Mr. Speaker, I voted against the original resolution

authorizing President Bush to take military action against Iraq. As a

Member of the Out of Iraq and Progressive caucuses, I have and will

continue to call for the immediate withdrawal of American troops.

I rise today in strong opposition to the President's proposal to send

more than 20,000 additional United States combat troops to Iraq.

Today's non-binding resolution is an important first step. After its

passage, I will encourage my colleagues in Congress to take further

steps to end the War in Iraq.

When a scientist uncovers facts that contradict a theory, he or she

throws out that theory. But when President Bush learns of facts that

contradict his theories, he throws out the facts. As a member of the

reality-based community, I continue to be amazed by this President's

disregard for objective truths.

The President, however, isn't just a scientist experimenting with

chemicals in a laboratory. He is an executive whose decision to take us

to war under false pretenses has adversely affected the lives of

millions of Americans and Iraqis. The costs of the nearly four-year old

conflict are grave.

More than 3,100 brave American servicemen and women, including at

least 325 from my home state of California, have already died in the

war. An additional 23,000 plus have been wounded. Estimates of the

number of Iraqi civilians killed since the invasion run even higher,

from 47,000 to 70,000. All at a cost of $379 billion to the American

people. That's more than $1250 for every man, woman, and child

currently living in the U.S.

But these are facts. President Bush is more interested in cockamamie

theories.

In the run-up to the war, Bush speculated that Iraq possessed nuclear

weapons. When intelligence officers suggested that might not be the

case, he ignored them. To date, no weapons of mass destruction have

been found.

Bush also hypothesized that the attack would turn Iraq into a liberal

democracy. When academic scholars wrote that Iraq's history and culture

didn't suggest such an outcome was likely, he dismissed them. Today,

despite the election of an Iraqi Assembly and formation of an Iraqi

government, the country is in a full-fledged civil war.

During the past four years, the President has repeatedly theorized

that America was making progress in Iraq, and that ``success'' was just

around the corner. I remember, in particular, Bush's summer 2003

statement that ``major combat operations in Iraq have ended,'' his

summer 2004 claim that we were ``turning the corner'' abroad, and

Cheney's summer 2005 reference to an insurgency in its ``last throes.''

Despite these promises, the situation in Iraq has gotten worse every

year, not better.

My favorite declaration came this past summer, when the President

said that the formation of a new Iraqi government represented a

``turning point.''

Unfortunately, the body count in Iraq continues to grow. This past

July, an average of 110 Iraqi adults died each day, the deadliest month

of the war for Iraq. In October, militia attacks spiked 22 percent. In

December, more than 100 American troops were killed, the third

deadliest month of the war for the United States.

But the November elections did represent a turning point--in the

United States. The Bush administration no longer has a Republican

Congress to lick its boots. What's more, voting on this resolution will

soon suggest President Bush doesn't even have the support of his own

party.

When the President in January suggested sending additional troops to

Iraq, Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle criticized his

foolhardy proposal. Senator Chuck Hagel, Republican from Nebraska,

termed it ``Alice in Wonderland'' thinking that would ``represent the

most dangerous foreign policy blunder since Vietnam.''

Retired military personnel weren't much more enthusiastic. Former

General Barry McCaffrey called the surge ``a fool's errand.'' Retired

Colonel Paul Hughes said ``sending more troops to Baghdad is like

pouring more water in the sands of Al-Anbar. It's just going to

disappear without accomplishing anything.''

I couldn't agree more. The President's proposal to escalate the war

in Iraq in the naive hope of winning a lasting peace is another

cockamamy theory that contradicts all available facts.

I strongly urge my colleagues to vote ``yes'' and take this important

first step to end the War in Iraq and bring all of our troops home.