Mr. Speaker, as this debate comes to a close, much has

been said. Certainly not everything. The House is considering a

resolution concerning the Iraq war. It expresses the unequivocal

support of this body for the American troops serving in Iraq and for

their families. This resolution expresses opposition to the President's

planned surge, escalation, augmentation. Call it what you will. But,

more than anything else, this resolution opposes the administration's

deeper commitment to a fundamentally and deeply flawed military

strategy.

The fact is that Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki lacks the authority or

the will to confront Shi'a militias. To do so would result in a major

confrontation with the militia leader Moqtada al-Sadr, without whom the

Iraqi government has little support. These dangerous Iraqi alliances

and compelling evidence of a strong Iranian alliance demonstrates how

weak the National Unity Government is and how pathetically dependent we

are on them for success in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, the American people deserve much better. Surging troop

levels in Iraq was tried in 2004, 2005 and 2006. Each time, it failed

to reduce violence and only served to inflame anti-American sentiment.

Under the President's plan, it is still the American troops that do

most of the fighting and, regrettably, will do most of the dying. For

any decent outcome in Iraq, the President has to be serious about

setting and enforcing deadlines. The President needs to demand that

Prime Minister Maliki stop protecting the militias and make clear there

will be serious consequences if he continues to do so.

The problem in Iraq is the same as it was when the conflict started:

American war planners never provided the resources to successfully

create a vital and secure center from which a functioning society could

evolve.

The history is clear. Modern Iraq was born out of a strong

nationalist aspiration in the early 20th century. Shi'a, Sunni,

Christians and Jews stood united against the British and peacefully

created and coexisted in a new, ethnically diverse Iraq.

Then, Iraqis prayed at each other's mosques. Today, Shi'a and Sunni

militias bomb each other's mosques with impunity. Last month, 70

college students were slaughtered by a car bomb in Baghdad. Iraqi

weddings, funerals and schools are the regular targets of suicide

bombers. These are called ``revenge killings.'' They are carried out in

the name of destiny and in the name of God.

Where is the outrage? Where is the condemnation for these atrocities

in the Arab Muslim community? Nowhere does the Koran talk about revenge

killings, violence, hate or intolerance. The Koran describes the

Prophet Muhammad as the Prophet of Mercy. At the core of Islamic belief

is compassion, forgiveness and tolerance: To you your faith and to me

mine.

Absent the real possibility of a functioning government, a

functioning society, a functioning economy, the National Unity

Government of Iraq cannot succeed because it lacks legitimacy in the

very eyes of those it seeks to govern. Elections and forming

governments are the symbols of democracy. Legitimacy in the eyes of the

governed is the substance of democracy and that of free and open

societies throughout the world.

Madam Speaker, I don't stand here as a partisan. I am an American,

and I want my country to succeed. I want my President to succeed,

regardless of party affiliation, regardless of who he or she may be.

The fact of the matter is, we have an obligation to tell the truth to

the American people at every level, militarily and politically. This

strategy, advanced and sustained by this administration, has been an

abject failure.