Mr. Speaker, today we begin debate on the

question of whether to escalate the war in Iraq.

The administration's policy on Iraq has failed. It failed yesterday,

it is failing today, and it will fail tomorrow. These failures have

left America weakened, not strengthened.

Today, we must chart a new course. We must end the war in Iraq.

Each one of us is immeasurably proud of the service of our troops.

They answered the call to duty, and they have done their job.

I am particularly proud of our Vermont troops and our families. No

State has sacrificed more per capita in the wars in Iraq and

Afghanistan than our State of Vermont. But while our men and women in

uniform have done their jobs, the President's policies have failed this

country and failed our troops, demonstrably and repeatedly.

Mr. Speaker, it is now our responsibility to chart a new direction;

one that brings our troops home, restores diplomacy to foreign policy

and improves the readiness of our military. And we start today. No more

troops, no more phony intelligence, no more blank checks. We must end

this war.

Top military commanders have made it clear that no amount of American

military force can take the place of the political consensus required

to end Iraq's civil war. We now face two questions: What is best for

America and what is best for Iraq? And the answer to both questions is

to end this war.

This resolution, Mr. Speaker, is just a beginning. The President has

left us no choice. America must change the direction of the war. If the

President won't, we will.

Today, we choose the path which offers us the best hope for success:

escalating the military conflict, as the President proposes, or taking

the first step in a new direction. To strengthen America, we must

choose a new path. Top generals have said it, the bipartisan Iraq Study

Group confirmed it, and the American people demand it.

Mr. Speaker, the troops have done their job. Now we must do our ours.