Mr. Speaker, last night President Bush told the American

people that he bore responsibility for the many mistakes made in the

prosecution of the war in Iraq. Then he announced that he planned to

make another mistake: He planned to escalate and expand the war in

Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, the President said he intends to send more than 20,000

U.S. service men and women into Iraq and indefinitely. As has been the

case with so many military strategic and diplomatic decisions made by

this President regarding Iraq, tragically, this too would be a terrible

error. This open-ended commitment of more U.S. troops will result in

the death and wounding of thousands more American soldiers, cost U.S.

taxpayers tens of billions of dollars more, and do nothing to help the

Iraqi people resolve their civil war. In fact, this escalation will

turn up the heat on the already boiling anti-American fanaticism in

Iraq and in the region.

The President's plan also weakens our severely overstretched and

depleted military, and it limits our ability to face the current and

future conflicts, future threats to our country.

In summary, President Bush's escalation and expansion of the war in

Iraq will hurt America's national security, and I will work with all of

my colleagues here to do all that we can to make sure that the

President's plan does not get allowed to be funded.

Our country has sacrificed deeply to help the Iraqi people already by

removing their murderous dictator Saddam Hussein from power, by

training their military, spending billions of our money to rebuild

their infrastructure, and by supporting them so that they could develop

a democratic government.

If we owed the Iraqi people a moral obligation after we deposed their

dictator and started this war, Mr. Speaker, we have long since met that

moral obligation.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, the United States must now simply, but

importantly, remove all of our troops from Iraq without delay. We must

rebuild our military and let the world know that we are ready to

counter the real threats to our national security, current and future.

Let me add one more thing, Mr. Speaker. I am delighted that my friend

and colleague Maxine Waters from California will be engaging in a

Special Order on Iraq and the necessity for withdrawing our troops from

Iraq. I am unable to participate in that Special Order and look forward

to participating and working with her under her leadership in the very

near future.