I thank the gentlelady for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, this week on the floor, the House will provide our

Nation with a clear, unambiguous answer to the most important question

facing the country: Will this body side with the President's approach

to the war in Iraq, or will we demand change?

Since Tuesday we have been debating President Bush's plan to escalate

the war in Iraq. It is a debate that was long overdue and one which the

American people and our troops risking their lives in Iraq and

Afghanistan deserve.

The simple reality is that two-thirds of the American public,

including myself, do not trust the President's judgment when it comes

to the war. It is a conflict that has been defined by mismanagement and

misinformation since it began, and the results have been devastating

for the Iraqi people and for our men and women in uniform.

We know that top administration officials, men like Douglas Feith,

abused the public trust and misused the work of the intelligence

community when making the case for the war. Since then, every piece of

evidence suggests that the strategy employed by this administration has

failed in Iraq. Sectarian strife in Iraq has not abated, with routine

bombings that kill dozens of civilians daily. The unemployment rate in

Iraq is as high as 25 percent and 40 percent. Baghdad has only a few

hours of electricity per day.

Our troops have continued to pay the price of being caught in the

middle of

another nation's civil war. 84 troops were killed last month, 48 more

have been killed already this month.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, corruption, fraud and lack of

oversight have haunted every aspect of our involvement in Iraq. Stuart

Bowen, the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, has

uncovered $10 billion in reconstruction funding that simply disappeared

once it was sent overseas. Projects critical to the rebuilding and

stabilization of Iraq society have been handed out to private firms,

using no-bid contracts, firms that failed to live up to their

responsibilities.

To cite one example, the construction of a new Baghdad police college

to train Iraqi security officers, a $75 million project of vital

importance to stability, was completely undermined by a private

construction company. The work was so shoddy that the classrooms it

built posed a health risk to the students and had to be abandoned. That

same fraud and lack of oversight for years have posed mortal risk to

our soldiers.

In January of 2006, we learned that 80 percent of the U.S. Marines

who had died of upper body wounds in Iraq would have lived if they had

had the proper armor. A Pentagon report released last month stated once

again that our troops have been sent into battle time and time again

without proper armor equipment, a reality which still exists today.

This simply hasn't been a case of going to war with the army you

have, as Mr. Rumsfeld said. We have faced these shortages in part

because the Pentagon contracts were given to companies who weren't up

to the job and couldn't meet the demands of the conflict.

A legitimate question might be, are we funding the troops or are we

funding crooked contractors and Iraqi government officials? Hundreds of

dollars have simply disappeared. These are borrowed dollars, ladies and

gentlemen, mainly from China.

My friends on the other side of the aisle made two arguments against

the resolution. They have told us that to condemn the President's surge

means that this Congress is giving up in Iraq, and they told us that we

cannot support the troops without supporting their mission.

Our troops have done their job in Iraq and they have risked their

lives countless times, but now they are being asked to do something

that no army can do, find a military solution to a political problem.

If the mission we have given our brave soldiers is the wrong one, and

the past 4 years prove that it is, why would we help our enemies by

refusing to change course? If that mission is the wrong one, how is

supporting the mission that is wrong supporting the troops? If the

mission is the wrong one, then how is demanding a change giving up?

Giving up means just the opposite, it means insisting on a continuing

failing strategy.

This escalation of the war is the same failed strategy, all it will

do is put more and more of our young men and women in harm's way. That

reality has led it to be opposed by a bipartisan majority in this

House. A Republican Representative recently said, ``This is not a fresh

approach, it is just more of the same.''

The plan has been publicly opposed by numerous high-ranking generals,

such as General John Abizaid, General Colin Powell and General James T.

Conway, the Commandant of the Marine Corps. He recently said that the

Joint Chiefs ``do not believe that just adding numbers for the sake of

adding numbers, just thickening the mix, is the necessary way to go.''

We need to stop this escalation and change what we are doing in Iraq.

We need to promote a political solution and a diplomatic solution to

the problems.

I urge the passage of this resolution.