Madam Speaker, after Congress has successfully

completed action on the first 100 hours, we now begin a critical 100

days for the future of our engagement in Iraq, United States policy in

the Middle East and our struggle against violent fundamentalism.

Between now and the Memorial Day recess, 100 days for Congress to

reassert itself as a coequal branch of government, as envisioned by the

framers of the Constitution, to change the course in Iraq.

This is a decisive moment. It is time for every one of us who would

be a leader to lay our cards on the table. Each must be true to our own

conscience and to the responsibility of office by letting the American

people know honestly and directly what we stand for and what we would

do in Iraq.

This resolution gives clear and concise voice to the desires of the

American people. It expresses support for our troops and demands that

we not place more of them at risk without a reason or a plan. And I

strongly support it.

Along with this resolution, the Congress under Speaker Pelosi's

Democratic leadership has already done more to provide oversight and

accountability than Republicans over the last 5 years. We have held 50

hearings on the conduct of the war, fraud and failure in reconstruction

efforts, and the outrage of our troops being sent into harm's way

without the equipment they need. I applaud the efforts of our

leadership

on the Appropriations Committee to end the practice of giving too much

to the wrong people to do the wrong thing.

However, these are only the first steps. We should not only oppose

escalation of the war, but we should pass legislation to bring the war

to an end responsibly. Investigations must be followed by specific and

personal accountability for crimes that have been permitted in the

conduct of this war.

We should use the power of the purse to ensure that funds go

specifically to keep our soldiers safe, rebuild badly damaged military

readiness, undertake new diplomatic efforts and support the Iraqi

people, not an open-ended occupation.

For the last 2 years, I have been working with concerned citizens in

Oregon to develop a responsible plan to end the war and provide the

best hope for a better future in Iraq. Last month, I introduced

comprehensive legislation, the New Direction For Iraq, H.R. 663, as a

model for the kind of legislation that Congress should enact, and I am

confident will enact.

This legislation would bring the troops home, require a comprehensive

diplomatic effort, redirect reconstruction assistance, promote

international efforts to disarm militias, investigate and punish war

profiteering and deal with the 2 million Iraqi refugees who have been

forced to flee their country, people the administration has only

recently been able to recognize.

A word about Iran. It is a complex puzzle, more difficult than any of

us imagine and one that poses real challenges. But as the President

marches us closer and closer to a major provocation, maybe a new war,

whether intentionally or not, Congress should not let itself be

steamrolled or lied to, as it was with Iraq; Congress must assert

itself with real diplomacy and a real strategy.

It is also time that America lived up to our ideals. No more torture,

kidnapping and unauthorized wiretaps; no more lying and unnecessary

secrecy; not treating the Constitution as a suggestion or using false

claims about national security to score political points against those

of us who have been right about this war from the beginning.

We must start treating the public like a partner and recognize that

they are far ahead of the President and the Republican leadership. I am

just frustrated to hear false analogies to the dark days of World War

II or to the Civil War. We are bogged down in somebody else's civil

war, and we have been doing it longer than World War II or the Civil

War, with no end in sight, until now.

They should join us in taking this conversation to coffee shops,

churches, campuses and conference rooms, working with the American

people.

Over the next 100 days, I will continue to fight for a comprehensive

plan that I am confident will come forward. It is in the honor of

Travis Bradach Nall, a constituent of mine who was killed in Iraq the

very day the President taunted the insurgents to ``bring it on.''

For Travis and over 3,000 of his brave comrades who have given their

lives, I urge support of this resolution as a critical first step to

bringing this tragic war to a close.