Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I rise

in support of the resolution and in opposition to the escalation in

Iraq. I want to thank the gentleman from North Carolina for his very

determined and principled effort to end this ill-advised and dangerous

war, and I am very pleased that he brought together a group of Members

today who are representing the traditional conservative position on war

and peace and I deeply appreciate that.

Mr. Speaker, this grand debate is welcomed, but it could be that this

is nothing more than a distraction from the dangerous military

confrontation approaching with Iran, which is supported by many in

leadership on both sides of the aisle. This resolution, unfortunately,

does not address the disaster in Iraq. Instead, it appears to oppose

the war while at the same time offering no change of the status quo in

Iraq.

As such, it is not actually a vote against a troop surge. A real vote

against a troop surge is a vote against the coming supplemental

appropriation which finances it. I hope all my colleagues who vote

against this surge today will vote against the budgetary surge when it

really counts, when we vote on the supplemental.

The biggest red herring in this debate is the constant innuendo that

those who don't support expanding the war are somehow opposing the

troops. It is nothing more than a canard to claim that those of us who

struggled to prevent the bloodshed and now want it stopped are somehow

less patriotic and less concerned about the welfare of our military

personnel.

Osama bin Laden has expressed sadistic pleasure with the invasion in

Iraq and was surprised that we served his interests above and beyond

his dreams on how we responded after the 9/11 attacks. His pleasure

comes from our policy of folly, getting ourselves bogged down in the

middle of a religious civil war 7,000 miles from home that is

financially bleeding us to death. Total costs now are recently

estimated to exceed $2 trillion. His recruitment of Islamic extremists

has been greatly enhanced by our occupation of Iraq.

Unfortunately, we continue to concentrate on the obvious

mismanagement of a war promoted by false information and ignore

debating the real issue which is this: Why are we determined to follow

a foreign policy of empire building and preemption which is unbecoming

of a constitutional republic?

Those on the right should recall that the traditional conservative

position of nonintervention was their position for most of the 20th

century, and they benefited politically from the wars carelessly

entered into by the left. Seven years ago, the right benefited

politically by condemning the illegal intervention in Kosovo and

Somalia. At the time, the right was outraged over the failed policy of

nation building.

It is important to recall that the left in 2003 offered little

opposition to the preemptive war in Iraq, and many are now not willing

to stop it by defunding it, or work to prevent an attack on Iran.

The catch-all phrase the ``war on terrorism'' in all honesty has no

more meaning than if one wants to wage a war against criminal

gangsterism. Terrorism is a tactic. You can't have a war against a

tactic. It is deliberately vague and nondefinable in order to justify

and permit perpetual war anywhere and under any circumstances. Don't

forget, the Iraqis and Saddam Hussein had nothing to do with any

terrorist attack against us, including that on 9/11.

Special interests and the demented philosophy of conquests have

driven most wars throughout all of history. Rarely has the cause of

liberty, as it was in our own Revolution, been the driving force. In

recent decades, our policies have been driven by neoconservative empire

radicalism, profiteering in the military-industrial complex, misplaced

do-good internationalism, mercantilistic notions regarding the need to

control natural resources, and blind loyalty to various governments in

the Middle East.

For all the misinformation given the American people to justify our

invasion, such as our need for national security, enforcing U.N.

resolutions, removing a dictator, establishing a democracy, protecting

our oil, the argument has been reduced to this: If we leave now, Iraq

will be left in a mess; implying the implausible, that if we stay, it

won't be a mess.

Since it could go badly when we leave, that blame must be placed on

those who took us there, not on those of us who now insist that

Americans no longer need be killed or maimed, and that Americans no

longer need to kill any more Iraqis. We have had enough of both.

Resorting to a medical analogy: A wrong diagnosis was made at the

beginning of the war and the wrong treatment was prescribed. Refusing

to reassess our mistakes and insisting on just more and more of a

failed remedy is destined to kill the patient. In this case, the

casualties will be our liberties and prosperity, here at home, and

peace abroad.

There is no logical reason to reject the restraints placed in the

Constitution regarding our engaging in foreign conflicts unrelated to

our national security. The advice of the founders and our early

Presidents was sound then, and it is sound today.

We shouldn't wait until our financial system is completely ruined and

we are forced to change our ways. We should do it as quickly as

possible and stop the carnage and the financial bleeding that will

bring us to our knees and eventually force us to stop that which we

should have never started.

We all know in time the war will be defunded one way or another and

the troops will come home. So why not now?