Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution by the Democrat leadership sends a

message to three parties: America's enemies, America's friends, and

America's troops. And I think it is going to be received by friend and

foe alike as the first sound of retreat in the world battle against

extremists and terrorists.

Mr. Speaker, we are not stopping anything with this resolution. In

fact, the Big Red One is already moving its first brigade toward Iraq;

the 82nd Airborne, America's all-American division, is already in Iraq.

In fact, the Second Brigade is already in their sector in Baghdad. As a

matter of fact, in the Baghdad plan, which reinforcements are serving,

all nine sectors now have American and Iraqi forces in place and

operating. So you are not stopping anything; you are simply sending a

message, and it is the wrong message. Because this Nation has been for

the last 60 years involved in spreading freedom, and it is in America's

interest to spread freedom. Nobody would say that it is in our interest

or it is not in our interest, for example, to have a free Japan on that

side of the Pacific, or to have a free El Salvador in our own

hemisphere, or to have those nations which were behind the Iron

Curtain, nations like Poland, now standing side by side with us in

Iraq. It is in our interest to spread freedom.

Mr. Speaker, I have been here before. A lot of us have. I remember in

the 1980s, when Ronald Reagan was standing up to the Russians in Europe

and the USSR was ringing our allies in France and Germany with SS-20

missiles, and the President of the United States moved to offset those

missiles with Pershing IIs and ground-launched cruise missiles, and you

had from the left a call that this was going to start World War III.

And you had pundits throughout this country, as a matter of fact

somebody showed me an old headline the other day, ``Better Red Than

Dead,'' which emanated from that debate and that action.

But we stood tough, we offset the Russians, we showed strength, and

at some point the Russians picked up the phone and said, ``Can we

talk?'' And when we talked, we talked about the disassembly of the

Soviet Empire.

In our own hemisphere, when we went in and helped that fragile

government in El Salvador and stood up a little shield around that

government, we had people saying that is going to be the next Vietnam

for the United States. Well, it wasn't a Vietnam for the United States,

and Salvadorans are standing with Americans now in Iraq. In fact, I

think we have got people who died of old age waiting anxiously for the

next Vietnam.

Now we are in a different part of the world, and it is a tough

mission, and moving freedom and spreading freedom in that part of the

world is very, very difficult. And I would just say to my colleagues,

my friends who have talked about the smooth road not taken, how we have

made mistakes; if we just kept that Iraqi in place of Saddam Hussein's,

somehow things would be better now. Saddam Hussein's army had 11,000

Sunni generals. Now, what are you going to do with an army with 11,000

Sunni generals whose mission is to stabilize a population which is in

the majority Shiite?

A lot of people have said we should have had 200,000 to 300,000

troops in country. Now at the same time they would say we have got to

put an Iraqi face on this occupation. How do you put an Iraqi face on

the occupation with 200,000 or 300,000 Americans in country?

The facts are, there is no smooth road. This is a tough and difficult

road. Our military planners have come up with a strategy. It involves

nine sectors in Baghdad with Iraqi troops to the front and with backup

American battalions behind them, mentoring them, giving them advice,

and in many cases stiffening their spine.

Now, there is no guarantee of success. But this is a first time. I

think we should check our history, and my friend, Mr. Skelton, I think

you should check our history and see if this Congress has ever, after a

military operation is already in place, is already moving forward, the

Big Red One is already moving out. The all-American division, the 82nd

Airborne, already has troops in place in combat, in the city, that we

retroactively say, you know, we don't support this. The only message

that can possibly send to the rest of the world is a fractured message.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to end with a comment, with a quotation from

Douglas MacArthur in his farewell speech at West Point. I thought it

was appropriate for these times. He talks about the American soldier,

and he says this, ``Their story is known to all of you. It is the story

of the American man at arms. My estimate of him was formed on the

battlefields many, many years ago, and has never changed. I regarded

him then, as I regard him now, as one of the world's noblest figures;

not only as one of the finest military characters, but also as one of

the most stainless.

``His name and fame are the birthright of every American citizen. In

his youth and strength, his love and loyalty, he gave all that

mortality can give. He needs no eulogy from me, or from any other man.

He has written his own history and written it in red on his enemy's

breast.''

