Mr. Speaker, we gather today to consider a question that

is profoundly simple: Do we support the President's plan to further

escalate America's involvement in Iraq, or not? After 4 long, painful

years in which we have seen so many young lives lost, are we now

willing to put even more of our brave heroes in harm's way, or will we

acknowledge that the current course is failing, that doubling down on

the status quo while hoping for a better result would be foolish.

There are those who oppose this resolution because they say it would

hurt the troops' morale. Hurt morale? Our leaders promised them they

would be greeted as liberators. Instead, we have put them smack in the

middle of a shooing gallery, policing someone else's civil war, backing

an Iraqi government that refuses to stand up for itself.

We have sent our soldiers back time and again. We have sent many of

them without the life-saving equipment and armor they needed, and now

they say this resolution would hurt troop morale? To suggest that more

of the same just won't do.

They have done their duty with courage and discipline. Now it is time

for Congress to do its duty. They deserve not to be sacrificed in the

furtherance of a policy that failed for the last 4 years.

From the beginning, this war has been a saga of miscalculations,

mistakes and misjudgments for which America will pay in many ways for

years to come. Let us not compound those bad judgments by ratifying

another.

The President assures us that this escalation of war is the most

promising path to a more peaceful Iraq. For the

past 5 years we have accepted the President's assurances on Iraq, only

to learn that the facts on the ground belied his aggressive assertions

and rosy rhetoric. We accepted his assurances about the presence of

weapons of mass destruction and Saddam's links to al Qaeda. We

authorized a war on that basis, only to learn that much of what we were

told simply wasn't true.

Against stern warnings, we accepted his assurances and those of the

Vice President that a post-Saddam Iraq would welcome our presence and

overcome deeply engrained sectarian differences. It simply wasn't true.

We accepted their assurances when they told us General Shinseki was

mistaken when he said we needed far more troops to stabilize Iraq than

the administration planned, and that the cost of this war would be

minimal. It simply wasn't true. We accepted their assurances when they

told us the insurgency was in its last throes. It simply wasn't true.

Each of the last three troop surges has been countered with a surge

in violence. It is for that reason that a bipartisan group of House

Members and the American public oppose the forth troop increase. More

troops doing more of the same is not a policy, it is not a strategy, it

is not a tactic, it is the status quo plus.

The time is past for accepting this administration's assurances at

face value. The human cost of its repeated assurances is too great.

Mr. Speaker, 3 years ago I asked permission to establish a temporary

memorial to the fallen in Iraq in Statuary Hall. The leadership at that

time refused, so I began posting the pictures of the young soldiers we

have lost outside my office. I have watched as that grim line of photos

has grown past my doorway to fill the corridor. More than 3,000 dead,

more than 20,000 wounded. When I walk by those photos, I see the

purpose, I see the pride, and I see the promise in their young faces.

They were sons and daughters, husbands and wives, mothers and fathers

who will never see their kids grow up.

I ask you, how long must this grim line of photographs grow before we

acknowledge that this policy is not working? How many corridors must

these memorials fill before we we say, not on my watch? How many more

lives must we lose? How many more hearts must be broken?

It is time for this Congress to tell President Bush that his

assurances are not enough. This escalation does not mean stability in

Iraq, it will mean more loss and more photographs in the corridor.

I urge you to vote ``yes'' on this resolution.