success.

A lot has changed since last November's election. We have a new

Defense Secretary, recommendation from the bipartisan Iraq Study Group,

and a new general, General David Petraeus. He will lead our troops on

the ground in Iraq.

We have a new plan, a new way forward that addresses the problem of

security in Iraq through a strategy that requires more ground power.

This reinforcement of troops is recommended by the study group, and we

will also hold the Iraqi Government accountable to establish and

preserve the peace.

Our Commander in Chief, the military commanders, and our troops

believe we can still achieve stability in Iraq.

But this resolution would be the first step in gutting the very

resources necessary to achieve success. This resolution offers nothing.

The Commander in Chief, the bipartisan study group, and General

Petraeus offer a new way forward. This resolution offers the status

quo. The status quo is a mandate to fail and begins the chain of events

that lead to a precipitous withdrawal from Iraq and all the

consequences that would inevitably follow.

And what would those consequences be?

Withdrawal makes the young Iraqi democracy vulnerable to takeover by

extremist elements that hate America.

What would withdrawal mean for the stability in the Middle East?

What would generations of Iraqis believe, that Americans will quit

before the job is done?

Who will fill the void of our strength, al Qaeda, Syria, or a country

like Iran that threatens regional stability through an aggressive

nuclear program, that supports terrorist groups like Hezbollah, and

that possibly supplies weapons to insurgents killing our troops?

Withdrawal only strengthens terrorist groups fighting the United

States and demoralizes our American troops.

I may be new to this House, but I recognize when a simple, nonbinding

resolution has potential to do great damage to our Nation and to our

men and women in the military.

I believe that, by voting for this resolution, the House will send a

demoralizing message to our service men and women who are courageously

implementing this strategy. By voting for this resolution, the House

will strengthen our enemies and tell them that the end is near; that

the Congress will continue to undermine our Commander in Chief, our

military commanders, like General Petraeus and our troops, by cutting

funding or demanding further retreats.

By voting for this resolution, the House will snuff out the hope of

democracy that millions of Iraqi people have. By voting for this

resolution, the House will begin a process that leads to the creation

of a dangerous power vacuum in Iraq to be potentially filled by those

who mean America great harm.

I ask the Members to join with me in voting ``no'' on this

resolution.