Mr. Speaker, our soldiers are engaged in combat right now. The worst

disservice that we can give to them is to retroactively blast and

degrade the mission that they are currently undertaking. There is no

good role, there is no good purpose that is served by this.

So I would ask all my colleagues, let us get behind not only our

troops, let us get behind their mission. Let us vote ``no'' on this

resolution.

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

Mr. Speaker, in my office I keep a photo of about a dozen Kurdish

mothers whose bodies are strewn across the hillside in northern Iraq,

holding their babies, killed in mid-stride where they were gassed to

death by Saddam Hussein. As I listened to some folks in this debate

talk about what they consider to be an immoral war, an illegal war, an

occupation that is not consistent with morality, I harken back to that

picture and the thousands of people that it represents, and I harken

back also to the exhuming of mass graves with, again, mothers shot in

the back of the head with a .45-caliber pistol by Saddam Hussein's

executioners and with their little babies similarly with holes in the

back of their skulls.

Mr. Speaker, this operation in Iraq is indeed a moral operation. It

represents the goodness of the American people.

I am also reminded of something that lots of folks and the Vice

President talked about, and that is the goodness that we have brought

with the 3 million-plus babies who have been vaccinated, with the

hundreds of schools and hospitals that have been built, and with all

those expectant mothers that were given prenatal care by the Americans

so that their children would be born in a healthy fashion.

But, Mr. Speaker, I recall that in 1984 Ronald Reagan very eloquently

asked the American people to support him in bringing freedom to the

people of El Salvador. I remember his speech; and in his speech, he

harkened back to another American who had appealed to us in bringing

freedom to another part of the world, which was at that time

endangered, and that was Greece in 1947.

The communists were very close to victory in Greece, and Harry Truman

appealed to the American people in a joint session of Congress. He said

the free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining

their freedoms. If we falter, we may endanger the peace of the world,

and we shall surely endanger the welfare of this Nation.

Now, we have no guarantee of victory in Iraq. There is no battle plan

that comes with a guarantee of victory, but I will tell one thing that

is very clear: what is happening in Iraq and our efforts in Iraq are

connected and are watched by every terrorist in the world, and that

connection is established and travels as fast as the speed of electrons

in this age of television and technology and high-paced, fast media and

the Internet. They see what we are doing.

And that connection, Mr. Speaker, was made when the Beirut bombings

occurred against the Marines in the Marine barracks in Beirut. In fact,

I think Mr. Skelton was with me. We were over there very shortly before

those bombings occurred.

They are connected and the terrorist world watched very closely when

there was no response to that. They watched very closely when there was

no response in the Khobar Towers, with respect to the Cole and

extremely anemic response with respect to the bombings in the embassies

in Africa.

Now we are undertaking an important and difficult mission; and, Mr.

Speaker, I pointed out before that at least one brigade of the 82nd

Airborne is already in place in Baghdad, now engaged in the operation,

and we have a brigade of the Big Red One moving now toward the theater.

I believe we have right at 4,000 members of the 82nd Airborne now in

country in Iraq, and we have Iraqi soldiers and Americans engaged in

the nine sectors of the city already undertaking this operation and

this plan that has been developed by our warfighting commanders.

The idea that we are here, poised to retroactively condemn an

operation that our soldiers are already carrying out, is, to my mind,

remarkable. There is not going to be any force in effect with respect

to this vote that will take place shortly that will do anything but

send the wrong message to America's

allies, and I think you have seen comments by some of our allies over

the last several weeks with respect to the message that we send out. We

are interesting people are we not, Mr. Speaker. We send out messages

with all the electronic gadgets in the world to convey the messages to

the entire world, and then we say, you know, we really did not mean

what you take our statements to mean and we really did not intend to

give anybody the wrong message that we still support the troops.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we have got a number of great members of the Armed

Services Committee that I want to yield to, and I want to come back

later and talk a little bit later about this war against terror and the

centerpiece that is Iraq and the centerpiece of that which is as

planned.

