Mr. Speaker, I come before the House this evening as one

of the organizers of the Out of Iraq Caucus to talk about what we have

done in that caucus, what we are attempting to continue to do, and

where we feel we are at this point.

We now have 69 Members who have signed up as part of the Out of Iraq

Caucus. We have been meeting on a regular basis. We have had invited

speakers and experts come to our caucus to talk about the war in Iraq,

to talk about our image in the world as it relates to the war in Iraq,

to talk about any number of subjects to help us try and guide this

House and this Nation on this war. We think it is extremely important

for the Members of Congress to be involved in this way because there

are so many questions that are being raised by the American public

about the war in Iraq.

When we organized this caucus, we did not organize the caucus with

the conclusion that we had to get out right now. We did not organize

the caucus with the strategy to adopt an exit strategy or to try and

force the administration to adopt an exit strategy. We did not organize

the caucus around the idea that we should stay there for as long as it

takes to train Iraqi soldiers and then exit.

We simply organized the Out of Iraq Caucus because we all felt that

we must get out of Iraq, and we did not try to say when. We did not

even try to say how. We wanted to bring together the kind of discussion

that would lead us to adopting the right kind of strategy, to provide

some leadership to the Congress of the United States and to this

administration.

While we have been doing that, over 2,032 U.S. soldiers died while

serving in Iraq as of November 2. In the month of October, 93 United

States soldiers died in Iraq. October was the fourth deadliest month

for U.S. soldiers since the war began on March 29, 2003, and the

deadliest since January when 106 U.S. soldiers died. The second most

violent month was November 2004, when Americans battled Sunni Arab

rebels in Fallujah. The third most violent month was in April 2004,

when U.S. soldiers fought militiamen loyal to the Shiite cleric in

Najaf. More than 15,353 U.S. soldiers have been injured while serving

in Iraq, and we are told there are over 404 amputees.

The administration has allocated about $357 billion for military

operations, reconstruction, embassy costs, and various foreign aid

programs in Iraq and Afghanistan since the September 11 attacks. Of

that $357 billion, $251 billion of that total has been for Iraq and

about $82 billion for Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, we are told, despite these casualties, despite these

amputees, despite what appears to be our inability to get a handle on

the insurgents and all of these roadside bombings, we are told that we

are winning this war. As a matter of fact, the President rolled out May

1, 2003, on an aircraft carrier all decked out in the proper dress to

accompany his speech and said ``mission accomplished.''

The American public has trusted that this administration knew what it

was doing. They gave the administration the benefit of the doubt, even

when Mr. Rumsfeld was being urged by people much more expert than he

that we did not have enough troops on the ground in order to win the

war. He insisted that he knew better what he was doing. He did not

increase those numbers. The American public sees now that he did not

know what he was talking about.

The American public has stayed with this administration despite the

fact that the President said that we were going to get enough money

from the oil wells in Iraq to take care of rebuilding the

infrastructure. That has not happened. The insurgents continue to blow

up the oil wells. We have gotten no money from the oil in Iraq.

The American people continue to try and trust the President of the

United States, but the lack of getting a handle on these insurgents and

the killing of our soldiers, the lack of getting any profits from the

oil wells, the lack of being in control and getting a handle on what is

going on in Iraq is causing the American people to move away from

support for the President of the United States and this war.

At first, the American public was saying, no, we do not like the way

this administration has handled this war, but we think perhaps the

President may be right. Perhaps we need to stay there until we have

trained enough Iraqi soldiers to wind out of the war.

But that does not appear to be happening. As a matter of fact, we

keep getting muddled information about how many Iraqi soldiers have

been trained. We have been told numbers that we cannot confirm. We have

been told that it is just a matter of time before we will have trained

enough of these soldiers to whom we can turn over the operations.

We have had all of these different military operations. We started

out with Operation Iraqi Freedom, which was the name of the entire

Iraqi effort that began in March of 2003. At its height, we had over

300,000 troops in the region. Currently, we have about 139,000 U.S.

soldiers in Iraq.

We had Strike and Awe, which described the initial military action in

the opening hours and days of the war. We have had Operation River

Gate, which took place in the al Anbar Province near the Syrian border.

American forces were trying to retake three towns from al Qaeda

insurgents.

Some 2,500 U.S. troops along with Iraqi forces participated in

Operation River Gate.

Then we had Operation Iron Fist, similar to Operation River Gate,

which occurred shortly before Operation River Gate.

