Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for

yielding.

Friends and colleagues, I am glad we are having this debate. It is

good to debate the most important issue facing our country, the most

important issue facing the world. I am glad we are talking about Iraq.

We need to have a debate about Iraq.

I have grave concerns about the conduct of this war. I look back at

the last 3 or 4 years and I think to myself, boy, I would have done

that differently, I would have done this differently; they should have

done that, they should have done this. I think we all can look at

hindsight and see how things should have been done differently.

Well, here is where we are. The question is, is this the right

resolution to pass? I for one don't know if this strategy is going to

work or not. I believe our troops are going to do exactly what we ask

them to do. I have perfect confidence that the U.S. soldiers, airmen,

Army and Marines are going to do exactly what we ask them to do and

they will do their jobs.

Where my doubts lie are with the Iraqi Government. Will the Iraqi

Government do what we are asking them to do? Will the Iraqi Government

do what is needed to do to hold up their end of the bargain? I don't

know.

But what I do know is this: If we pass this resolution, this

resolution, while our troops are in the middle of implementing this

mission, while our troops are over there right now implementing this

strategy, and we pass this resolution which says, you know what, we

don't think you can succeed; we don't think you can do the job; we

don't think you can do what you are being asked to do right now, that

is a slap in the face. It is a killer of morale. This is the wrong

message to send our troops.

We have to think about the alternatives. We have to think about the

consequences of failure. We have to think about the message this sends

our troops. We have to think about the message this sends our enemies.

Madam Speaker, by telling the world, by telling Americans and by

telling our enemies and our troops we don't think this is going to

work, we don't think this can succeed, what message does that send?

And for those who say this won't work and I am voting for this

resolution, it is your obligation to tell us how better you can do

this, what is your plan, what is your strategy. Because we have to

think about the consequences of failure. We have to accept and know

that if we just pull out we will have sectarian genocide. We will have

a safe haven for terrorists with oil money. We will have a Middle East

power struggle that will be very, very ugly, where countries that are

very hostile to us, like Iran and Syria, will have the run of the

region. We have to look at those consequences.

But more important than anything else, Madam Speaker, is the fact

that I just cannot look our soldiers in the eyes, and I am traveling to

this region in a few days, I cannot look them in the eyes and tell them

that when I was in the comforts of Congress, I sat there high open my

pedestal and I told the American people and you that the mission you

are about to engage in, the job you are trying hard to do for us, you

can't complete it. You are incapable. It won't work. Why bother trying?

I can't send that message to our troops.

With that, Madam Speaker, I urge a ``no'' vote. This is the right

debate to have, the wrong resolution to pass.