Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Pennsylvania, Mr. Murtha

said yesterday that ``our military has done everything that has been

asked of them, the U.S. cannot accomplish anything further in Iraq

militarily. It is time to bring them home.'' I know Mr. Murtha to be a

man of honor and integrity and I am sure he is sincere in his belief

that there is not more to accomplish and we must immediately withdraw

our troops. I could not disagree more with his assessment.

We must stay in Iraq to finish the job and leave with honor. To cut

and run now and leave with our tail between our legs would send the

message to terrorists around the world that America has lost its will

to win the War on Terrorism. This would merely embolden our terrorist

enemies and lead to open season on America and our allies. We cannot

allow this to happen. We must stay the course in Iraq and finish the

job. The stakes are too high to fail.

Throughout American history, we have been tested in times of war many

times. But virtually every time, we stayed the course and prevailed.

We did not experience quick victory in the American Revolution. In

fact, it took our Founding Fathers years to win our hard-fought

independence. We were defeated at the Battles of Long Island, Harlem

Heights, White Plains and others, and we will never forget the dark

days at Valley Forge, yet we did not give up our desire for freedom.

And let's not forget in WorId War II, where we suffered rapid and

repeated defeats at Guam, Wake Island, the Philippines and Kasserine

Pass.

But when General Douglas Macarthur was forced to leave the

Philippines, he did not say, ``We should have an immediate withdraw of

all American troops.'' Instead, he uttered the immortal words: ``I

shall return.''

And we aren't even losing in Iraq! We are winning, and making a

difference. Because of our intervention in Iraq, a murderous dictator

and a totalitarian regime have been overthrown, free elections have

been held, and a new constitution has been drafted and ratified.

This is an important and emotional debate. When to send our

servicemen and women to war and when to bring them home is perhaps the

most difficult decision we as Member face. I have been to Iraq and

everybody I met was enthusiastic, about doing their job and helping the

Iraqi people.

We must fight this temptation to set an artificial timetable as to

when we bring our troops home. All this will do is allow the terrorists

time to regroup and lay in wait until we leave. But do not take my word

for it. Take the word of a top American commander in Iraq who called

setting a deadline for troop withdrawal ``a recipe for disaster.''

Army Maj. Gen. William Webster, whose 3rd Infantry Division is

responsible for security in three-fourths of Iraq's capital said

``Setting a date would mean that the 221 soldiers I've lost this year,

that their lives will have been lost in vain. Iraq's armed factions

would likely take a cue from a timetable for a U.S. withdrawal to lie

low, gathering their strength and laying plans for renewed conflict

when the Americans leave.''

Gen. Webster went on to say ``They believe they're doing the right

thing. The soldiers believe they're helping.''

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle have been saying that

the war in Iraq has been a dismal failure and a mistake. Let me ask

them, is it a sign failure that our troops have vaccinated over 3

million children under 5 to help these children fight polio. Or that we

screened more than 1.3 million children under age 5 for malnutrition.

Was it a mistake to rehabilitate almost 3,000 schools? What about the

36,000 secondary school teachers and administrators, including 1000

master trainers, that have been trained by the Iraqis with the United

States' help? These teachers are going to start teaching in a way that

gives freedom to the children.

I ask my friends on the other side of the aisle once again, would you

say accomplishing all of this constitutes failure? The millions of

Iraqi men, women and children who no longer live under a brutal

dictator would not think so.

We must continue to fight the terrorists and secure Iraq as a stable,

secure democracy. We are making a great deal of progress on the

democracy front as well. The approval of Iraq's constitution on October

15 was a historic day for Iraq and a bad day for terrorists. Millions

of Iraqis turned out to vote, embracing the democratic process. Iraq

now has a constitution.

On the day of the referendum, there were no suicide bombings, and

attacks on polling stations were down from 108 in January to 19 in

October. Sixty percent of registered voters took part in the

referendum. Significantly higher turnout in Sunni a further indication

that Sunnis are joining the political process.

Mr. Speaker, we are at a crossroads in Iraq. Do we cut and run or do

we stay and finish the job? There is too much at stake to immediately

pull out. All we would be doing is strengthening the terrorists. We

must finish the job. We must stay the course and leave with honor. I

urge a ``no'' vote on this resolution.