Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this

resolution and express my profound disapproval of President Bush's

decision to increase our troop levels in Iraq.

Late last year the President had an opportunity to create a new

strategy. The voice of the American people was heard at this past

election. The voice of the Iraq Study Group gave the President a

bipartisan plan to draw down our troops. New leadership at the Pentagon

also could have been a voice of change of strategy. But President Bush

did not listen to any of these voices. He decided to escalate our troop

levels in Iraq. No time frame, no measurable benchmarks, no end.

Mr. Speaker, if President Bush chooses an erroneous path, then it is

our constitutional responsibility to show the way.

I have the deepest respect and gratitude for our women and men in

uniform. I honor their commitment, their courage and their sacrifice.

Our troops have done everything we have asked them to do. They

overwhelmed the old Iraqi Government and captured Saddam Hussein. They

provided security while Iraq formed its provisional government,

approved a constitution, and elected a permanent government.

Nine individuals from the First Congressional District of Indiana

have already given their lives and made the supreme sacrifice for our

Nation. These brave men and women will always be remembered: Sergeant

Jeanette Winters; Specialist Gregory Sanders; Sergeant Duane Rios;

Specialist Roy Buckley; Private First Class John Amos, II; Private Luis

Perez; Private First Class Nathan Stahl; Corporal Bryan Wilson; Private

First Class Steven Sirko; Specialist Nicholas Idalski; Specialist Adam

Harting; and Staff Sergeant Jonathan Rojas.

I am so proud of the dedication and service of the people of my State

in the United States military. We owe them a commitment equal to their

courage. We owe them the courage to act on our conviction.

With the passage of 4 years and the loss of over 3,000 brave

Americans and countless others who have been permanently injured, I

regret to recall that we were told we needed to invade Iraq because

Saddam Hussein possessed materials for weapons of mass destruction.

None could be found. I regret that

the President felt compelled to justify the invasion by claiming a

connection between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein when the 9/11 Commission

found this was simply not true.

Our situation in Iraq has redirected our Nation from its true

mission. The war in Iraq has diverted our attention from the global war

on terror. We need to reconstitute our Armed Forces. We also need a

strategic redeployment of our forces that will give us the ability to

focus our efforts directly on the global terror networks that target

innocent people around the world.

I voted against the authorization of the Iraq invasion in 2003. There

was no plan or exit strategy then, and there are clearly no good

options now. Yet the Iraq Study Group provided a bipartisan perspective

on some changes in strategy. They called for a drawdown of troops and

for intensive diplomatic efforts to resolve the sectarian violence

there. We need to listen to their recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, it is not too late to change our strategy, and the first

step along the new way is to prevent the President's escalation of this

war. It is time to obligate the Iraqi Government to assume the full

burden and consequences of governing their country. We need to listen

to the majority of the American people. We need to listen to reasoned

voices such as the Iraq Study Group. The time to pursue a new course is

now. I support our troops, and that is why I support this resolution.