You know, I was thinking there was a statement once that in a little

hut in Central America when we were standing up to the Communists and

we were providing a shield for El Salvador, while that fragile

democracy stood up, there was a hut in El Salvador which reportedly had

the writing on it, Thank God for Ronald Reagan. I am wondering if some

trooper in the 82nd Airborne, in the 2nd brigade of the 82nd Airborne

may write on a wall in Baghdad, maybe on Friday when we take this vote,

This is the day in which the American Congress condemned the mission

that we are carrying out today.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I yield myself just 30 seconds, and I would

like to just make one note. That is, if we add the 21,500 troops that

are already partly in Iraq, these reinforcements to the 138 who existed

before the movement started, and we allow for the troops who are

rotating home, we will have fewer; we will have 157,000 troops in Iraq,

according to DOD. That is fewer than the number of troops that we had a

year ago in December. That is the state of this so-called surge; fewer

troops than we had last year.

Mr. Speaker, at this point I would yield such time as he may consume

to the distinguished gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. Saxton) who, for a

number of years, chaired the Terrorism Subcommittee and is now the

ranking member.

I want to thank the gentleman for yielding briefly. I

want to thank him for his statement and just clarify the record, while

he has got some time, if I could.

Mr. Speaker, my good friend from California, the gentlelady, made the

remark, as I understand it, that the Iraq Study Group did not agree

with the President's so-called surge. I just would point to the

statement that the Iraq Study Group published in their report. They

said we could, however, support 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 steps would be effective.

We also rejected the immediate withdrawal of our troops because we

believe that so much is at stake. So the Iraq Study Group did state

that they would support a surge to effect the stabilization of Baghdad,

and it is in the nine sectors of Baghdad with Iraqi battalions to the

front, American battalions backing them up, that this operation is

taking right now. So it appears to me that the President is, in fact,

following and is on common ground with this recommendation by the Iraq

Study Group. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I would just say to my friend from California, he is

consistent with the Iraq Study Group to the extent of 21,500 troops,

which has been described by your side of the debate as very substantial

and such an important thing and such a major thing that it should be

stopped. So that, obviously, is not an inconsequential aspect of the

Iraq Study Group's statement.

Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 3 minutes to just make a

brief response to a couple of statements that have been made.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Holt referred to our wounded folks in Walter Reed as

tragic. They are not tragic. They are American heroes, and they are the

people who have bought the freedom that allows us to have this debate

today.

Mr. Speaker, to complete this triad of veterans' fathers,

fathers of sons who have served in Iraq, is Joe Wilson, whose son Alan

has received the Combat Action Badge for service in Iraq and the

Palmetto Cross, which is a high award for the National Guard in South

Carolina, and who has a son in the Signal Corps, Julian, a doctor in

the Navy, and a son Hunter, a well-named son, Hunter, in the ROTC.

The reason I am going through these members of the Wilson clan, Mr.

Speaker, is because inspired by his wife Roxanne, all these young men

are serving in the military, and if the Wilson family does not re-up,

we are in trouble.

I yield such time as he may consume to the great gentleman from South

Carolina, Joe Wilson, to follow that wonderful presentation by Mr.

Akin.

Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute just to respond to

my friend from Tennessee.

Let me just point out that we are spending roughly 4 percent of GDP

on defense at this point. President Ronald Reagan spent 6 percent.

President John Kennedy, 9 percent. Operations in the war against terror

are not bankrupting this country.

With respect to the group of allies that the gentleman called our few

remaining friends, I am reminded that there is a number of them like

Poland and Moldavia and Herzegovina and Georgia and Bosnia and

Azerbaijan and Armenia and Albania, lots of little countries that used

to be behind the Iron Curtain or in the case of El Salvador, in what

was called by the Democrat Party the unwinnable war in Central America

in Salvador, those countries, which themselves were the beneficiaries

of an American policy of expanding freedom are standing with our

country in this operation in Iraq.

Madam Speaker, I yield myself 2 minutes to respond to my

colleague, my good friend who just spoke, Mr. Israel.

Let me just make a couple of points. With respect to up-armored

Humvees, when we entered this administration, the Humvee is a successor

to the Jeep, it is a tactical vehicle, we had 1,200 up-armored Humvees.

That was in the year 2000. Today, we have got 15,000 up-armored 114s,

plus thousands of Humvees that have the so-called MAC kits which are

also protective armor kits.

We had virtually no body armor in the year 2000. I don't believe we

had a single set that was available for any line units in any American

division in the world. Today, we have over 400,000 of those.

