Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak against the motion

under consideration. As the House debates this so called non-binding

resolution concerning the recently implemented troop surge in Iraq, I

think it is important to remind my colleagues exactly what is being

sought by this resolution and what is to be accomplished with its

passage.

This ill-conceived resolution seeks to do two incompatible and indeed

conflicting things; it attempts to speak for this chamber in

disapproving the proposed troop increase. And it simultaneously claims

to support those troops, whose devotion to duty is essential, in

prosecuting a mission which is, in part, renounced by this very same

resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I do not question that the members who serve in this

chamber do so with integrity and with a high regard for the men and

women who serve in uniform. I do, however, question the wisdom of

considering a resolution which will have no practical effect, but will

have serious and inevitable consequences for the men and women who have

been asked to serve.

While we consider this resolution, our enemies, in prosecuting their

side of this war--will little note its allegedly non-binding character.

In that sense, Mr. Speaker, this is very much a binding resolution. It

binds this House irreversibly to a statement of disapproval. But it

will do nothing to change the situation to which it is nominally

addressed, because it does not bind our words to any actions.

General Peter Pace, in his testimony before the Armed Services

Committee displayed confidence in our armed forces. He said that he

believes our men and women in uniform understand the intricacies of our

democracy and the nature of our vibrant debate in this Congress. Mr.

Speaker, I would add that while they may understand our prerogatives,

they will seek to decipher our intent and the resolve of this Chamber

to support them in this fight. I also believe that they will rightfully

see this resolution for what it is--mere contradiction.

Without our continued commitment to the young democracy in Iraq, the

political and security situation in that country will suffer tremendous

setbacks. Without support from American troops and our allies, there is

a greater chance of failure in Iraq. General Petraeus, Commanding

Officer of Multi-National Force-Iraq, last month described what failure

in Iraq would look like when he said that ``Sectarian groups would

obviously begin to stake out their turf, try to expand their turf. They

would do that by greatly increased ethnic cleansing.''

Defense Secretary Robert Gates in a press conference last month said

that if we fail, ``One would see an emboldened and strengthened Iran, a

safe haven and base of operations for jihadist networks in the heart of

the Middle East, a humiliating defeat in the overall campaign against

violent extremism worldwide, and an undermining of the credibility of

the United States.'' Mr. Speaker, these results are not acceptable to

Americans because they are not in America's interest and because more

turmoil in Iraq or the Middle East will unacceptably threaten our

national security.

Mr. Speaker, we know that among the strengths that our men and women

in uniform possess is the courage to carry on. They are armed with the

notion that no matter what inspires our enemies, we fight in defense of

human dignity and natural rights. This chamber, which would say that it

supports our troops, should not do anything that would lead those

troops to question the meaning or sincerity of our support.

I therefore encourage my colleagues to join me in opposing this

dangerous resolution, which in two short paragraphs declares principles

while avoiding the actions those principles seemingly require.