Mr. Speaker, the administration is closing defense

bases here at home and building new bases in Iraq. There is no money to

maintain some defense installations here, but there is $270 billion and

counting for establishing a permanent presence in Iraq. The Armed

Forces ranks are depleted. Enlistment is falling off. So the

administration is hard at work privatizing the war, having hired about

20,000 so-called contractors, mercenaries, to do work that used to be

done by the military.

A member of the new private army in Iraq may make as much as 10 times

more than what an enlisted soldier makes, and private companies making

billions from the Iraq war will no doubt be quick to make political

contributions to make sure the war keeps going. Our Reservist and

National Guard units are fortifying a mission to which they should have

never been called.

Iraq has turned into a tragedy. What is even more tragic is the

thinking that says, Well, we are there; now we need to stay and finish

the job.

Mr. Speaker, we need to get out. The sooner the better. And we need

to hold accountable those whose lies sent our soldiers there at the

cost of many American lives and the lives of innocent Iraqis.