I just want to make a point, if there are American moms and dads, and

we have had a few who have thought that their sons and daughters were

going to Iraq without body armor, I have said, Call me personally at

the office, and I have not had a single phone call in 2 years. So they

have plenty of body armor.

And, lastly, I just want to make one other point with respect to what

America has, because there has been an implication I think throughout

the debate that we are stretched too thin, that others may attack us,

may take advantage of the fact that we have deployments in Iraq and

Afghanistan. Since the year 2000, we have more than doubled the

precision firepower of this country. That means the ability of this

country, and Republicans and Democrats have supported the funding that

has done this; but if any country in the world should think they are

going to take advantage of an America that is, in their estimation,

stretched too thin, the precision firepower, that means the ability to

send a smart weapon on target to thread a goal post at many, many

miles, has more than doubled since the year 2000. And so no country

that feels that there is that implication in our situation in Iraq and

Afghanistan should bet their life on it, because they will lose.

Madam Speaker, I yield 10 minutes to Mr. Cole, the outstanding

gentleman from Fort Sill.

Madam Speaker, let me just respond to my good friend from

Rhode Island, he is a great friend of mine and a former colleague on

the Armed Services Committee, the estimate that has been given, that

has been bandied around, that we would need some 20,000 support troops

to support the 21,500 troops that are involved in the President's plan,

some of whom are already in theater, has been rebutted by DOD, which

said it is not 1 for 1 support to line troops, it is about 1 in 10,

which in the estimate that they gave us was about 2,000 to 2,300, not

20,000 support troops.

Using that number, even with the 21,500 troops that are involved in

the Baghdad plan, adding them to the 138 that we have right now, still

brings us to a number that is lower than the 160,000 that we had

December a year ago. I know that number has not been absolutely

resolved, but I would just tell my friend that I believe it is going to

be much lower than the number that has been put out there.

To my good friend from California, who talked about the Kosovo vote

and the resolution to disapprove it, my recollection is that vote was

undertaken before troops were moved. In this case, the 82nd Airborne is

not already over the line in Iraq, but they actually have a brigade

deployed in this operation, and the Baghdad operation that is being

undertaken right now has a combination of Iraqi troops and American

troops in each of nine sectors.

Madam Speaker, I yield as much time as he would like to take to Mr.

Conaway from Texas, who is a gentleman that represents a great base at

Fort Hood.

I will stipulate that the gentleman would like to

represent Fort Hood.

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

I want to take a couple of minutes to answer a couple of things that

my friend said.

First Mr. Weiner said, ``We aren't done.'' Madam Speaker, that is one

thing that I am worried about. He said that we want more choices, more

bills, more language. Not this Member. I will settle for a ``no'' on

this resolution. I haven't asked for more bills, more choices, or

different language.

And the problem with this resolution, the gentleman said this is a

very good resolution because it is very clear, very concise, and gives

us clear choices. This resolution retroactively condemns an action that

has already been taken. That is the movement of reinforcements into the

theater. You already have the 82nd Airborne in the theater. That is

part of the reinforcing force. They are already in there. You already

have a brigade from the 82nd Airborne in one of the nine sectors right

now, operating, boots on the ground as we talk. So you aren't

prohibiting the President from sending reinforcements.

He said that American forces are being stretched thinner and thinner

and thinner.

We have 2 1/2 million Americans in uniform. We have roughly 138,000

before the surge. Now a little more than 140,000 counting the ones that

are already in country. When they are in country and the support troops

are there and less the troops who will be rotating home at that point,

you will have at the high point, we are told by DOD, about 157,000

troops. That is less than we had a year ago in country, I would say to

the gentleman. So that is not a huge surge.

He stated that we are going to be drawn thinner, and I quote,

``thinner and thinner and thinner.''

So you have about 160,000 troops, a little less than that, max. That

is not 10 percent of the 2.5 million persons who are presently wearing

the uniform of the United States.

Secondly I will say to my friend, I want to say to folks who listen

to this debate, because this statement about us being drawn thin and

therefore being susceptible to problems and being vulnerable is a

message that has come up several times in this debate.

We have more than doubled the precision firepower of this country

since the last administration, that is the Clinton administration. You

have more than doubled the precision firepower. That means the ability,

if people should give the United States a need to respond militarily,

the ability to send precision systems that can explode right straight

through goalposts at long distances and handle lots of stuff.

