Mr. Speaker, the common theme to the war in Iraq has

been the Bush administration's ability and willingness to mislead the

American people. First, they misled about the weapons of mass

destruction. Then, nearly 2 years ago, they falsely declared the end of

major combat operations. Now, they are openly declaring the success of

the mission, and President Bush regularly speaks of an increasingly

democratic Iraq.

This assessment suggests the degree to which the President fails to

comprehend the disastrous lack of security that has plagued Iraq over

the last 2 years. Personally, I am frightened that our own President

has such a failed understanding about the reality of the war that he

started.

Just as disturbing were recent comments by Vice President Dick

Cheney. In an interview, he said that the Iraqi insurgency was in its

``last throes.'' I am not sure which press reports the Vice President

has been reading but, somehow, I do not think his optimistic assessment

of Iraq's insurgency is grounded in real fact.

Unfortunately, misleading assessments of the war like these do not

magically secure Iraq from the true threats that it faces. And the true

threats are an increasingly strengthened Iraq insurgency, bolstered by

the continued United States military occupation of Iraq.

On the ground, a violent wave of car bombings and other attacks

killed 80 U.S. soldiers and more than 700 Iraqis in the month of May

alone. Vice President Cheney calls this the ``last throes''? And by

mid-June, almost one-third more troops were killed than during all of

the month of May.

At some point, the Bush administration needs to admit what the rest

of the American people know, that its current strategy for Iraq is

failing.

Recent polls show that 63 percent of Americans want our troops to

come home. Now it is time for the President to start listening to the

American people, the people he works for.

Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle understand that our

Iraq policy is a disaster. When the House recently debated the Defense

Authorization Act for fiscal year 2006, 122 Democrats, five

Republicans, and one Independent voted in favor of my amendment simply

expressing the sense of the Congress that the President should

establish a plan for the withdrawal of troops from Iraq and bring his

plan to the Congress.

Mr. Speaker, Americans are less secure, not more secure, as a result

of the war in Iraq. This war has created a whole new generation of

terrorists whose common bond is their hatred for the United States and

our aggressive militarism. We have asked the President to address

Iraq's lack of security. We have asked him to come up with a plan for

ending the war. He has not, so we will. And when we put our plan in

place and when the troops come home, we can begin to plan for the

future.

Fortunately, there is a plan that would secure America for the

future. That plan is the SMART Security resolution which I recently

reintroduced with the support of 50 of my House colleagues. SMART is a

Sensible Multilateral American Response To Terrorism for the 21st

Century, and it will help us address the threats we face as a Nation.

SMART will prevent acts of terrorism in countries lick Iraq by

addressing the very conditions which allow terrorism to take root:

poverty, despair, resource scarcity, and lack of educational

opportunities. Instead of rushing off to war under false pretenses,

SMART Security encourages the United States to work with other nations

to address the most pressing global issues. That way we will be able to

deal with global crises diplomatically instead of resorting to armed

conflict.

Instead of maintaining a long-term military occupation of Iraq, our

future efforts to help the Iraqi people must follow the SMART approach:

humanitarian assistance, coordinated with our international allies, to

rebuild Iraq's war-torn physical and economic infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, the Bush administration needs to take a long, hard, and

honest look at the effects of our policies in Iraq. Once they do, they

will understand that the United States is less safe than we were before

we got ourselves into this preemptive war and that we must end this

long and destructive war.