Let me thank the distinguished gentleman

for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I believe that each and every Member that has come to

the floor tonight and over the last 2 days would never consider any of

their remarks frivolous, nor would we characterize this debate as

political. Unfortunately, in 2002, many of those same words were used

to characterize a very needed debate and one that we had hoped that

those who had the powers of decision would have listened to.

I remember standing in this same location and suggesting to my

colleagues that I was proud to accept and to make as my choice life

over death and peace over war. Through these years, members of the

Progressive Caucus thoughtfully have gathered to reinforce the words

that we offered during those days when even though the en masse

lobbying and representation of mass destruction weapons, we knew that

this was a war that would be ill-fated and misdirected. In fact, during

that time, we had solutions. We asked for a continued use of political

diplomacy and, as well, the continuation of utilizing the U.N.

inspectors to determine if there were weapons of mass destruction.

But now we have come some 5 years and we hear the same refrain. And I

know in the hearts of those who have spoken that they are sincere. But

if we said nothing else but point to those who have fallen, let their

faces represent the sacrifice of America. Those are the faces of those

who are always willing to go into battle, and not one of us on the

floor today will ever say anything untoward about the United States

military through the years and decades and centuries, because they have

never faltered in the Commander in Chief's direction to go to war.

But what has really failed in this Congress in its oversight and

responsibility and, as well, the choices being made by the leadership

that has sent them into war.

And so, as Abraham Lincoln has said, ``We wish to honor the soldiers

and sailors everywhere who bravely bear this country's cause; honor

also to the citizen who cares for his brother. We will never forget.''

But we now stand in opposition to the escalation and support of this

resolution because we believe that the Nation must hear, but also the

leaders who make the decisions must hear this is wrong and misdirected.

The troops have been magnificent. We have had 180,000 of them who

have served in Iraq from Texas, we have had 200 or more who have been

killed, including the 3,000-plus that have been killed across the

Nation. They do have a military success.

But we know that the surges do not work. We know it was ill-fated

from the beginning. There was no collaboration, very minimal, and now

the collaboration has ended. What is needed now is the declaration of a

military success, which is what I have expressed in H.R. 930. And now

we must search for diplomatic and political reconciliation, a Special

Envoy to Iraq that focuses specifically on bringing together the

Sunnis, the Shiites and the Kurds. We know that surges have only

generated more insurgents, they have only generated more violence, and

it has not brought about the safety that is needed.

Of course, the response is that this escalation will bring some sort

of security to Baghdad, and then we can sit down and have

reconciliation. One more soldier generates one more violent act. So we

know that the troop surges do not work. We also know that it strains

the readiness.

We need a diplomatic surge. More importantly, we need not to go over

the steps of Secretary McNamara who indicated in his words, as I said

in the October 2002, Former Defense Secretary Robert McNamara said in

his mea culpa on the Vietnam War: We were wrong, terribly wrong. And he

hoped that the suffering, as he quoted one of the philosophers, he

hoped that what we had experienced in the suffering of Vietnam would

give us experience. Today this ongoing war in Iraq shows we have thrown

away that experience.

We also throw away the Constitution, because this is not pursuant to

Article I, section 8. This is not a declaration of war that we are in,

and we therefore need to terminate the power of the President that had

been given in 2002 to attack Iraq. This document has not been followed.

And so H.R. 930 will terminate the authorization given in 2002, because

for these lives lost already we don't want to participate in the

foolishness of monies being spent recklessly, the lack of

accountability, and a war that already can be claimed as a military

victory by the United States military who can now come home with honor

and dignity.

Let us stand again on this floor and claim that we support life over

death and we support peace over war and we want our soldiers to return

home in celebration and dignity in honor of these who now are fallen on

the battlefield.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 63. I stand

in strong support of our troops who have performed magnificently in

battle and with a grace under pressure that is distinctively American.

I stand with the American people, who have placed their trust in the

President, the Vice President, and the former Secretary of Defense,

each of whom abused the public trust and patience.

