Mr. Speaker, in a few hours the President will address

the Nation and talk about his plan to escalate the war in Iraq, to try

and salvage the abysmal failures of his administration and the

unnecessary war which they sold to the Congress and the American

people.

Now, in leading up to this, just last month the President said, ``It

is important to trust the judgment of the military when they are making

military plans. I am a strict adherer to the command structure.''

President Bush.

Well, I guess he is, because he is the commander-in-chief, and he is

ignoring the advice of the uniformed services. The President's chief

military advisers oppose this escalation in the war.

General John Abizaid, who was then head of all U.S. forces in the

Middle East, testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee

November 15, ``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.''

But the decider wasn't listening. The reason is because we want the

Iraqis to do more. It is easy for the Iraqis to rely on us to do this

work. I believe that more American forces prevent the Iraqis from doing

more, from taking more responsibility for their own future.

The President didn't like what he had heard, the decider being an

adherer to the military chain of command, so General Abizaid is being

shown the door. As a Lebanese American who is fluent in Arabic, I think

his understanding of the region far exceeds that of any of the advisers

that the President may be depending upon to make this misguided

proposal to escalate the war.

General Casey has also been removed as commander of U.S. forces in

Iraq. It started with General Shinseki, who told the President he would

need 500,000 troops to occupy the country and avoid the abyss into

which we have fallen, a civil war, insurrection, insurgency. He also

was fired because the decider didn't believe his advice.

It is time to change course in Iraq.

And the President is not only continuing a failed policy and sending

more U.S. troops to a mission that is very unlikely to succeed,

according to the advice of his uniformed commanders, who he is

ignoring, he is also going to undermine the effort in Afghanistan.

Things are going bad in Afghanistan. Remember, that is where Osama

bin Laden planned 9/11. That is where the Taliban supported and

harbored al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden. We, with NATO and the world

behind us, decided to take them out. Remember that? Osama bin Laden,

dead or alive; dead or alive. You don't hear that from the White House

much anymore.

But Osama bin Laden is still planning attacks on the United States,

and the one-eyed Omar is coming back to Kandahar. They are planning a

spring offensive. They didn't withdraw this winter. The NATO forces are

ineffectual. And what is the President's response? He is going to

withdraw U.S. troops from that region.

So we have the heart of darkness, Afghanistan, and the President is

ignoring that problem to continue his failed policies in Iraq. No

escalation of the war in Iraq by the adherer-decider, President Bush.