Mr. Speaker, after 9/11, the House of Representatives

voted in unprecedented near unanimity with one dissenting vote to

invade Afghanistan and go after the perpetrators of 9/11, Osama bin

Laden, al Qaeda, and also their host, the Taliban. The U.S. Forces with

real allies quickly accomplished that mission, displacing the Taliban,

Osama bin Laden, al Qaeda.

Unfortunately, because of the administration's diverting its

attention already toward Iraq and failing to send adequate troops into

Afghanistan and overly relying upon untrustworthy Afghan warlords,

Osama bin Laden escaped, as did the one-eyed Omar of the Taliban, al-

Zawahiri, his deputy.

They are still at large. They are still planning attacks in the

United States. In fact, they are resurgent. For the first year since

our invasion of Afghanistan, the Taliban didn't shrink back into

Pakistan for the winter. They have set up sophisticated forward bases

in Southern Afghanistan.

We are hearing a plea for reinforcements from the NATO forces, from

U.S. troops on the ground. And what is the President's reaction?

Remember the President, ``Osama bin Laden, dead or alive; dead or

alive, we are going to hunt him to the ends of the Earth''? He does not

talk about that anymore, does he? The Taliban, Afghanistan. He is

totally focused on his failed policies in Iraq, where there was no al

Qaeda, where there were no weapons of mass destruction, where there was

no Osama bin Laden.

And now the President, as part of an attempt to paper over his failed

strategy yet once again and pretend there is possibly a military

solution, he is going to take U.S. troops out of southern Afghanistan

and send them to Baghdad, despite the warnings that the one-eyed Omar

and the Taliban intend to try and retake Kandahar against the pathetic

NATO troops that are defending that region, hobbled by extraordinarily

restrictive rules of engagement.

There is a possibility that there will be a new sanctuary and there

will be a resurgence in place for the terrorists to go, but it is not

Iraq. The President, in his blind obsession with Iraq, is failing to

see the real threats against the United States of America. The

President should not, and this Congress should not, support an

escalation of the war in Iraq, sending 21,500 troops in Iraq, some of

whom are vitally needed in Afghanistan who will be displaced as part of

that number because we have taxed our military so heavily.

This is wrong policy for Iraq, wrong policy for America, and wrong

policy for the much-touted war in Iraq. We must refocus our efforts on

Afghanistan, and we must work more broadly for a solution in Iraq,

following many of the recommendations of the Hamilton-Baker report

rejected by the President in favor of doing the same thing again and

again and again.

This is not a change in policy. It is the same failed policies of the

past.