Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say we need to bring our

troops home.

Before continuing, though, I must say that this resolution before us,

unfortunately, is perfectly irrelevant to the choices facing the

American people and this Congress. It is transparently political, does

nothing to get us out of our predicament in Iraq, and is a crude

attempt to intimidate and smear those who wish to honor the desire of

the American people by bringing our troops home. This resolution

attempts to reinforce the lies that led us to war which have been

refuted and disproved many times over.

All of the lies that were offered to justify sending our men and

women to fight and die have evaporated in the light of truth. All that

we are left with is this argument that we're there now, so we have to

stay ``as long as it takes.'' This is nonsense.

This is the same illogical rhetoric that kept our Nation in Vietnam,

the rhetoric that doubled the cost of that conflict in American lives.

More than half the combat deaths in Vietnam occurred after Richard

Nixon was elected on a promise to bring the war to an end, and after

the American people had already decided that they did not want one more

soldier to die in Vietnam.

Our vital task today in this Congress is to prevent a repeat of that

tragedy in Iraq, to stop the bleeding, to make the will of the American

people, which is to bring our troops home, the policy of our government

as soon as possible. Our task today is to save the lives of our troops

who remain in Iraq by bringing them home.

We in this Congress have a choice. The American people have a right

to exercise a choice on this issue, as to whether our men and women

will continue to fight and die in a war based on deception and fantasy,

or to start bringing the troops home.

The American people have decided that it was a mistake to choose to

go to war in Iraq.

The American people deserve some answers, as to how we could spend so

much in Iraq and achieve so little. They deserve to know why all this

money is being spent on a war of choice, when one on eight Americans

lives in poverty, and when 46 million Americans have no health

insurance, including 13 million children.

No one in this body wants to see terrorism and the rule of force

prevail in Iraq. Some on the other side say otherwise, but I believe

they know better.

Bringing the troops home is necessary not just for the future of

Iraq, but also for the people of the United States. We must stop the

hemorrhaging of tax dollars that could go to meet our Nation's vital

domestic needs.

This war of choice in Iraq is undermining the very fabric of American

society.

By the end of this year, the costs of the invasion and occupation of

Iraq will total $450 billion; $450 billion spent in Iraq, who knows how

much of it going to corrupt, crony contractors.

All of the President's statements amount to excuses for an open-

ended, seemingly never-ending commitment of our troops to occupy Iraq.

He is trying to salvage the terrible wager he made in Iraq by doubling

down the bet with human lives: Iraqi and American.

While this debate today is a belated effort to inform the American

people, it is nevertheless an empty gesture. It is time to admit our

mistake in Iraq and begin to bring our troops home with honor.