Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of our

troops who are faithfully serving our Nation in harm's way. Therefore,

I must oppose this resolution brought to the floor by the Democrats

because it offers no plan, no strategy, and no hope for victory. In

fact, it does nothing but risk demoralizing our troops.

Mr. Speaker, let me start by saying that Republicans and Democrats

alike recognize mistakes have been made in Iraq and neither side of the

aisle is happy with where we are today. But rather than offering

solutions to move us forward or engage in a productive debate on

alternative strategies, the Democrats have decided to propose what

certainly seems to be a politically motivated resolution.

I ask, Mr. Speaker, what are we really accomplishing with this

resolution? The answer is nothing. With this shameless stunt, the

Democrats are locking down this body for 36 hours maybe in hopes of

scoring political points by criticizing the President. But by using our

troops as pawns in an attempt to gain political leverage, this

resolution serves only to weaken troop morale while giving hope and

comfort to the enemy.

In doing so, Mr. Speaker, the Democrats have done nothing to end the

war or help our troops achieve victory.

Mr. Speaker, seeing as the Democrats have hijacked the Floor all week

to debate this resolution, surely they must have an alternative to the

President's plan. I will bet the American people are as eager as I am

to hear about this new plan for success, their plan. Certainly my

constituents in the Eleventh District of Georgia are waiting.

So what is their magic alternative? Mr. Speaker, here it is. It is

the same on both sides. They don't have one. We have heard from members

of the Democratic team threaten to cut funding, to cap troop levels or

to compel a forced withdrawal. But where are those ideas in this

resolution? I have read through its two brief paragraphs and I can

assure you they aren't to be found.

Sadly, the Democrats lack the political will to fully engage in a

meaningful debate on Iraq policy. They have refused to allow a vote on

funding for the war which would give Members an opportunity to show

support for our troops with actions and not empty words.

Simply put, Mr. Speaker, the Democratic leadership is afraid to ask

their Members to put their money where their mouths are and either vote

yes or no to fund our troops and the mission. Isn't this why they have

denied Republicans an opportunity to offer an alternative bill, or even

a motion to recommit? They were for that last Thursday,

before being against it tonight. Sound familiar?

Apparently, Mr. Speaker, calls for funding cuts and troop withdrawals

are good enough for newspaper headlines, but they are not good enough

for votes on this House floor. Let me remind my colleagues that sound

bites for the nightly news will do nothing to win this war against

terror.

Mr. Speaker, America has a long tradition of standing on the right

side of this fight for freedom, even when it is a difficult stand to

make, and the right course of action today is to stand by the Iraqi

people until their government, their police and military can ensure the

security of their own nation.

As in any war, there have been setbacks in Iraq. But as in past wars,

we will move forward with victory as our goal. This Democratic

resolution is a thinly veiled attempt to sound the retreat. That

amounts to an unacceptable act of playing politics with our national

security.

Mr. Speaker, as you have heard over the past 2 days, this is a

serious debate, with very serious ramifications. It is not simply a

simple resolution as the Democrats would like to characterize it. But

on one hand, we have a shot at victory. We have an opportunity to push

back the cause of radical terrorism. On the other hand, we have a two

paragraph, nonbinding resolution that is essentially a vote of no

confidence in the commander in chief.

This is not the time for our majority party to cave in to their anti-

war supporters of the liberal left and play politics with the security

of the United States. This is a time for bold leadership and bold

plans. Sadly, Mr. Speaker, neither is on display here today.

I hope for the sake of the American people, our troops and freedom-

loving nations around this world, that this resolution's flimsy words

are not taken as a substitute for America's long tradition and

commitment to achieving victory.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to point out to my colleagues this

poster on my left. These brave soldiers, Paul Saylor from Breman,

Georgia; Justin Johnson from Rome, Georgia; Lieutenant Tyler Brown, a

Georgia Tech graduate, the president of the student body; and Hayes

Clayton, III, from Marietta, Georgia, all died for their country.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot turn our backs on them. We cannot say to their

moms and dads, their brothers and sisters, their wives and their

children, that we supported sending them into harm's way and they gave

their lives for their country, and now we are saying it was for naught,

it was for nothing, it was not worth it. We can't let that happen.

Mr. Speaker, I want my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join

with me in voting down this meaningless resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of our troops, who are

faithfully serving our Nation in harm's way. Therefore, I must oppose

this resolution brought to the floor by the Democrats because it offers

no plan, no strategy, and no hope for victory. In fact, it does nothing

but risk demoralizing our troops.

Mr. Speaker, let me start by saying that Republicans and Democrats

alike recognize mistakes have been made in Iraq, and neither side of

the aisle is happy with where we are today. But rather than offering

solutions to move us forward, or engaging in a productive debate on

alternative strategies, the Democrats have decided to propose what

certainly seems to be a politically motivated non-binding resolution.

I ask, Mr. Speaker, what are we really accomplishing with this

resolution? The answer is nothing. The Democrats are locking down this

body for 36 hours--maybe in hopes of scoring political points by

criticizing the President. But by using, our troops as pawns in an

attempt to gain political leverage, this resolution serves only to

weaken troop morale, while giving hope and comfort to the enemy.

