Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this resolution and in

opposition to the President's decision to send more of our troops to

Iraq.

I was against this war from the onset. On October 10, 2002, I was one

of

the few who voted against the resolution authorizing the President to

use military force in Iraq. But the authorization passed, and we went

to war. At that point we supported our troops and we wanted to win, and

we want win. And I have voted for every appropriation bill to give our

troops what they need to achieve their mission.

So here we are, more than 4 years later, and what do we have to show

for this war? Violence in Iraq continues to skyrocket. This past

December was the deadliest month for Iraqi civilians since the war

began.

Over the course of this war, 45,000 to 65,000 Iraqi civilians have

lost their lives, maybe more; we really don't know, because nobody is

counting here in America. And over 3,000 brave American troops, men and

women in our Armed Forces, have lost their lives. My home State of

California sends the most to the services. We alone have lost 325 men

and women in Iraq, and we have sustained about 2,500 injuries to our

military personnel, more than any other State in the United States.

And Iraqis have paid the price. Our military, their families; the

families of our military are the ones sacrificing in this war. They

have paid the price, and our country has paid the price for this

President's war.

Yet Iraq is less secure than ever, even before the President's

``mission accomplished'' declaration. There is no functioning

infrastructure, no banking system, zero economic stability. Iraq is not

secure, Baghdad is not secure. The Iraq Study Group reported that the

President's strategy in Iraq is failing. It is failing.

And how does our President respond? With more of the same. He wants

to send 21,500 more of our men and women into Iraq to carry out the

same failure.

The President has failed to articulate what these new troops will do

that is different from what has been done over the past few years. What

is his plan? Four surges? Four surges that didn't work. He wants to do

it again?

And believe me, sitting on the Armed Services Committee, I have been

here to see it. I was the one in the first few months who told General

Franks, this is an insurgency, it is guerrilla warfare. He refused to

call it that. I was the one that went to Iraq when General Odierno told

me there were only 359 insurgents left, that we were almost there,

while the day before, his boss, Abizaid, had said he thought there were

about 5,000. That was 2 years ago.

I was there when Secretary Rumsfeld was saying we have trained

89,000; 2 days later, 95,000; a week later, 160,000 Iraqi Army. This

was 2 years ago. Just pulling numbers out of the air, that is what they

were doing to America.

And I was there in Iraq the day that General Petraeus, who was

successful in Mosul, and then Mosul fell because he pulled his troops

from there to Fallujah, and to try to take Fallujah. And he said to me

with tears in his eyes, We couldn't hold Mosul because we had to take

the troops to go to Fallujah.

At that point he said, We didn't have enough troops. But the

President didn't listen. The President fails to grasp that military

action alone is not sufficient to stabilize Iraq. And without a

legitimate diplomatic component, there will be no end to the civil war

in Iraq. But the President has refused to engage the powers in the

region. He has outright rejected the notion of dialogue with Iran and

Syria, a key suggestion from the Iraq Study Group. It is not the role

of Congress to command our forces. That is the constitutional

responsibility given to the Commander in Chief. But he has to do it

right. And we have to hold him accountable for our failures in Iraq.

As Commander-in-Chief, that responsibility is up to President Bush.

The President must be frank with Congress and with the American

people, and admit that the strategy in Iraq to date has been a complete

failure.

The President must come up with a new strategy to stabilize the

situation in Iraq, one that ends with the redeployment of our troops

home. What is his plan?

My message for the President is this:

The voters have told you, Mr. President, that they have had enough of

your failed strategy in Iraq.

And today, Mr. President, this Congress is telling you that we too

have had enough of your failed strategy in Iraq.

Our troops deserve more from you. You have ignored the American

people's wishes. You have ignored the Iraq Study Group's

recommendations.

Today, I hope you will not ignore this Congress. I hope you will not

send any more of our Armed Forces into harm's way, until you have a

plan to win.

Our military is the strongest and most capable in the world, but they

cannot continue to be overextended and asked to participate in your

failing strategy.

Mr. President, I ask you to listen to the American people, the Iraq

Study Group, and this Congress.

We are telling you clearly that we do not want you to send any more

troops to participate in a failing strategy. It is your responsibility

as the Commander-in-Chief, to come up with an actual plan to stabilize

Iraq and begin bringing our troops home to their families.