Madam Speaker, I rise today to address the

President's plan to deploy an additional 21,500 American troops in

Iraq. I oppose this course of action and feel that contributing more

troops to this war is not in the best interest of our country.

One only needs to look back on the timeline of events in Iraq to

realize how much we have given that country. From the deposing of

Saddam Hussein and his ruthless heirs, to the drafting of a

constitution and free elections, the United States has fulfilled its

role in liberating Iraq. However, the sacrifices our country has made

must be met by an even stronger commitment by Iraq's leaders to face

the challenges of a fledgling democracy and ensure the safety and

freedom of its own people.

Our troops have served with tremendous bravery during this nearly 4

year endeavor. The resolution we are discussing today contains a pledge

that Congress will ``continue to support and protect'' our courageous

men and women who are serving or who have served in Iraq. This is a

promise we must keep and I will work with like-minded colleagues to

ensure that the members of the United States Armed Forces continue to

have the resources they need while they are in harm’s way and after they

return home.

However, I am in disagreement with the President on sending 21,500

more troops to Iraq because the time has passed for the leaders and

citizens of Iraq to ascend and defend their country. The people of this

country sent a message to the Congress a few months ago and my

constituents have made it increasingly clear to me that they do not

support the escalation of U.S. troop involvement amidst the seemingly

endless sectarian strife inside Iraq.

Therefore, I rise in support of this resolution.