Madam Speaker, the American

people want a new direction in Iraq and I expect Congress to act

accordingly. They really do think that this is a democracy and that

this is representative government.

It has been almost 4 years since this administration declared the end

of major combat in Iraq. He declared mission accomplished. Since this

declaration, we have seen more than 3,000 of our military killed in

combat, and more than 22,000 injured.

We cannot forget that these are not just numbers. These are our sons

and daughters and grandsons and granddaughters. They are now more than

3,000 men and women who will never return home to be with their

families. Many are so young, at 18, 19 and 20 years old, their lives

have ended before they ever really began.

I started my professional career as a psychiatric nurse at the Dallas

Veterans Administration Hospital, and I observed firsthand the physical

and psychological trauma that the returning young people faced from the

Vietnam war.

It is a long-term battle for them and their families as they learn to

live with these disabilities. We are in a war with no end in sight, and

now we are talking about troop escalation. How many more young lives

are we going to lose? How many more soldiers will face long-term

disabilities, life-long disabilities? The experts have weighed in on

this issue, and they have said we are making a mistake to escalate.

The President sent a group of experts to design a new course for

Iraq. The President's experts did not recommend additional troops. In

fact, they recommended the very opposite.

Madam Speaker, it is time to listen to the experts and the commanders

on the ground. Our troops are faced with an impossible task of policing

a civil war. Each day we hear of sectarian attacks and bombings. Our

troops are caught in the middle with no real strategy to end this

violence. A great American military cannot be a substitute for a weak

Iraqi government.

We need to focus on diplomatic solutions and training Iraq's security

forces so they can take care of themselves and patrol their own

country. With this escalation, we are just compounding the problem. We

should concentrate on training the Iraqi security forces. They must

know that this is not going to be an open-ended situation.

Madam Speaker, my constituents in north Texas continue to grieve the

loss of their sons and daughters. They are

concerned for our troop safety and they are demanding answers. The war

is costing us too many lives and too much money, $1 billion a week. At

an overall cost of $500 billion, we will be paying the cost of this war

for decades to come.

In my congressional district in Dallas, Texas, our share of the cost

will be $1 billion. In Dallas this would have provided 400,000 children

with health care or paid for 23,000 additional police officers. For our

Nation's 300 million Americans, their share will be $1,300 a piece.

Accountability of Iraq war spending has been appalling. Does there

exist any accountability? Last week we began the congressional hearings

regarding contracting fraud. Apparently there is $12 billion

unaccounted for. Contractors were being paid with large bags of cash.

This is truly an embarrassment and the height of irresponsibility as

thousands of American children go to bed hungry tonight. Many are

children of our troops, and now we are talking about spending more

money and adding more troops. We need to end this, redeployment needs

to start now.

Madam Speaker, we have before us a bipartisan resolution opposing the

escalation of troops in Iraq. However, this debate is only the first

step. The ultimate goal is to bring our troops home safely and swiftly.

It is time for the President to listen to the American people and his

advisers and refrain from changing the leadership when they disagree

with him.

The best way to support our troops serving in Iraq is to say ``no''

to the President's escalation of this war. An outstanding general said

recently that stubbornness cannot be mistaken as leadership and cliches

cannot be called policy.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this resolution.