Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the

resolution on the Iraqi war.

Mr. Speaker, as we discuss what to do now, we must first acknowledge

the fact that we cannot discuss an exit strategy for leaving Iraq

without first stating what the entry strategy was, and then stating

what we are trying to accomplish now.

We were originally told we invaded Iraq because they had weapons of

mass destruction. That turned out not to be true. We were then told

that we invaded Iraq because the Iraqi leaders were connected with the

9/11 attacks. That turned out not to be true. The rationale that Iraq

posed an imminent threat to the United States was exposed as untrue

even before the invasion.

A letter from the Director of the CIA to the Chair of the Senate

Intelligence Committee dated October 7, 2002, specifically stated that

the CIA believed that Iraq and Saddam Hussein did not pose a terrorist

threat to the United States and would not be expected to pose such a

threat unless we attacked.

Mr. Speaker, after it became clear that there were no weapons of mass

destruction, that Iraq had nothing to do with 9/11, and that Iraq posed

no terrorist threat to the United States, we have been subjected to the

excuse of the week for being in Iraq.

We were told that we needed to capture Saddam Hussein for our safety.

He has been in jail for over a year, and yet we are still in Iraq.

Then the rationale changed that we needed to capture al Zarqawi. We

did that, and we are still in Iraq with no apparent plan to leave.

The rationale for this week is we are still in Iraq in order to

establish a democracy. We have to recognize that the nature of a

democracy is that it cannot be imposed on anyone. Further, if the

purpose is to establish a democracy in Iraq, it is ironic that the

citizens right here in Washington, D.C. cannot elect a representative

to vote on this very resolution.

Mr. Speaker, the simple fact is that we made a mistake and the only

sensible rationale for still being there is because we made a mess and

we have a moral responsibility to clean up that mess. And so we have to

acknowledge that we are in quagmire, and it will become clear that

there are no good results that can occur.

Cut and run, bad result. Stay the course to prove we have resolve,

bad result. Don't worry, be happy, bad result. Continue to pretend that

success is around the corner, bad result. I use ``quagmire'' lightly

because this administration's poor planning has strained our troops

with many units in their second and third tours. Attacks on the United

States are increasing, not decreasing. During the course of our

occupation, the number of insurgents has dramatically increased, and

our presence in Iraq has been counterproductive, just as the CIA

predicted. As of today, 2,500 servicemembers have been killed and many

more wounded.

Our military equipment is wearing out much faster than normal.

Emergency reserve stocks have been stripped. We have endured the

embarrassment of torture at Abu Ghraib prison and questionable

detention policies at Guantanamo Bay, and we have not begun to

effectively deal with the issue of corruption in private contracts.

Despite spending billions of dollars on electricity and

reconstruction, over half of the Iraqi households lack clean water, and

85 percent lack reliable electricity.

Mr. Speaker, we have to be reminded when we first invaded Iraq the

administration instructed the Budget Committee not to even budget for

the war because it would cost so little. But now we have appropriated

almost $400 billion, not including future medical costs for injured

troops, and that has to be compared with the $7.4 billion that it cost

us to defeat Iraq in the Persian Gulf war.

Meanwhile, we have problems at home. There are shortfalls in the

Department of Veterans Affairs, cuts in first responder grants, only 5

percent of our containers in our ports are being screened, and the

administration has failed to adequately implement the 9/11 Commission's

recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, we are not more secure. We are less secure as a result

of the war.

Many experts have concluded that the military has done as much as it

can, and so our exit strategy must include the use of diplomacy and

politics using the lessons we have learned from our mistakes.

But today, instead of honestly assessing what we are going to do in

Iraq, we are considering this resolution which repeats all of the

disparaged reasons for the invasion and proclaims its success, not a

civil war is just around the corner, and that we should follow the

strategy of don't worry, be happy.

In contrast, any real debate would have us start with an honest

assessment of our situation. But without articulating why we invaded in

the first place and what we want to accomplish now that we are there,

we cannot have an exit strategy. There can be no coherent discussion of

an exit strategy while we are being directed by this resolution to

accept the smiling face, don't worry be happy description of our

situation in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, we should defeat the resolution.