I thank the ranking member for yielding time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the concurrent resolution

for the House, and I do so from a position of a humble public servant,

one who has not served in Iraq in uniform, as our previous speaker did,

and others have who are in this Chamber at my side, but as one who has

been there. I rise as one who is charged with public responsibility as

the ranking member of the Middle East Subcommittee.

While this resolution before the Congress today and this week, while

this resolution expresses support for our troops in Iraq, the heart of

the resolution is a statement of disapproval of the President's so-

called surge of troops in Iraq, and I cannot support it.

I see Iraq, as others have eloquently stated, as the central front in

the war on terror. I rise today in opposition to this resolution out of

a fundamental sense that we have a moral obligation to finish what we

started, to confront the enemies of our way of life, and to support our

duly elected Commander in Chief as he makes those decisions that he

deems necessary and appropriate to achieve those ends.

Let me say from the heart, for a moment, my reasons for supporting

this troop surge. A few days before President Bush addressed the

Nation, he invited a handful of Members of Congress down to the West

Wing of the White House. I must tell you that I had my doubts about

this troop surge. In all four of my trips to Iraq, I had heard

consistently from our military commanders over the past several years

that a large American footprint in Iraq was actually counterproductive

to our goals.

But August and the aftermath of 2006 changed all of that. All of that

advice predated an extraordinary increase in violence that commenced in

the late summer of last year, when it became clear to all of us in this

body, and to freedom-loving people around the world, that our strategy

and tactics on the ground in Iraq were not working.

Now, I took that skepticism and that counsel into the Cabinet room of

the West Wing, and there I heard the President describe a new strategy

and new tactics. For all of the world to have read the newspaper

accounts, Mr. Speaker, I would have assumed the President was simply

sending more troops for more troops' sake. But that was not the case.

Despite what the previous speaker on this floor suggested, this is a

new strategy. It is a new way forward. It is an effort on the part of

the President to embrace an increase in troop strengths in Baghdad that

was initially recommended by the Iraq Study Group, and more on that in

a moment.

But let me say that I believe this new way forward, this new approach

ought to be given a chance to work. I believe to oppose the President's

new strategy in Iraq is to accept the status quo. And the headlines of

the last 24 hours should tell every man and woman of good will in this

Congress that the status quo in Iraq is not acceptable.

Now, earlier I mentioned that the approach of a troop surge in

Baghdad was first recommended by the Iraq Study Group. I am quite

struck, Mr. Speaker,

that the previous speaker who is a freshman Member of Congress from

Pennsylvania spoke, as many have in the Democrat majority, quite

glowingly of the report of the Iraq Study Group. And I admire this work

product greatly.

A bipartisan work authorized during the last Congress, James A.

Baker, III, former Secretary of State, Lee Hamilton of Indiana, a

former chairman of the House International Relations Committee bringing

together a bipartisan group of wise counselors developed the Iraq Study

Group report.

While I do not agree with every aspect of it, particularly those that

talk about having a dialogue with terrorist states in the region, there

is much that recommends the American people to the Iraq Study Group.

And again I site in evidence the gentleman from Pennsylvania's glowing

reference to that report just moments ago.

Now, let's look, if we can, at what the Iraq Study Group has to say

about the idea of a troop surge in Iraq. I would offer very humbly, and

maybe startling to some who are looking in, Mr. Speaker, that the very

words ``troop surge'' comes from the Iraq Study Group's

recommendations.

Allow me to quote from page 73 of the book that is available in book

stores all over America. The Iraq Study Group 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.''

Let me emphasize that again. The Iraq Study Group that the gentleman

from Pennsylvania and many in the majority have heralded as an

important work that provides us with a vision for going forward says:

``We could, however, support a short-term redeployment of surge of

American combat forces to stabilize Baghdad.''

Mr. Speaker, that is precisely what President Bush called for in

January. And it is precisely that which Congress this week is poised to

reject in a nonbinding resolution. I submit to you today that if the

Iraq Study Group is to be cited again and again by the majority as

source authority, and a fount of wisdom, and I believe it is, then

let's be clear about the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group.

