Mr. Speaker, I think it is safe to say that regardless

of any differences of opinion over military strategy in Iraq, we all

agree that the outcome in Iraq will affect our national security and

the security and stability of the Middle East for generations to come.

I was not a Member of this distinguished body in October of 2002 when

many of my colleagues were faced with the decision of whether to

authorize the President to go to war in Iraq. But 4 years later, I was

elected by the people of my district who asked me and this Congress to

set a new course in Iraq because it is clear to them that the

administration's course is not working.

That is not to say there has not been some success. Our troops have

performed bravely and succeeded in their mission to end Saddam

Hussein's brutal regime. The Iraqi people exercised their new-found

right to vote, and those who murdered innocent Iraqis have been given

fair trials and justice has been served.

But since the initial military victory, political, diplomatic, and

economic failure has become widespread. Today, sectarian violence is at

an all-time high, and American troops are now caught in the middle of a

civil war.

Now the administration is engaging in a military escalation of the

war. They tried this strategy before and it didn't work. It didn't work

because we need more than a military strategy. We need political and

economic solutions too. We need a strategy that employs all of the

elements of national power to ultimately put the Iraqis in charge of

their own security and stability.

So far a military strategy has not solved the problems we have in

Iraq. So far a military strategy has not brought Sunnis and Shiites

together to maintain a unified government and a peaceful political

environment. We know that a military strategy alone cannot create

commerce and jobs for the Iraqi people. A military strategy alone

cannot rebuild the basic infrastructure that has been destroyed over

the past 4 years. A military strategy must be combined with sufficient

political, diplomatic, and economic components. But that is not

happening here.

I disagree with many of my colleagues in this Chamber who support the

immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops. We have heard from too many

generals, including those who have spoken out against this escalation,

about the dangers of even more violence and instability in the Middle

East if we simply withdraw. I do believe American troops have a role in

Iraq, a supporting role. They should continue to train Iraqi soldiers,

and their mission must ultimately be to put the Iraqis in charge of

their own security and stability. But let me be clear: American troops

have no place in the middle of a civil war.

This resolution reaffirms this body's support for the men and women

of the United States military. Many of our troops have given their

lives or suffered serious injury so that one day the people of Iraq may

enjoy the same freedoms we have here in the United States. Their

service and their sacrifice make me even more proud to be an American.

I hope and pray that we can have all of our brave men and women in

Iraq and Afghanistan return safely to their families. But while they

are in harm's way, we must honor their service by ensuring that the

burden of success or failure is not left to them alone. We

have a responsibility to utilize every political, diplomatic, and

economic tool at our disposal to ensure success in Iraq.