Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to continue the debate on

Iraq, the war in Iraq. I rise to continue this debate because those of

us who are part of the Out of Iraq Caucus, and I am the Chair of that

caucus, do not intend to have a debate organized for one day and have

people going away saying, well, we took care of that.

This debate must continue because the truth must be told.

Over the weekend, we received terrible news. Two of our soldiers,

Private First Class Kristian Menchaca of Texas and Private First Class

Thomas Tucker of Oregon were captured by insurgents, reportedly al

Qaeda operatives in Iraq.

Today their bodies were found. Their bodies showed signs of torture,

leading an Iraqi Defense Ministry official to say that they were

``killed in a barbaric way.'' I extend my deepest sympathies to the

families and friends of Private Menchaca and Private Tucker. Our

thoughts and our prayers are with them and all those who have lost

loved ones in this war.

Mr. Speaker, the President constantly tells us that ``as Iraqis stand

up, we will stand down.'' This is the President's way of describing in

a rather vague and evasive manner our involvement in Iraq, our

continued involvement in Iraq.

According to the Department of Defense, significant progress is being

made in training Iraqis to assume security responsibilities in Iraq.

The Defense Department trumpets the news that 250,000 Iraqi military

are either fully trained or nearly fully trained to provide security

throughout Iraq. Well, my question to the administration is: What are

they doing? What are these trained Iraqi soldiers doing?

If they are so trained as the administration says they are, they

should be able to take over the responsibility of providing security to

their fellow countrymen while allowing our men and women in uniform to

return home.

But the sad fact is Iraqis are not assuming this role. Instead, our

troops who are put in harm's way are the ones paying the price for this

administration's mistaken and misguided war. They have been assuming

this role and will continue to do so indefinitely until this

President's irresponsible leadership is challenged and changed.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, the administration constantly tells the

American people that progress is being made on the war. For example,

when the formation of the Iraqi Government was announced, President

Bush said the Iraqis had reached a ``turning point.'' At least five

times since the beginning of the Iraq war, President Bush has declared

that Iraq has reached a turning point. Yet after each milestone was

achieved, violence in Iraq grew progressively worse, and more U.S.

soldiers have died or been injured.

The most infamous turning point was on May 1, 2003, when President

Bush rolled out and declared ``Mission Accomplished'' aboard the USS

Abraham Lincoln. At that point, 139 U.S. servicemen and -women had died

in Iraq. Today that number has grown to 2,502 U.S. servicemen and -

women who have died in Iraq.

Furthermore, the violence against Iraqis has grown almost beyond

comprehension. It is estimated that between 138 and 242 Iraqis have

died so far this month alone. They die from car bombings,

assassinations and other violent acts.

Today alone, news report indicate that at least 11 Iraqis were killed

in a string of bombings across Iraq. In short, the progress that the

administration and its supporters cite in Iraq does not exist.

The administration went into war with rose-colored glasses on. They

promised the American people that the war had been adequately

justified, planned and could be an affordable undertaking.

Unfortunately, the facts on the ground show differently. The war has

gone on for more than 3 years, and by the end of this year, the total

cost of the war will be $450 billion.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for us to redeploy our troops from Iraq and

end the war in Iraq. The best way to accomplish these goals is to pass

the Murtha resolution, H.J. Res. 73, which would redeploy U.S. forces

from Iraq. The resolution says no more U.S. troops sent to Iraq, and

that the troops in Iraq will be redeployed as soon as possible, a

judgment made by military officials on the ground.

Section 2 says that a group of marines will remain in the Middle East

to respond to threats that destabilize our allies in the region or the

national security of the United States.

I wish could go into it more, but I have run out of time.