Mr. Speaker, I come before you tonight after listening to

the presentations that have been taking place all day, not only as a

Member of this body but as a parent who has lost a child. My son, B.J.,

who passed away a little more than 6 years ago, would have turned 24

tomorrow. Every time I learn about loss of life in Iraq, another son or

daughter, mother or father, brother or sister, I can't help but think

about my son B.J. and the profound pain and loss that will remain with

us for the rest of our lives.

That intense pain that we feel over the loss of B.J. is being felt

every day by those families here in America who have suffered a loss in

Iraq, and that is one of the reasons why I oppose this war and one of

the reasons why I plan to oppose this resolution.

But one of the other reasons I oppose this resolution deals with

honesty and truth. Boake Carter is credited with saying that ``in time

of war, the first casualty is truth.''

Mr. Carter's statement is applicable to the resolution before us

today. Like the one-sided resolution presented to the House last

December, the Republican majority has refused to allow a true debate on

the war on Iraq. The truth is 2,500 servicemen and -women have died in

Iraq. The truth is the so-called coalition countries, including Great

Britain, are drawing down their troops in Iraq. The truth is the

Republican majority in its resolution today wants to blur the truth,

that the cause and purpose of the war in Iraq is the same as the war in

Afghanistan.

The truth is the Republican majority in its resolution today wants to

blur the truth that the cause and purpose of the war in Iraq is

justified by the terrorist attacks of September 11.

The truth is the Republican majority in its resolution today wants to

blur the truth saying that we who oppose this war in Iraq are not as

patriotic as those who support the war.

The truth is the Republican majority in its resolution today wants to

blur the truth saying that those who do not support Resolution 861 do

not support our troops in Iraq.

Resolution 861 continues the open-ended commitment of U.S. troops in

Iraq and embodies President Bush's latest attempt to justify the U.S.

involvement in Iraq.

Last December the President and his congressional allies claimed the

Iraqi parliamentarian elections were a ``crucial victory'' in

establishing a democracy in Iraq. Thus, through this election,

``victory'' was inevitable in Iraq. Even Vice President Cheney declared

the insurgency was ``in their final throes.''

America has heard this type of reasoning before from President

Johnson during the Vietnam War. In 1967, the South Vietnamese freely

elected their government. President Johnson then declared the

Vietnamese election had established a democracy supported by the

Vietnamese people. Even our Vietnam military leaders declared the war

would be over soon as there was ``light at the end of the tunnel.''

After this Vietnamese election, and the light at the end of the

tunnel, 3,800 more Americans would die in Southeast Asia.

Since May 1, 2003, when the President declared ``mission

accomplished'' in Iraq, over 2,300 troops have died in Iraq. What is

the victory that the President and his congressional supporters

envision in Iraq for the U.S.? What is the strategy for the Iraqi war

mission to be accomplished?

This is not a war like our grandparents fought. This is an

insurgency. There is no country to hoist a white flag of surrender.

There is no recognized political entity that America can

sign a peace agreement with. There is only an insurgency of fanatics

who have no desire to reach peace with the United States.

Our brave men and women in the military are trying to build a

democracy in a country that views U.S. troops as occupiers. Almost one-

half of the Iraqi people believe it is justifiable to kill our U.S.

troops. The U.S. military has been used to prop up a government being

threatened by a guerrilla insurgency.

With this Iraqi insurgency, I cannot envision an event, a goal or a

date when victory in Iraq can indisputably be achieved.

What has President Bush said about achieving victory in Iraq? The

President said the United States will stay the course and the next

President will have to withdraw our troops from Iraq. It will be 2\1/2\

years, or 30 months, before this President leaves office. Does this

mean America will spend another $300 billion on the war in Iraq? Does

it mean America will suffer 18,000 more young people to war wounds and

another 2,500 killed?

In October 2002, I warned that this administration would open a

Pandora's box if the United States unilaterally went to war in Iraq.

Mr. President, you opened Pandora's box with all its death and

destruction of American and Iraqi lives. You cannot simply wash your

hands of this war and leave it to the next President to withdraw our

troops from Iraq.

It is time for America to demand accountability from the President

and the Iraqi Government. It is time for an Iraqi accountability plan

to bring this war to an end.

Because of America's sacrifice, the people of Iraq have been able to

participate in a democracy by electing the leaders who will shape their

young government and institute laws to protect them. This is a giant

step towards accountability.

The formation of a new government in Iraq is more than just filling

out a cabinet. It is an opportunity for the people of Iraq to accept

responsibility for governing their country. This responsibility extends

beyond voting or forming a new government or killing Abu Musab al

Zarqawi. Now, is the time for Iraqis to be accountable for themselves

and their developing country.

I believe that in order for the principles of democracy to take hold

in Iraq, the target of the insurgency, our U.S. troops, must be removed

as soon as possible!

The President must develop a strategy to bring our troops home. I

believe America should demand from the Bush administration an Iraq

Accountability Plan that will set clear and measurable goals. The

United States has provided the Iraqis with an opportunity for freedom,

democracy and self-governance. But it is the responsibility of the

Iraqi people to seize the opportunity and set forth these principles in

their land.

In this war; the truth lies in today's The Washington Post headline

which states ``Iraq Amnesty Plan May Cover Attacks on U.S. Military.''

The war in Iraq has boiled down to amnesty for insurgents who attack

and kill U.S. soldiers but no amnesty for the insurgents who kill Iraqi

citizens. This amnesty proposal appears to have the tacit agreement of

the Bush Administration for Iraqi government Officials stated,

``There's some sort of understanding between us and the UNF-I [The

U.S.-led Multi-National Force-Iraq] that there is a patriotic feeling

among the Iraqi youth and the belief that those attacks [on U.S.

military personnel] are legitimate acts of resistance and defending

their homeland. These people will be pardoned definitely, I believe.''

If you vote ``yes'' on this Resolution, you are supporting the Iraqi

Government's belief that it is ``ok'' to give Iraqi's amnesty for

attacking and killing U.S. troops!

I cannot, and I will not support Resolution 861 which supports a

government that pardons and justifies killing of 2,500 American

personnel as Iraqi patriotism!

I will not support a resolution that leaves our commitment in Iraqi

``open-ended''; or which allows this President to hand over the Iraq

war to the next President, 30 months from now; nor a resolution that

does not have a strategy to end the war in Iraq.

I urge my colleagues to reject this resolution!