Mr. Speaker, it was September 26, 2002, I was sitting in

the cabinet room of the White House with Condoleezza Rice, Andy Card,

and President Bush, and the President explained to us that day, and I

took notes and still have them, that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass

destruction; that Saddam Hussein was training terrorists on weapons of

mass destruction; and that if military force was used, in President

Bush's words, it would be swift. September 26, 2002.

It is now June 15, 2006, some 2,500 soldiers have died and more than

18,000 injured, many like Kevin Pannel, from Glenwood, Arkansas, who

have been injured in ways that will forever change his life and so many

others.

One thing we know for sure, Mr. Speaker, is that our intelligence

failed us. There is not a more difficult decision that Members of

Congress are asked to make than whether or not to send our men and

women in uniform into harm's way. And when we are faced with making

that decision, we must know our intelligence is right.

This has been a war that has touched most families, and mine is no

different. My brother-in-law spent Christmas in the Middle East

supporting a mission to refuel Air Force aircraft over Afghanistan. My

first cousin was in Iraq serving our country when his wife gave birth

to their first child.

We all have a story like that. We all know someone who has been

there. I escorted a young woman and her two children to the White House

this morning for a tour of the White House. They are in Washington,

D.C. with her mom and dad on vacation. Her husband was in Iraq when she

gave birth to their second child, and he is in Iraq today on his third

mission in 4\1/2\ years.

I want you to know that our men and women in uniform and their

service to our country is much greater, much greater than that of any

Member of Congress or any President could ever be, and tonight I honor

them.

There has been a lot of talk about this resolution that we will be

voting on tomorrow. I have read it three times. It says that we support

our troops, and I do. It says that we are against terrorists, and I am.

It says that we are against a date certain for withdrawal from Iraq,

and I agree with that, and so I plan to vote for this resolution

tomorrow. But here is where I disagree with this President.

This President is spending $279 million of your tax money in Iraq

every 24 hours. And yet if you ask him to be accountable for it, if you

ask him how he is spending that $279 million of your tax money in Iraq

every day, he will tell you that you are unpatriotic. I disagree with

that. I believe in accountability. I believe that this President, this

administration and this Republican Congress, must be held accountable

for the $279 million of your tax money that they are spending in Iraq

every 24 hours.

I also believe that this President lacks a plan. This resolution is

full of saying things like, we support our troops, and I certainly do.

It is full of things like saying, we are against terrorists, and I

would hope we all are. But there is nothing in the resolution about how

we are going to win, how we are going to win, and it is time for this

President to give us a plan on how we can win in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I was in Iraq. We had some 3,000 Arkansas National Guard

troops there August 11, 2004, and I went to let them know we support

them and to make sure some of this money was being spent on them and

the equipment they need to get the job done. I visited with young

soldiers from my hometown, soldiers I had taught in Sunday school,

soldiers I had duck hunted with.

And so I said to them, what do we need to be doing differently? They

said we need to be hiring Iraqis to rebuild

their nation's infrastructure. The insurgents are hiring them and they

are accepting the money and lobbing cheap bombs at us. Why? Because

they need to feed their family. And they also told me we need to be

training a lot more Iraqis to take control of their military and police

force. August 11, 2004.

February 2006, as a member of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly I was

in Brussels visiting the Ambassador to NATO, the U.S. Ambassador to

NATO, at his home. I visited with the Iraqi Ambassador there, and I

asked him the same question. And you know what? Some 2 years later, he

gave me the same answer.

It is time for this President, this Congress, to give us a plan to

establish a democracy, to win the peace, a plan that will eventually

allow us to bring our men and women in uniform home.