Madam Speaker, I would like to paraphrase a

poem that Rudyard Kipling wrote upon the death of his son in World War

I that seems particularly apt to the war in Iraq:

When they ask why the young men died

Tell them it's because the old men lied.

Madam Speaker, when the White House announced 4 years ago the U.S.

military would attack Iraq under the guise of the global war on

terrorism, there wasn't one single uniformed military officer who

believed that Iraq was part of a global war on terrorism. Saddam had

had nothing to do with the 9/11 attack.

Saddam wasn't harboring any al Qaeda cells that did attack us. In

fact, they understood that starting a new war would distract us and

limit us from accomplishing our immediate need to eliminate Osama bin

Laden. Saddam was a vicious, secular, despotic dictator, but he saw al

Qaeda as a threat to his control, and al Qaeda viewed Saddam as an

enemy of their religious extremist world vision.

The U.S. Intelligence Community knew that there was no clear evidence

that Saddam was a threat to the United States. There was no failure of

our professional Intelligence Community, but there was an abysmal

failure of our political leadership.

So how did we get to this point? First we were scared with the threat

of Saddam's arsenals or weapons of mass destruction, al Qaeda training

camps, an Iraqi meeting with the 9/11 hijacker, mobile labs, aluminum

tubing, yellow cake uranium. But there were no weapons of mass

destruction, Madam Speaker.

The training camps didn't exist. Mohamed Atta never met an Iraqi

agent in Prague. The White House knew, before they informed us about

the mobile labs, that our experts had determined that they were not in

any way related to chemical or biological weapons. Likewise, the

aluminum tubing was bogus information. Well before the so-called yellow

cake uranium from Niger was cited as evidence at an attempt at nuclear

armament, our Intelligence Community had informed the White House that

it was a hoax.

Yet we were told repeatedly by the President and the Vice President

that Saddam was a threat to global stability, that there was a direct

connection between Iraq and al Qaeda and September 11. We were told in

the buildup to the war that our troops would be greeted by the Iraqis

as liberators, being offered flowers in the streets. This was

propaganda that the State Department warned the White House not to

believe, but they nonetheless peddled it to the Congress and to the

American people.

We were told that to liberate Iraq was to spread freedom and

democracy, to keep oil out of the hands of potential terrorist-

controlled states. We were told that the war would pay for itself with

Iraqi oil revenues. Yet all we have done is to finance our enemies, the

insurgents and Iranian Shiia interests.

After Baghdad fell, we were told that America had prevailed, that the

mission was accomplished, that the resistance was in its last throes,

that more troops were not needed. As things went from bad to worse, we

were told of turning point after turning point, the fall of Baghdad,

the death of Saddam's sons Uday and Qusay, the capture of Saddam, a

provisional government, the trial of Saddam, a charter, a constitution,

an Iraqi Government, elections,

purple fingers, a new government, the death of Saddam, all excuses for

triumphant rhetoric while the reality on the ground continued to

worsen.

We were told, as they stand up, we would stand down. We would stay

the course. Now we are told that there is a new course, but it is in

the same misguided direction. Falsehood after falsehood unravels each

day, with the morning paper reporting even more deaths.

Now the American people are being asked to put 20,000 more sons and

daughters, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives into the line of

fire, and into the dead zone between the sectarian sides of a civil

war. A message was sent to President Bush on November 7, 2006. This

surge of more troops into Iraq defies the will of the American people.

But this is a new Congress. We will no longer be cowed by leaders

using 9/11 as a political ploy against sensible people who oppose the

administration's failed Iraq policy. Today for the first time since the

war began, Congress will go on record opposing the President's failed

Iraq policy. Some will argue that it is a nonbinding resolution, that

it will not have the impact of a law, that it will not stop a roadside

bomb or bring a single soldier home to their family. But the President

understands what this resolution means. It is the beginning of the end

of this wrong war of choice