Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor this evening to voice my strong opposition to Bush's apparent decision to send up to 20,000 more troops to Iraq. Tomorrow evening, the President will try to persuade a very skeptical public that more troops are needed in Iraq, but regardless of the number he suggests, I will oppose any efforts to escalate the war by sending additional American troops.

Mr. Speaker, it appears President Bush has learned nothing from the results of the 2006 election, nor has he listened to the suggestions of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group or his own Joint Chiefs of Staff who said as late as last month that they saw no reason to send more troops to Iraq.

Instead, President Bush has chosen to stick his head in the sand, not listen to anyone and continue on a course that is not going to make Iraq safer for either our brave troops or for the Iraqis themselves. It's time to bring an end to the war in Iraq.

President Bush has lost the support of the American people who have grown frustrated by the continuing loss of American troops. They're rightfully asking the question, why must our troops continue to serve as referees in a civil conflict between Sunnis and Shi'ias?

Mr. Speaker, there was a new "Washington Post" poll released this morning and only 17 percent of Americans approve sending troops to Iraq. Seventeen percent is not a mandate for anything in my opinion, and it's time for President Bush to finally listen to the American people.

Many of us woke up on New Year's Day to the headline of "3,000" bannered across our newspapers. We have lost more than 3,000 soldiers in Iraq. Now, how many more are going to have to die until the president realizes there is no possible U.S. military solution in Iraq?

Some supporters of the president's plan are going to claim that if we bring our troops home now then more then the 3,000 U.S. soldiers that have died over the past three years will have done so in vain, but I could not disagree more. They fought admirably for our country and will be certainly remembered as heroes. The question is whether or not we want to risk thousands more American lives in a war we obviously cannot win.

Since the inception of this war we have seen little evidence of progress in Iraq. In fact, the violence has only intensified to the point that a report released from the President's own pentagon concluded that violence in Iraq was at an all-time high just last month. And, last month was the third deadliest month for American troops since the start of the war, with insurgents claiming 111 soldiers' lives. Now, our troops know that the situation in Iraq is getting worse every day. They are speaking out about I.E.D.'s, the improvised explosive devices used by the insurgents, which are now bigger and more complex.

The Bush Administration has tried troop escalation before, but it's never worked. Last summer the president touted a plan that sent more troops into Baghdad - similar to what he is expected to propose tomorrow. But while the violence subsided for a couple of

weeks, by the end of august last year violence was on the rise and continued to escalate for the remainder of the year. Based on these facts on the ground, why would the President even consider sending more troops to Iraq? Why would we put more American lives in harm's way when we know that previous troop escalations have not been successful in reducing violence and decreasing the number of insurgents?

Mr. Speaker, it's time for us to begin to bring our troops home. The President has said that increasing troops is a sacrifice we have to make to win this war, but I think truly it's time for him to admit that risking more American lives for this failed war is a monumental mistakes. I yield back the balance of my time.