Then we had Operation Lightning launched in early May 2005, to break

the insurgency. Approximately 40,000 Iraqi troops and 10,000 U.S.

soldiers were deployed in and around Baghdad.

Then we had Operation Matador. Operation Matador was launched in the

first weeks of May 2005, after U.S. intelligence showed insurgents had

moved into the northern Jazirah Desert after the losses in the cities

of Fallujah and Ramadi.

Operation Spear began on June 17, 2005, with 1,000 Marines and Iraqi

soldiers in western Iraq to hunt for insurgents and foreign fighters.

Operation Spear took place in the Anbar province. The operation came

one day after Air Force Brigadier General Don Alston called the Syrian

border the worst problem in stemming the influx of foreign fighters to

Iraq. Syria is under intense pressure from Washington and Baghdad to

tighten control of its porous 380-mile border with Iraq. Yet we do not

know whether or not the insurgents are really the Sunnis and al Qaeda

inside Baghdad, inside Iraq, or really all of the insurgents coming

from Syria.

Operation Dagger. About 1,000 U.S. Marines and Iraqi troops, backed

by fighter jets and tanks, launched a second offensive Saturday against

insurgents operating in restive Anbar province. That was called

Operation Dagger. Operation Dagger aims to uncover insurgent training

camps and weapons caches in the southern part of the Lake Tharthar area

in central Iraq, 85 kilometers northwest of Baghdad.

And now, Operation Sword. Operation Sword included about 1,000 U.S.

Marine soldiers and sailors from Regimental Combat Team-2, as well as

about 100 Iraqi soldiers. It was the fifth operation launched in late

spring, early summer 2005, designed to pressure insurgents in the

country's expansive and restive Anbar province west of Baghdad.

We are not in control of what is happening with this war that we

launched because there were supposedly weapons of mass destruction. We

are losing our soldiers. We are not getting Iraqi soldiers trained. The

President of the United States said we may be there for the next 10

years.

The American people have had enough. I believe that those of us who

are working in the Out of Iraq Caucus have had enough. It is time for

us to review what we are doing. It is time for us to call on this

President to tell the American people when and how we are going to get

out, and we cannot accept that we will be there until hell freezes over

if that is what it takes.

We cannot accept that all of these operations have not worked. We

cannot accept that we cannot find a way to stop these roadside

bombings. We cannot accept that we are bleeding the American taxpayer

dollars with over $1 billion a week being spent in Iraq and over $1

billion a month being spent in Afghanistan. So we come here tonight to

challenge the President and this administration.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to yield to my colleagues who have come here

to discuss this very, very serious matter with us. First, my good

friend and colleague, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. McGovern).

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts

(Mr. McGovern) for his eloquent and very thorough evaluation and

assessment of what is happening in Iraq. He has been an absolute

stalwart in trying to help bring this Congress to its senses and this

administration. And I am so pleased that he was here this evening to

further share with the American public our very, very deep concerns and

our very deep feelings.

The gentleman's call for an end to this war, I think, is right on

target. With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from

California (Ms. Woolsey) to further discuss not only her long-time

involvement with trying to help frame a direction for this Nation, her

long-time commitment to challenging this administration, about the way

that it went into this war, and what has been happening since we have

been in this war, all the work that she has done, the many nights that

she has been on the floor, the resolution that she did so well on with

this Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from California (Ms.

Woolsey) for her commitment, for her hard work, and for her sincere

desire to provide leadership for this Congress to bring our troops

home.

Mr. Speaker, you have heard from two of our hardest workers this

evening about the war in Iraq. You have heard their assessments. You

have listened to their advice.

I think it is important for us all to understand that not only have

we gone into this war under false pretenses, having the American people

believe that there were weapons of mass destruction when, in fact,

there are no weapons of mass destruction. We have gone into this war

with this administration making the American people believe that

somehow Saddam Hussein was responsible for the 9/11 attacks when that

certainly is not true. And al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden who have been

determined to be responsible are still not contained, have not been

apprehended.

The idea that somehow we must stay in Iraq because it is going to

make us safer is the kind of argument that the American people just

will not accept any more. As a matter of fact, I think the American

people understand we are less safe because we are in Iraq. We are less

safe because we have created a breeding ground for the training and

development of these insurgents. We are less safe.

While the President talks about homeland security, it takes but a

natural disaster to help Americans know that really we do not have a

handle on homeland security at all. If, in fact, we can witness what

happened to us as a result of Katrina, if we understand that not only

were we not able to handle a disaster despite the fact we have this

huge bureaucracy of homeland security under FEMA, and with all of that

people were left stranded without food, without water, still we do not

have a handle on how to get those people into temporary housing, let

alone permanent housing.

