Mr. Speaker, I follow the distinguished

gentleman from Tennessee. I thank him for his honesty, and I thank him

for his eloquence. And I too, Mr. Duncan, wish that we could do this in

a nonpartisan manner, and I would have hoped that we would have had

every voice to have been able to be heard on this question. This is not

a Democratic or Republican issue about the forces in Iraq, the freedom

of this Nation, the right to defend our Nation, the right to tell the

American people the truth that Saddam Hussein had nothing to do with

the tragedy, the horrific, heinous act of 9/11.

If you looked at the 19 terrorists, you might think that we need to

be engaged in war with Saudi Arabia. But we are not. That is why this

debate had such insignificance because all of us believe in our troops.

More importantly, we believe in the families and the wounded that have

come home.

But I stand here today, Mr. Speaker, as someone who has just returned

from Iraq, been to Iraq three times and Afghanistan; been to the border

between Pakistan and Afghanistan where we truly believe Osama bin Laden

hides. Do we remember that name? Someone that we allegedly have been in

pursuit of for a number of years, a pursuit that has been stymied by

the intrusion of the Iraq war. Rather than the global war on terror, we

have misdirected and misconstrued the truth.

I am reminded of the somber presentation that Secretary Powell made

before the United Nations; all the world was in awe, all the world's

eyes were turned to America, America with the high moral compass. Yes,

if America said it, it must be true. And now we can't get more than one

or two countries to follow our lead. It cries out for a change in

direction.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I hold up for the world to see and for America

to see that these are the ones that we should be concerned about, those

who have lost their lives in battle, 2,500 and growing, and the 19,000

casualties that are facing America. Are these the soldiers that we are

going to say are cutting and running because we want a new direction

that makes sense?

Well, I believe in the Declaration of Independence when brave

patriots said we all are created equal, with certain unalienable rights

of life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness. And our soldiers

deserve the right to pursue happiness. And America deserves the right

of the right investment of its tax dollars. The global war on terror is

where we should be confronting the evilness of the Osama bin Ladens and

the others who are mounting efforts around the world to fight against

us.

The insurgency in Iraq, the foreign terrorists are a mere 10 percent

or less. It is a civil war in Iraq between Sunnis and Shiia. And Mr.

Murtha is right: there is no mission. The mission is complete. Our

soldiers are victorious. Saddam Hussein is gone. We are not broom

sweepers. We don't go around cleaning up IEDs. That is what their

mission is. That is not a mission of freedom.

And so Democrats today joined with more than one-third of this

Congress to ask for a new direction. And I would venture to say that we

would have more if there had not been the hard hand of the Republicans

to scare their Members into not going against the tide.

The war in Iraq has increased the burden on taxpayers. We are paying

$300 million a day, a day, for this war. And yet we do not have monies

for our enlisted personnel. Our soldiers' families are on food stamps,

and veterans health care has been cut when soldiers are coming with

catastrophic injuries, brain injuries that they have yet not diagnosed

of how long they will be impacted by what we call closed-brain

injuries.

We asked the administration to tell the truth. We asked them to

recognize the young soldiers that were kind enough to sign this scarf.

Yes, they are true and the brave, and this is not a question of

challenging the soldiers' bravery and duty. This is a burden on the

policymakers like Secretary McNamara, who indicated that he was wrong

in the Vietnam War. But, oh, what a price we paid: 50,000 dead in

Vietnam and broken hearts and broken families and yet someone 20-some

years later was willing to admit they were wrong.

Well, I voted against this resolution and I voted because I never

want it to be said that any war to which we send young soldiers into

battle, the military into battle does not have the truth and the

strength to withhold the understanding that America's freedom is at

risk.

I close, Mr. Speaker, by saying when I went to Iraq and visited many

bases, one sailor took this off of his chest. It is a badge of honor I

wear.

We are not cutting and running. We are holding up the Constitution

and the Declaration of Independence. We want our soldiers to be able to

pursue happiness, and we want a sovereign Iraq to protect its own

nation.