Mr. Speaker, I rise today for the 200th time to express

My disgust and dismay with our Nation's policy in Iraq. And I want to

thank Bart Ackeocella, who has helped me with my many, many words

calling on the President of the United States to bring our troops home.

Forty-nine months after this failed Iraq policy was launched, we are

still being told, Be patient. Progress is just around the corner. All

of our sacrifices will somehow be worth it. But all that amounts to

nothing more than desperate spin. And the American people aren't buying

it; neither, apparently, are some top military brass. The

administration can't find someone to take the job of war czar, a job

that would coordinate the military campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan.

One of the recruits for the job, retired Marine General Jack Sheehan,

told The Washington Post last week that he would rather spare himself

the ulcer, saying of the Bush administration,

How can the administration possibly say that Iraq is on the road to

freedom and stability when a bomb goes off inside the Green Zone and

kills members of the elected Parliament? If it's not safe inside the

fortress of the Green Zone, just imagine what it is like in the streets

of Baghdad.

How can the administration say progress is being made when the

Associated Press reports that dozens of Iraqi police officers were

demonstrating outside their Baghdad station chanting, ``No, no to

America. Get out, occupiers.'' And now American soldiers can look

forward to a few more months of trying valiantly, but in vain, to carry

out this misguided mission, as the Pentagon has announced that

soldiers' 1-year tours will be extended to 15 months.

I ask my colleagues who gave the President the authority to invade

Iraq 4\1/2\ years ago if they weren't surprised that they voted for an

occupation with no apparent end in sight. They absolutely didn't intend

for our troops to be caught in the middle of a civil war that our very

presence as occupiers has inspired. Four and a half years later, over

3,300 Americans who will never make it home to their families, and all

at the cost of more than $375 billion to stop Saddam Hussein from using

weapons of mass destruction that he didn't have.

This week, Americans sent their 2006 tax returns to the IRS, trusting

that our government will send that money back to us in the form of

services, benefits, stability and security. So what do we tell them?

What do we tell the American people about the staggering costs they are

being asked to assume for the occupation of Iraq? Can anyone possibly

argue that we have somehow gotten a return on this reckless investment?

The National Priorities Project has broken down the Iraq financial

burden, assuming a total of $456 billion once the latest supplemental

is signed by the President. Here is what it boils down to: $4,100 for

every American household; $1,500 for every man, woman and child; $275

million a day; $11 million every hour. Look what we could do with that

kind of money: $928 million, 3 days in Iraq is enough to build 100

schools or 5,400 affordable housing units, or provide health care for

144,000 children for the length of the Iraq war.

And if national security is what you want to redirect the money

toward, we could have used Iraq appropriations for more secure posts,

for energy independence initiatives, for nuclear nonproliferation

programs, for debt relief in the underprivileged areas of the world. We

could have invested in real national security.

Mr. Speaker, we have sacrificed more than enough in lives, in

treasure, in national stature and credibility for a mistaken

ideological pipe dream.

It is time for our leaders to hear the frustration of the American

people, frustration with this shameful, wasteful, futile policy. It is

time to end this occupation. It is time to bring our troops home.