Madam Speaker, this is a very important debate. Four

long years and we are searching our souls. We have sent our finest and

our bravest soldiers on a mission that made no sense from the

beginning. Our Nation was attacked by evil people who trained in

Afghanistan.

We have a right to go into Afghanistan to remove the terrorist

training camps. As a matter of fact, we should be working even harder

there to make sure our Afghanistan mission does not fail. We must not

allow the Taliban and other terrorist groups to control Afghanistan

again.

However, we are unable to give Afghanistan our full attention because

our President has led us into a war with Iraq. Why? There are no Iraqis

on the plane that day. The Iraqis had no weapons of mass destruction.

And they never asked us to come to their country. They do ask us to

leave, though. And yet we will not leave.

The President will not listen to the Iraqis. The President will not

listen to the American people. The President will not listen to the

world. But Congress will. We are ready to go in a new direction and say

no to the President, and no to his plan to escalate this war.

I was a military spouse. I am very, very proud of my husband's

service. I am also on the Armed Services Committee. I know our troops

need our support and they have it. But troops also

need to know that their leaders will make sure that their mission is in

the best interests of the United States before they are asked to go

fight and die for their country.

I watched a young soldier walk down a ramp on the way to Iraq. He was

looking at all of us, and we were looking hard back at him. And I think

most of us had the same thoughts in our hearts, that we could not look

him in the eye and tell him that his mission was so essential to the

security of the United States and the freedom of the world that he had

to go and he had to die if necessary.

Why could we not tell him that? Because the mission had changed.

Several times the President told us why we were there, and it was

always a different reason. The mission had changed. And therefore the

soldier looked confused and we certainly felt confused also, because we

could not tell him why we were there.

I wanted to run up to him and tell him I support you, I support you

by making sure that you never get sent to a war against unless we know

why you are there.

What is this talk I have heard tonight about freedom and liberty?

This talk of glory that I heard on the floor. This romanticized

language, this talk about Davy Crockett. There is no Davy Crockett in

Iraq. Our troops need clear-eyed leaders, not this romantic rabble that

we have been hearing. This war has cost us. We have paid a terrible

price.

Our military troops are strained. Yes, they are strained. Their

families are strained. Our brave soldiers have died or they have been

injured. The Iraqis have lost their lives. They have lost their

society. They have lost their infrastructure. They are losing their

middle class who are moving to other countries to keep their children

safe.

Their people are fleeing from their own country. We are wary, they

are wary, the world is now more dangerous. Iraqis were polled and the

majority of them said they wanted the Americans to go home and let them

work out their problems. For 4 years the administration and its

supporters here have made no plan for them to do that.

Now they ask us on this side of the aisle what our plan is. This is a

strange question. But it shows how confused this administration's

supporters are, if they are looking to us and ask us what our plan is.

They have been offered plans. They even commissioned a plan, and they

do not follow any plans. The President follows his own way.

We have offered plans. They will not listen. I for one want the

United States to succeed in this world. Therefore, I am going to listen

to all of the generals who have pled with the President and pled with

the President's supporters in this administration to do the right thing

here.

But the President does not listen. Now, I am going to vote to tell

the President that I am against his escalation.