Madam Speaker, it is good we are having this debate. As a

20-year veteran of this place, I am, frankly, impressed with the

heartfelt and articulate statements from both sides of the aisle. On

matters of war and peace, it is imperative we do what is right for our

country, as we see it, and then live personally with the consequences.

Critics of the war in Iraq wanted new leadership at the Department of

Defense, new military leadership on the ground, and a new plan to

stabilize Iraq and bring our troops home.

We have a new Defense Secretary, Robert Gates, new Commanding General

of Multinational Forces, David Petraeus, who everyone acknowledged is

as perfect a person for this job as we could find, and a new strategy

to clean up, hold and rebuild the neighborhoods with a short-term

buildup of our forces.

The Democratic majority in the House has introduced a resolution

condemning this strategy, expressing disapproval, without offering any

alternatives. Ironically, they offer a stay the course resolution.

The majority is clear on what it is against, but does not say what it

is for, leaving us with what exists right now, the status quo.

The resolution sends the wrong message to the President, to our

troops, and to our enemies. It will not get my vote.

We need a resolution to help resolve this conflict, not a symbolic

resolution that gives no guidance on how we can help stabilize Iraq and

bring our troops home.

Working with Congressman Frank Wolf and others, we helped create the

Iraq Study Group, bipartisan experts led by Jim Baker and Lee Hamilton

who offered fresh eyes on Iraq and offered specific recommendations.

The Iraq Study Group made three recommendations, transfer

responsibility for police patrolling the streets from American troops

to Iraqi security forces; two, encourage Sunnis and Shias to resolve

their differences or face the consequences, American troops leaving;

and, three, conduct a robust diplomatic effort with all of Iraq's

neighbors to engage them in the country's future.

The White House has implemented the first and second of those

recommendations but, regretfully, not the third.

The Study Group provided a road map resoundingly endorsed by members

from both political parties. It is a missed opportunity that the

resolution we are debating this week does not incorporate these three

recommendations.

I know there are many Americans who are concerned about a short-term

increase in troops to secure and regain control of Baghdad. I

understand their concern. Two years ago I believed this strategy had a

better than even chance to work. Today it is less likely to succeed,

but it is still the best opportunity we have.

But this strategy will only work if Iraqi troops do their part; Sunni

and Shia politicians resolve their differences, meeting benchmarks

against firm timelines like they did in 2005; and the U.S. and Iraq

engage in a diplomatic surge with all of Iraq's neighbors, including

Syria and Iran.

We also need to be prepared with plan B if this plan fails. It seems

to me plan B involves taking our troops out of harm's way, removing

them from the urban areas, and placing them along the borders so Iraq's

neighbors, Syria, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan, and Turkey, are

not tempted to enter Iraq.

And if plan B fails, we will have no choice but to leave, having been

defeated, having lost to the Islamist terrorists who have made it very

clear this is just the beginning.

In essence, our troops deserve to know we have a plan to win. If we

do not have a plan to win, we need a plan to leave. The resolution

before the House neither helps us succeed nor gives us guidance on when

and how to leave. It is counterproductive.

It is so counterproductive, for 535 Members of the House of

Representatives and Senate to micromanage the war. It is the

responsibility of the administration to conduct the war effort. It is

Congress's responsibility to conduct tough oversight, hold the

administration accountable for the implementation of the war.

Having chaired 14 hearings on the operations in Iraq and been to Iraq

15 times to conduct on-the-ground oversight, I will continue to ask the

administration the tough questions and to provide, to the best of my

ability, my observations and recommendations.

Regretfully, too few Members of Congress have fully considered the

consequence of leaving Iraq prematurely. The Iraq Study Group warned,

``If the situation in Iraq continues to deteriorate, the consequence

could be severe for Iraq, the United States, the region, and the

world.'' This is what members of the Iraq Study Group said on a

bipartisan basis, Republicans and Democrats united.

The ultimate goal for me is to bring our troops home without leaving

Iraq in chaos. This is still achievable if Republicans and Democrats,

the White House and Congress, agree on a bipartisan solution and then

carry it out with steely resolve. Officially endorsing the

recommendations of that Iraq Study Group and acting on them is the best

way to make this happen.

The only way we should leave Iraq is the same way we went in:

together.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to emphasize the fact that,

until now, this debate has been, I think, very up-front and I hope we

can keep it at that level. I would also say, I wonder if it is the

position of the Democratic Party that Iran is not funding and supplying

the insurgents in Iraq, because I think that was determined far before

President Bush's administration made any comments about it.

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

Before yielding to the gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Deal, I would just

like to comment on my colleague from Wisconsin and say to have lost 18

of his constituents is heart wrenching, and I know that his statement

is heartfelt.

But, in fact, we are involved in the Arab League. We have involved

five of the states surrounding, and every one of the ambassadors from

this Arab League said, we didn't want you to go in, but you cannot

leave.

I would just say to the gentleman as well that we asked, critics

asked you and others for a new team and a new plan. You have a new

team, and you do have a new plan. The new plan is not the surge in

troops. The new plan is coming into the neighborhoods in Baghdad with

Iraqis, embedded American troops, cleaning them up, and holding them.

Reclaiming my time, what we do have is a new plan, and it

is not the surge, it is cleaning up the neighborhoods and holding them

with Iraqi troops embedded with American troops.