I stand with the American taxpayers who have paid nearly $400 billion

to finance the misadventure in Iraq. I stand with the 3,019 fallen

heroes who stand even taller in death because they gave the last full

measure of devotion to their country. For these reasons, Madam Speaker,

I stand fully, strongly, and unabashedly in opposition to the

President's unilateral decision to escalate the war in Iraq by

deploying more than 20,000 additional combat troops to Iraq, and at

least that many more to provide logistical support.

I wish to make clear, Madam Speaker, that sending more combat troops

into Iraq will not lead to success in Iraq. We cannot achieve success

in Iraq unless we change strategy. But the President's proposed troop

surge is not a change in strategy and it does not signal a new

direction; it is simply more of the same. As our most recent great

President, Bill Clinton, once said, ``if you always do what you've

always done, you'll always get what you've always got.''

In proposing this latest troop surge, President Bush seeks to ``cry

havoc and let slip the dogs of war.'' But even Henry V did not exhort

his troops, his band of brothers, to go ``once more, into the breach''

for a fifth time. And neither should we.

Madam Speaker, instead of a surge in combat troops, the United States

needs to launch a diplomatic surge for political and national

reconciliation in Iraq. That is why I have introduced H.R. 930, the

``Military Success in Iraq and Diplomatic Surge for Political and

National Reconciliation in Iraq Act of 2007.'' As I will discuss in

greater detail later in my remarks, my legislation offers a far better

chance of sustainable success in Iraq than does the President's

escalation. And equally important, my legislation will go a long way

toward ensuring that never again will the American people or the

Congress be bamboozled into rubber-stamping an ill-advised, ill-

planned, preemptive war.

Madam Speaker, I am privileged to represent the citizens of the 18

Congressional District in the great State of Texas. The sons and

daughters of the Lone Star State have always answered the call to

service. More than 280 Texans have been made the ultimate sacrifice for

their country. More than 2,200 Texans have been wounded. Only

California has suffered a greater number of dead and wounded. Today,

Madam Speaker, there are more than 31,000 Texans serving in Iraq, which

is 12,000 more than the next highest state. Since the war began in

March 2003, more than 180,000 Texans have served in Iraq, some deployed

two, even three, in some cases four times.

Madam Speaker, it is more than irresponsible not to oppose the

President's plan to escalate the war in Iraq. It is unconscionable. In

opposing the President's latest folly, we send a message that is both

simple and profound: You cannot win the just War on Terror by launching

an unjustified War in Iraq. That is one of the hard and bitter lessons

we have learned during the 4 years course of the War in Iraq.

The misguided, mismanaged, and costly debacle that is the Iraq War

was preemptively launched by President Bush in March 2003 despite the

opposition of me and 125 of my colleagues in the House of

Representatives. To date, the war in Iraq has lasted longer than

America's involvement in World War II, the greatest conflict in all of

human history.

But there is a difference. The Second World War ended in complete and

total victory for the United States and its allies. But then again, in

that conflict America was led by FDR, a great Commander-in-Chief, who

had a plan to win the war and secure the peace, listened to his

generals, and sent troops in sufficient numbers and sufficiently

trained and equipped to do the job.

My friends, I say with sadness that we have not enjoyed that same

quality of leadership throughout the conduct of the Iraq War. The

results, not surprisingly, have been disastrous. To date, the war in

Iraq has claimed the lives of 3,109 brave servicemen and women (115 in

December and 39 in the first 13 days of this month). More than 23,400

Americans have been wounded, many suffering the most horrific injuries.

American taxpayers have paid nearly $400 billion to sustain this

misadventure.

The depth, breadth, and scope of the President's misguided,

mismanaged, and misrepresented war in Iraq is utterly without precedent

in American history. It is a tragedy in a league all its own. But it

was not unforeseeable or unavoidable. As the President's intention to

launch a preemptive war against Iraq became known back in the fall of

2002, thoughtful members in the halls of Congress took to the floor,

and concerned citizens in the countryside took to the streets to stop

it. Patriots all, we registered our dissent. We acted not out of

dislike of the President but out of love for our country and what it

had represented to the world. As Robert Taft, ``Mr. Republican,'' as he

was affectionately known, the late, great Senator from Ohio, stated two

weeks after Pearl Harbor, ``Criticism in a time of war is essential to

the maintenance of a democratic government.''

