I thank the Speaker for his recognition and for

his usual courtesy.

Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in opposition to the resolution. I have listened as

carefully as I can for the past day and a half of debate, and it

becomes clearer and clearer to me that those who were supporting this

resolution, for whatever reason, are unwilling to accept the

consequences of the words of this resolution, unwilling to accept the

consequences of what could happen by the adoption of this resolution.

Yes, the resolution is meaningless. Yes, the resolution has no legal

impact, but it does send a terrible message. It sends a terrible

message to the world that the United States is losing a sense of

resolution, if you will. It also sends a very cruel message, I believe,

to the troops in the field, because while the resolution goes out of

the way to say it supports the troops, at the very same time it is

necessarily undermining the newly appointed commander of those troops.

We hear from speaker after speaker who was speaking in support of the

resolution that this is more of the same staying the course, this is a

policy that cannot work.

But yet the newly designated commander, General Petraeus, who was

unanimously confirmed by the United States Senate, is one of the

architects of this policy. General Petraeus has stated that this policy

can work, that he believes it will work.

Those of us who have been to Iraq and seen the outstanding work that

General Petraeus has done, the 101st Airborne, we realize how committed

he is. To me it sends such a mixed message to, on the one hand, have

him unanimously confirmed as the new commander in the field, and yet at

the same time to be attacking his credibility or his competency.

You can't have it both ways. You can't say he is the best man for the

job, we have faith in him, and yet say the policy is wrong and it

cannot work, and he says it will work and he is the architect of that

policy. Think of the message we are sending to the troops. Think of the

message we are sending to our allies in our region. Probably most

importantly, think of the message we are sending to the enemy of the

region.

I just heard the previous gentleman say that those of us who oppose

the resolution want to stay the course. I would say that those who are

supporting the resolution are the ones who want to stay the course.

This is a significant new policy. General Petraeus has said it is a new

policy, and it is a new policy.

The gentleman also said that we don't really have to worry about Iraq

becoming a haven for terrorists because terrorists can attack us

anywhere. He basically said you can do it from an apartment in Hamburg.

I would suggest that if the proponents of the resolution cannot

appreciate the distinction between a hotel room in Hamburg and a

sovereign state such as Iraq being occupied by terrorists, then they

don't realize the impact that Afghanistan had, the fact that the

Taliban allowed al Qaeda to have a sanctuary in Afghanistan, how it

gave them a strong base of operations to carry out and plot the attacks

of September 11.

Now, truly there are terrorists everywhere, Islamist terrorists

throughout the world. They are certainly throughout the Middle East,

the Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore, they are here in the United

States, we know that, in Canada. But the fact is you try to take as

many sanctuaries away from them if possible.

Iraq, if we did leave Iraq, and that, I believe, has to be the

necessary outcome, the only logical conclusion of where this resolution

will ultimately lead us, then we have a situation where we are talking

about confronting Iran. Well, the Shiites in Iran will certainly have

enormous influence in Iraq. Al Qaeda will have a sanctuary among the

Sunnis in Iraq, and then we will have the situation in the north

between the Kurds and the Turks. So the fact is no one more than those

of us who oppose the resolution realize this is not the only

battlefield, but it is a main battlefield.

Certainly al Qaeda believes it is important. That is why we have al

Qaeda in Iraq. That is why al Qaeda has been carrying out attacks, that

is why al Qaeda was there. That is why we are engaging in Anbar

province. By the way, of the 21,000 additional troops, at least 4,000

will be directly confronting al Qaeda in Anbar province.

These are all the issues I feel have not been in any way adequately

or sufficiently addressed by the supporters of the resolution. Again,

at a time when we have General Petraeus embarking on what I believe is

a key turning point in the war, it is really irresponsible to even be

considering voting for this resolution.

Now, another point, I know many speakers on my side want to be heard

during the time that I will be controlling, but we, I think, have to

address the issue of should Congress be getting involved in making

strategic battlefield decisions.

I have researched this. I have not found one instance during the

history of our country where the United States Congress has injected

itself into battlefield decisions.

I was just thinking suppose we did this during World War II, and we

had this situation with a small island in the Pacific, Iwo Jima, where

almost 7,000 people were killed in less than 6 weeks, almost 26,000

casualties. If we had 24-hour cable news, if we had a sense of disunity

in the country, we would be bringing a resolution in the second or

third week of the battle saying we already lost 2, 3, 4,000 troops,

this one island, how can we have 10 to 15,000 casualties just in the

first 2, 3 weeks.

But the fact is we have allowed the President, as Commander in Chief,

and that is his constitutional responsibility. We voted for the war in

the House. We voted for the war in the Senate. Once we do that, the

Commander in Chief, I believe, strongly believe, has the constitutional

authority and the right to be deciding exactly the tactical and

strategic decisions.

