Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 10 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, we hear so many voices in this country and in this

Chamber who are willing to fight to the last drop of someone else's

blood. Those of us who are supporting this resolution today are being

accused of being for ``precipitous withdrawal.'' I hardly think that

seeing this war continue for another 14 months constitutes precipitous

withdrawal.

Mr. Speaker, it is 56 months since the United States first launched

its attack against Iraq. It is 4 1/2 years since the President

appeared before his ``Mission Accomplished'' banner on that carrier. It

is almost 5 years since the administration ignored the advice of

General Shinseki. It is 2 1/2 years since Vice President Cheney said

that he thought the insurgency was in its last throes. Since that time,

we have had 3,800 Americans killed and 28,000 wounded. We have had

8,000 Iraqi military personal killed and 38,000 civilians killed. We

have had 4 million Iraqis displaced. 2.3 million of them have been

displaced internally in the country. One and a half million have fled

to Syria, 1 million to other countries. Not a pretty picture.

This war is the most colossal blunder in modern U.S. history. It is a

mistake that has shattered our influence in the region, and it has made

the one country in the region that we did not want to see strengthened,

Iran, it has made them infinitely stronger in that region. We are in

the process of borrowing $600 billion and we are not having the guts to

pay the bill ourselves.

There is no sense of shared sacrifice in this country. The only

families being asked to sacrifice are military families and they're

being asked to sacrifice again and again and again and again. We aren't

even willing to tax ourselves to pay for the cost of this war, so we're

shoving off the cost to our kids. Shame on every one of us for making

that decision.

In November, the public tried to send two messages to this Congress.

The first was that they wanted a change in policy in Iraq. The second

is that they wanted a change in domestic policy. And yet after blowing

$600 billion in Iraq, after signing a Defense bill which adds $39

billion to spending levels over last year, the President has yesterday

blocked our efforts to add $6 billion to pay for investments in

education, health and medical research here at home.

The President is telling the American people, ``Forget what message

you think you sent in November in the election.'' He is stiffing the

American people. He is saying, ``Forget what message you thought you

were sending to Washington; I am the `Great Decider' and we are going

to do things my way.'' That is what we are getting out of the White

House. Instead of compromise and instead of searching for common

ground, the President is making clear that he prefers to govern through

confrontation, he prefers to go it alone, with one-third support in the

country and one-third support in the Congress.

The same is true in Iraq. This is the same President who decided to

go it alone, with almost no allies, who decided to go it alone when it

came to evaluating intelligence, ignoring the caution alerts that were

sent by the State Department intelligence people and the CIA analysts.

He bulldozed through. When Baker-Hamilton was produced to offer an

opportunity for change, the President simply used that as an

opportunity to say ``full steam ahead, no change in course'', and he

has deepened and intensified our involvement in Iraq.

At home, he insists that Congress cuts 50 percent out of vocational

education; he insists that we cut 1,100 grants out of medical research

at the National Institutes of Health; he insists that we cut rural

health programs by 54 percent; he insists that we cut low-income

heating assistance programs by 18 percent; he insists that we cut

financial support for programs under No Child Left Behind that he

mandated in the first place. He insists that we cut all of that, and

yet he demands $200 billion more for Iraq. I say enough is enough.

He gave a speech to the American people which was designed for the

purpose of public deception, in my view, because it was designed to

leave the impression that the President intended to reduce steadily our

troop commitment in Iraq, when in reality it was intended to assure

that 6 months from now we have the same number of troops we have there

that we had 6 months ago.

Mr. Speaker, the President is asking for $200 billion more, and as

chairman of the Appropriations Committee, I announced that I had no

intention of providing that money, but I made it clear I'd be happy to

provide it all, provided that the President would recognize that we

needed a policy change and would get on board with the determination to

have a goal of removing our troops from combat operations by the end of

next year. That is hardly precipitous.

So what this measure does, instead of giving the President $200

billion to continue the war, it gives him $50 billion to shut the war

down. Instead of having troops there for the next 10 years, as the

President indicated in his speech, we want to have them out by December

of 2008. It requires redeployment to begin in 60 days, and it ends the

authority for any agency of the United States Government whatsoever to

engage in torture.

We are mired, Mr. Speaker, in Iraq because of the self-important

illusions of hopeless romantics in the administration. We hear tell

these days that the President talks a lot about Teddy Roosevelt and

Winston Churchill. If that is the case, he is harboring dangerous

illusions. He ought to heed the advice of a statesman 80 years ago who

wrote the following. I will read excerpts from this letter.

``I am deeply concerned about Iraq. The task you have given me is

becoming really impossible. Incompetent Arab officials are disturbing

some of the provinces and failing to collect revenue. We overpaid on

last year's account, which it is almost certain Iraq will not be able

to pay this year, thus entailing a supplementary estimate. . . I have

had to maintain troops in Mosul all through the year in consequence of

the Angora quarrel. This has upset the program of relief and will

certainly lead to further expenditures. . . . I do not see what

political strength there is to face a disaster of any kind, and I

certainly cannot believe that in any circumstances any large

reinforcements would be sent . . . In my own heart, I do not see what

we are getting out of it. I think we should now put definitely to the

assembly the position that unless they beg us to stay, and stay on our

own terms in regard to efficient control, we shall actually evacuate

before the close of the financial year. I would put this issue in the

most brutal way, and if they are not prepared to urge us to stay and to

cooperate in every manner, I would actually clear out. . . .

``I think I must ask you for definite guidance at this stage as to

what you wish and what you are prepared to do. At present, we are

paying millions a year for the privilege of living on an ungrateful

volcano out of which we are in no circumstances to get anything worth

having.''

That was the real Winston Churchill speaking in 1922 in a letter to

Lloyd George. It seems to me that the President in the White House

today ought to heed the words of Winston Churchill so long ago and at

long last reconsider a policy change in Iraq. That is what this

legislation is designed to stimulate.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 1/2 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard significant discussion tonight about al

Qaeda. And people seem to think that Iraq, the Iraq war was necessary

in order to tackle al Qaeda. Well, that's backwards.

I can recall being out at CIA headquarters after 9/11. I can recall

sitting out at CIA headquarters watching the Predator aircraft as they

flew over Afghanistan, transmitting pictures back here in the search

for bin Laden and al Qaeda. And I remember what those CIA people out

there said, and the frustration they expressed because half of their

resources were being diverted from the search for bin Laden and al

Qaeda to prepare for the attack on Iraq.

It isn't that the war in Iraq was necessary to get at al Qaeda. The

war in Iraq diverted us from concentrating on al Qaeda and bin Laden.

And we are still suffering the consequences today.

So let's keep the facts straight. Let's keep history straight. And

let's keep our heads straight. The fact is that Iraq got in the way of

our effort to get at al Qaeda and we have been suffering from that fact

ever since.