Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Concurrent Resolution

63. I

also rise in strong support of the brave men and women who have served

or are serving in Iraq and around the world.

I represent thousands of men and women on Active Duty and in the

National Guard and in the Reserves. I have visited our wounded and

injured troops at both Walter Reed and Landstuhl Regional Center in

Germany. My commitment to our brave men and women is unwavering.

However, I disagree with deploying more than 20,000 more U.S. combat

troops to Iraq.

The President has consistently said that the size of the force would

be determined by military leaders on the ground. Yet the two previous

leading commanders on the ground do not support the addition of more

troops. General George Casey, the former commander of the Multinational

Force in Iraq and current chief of staff of the Army, advocated

transferring security duties to Iraqi soldiers.

General Casey said, ``The longer we and the U.S. forces continue to

bear the main burden of Iraq's security, it lengthens the time that the

Government of Iraq has to make the hard decisions about reconciliation

and dealing with the militias.'' He goes on to say, ``And the other

thing is that they continue to blame us for all of Iraq's problems,

which at face are their problems. It has always been my view that a

heavy and sustained American military presence was not going to solve

the problems in Iraq in the long run.''

Additionally, General John P. Abizaid, the former commander of U.S.

Central Command in the Middle East, has said that he did not believe

that adding more American troops right now is the solution to the

problem, and also advocated transferring responsibility to the Iraqis.

General Abizaid said, ``I met with every divisional commander,

General Casey, the Corps Commander, General Dempsey. We all talked

together. And I said, in your professional opinion, if we were to bring

in more American troops now, does it add considerably to our ability to

achieve success in Iraq? And they all said no. And the reason is

because we want the Iraqis to do more. It is easy for the Iraqis to

rely upon us to do this work. I believe that more American forces

prevent the Iraqis from doing more, from taking more responsibility for

their own future.''

During the course of the war, I visited Iraq twice, in 2003 and 2005.

While I was there, the main goal, other than achieving victory, was

developing Iraq's infrastructure. Yet after 4 years and hundreds of

billions of dollars, we have not had much success in improving

infrastructure and still face serious problems. Oil production is one-

half of the prewar level, while conditions of basic services, such as

water, power and sewage, are below that. In Baghdad, electricity levels

are at an all-time low. And while we have spent billions of dollars on

these problems, $9 billion is lost and unaccounted for.

That is why I also rise today in support of the Blue Dog resolution

which provides cost accountability for Operation Iraqi Freedom. This

resolution will directly address the infrastructure and security

failures in Iraq. More specifically, the resolution requires the

Department of Defense Inspector General and the Special Inspector

General for Iraqi Reconstruction to report to Congress every 90 days

with:

One, a detailed accounting of how military and reconstruction funds

in Iraq have been spent;

Two, a detailed accounting of the types and terms of contracts

awarded on behalf of the United States;

Three, a description of efforts to obtain support and assistance from

other countries toward the rehabilitation of Iraq; and, finally,

Four, an assessment of what additional funding is needed to complete

military operations and reconstruction efforts in Iraq, including a

plan for the security of Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, our troops have done their job and performed with great

courage and honor. The solution in Iraq can no longer be resolved

militarily. We must win both politically and diplomatically. We must

ask Iraq's six neighbors to use influence that is consistent with our

own objectives, and we must convince them that stability in the region

is in their best interests.

In closing, I want to offer my utmost gratitude and appreciation for

our troops. Our thoughts are with these brave men and women and also

with their families as we pray for them to return safely.