Mr. Speaker, the Bush administration loves to tout

George W. Bush's willingness to stay the course as the source of his

strength as a President. Day after day, the President and his

surrogates use this to demonstrate why he should be

reelected.

The sad truth is that President Bush's resolve amounts to little more

than a campaign tool to disguise the fact that his administration's

policies have increasingly made Americans far less safe in the world.

The President's resolve is actually nothing more than his attempt to

lead our Nation while wearing blinders.

President Bush failed to demonstrate resolve in fighting terrorism in

the days before the September 11 terrorist attack. In fact, he

vacationed at his ranch in Crawford, Texas, for the entire month of

August in the year 2001, neglecting to act on his daily intelligence

briefings which specifically warned against terrorists crashing planes

into large city buildings.

Since September 11, President Bush has continued to fail in his

resolve to fight international terrorism. Despite a promise to

apprehend Osama bin Laden, dead or alive, President Bush actually

pulled troops out of Afghanistan in the year 2002. This grave error

allowed the al Qaeda leader to flee to the shadowy hinterlands between

Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Early in 2002, with bin Laden still on the loose, President Bush

turned his attention to Iraq. Citing the threat of Iraq's nuclear

weapons program and Saddam Hussein's links to al Qaeda, Bush marshaled

a war resolution through Congress.

Resolve, however, was not enough to win the support of the United

Nations; so our President, determined to stop Iraq's supposed nuclear

threat, went to Iraq with the support of only a loose and fragmented

coalition of other countries.

Since the beginning of the war in Iraq, no weapons of mass

destruction have been found and no evidence has ever linked Saddam

Hussein to al Qaeda. Still, the President's handlers point to his

resolve as a source of strength. Strength for whom? The terrorists who

have escaped from America's grasp as we shamefully turned our attention

to Iraq? The leaders of Iran and North Korea who continue to develop

the deadliest weapons known to man? Resolve, as thousands of insurgents

savagely attack our soldiers and Iraqi civilians? Resolve, as more than

1,000 American soldiers and at least 13,000 innocent Iraqi civilians

are killed in Iraq? And let us not forget about the more than 7,000

U.S. soldiers who have been gravely wounded. Where is the resolve to

protect our troops?

I, for one, am sick and tired of the White House calling it resolve

when President Bush continues to focus on Iraq at the expense of other,

more important issues.

Today the House voted to reallocate $3.4 billion of last year's $18.4

billion supplemental, using it for military purposes instead of for

Iraq's reconstruction. So now we are forced to pilfer money that is

supposed to pay for infrastructure needs for the Iraqi people.

This, after spending less than $2 billion of the $18.4 billion

allocated for Iraq's reconstruction in the first place. I do not

consider that resolve; I consider it malignant neglect of an entire

country's needs.

There has to be a better way to handle the quagmire in Iraq. That is

why I have introduced H. Con. Res. 392, 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, and

it controls the spread of weapons of mass destruction with aggressive

diplomacy, strong regional security arrangements, and vigorous

inspection regimes.

If we had pursued a SMART security strategy in the first place,

America would not be embroiled in this violent situation in Iraq. Let

us not forget that Saddam Hussein did not have a nuclear weapons

program and Iraq did not have ties to al Qaeda. Instead of blindly

focusing our country's resources on a conflict that has nothing to do

with American security, President Bush should take off his blinders and

focus on the real threats to our country.

How can we be secure if our public schools are failing our children

and 40 million Americans lack health insurance? How can we be secure

when our President's shameful tax cuts force our children to repay

America's debt for the next several decades?