Mr. Speaker, yesterday the House voted on the Defense

appropriations bill for the year 2007, and once again, we missed a

golden opportunity. We missed an opportunity to pass a bill that

strengthens our national security, while at the same time, reflecting

the very best of American values.

Foremost among these values is our desire for peace, our capacity for

global leadership and our compassion for the people of the world.

Unfortunately, the Defense bill passed by the House, which included a

$50 billion bridge fund for Iraq, came to a grand total of $431

billion. This amounts to more than all other discretionary programs

combined. With this latest appropriation, the war in Iraq now totals

$320 billion.

With this amount of money, we could have given more than 61 million

American teenagers a 4-year university scholarship. We could have

created nearly 3 million affordable housing units, a process by the way

that would in itself have created over 1 million jobs.

Remember, this is the same war that Paul Wolfowitz said could be paid

for out of Iraq's oil revenues, the same war that caused Bush economic

adviser, Lawrence Lindsey, to be fired when he suggested it might cost

as much as $200 billion.

Three years, more than $300 billion later, and over 2,500 American

soldiers killed and more than 18,000 wounded, and with Iraq's oil still

not flowing at the capacity it was before the war, there is still no

end in this war in sight. We are still mired in a seemingly endless

conflict.

The President still has not told the American people how he plans to

bring our troops home, or even what an end to the war would look like.

In fact, when pressed, our President, the commander-in-chief, explained

that ending the war would be the job of a future President.

Mr. Speaker, this administration likes to claim that those who

support the U.S. leaving Iraq are somehow not supportive of our troops,

but the very, very opposite is true. Those who would leave our soldiers

in harm's way for years on end on a dangerous and ill-conceived mission

should ask themselves whether this is the best way to truly support our

troops and to truly secure America.

What we need is a smarter approach to national security, an approach

that puts sanity back in our Nation's defense policies.

With the help of Physicians for Social Responsibility, the Friends

Committee on National Legislation, and Women's Action for New

Direction, I have introduced a plan that would do just that. It is

SMART security, H. Con. Res. 158, and it represents a sensible,

multilateral, American response to terrorism.

SMART security focuses on investments in multilateral partnerships

and regional security arrangements, rather than spending billions of

dollars for perpetual war and Cold War relics like the missile defense

system.

SMART attacks terrorism at its source with an ambitious international

development agenda that supports democracy and economic growth in the

troubled regions around the world.

You see, Mr. Speaker, it is time for a fundamental change in our

national security policy, a change affected through our actions on the

ground and through the bills we pass in Congress. Yesterday's Defense

bill was a step in the opposite direction.

The first step in the right direction is an end to the war in Iraq.

For the sake of our soldiers, their families and our national security,

it is time to stop spending billions of dollars on this war, and it is

time to bring our troops home.