Mr. Speaker, it is good to see you in the Chair, and

I thank the gentleman for allowing me to do this.

I am a proud member of the Out of Iraq Caucus, and my office has been

flooded with letters and calls from constituents who want the President

to start bringing the troops home from Iraq. According to all the

polls, an overwhelming number of Americans are opposed to any

escalation.

Instead of a plan to begin redeployment, Americans heard a giant

sucking sound from President Bush last night, pulling our troops

further into the civil war that has already taken the lives of so many

of our brave sons and daughters.

The President is dealing with an Iraq that exists only in his

imagination. I challenge the President to answer the questions: Who are

our allies? Who are our enemies? What does winning mean? How long will

American troops be there? How many lives are you willing to sacrifice?

Escalation presumes a military solution is still possible. The

catastrophe facing Iraq is political, and yet there is no evidence of a

political process that has any hope of achieving any kind of

reconciliation or success.

The President has virtually fired General John Abizaid, our top

commander for Iraq in the region, who consulted with all of the

divisional commanders and asked them in their professional opinion, if

we were to bring in more troops would it add considerably to our

ability to achieve success in Iraq. They all said no, but the President

has not listened.

The British have announced that rather than escalating their

participation in this war, they are going to bring 3,000 troops out of

Iraq in May.

We are not receiving support from any allies. So it seems to me, as

now a sponsor of the Markey-Kennedy bill, H.R. 353, that Congress has

to step in, has to state its belief that this escalation is misguided.

And according to the Markey-Kennedy bill, it would prevent the

President from spending another taxpayer dollar to increase troop

levels in Iraq without the consent of Congress. And after 4 years, it

is time for President Bush to wake up and realize that his policy in

Iraq has failed. Most of the country has already come to that

conclusion.

Now, we must renew our military, work to restore our diplomatic

credibility and, above all, begin redeploying our troops out of Iraq.

And I would like to yield the remaining time to my colleague from

California, Lynn Woolsey.