Mr. Speaker, at the end of last month, the United States

Government handed control of Iraq ``back to its people.'' And everyone

I know who is being at all intellectually honest believes that the

choice of a June 30 deadline was driven more by the political calendar

than anything else.

The Bush administration wants to have it both ways. They want to go

before the voters with ``clean hands'' in the fall to say that the job

has been completed just as they tried to declare ``mission

accomplished'' a year ago, but at the same time remaining in charge of

this occupation, while even after the handover, U.S. troops and other

officials will enjoy full immunity if they should destroy property or

kill Iraqi citizens.

Coming on the heels of the Abu Ghraib revelations, this arrogance and

lack of accountability is absolutely staggering. The war in Iraq has

already cost lives of hundreds of American soldiers, 25,000 being

injured, the lives of thousands of innocent Iraqi civilians, and

billions of dollars that should have been invested right here at home.

This war has diverted resources from the struggle against al Qaeda,

the group actually responsible for the atrocities of 9/11. Now al Qaeda

has regrouped and poses as great a strength and threat as ever.

This case for war was built on dubious intelligence and outright

deceptions. The 9/11 Commission recently announced that it had access

to all the same information as Vice President Cheney; yet there is ``no

credible evidence'' that Saddam Hussein's government in Iraq

collaborated with al Qaeda.

Our presence in Iraq has been met not with gratitude but resentment.

Instead of throwing flowers at American troops, Iraqis now throw

torches at Humvees.

Mr. Speaker, our current national security approach is an unmitigated

disaster, but do not take my word for it. Listen to the statement

issued in mid-June by a group of 27 former senior diplomats and

military officials. They said the Bush administration ``has failed in

the primary responsibilities of preserving national security and

providing world leadership.'' They went on to say: ``Instead of

building upon America's great economic and moral strength to address

the causes of terrorism and to stifle its resources, the

administration, motivated more by ideology than by reasoned analysis,

led the United States into an ill-planned and costly war from which

exit is uncertain.''

It is clearly time for a new national security policy, Mr. Speaker.

And I have introduced H. Con. Resolution 392 to create a SMART security

platform for the 21st Century. SMART stands for Sensible Multilateral

American Response to Terrorism. SMART security treats war as an

absolute last resort. It fights terrorism with stronger intelligence

and multilateral partnerships. It controls the spread of weapons of

mass destruction with aggressive diplomacy, strong regional security

arrangements, and vigorous inspection regimes. SMART security invests

in the development of impoverished nations to prevent terrorism from

taking root in the first place. SMART security is about preventing war

as opposed to preemptive war. It emphasizes brains over brawn. It is

tough, but diplomatic; aggressive, but peaceful; pragmatic, but

idealistic.

President Bush loves to think that those who support his efforts in

Iraq are patriotic and those who think there is a better way are

unpatriotic, or worse, un-American. But I can think of nothing more

patriotic than pursuing a national security policy that protects

America by relying on the noblest of American values, our capacity for

global leadership, our compassion for the people of the world, our

commitment to peace and freedom.