My friends, in light of the enormous losses of precious American

blood and treasure, it is very small consolation to know that those of

us who acted on the biblical injunction to speak truth to power have

been proven right in our warnings about the disaster war in Iraq would

produce.

We predicted before the war that ``the outcome after the conflict is

actually going to be the hardest part, and it is far less certain.'' We

made the point that it was essential for the Administration to develop

``a plan for rebuilding of the Iraqi government and society, if the

worst comes to pass and armed conflict is necessary.'' We knew the

Armed Forces of the United States is invincible on the battlefield and

would decisively defeat Iraq's forces and remove Saddam Hussein. But

like the proverbial dog chasing the car down the road, we questioned

whether the President knew what to do after we caught it.''

We warned of the ``postwar challenges,'' particularly the fact that

there was no history of democratic government in Iraq, and that its

economy and infrastructure was in ruins after years of war and

sanctions and that rebuilding Iraq would cost hundreds of billions of

dollars that could be better at home securing the homeland and waging

the real War on Terror. And we warned against sending American soldiers

to war in Iraq without adequate protection against biological and

unconventional weapons.

I am also reminded how General Eric Shinseki told the Senate Armed

Services Committee in February 2003 that the Defense Department's

estimate of troops needed for occupying Iraq is too low and that

several hundred thousand soldiers would be needed. But instead of

heeding the wise counsel of General Shinseki, the Bush administration

cashiered him out of the Army.

Indeed, anyone who questioned the Bush Doctrine of preemptive war was

ridiculed and marginalized as unpatriotic, weak, sympathetic to

terrorists, and un-American: Anti-Terrorism Chief Richard Clarke,

Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill, Council of Economic Advisors Chairman

Laurence Lindsay, Joe Wilson, and congressional Democrats.

But four years later, people like us are now the majority. And we are

united in raising our voices to proclaim: End the war and redeploy our

troops out of Iraq.

Madam Speaker, it is instructive to review why the American people

have turned against the war in Iraq.

The American people were told erroneously but repeatedly that the

gravest threat facing America was Saddam Hussein and his regime. The

Vice-President assured all who listened that he knew that Iraq and Al

Qaeda had high-level contacts that went back a decade and that Iraq had

trained Al Qaeda members in bomb making and deadly gases. He was wrong.

What's more, the American people were led to believe that the regime in

Baghdad had long-standing and continuing ties to terrorist

organizations. Wrong again. President Bush even went so far as to say

that you couldn't distinguish between Al Qaeda and Saddam when you

talked about the war on terror. Of course, this claim turned out to be

untrue as well.

That is not all, Madam Speaker. The campaign to persuade Americans

that Iraq posed a clear, present, and mortal danger to us included the

false claims that Iraq possessed ballistic missiles with a likely range

of hundreds of miles--far enough to strike Saudi Arabia, Israel,

Turkey, and other nations. It was also falsely represented to Americans

that Iraq had a growing fleet of manned and unmanned aerial vehicles

that could be used to disperse chemical or biological weapons across

broad areas and that Iraq was exploring ways of using unmanned aerial

vehicles to target the United States.

But the capstone of the administration's disinformation campaign was

the claim that Saddam Hussein was actively pursuing nuclear weapons

which could be used against America by Iraq, or by the terrorists to

whom it was giving safe harbor. President Bush even went so far to

announce to a world-wide audience in his 2003 State of the Union

address that ``the British government has learned that Saddam Hussein

had recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa.''

According to the President, facing such clear evidence of peril, we

could not wait for ``the final proof that could come in the form of a

mushroom cloud.'' We now know for sure that these claims were false.

And covering up those false claims is one of the main reasons that

Scooter Libby found himself in the predicament that led to his

indictment by a grand jury and the on-going trial in the United States

District Court for the District of Columbia.

Regarding the actual conduct of the looming hostilities, the

Administration and its courtiers assured us that ``it would be a

cakewalk'' and that American troops ``would be greeted as liberators.''

The Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, boldly claimed that ``the

war could last six days, six weeks. I doubt six months.'' Vice-

President Cheney said, ``I think it will go relatively quickly . . .

[in] weeks rather than months.'' There are many things one could say

about these rose- colored scenarios peddled by the Administration

nearly four long years ago. But there is one thing you cannot say and

that is ``truer words were never spoken.''

