Mr. Speaker, for over 2 years, the Bush

administration has failed to offer the American people a truthful and

meaningful dialogue on the war in Iraq. We have lost thousands of

troops and we have spent billions of dollars, and yet the President

refuses to offer a credible strategy for success. The President has

misled the public and he refuses to acknowledge the truth of the

reality in Iraq.

Hundreds of Members of Congress and millions of Americans have voiced

very serious and very real concerns with the decisions being made by

the White House. Although I voted against the war, once the President

took us to war, I have supported the men and women in uniform who are

serving our Nation. However, I continue to believe that unless we have

a clear strategy, we will continue to see the loss of American lives in

Iraq with no end in sight.

Unfortunately, today, instead of having a legitimate debate about

strategy and consequences, the majority has chosen to waste the time of

this body and the American people by bringing forth a blatantly

political resolution that is difficult to take seriously. My colleague

from Pennsylvania, a Vietnam veteran decorated with two Purple Hearts

and a Member of the House for three decades, Mr. Murtha, yesterday

offered a well thought out, principled resolution calling for the

redeployment of the forces in Iraq at the ``earliest practicable

date.'' In addition, despite what some in the majority have

characterized during today's debate as cutting and running, Mr.

Murtha's resolution calls for a continued military presence in the

region through the deployment of a quick-reaction force and an over-

the-horizon presence of U.S. Marines. Also, the resolution states that

the U.S. shall continue to pursue security and stability in Iraq

through diplomatic means.

It is important to note that the word ``immediate'' does not appear

anywhere in Mr. Murtha's resolution. Yet we find ourselves today

debating a resolution introduced by the chair of the House Armed

Services Committee that calls for the ``immediate withdrawal'' of

American troops. The fact that this was introduced by the House Armed

Services Committee and the fact that he along with colleagues in the

majority will be voting against his own resolution demonstrates not

only the lack of clear ideas from their side of the aisle but also a

lack of willingness to have a true debate.

Today, the majority once again shunned their responsibility in having

an open debate on the war in Iraq, and instead they and the President

continue to attack those who disagree with them by questioning their

patriotism. Rather than engaging in an open dialogue to debate the

issue, the majority chose to engage in personal destruction and

politicized the issue by voicing empty rhetoric. They chose to question

the patriotism of those who have served in uniform and who have

honorably served their country. And they chose to continue to hide from

the American public the facts of this war.