And in doing so, Mr. Speaker, the Democrats have done nothing to end

the war or to help our troops achieve victory.

Mr. Speaker, since the Democrats have hijacked the floor all week to

debate this resolution, surely they must have an alternative to the

President's plan. I'll bet the American people are as eager as I am to

hear about this new plan for success. Certainly my constituents in the

11th District of Georgia are.

So what is their magic alternative? As far as I can tell, Mr.

Speaker, they don't have one.

We've heard members of the Democrat team threaten to cut funding, cap

troop levels, or compel a forced withdrawal. But where are those ideas

in this resolution? I've read through its two brief paragraphs, and I

can assure you--they aren't to be found.

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Simply put, Mr. Speaker, the Democrat leadership is afraid to ask

their members to put their money where their mouths are and vote

``yes'' or ``no'' to fund our troops and their mission.

Isn't this why they've denied Republicans an opportunity to offer an

alternate bill, or even a motion to recommit with instructions?

They were for that last Thursday before now being against it. Sound

familiar?

Apparently, Mr. Speaker, calls for funding cuts and troop withdrawal

are good enough for newspaper headlines, but not for votes on the House

floor. Let me remind my colleagues that sound bytes for the nightly

news will do nothing to win this war on terror.

I can tell you one thing the Democrats aren't discussing here today,

and that's victory. Victory in Iraq will result in a nation that can

defend itself, govern itself, sustain itself, and be an ally against

terrorism rather than a safe haven for terrorists. Victory should be

the focus of our debate today, because victory is the goal of our

military's efforts. One of my Democrat colleagues said yesterday that

``we have given war a chance.'' Well, Mr. Speaker, I retort that we

must now, at this darkest hour, give victory a chance, rather than

appeasement!

So I implore someone to please tell me how this resolution achieves

any advancement toward victory.

Mr. Speaker, the President has offered a new idea that can help us

achieve our goals in Iraq, so we can foster a more stable Middle East

and yes, then bring our troops home to a grateful nation and the

comfort of their families. This ``new way forward'' isn't perfect, nor

will it make every Member of this body happy, but it is a reasonable

plan which offers perhaps our last best chance to silence the

insurgency, allow the Iraqi political apparatus to thrive, and help the

region realize greater security and stability.

Mr. Speaker, when I look at this resolution, I feel as though I need

to remind my colleagues on both sides of the aisle just what is at

stake in this debate--and what is at stake with our victory or defeat

in Iraq.

Victory in Iraq will deliver a blow to the cause of terrorism in the

Middle East and across the world. Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups

are hoping the U.S. will give up in Iraq, because that would make it

easier for them to recruit, plan, and execute deadly acts of terrorism

across the Middle East and even here in America. Victory, on the other

hand, will deliver a tremendous blow to their unconscionable plans.

While all of us may worry about the next election, today's debate

should focus on the next generation, and how the Congress will achieve

security for the American people.

How soon we forget what it takes to keep our Nation safe, Mr.

Speaker. Is it an accident that we have not had a terrorist attack on

U.S. soil since 9/11? No! It is because our leaders have consistently

stood up to the terrorists in word and action to show that the U.S.

will not tolerate their ideology.

The war on terror rages today, and America can't give up our fight in

Iraq, because it is crucial to our triumph over global terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, let me discuss in very clear terms the consequences of

failure in Iraq.

Failure in Iraq--which is what this non-binding resolution will lead

to--would mean: the collapse of a democratic Iraqi government, likely

leading to mass killings and genocide in the nation. Al Qaeda and other

terrorists groups would use this defeat to boost recruitment, and would

use Iraq as a staging ground for deadly attacks--paid for with Iraqi

oil revenue. Iran and Syria would exert tremendous influence over the

region, an extremely dangerous proposition when you consider Iran's

nuclear ambitions and Syria's continued disruption of the democratic

process in Lebanon. Israel would be pushed into the sea, and the

opportunity for democracy and freedom across the Middle East would be

dealt a crippling, indeed deadly, blow.

These are the consequences of defeat. And these are the reasons we

can't abandon our Iraqi friends just because we face difficult times.

Instead, we must find bold solutions and have the will to carry them

out.

Who said ``when the going gets tough, the tough get going?'' Maybe

the Marines; certainly not the ``Out of Iraq'' House caucus.

Mr. Speaker, the Democrats' would have you believe the President's

plan amounts to nothing more than a thoughtless troop surge. While a

temporary troop increase is critical to the plan's success, the ``new

way forward'' is a comprehensive plan that offers an array of

solutions vetted by our nation's top military minds and the Iraqi

government.

For example, the plan includes elements of the ``Go Iraqi'' strategy

advocated by Armed Services Ranking Member Duncan Hunter and supported

by many in this body--including myself--who serve on the Armed Services

Committee.

We know we need more troops in Baghdad. The ``Go Iraqi'' strategy

will make many of those troops Iraqi, including the redeployment of

three Iraqi brigades to Baghdad. This achieves several important goals:

it allows Iraqi units to become battle-hardened, which in turn allows

U.S. troops to redeploy as Iraqi troops take their place; it shows the

Iraqi people that their military is capable of protecting and defending

the nation; and it builds rapport between the military and the people

it is charged with protecting.

