Mr. Speaker, I disapprove of the President's January 10

decision to surge 20,000 new troops into Iraq. I urge my colleagues to

support the resolution.

Mr. Speaker, although the President says that the 20,000 new troops

constitute a change in his strategy, all I am seeing are a repeat of

the same failed policies of the past. America has sent additional

troops to Iraq before, several times, without result. America has tried

to work with the Maliki government, and it has not been very

successful.

Mr. Speaker, we have to admit that this approach is not working. The

President himself has admitted that his patience is running out with

the Maliki government. It is really just a question of whether Congress

should try to force President Bush and Vice President Cheney to change

course now or whether they will do it several months from now. I say

that the time for change is now.

It is true that Congress has no business micromanaging a war. No one

here in Congress is Commander in Chief. It is also true that we must

not shirk from our responsibilities to support our brave men and women

in uniform, and we need to support the brave Iraqis who have stood with

us and the good people of the region, but we do deserve a better

strategy. More of the same is just not good enough, either for our

soldiers or for the good people of the region.

President Bush, we have to admit, has shown a distressing

stubbornness regarding Iraq. Although former Secretary of Defense

Donald Rumsfeld offered to resign twice due to his own embarrassment

with his failures, President Bush refused to accept his resignation for

years, and finally only accepted it the day after the last election.

Colleagues on both sides of the aisle know that if the President had

accepted that resignation earlier, not only would Pentagon policy have

been different; the core of the war might well have been different.

I think that the President needs a nudge now, and this resolution

will offer it. True, it is nonbinding, but that is a good thing.

Congress is not cutting off money for the troops, nor should we. We are

sending a message to the President.

Now, I will admit that it is a shame that we do have to do it this

way; but on this issue, the President has refused to heed the advice of

so many of his own top generals, of his own father, of the Iraq Study

Group, of our few remaining allies, or of the leadership of this equal

branch of government. It is also a shame that today in America there is

a widespread fear that the President could even be establishing the

preconditions for war with Iran. Regardless of that situation, I hope

that this resolution will curb any reckless behavior.

Finally, why is a change in strategy necessary now? Iraq appears to

be descending into a civil war that neither Congress nor the Pentagon

predicted. Defense Secretary Gates has described no less than four

separate conflicts going on in Iraq today. That has led stalwart

Republicans like Senator John Warner, the former chairman of the Senate

Armed Services Committee, to question whether the 2002 authorization to

use force in Iraq is even still valid today. American influence in the

region has substantially diminished, while the influence of Iran has

increased. It is time for a change.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the original judgment of CENTCOM commander

General Abizaid who testified before Congress not long ago, and he

said, ``I do not believe that more American troops right now is the

solution to the problem. I believe that the troop levels need to stay

where they are.''

General Abizaid went on to say, ``I met with every divisional

commander, General Casey, the corps commander, General Dempsey, we all

talked together. And I said, `In your professional opinion, if we were

to bring in more American troops now, does it add considerably to our

ability to achieve success in Iraq?' And they all said no.'' That is

quoting General Abizaid.

Mr. Speaker, I would have been more inclined to support the President

if he had asked for a much larger number of troops or for a sacrifice

on the part of all Americans who do not have a loved one in our

military. Such proposals would have led me to believe that the

President was considering a serious change in strategy, but the

President has not recommended either.

Instead, he has consistently violated the so-called Powell doctrine

by not waging war with an overwhelming military force, a clear

objective, or a defined exit strategy. From the beginning of this

conflict, we have skimped on the number of troops, the equipment for

our soldiers, the commitment of our allies. It is simply too late to

add on a few thousand more troops now.

Our brave troops and their families in the all-volunteer military

have carried the entire burden of this war. Wall Street and Main Street

have not been asked to help. Where are the war bonds to pay for this

war? We have not even tried to pay for it. We have borrowed most of the

money from nations like

China. Policies like that do not make the Nation more secure.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, Congress has already given the President

more time to fight this war than it took to win World War II, more

money than was spent in Korea and Vietnam, and the unfettered use of

the finest military in history. We are spending more on our military

than every other nation in the world combined, and yet we are bogged

down in a Third World country embroiled in its own civil war. At this

point in time, it is not unreasonable for Congress to say enough is

enough. Voters certainly said so clearly in the last election.