Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to

increasing U.S. troop strength in Iraq. As one Member of Congress who

voted in support of the Iraq resolution in 2002, I recognize the

pretext for going to war was based on faulty, misleading intelligence.

I can not reverse that vote, but I can no longer acquiesce to a failed

and tragic military exercise in Iraq.

Two months ago, Generals Casey and Abizaid stated they did not

support increasing U.S. troop levels in Iraq. Last month, President

Bush maintained that military policy with regard to Iraq would be

determined by our military leaders. However, last week President Bush

ignored his top military advisors and called for a 20,000-plus increase

in U.S. troops to Iraq.

I, along with others, have been pressing the administration to level

with the American people on the status of the American security forces

being trained and ready to defend their nation. If Iraqis are trained

and ready as we are told, we should begin a planned phased withdrawal

of U.S. forces; if not, the administration should tell us when they

will be trained and ready.

Sending more troops to Iraq does nothing to enhance the Iraqis'

training; it only places more U.S. forces into harm's way to become

additional targets for the insurgency. This failed policy must be

stopped.

We can support our troops in the field and oppose the escalation of

U.S. forces. I urge all my colleagues to work in opposition to the

President's increase in U.S. forces.