Now, the gentleman is very concerned about Iran. I share that

concern. And I share the concern the gentleman has about the centrifuge

activity and the proposed centrifuge activity that Iran has discussed

and may at some point develop with the aid of the Russians and the

Chinese.

I would just remind the gentleman that those precision systems, that

doubling of the precision firepower that we now have, is probably the

right medicine if we should have to keep the military option open and

on the table with respect to Iran. So we will watch them as they try to

walk down this road to developing a nuclear weapon.

We have been up as high as 40 percent National Guard and

Reserve, and that is a deliberate policy of the United States. When we

went to war in Vietnam, the Guard and Reserve for practical purposes

stayed home. And we said from here on out, when we go to war, we go to

war with what is known as a total force.

So you have a Reserve element that goes to war. If you were over in

Iraq, as the gentlelady has been there a number of times, you will see

Reservists flying C-130s, doing a lot of support missions, and you have

National Guard units on the ground.

Certainly. I can tell the gentleman, my son has done two

tours of duty. There are a number of people that have done that.

I will just tell the gentleman, in the MOSs that our

folks sign up for, especially the aerial supportive MOSs, that is

always out there, that they are going to have to go, because where the

armed services go, where the active folks go, let me just finish my

answer to the gentleman. He asked me a question. I am going to ask

answer it.

If you are in a supportive service that involves things likes aerial

refueling, C-130 work, which is the workhorse of the U.S. military, you

understand when you go in, you are going to be making probably multiple

tours. If you join the U.S. Marines right now, the recruiter tells you

as you sign up, you can be guaranteed that you will go to Iraq.

I would say to the gentleman another thing: Knowing those things, we

are meeting all of our enlistment goals in the Guard and Reserve. So

the active duty people who are undertaking multiple tours are coming

back and reenlisting. And knowing that, knowing that you are exposed to

multiple tours, we have more people signing up for the Guard, for the

Reserve.

And interestingly, I will tell the gentleman, the place where we have

had problems with recruiting in the last year from the information I

have seen is the Naval Reserve, which doesn't do tours in Iraq. But the

combat arms have multiple tours.

Reclaiming my time, I will just tell the gentleman this:

There is a difference between people in specialties spending more time

doing multiple tours, and I will say to him again, almost all Marines

know that they are going to do multiple tours, either in country or on

the so-called float, which is the deployment around the world, because

they are the 9/11 force for this country. So that is something that

people do.

That is a far cry from not having enough firepower to respond to an

Iranian crisis. We still have tons of firepower to respond to an

Iranian breakout or surprise, a technological surprise, with respect to

development of nuclear systems.

Madam Speaker, if the gentlewoman from California has more speakers,

I will enjoy listening to them, and I will reserve the balance of my

time.

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

Madam Speaker, I have got one speaker left here, Mr. Franks of

Arizona, but let me just say one thing before he speaks. I appreciate

the debate. I think we have had a good discussion this evening.

I wanted to say one thing about Charlie Norwood. He passed away. He

was a Member of the 173rd Airborne Brigade. I was a member of that

brigade. I had a very average tour, a very easy tour in Vietnam. I did

nothing special. But Charlie Norwood was a real hero who won the Combat

Medical Badge and two Bronze Stars in Vietnam.

I thought to commemorate Charlie, I have got my copy of General

Douglas MacArthur's farewell speech that I quoted earlier, and let me

just quote a paragraph about duty, honor and country that Douglas

MacArthur thought so represented the fighting man in this country.

He said these of words, duty, honor and country, ``They teach to be

proud and unbending in honest failure, but humble and gentle in

success; not to substitute words for action; not to seek the path of

comfort, but to face the stress and spur of difficulty and challenge;

to learn to stand up in the storm, but to have compassion on those who

fall; to master yourself before you seek to master others; to have a

heart that is clean, a goal that is high; to learn to laugh, yet never

forget how to weep; to reach into the future, yet never neglect the

past; to be serious, yet never take yourself too seriously; to be

modest so that you will remember the simplicity of true greatness; the

open mind of true wisdom, the meekness of true strength.''

I think that largely represented our great friend Charlie Norwood.

Madam Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from

Arizona (Mr. Franks).