Mr. Speaker, the time has come for the United States

military to leave Iraq. Even though I was not a supporter of our role

in Iraq in the first place, this is not a statement that I make

lightly, nor is it a decision that I arrived at easily. But now, more

than ever, I am convinced that it is the right decision.

Not all Members of Congress supported the war in Iraq, but we all

have to live with its consequences. The global havoc wreaked by this

war will affect the world in ways that we can only imagine. And as I

said, as someone who did not support the invasion of Iraq from the

outset, I still believed at first, once we had invaded them, that the

United States had a moral responsibility to assist the Iraqi people as

they struggled to rebuild their war-torn country.

But it has become all too clear now that the presence of the nearly

150,000 American soldiers in Iraq, rather than helping to bring about

stability and political independence, is actually stifling the

country's ability to develop into a flourishing democracy. That is why

tomorrow I will introduce legislation calling for a withdrawal of U.S.

military forces from Iraq.

I believe that it is the presence in Iraq of our military that has

engendered so much hatred of the United States throughout the Muslim

world. We talk of holding free elections in Iraq, but we cannot hold

free elections when the very country yearning to be free is under the

thumb of more than 150,000 foreign troops. Democracy cannot be forced

from the barrel of a gun.

Instead of issuing an arbitrary date for holding elections, why not

let the Iraqi people themselves determine when they are ready to knock

on democracy's door? That way, at least we

would adhere to the very democratic principles we are trying to export

to the Middle East.

There are some that say we need to remain in Iraq until we are sure

we have destroyed every last remnant of Iraqi's growing insurgency. The

United States has faced this kind of elusive enemy before, in places

like Vietnam in the 1970s and the Philippines in the early 1900s. We

learned then and we should know now that this is a battle that we

cannot win, because it is a battle that is not fought on a traditional

battlefield.

Bullets will not win this war, because for every insurgent killed,

three more sign up to fill his shoes. The suicide bombers of tomorrow

are born from the bombed-out homes of Iraq's war zones of today. We

have to be smarter than the insurgents if we wish to see a free and

democratic Iraq.

In the end, withdrawing our forces is the smarter option. This is not

a suggestion that our troops have failed. It is an acknowledgment that

the military option itself has failed us. It is a recognition that we

need to address the root causes of the Iraq insurgency instead of

watching America become further bogged down in an unwinnable war.

In the 108th Congress I introduced a SMART Security Resolution for

the 21st Century which called for a Sensible, Multilateral, American

Response to Terrorism. Adopting this type of foreign policy will help

us avoid the many mistakes that have been characterized in the war in

Iraq.

SMART security calls for the United States to address the root causes

of terrorism by engaging our international partners and the

humanitarian community in international reconstruction and political

transition processes.

SMART security calls for increased developmental aid programs,

integrated with peace-building and conflict-resolution measures. By

withdrawing U.S. military forces from Iraq, we can spend some of the

billions of dollars which formerly paid for military operations on

humanitarian projects for the Iraqi people, such as new schools for

Iraq's children, water desalination plants and improved economic and

civil infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, the United States must stop engaging in a reckless

national security strategy, because our current path only encourages

further terrorist activities. It costs Americans in our taxes, in our

loss of our loved ones. It costs our international reputation, and it

makes our troops sitting ducks.

It is time we pursue the SMART security strategy for America. That is

the best way to secure Iraq, and it is the best way to keep America

safe and secure for the future. If we do not, all we will be left with

is the consequences of our current failed policies.