Mr. Speaker, I voted to give President Bush the

authority to go into Iraq. I'm not on the left; I'm not on the right.

I'm on the side of our country and I'm on the side of our troops. I

can't imagine why the Republicans have brought this Bush-Hunter

resolution to the floor. How does this help our troops serving in Iraq?

How does this help make our Nation safer?

For the past two years, the Republicans have taken any criticism of

this war and labeled it as unpatriotic and as an attack on our troops.

Criticizing the way the war has been prosecuted--criticizing the way it

has been bungled--is not unpatriotic. It is the ultimate act of

patriotism.

John Murtha is a 37-year veteran of the Marine Corps. He served in

Vietnam. He was awarded the bronze star. He received two purple hearts.

Now Mr. Murtha has provoked an important debate--one we should be

having in this body. Mr. Murtha has the right to have these ideas

discussed. Our troops have the right to have these ideas discussed. The

American public has the right to have these ideas discussed.

We send young men and women to war. We are responsible for them. We

must be diligent in our oversight. That's our duty.

What we are doing here tonight is a waste of time and does a

tremendous disservice to our troops. Talk about patriotism--this is not

patriotism. This is a cheap political stunt and an affront to those

serving our Nation so far from home.

The President wants to stay the course. What does that mean? 700

attacks a week against our troops; no winning strategy; no plan; no end

in sight.

Let us not embarrass ourselves any further, and vote against the

Hunter resolution.