Mr. Speaker, this is Iraq Week in the House of

Representatives, called by the Republican majority in hopes that they

can stop the bleeding, not on the ground in Iraq, but in the opinion

polls in this country.

They want to capitalize on the success of the U.S. military last week

and define progress in Iraq all over again. Over the last 3 years, the

definition of progress by the Republican majority has been as elusive

as the President's plan for Iraq.

Still, later this week after lots of Republican speech making, the

majority leader will force-feed the American people a new resolution

telling them what to think about the Iraq war. In the fine print is a

desperate effort by the Republicans to cling to power in the November

election. That is what this week is all about.

Republican leaders hope to commandeer the news cycle and convince the

American people that Republicans deserve to stay despite their record

on Iraq. In other words, Iraq Week is a staged Republican campaign

event.

The resolution the Republicans will force through the House of

Representatives on Friday will have nothing to do with increasing the

safety of our Nation or the security of our soldiers on the ground in

Iraq. It is about the security of the Republican grip on power. The

Republicans fear the American people have answered Newt Gingrich's

question. Do you remember it? Well, they have. Poll

after poll says the American people indeed have had enough of

Republican power. The American people always have accepted sacrifice

when it comes to defending the Nation. But one thing they have never

accepted is being misled by their leaders. The American people have

heard enough to know the trust they placed in the President over his

justification to invade Iraq was misplaced.

The American people have seen enough to know this administration and

the Republican Congress have no plan except to keep declaring progress.

The words, however, pale compared to the images they see on TV every

day. Enough facts have emerged for the American people to know that

Iraq has become a grim lesson we learned a long time ago in Vietnam.

But instead of transferring responsibility, the President declares the

tide has turned, U.S. troops will stay in Iraq, and there will be

difficult days ahead.

That is a Presidential declaration that more American soldiers will

die, more American soldiers will suffer grave physical injuries, more

American soldiers will be exposed to depleted uranium, and more

American soldiers will return home traumatized by post-traumatic stress

disorder.

This is today's reality, and the truth is there is no end in sight.

And you will not hear that from the President. Earlier this year, U.S.

military commanders talked about significant force reductions by the

end of the year. They have stopped talking about it. That is because

the reality on the ground in Iraq defies the Republican spin.

But the spinning goes on. Yesterday at Camp Neocon, that is what they

used to call Camp David, the President called together the

administration in a new effort to define progress. It was a campaign

meeting meant to manage the news the American people receive about

Iraq. Today, the President made a surprise visit to Iraq, not unlike

landing on an aircraft carrier to declare mission accomplished. It

wasn't then and it isn't now.

Soon, the Republican leaders will tell the American people what to

think,

without the information on which to make an informed decision. Here is

something they do not want to talk about: the U.S. is building Fortress

Iraq, a $600 million embassy, the biggest in the world.

What lurks ahead for the United States is another grim and painful

lesson we learned a long time ago. The administration would like to

divert your attention while it orders the military to pour concrete

runways and bunkers across Iraq. Tens of thousands of U.S. soldiers are

going to be stationed in Iraq indefinitely. These bases will be called

something else for the American people, but they will still be targets

for the insurgents.

Not everyone has access to enterprise journalism being produced by

the mainstream news organizations. So in the interest of promoting a

resolution of truth about Iraq, I will enter into the Record two recent

news articles. The first is from the Los Angeles Times entitled:

``A Roadblock to Unity in Iraq'' was

published in the Salt Lake City Tribune. Read them. Make up your own

mind.

The definition of progress in Iraq is not a Republican resolution

force-fed to the Congress, as they would have you believe. The

definition of progress is bringing our soldiers home, all of them, in

significant numbers every month from this moment on until they are out

of harm's way and we are out of the war that we should never have been

in in the first place.