Mr. Speaker, this is the moment that a majority of

Americans who voted last November have been waiting for, a time when

Congress does something about Iraq. And that something that the people

asked of us is to get us out of Iraq.

The resolution before us will not of itself get U.S. forces out of

Iraq, but to paraphrase Winston Churchill, if it is not the end, it is

at least the beginning of the end.

Our President is having trouble understanding the message from the

American people. It is a simple message that I hear every time I go

back home to Minnesota. Time to bring our troops home with honor. The

people are telling me our mission in Iraq is accomplished. The

President already declared victory. The goals of the U.S. invasion have

been met.

Iraq's army was defeated, Saddam Hussein removed from power and

brought to judgment. The Iraqi people held elections to establish a new

government. Mission accomplished. Time to bring the troops home with

honor.

No weapons of mass destruction were found, despite extensive

searches. The Iraqis have a government, they have an army, a police

force. There is no further purpose of American policy to be served by a

continued military presence in Iraq.

What remains in Iraq is religious warfare between Sunni and Shia,

with our troops caught in the crossfire. This is not the job our troops

signed up for. This is not the war President Bush sold to Congress.

People are telling the President, it is time to bring the troops home

and to do it with honor.

President Bush has said he is concerned this resolution is prejudging

the outcome of our involvement in Iraq. I would say the outcome is not

in doubt. We have spent and are continuing to spend $9 billion a month

in Iraq; 3,122 of our servicemen and -women have been killed; 23,550-

plus have been wounded; tens of thousands more Iraqis killed and

wounded. The violence is escalating, our troops are the targets.

I do not think this resolution prejudges anything. The facts speak

for themselves. And the people are saying bring the troops home with

honor. I did not support this war at its outset. We had Saddam Hussein

contained. Al Qaeda was not in Iraq. We had a job to do in Afghanistan.

I supported going into Afghanistan to capture Osama bin Laden. But I

saw no clear rationale for sending troops into combat in Iraq.

The resolution does offer a statement of support for the troops.

Their service is an extraordinary gift. They volunteer to leave their

homes and families and risk their lives every day, at the order of the

President. All they ask is that we never ask them to go to conflict

unless that conflict is absolutely necessary and in the national

interest.

Lieutenant General William Odom, in a recent article in The

Washington Post said, about the question that we have to continue to

fight in order to support the troops, has anyone asked the troops?

During their first tours, many may have favored staying the course. But

now in their second, third, fourth tours, he writes, many are changing

their minds.

We see no evidence of that in the news stories about unhappy troops

being sent back to Iraq. The strangest aspect of the rationale, General

Odom writes, for continuing the war is the implication that our troops

are somehow responsible for deciding to continue the President's

course.

That political and moral responsibility belongs to the President, not

to the troops. Didn't Harry Truman make it clear that the buck stops in

the Oval Office? The President keeps dodging it. Where does it stop,

General Odom asks, with Congress? And that is why we are here today to

say it is up to us to make a definitive statement with this resolution,

a statement that it is time to end the U.S. involvement in Iraq, to

bring the troops home with honor. And then if the President does not

heed, then we must take more vigorous steps, steps that I voted for in

coming to end the U.S. involvement in Vietnam over 32 years ago.

If that is what it takes, then we have to say that the buck stops

with us in the Congress to stop the U.S. engagement in Iraq.