Madam Speaker, in the lead-up to the war in Iraq, the

President offered the American people many reasons why we should enter

into this conflict. We were told unequivocally that Iraq possessed

weapons of mass destruction and posed an imminent threat to the United

States. We have since learned that pre-war intelligence was completely

inaccurate.

We were told that proceeds from Iraq's oil reserves would pay for the

cost of the war. Instead, the American people have paid for the cost of

the

war. So far, $400 billion, with an additional supplemental request of

$100 billion pending.

We were told that we would be greeted as liberators. Nothing could be

further from the truth. More than 3,000 American troops have been

killed, more than 23,000 injured, and violence in Iraq continues to

escalate. There are over 900 weekly attacks on U.S. troops.

These predictions were in the past, but they are instructive as we

consider the President's current predictions on how to achieve success

in Iraq.

The American people have expressed their clear frustration with the

conduct of the war. The bipartisan Iraq Study Group offered a

comprehensive strategy to successfully move combat forces out of Iraq.

High-level military leaders, including General John Abizaid, have

expressed opposition to an escalation of troops. But the President

continues to ignore public opinion, rejects sound advice, and

stubbornly adhere to his failed go-it-alone policies.

He says he wants a bipartisanship study; but when his results are not

to his liking, he dismisses it. He says he wants to hear from his

advisers; but when they disagree with them, he dismisses them. He says

he wants to hear from his generals on the ground; but when they tell

him what he doesn't want to hear, they are reassigned.

The fact is, Madam Speaker, the President's plan to escalate the war

in Iraq is not a new policy, just more of the same failed policy.

The solution in Iraq requires the Iraqis themselves to reach a

political solution and take responsibility for their own government.

The continued open-ended commitment of U.S. forces only deters the

Iraqis from making the appropriate political decisions, training

security forces, and enacting the reforms necessary to achieve

stability.

The Iraq war resolution before us today is simple and straight

forward. Let me explain what it does and what it doesn't do.

First and foremost, this resolution expresses our continued support

for our military men and women who are serving bravely and honorably.

It also expresses the sense of Congress that we disapprove of the

decision made by the President to send additional troops to Iraq.

So make no mistake, this resolution is in support of our troops.

Anyone who says otherwise is simply wrong. No Member of this House,

Republican or Democrat, wants anything less than victory in Iraq and to

support our troops.

This resolution does not affect the funding levels to carry out the

war. And on that point, let me be clear. As long as we have troops in

the field of battle and brave Americans in harm's way, I will never

vote to withhold their funding.

I support this resolution because we have the duty as representatives

of the American people to continue to voice their opinion that, with

his policy of escalation, the President is heading down the wrong path.

The best way forward is for the President to work with Congress, to

change course, and adopt a responsible strategy that protects American

interests in Iraq, around the region, and at home.

I urge every Member of this House on both sides of the aisle to heed

the call for change and vote for this resolution.