Madam Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman for her

leadership, for yielding, for her deep commitment to our troops and to

our country.

As a daughter of a proud veteran of two wars, I know personally that

we have a moral obligation to support and protect our brave men and

women on the ground in Iraq. However, there is no reason for us to

stand behind the President's plan to escalate his failed policy in

Iraq. In fact, Madam Speaker, the American people are way ahead of us.

A USA Today/Gallup poll released just today shows that 60 percent

oppose this escalation, 63 percent favor bringing our troops home by

the end of 2008, and last November the American people soundly rejected

the President's failed policy in Iraq at the voting booth. You would

think that the President understood what all this meant. After the

election he continued his listening tour on options for Iraq, but it

seems that he wasn't hearing what the American people were saying.

The Iraq Study Group actually indicated and said very clearly that

there was no military solution to this mess. And rather than heed the

call of military experts, advisers, and the American people, the

President offered an even worse plan: put more troops in harm's way in

Iraq. This just doesn't make any sense.

That is why this no-confidence resolution puts the administration on

notice: end the occupation and bring our troops home. However, if the

President doesn't change course, we must go further. This war has

undermined our credibility and standing in the world. It has cost too

many lives and injured too many of our troops. This war has cost too

many Iraqi lives. This war has cost us nearly half a trillion dollars,

and the costs keep mounting. The chaos in Iraq that the President set

in motion has further destabilized an already precarious balance in the

Middle East.

We must take steps to use the upcoming supplemental appropriations

bill to set in motion an end to this terrible and misguided war and

bring our troops home from Iraq.

To that end I support fully funding the safe withdrawal of our troops

from Iraq over a 6-month period, and I will work with my colleagues to

do this. Additionally, along with Congresswomen Woolsey and Waters, we

have introduced H.R. 508, the Bring our Troops Home and Sovereignty of

Iraq Restoration Act.

This bill would completely fully fund military withdrawal from Iraq

within 6 months, while ensuring that our troops and contractors leave

safely, and accelerate the training of Iraqi Security Forces. And we

would make certain that our veterans, who have given us so much,

receive the health and mental health benefits that they deserve.

Our bill would remove the specter of an endless, and that is what

this is right now, it is an endless occupation, by preventing the

establishment of permanent military bases. Our very presence in Iraq is

fueling the insurgency, and our troops have been the targets of this

civil war.

Madam Speaker, these are the best and the safest ways to end this

occupation. But it really didn't have to be this way. Imagine for a

moment what would have happened had Congress adopted my substitute

amendment to the authorization to use force against Iraq in October

2002. We would have allowed the United Nations inspectors to finish

their job. We would have discovered what we all know now as fact, that

Saddam Hussein had no weapons of mass destruction, and, as then, there

was no connection between the horrific events of 9/11 and Iraq. Iraq

did not attack us, as many are trying to continue to convince the

American public that it did. Iraq did not attack us 5 years ago.

The bottom line is that Iraq also would not be a war-torn country as

it is today, and, again, the world is less safe. And if this wasn't

enough, over the last several months the President has been saber-

rattling on the issue of Iran. We must not go down the same path and

end up in another unnecessary, dangerous, costly and disastrous

preemptive war with Iran. This notion of the ``axis of evil'' and

preemptive war is very, very dangerous.

Madam Speaker, the stakes are too high. We need to stop digging

ourselves deeper into this hole. Escalating this war and expanding this

war does nothing in terms of our national security. It puts us more at

risk. Iraq was not a haven for terrorists as it is now. Again, Iraq,

Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda, there was no connection, and we have to

dispel that notion so the American people know the truth.

So, rather than end this war today, we are saying let's just for

today at least take one step and stop the escalation and expansion, and

we will be back to talk about how we are going to begin to bring our

troops home, and bring them home within 6 months