Finally, Madam Speaker, let us not forget the wildly extravagant

claims of this Administration regarding the cost of this war. The

Director of the White House OMB was quoted as saying that ``Iraq will

be an affordable endeavor that will not require sustained aid and will

be in the range of $50 billion to $60 billion.'' At last count, Madam

Speaker, the war has cost the taxpayers $379 billion. That a cost

overrun of more than 600 percent.

To put the cost of the war in perspective, consider that we are

spending more than $8 billion a month to sustain the war effort in

Iraq. Could this money be put to better use? Well, consider the

following:

For $33.1 billion, or 4 months in Iraq, we could have fully funded

the Department of Homeland Security FY 2007 budget.

For $10 billion, just 5 weeks in Iraq, we could equip every

commercial airliner with defenses against shoulder-fired missiles.

For $8.6 billion, just 30 days in Iraq, we could finance the shortage

of international aid needed to rebuild Afghanistan.

For $5.2 billion, just three weeks in Iraq, we could finance the

capital improvements needed to secure the nation's public

transportation system, including trains, subways, and buses.

For the equivalent of 5 days in Iraq, just $1.5 billion, we could

provide radiation detectors at every port in the United States.

For only $1.4 billion, the cost of another 5 days in Iraq, we could

double the COPS (community police grants) program.

For the cost of a mere two days in Iraq, we could fund the $700

million needed to provide 100% screening of all air cargo.

For $350 million, 26 hours in Iraq, we could instead make emergency

radio systems interoperable.

For the cost of 8 1/2 hours in Iraq, $94 million, we could restore

the cuts in Homeland Security funding to cities hit on September 11.

Madam Speaker, opponents of the resolution before us contend that it

gives comfort to the enemy and undermines the President's strategy for

success in Iraq. They claim it is our patriotic duty to avert our eyes

to this Administration's nearly unbroken record of spectacular failure

and incompetence and rally around the flag. But to paraphrase the old

saw: fool me four times, shame on you; fool me a fifth time, shame on

me. The truth is, Madam Speaker, this Congress--and the American

people--has not been fickle or impatient. Rather, it has been

understanding and generous to a fault, overlooking and excusing blunder

after blunder committed by the White House and the Office of the

Secretary of Defense (OSD). As Kenneth M. Pollack of the Brookings

Institution, and a former senior member of the NSC, brilliantly

describes in his essay, ``The Seven Deadly Sins Of Failure In Iraq: A

Retrospective Analysis Of The Reconstruction,'' in Middle East Review

of International Affairs (December 2006), our trust and patience has

been repaid by a record of incompetence unmatched in the annals of

American foreign policy.

The Bush administration disregarded the advice of experts on Iraq, on

nation-building, and on military operations. It staged both the

invasion and the reconstruction on the cheap. It did not learn from its

mistakes and did not commit the resources necessary to accomplish its

original lofty goals or later pedestrian objectives. It ignored

intelligence that contradicted its own views.

It is clear now that the administration simply never believed in the

necessity of a major reconstruction in Iraq. To exacerbate matters the

Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and the White House Office of

the Vice President (OVP) worked together to ensure that the State

Department was excluded from any meaningful involvement in the

reconstruction of Iraq.

The administration's chief Iraq hawks shared a deeply naive view that

the fall of Saddam and his top henchmen would have relatively little

impact on the overall Iraqi governmental structure. They assumed that

Iraq's bureaucracy would remain intact and would

therefore be capable of running the country and providing Iraqis with

basic services. They likewise assumed that the Iraqi armed forces would

largely remain cohesive and would surrender whole to U.S. forces. The

result of all this was a fundamental lack of attention to realistic

planning for the postwar environment.

As it was assumed that the Iraqis would be delighted to be liberated

little thought was given to security requirements after Saddam's fall.

The dearth of planning for the provision of security and basic services

stemmed from the mistaken belief that Iraqi political institutions

would remain largely intact and therefore able to handle those

responsibilities.

But there were too few Coalition troops, which meant that long supply

lines were vulnerable to attack by Iraqi irregulars, and the need to

mask entire cities at times took so much combat power that it brought

the entire offensive to a halt.

