Mr. Speaker, on November 17,

2005, my distinguished colleague from Pennsylvania, Mr. Murtha, the

ranking Democrat on the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee--a 27 year

Marine and a veteran of 3 tours in Vietnam--announced that he was

introducing a resolution that was meant to stimulate a thoughtful and

profound debate on how we salvage a failed policy in Iraq.

Recently, a Texas soldier became the 2,000th member of the U.S. armed

forces to die in Iraq since the conflict there began in March 2003.

Like any milestone, the death of that soldier is an occasion to look

back and see what lessons can be learned from our country's bitter

sacrifice in Iraq over the past 2\1/2\ years. One such lesson,

underlined anew by the continuing deaths of Americans and Iraqis, is

the need to limit our country's commitment to Iraq.

Instead of creating a significant dialogue on this issue, Republican

leadership has chosen to divide this House by generating phony,

cynical, political, outrageously tricky and sneaky maneuvers like this.

Mr. Speaker, too often, so many of my colleagues are reluctant to

challenge this Administration's policies in Iraq for fear that anything

other than staying the course will somehow appear weak. But the

President's course is misguided, and it is doing grave damage to our

extraordinarily professional and globally admired all-volunteer United

States Army. To stand by while this damage is done is not patriotic. It

is not supportive. It is not tough on terrorism, or strong on national

security.

Because I am proud of our men and women in uniform, and because I am

committed to working with all of my colleagues to make this country

more secure, I am convinced that we must change our course and I

commend Mr. Murtha for standing up for what is right.