Madam President, 4 years ago the President of the United

States told the Nation that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. The

President told us that Saddam Hussein was aiding and abetting al-Qaida.

Now he is telling us that sending more troops into Iraq will lead to

some kind of victory in a country torn by civil war and rife with

insurgents. The President did not make a credible case in 2002. He has

failed to do so again.

Before the President sent our troops into battle in 2003, I asked him

a series of questions in a letter to the President and in a House

resolution, questions about strategy, about reconstruction, and about

troop safety. He did not answer those questions then. He still has not

answered them. We do not know his definition of victory. We do not know

his plan for an exit strategy. We still do not have an answer as to

when our troops will have all the body armor they need. We are supposed

to take it on trust that sending more of our troops into this chaos

will somehow produce stability. Trust needs to be earned.

In November, voters in my State of Ohio and voters in Missouri and

across the country spoke loudly and clearly that they do not support

more of the same when the same simply has not worked. Clearly, the

President has not listened to them. It is up to Congress to work

together and up to Congress to work on a new direction for Iraq. We are

well served to remember that we stand in this room today at the will of

the American people. We have a duty to stand up to the President now as

we failed to do in sufficient numbers 4 years ago.

The same people who chose to start this war, who recklessly started

this war without the necessary resources, without the necessary

planning, without the necessary body armor--those people who ignored

the sage advice of military experts are the same people, with their

same tired advice, who want to escalate this war today. If we choose to

ignore history, we will be repeating a grave mistake.

This resolution does four important things.

First, this resolution reaffirms our continuous support of our men

and women in uniform. Any official in our Government who says anything

other than that is playing to the crowd, is disingenuous at best. Our

troops have done everything we have asked of them in Iraq. They have

acted heroically. They have done their job. Some have said that if we

do not support the President's plans, we are unpatriotic. They say we

don't support the troops. Every Member of this body supports the brave

men and women fighting in Iraq. Every Member of the Senate who stands

up and speaks out in this war is demonstrating patriotism. Patriotism

isn't a yes-man; it is love for our country. Fighting against more of

the same in Iraq when more of the same is not working is what

patriotism looks like.

Second, this resolution answers the demand of the American people to

redeploy our troops out of Iraq. The President's original plan for Iraq

has not worked, and his most current plan for escalation is neither new

nor different. We must have a timetable for redeployment of U.S. forces

or, at the very least, a plan for it--something the administration has

simply failed to do.

Third, this resolution calls for a comprehensive strategy using

diplomacy--something else the administration has failed to do.

Fourth, and perhaps most important, this resolution calls for

oversight. The abdication of oversight and accountability in past

Congresses is nothing short of shameful. The administration says the

current plan for escalation will require 20,000 troops and will cost

$5.6 billion. The Congressional Budget Office tells a different story.

In the past, the President could put those numbers out there and nobody

would call him on that--nobody in this body who had any ability to do

oversight. Instead of the 20,000 troops and the $5.6 billion this

President claims it costs, the Congressional Budget Office said the

requirement will be 48,000 troops and the price tag will be $27

billion. Again, more of the same is not the answer.

We have the duty to heed the call of those who sent us to Congress,

and with this resolution we have the opportunity to heed that call. If

the President will not listen to the voters, if the President will not

listen to his generals, if the President will not listen to the Iraq

Study Group, if the President

will not listen to his own National Intelligence estimate, then we must

make him listen to us as the people's representatives.

Let us work today toward sending a clear message to the President and

to the world that the era of congressional willful ignorance is over.

We will hold the President accountable, and we will start today.