I want to thank my friend from California for yielding

time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Skelton bipartisan

resolution opposing President Bush's policy to send 21,500 additional

troops to Iraq. I do so because I am strongly against escalating the

war in Iraq.

This is not so much a policy as it is a hope that additional troops

will somehow make right the long list of poor decisions by this

administration regarding our involvement in Iraq. Putting 21,500 more

soldiers on the

ground only gives President Bush little more time to resist the

conclusion that the vast majority of Americans have already reached,

and that is that the events in Iraq have moved beyond our ability to

impact them in a meaningful way militarily.

It is important to note that we have reached this point not because

of some failing of our men and women in uniform who continue to make

sacrifices. Indeed, our respect and admiration for our troops is

matched only by their bravery. Regrettably, but not unpredictably, the

plan for postwar Iraq woefully was inadequate, and the Bush

administration, instead of taking responsibility for its failings,

continues to insist that victory is just around the corner. It is not.

A civil war is raging in Iraq, and our troops are caught in the

crossfire.

The grand designs of the Bush administration are not attainable now,

if they ever were. It is time to admit it and move forward. This is not

to say that we should abandon the region. Far from it. The United

States must continue to work with countries of the Middle East and of

the world to stabilize Iraq and its neighbors.

I have said for months that I believe the best way to get the rest of

the world to take responsibility for what is happening on the ground in

Iraq may be to remove our troops, and I am convinced that this is the

necessary course of action now. We can maintain a strong presence in

the region, but we cannot make the hard political decisions that the

Sunnis, Shiites and others must make to save Iraq, and then they will

not make them as long as our military is there.

Let me just reemphasize that. We cannot make the hard political

decisions that the Sunnis and Shiites and others must make to save

Iraq, and they will not make them as long as our military is there.

Mr. Speaker, the American people do not support sending more troops

to Iraq. In fact, the American people want us out of Iraq, and the

people of Iraq want us out as well

Mr. Speaker, I commend the sacrifices and service of our men and

women in uniform, and I commend Chairman Skelton for bringing this

bipartisan resolution to the floor of the House. I urge my colleagues

to support the bipartisan resolution.