So people have to be suspicious about what would happen to us in the

event of a terrorist attack, and people have to wonder why are we

putting all of this money and all of this effort into Iraq when the

folks who were responsible for 9/11 still have not been apprehended.

People have to wonder what is it about this relationship with Saudi

Arabia, when we know that the perpetrators of 9/11 were from Saudi

Arabia, trained in the madrassas of our so-called friends, trained by

the royal family's money that helped them to learn to hate the United

States of America, yet we wrap our arms around them, we call them our

friends. And after the 9/11 attack we went to their aid, and the

members of that royal family that was in the United States of America,

we picked them up one by one. We had airplanes dispatched across this

country. We put them on those airplanes when Americans could not get on

airplanes. When airplanes were grounded, when the Vice President of the

United States could not get an airplane, we picked up the Saudis, we

put them on the airplanes. We protected them, and we got them out of

here.

We did not know whether or not they were tied to those that were

responsible to 9/11. We did not understand how the funding of some of

the so-called nonprofit operations were really funds that were going

into terrorist operations. We did not do an investigation. We did

nothing but pick them up, protect them, and send them on their way. And

we talk about homeland security. Give me a break.

We cannot trust that this administration can secure the homeland and

certainly we are spending the taxpayers dollars, billions of dollars,

billions of dollars in Iraq when perhaps we do need that money in our

ports. We need those monies in our airports. We need those monies with

helping to fund the first responders.

I have been holding emergency preparedness town halls all over my

district. What do the first responders tell us? They do not have enough

money. They do not have enough resources. They do not have the

communication systems by which in the event of an attack that the

various first responders can communicate with each other just as they

did not have it in New Orleans.

So this effort that has been put forth by this administration is not

a good one. Not only did they not plan well for the war, they never had

an exit strategy going in. They never knew how they were going to get

out. The headiness of Mr. Rumsfeld with his shock and awe campaign that

led people to believe that somehow we were going to bomb people into

submission, make people think that somehow we were protecting them from

terrorism, that we were making this country safer, somehow because of

the might of the bombs and the sophisticated artillery that somehow we

were going to make Americans believe everything was all right.

At the moment the President declared ``mission accomplished,'' the

insurgents said, now let the war begin. And, guess what? They do not

have the sophisticated technology that we have. They do not have the

resources that we have. But you know what? They are wreaking havoc on

us and our soldiers. They are killing our young people.

As it was said by some of my colleagues, it is all right to say we

will be there for as long as it takes. But whose children are we

talking about? Whose young people are we sending into war, a timeless

war, when we cannot tell the American people how we are going to get

out of it, where we never had a plan to get out of it? Whose children

are dying?

The American people are fed up with this war. They have trusted this

President and this administration long enough. Mr. President, it is

time to bring our soldiers home. It is time to get out of Iraq.

The President consistently tells the American people that we will

stand down when the Iraqis are ready to stand up. However, there is

little evidence that the Iraqis are ready to take over their security

responsibilities.

In July, the House Armed Services Committee ranking member, the

gentleman from Missouri (Mr. Skelton),

told us that he believed there were only about 5,000 trained Iraqis,

even though the Bush administration claims to have trained 170,000.

General John P. Abizaid, who leads the U.S. Central Command, told the

Senate Armed Services Committee in September that a single Iraqi

battalion was at level one combat readiness, meaning it was capable of

taking the lead in combat without support from coalition forces.

During the same testimony, General George W. Casey, Jr., who oversees

U.S. forces in Iraq, said the number of level one battalions had

dropped from three to one since June.

We cannot even get the right information, and that is why the Senate

Democrats will take the action that they took. They had to go into

closed session. They had to confront the Republicans in the Senate

about the so-called investigations, about going on to phase two, to try

and get information about what happened with our intelligence

community. What did we know and when did we know it and what did we do

about it? You cannot hide this information forever.

The tactics of this administration, misleading, not giving out all of

the information, distorting information, will come to an end; and the

retaliation against those who speak out is being unveiled now in a way

that is causing the indictments and more to come.

The fact of the matter is this administration attempted to punish

Ambassador Wilson by outing his wife, Valerie Plame. These tactics of

distortion, intimidation, misleading information, rolling out

Republican relations campaigns, all of this must come to an end.

