Mr. Speaker, America will hear 435 separate ideas about

Iraq, but I want to note one great shining light about our country. The

American people are absolutely unified, no matter what they think about

the policy in Iraq, of holding American warriors and our sons and

daughters close to our hearts. This is a unified position across this

country, and it is a bright light for America.

Now, I have heard some people have suggested that soldiers who fall

in Iraq will have fallen in vain. That is wrong. Any American who falls

in the course of the conduct of American wars, they do not fall in

vain. They fall into our arms, and they fall into our hearts, and there

they will always remain. And we are unified on this principle. And when

I go to a memorial service for a young man from Redmond, Washington

next Monday, I will carry the unified American prayers and hearts of

the 650,000 people I represent.

Now we are in a difficult situation in Iraq and none of us have a

silver bullet, and none of us have a magic wand. And it seems to me

that when we are in dark times, we should go back to fundamental

American character to find a way forward.

There are three parts of the American character we should think about

here: first, the character of the American mission in Iraq; second, the

character of American common sense; and, third, the character of

American democracy.

What is the character of our mission in Iraq? President Bush, when he

started this war, said we have three missions:

Eliminate WMD. Mission accomplished. They were never there.

Second, eliminate any terrorist that attacked us on 9/11. Mission

accomplished. They were never there.

Third, eliminate Saddam Hussein as a threat. Mission accomplished. He

is no longer a threat to anyone who walks the face of the Earth.

Our proud men and women have fulfilled the three mandates of missions

set forth by George Bush. And now we have one moral mission to

complete, and that is the moral responsibility to give the Iraqis a

reasonable chance to form a government. We have done that after 4

years; and our investment of 3,000-plus lives and hundreds of billions

of dollars of American money has fulfilled that moral obligation in

spades.

Second, what is the American character of common sense? Why did

General Abizaid, when he asked all the divisional commanders whether

this escalation would help and every single one of them say no, why is

that? It is because they have common sense.

I was on a walk a couple of months ago, and I met an old high school

friend. His son was serving in Baghdad, and I asked him what he thought

about Iraq. And he said, We have no common sense in our policy. He

said, the fundamental problem in Iraq was that the Shiites were not

agreeing with the Sunnis principally over oil revenues. And my son is

serving in Baghdad today as a security blanket because the Iraqi

politicians will not make the compromises necessary to form a

government.

That has to end. It is American common sense to understand the real

enemy in Baghdad is sectarian intransigence. The real enemy in Baghdad

is their failure to compromise. And the best weapon we have is a dose

of reality to the Iraqi people of all sectarian faiths. You have to get

a grip on your country because you will very shortly have your own fate

in your own hands. The best weapon we have in Iraq is to tell the rest

of the immediate region that they must become responsible for their own

neighborhoods. That is the weapon of reality we should use.

And, third, what is the character of American democracy? George Bush

said that he was the decider. That is wrong. The decider is the

American people. And the American people had a message to George Bush

that there has to be a change in Iraq policy. And he is not listening

to the generals, he is not listening to the bipartisan commission, and

he is not listening to the American people.

Congress has a responsibility coequal with the President under

Article I of the Constitution to declare war, to raise and support

armies, to make rules for the government and regulation of the land and

naval forces. It is time for Congress to stand up on our hind legs and

take away the keys from the man who has driven our foreign policy into

a ditch. It is time to restore the American mission to where it

belongs, to American common sense where it belongs, and to American

democracy where it belongs.

Support this resolution. Prevent this escalation in Iraq.