Madam Speaker, I join my

colleagues today to add my support to this resolution.

This resolution is straightforward and simple: we support our troops

and oppose President Bush's plan to send more than 20,000 additional

combat troops to Iraq.

I support this resolution because we need a new direction in our Iraq

policy. This war has been going on for almost my entire service in this

House, and during that time, I have heard one misrepresentation after

another.

This war began on a flawed premise, that Iraq had weapons of mass

destruction and posed an imminent threat to the world. After months of

fruitless searches, it became clear that there were no weapons of mass

destruction; but 3 years after coming to that conclusion, we are still

in Iraq.

Then we captured Saddam Hussein and more than 3 years later we are

still in Iraq. We were told we needed to be there to fight the

terrorists who attacked us, but we all knew that al Qaeda was based in

Afghanistan, not in Iraq.

Vice President Cheney said the insurgency was in its last throes; and

20 months later, our troops are still in combat in Iraq.

We were told we were in Iraq to establish democracy and freedom. Iraq

now has a Constitution and an elected government, but over 1 year later

we are still in Iraq.

It was 3 years, 9 months and 2 weeks ago that President Bush declared

mission accomplished, but our troops are still in Iraq.

We in this House and the American public have been continuously

misled about this war. Enough is enough. If I really believed that

sending another 20,000 troops would end the war and bring stability to

Iraq, I would support it. It would be worth the sacrifice. But the war

in Iraq cannot be solved militarily because it is a political problem.

So when the President wants to send even more troops, we really need

to take stock of what that means for our country and the lasting impact

that it will have.

We all know the statistics: 3,124 American troops killed; over 20,000

wounded; and over $379 billion spent.

And I have seen the costs beyond the numbers, and I am sure my

colleagues have as well.

Each visit that I have made to Walter Reed, every wounded veteran

that I have met in my district and each condolence letter I write to

the widow or the parent of a fallen soldier painfully reminds me of the

great sacrifice we are asking from our men and women in uniform and

their families.

There are also costs that we don't have numbers for, but they are

worth considering. How many children will grow up without a parent

because of this war? How many veterans' lives will be forever altered

because of the injuries they have endured? How are we being perceived

throughout the world, and has it made us more vulnerable to terrorism?

As we consider the President's decision to send yet more troops and

to escalate the costs we are bearing, we need to ask ourselves whether

the cost of sending more troops to fulfilled a flawed policy is

justified. I don't think it is, and most Americans don't think it is

either.

As far as I am concerned, this is a moral issue. We are not doing

right by our troops and their families to continue sending them into

harm's way without a winning strategy.

And we are not doing right for America. Our continued presence in

Iraq is breeding new recruits for terror groups and eroding the

readiness of our own Armed Forces.

We are increasingly vulnerable to defending our interests in other

parts of the world, such as Afghanistan, where just yesterday The

Washington Post reports that NATO lacks enough troops to fight the

Taliban and al Qaeda.

It is time to change our tactics and bring an end to our current

mission in Iraq. This resolution is not going to do that, but it is a

first step in articulating to this President that staying the course is

not working and it is not acceptable to the American people.

I urge all my colleagues to join me in voting ``yes'' on the

resolution.