Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding. I

rise in opposition to House Concurrent Resolution 63, the resolution

that calls on us to disapprove of the increase in troops in Iraq. I

rise to oppose it, and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle

to carefully reflect on what we are doing.

This debate may benefit the American people. This resolution will

undoubtedly harm America and harm our troops. Every American wants our

troops home. Every American wants this war over. But it is not that

easy. You cannot just wish this war would end and believe it will go

away as a problem for America. Life is never that easy.

Let us begin with the text of the resolution. Make no mistake about

it, it is very brief, and all of us should have read it. It is two

sentences long. It essentially says: stay the course. A resolution

which says, we oppose increasing troops, but we support our current

troops is a resolution that says, stay the course.

It is not a resolution that says withdraw. That might be a morally

defensible position, because perhaps we should withdraw, at least some

believe. It is not a resolution that says, put in more troops. It is a

resolution that says, adding more troops is wrong, but we support those

that are there.

That is a resolution to stay the course. I would suggest no American

believes we should stay the course. I would suggest that the RAND study

and the Army's manual on counterinsurgency both suggest that staying

the course is wrong. Indeed, it is a recipe for failure. Both RAND and

our own counterinsurgency manual say, if anything, we should have

between 400,000 and 450,000 troops there.

So why would we support staying the course? Now, we all know that

many of us, and I included, wanted a change in strategy in Iraq. My

colleagues on the other side called for a change in strategy. This

surge is the change in strategy.

Indeed, and I am mystified, and I am glad some of my colleagues today

have made the point, this is the change in strategy, at least one of

them, recommended by the Iraq Study Group. I thought my colleagues on

the other side supported that. It seems to me that there is also an

important flaw in this debate.

My colleagues say that this is a nonbinding resolution. I would

suggest to you that when you are at war, and when the United States

Congress acts with regard to that war, it is not nonbinding. The world

is watching. The world is watching every word that is said on this

floor.

I believe we have a moral duty to finish what we began. Earlier on

the floor, my colleagues have mentioned that many leaders in the

region, in the Middle East, have begged us not to leave. They have

begged us to stay at least long enough to stand up the Iraqi Government

so that it can defend itself. They have implored us not to leave.

Let me give you their words. They have said, because they opposed our

originally going in, the coalition came uninvited, it should not leave

uninvited. They are making the point that we have a duty to finish this

effort. They have talked about analogies. They pointed out that a heart

surgeon who begins a heart surgery is not entitled, halfway through the

surgery, to say, you know what, I am tired, I want to leave.

On the other side of the aisle many of my colleagues have said this

is hard. Indeed, it is hard. But that is not a justification for

leaving. The best analogy I heard was one that said, this is like

stepping on a land mine, where you put your foot on it, but you know

that if

you lift your foot off it will blow up. We have put our foot on a land

mine in Iraq. But if we lift our foot off before the Iraqi Government

can defend itself, it will blow us up, and it will blow them up.

You cannot wish this war away. And so I would suggest this resolution

is binding. The world is watching. Our allies, if we abandon Iraq, will

never trust us again. But why do they want a nonbinding resolution?

Because they do not want to accept responsibility.

The President does not have that choice. He has responsibility. Those

who oppose this war have a duty to take a stand, one side or the other.

If you oppose the war, then seek withdrawal. If you do not, then do not

undermine our troops. Because make no mistake, this nonbinding

resolution hurts our troops.

Let me just conclude with this point. In the midst of an ongoing war,

it is impossible to support the troops and oppose the mission. Let me

make that clear. The world is watching. Our enemies, al Qaeda, and the

radical jihadists who hate us and want to kill us are watching. If we

tell them we oppose the mission, we are encouraging them. They have

guns, rockets, and missiles pointed at our troops. This resolution is a

grave error. I urge my colleagues to oppose it.

Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

And I have listened to his eloquent words today about the radical

threat we face.

I have a fundamental question for the other side. I thought our

colleague from New York did a superb job of acknowledging the good

intentions of every Member of Congress involved in this debate and the

good intentions of the majority. I share his frustration with the

progress of the war to date. I share the comments made by my colleagues

on the other side who are unhappy at how we got here. But I think that

misses what I believe is the essential question we confront now, and

that is, where do we go from here? What will this resolution do? And I

would suggest that that is a question that has not been examined in

this debate. I would suggest that many would like to wish this war

would go away, that many would like to believe that if the United

States withdrew its troops from Baghdad and withdrew its troops from

Iraq that somehow Iraq as a problem would go away.

But, Mr. Chairman, you have made the point over and over and over

again today: this isn't about Iraq.

I would ask my colleagues on the other side can they name a single

jihadi leader, a single radical Islamist, who has said if they prevail

in Iraq, if we will just leave Iraq, that this will end, that they will

no longer desire to conquer the world, that they will back away from

all of their rhetoric about attacking all Westerners everywhere? And I

suggest you can't name anyone like that.

Let me read you just a few quotes to make this point. Ayman al

Zawahiri, we all know who he is, a well-known jihadi leader: ``It is a

jihad for the sake of God and will last until our religion prevails.''

Not until we abandon Iraq, but until their religion prevails.

``The entire world is an open battlefield for us,'' he goes on to

say. ``We will attack everywhere until Islam reigns.'' Ayman al

Zawahiri does not say we will attack until the war in Iraq ends, we

will attack until Americans pull out of Baghdad, we will attack until

they are no longer in the nation of Iraq. He says, ``We will attack

everywhere until Islam reigns.''

Again al Zawahiri: ``The jihad in Iraq requires several incremental

goals. The first stage: expel the Americans from Iraq.'' Note that that

is only the first stage. ``The second stage: establish an Islamic

authority or emirate. The third stage: extend the jihad wave to the

secular countries neighboring Iraq.'' It will not end.

If your resolution, if a resolution tonight, could end this war and

bring our boys home and our girls home and make the world safe, I would

be the first to vote for it. But it won't.

Osama bin Laden says it clearly: ``Hostility toward America is a

religious duty, and we hope to be rewarded for it by God . . . I am

confident that Muslims will be able to end the legend of the so-called

superpower that is America.''

We are on notice. I think we have to take them at their word. It

isn't about Iraq. It is about our confrontation, a historic

confrontation, with radical jihadists who seek to kill us