Mr. Speaker, tonight I am disappointed by the limitation

placed on debate on the U.S. role in Iraq.

Congress needs to have a real and meaningful debate on the future

role of the U.S. military in Iraq as we approach the third anniversary

of our invasion of Iraq. Congress should take seriously its obligation

to oversee our military forces.

I voted against giving the President the authority to go to war in

Iraq. I have been an outspoken critic of the President's handling and

planning for the Iraq War, and have criticized both the pre-war

intelligence used by the President and the failure of the President to

plan a realistic transition from a dictatorship to a democracy in Iraq

with our allies.

I commend the Senate for the debate it had this week in which real

policy options were reviewed in a serious and responsible manner. I

agree that 2006 should be a period of significant transition to full

Iraqi sovereignty, and that Iraqi security forces must take the lead in

protecting its citizens. U.S. military forces should not stay in Iraq

any longer than required, and Congress must insist on measurable

benchmarks for bringing our troops home.

Our soldiers have paid the heaviest price in Iraq: thousands are

dead, and tens of thousands are wounded. The American taxpayer has

already invested hundreds of billions of dollars. Mr. Speaker, our

soldiers deserve better than the resolution we are considering this

evening. The American people deserve a Congress that will give serious

consideration to how we can safely bring our soldiers home.