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 weapons of mass destruction.

Then, nearly 2 years ago, they falsely declared the end of major combat

operations.

Now they are openly declaring 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 the 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 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 Iraqi insurgency, encouraged

by the continued U.S. military occupation.

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?

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

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

failing. Recent polls show that 58 percent of Americans disapprove of

the President's handling of the situation. Now it is time for the

President to start listening to the American people.

Members of Congress in both parties understand that our Iraq policy

is a disaster. When the House recently debated the Defense

Authorization Act for fiscal year 2006, 122 Democrats, 5 Republicans

and 1 Independent, totaling 128 Members of Congress, voted in favor of

my amendment expressing the sense of Congress that the President should

establish a plan for the withdrawal of troops from Iraq.

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.

Unfortunately, we do not follow a smart plan, but fortunately there

is a plan that would secure America for the future, the Smart Security

Resolution, H.Con Res 158, which I recently re-introduced with the

support of 49 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 security will prevent

acts of terrorism in countries like Iraq by addressing the very

conditions which allow terrorism to take root: poverty, despair,

resource scarcity, and lack of educational opportunities, as starters.

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, dealing with global crises diplomatically

instead of resorting to armed conflict.

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

future efforts to help the Iraqi people should follow the smart

approach: humanitarian assistance, coordinated with our international

allies, to rebuild Iraq's war-torn physical and economic

infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, the President must create a plan to bring home the

hundreds of thousands of U.S. soldiers fighting in Iraq, helping to

secure Iraq by giving Iraq back to the Iraqis and saving the lives of

thousands of American troops. We must end this long and destructive

war.