Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to ask my colleagues to vote

against House Concurrent Resolution 63. I ask this despite the fact

that I am very much in favor of the first part of the resolution before

us. The first part says: Congress will and should continue to support

and protect the members of the United States Armed Forces who are

serving or who have served bravely and honorably in Iraq. If the

resolution stopped there, it would be great.

We would be sending a message that we unequivocally support our

troops in Iraq, our troops who are preparing to go there, and General

Petraeus is being confirmed to lead those troops.

But the resolution does not stop there. It goes on and by its words

takes that support away. How do you support the troops without

supporting the plans of those troops? General David Petraeus was

confirmed just a scant 20 days ago with much praise and fanfare. He is

probably one of the most respected men to ever wear the uniform.

Congress said to him, you are great, go get the job done. Now, less

than a week after he took over in Baghdad, we are in the throes of the

process which will essentially tell the general, sorry, we don't

approve of the plan you created or are currently undertaking.

Most of those criticizing this plan offer no alternative, and I say

most. Some have offered an alternative, but most of those criticizing

this plan have offered no alternative.

Even the Iraq Study Group, a bipartisan commission of statesmen who

have been heralded and quoted by the many who support this resolution,

have indeed said that they support the short-term surge. This was later

confirmed by Mr. Hamilton, the Democratic co-chair of the group when he

appeared in front of the Foreign Affairs Committee of which I am a

member.

I visited Iraq five times, the last with my friend from Indiana (Mr.

Buyer). I met with the troops from my State and from others across

America, thanking them for their service in combating radical Islam and

the insurgency and liberating a people from tyranny.

I have sat down with the President and the Prime Minister of Iraq. I

have told them that the Americans and the coalition forces would soon

be leaving Iraq in the not-too-distant future. Their response has

always been, we want you to leave but we need your help now until we

can train our forces to provide our own security.

America will one day hand over responsibilities to the Iraqis, but it

must be on terms which are beneficial to the interests of America, Iraq

and the region, while not sacrificing the progress we have made or the

security that we have earned. We must do right by the Iraqi people. We

must do right by our troops in Iraq tonight, and we must do right by

the men and women in uniform and their families who have served and

sacrificed so much.

Our allies, countries in the region, in fact most of the world,

agrees that if we pull out before the Iraqis are ready, it will create

tremendous instability in the region, leading to the possibility of war

and nuclear proliferation in the Arab states.

I had the opportunity to successfully play sports at a fairly high

level. Whether it was on a Boys Club team, a high school team or a

major college football team, nothing emboldened our team more or made

us work harder to defeat the other team than when we saw dissension on

the other team. We have an opportunity this week to send a strong

message to our allies, the insurgents and most importantly the men and

women in uniform who ironically are in combat tonight attempting to

execute the plan that is being railed against on the House floor as we

speak.

The message that we should send should be our will to not jeopardize

the safety of those in Iraq by emboldening our enemies. We can show

this by our will tonight of defeating this resolution.

The other thing I would like to say is that reference was made to

Washington. And I also am reading a book on John Adams that is related,

certainly. And Washington did at times have to pull back. He was facing

the greatest army of the time.

But he did pull back. And Washington also was under tremendous

pressure from Congress, under tremendous criticism. And I am certainly

glad that Washington did not listen to that criticism, that he fought

on. If he had not, we would probably be under British rule today.