Madam Speaker, a violent civil war is raging in Iraq,

with atrocities against innocent civilians mounting every day. Our

troops, our brave troops, are caught in the crossfire, dying and being

maimed driving on local roads, patrolling neighborhoods and moving

about by helicopter. What is their mission today? What is the strategic

objective of the escalation proposed by the President?

President Bush's plan to deploy 20,000 additional U.S. combat troops

to Iraq is not a new strategy, and nothing I have seen or heard has

convinced me that this escalation will make a positive difference in

Iraq or hasten the safe return of U.S. troops. In fact, General Abizaid

said that ``more American forces prevent the Iraqis from taking

responsibility for their own future.''

Four previous troop surges between December 2003 and October 2006

have not made a dent in the level of violence nor in the number of U.S.

casualties. We have spent nearly $500 billion in Iraq and Afghanistan,

and yet inexplicably our troops still do not have the protection they

need. Throughout this war, many in Congress have addressed the lack of

equipment and protection for our troops. Now, military leaders are

saying there are not enough armor kits and vehicles to protect these

additional five brigades the President plans to send to Iraq. It is

unacceptable to send more soldiers to Iraq, but it is unconscionable to

send them without proper armaments or an explanation from the

administration about how our troops will be protected.

Madam Speaker, 3,132 Americans in uniform have died and 23,417 have

been wounded since the start of the war in Iraq. I visited our wounded

soldiers at Walter Reed, Bethesda Naval Hospital, and, most recently,

at Landstuhl Military Hospital in Germany during my visit to Iraq with

the Speaker.

I stood at the bedside of a 23-year old severely wounded soldier, a

soldier who was holding the hand of his 21-year old brother, currently

serving in Iraq, and the hand of his father, who had also served in the

Armed Forces, a soldier who will likely never come home. These families

are making the ultimate sacrifice for our family. I am humbled by their

commitment, their professionalism and dedication. We have a

responsibility to our Armed

Forces, our citizens, and the constituents who have elected us to bring

them home as quickly and safely as possible.

I am convinced that the thorough analysis and conclusions of the

bipartisan Iraq Study Group are correct. Iraqi leaders must take

responsibility for the country's security and government and we must

engage the international community to work towards stability in the

region. There is no military solution to the crisis in Iraq, and we

cannot send more brave men and women to police a civil war.

As I have said many times before, there are no good solutions to the

quagmire in Iraq. This war was ill-conceived, poorly planned and

incompetently executed. The best military minds must now focus their

efforts on the safe and responsible redeployment of our troops rather

than on this escalation. I cannot support sending more of our brave men

and women in uniform on a last-ditch, misguided mission.

We best support our troops, my colleagues, and our national

interests, by adopting this resolution, and by expressing clearly on

behalf of the American people our firm determination to change course

in Iraq.