It was not long before these naive assumptions and inadequate

planning conjoined to sow the seeds of the chaos we have witnessed in

Iraq.

The lack of sufficient troops to secure the country led to the

immediate outbreak of lawlessness resulting in massive looting and

destruction dealt a stunning psychological blow to Iraqi confidence in

the United States, from which the country has yet to recover. We

removed Saddam Hussein's regime but we did not move to fill the

military, political, and economic vacuum. The unintended consequence

was the birth of a failing state, which provided the opportunity for

the insurgency to flourish and prevented the development of

governmental institutions capable of providing Iraqis with the most

basic services such as clean water, sanitation, electricity, and a

minimally functioning economy capable of generating basic employment.

Making matters worse, the administration arrogantly denied the United

Nations overall authority for the reconstruction even though the U.N.

had far more expertise and experience in nation building.

The looting and anarchy, the persistent insurgent attacks, the lack

of real progress in restoring basic services, and the failure to find

the promised weapons of mass destruction undercut the administration's

claim that things were going well in Iraq and led it to make the next

set of serious blunders, which was the disbanding of the Iraqi military

and security services.

Madam Speaker, counterinsurgency experts will tell you that to pacify

an occupied country it is essential to disarm, demobilize, and retrain

(DDR) the local army. The idea behind a DDR program is to entice,

cajole, or even coerce soldiers back to their own barracks or to other

facilities where they can be fed, clothed, watched, retrained, and

prevented from joining an insurgency movement, organized crime, or an

outlaw militia.

By disbanding the military and security services without a DDR

program, as many as one million Iraqi men were set at large with no

money, no means to support their families, and no skills other than how

to use a gun. Not surprisingly, many of these humiliated Sunni officers

went home and joined the burgeoning Sunni insurgency.

The next major mistake made in the summer of 2003 was the decision to

create an Iraqi Governing Council (IGC), which laid the foundation for

many of Iraq's current political woes. Many of the IGC leaders were

horribly corrupt, and they stole from the public treasury and

encouraged their subordinates to do the same. The IGC set the tone for

later Iraqi governments, particularly the transitional governments of

Ayad Allawi and Ibrahim Jaafari that followed.

Finally, by insisting that all of the problems of the country were

caused by the insurgency rather than recognizing the problems of the

country were helping to fuel the insurgency, the Bush Administration

set about concentrating its efforts in all the wrong places and on the

wrong problems.

This explains why for nearly all of 2004 and 2005, our troops were

disproportionately deployed in the Sunni triangle trying to catch and

kill insurgents. Although our troops caught and killed insurgents by

the hundreds and thousands, these missions were not significantly

advancing our strategic objectives. Indeed, they had little long-term

impact because insurgents are always willing to flee temporarily rather

than fight a leviathan. Second, because so many coalition forces were

playing ``whack-a-mole'' with insurgents in the sparsely populated

areas of western Iraq, the rest of the country was left vulnerable to

take over by militias.

Finally, Madam Speaker, a cruel irony is that because the Iraqi

Government brought exiles and militia leaders into the government and

gave them positions of power, it is now virtually impossible to get

them out, and even more difficult to convince them to make compromises

because the militia leaders have learned they can use their government

positions to maintain and expand their personal power, at the expense

both of their rivals who are not in the government and of the central

government itself.

All of this was avoidable and the blame for the lack of foresight

falls squarely on the White House and the Office of the Secretary of

Defense.

Madam Speaker, the American people spoke loudly and clearly last

November when they tossed out the Rubber-Stamp Republican Congress.

They voted for a New Direction in Iraq and for change in America. They

voted to disentangle American troops from the carnage, chaos, and civil

war in Iraq. They voted for accountability and oversight, which we

Democrats have begun to deliver on; already the new majority has held

52 congressional hearings related to the Iraq War, investigating

everything from the rampant waste, fraud, and abuse of Iraq

reconstruction funding to troop readiness to the Iraq Study Group

Report.

But President Bush is still not listening to America. He is acting as

if nothing has changed. He is not offering a way out of Iraq, only a

way forward that will take us deeper into the morass and quagmire.

