Mr. Speaker, as we wind up this debate on escalating the

war in Iraq, I wish to thank Speaker Pelosi for allowing Members of

Congress to express themselves on the most serious debate that will

occur in the 110th Congress. Perhaps more importantly, we should thank

the American people for voting for a new majority which has allowed a

free and open debate on the President's plan to escalate the war. With

their votes, the American people have clearly demanded a new direction

for the war in Iraq. Today's debate symbolizes more than just a debate

on escalating the war, the debate symbolizes a new direction for

America's policy in Iraq driven by the American people, not by a

President who has lost touch.

In October of 2002, just before the general election, President Bush

insisted a vote be held on Resolution 114 which would allow the use of

Armed Forces of the United States as he determines to be necessary and

appropriate in Iraq. At that time, I argued that the United States did

not have the moral, legal and ethical authority to go to war with Iraq

and that our Nation would lose its moral authority to speak out against

aggression throughout the world.

It would be very easy for me to stand here and remind my constituents

that I voted against the war in Iraq. It is sufficient, however, to

simply note that the evidence to justify the war has been repudiated.

Rationale for this war has been inadequate. And our Nation's

credibility has been eroded.

While some of us opposed the war in Iraq, our support for our troops

has never wavered. Congress has appropriated the supplies and the

resources to assure that our troops have what they need to accomplish

their mission and return home safely. We know too painfully that more

than 3,100 Americans have not returned home and more than 23,000 have

been wounded. We have visited with the wounded and comforted the

families of the fallen. We simply cannot allow the President to

continue to fight this war as if there were no consequences for our

troops, their families and our country. By standing up against this

escalation of the war, we are supporting the troops.

Because of this war, many lives have been shattered and broken. I

speak of the lives of family members who have lost loved ones. I speak

of the brave troops recovering from their wounds at Walter Reed Army

Hospital or the recently dedicated amputee clinic in Texas. As a

Nation, we are comprised of a reasonable, noble, compassionate and

determined people.

I believe that it is not in our Nation's best interest to leave a

shattered and broken Iraq behind. Still, we cannot continue with a

policy of military might and no diplomatic foresight. Instead of

military escalation, our Nation should embark upon a diplomatic and

political escalation. The current administration with its ``military

might makes right'' philosophy is no longer applicable in Iraq. This

administration has not seriously focused on the diplomacy and political

persuasion necessary to end this war.

I am struck by the recent news out of Korea. It is reported that

after years of negotiation, the administration may have reached an

agreement with North Korea on its nuclear threat. The journey was long,

discussions were difficult, diplomacy was frustrating, but we may have

accomplished our goal without having to go to war. There is a lesson to

be learned here, reflected in the words of an American journalist, Anne

O'Hare McCormick, who said:

``Today the real test of power is not the capacity to make war but

the capacity to prevent it.''

I call on the Bush administration and this Congress to escalate

diplomacy. I call on the Bush administration and this Congress to

escalate political pressure. This war is a mistake and what we need now

is a President who has the courage to admit his mistake. We need a

President who will bring peace and stability to Iraq through diplomacy

rather than military force.

In an earlier time, in an earlier war, a young man spoke out. That

young man was Bobby Kennedy and his words have lived with me for many

years. So to our service men and women, to my colleagues in the U.S.

House of Representatives, and to those whose hearts are burdened by

war, I leave you Bobby's challenge:

``Diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped

each time a man stands up for an ideal or strikes out against

injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each

other from a million different centers of energy and daring those

ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest wall.''

Our vote for this resolution will not stop the war in Iraq. It will

not restore the shattered and broken lives here in America and in Iraq.

It will not bring peace and stability to Iraq. But it will send a tiny

ripple of hope.

I still believe in that tiny ripple of hope.

I still believe in diverse acts of courage.

I still believe in the greatness of America.