Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the resolution,

which inaccurately describes the war in Iraq as part of the Global War

on Terror. While I strongly and proudly support our courageous and

dedicated troops, coalition partners, and the Iraqi Security Forces who

put their lives on the line each and every day to fight for a

democratic, stable and secure Iraq, I cannot support a resolution that

does not paint an accurate picture of what the true situation on the

ground is in Iraq.

It is imperative that we acknowledge these realities: since we

invaded Iraq in March 2003, more than 2,500 American service men and

women have been killed in Iraq; 18,000 have been wounded. More than

100,000 innocent Iraqi civilians have lost their lives. Nearly $350

billion of U.S. taxpayer dollars have been spent. Terrorist leader al-

Zarqawi has been killed and Saddam Hussein is in prison, but the

pacification and reconstruction of Iraq have been a failure. Every

single fact that the President has offered to justify both the invasion

of and the sustained U.S. military presence in Iraq has proven to be

wrong. The President said that the war would be short-lived, aided by

our allies, paid for by Iraqi oil, welcomed by the Iraqi people, and

would result in a reconstructed Iraq with an improved quality of life

for its citizens. His strategy in Iraq is not working and, as we have

seen so many times, he and his administration are incapable of

admitting mistakes--even when those mistakes are irrefutable.

This war has exhausted our military, hurt our war on terrorism,

damaged our country's credibility internationally, and strained our

economy. I strongly believe that the President's current ``stay the

course'' plan in Iraq is not working. We need a new strategy. We need

to take our troops out of Iraq.

I strongly disagree with the assertion in this resolution that our

continuing presence in Iraq is a vital part of fighting our war on

terrorism. After all, the attacks on our troops in Iraq are not coming

primarily from al-Qaeda. There are only approximately 1,000 al-Qaeda

amidst the 26 million people of Iraq. The attacks on US. troops are

planned by an insurgency that is comprised of native Iraqis. Once the

American soldiers leave, we will remove the stimulus for the local

Iraqi and worldwide incitement against America as an ``occupier.'' We

can continue to assist the Iraqi people in strengthening their

fledgling democracy, but we must remove the provocation of an American

military presence and instead, reinvest our resources in strengthening

U.S. border and port security, defeating al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and

elsewhere, and rebuilding our much-depleted U.S. military.

For this reason, I urge my colleagues to oppose the resolution and

instead, support a new plan in Iraq that will bring our troops home.