Mr. Speaker, it is good to see you in that chair, Mr.

Speaker, because you and I, I think, are here because people in this

country wanted a new direction. They had had enough. They wanted a

change. And they want a new direction in how this country is being run.

And if there is a single subject where they want a new direction, it is

on Iraq.

Now, we have a resolution before us tonight that is a vote of

confidence for our troops and a vote of no confidence for our

President's policies in Iraq. First and foremost, I want to say that I

support our troops and will fight to make sure they have the equipment

they need and deserve. What they require on the battlefield they must

have. What they need when they come home we must provide.

However, our troops are entitled to sound public policy with a

realistic mission that strengthens America's national security

interests. I am opposed to the President's proposed surge of sending

21,000 additional troops to Iraq. I was opposed to the invasion of

Iraq, and I believe that we have taken our eyes off the necessary war

in Afghanistan and against terrorism by the costly distraction of

nation-building in Iraq.

We must be seeking Osama bin Laden. That is where our attention must

be focused. But this surge is not a change in direction, but it is more

of the same.

The President has not listened to the American people. He has not

listened to the bipartisan Iraq Study Group or even to our senior

officers such as Generals Powell, Abizaid, and Hoar.

Now, my opponent and I in this last election debated the issue of a

surge. How my opponent knew that there would be a surge, that is beyond

me. But he supported the escalation and I opposed it. And I still

oppose this surge, because in my opinion it is too little too late.

The people of the Seventh Congressional District of Colorado spoke

loud and clear. They questioned the President's policies in Iraq.

Americans elected a new majority in Congress to act as a check and

balance, and not a rubber stamp of the President's policies, especially

those in Iraq.

It is time to turn over security to the Iraqi people, press forward

with diplomatic efforts, create a multinational reconstruction effort

and redeploy our troops from Iraq by the spring of 2008, as recommended

by the Iraq Study Group.

It is time for Iraq to take responsibility for its future. Mr.

Speaker, I urge the Congress and all of the Members to vote in favor of

the resolution that is before us tonight.