Mr. Speaker, the Nation brought in the new year by marking

a somber milestone: the 3,000th fallen American combatant in Iraq. In

response, the President proposes to send even more of a failed and

dangerous policy.

How much more heartbreak must American families suffer before the

President comes to see what the rest of the Nation has long known: His

Iraq policy is an utter failure, one that makes our country less and

less secure with each passing day, all at the expense of the flower of

our youth. How long before the President realizes that each fallen

soldier, sailor, aviator, and marine is a valuable, cherished human

being and not just a checkmark on a deployment order? How long will

President Bush continue to ignore the demands of American voters who

have clearly demanded a new direction?

Mr. President, I have asked before and I will ask again now: Why?

These policies of escalation have been tried in the past in Iraq. The

results speak for themselves: 3,000 brave men and women return home in

body bags, their families and friends left with nothing but memories;

over 22,000 more returning home injured, their lives never the same.

America's credibility around the world and its domestic security have

been dangerously eroded. We have plunged Iraq into a civil war, further

destabilizing an already precarious region. All this while, at home the

civil rights of American citizens are slowly being degraded, often

without congressional oversight.

On November 7, 2006, the American people spoke loud and clear. They

demanded a new direction.

This escalation is not a new direction. It is a slap in the face to

all Americans. And the fact that the President began committing new

troops in Iraq before Congress had a chance to respond to his new plan

is an insult to this body and an insult to the people who elected us to

lead our country in a new direction.

Mr. President, you have claimed that you wanted to start this year

off in a spirit of bipartisanship and collegiality. As an equal

partner, Congress deserves it, America deserves it and, most

importantly, our troops deserve it.