Madam Speaker, I am here today to support the

resolution.

Madam Speaker, I won't spend a lot of time assessing the blame and

the responsibility for the quagmire that our Nation finds itself in in

Iraq, but I do find it curious during this debate that the opponents of

this resolution want us to believe that the history of the Iraq war

begins today, that it has no past, that it has no consequences, just a

doubtful future. This head-in-the-sand attitude, while politically

expedient, denies reality and truth.

Rest assured that history will not be kind to the decision makers and

the decider of this war, nor will it be kind to a Congress that looked

the other way.

The resolution before us today is a first tentative step toward the

removal of our troops from Iraq. The escalation proposed is another

desperate act opposed by the American people and former military

leaders.

The resolution does not demoralize our troops nor embolden the

insurgents. To the contrary, this resolution offers hope to our troops

that an end is in sight and that their elected representatives in this

House are not passing on their authority regarding the most important

issue confronting our Nation today.

I personally know families whose loved ones have been lost, badly

injured or profoundly intangibly affected by this war. Our commitment

should be to those families and veterans who need our full measure of

support. Our gratitude should be measured in real resources for

veterans, and not empty platitudes and political rhetoric expounded to

justify an irreparable failure in Iraq.

The focus of this debate is not centered on our soldiers who are

nobly doing their duty and following their orders. It is directed at

those who set policy and who have produced a war without end, with no

plan of success or exit, with no international strategy, who now turn

to a desperate and doomed escalation that only reinforces the failure

and the desperation of those policymakers.

Rest assured that the civil war in Iraq will not end with the influx

of more American troops. I do believe this resolution should have

teeth. We must send a message that binds all of us to real action, an

unflinching message of opposition to the escalation and a message of

support for our troops. Today marks a step in that direction.

And I wonder, how many ways can the American people tell this

Congress to act to prevent more loss of our blood and treasure in the

war in Iraq? Weren't the elections that just happened a strong message?

Isn't the loss of confidence by the public in their elected officials a

strong message? Isn't the sacrifice and valor of our men and women

fighting this war deserving of the respect of this government? Don't we

have a duty to those men and women to protect them, reunite them with

their families immediately, and, above all, share the truth with them,

that the question is no longer if we get out of Iraq, it's how and

when.

The answer to that question for me and many other families is, the

sooner the better. I could stand here and read poll after poll that

talks about the public's overwhelming opposition to this war and even

more overwhelming opposition to this escalation. But as I think about

it, the most important poll for those of us who serve in Congress needs

to be our conscience. The resolution before us is simple and direct. It

speaks in a very clear way to the frustration we all feel about this

misadventure in Iraq. And I said I would not belabor the question of

who to blame, but it is important to address the obvious.

Remember weapons of mass destruction? None found.

Remember the links between Iraq and the attack on 9/11? It didn't

exist.

All the misspent funds in Iraq, misappropriated dollars. That was

ignored by the administration.

``Mission Accomplished.'' What a premature political hype that was.

And a strategy for Iraq. It doesn't exist.

Funds for education, health care, our cities and towns, investments

in our people here in this country, that has all been spent in Iraq.

The litany of failures and untruths goes on and on. The lack of

leadership by this administration requires, no, I think it demands that

this Congress assert its constitutional duty to check and balance this

administration by beginning with the important step of passing this

resolution.