It is not to say, Mr. Speaker, that a short-term redeployment or

surge of combat forces in Baghdad will solve the present crisis and

impasse that we face. It simply is a strategy to quell violence with

Iraqis in the lead, to create the conditions of stability whereby a

long-term political solution can be achieved.

Now let me say, Mr. Speaker, it was my great hope that the resolution

before us today would have come to the floor under procedural rules

that allowed for amendments. For my part I spent much of last evening

offering an amendment, along with others, that would state that it is

the sense of Congress that we should not take any action that would

result in the elimination or reduction of funds for our troops.

I rise today not to complain about procedure, but to say, Mr.

Speaker, I regret that this newly minted majority could not do as the

Democrat chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee appears

prepared to act.

My amendment that was offered, similar to others, has nearly

identical language to a resolution being offered by the distinguished

Senator Levin, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee. And both

of us agree that Congress should affirmatively state that it will not

cut funding to the troops.

I deeply regret that we were not able to make that declarative

statement today. And let me say with great respect to the chairman of

this Armed Services Committee, who needs not to hear from me about the

deep respect I have for him, that I have to believe that somewhere in

his heart of hearts, knowing his extraordinary record of service to

this country, that he may well have hoped for a stronger statement as

well.

While the Democrat resolution before us expresses the hope that

Congress and all Americans will continue to support and protect our

brave men and women serving in Iraq, it does not take the next step to

show tangible support for our troops in the nature of funding. And let

me say this with great sincerity: there is a fundamental difference

between pledging to support and protect our troops and pledging not to

cut off the funding for our war in Iraq.

It is a specious distinction, and one that is not lost on our

colleagues in the Senate. I would submit to you that words have

consequences, and ``support'' and ``protect'' do not assure the

American people that we will continue to fund our troops in the field.

I believe the American people understand this point, Mr. Speaker. A

poll cited this morning in USA Today shows that even though a majority

of Americans are opposed to the surge of troops in Baghdad, a majority

also oppose cutting off funding for the troops.

The American people do not want Congress to defund this war in the

majority, even if they are concerned about the course and direction the

war is taking. And Congress should tell the troops and the American

people that it will never use the power of the purse to accomplish

policy ends in the field of battle.

With this I close. Listening to this debate today and to the

opposition to the surge being espoused by the Democrat majority, I have

begun to wonder a very simple question: What if it works? I have made

it clear that I support the surge and the President's new strategy.

My good friends on the Democrat side of the aisle and, as has been

said, some Republicans have made it clear that they oppose the surge of

forces in Iraq. And that is their right, and if it is in their heart,

it is their duty. And at this moment, it appears that a majority of

Americans are with the majority in this Congress.

But what if? What if they are wrong? What if you are wrong? What if

the surge and the new leadership of General Petraeus and the courage

and bravery of American men and women in uniform and the sacrifices of

Iraqis in uniform succeed in the coming months?

You know, it is a snow day back in Indiana today, Mr. Speaker. And my

kids are even home watching this on TV. I give my kids some pretty

basic advice sometimes. One of the pieces of advice I give my kids when

they are facing challenges, I say to them, you know, people don't like

losers, but they like quitters even less.

And I think we ought to reflect on that old maxim as we come upon

this decision today. If this new strategy in Iraq succeeds in the

coming months, what will those who vote for this resolution say? The

truth is, we must fight and win a victory for freedom in Iraq. The

truth is we have no option but victory.

In their hearts the American people know this, and the American

people are willing to make the hard choices to choose victory. Courage.

Courage is the key in this moment.

C.S. Lewis wrote that courage is not simply one of the virtues, but

the form of every virtue at the testing point. Courage then is the

answer, not recrimination and retreat. We are at a moment when the

American people and the Members of this body will take a stand. This is

a moment for courage. Our brave men and women in Iraq exhibit courage

and uncommon valor every day.

It is my hope and prayer that we in this House might follow their

lead and show them that such courage resides here as well. Let's vote

down this resolution and find it within ourselves to lead the American

people by bringing forward the resources and the support necessary to

see freedom within Iraq.