The troop surge proposed by President Bush is not a new strategy for

success in Iraq; it is just the same old repackaged policy of ``stay

the course.'' This troop surge--this escalation of the war--will not

provide lasting security for Iraqis. It is not what the American people

have asked for, nor what the American military needs. It will impose

excessive and unwarranted burdens on military personnel and their

families. It is opposed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It is opposed by

an overwhelming majority of the American people. It is opposed by a

majority in Congress.

The architects of the fiasco in Iraq would have us believe that

``surging'' at least 20,000 more soldiers into Baghdad and nearby Anbar

province is a change in military strategy that America must embrace or

face future terrorist attacks on American soil. Nothing could be

further from the truth, as we learned last year when the ``surge'' idea

first surfaced among neoconservatives.

The President's proposed troop surge is not new and, judging from

history, we know it will not work. It will only succeed in putting more

American troops in harm's way for no good reason and without any

strategic advantage. The armed forces of the United States are not to

be used to respond to 911 calls from governments like Iraq's that have

done all they can to take responsibility for the security of their

country and safety of their own people. The United States cannot do for

Iraq what Iraqis are not willing to do for themselves.

Troop surges have been tried several times in the past. The success

of these surges has, to put it charitably, been underwhelming. Let's

briefly review the record:

1. Operation Together Forward, (June-October 2006): In June the Bush

administration announced a new plan for securing Baghdad by increasing

the presence of Iraqi Security Forces. That plan failed, so in July the

White House announced that additional American troops would be sent

into Baghdad. By October, a U.S. military spokesman, Gen. William

Caldwell, acknowledged that the operation and troop increase was a

failure and had ``not met our overall expectations of sustaining a

reduction in the levels of violence.''

2. Elections and Constitutional Referendum (September-December 2005):

In the fall of 2005 the Bush administration increased troop levels by

22,000, making a total of 160,000 American troops in Iraq around the

constitutional referendum and parliamentary elections. While the

elections went off without major violence these escalations had little

long-term impact on quelling sectarian violence or attacks on American

troops.

3. Constitutional Elections and Fallujah (November 2004-March 2005):

As part of an effort to improve counterinsurgency operations after the

Fallujah offensive in November 2004 and to increase security before the

January 2005 constitutional elections U.S. forces were increased by

12,000 to 150,000. Again there was no long-term security impact.

4. Massive Troop Rotations (December 2003-April 2004): As part of a

massive rotation of 250,000 troops in the winter and spring of 2004,

troop levels in Iraq were raised from 122,000 to 137,000. Yet, the

increase did nothing to prevent Muqtada al-Sadr's Najaf uprising and

April of 2004 was the second deadliest month for American forces.

Madam Speaker, by more than 60 percent, Americans oppose increasing

American troop levels in Iraq. So do many of the nation's leading and

most knowledgeable military officers. In testimony before the Senate,

Gen. John P. Abizaid, the former Commander of United States Central

Command, stated: ``I do not believe that more American troops right now

is the solution to the problem. I believe that the troop levels need to

stay where they are.'' General Abizaid's view is shared by Gen. Colin

Powell, the former Secretary of State and former Chairman of the Joint

Chiefs, who has said ``I am not persuaded that another surge of troops

into Baghdad for the purposes of suppressing this communitarian

violence, this civil war, will work.'' And Gen. Barry

McCaffrey (retired), who commanded the 24th Infantry Division during

the first Gulf War, is even more blunt: ``It's a fool's errand . . .

Our allies are leaving us . . . Make no mistake about that. Most will

be gone by this summer.''

Even leading members of the Republican Party are skeptical of the

President's latest ploy to salvage the mess he has made of Iraq.

According to Sen. Chuck Hagel of Nebraska, the President's escalation

plan ``represents the most dangerous foreign policy blunder in this

country since Vietnam--if it's carried out. I will resist it.'' Senator

Hagel is joined in his skepticism by Senators Olympia Snowe, John

Warner, Susan Collins, Gordon Smith, Norm Coleman, George Voinovich,

Sam Brownback, Arlen Specter, and a growing list of others.

Madam Speaker, although Americans are right to oppose the President's

troop surge, stemming the chaos in Iraq will require more than

opposition to military escalation. It requires us to make hard choices.

