Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the war

in Iraq. I oppose the surge. We don't need more American troops caught

in the cross-hairs of a civil war. After nearly 4 years, it is high

time for the Iraqis to send in their own troops to take out the Shia

militias and the Sunni insurgents.

In short, the problem in Iraq is that we are losing nearly 100

American lives every month, and we are spending $2 billion a week. The

solution is not to lose even more lives and to spend even more money.

I approach this subject with a great deal of humility, and it is not

my intention to micro-manage this war. I am merely a Member of Congress

and not a four-star general. But I have listened to what the most well-

respected four-star generals in the United States have to say about

this matter, and Generals Abizaid, Casey and Colin Powell have all said

that sending another surge of troops into Iraq is not the answer.

I am terribly concerned about interjecting American troops into the

middle of civil war violence. Who do they shoot at? The Sunni? The

Shia? One thing we know is that 61 percent of Iraqis approve of violent

attacks against our own U.S. troops. Does that sound like a grateful

country to you?

Thanks to our brave American troops, Saddam Hussein and al-Zarqawi

are dead, the Iraqi people have had three Democratic elections and

three-fourths of the senior al Qaeda operatives have been killed or

captured. And yet 61 percent of Iraqis want to kill American troops,

and 79 percent of Iraqis have a mostly negative view of the United

States.

The American people have paid the ultimate price for this war, and

now is not the time to escalate the tragedy even further. The Iraq war

has lasted longer than World War II. It has claimed more American lives

than the attacks of 9/11, and it has cost more money than the Vietnam

War.

The military action this Congress authorized in 2002 was for a far

different purpose than the war we face today. I voted to authorize the

use of force because I did not want Saddam Hussein to give weapons of

mass destruction to al Qaeda. Now Saddam Hussein is dead, and there are

no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

Why did we stay in Iraq? Because we wanted the Iraqi people to have a

unified and secure government so that Iraq would not become a haven for

terrorists, like what happened to Afghanistan after Russia pulled out.

Unfortunately, the Iraqi government has provided neither unity nor

security. After nearly 4 years, the Iraqis still have not achieved

reconciliation, still have not decided how to share oil revenues and

still have not dealt with the militias and the insurgents.

For example, 80 percent of the sectarian violence in Iraq is within a

30-mile radius of Baghdad, yet despite the fact that the Iraqi security

forces outnumber the al-Sadr militia by a ratio of 5-1, that is 300,000

versus 60,000, the Maliki government has still not taken action to take

out Moqtada al-Sadr and his militia.

In his speech, President Bush tells us that he emphasized the

importance of benchmarks with Prime Minister Maliki. Unfortunately, the

Iraqi government has a pattern of not fulfilling its promises with

regard to benchmarks.

For example, when I was in Iraq in May of last year, the Iraqi

government officials told me they would be able to provide security for

themselves by December of 2006. Now they are saying they hope to have

their own security in place by December of 2007.

Similarly, the U.S. surged the number of troops in Baghdad last

summer from 7,500 to 15,000 to take out the insurgents. But the Iraqi

government reneged on its promise to provide Iraqi troops, and, as a

result, the insurgents came right back after we left.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the motives of President Bush and other

prominent leaders, such as John McCain, who are pushing for more troops

are pure and well meaning. I believe they sincerely think this is the

best way forward. Three years ago, I would have agreed with them.

However, at this late stage, interjecting more young American troops

into the crossfire of an Iraqi civil war is simply not the right

approach. We are not going to solve an Iraqi political problem with an

American military solution.

In closing, regardless of how one feels about the war in Iraq or the

proposed surge in troops, as long as our American troops are in harm's

way, it is our duty and responsibility to support these troops 100

percent.

May God bless our troops and our country.