Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and rise

to support the resolution and to talk about something the President

seldom mentions, the cost of the war in Iraq. In deciding what we

should do, cost is not the determining factor, but it is considerable,

and with costs overall approaching $500 billion, it has to be a factor.

During the first Persian Gulf War we had real allies, Britain,

France, the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia, and our gross cost was around

$80 billion in current dollars. But Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States

contributed in kind about $16 billion, and allies like Germany and

Japan and Saudi Arabia contributed in cash around $60 billion, so the

net cost to the United States was a mere $4 billion.

Because we had allies willing to share the burden, the cost of the

first Gulf War was minimal. But in this war our President was able to

enlist only one major ally, Great Britain, and he chose to go it alone

with a motley coalition. That is one reason this war is proving more

costly than the first, in lives and in dollars.

So far, over 3,100 service men and women have been killed in action;

so far, over 23,000 have been wounded in action, many of them

grievously; and so far, Congress has appropriated $379 billion for the

war in Iraq.

As we speak, two supplemental appropriation bills are on deck. One is

to cover operations in Iraq for the rest of fiscal 07, and it provides

$100 billion to the $70 billion provided last year. The other

supplemental is to cover operations in Iraq during fiscal 08, and it

provides $145 billion. These bills, when passed, will push

appropriations for the war in Iraq over $600 billion. $600 billion.

When the 08 supplemental is added to the 08 base budget, these two will

push appropriations for fiscal year 2008 alone to $643 billion. In

constant dollars, that is more than we spent at the peak of Korea or

Vietnam.

In a few weeks we will enter the fifth year of our engagement in

Iraq. You would think after 5 years spending would come down. But

spending over this time has not come down, it has gone up. Three years

ago, 2004, the Pentagon was obligating money for Iraq at the rate of

$4.8 billion a month. Today the Pentagon is obligating money for Iraq

at the rate of $8.6 billion a month, and considering the supplemental

for 07, with $170 billion, and the surge in Baghdad, the obligation

rate will probably rise to $10 billion a month by the end of this year.

To support this surge, the President has called for five brigades,

21,500 additional troops. He sends a supplemental of $3.2 billion to

pay for these troops. The CBO says, how about the support troops? How

about the staff? This will cost billions more.

CBO has also looked out 10 years and tried to figure what future

costs might be. By its estimation, future operations in Iraq and

Afghanistan together could come to $824 billion between 2008 and 2017.

Mind you, this assumes that the troops deployed in these theaters will

be declining from a little over 200,000 today to a steady state of

75,000 in 2013.

If future costs are split 75-25, then over the next 10 years that is

another $600 billion in store for us. Surely, surely at this juncture,

as spending surges head upwards to more than $10 billion a month,

surely we should ask whether we want to raise our commitment of troops

and thrust them into a civil war with no clear exit, no timetable for

completion, and, worse still, an urban war.

The Pentagon will say they can't see past 2008 and they don't know

what the budget is for the outyears, and they will probably dispute

this end state of 75,000 troops in the two theaters 10 years from now.

And I hope they are right.

But there are other costs, the cost of ``reset,'' of refurbishing or

repairing our equipment, which our commanders have told us could easily

be $60 billion to $70 billion. And I haven't talked about the toll on

our troops and their families, where some will soon be going for their

third tour. The dwell time between tours is now 1 year instead of 2

years.

Whenever you go into the field to visit these troops, you have to be

impressed with their attitude, with their readiness to serve and their

willingness to sacrifice. I have always come away from these

experiences saying thank God there are such Americans. They deserve our

admiration and support, but they also deserve something else. They

deserve not to be asked to do

what Iraqi troops and Iraqi police should do themselves.

For the past 2 years, the Bush administration has said to us just

forebear, just wait, because we are training Iraqi forces, and as soon

as these forces are stood up, ours can be stood down. Well, 118 Iraqi

battalions have been stood up, and none of ours have been stood down.

In the Defense Authorization Act for 2006, Congress enacted this

policy into law. We called for 2006 to be a year of transition. The

resolution before us embodies that notion. The resolution heeds that

advice. It does not call for pulling out our troops. It does not call

for cutting off our funds. It says simply but solemnly that we disagree

with the surge of our troops, thrust into what the Intelligence

Estimate has called ``self-sustaining sectarian violence,'' especially

when there are more than 118 Iraqi battalions trained to take on that

task.

It is time for them to stand up and us to stand down, and Baghdad is

a good place to start.