Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from New Jersey for

yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, as we debate this resolution on Iraq, we are reminded of

the uncertain world in which we live. While the 5-year anniversary of

9/11 has passed, the memories of that day are still with us, as are the

actions of this administration that led us into this war.

Following 9/11, our country missed an important opportunity that will

forever change our history. Instead of building coalitions and using

that support to maximize our strength, we alienated much of the world.

We lost sight of the simple truth: A respected America is a more secure

America.

But this administration insisted on going it alone in Iraq. They

refused to let U.N. inspectors complete their work, and they launched

an invasion without the support of the international community. We are

now faced with lasting repercussions of that decision. And it appears

the President still has not learned from that mistake.

Once again, the President is going it alone with his call for more

than 20,000 additional troops in Iraq. He does not have the support of

the international community, and he has lost the support of many in the

military, the Congress, and, most importantly, the American people.

I fear, Mr. Speaker, the President is once again missing an important

opportunity. He is missing his chance to send a strong message to the

Iraqi people that we will no longer police their civil war, and that it

is time for them to assume responsibility for their own country so that

our troops can be removed from harm's way.

In my judgment, this war is beyond the scope of our men and women in

uniform. The situation in Iraq is in dire need of a diplomatic

solution. Sure, we need to be ready to take down al Qaeda training

camps in the region, but we do not need to be refereeing age-old

religious disputes.

This is an untenable situation and unfair to our brave troops who

have become targets of insurgents. If we are going to support our

troops in every way possible, it is vital that we not only support them

with the supplies and armor that they need, we must also ensure that

they are being deployed in such a way that they have a realistic chance

of success. We must make certain that the funds we are sending to Iraq

are going to our troops and not into the pockets of no-bid contractors

and war profiteers.

Mr. Speaker, I support this resolution, because I support our men and

women in uniform. I have heard speakers on the other side say that this

debate will demoralize our troops. Well, I submit that nothing can

demoralize our troops more than having them police a civil war. And

that is what this administration is asking them to do.

All of us in this body believe in the spread of democracy and

freedom. But that grand responsibility cannot solely rest on the

shoulders of our troops. It must rest on the shoulders of free nations

across this world. And it must rest on the shared sacrifice of all

citizens of this country.

No doubt we have real enemies. They are the Islamist jihadists, and

they must be opposed. These same enemies are shared by all free

nations. But escalating the war in Iraq is not the right approach to

defeat the jihadists. It is an approach that will cost more American

lives and mire us even further in the Iraqi civil war.

We can win the long-term struggle if we are smart, if we focus on the

real enemy, if we build our alliances properly, and if we do not let

our own pride get in the way.