Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me

time. I appreciate him letting me go out of order. I am not a member of

his committee. But when my committee has time on Thursday night, I am

hoping to be able to attend the memorial service for our comrade,

Charles Norwood, whom we lost today.

Madam Speaker, I rise to speak against H. Con. Res. 63. I think it is

a mistake. It is the first step of this new Congress, the first step

this new Congress is going to make towards cutting off the funding for

our troops.

You do not have to take my word for it. Yesterday's CQ Today, a

magazine widely read up here in Washington, and I am quoting, ``It is a

foot in the door toward limiting military involvement in Iraq. The

Democrats want to do this by the Congressional power of the

checkbook.''

Further in the article it says, ``Democrats are well on their way

toward planning more aggressive measures in an attempt to force

redeployment beginning by blocking funding, and ending in the

supplemental spending request.

And then finally, Democrats said, ``The resolution would just be a

first step in the process that could result in a reduction or

reconditioning of funds slated for our troops in Iraq.''

Well, we do not have to go too very far back in our past to see the

consequences of that type of action. When I was in Iraq in August of

2005 General Casey told myself and a group of us who were there that

there is no group in the world that can stand up to the American

military. In fact, the only organized body in the world capable of

defeating the American military was the American Congress.

I believe he was right. The CRS has done a report for this Congress,

a report for Congress about restrictions of military operations in

Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Somalia and Kosovo, funding and non funding

approaches. I reference particularly, I urge my colleagues, this is

easy to download from the Internet on the CRS, simply type in Cooper-

Church amendment, and you will get this well-researched product.

It details the Mansfield amendment, the Cooper/Church amendment of

1970 and 1973, the Cranston amendment, the McGovern/Hatfield amendment.

It also talks about the funding for Somalia. In fact, in this House, in

1999, when President Clinton was President, a bipartisan group in this

House came together to defeat a motion to block funding for the troops

in Kosovo. So congressional actions regarding funding do have a real

world impact.

And I would submit that much of the chaos that ensued after we left

Vietnam, and I would include the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in that

chaos, I would include the militant jihadist takeover of our Embassy in

Iran in that chaos, much of that ensued because of congressional action

that was taken on the floor of this House in cutting off funding for

our troops.

And I am not a big one on process. I haven't been here that long. I

don't know that I understand process all that well. But why in the

world would we not allow a vote or even a motion to recommit on, say,

Sam Johnson's bill, H.R. 511. Sam Johnson's bill, a simple two-page

bill that details all of the fine things done by our troops in Iraq and

Afghanistan, and ends with this simple paragraph: Faithful support of

Congress. Congress will not cut off or restrict funding for units and

members in the Armed Forces that the Commander in Chief has deployed in

harm's way.

Wow, that is pretty simple. I don't understand. I frankly, do not

understand why this House could not vote on this simple measure

submitted by my fellow Texan, Sam Johnson, a legitimate war hero in his

own right. I simply do not understand why we wouldn't have an

opportunity to vote on that bill or offer it as a motion to recommit

before we vote on the resolution.

And the resolution itself, it is a shame that we weren't offered a

chance to amend the bill, to amend the resolution, to perhaps make it

better. I urge people to go on line and read it for themselves. It is

only two lines. It is not a very heavy lift to read this particular

piece of legislation.

Line 1, Congress and the American people will continue to support and

protect Members of the United States Armed Forces who are serving or

who have served bravely and honorably in Iraq. That is sentence one.

Remarkable for what it leaves out. What about a comma, and who will

serve? Would it be so wrong to include those individuals who will serve

in whatever time is left in the country of Iraq, to include them in as

being worthy of our support in Congress?

Line 2 is so vague as to almost defy description. Line 2 reads:

Congress disapproves of the decision of President George W. Bush,

announced on January 10, 2007, to deploy more than 20,000 additional

troops.

Well, would 19,995 troops be okay? Would Congress then not cock an

eyebrow to say we don't like that either? Well, what does that second

statement actually, what point are we trying to make by that second

statement, other than we don't support the Commander in Chief, we don't

support the mission, and as a consequence, you do have to ask if we

support the troops.

