Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding.

With all due respect to my friend from New Mexico, I want to make the

point that this resolution does not do anything to stop funding for the

troops. As a matter of fact, it was this administration that sent

140,000 troops into harm's way without up-armoring Humvees. There is

nothing in this to cut funding for the troops. But this administration

sent 140,000 troops into harm's way without up-armored Humvees, without

Kevlar vests. And what did Secretary Rumsfeld say? He said you go to

war with the Army you have, not the Army you wish you had.

We are the United States of America. We should never go into harm's

way, never go into harm's way, without up-armored Humvees and Kevlar

vests.

The Washington Post did a front page piece just the other day. It

says that we still don't have the most effective up-armored Humvees

that are available in the United States. It is not acceptable. It is

inexcusable and indefensible.

I will be going to Iraq in a few days. I expect to see a country,

unfortunately, that has gotten worse and worse in terms of the level of

violence than the one I visited in 2003 and in January of 2005.

When I came back in January of 2005 I presented a strategy, a white

paper, entitled ``Iraq: The Light at the End of the Tunnel.'' Many of

those recommendations were included in a bipartisan Iraq Study Group

with distinguished experts on foreign policy and military affairs. They

didn't call for more troops in Iraq. What they called for was for

America to go into the background.

The simple facts bear out a true grim reality. We are told that we

are going to rebuild the country's infrastructure. But here are the

facts. Iraq has less electricity than it did before the war. Residents

of Baghdad get 4 1/2 hours of electricity now, one-quarter of what

they expected before the war.

We were told that oil revenues would pay the entire cost of the way.

But here are the facts. Iraq produces less oil today than it did before

the war. Instead of funding the war, oil is turned out at about half

the rate it was when Saddam was in power.

The bad news continues. Skyrocketing unemployment, decreasing levels

of drinkable water and a security situation that has deteriorated into

a full-blown civil war.

Now the President wants, in face of the recommendations of experts,

to send 21,500 more troops into this situation. Does the President

really think that the surge will stabilize the security system long

enough to undo all the failures of the last 4 years? I cannot honestly

believe that this is the best strategy and the collective wisdom of the

Department of Defense, of

the State Department and of the intelligence community.

You know what I see? I see a President who seems to be desperate to

divert attention away from the missteps, away from holding people

accountable, and to just hold on to Iraq as long as he can and let the

next administration deal with it. When I watched his speech, when I

listened to Secretary Gates describe it, I saw nothing that gave me the

impression that the escalation would do any good in the long term.

When we need to encourage them, Shias, Sunnis and Kurds, instead we

are alienating. When we need to be standing up Iraqi security forces so

our men and women can stand down, instead we are undercutting. When we

need to be engaging Iraq's neighbors, instead we are on a war path with

Iran. We need to fundamentally change our approach in Iraq, and this

plan is more of the same.

I admit that the escalation we are debating will accomplish a number

of things. It will endanger more American lives. It will continue to

erode our national security. It will continue around the world to keep

America up front in the war in Iraq, creating more terrorists and more

insurgents, not less. It will deplete our military's resources, which

are already stretched to the limit. And this plan will again ask our

soldiers and marines to leave their families and return to the war zone

that they have just left.

I stand here today with a simple message: Mr. President, the American

people want a policy that changes direction. We urge you to rethink

this policy of escalating the war in Iraq.