Mr. Speaker, I rise today to show support for the Out of

Iraq Caucus and to add my voice to this much needed debate on the war

in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I voted against this war because I thought it was a

mistake from the beginning. Iraq was not an imminent threat to our

security, there were no weapons of mass destruction, and it has never

been a part of American foreign policy to preemptively invade another

country in order to spread our will on their citizens.

But Mr. Speaker we are in Iraq now, the President has committed our

troops there and we now have an obligation to fix the mess that we've

made over there.

But how long do we stay the course when the course that we have been

on has not been a successful one. How long do we keep our troops in a

country where they are not treated as liberators, but are instead

fueling the violence there just by their mere presence?

The American people are starting to realize that this war was a

mistake. The reason for going to war was wrong, the planning for

keeping the peace after the war was nonexistent, and there does not

seem to be any clear indication of what victory in Iraq looks like.

This was a war of choice and the people of Iraq are very suspicious

about our motives for being there. Many people in and out of Iraq

believed America's motivation for invading Iraq had more to do with its

oil fields and strategic location in the Middle East, than with its

supposed weapons of mass destruction.

The American public also overwhelmingly believes this war was not

worth the human or financial burden, and how can we blame them?

At a time when our education system needs vast improvement, our

schools are deteriorating, and our children are losing their edge in

the fields of math, science, and engineering, we are sending billions

of taxpayer's dollars overseas on a weekly basis.

While we have sent close to a half a trillion dollars over to Iraq,

here at home many Americans still do not have the basic necessities

they need to live whole, fruitful lives.

Millions of our citizens do not have healthcare, and millions more

are working overtime just to make ends meet. Sadly, many Americans are

not feeling the great economic boom that the Administration is trying

so desperately to tout.

Constituents in my districts are feeling the pinch in their pockets

due to skyrocketing fuel costs, an overpriced housing market, and debt

that will follow them to their graves.

My constituents are starting to wonder, how can we continue to

justify sending billions of dollars out of the country when they need

better services and resources here at home?

How can we continue to ask our men and women in uniform to give their

lives for a cause that was built on deceptions and misinformation?

Our national deficit is fast approaching $8 trillion, I repeat $8

trillion, and yet Congress is more concerned with enacting tax cuts for

the wealthy, while simultaneously spending billions in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, something has to give. We cannot continue on this path

that we are currently on. The resources of this country, as great as

they are, are being stretched too thin.

Our forces, as mighty as they are, are being stretched too thin for

the long-term health of the country.

Mr. Speaker, for the sake of this great Nation, we need to set a new

course. We need a new policy on Iraq and Congress needs to start

focusing its attention on the problems facing our citizens here at

home.

I urge all of my colleagues to support the Murtha Resolution, which

establishes a time line for a responsible troop redeployment and allows

Iraqis to stand up and take responsibility for the course of their own

nation.

As long as we are there doing the job that Iraqis should be doing for

themselves we cannot expect them to stand up and take control of their

own country.