Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor this evening to voice

my strong opposition to President Bush's apparent decision to send up

to 20,000 more troops to Iraq. Tomorrow evening the President will try

to persuade a very skeptical public that more troops are needed in

Iraq. But regardless of the number he suggests tomorrow night, I will

oppose any efforts to escalate the war by sending additional American

troops.

Mr. Speaker, it appears President Bush has learned nothing from the

results of the 2006 election, nor has he listened to the suggestions of

the bipartisan Iraq Study Group or his own Joint Chiefs of Staff who

said as late as last month that they saw no reason to send more troops

to Iraq.

Instead, President Bush has chosen to stick his head in the sand, not

listen to anyone and continue on a course that is not going to make

Iraq any safer for either our brave troops or for the Iraqis

themselves.

It is time to bring an end to the war in Iraq. President Bush has

lost the support of the American people who have grown frustrated by

the continuing loss of American troops. They are rightfully asking the

question, why must our troops continue to serve as referees in a civil

conflict between Sunnis and Shias?

Mr. Speaker, there was a new Washington Post ABC news poll released

this morning. And only 17 percent of Americans support sending more

troops to Iraq; 17 percent is not a mandate for anything, in my

opinion. And it is time for President Bush to finally listen to the

American people.

Many of us woke up on New Year's Day to the headline of ``3,000''

bannered across our newspapers. We have now lost more than 3,000

soldiers in Iraq. Now, how many more are going to have to die before

the President realizes that there is no possible U.S. military solution

in Iraq?

Some supporters of the President's plan are going to claim that if we

bring our troops home now, the more than 3,000 U.S. soldiers that have

died over the past 3 years will have done so in vain. But I could not

disagree more. These men and women fought admirably for our country and

will certainly be remembered as heroes. But the question now is whether

or not we want to risk thousands more American lives for a war that we

so obviously cannot win.

Since the inception of this war, we have seen little evidence of

progress in Iraq. In fact, the violence has only intensified to the

point that a report released from the President's own Pentagon

concluded that violence in Iraq was at an all time high just last

month. And last month was the third deadliest month for American troops

since the start of the war with insurgents claiming 111 soldiers lives.

Now, our troops know that the situation in Iraq is getting worse

every day. They are speaking about IEDs, the improvised explosive

devices used by the insurgents, which are now bigger and more complex.

The Bush Administration has tried troop escalation before, but it has

never worked. Last summer, the President touted a plan that sent more

troops into Baghdad, similar to what is expected to be proposed by him

tomorrow. But while the violence subsided for a couple of weeks, by the

end of August last year, violence was again on the rise, and it

continued to escalate for the remainder of the year.

Based on these facts on the ground, why would the President even

consider sending more troops to Iraq? Why would you put more American

lives in harm's way when we know that previous troop escalations have

not been successful in reducing violence and decreasing the number of

insurgents?

Mr. Speaker, it is time for us to begin to bring our troops home. The

President has said that increasing troops is a sacrifice we have to

make to win this war. But I think truly it is time for him to admit

that risking more American lives for this failed war is a monumental

mistake.