Now, we are all sent here in Congress, we are all elected by 600- to

700,000 people, back in our districts, back in our States, to make hard

decisions. We are not sent here to read the polls, stick our fingers in

the wind and then decide which direction to go. We are not sent here to

shift tactics because we think we may become more

popular back home if we do that. I fully recognize that by voting

against this resolution, I put myself in jeopardy of reelection, and I

am willing to do that because I believe a vote for this resolution puts

my country's fate in significant jeopardy for decades to come.

Now, I was not here when this House voted in October of 2002 to give

the President the power he needed to deploy the troops. But I have

always voted for funding for the troops. And I appreciate so much the

chairman standing up here and offering his telephone number to any

family who is concerned whether or not their loved one will have access

to body armor in Iraq.

I remember those first hearings when I came here in March of 2003, we

were instructed on how quickly our men and women in the field could get

into their chemical suits. This was an object of great concern to

everyone in this body. In fact, most of us sit on top of a chair which

has a gas mask underneath it, just in case we need to leave this body

in a hurry because of the deployment of chemical weapons. We were all

concerned about chemical weapons back in 2003.

Now, I have made five trips to Iraq, and I know that what is reported

on our television news services here in the States is not always

accurately reflective of what is happening on the ground back in Iraq.

I referenced Dr. Norwood a moment ago. My last trip to Iraq was in July

of 2006. Dr. Norwood, Chairman Deal and I, and Gene Green from our

Health Subcommittee went over to see the status of health care for our

troops. I was very impressed with what I saw that day.

But, Madam Speaker, I think everyone in this body has to answer two

fundamental questions on this resolution before us: Is it in our broad

national interest to win this fight? The second question: Can we

prevail? Can we provide a modicum of security in the country of Iraq?

Can we provide a modicum of sovereignty in the country of Iraq? For me,

the answer to those two questions is yes. Yes and yes. And I recognize

that people of goodwill can disagree about these issues. But if your

answer is no, and no, then please stand up, show some courage.

This is a nonbinding resolution, for crying out loud. Even a

Democratic Presidential candidate said it is equivalent to standing in

the corner and stomping your feet.

We have heard a lot about moral obligations tonight. Well, I would

submit that we have a moral obligation that if we can't answer both of

those questions in the affirmative, bring the troops home now. Don't

wait till April. Don't wait till September. If we haven't the resolve

to see this thing through, or if we no longer feel that it is in our

broad national interest to continue this fight, why in the world would

you ask any man or woman to continue to serve in that country under

those conditions?

It is our moral obligation to ensure that our troops know our

intentions and they know that we are going to provide continued support

for them, and that continued support, whether it is bullets for their

gun, whether it is the M-16, whether it is the Humvee, or whether it is

reinforcements, we are going to continue to provide the things that the

generals on the ground say they need for their men and women to get the

job done.

When the President invited me down to the White House right before

his Oval Office speech, he asked me what the constituents in my

district would say. And I said, Mr. President, it is pretty clear. My

constituents would say to you, if they were standing here today, fight

the war or bring the boys home.

The rules of engagement sometimes, frankly, I don't understand. If we

capture someone in Sadr City and we get a call from the Prime

Minister's Office and we have got to take him back and let him go, that

doesn't make sense, good sense, if you are fighting a war.

Well, it looks as if a lot of those restrictions have been removed.

In fact, on the Drudge Report on Fox News earlier this evening they

broke the story that Moqtada al-Sadr is now living is Iran. That is a

good thing. That reflects the change in tactics on the ground brought

to you by our men and women who are fighting for our freedom abroad.

Madam Speaker, I suggest that we commit together to support the

future, the future support of our troops in the country of Iraq, or

simply get them out of harm's way now. Again, Moqtada al-Sadr has fled

to Iran.

I think we can prevail. I think it is in our broad national interest.

I think the price of defeat is simply too steep, not just for us today,

but for generations in the future.