Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight in support of this resolution because for

4 years this administration has driven us down the wrong road in Iraq.

The administration's newest proposal does nothing more than accelerate

our pace further and further away from our obligation of stabilizing

Iraq and getting our troops home.

Our men and women in uniform have performed bravely and done

everything

asked of them. Yet, 4 years into this conflict, we have our troops

driving unarmored humvees in enemy territory.

Meanwhile, our government cannot account for roughly $12 billion

allocated for the war in Iraq. With that $12 billion, we could have

made the following purchases for our men and women in harm's way:

80,000 armor kits for humvees; 16,000 armored security vehicles; 20

million bulletproof vests; 40 million helmets. That money is gone. It

disappeared in a cloud of waste, fraud and incompetence that has

engulfed this war from the beginning.

In the words of Three Star General Greg Newbold, ``Members of

Congress, from both parties, defaulted in fulfilling their

constitutional responsibility for oversight.''

Now, this administration wants Congress to rubber stamp an escalation

and continuation of those same failed policies. Well, that time is

over.

My fellow Blue Dogs and I have made a public commitment to root out

war profiteering. We demand oversight. We demand accountability. We

demand transparency. The Blue Dogs and I will do everything in our

power to make sure when we say we are funding our troops, the money

actually gets to our troops.

Mr. Speaker, our military defeated a terrible dictator. This is what

they were asked to do, but for 4 years now, we have asked those same

troops to rebuild a Nation, and we have asked them to do this without a

plan.

Now, this administration has asked us to send over 20,000 more

military troops to continue trying to rebuild Iraq, still with no plan.

Mr. Speaker, that is wrong.

I believe it is the patriotic responsibility of every Member of

Congress to ask those tough questions. I promised the people of Western

North Carolina that I would ask those questions. I have been to the

White House, I have been to the Pentagon, and I have been to the

hearings, and I am not satisfied with the answers I am getting.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution we are debating is not a binding

resolution, but the grief felt by families who have lost loved ones is

binding. The physical and mental struggles of our returning troops are

binding. The devastation caused to innocent people by the violence in

Iraq is binding.

It is a moral outrage to continue sending troops into harm's way

without a plan for success.

This administration must realize that military might alone is not

enough to secure Iraq and end the civil war.

Victory in Iraq requires more than bullets and bombs. It requires the

cooperation of the Iraqi government, increased regional diplomacy, and

competent leadership at home.