If the Members of Congress want to cut off funding for the war, the

fact is some of them may, then the fact is they should say that, not be

coming in through the backdoor.

So I would urge my colleagues to realize the consequences of their

action. You know, I spoke on the House floor yesterday, and after I was

finished the speaker who followed me said I wish that the opponents of

the resolution would just stick to the resolution itself.

I am more than willing to debate the resolution. I believe I have.

The fact is I can see why they don't want to look at the consequences

beyond the narrow language of that resolution, because it will have

horrific consequences for the United States. Actions have consequences,

words have consequences, and the words of this resolution will have

terrible consequences for the United States, terrible consequences for

all of us who oppose Islamic terrorism, and terrible consequences for

our allies in the region and with whom we need support in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, I certainly acknowledge the

passion of the former speaker on the floor.

I would just say, though, that all of us have suffered casualties and

deaths in our districts. Certainly a gentleman from my former district

was killed last week. He was a graduate of Duke University. He was

offered scholarships to law school. He was an All American lacrosse

player, volunteered to serve in the Army, was in his third tour. His

family more than ever supports the effort in Iraq, and you can find

families on all sides.

I think it is wrong to somehow suggest that those who died, somehow

the families want us to vote for this resolution or against it. We can

find sufficient numbers on both sides. Certainly in my experience, most

of those would oppose the resolution. I certainly would not impose that

on anyone else.

Madam Speaker, I would suggest to the

gentleman, while he believes this plan has no chance of working and it

is the same as previous plans, the fact is the newly confirmed general

in Iraq, General Petraeus, who is by all accounts the most significant

general we have had in Iraq, who is the author of the counterinsurgency

policy, said it is a significant change and it will work. That is why I

would say that while the resolution says it supports the troops, you

are in effect undermining the new commander by challenging either his

credibility or his competency. And that is a terrible message to the

troops.

Reclaiming my time, I never suggested

unpatriotic. I said you are questioning the competency or credibility

of the commander in Iraq, who was just confirmed unanimously by the

United States Senate.

Madam Speaker, I would just advise the

supporters of the resolution that while Mr. Clay and others did oppose

the war, and I certainly commend them for their consistency, the fact

is the Democratic leader at the time and many of the Democratic leaders

in the House and the Senate strongly supported the war resolution in

October of 2002, both in the House and the Senate.

Reclaiming my time, both former President

Clinton and others have said that he saw the same intelligence as

President Bush did.

Madam Speaker, various supporters of the

resolution can point to this general or that general. I would point to

the general who was most recently confirmed and unanimously confirmed

by the United States Senate, who is the author of this plan. I will

stand by him.

Madam Speaker, I would suggest that the lives

of our troops are in the hands of General Petraeus, and his credibility

is undermined by this resolution.

Madam Speaker, I would say to my good friend

from American Samoa that one of the reasons why I do refer to General

Petraeus is he is one of those who put this plan together and he says

it will work, and for people to belittle his plan or to ridicule it or

to adopt for the first time in history a resolution attacking his

strategic plan is an attack on either his credibility or his

competency. You can't have it both ways.

Madam Speaker, again I would suggest to these

supporters of the resolution that the President's key advisers,

including the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Pace, and

the new commander in Iraq, General Petraeus, strongly support this

increase in troops.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to my good friend from

New York, the message this resolution sends to the troops in the field

is that the resolution challenges and opposes the mission that their

group commander is asking them to carry out, and to me that has to

undermine their morale.

Reclaiming my time, the reason I am saying that

is, you are opposing the 21,000 troop increase, and that is the policy

of General Petraeus, who is the new commander in the field. That is the

policy he is asking his troops to carry out, and you are opposing the

very policy the new commander says can work and will work.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to supporters of the

resolution that General Petraeus himself, in answer to a question from

Senator Lieberman, he said that resolutions such as this will affect

the morale of the troops that he has been asked to lead in battle.

Mr. Speaker, I would just comment on the

remarks of my good friend, the gentleman from Kansas, as to troops that

he has heard from. I know I have visited Iraq a number of times. I

visit Reserves, National Guard, regular troops, active duty, and I have

never seen morale higher in any Armed Forces.

I speak with troops when they come home to my district. I go to the

wakes and funerals of those who die from my district. And I think we

can pick and choose as to what we say. I would say the overwhelming

majority I have spoken to do support and know exactly why they are

there.

But again, I just lost a constituent the other day. His family

certainly is honored by his service. It was his third tour. He went

back for a third tour. So he certainly understood what was going on.

Mr. Speaker, I was remiss before in not

commending the gentleman from New Jersey on his knowledge of logic and

philosophy. I should have known he would get us on that one.

With that, I also note that the Iraq Study Group said that the United

States should significantly increase the number of U.S. military

personnel, including combat troops.