Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend for

yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise with deep concern that this President has chosen

to escalate the war in Iraq instead of charting a course towards peace.

Today, I am reminded of the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., when he

spoke out against the war in Vietnam on April 4, 1967. He said, ``The

world now demands a maturity of this Nation that we may not be able to

achieve. It demands that we admit that we have been wrong from the

beginning of our adventure in Vietnam,'' we could substitute Iraq,

``and that our actions have been detrimental to the people of that

Nation.''

Mr. Speaker, war is messy. War is bloody. It tends not just to hide

the truth but to sacrifice the truth. And the truth is that this was a

war of choice and not a war of necessity. It was ill-fated from its

inception at the highest levels of Government, and persisting in error

will not fix a policy that was fundamentally flawed from the very

beginning.

Thousands of our sons and daughters have been left dead on the

battlefield, and tens of thousands are changed forever, wounded

physically and spiritually by the brutality of war. Our soldiers are

the best men and women in the world, willing to sacrifice all they have

at a moment's notice to protect our freedom. They do not deserve to pay

with their lives for the errors of this administration.

Mr. Speaker, we will never find the answer to the problem we have

created in Iraq down the barrel of a gun. The lasting solution to this

crisis will rise from skillful diplomacy, not military might. The Good

Book said, ``Come let us reason together.''

We must never, ever be afraid to talk. What harm comes from sitting

down with Syria, Iran and our allies in the Middle East to help bring

the warring parties together? John F. Kennedy once said, ``Those who

make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution

inevitable.''

My greatest fear here is that the young people growing up in the

Middle East will never forget this American invasion. My greatest fear

is that they will grow up to hate our children, our grandchildren and

generations yet unborn, because of what we are doing today in Iraq.

Yes, we must maintain a strong national defense. We must defend our

borders. We must bring an end to terrorism. But not at the expense of

our democracy, not at the expense of the very principles this Nation

was founded upon.

I want to close by asking a question of old, Mr. Speaker. What does

it profit a great Nation to gain the whole world and lose its soul?

Gandhi once said, ``It is either nonviolence or nonexistence.''

Martin Luther King, Jr., once said, ``We must learn to live together

as brothers and sister or perish as fools.''

It is better to heal than to kill. It is better to reconcile than to

divide. It is better to love than to hate. That is why we must vote for

this resolution. We must do more.

We must not place more of our young people in harm's way. We must not

continue to make our soldiers sitting ducks in a civil war. As Members

of Congress, we must continue to stand up, speak up and speak out. It

is our duty, it is our right, it is our moral obligation. We must find

a way to get in the way until we bring our young men and women home,

and not to continue to escalate this war.

Vote for this resolution. It is the right thing to do. We must send a

powerful and strong message to this administration to stop this

madness.