Americans cannot stand to be misdirected. Americans can stand no longer

to be told mistruths. Americans can no longer take from their President

and this administration that kind of treatment.

So we stand here tonight to say again and again, enough is enough. We

have got to bring an end to this war. We have got to redirect our

resources back to the people of this Nation. The war in Iraq has cost

us almost $3 billion so far. The funding would provide much-needed

resources for Americans here at home for the money that we are sending

in Iraq.

Let me just give you some idea what could have been provided: Health

care for 46,458,000,805 people. Health care could have been provided

for the amount of money that we are spending. 3,545,016,000 elementary

schoolteachers could have been paid for. 27,93,000,473 Head Start

places for children. 120,351,991,000 children's health care could have

been paid for. We could have built 1,841,000,833 affordable housing

units. We could have built another 24,000,072 new elementary schools.

On and on. 39,000,665,748 scholarships for university students.

4,000,000,699 public safety officers or 3,204,000, 265 port container

inspectors. I could go on and on.

The American people deserve to have their tax dollars spent not only

to protect and secure us but to provide universal comprehensive health

care. It is unconscionable to talk about we are going to be confronted

with a pandemic but we do not have enough medicine. We do not have

enough resources. We do not have enough hospitals. We do not know how

we are going to take care of people in the event of a pandemic. It is

unconscionable to talk about how in the event of a pandemic so many

people are going to be at risk, to anticipate that so many people are

going to die.

It is unconscionable to talk about you cannot pay for Katrina or Rita

or any of these disasters that are confronting us unless we go back

into the budget and reconcile and cut the budget deeper and deeper and

deeper and do all of this while we continue to give a tax break to the

richest people in America.

We are sick and tired of these policies that do not make good sense.

We are sick and tired of the direction that is keeping us at war while

we are hurting and undermining the people of this Nation. We are sick

and tired of public policy that does not make good sense.

I am pleased that my colleague said this evening at the beginning of

their discussions, we support our soldiers. Do not forget it was really

this side of the aisle who forced the issue of protective gear for our

soldiers when we discovered that, with all of the talk from Mr.

Rumsfeld about we had enough soldiers and they had everything they

needed, and we discovered that they were over there with spit and glue,

literally trying to build protection, literally trying to figure out

ways by which to stop the bullets. It was this side of the aisle that

forced getting more money.

And we will continue to do that because we do respect, we do support

our soldiers. We love them. That is why we want them home. We want them

out of harm's way. We cannot tell them why they are there. We cannot

tell them why they are losing their lives.

Many of those young men and women went there because they are

patriotic. They believed their President. They went there because they

thought they were doing something good for their country, only to

discover that they were misled, that there are no answers.

Many of them went there because they were looking for a way out. They

were looking for ways by which to provide for their families. They were

jobless in America, in the rural communities, in the inner cities.

We have not done right by our young men and women. We have not done

right by them. We have neither provided them with the security and the

protection that they need to serve in this war, nor have we respected

their right to have the answers to the questions that they are raising.

I would like to at this time have a colloquy with my dear friend from

California who has worked so hard on this issue.

Do you believe that if we bring our soldiers home that we will be

taking the kind of action that will not only bring resources back to

this country that could be spent domestically, but in the final

analysis, we are taking them out of harm's way because if they stay

there there will be more and more deaths, and we still will not be able

to contain what perhaps is going to be a civil war anyway between the

Shiites, the Sunnis and the Kurds?

Mr. Speaker, I think the gentlewoman is absolutely

correct. As a matter of fact, they do not even talk about Osama bin

Laden anymore.

I am absolutely outraged that we put money into Pakistan. We think we

have a friend there, Musharraf; but we know that that border between

Afghanistan and Pakistan is where we have al Qaeda, is where we have

terrorists. We believe that is where Osama bin Laden is. I believe that

he is being protected by those who we are trusting in Pakistan. I

believe that we are not putting enough time and effort on that border

where we have not only the terrorists and al Qaeda, but increasingly,

the Taliban is rising again from the Afghanistan side of all of this.

So we just have a misdirected administration who has messed up

everything. They have created a crisis. Our young men and women are

dying. We are spending American taxpayers' dollars. This money is going

out of the window. We are not accomplishing anything. We are getting

ripped off in more ways than one. Halliburton is making all of its

money. They have been cheating us, and we have slapped them on the

wrist, and we have let them go.

We are sick and tired. Enough is enough, and I would like to say to

the gentlewoman from California, if you have one last word in this 1

minute or so, please.