Madam Speaker, there are many truths about America's

involvement in Iraq. My truth is that our policies there over the last

2 years have been both immoral and ineffective. With nearly 1,500

American troops killed since the fighting began and another 11,000

injured, the time has come for a drastic change in our role in Iraq.

Leave aside, if my colleagues possibly can, the fact that the

President and his team misled us about weapons of mass destruction.

Forget for a moment, if they can, that they invented out of whole cloth

a link between Saddam Hussein and the 9/11 tragedy. Those lives were

bad enough. But their policies, the administration's policies, have

also failed to achieve one of their later stated objectives of securing

Iraq. The Bush administration is not only dishonest; I believe they are

incompetent.

Rather than liberating Iraq, the U.S. invasion and occupation has

trapped the nation and its people in a cauldron of violent civil

strife. Our presence there has not engendered gratitude but bred

resentment in the form of vicious insurgency. It has emboldened Muslim

extremists who hate America now more than ever. Neither Iraqis nor

Americans nor anyone else in this world is safer because of this war in

Iraq.

In fact, a report came from the CIA's National Intelligence Council

that concluded Iraq has replaced Afghanistan as the most fertile

breeding ground for terrorists. It turns out that the Bush

administration was right in their projection that we cannot separate

Iraq from the war on terrorism. What they did not tell us is that

invading Iraq fulfilled those projections and strengthened the wrong

side in the war on terrorism.

Even since the Iraqi election, violence is making democracy a real

long shot; and our troops, charged with somehow bringing order to the

chaotic situation, are sitting ducks. Perhaps the President should ask

the Iraqi people how free they feel when they must dodge bullets just

to go to the market or visit a neighbor, when they stand by and watch

neighborhoods being destroyed. Even in Afghanistan, which is often

cited as a Bush success, there is evidence that the country is being

run by warlords and drug dealers.

To help the situation in Iraq, I have introduced H. Con. Res. 35,

legislation

that will help secure Iraq by withdrawing our troops, which will ensure

that America's role in Iraq actually does make America safer. So far 27

of my House colleagues have joined me as co-sponsors of this important

legislation.

My plan for Iraq is part of a larger strategy that I call SMART

Security, which is a Sensible, Multilateral American Response to

Terrorism that will ensure America's security by relying on smarter

policies.

Madam Speaker, let me be clear. We would not abandon Iraq and we

should not. There is still a critical role for the United States in

providing the developmental aid that can help recreate a robust civil

society, build schools and water processing plants, and ensure that

Iraq's economic infrastructure becomes fully viable.

Instead of troops, we need to send scientists, educators, urban

planners, and constitutional experts to help rebuild Iraq's fighting

economic and physical infrastructure and help establish a robust and

democratic civil society. We need to pursue a new approach, and we need

to do that because it has become clear the military option is not

working. That is not the ideological statement of someone who opposed

the war on principle, though I am that. It is a sober assessment of the

situation in Iraq that is now shared across the political spectrum. We

must truly support our troops, and the right way to do this is by

bringing them home.