Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to enter

into the Congressional Record my observations regarding the shameless

acts of the Republicans who have hijacked the House of Representatives

and have become so arrogant, so deaf to any voices but their own they

do not hear the voices of the American people. My friend and colleague,

John Murtha, a true American patriot and decorated Marine Corps veteran

of Vietnam combat, spoke from his heart yesterday on behalf of those he

cares most about: the men and women wearing the uniform of the United

States of America and the people of this country he has served all his

life.

Congressman John Murtha, the leading Democrat on the House

Appropriations Committee's defense committee, reached a point where he

felt this country's continued occupation of Iraq was a source of the

violence in Iraq. Congressman Murtha had the courage to do what few

have been able to do. He faced the people at a press conference and

described how he had come to the conclusion that: ``The United States

and coalition troops have done all they can in Iraq, but it is time for

a change in direction. Our military is suffering. The future of our

country is at risk. We

cannot continue on the present course. It is evident that continued

military action in Iraq is not in the best interests of the United

States of America, the Iraqi people or the Persian Gulf Region.''

Congressman Murtha supported his conclusions by the now familiar

truths we know. The reasons we were given for going to war were all

false. There were no weapons of mass destruction and no nuclear

weapons; there was no imminent danger. We were not welcomed by flowers

in Baghdad. We had not brought Democracy in Iraq. Congressman Murtha

cited the key indicators in order to assess the ``progress'' of Iraq.

According to reports recently submitted to his committee by the

Secretary of Defense, Congressman Murtha learned some disturbing news.

``Oil production and energy in Iraq are below prewar levels. Our

reconstruction efforts have been crippled by the security situation.

Only $9 billion appropriated for reconstruction has been spent.

Unemployment remains at about 60 percent. Clean water is scarce. Only

$500 million of the $2.2 billion appropriated for water projects has

been spent. And most importantly, insurgent incidents have increased

from about 150 per week to over 700 per week in the last year.''

Congressman Murtha pointed out that the American people do not want

us in Iraq. A British poll found that 80 percent of Iraqis do not want

us occupying their country. Of the 80 percent of the Iraqis who don't

want us in Iraq, 44 percent felt attacks on Americans were justified.

Drawing on his experience in Vietnam, Congressman Murtha said there is

no way to win a war with insurgents when the people tell the insurgents

what moves you are going to take.

Congressman Murtha repeated what he has been saying. The war in Iraq

cannot be won militarily. The administration is now saying the same

thing. Congressman Murtha stated that our military has done its duty,

but the war continues to intensify.

Congressman Murtha's proposal was not to ``cut and run'' as the

Republicans have said. His proposal provides for re-deployment from

Iraq, the safety of our troops, and a rapid deployment force to deal

with any genuine terrorist threat in the region.

To equate a criticism of the President's failed policy with a lack of

support of our troops is beneath contempt. It is appalling to see the

President, the Vice President, and Secretary Rumsfeld smear John Murtha

with accusations of cowardice.

I think Congressman Murtha said it just right when he was asked at

his press conference yesterday how he felt about Vice President

Cheney's attempt to tell him what was good for the troops. He said he

welcomed a man with five deferments attempting to tell him what was

good for troops in battle. It was easy, Murtha said, to sit in air-

conditioned offices, and decide what the troops were going to do, but

our soldiers have it very hard in Iraq. Very hard. When a man with the

combat record of Congressman Murtha talks about men and women in

battle, I think he deserves to be heard.

Instead, the President blasted him from as far away as China. And

today, the Republican House leadership pulled one of their dirtiest

tricks. The Republicans introduced and put up for a vote a mockery of

the Murtha Resolution, with no discussion, no consideration in

committee and no input from the American people. It was a calculated

move by Republicans designed to make it appear to the American people

that Murtha's reasonable resolution was a proposal to undermine the

troops.

With this move, Republicans made a mockery of the people's House and

the people's wishes. They smeared an American hero and a man who cares

about the military and his country. The leadership of the Republican

House of Representatives, acting in lock step with a failed President

is perpetuating, in John Murtha's words, a ``failed policy wrapped in

an illusion.''