Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from

New Jersey. And I apologize for my voice.

Before I yield time, I want to take just a couple minutes and remind

the House that, yes, we are here today to talk about resolution 63, but

to remind the House that why we are in Iraq is the question.

I want to start my comments by sharing with the House that I met with

a real marine general hero that very few people on the floor know his

name; his name is General Gregory Newbold. And I want to quote him from

Time magazine, April 9, 2006, ``Why Iraq Was a Mistake.'' I will be

brief.

Two senior military officers are known to have challenged Defense

Secretary Donald Rumsfeld on the planning of the Iraq war. Army General

Eric Shinseki publicly dissented and found himself marginalized. Marine

Lieutenant General Greg Newbold, the Pentagon's top operations officer,

voiced his objections internally and then retired, in part out of

opposition to the war. Here, for the first time, General Newbold goes

public with a full-throated critique. I want to quote this to the House

from General Newbold.

``I was a witness and therefore a party to the action that led us to

the invasion of Iraq, an unnecessary war. Inside the military family, I

made no secret of my view that these zealots' rationale for war made no

sense, and I think I was outspoken enough to make those senior to me

uncomfortable. But I now regret that I did not more openly challenge

those who were determined to invade a country whose actions were

peripheral to the real threat, al Qaeda.''

I mention that, Mr. Speaker, because today this is an important

debate. And, yes, my friends on the other side I respect and have great

love and affection. But I remember in 1999, when we were on the floor

as the majority party criticizing President Clinton for going into

Bosnia, that was a nonbinding resolution.

That is what the Congress is about: debate, disagreements, agreement,

debate. That is our constitutional responsibility.

Let me tell you what Karen Hughes, who was speaking for then-Governor

Bush, who is now President Bush, said about the nonbinding resolution.

This was in The Washington Post, March 27, 1999. I quote Mrs. Hughes

speaking for Governor Bush at the time, criticizing President Clinton,

and this is a quote. ``If we are going to commit American troops, we

must be certain that they have a clear mission, an achievable goal, and

an exit strategy.''

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from North

Carolina, my colleague and friend (Mr. Coble).

Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as

I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote a military expert, General John

Abizaid, former commander of the U.S. Central Command, who said during

a Senate Armed Services hearing on November 15, 2006, ``I believe that

more American forces will prevent the Iraqis from doing more, from

taking more responsibility for their own future.''

General Abizaid is not in favor of this surge. He is a military

expert.

Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as

I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution is, first of all, to thank our men and

women in uniform. They are absolutely magnificent. They are the real

heroes of America, not the football players, not the basketball

players, and not the baseball players. It is our men and women in

uniform, and that is what H. Con. Res. 63 says. We appreciate you. We

will be with you today, tomorrow, and in the future.

The second part is that we are opposed to the surge. Let me read very

quickly, before I introduce the next speaker, General Barry McCaffrey

before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on January 18, 2007, and

I quote General Barry McCaffrey, former commander of the Southern

Command. He said, ``There the current administration is going to try to

muscle this thing out in the next 24 months with an urban

counterinsurgency plan that I personally believe, with all due respect,

is a fool's errand.''

That is a military professional. A military professional.

Mr. Speaker, first I would like to thank

Chairman Skelton and Chairman Lantos for allowing me to be part of this

resolution, H. Con. Res. 63.

Also I want to thank the 10 Republicans who came to the floor to join

me today to support this resolution. In closing, I want to again say

this resolution is simple and to the point. The most important point is

to say, Thank you, men and women in uniform; you are great, you are

magnificent, we are behind you 100 percent.

The second part deals with the surge. Two very quick stories. Six

months ago Gene Taylor and I went to Walter Reed. We went into a room

that we were carried into and saw a mother with tears in her eyes, a

father, and we shook their hands.

Then the Army colonel took us to the bed to speak to the Army

sergeant who had been wounded in Iraq. We thanked him. We told him he

was a hero. And he was just great. His fiancee was sitting at the end,

at the foot of the bed. We met her. Then he said, I don't know if my

opinion matters to you gentlemen. And we assured him it did matter. It

mattered greatly.

He said, well, let me share this with you. I have been to Iraq three

times. He said, I don't care if you are there 5 years or 10 years, you

cannot change the people. If you look at the history, he is probably

right. But then after he said that you cannot change the people, Mr.

Speaker, he pulled the sheets down from his waist and we saw that above

his knees his two legs were gone. In his third tour in Iraq he lost his

legs.

I close by sharing this in this debate. I quoted five generals that

have said in the last 6 months this surge will not work, it is not the

right policy answer. I don't think anyone can say it any better than

retired Army General Jay Garner, the first U.S. official in charge of

postwar Baghdad. January 7, 2007. This is his quote. ``I don't know

that the Iraqi Government has ever demonstrated an ability to lead the

country, and we should not be surprised. You will never find in my

lifetime one man that all of the Iraqis would coalesce around. Iraqis

are too divided among sectarian, ethnic and tribal loyalties'' he said,

``and their loyalties are regional, not national.''

Mr. Speaker, as I close, and this is my close, let's pass this

resolution. Let's work with the President to find an end point to the

strategy, and let's not put our men and women in the middle of a civil

war to make them referees.

God bless America, and God bless our men and women in uniform.

Please, God, continue to bless this country.