Madam Speaker, Americans are outraged with the present

course in Iraq. Here we are more than 4 years later with 3,100 of our

brave men and women killed, fighting a war that has cost our Nation

$370 billion.

It has become overwhelmingly clear that the current strategy to

secure the peace of Iraq is failing. And yet the administration

contends that sending more combat troops into Iraq is somehow a silver

bullet that is going to quell the ongoing violence. I couldn't disagree

more.

The resolution before us today establishes two overwhelmingly clear

and concise principles that are supported by a large majority of

Americans, and I am confident will garner a great deal of support for

many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

First and foremost, we support our brave service men and women. They

have done everything that has been asked of them, bravely and

honorably; and for that, we in Congress and the people all over America

will be forever grateful.

Second, and simply, we oppose sending additional troops into Iraq.

Madam Speaker, during this debate some of my colleagues have used the

term ``victory'' in their remarks. Victory. But no one, not one of my

colleagues in this Chamber, nor anyone in this administration, has yet

to clearly define what victory in Iraq really means.

At one point we were told victory meant getting rid of weapons of

mass destruction. Then, of course, we learned there were no weapons of

mass destruction. When that didn't work, we

were told victory meant toppling a dictator, and that we would be

greeted as heroes. We toppled the dictator, but of course we were never

greeted as heroes. And yet, still no victory.

The administration then told us establishing elections would

constitute victory. There have been several elections in Iraq, yet

still no victory. And all the while, the casualties have continued to

rise.

Earlier this week, I had an opportunity, for the first time, to visit

with wounded soldiers recovering at Walter Reed Army Medical Hospital.

Seeing firsthand the devastating injuries that some of our brave

soldiers have endured has troubled me in a way that I have not known

before. As an American who loves his country very much, and as a father

of two teenagers, it became crystal clear to me right then and there

what exactly victory in Iraq means. I think victory in Iraq means

bringing as many of our troops home alive as possible, the way I would

want to see my two children brought home, if they were in Iraq. That is

what victory is about, is bringing as many Americans home alive as we

possibly can.

Madam Speaker, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle had the

better part of 3 years to use their position in the majority to change

the course in Iraq. They did nothing. No resolutions; few, if any

hearings; and no accountability. How many more American lives are worth

risking to continue an ill-conceived and poorly planned strategy that

is clearly not working?

The American people answered that question last November. They have

had enough, enough political rhetoric, enough stay the course, and most

importantly, enough of the loss of life.

Some of my colleagues are trying to mischaracterize this resolution.

They say this resolution somehow demonstrates a failure to support our

troops. That is ridiculous.

Let me be clear, perfectly clear. Everyone in this Chamber,

Republicans and Democrats alike, support our brave men and women

serving in the Armed Forces. Simply because we believe the best way to

support our troops is to bring them home does not mean that we don't

stand behind them. In fact, I think it means a greater commitment of

support to them.

Madam Speaker, I was not elected to blindly follow along. I was not

elected to accept the status quo, and I was not elected to be a rubber

stamp. I was, however, elected to stand up when necessary and say no, I

disagree. And that is exactly what we are doing here today, we are

standing and saying we disagree.

The American people have run out of hope. They are tired of the

failed policies of this administration. It is time for a new approach.

It is time for a new strategy, and it is time for a new direction