Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to this

resolution. General Petraeus said a resolution like this would

discourage the troops. The Secretary of Defense said a resolution like

this would embolden the enemy. This Congress should be doing neither of

those things.

What this resolution will not do is take a position on what we should

do as we face the challenge of our generation.

President Johnson was criticized a generation ago and still today for

choosing bombing sites in Vietnam. He was the Commander in Chief; yet

he should have left those tactical choices to the military.

But his actions made imminently more sense than this. It is hard to

imagine a group less capable of making tactical decisions about

specific troop deployments than 535 Members of Congress.

The resolution today is about the exact number of troops. Will the

one tomorrow or next week be a vote on which block in Baghdad to target

or which car to stop?

And, of course, today what we debate is a tactic in the greater fight

we are in. The new commanding general determined this surge is the

right course of action. The Iraq Study Group was supportive of ``a

short-term redeployment or surge of American combat forces to stabilize

Baghdad or to speed up the training and equipping mission, if the U.S.

commander in Iraq determines that such a step would be effective.''

Mr. Speaker, we can all agree that the current situation in Iraq

cannot continue. That is why the President has advanced a new way

forward.

Actions do have consequences, and this resolution the Democrats

advance today is a vote for the status quo. It is a vote for the

current strategy because it is a vote not to change that strategy. The

current strategy is not working, and as a southwest Missourian told me

yesterday, We are there. He went on to say, It really doesn't matter

how we got there or what we thought. We are in a fight that won't stop

if we leave.

The fact of the matter is that Congress does have the power to end

the war if it has the political will to do so.

Almost 24 years ago, in November of 1983, the Congress voted to

withdraw from Lebanon by March of 1984. Many of the proponents of this

resolution voted then, who were Members of Congress then, voted to

leave. They lost 153-274, but the message was sent, and we left anyway,

and when we left, the myth of American weakness began to take hold in

al Qaeda.

The language of this nonbinding resolution does not tackle the tough

issues of war. It tries to have it both ways: disapproving the tactics

but supporting the troops. It does not say we will fund the troops in

the future or not fund the troops. It does not say we will supply the

troops in the future or not supply the troops. This resolution just

says enough not to say anything at all.

America should see this move for what it really is, a political first

step to cutting off funding to the dangerous mission our troops face.

The truth is, we are in a war against a hostile and ferocious enemy

that will stop at nothing. Imagine how this debate this week bolsters

those radical terrorists whose sole goal is to destroy America because

we disprove, as no society ever has, the dogma of religious

totalitarianism that they use every day to recruit followers and

funders and suicide bombers.

Our diversity, our ability to live together, and the prosperity and

vitality that are the result have produced the enemies we face today.

As long as we live as we do, they must be wrong.

This week, the Congress will send the signal to those enemies and to

those who fight to protect us from them that America has the will and

indeed the courage to continue fighting these Islamic totalitarians or

that we do not take the consequences of failure seriously