The President's new plan was contingent on several promises from

Prime Minister Maliki, and it is critically important that these

promises are kept. So far, the Iraqi government has been true to its

word, and we are making progress.

Prime Minister Maliki has pledged that he will institute new rules of

engagement to give Iraqi commanders greater control of their forces and

the ability to crack down on all militias, regardless of their

religious sect. This may be the single most important aspect of the new

strategy, as militias loyal to Muqtada al-Sadr will no longer operate

unfettered and can be increasingly neutralized.

This new plan also recognizes that unemployment rates in Iraq are

between 14 and 18 percent, which fuels participation in militias and

death squads.

An essential part of the ``new way forward,'' therefore, requires

economic development assistance, including a $10 billion commitment

made by the Iraqi government.

New oil legislation will decrease fuel shortages, and there will be a

more equitable distribution of oil revenues. The ``new way forward''

also calls for passing de-Ba'athification legislation, and holding

provincial elections in the near future.

It is a shame that we are not debating any of these new ideas here

today.

Mr. Speaker, while the Democrats would have you believe the

President's plan is doomed to failure, a January 19th Associated Press

article indicates that the plan is already working.

The article notes, ``The arrest of a high- level aide to radical

Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr in Baghdad came a day after Sadr's Mahdi

Army fighters said they were under siege in their Sadr City stronghold

as U.S. and Iraqi troops killed or seized key commanders. Further, two

commanders of the Shiite militia said Prime Minister Maliki has stopped

protecting the group.''

There are also reports that al-Sadr himself, accompanied by his

military commanders, has fled the country for neighboring Iran.

And to address concerns voiced last evening by my friend from New

York, Mr. Weiner, about how the new plan did nothing to address

incursions by extremists along the Iranian border, Prime Minister

Maliki has announced plans to seal the border with both Iran and Syria,

ostensibly to keep al-Sadr out of the country.

So Mr. Speaker, we are seeing results. And our Generals in charge say

they need this new plan in order to achieve victory.

General Casey has consistently stated he will ask for the troops

needed to accomplish our mission, something he says this new plan can

achieve. In fact, General Petraeus stated in a recent Senate Armed

Services Committee Hearing that he could not take over his new job and

succeed without additional troops.

Mr. Speaker, I for one am more inclined to listen to our military

commanders focused on winning this war than to the Democrat leadership

focused, it seems, on winning something else.

I am also inclined to listen to our troops. Mr. Speaker, as I have

visited our men and women in uniform serving in Iraq, they have

impressed upon me their dedication to achieving victory. And they know

that cutting and running won't get the job done.

Captain Jim Modlin of Oceanport, New Jersey recently told the

Washington Post that ``Pulling out now would be . . . worse than going

forward with no changes. Sectarian violence would be rampant, democracy

would cease to exist, and the rule of law would be decimated. It's not

``stay the course'' or ``cut and run'' or other political catchphrases.

There are people's lives there . . . a simple solution just isn't

possible.

Another soldier posted on a military blog that ``If the Democrats

block these troops, we're screwed. We need them. We are as effective as

we can be right now, but with more personnel we could be doing a lot

more.''

Mr. Speaker, our veterans have also voiced strong support for a

meaningful discussion on Iraq.

Gary Kurpius, a Vietnam veteran and leader of the VFW recently

stated, ``We have to let our generals be generals and wage this war as

only they are trained to do . . . My generation learned the hard way

that when military decisions are second-guessed by opinion polls or

overruled by politicians, it is the common soldiers and families who

pay the price.''

Yet against this tide of support, the Democrats it seems have decided

to put politics front-and-center. So we debate not a solution for

victory, but two paragraphs aimed at criticizing the President.

Mr. Speaker, America has a long tradition of standing on the right

side of the fight for freedom, even when it is a difficult stand to

make. And the right course of action today is to stand by the Iraqis

until their government, police, and military can ensure the security of

their own nation.

As in any war, there have been setbacks; but as in past wars, we will

move forward with victory as our goal. This Democrat resolution is a

thinly-veiled attempt to sound the retreat, and that amounts to the

unacceptable act of playing politics with our national security.

Mr. Speaker, as you can tell, this is a serious debate with very

serious ramifications.

On one hand, we have a shot at victory, an opportunity to push back

the cause of radical terrorism. On the other hand, we have a two-

paragraph non-binding resolution that is a vote of no confidence in our

Commander in Chief. The potential impact this will have on troop morale

and the overall success of the mission could truly be devastating.

This is not the time for our majority party to kowtow to their anti-

war supporters of the liberal left and play politics with the security

of the United States of America.

This is the time for bold leadership, and bold plans. Sadly, Mr.

Speaker, neither is on display here today.

I hope--for the sake of the American people, our troops, and freedom-

loving nations around the world--that this resolution's flimsy words

are not taken as a substitute for America's long tradition of--and

commitment to--achieving victory.

We owe it to them, their moms and dads, wives and children, brother

and sisters.

I ask all of my colleagues to join me in voting ``no'' on this

resolution.