Thank you, Mr. Lantos.

Mr. Speaker, today I stand with the American people in support of

this resolution and in opposition to the President's escalation of the

Iraq war. I stand in opposition to a President that failed the American

people by initiating an ill-conceived war; an administration that

misled the Nation, vulnerable after 9/11, into believing that Saddam

Hussein had weapons of mass destruction; an administration that

invented links between Baghdad and al Qaeda; that ignored the views of

the intelligence community, while convincing Americans that our brave

soldiers would be greeted in Iraq as liberators; an administration that

assured us that Iraqi oil money would pay for the reconstruction; and

that through military force, rather than diplomacy, we would cultivate

American values of freedom and democracy in Iraq.

The American people know that they have been taken down a false path

by this administration, down a spiraling path of war under false

pretenses into a quagmire with a President who will not change course,

even in the face of a growing civil war. This resolution sends the

President an unequivocal message that he must change direction of this

war.

How did we arrive in this desperate situation? From the top down, the

President, the Vice-President and the Secretary of State have

manipulated evidence, broadcast half truths, and doctored intelligence

through an orchestrated effort to smear and destroy those who have

opposed their policies. Just last week, in a scathing report, the

Defense Department's Inspector General concluded that the Pentagon took

inappropriate action by advancing conclusions that were not backed up

by the intelligence community.

The American people have judged the actions of this President, they

see this war for what it is, and they spoke clearly in November,

stating loudly that we must end our disastrous Iraq policy. Yet this

administration continues its defiant disregard of the views of the

American people. Not the voice of the American people nor the

conclusions of the Iraq Study Group have

budged this administration from its stubborn and misguided path. And

now, the President is doubling down on a bad bet that risks the lives

of thousands more American soldiers on a misguided plan that ignores

the recommendations of our military commanders on the ground.

Unbelievably, President Bush has already tried twice the strategy of

escalation. It failed both times. To try again is to act in blind

faith, ignoring the facts, ignoring the experts, ignoring the will of

the American people, and, worst of all, ignoring the terrible

sacrifices that will undoubtedly be endured by our soldiers and their

families.

Mr. Speaker, our troops must be redeployed from Iraq. Instead of a

surge of American troops entering Baghdad, there should be a surge of

American soldiers back into every town and every city across our

Nation. For our troops who have given so much in Iraq, for our military

families whose lives have been shattered by this war, it is time to

bring them home.

How do we honor our brave men and women? How do we honor over the

3,000 who died, and thousands more who have been maimed? Instead of an

escalation, we should honor these soldiers by bringing them home and

giving them the best health care, the best mental health support that

they have justly earned.

I applaud Congress for taking a stand on this war. I only wish we

were voting on a binding resolution that mandates a redeployment of

troops and cuts off funding for this tragic escalation. Each month we

remain in Iraq, 100 more American soldiers die, hundreds more are

maimed, and $5.5 billion is spent.

Mr. Speaker, we have endured 4 years of a failed Iraq policy, longer

than we were in World War II, longer than we were in the Korean War,

and we can afford no more blank checks for this President.

Today I stand with the American people, our soldiers in Iraq, with my

fellow Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle in strong

opposition to the President's escalation in Iraq and in support of our

redeploying our troops and reversing, most importantly, our Nation's

failed strategy in Iraq.