Mr. Speaker, I thank our chairman, Mr. Skelton, and I

stand proud today with my fellow veterans in the House of

Representatives to register our opposition to the President's plan to

escalate the war in Iraq and to show our support for our men and women

in uniform.

Now, last November 7 the American people sent a clear message to

Congress and the President: we must end the war in Iraq. Now after

nearly 4 years of bloodshed, death and destruction, Congress is likely

to go on record as opposing the plan for escalation of this war.

No longer will Congress stand by while the President wages a war that

defies logic, common sense and human decency. This week we shall take a

stand. This week, we tell this administration enough is enough, stop

ignoring the American people, stop ignoring your generals. And by the

way, I include to the gentleman from New York two speakers ago, General

Colin Powell, no less agrees with us.

Stop ignoring the foreign policy experts. Stop wasting American lives

and resources on this disastrous and unnecessary conflict. This week's

debate on this resolution represents an important turning point in

public dialogue about Iraq. And so I welcome it, but it is not enough.

The escalation must be stopped, and we cannot let the momentum against

the war subside after we deal with the escalation.

Our priority must remain ending the fighting and dying in Iraq. We

must end the senseless deaths of service members like marine Tarryl Hill

of Southfield, Michigan, who only last Wednesday died when his vehicle

drove over a bomb in Fallujah.

Tarryl Hill was 19 years old. He had joined the military to help

finance his education to become a chemical engineer. I do not want to

see one more promising life like his extinguished on the altar of this

administration's arrogance. The loss of Tarryl's life brings to mind

the bereavement of another patriot from Flint, Michigan, Lila Lipscomb,

whose 26-year-old son, Michael, died in Iraq in April 2003, when his

helicopter was shot down.

A member of a military family, Ms. Lipscomb initially believed

President Bush when he told the Nation that war was necessary for our

national security. But her son's letters from the front lines and his

tragic death showed her that he should have never gone to Iraq.

I need to spend a little time explaining my opposition to the troop

surge, which is simply even more of the same. This policy is going in

precisely the opposite direction recommended by the generals who get

transferred if they do not agree.

It would simply expose GIs to more intense door-to-door fighting, in

the vain hope that in the meanwhile the Iraqis will miraculously

reconcile with us still being in their country.

The real and underlying question is how we remove ourselves from this

quagmire. As I have emphasized many times, our Constitution gives

Congress the central role in decisions of war and peace. Last fall the

American people spoke loudly with their votes. We should be here

showing the voters that we heard them and that their trust was well

placed.

The ultimate, unequivocal authority of the Congress is the power of

the purse. And so we must use it. Supporters of the President's failed

Iraq policy have argued that using Congress's spending power to end the

war means that we do not support the troops. It is beyond absurd to

suggest that those of us who favor ending funding for the war would

simply abandon the troops in the field without equipment and the

supplies they need.

Cliches about supporting the troops are not really about our service

members' best interests. The true purpose of these accusations is to

distract us from the fact that we are bogged down in an unwinnable war

that threatens to drag on for years, if not decades. Keeping our troops

out of harm's way, especially when war is unnecessary, is the best

possible way to support them. The American people understand that

marching ahead blindly into oblivion is no way to support our troops.

That is why they have asked us to end this war.

Mr. Speaker, the administration continues to live under the illusion

that it can salvage its reputation by achieving a military victory in

Iraq, when it is clear that diplomacy is the most effective means at

our disposal. The recent National Intelligence Estimate reflecting the

collective judgment of U.S. intelligence agencies only confirms what we

have seen in the daily headlines for almost a year. It concludes that

the civil war has reached an intensity that is ``self-sustaining'' and

that there are no Iraqi national leaders with the ability to stop it.

No wonder the administration stalled completion of the NIE until after

the election and the President's presentation of his latest proposal.

Most of the American people know that there is only one way to

proceed in Iraq. We must begin the phased withdrawal of American troops

in the next 4 to 6 months and conclude it within the year. Redeploying

our Armed Forces does not mean ``cutting and running.'' On the

contrary, we suggest continued and extensive involvement in the region

through renewed diplomacy, a regional conference and reconstruction

that is free from fraud and abuse. This sensible path is the only one

that can lead us to victory.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to stand today with my fellow

veterans in the House of Representatives to register our opposition to

the President's plan to escalate the war in Iraq and to show our

support for our men and women in uniform.

Last November 7th, the American people sent a clear message to

Congress and the President: we must end the war in Iraq.

Now, after nearly four years of bloodshed, death and destruction,

Congress is likely to go on the record as opposing the plan for

escalating the war. No longer will Congress stand by while the

President wages a war that defies logic, common sense and human

decency. This week, we shall take a stand. This week, we tell the

administration: ``Enough is enough. Stop ignoring the American people.

Stop ignoring your generals and retired generals, including Colin

Powell. Stop ignoring the foreign policy experts. Stop wasting American

lives and resources on this disastrous, unnecessary conflict.''

This debate represents an important turning point in the public

dialogue about Iraq, and so I welcome it. But it is not enough. The

escalation must be stopped, but we cannot let the momentum against the

war subside after we deal with the escalation. Our priority must remain

ending the fighting and dying in Iraq.

We must end the senseless deaths of service members like Marine

Tarryl Hill of Southfield, Michigan, who died only last Wednesday when

his vehicle drove over a bomb in Fallujah. Tarryl Hill was just 19

years old. He had joined the military to help finance his education to

become a chemical engineer, but instead he became the 120th serviceman

from Michigan to die in Iraq. I don't want to see one more promising

life like Tarryl's extinguished on the altar of this administration's

arrogance.

The loss of Tarryl's life brings to mind the bereavement of another

patriot from Michigan, Lila Lipscomb of Flint, whose 26 year old son

Michael died in Iraq in April 2003 when his helicopter was shot down. A

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I need not spend much time explaining my opposition to the troop

surge, which is simply even more ``more of the same.'' This policy

takes us in precisely the opposite direction recommended by the

generals and the experts. It would simply expose GI's to more intense

door-to-door fighting, in the vain hope that, in the meanwhile, the

Iraqis will miraculously reconcile.

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well placed.

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the purse. We must use it. Supporters of the president's failed Iraq

policy have argued that using Congress' spending power to end the war

means that we don't ``support the troops.'' It is beyond absurd to

suggest that those of us who favor ending funding for the war would

simply abandon the troops in the field without the equipment and

supplies they need. Every piece of legislation proposing cutting funds

for combat operations would require the spending necessary to bring the

troops home safely.

Cliches about supporting the troops are not really about our service

members' best interests. The true purpose of these accusations is to

distract us from the fact that we are bogged down in an unwinnable war

with no end in sight. Keeping our troops out of harm's way, especially

when war is unnecessary, is the best possible way to support them. The

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