It is past time for a new direction that can lead to success in Iraq.

We cannot wait any longer. Too many Americans and Iraqis are dying who

could otherwise be saved.

Since the President still has not seen the light, we need to make him

feel the heat. I believe the time has come to debate, adopt, and

implement a plan for strategic redeployment. I am not talking about

``immediate withdrawal,'' ``cutting and running,'' or surrendering to

terrorists. And I certainly am not talking about staying in Iraq

forever or the foreseeable future.

I am talking about a paradigm shift. Rather than undertaking a

misguided and futile surge in troops, the United States should surge

diplomatically. The Armed Forces of the United States have performed

magnificently. They won the war they were sent to fight. Their civilian

leadership has not succeeded in winning the peace.

That is why I have introduced H.R. 930, which among other things

creates a high-level Special Envoy to launch a new offensive on the

diplomatic front. My legislation, the ``Military Success in Iraq and

Diplomatic Surge for Political and National Reconciliation Act of

2007,'' implements twelve of the most important recommendations of the

Iraq Study Group, headed by former Secretary of State James A. Baker

and 911 Co-Chairman Lee Hamilton.

Among other things, H.R. 930, would require a diplomatic full-court

press designed to engage all six of Iraq's neighbors--Iran, Turkey,

Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait--more constructively in

stabilizing Iraq. These countries are already involved in a bilateral,

self-interested and disorganized way.

While their interests and ours are not identical, none of these

countries wants to live with an Iraq that, after our redeployment,

becomes a failed state or a humanitarian catastrophe that could become

a haven for terrorists or a hemorrhage of millions more refugees

streaming into their countries.

Madam Speaker, when Congress authorized the president to use military

force in Iraq in 2002, it departed from the wisdom of our forefathers.

The Framers understood that while the military does the fighting, a

nation goes to war. That is why they lodged the power to declare war in

the Congress, the branch of government closest to the people. They knew

that the decision to go to war was too important to be left to the whim

of a single person, no matter how wise or well-informed he or she might

be. But the AUMF passed by Congress was not a declaration of war but

rather a blank check for the president to start and wage war in Iraq at

a time, place, and manner of his choosing. It is time to rescind that

blank check and return to first principles.

That is why H.R. 930 also includes another important legislative

initiative, the ``Military Success in Iraq Act of 2007 (MSIA).'' This

provision of my legislation is crafted to end the American military

involvement in Iraq and redeploy American troops out of Iraq.

The MSIA declares that the objectives which led Congress to pass the

2002 AUMF have been achieved. It further declares that whenever the

objectives set forth in an AUMF have been achieved, the AUMF expires

automatically. Then it finds that Congress is the ultimate arbiter as

to whether the objectives set forth in its AUMF have been achieved.

Because Congress now finds that the 2002 AUMF objectives have been

achieved, my legislation provides that the authorization to use force

conferred upon the President by the AUMF has now expired. My bill then

makes clear that the President must obtain a new authorization to

continue the use force in Iraq. Finally, my bill requires that if the

Congress does not vote to reauthorize the use of force in Iraq by March

31, 2007, then all American armed forces in Iraq must be redeployed out

of Iraq. Thus, under my legislation, an up-or-down vote must be held by

the House and Senate to continue waging war in Iraq.

Madam Speaker, our domestic national security, in fact, rests on

redeploying our military forces from Iraq in order to build a more

secure Middle East and continue to fight against global terrorist

networks elsewhere in the world. Strategic redeployment of our armed

forces in order to rebuild our nation's fighting capabilities and renew

our critical fight in Afghanistan against the Taliban and al-Qaeda is

not just an alternative strategy. It's a strategic imperative.

My legislation requires the Congress to provide leadership on the

most important issue of our day. That is what the American people want.

That is what they voted for last November. That is what has been

required all along.

And providing constructive leadership that will bring peace, enhance

security, and save lives is the task to which I am now, and always have

been, dedicated. That is why I strongly and proudly support our

magnificent, heroic, and selfless service men and women. That is why I

strongly support H. Con. Res 63 and squarely oppose the President's

decision to escalate the war in Iraq. I urge all members to support the

resolution before the House.