Let me thank the gentleman for yielding and also for your

leadership and for that very powerful statement. And I want to thank

you for reminding the country that this is one-party rule, and that

there are no checks and balances, and that, unfortunately, there is no

accountability.

I appreciate the opportunity to participate with you tonight, and

again thank you very much for calling this special order and for Iraq

Watch.

This week has been the fifth anniversary of the tragic terrorist

attacks of September 11, 2001, and we should be commemorating the lives

of those who died. We should be coming together as a Nation to grieve

and to remember the men, women, and children who lost their lives that

day. We should be honoring the courage and the heroism of our first

responders and those who put themselves in harm's way to help others.

But, instead, as we have seen, Republicans are politicizing this

solemn anniversary by shamelessly attempting to hide the

administration's failure to make our Nation safer, and, quite frankly,

failing to hold accountable those who perpetrated the attacks, and that

is Osama bin Laden.

Bin Laden is still at large. He is alive and well. The Taliban is

resurgent in Afghanistan. Why? Because the Bush administration pulled

troops out of Afghanistan to send them to Iraq. But Iraq had nothing to

do with 9/11. The President, as you said earlier, has admitted this.

Now, the members of the Out of Iraq Caucus have been saying that even

before we went into this illegal, immoral, and unnecessary war. There

were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, and we knew this. During

the debate on the authorization to use force, if you remember, I

offered an amendment that merely said let the United Nations complete

its inspections process. Now, had that amendment passed, lives would

have been saved, Iraq would not be what it is today, and that is a

terrorist training ground, and America would not have lost its standing

in the world.

Congresswoman Maxine Waters, Congresswoman Woolsey, Congressman

Hinchey, and many others participated in the Downing Street memo

hearings, where it was revealed and exposed and demonstrated factually

that the administration concocted the intelligence and used what they

had to cherrypick and fix the facts as they saw it to justify this war

and invasion. Hundreds of thousands of people around our country signed

petitions. We delivered those petitions to the White House saying this

war should end; that there were no weapons of mass destruction; that

this was wrong and that we should get out.

And last Friday, the bipartisan Senate Intelligence Committee report

refuted one of the administration's key justifications for going to war

in Iraq; the claim that Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda had ties in

planning 9/11. There was no connection between them and, again, the

Senate Intelligence Committee, bipartisan committee, said that.

The war in Iraq is a war of choice by this administration. And what

has resulted? This war and the continuing occupation has created a

terrorist training ground in the heart of the Middle East. It has

really created and fueled more anti-American sentiment and has been a

powerful recruiting tool for terrorists. It has emboldened Iran and

North Korea. It has diverted our focus and resources from pursuing

Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda. It has cost us the lives of 2,700 brave

men and women, with over 20,000 wounded, and Iraqi civilians dead. We

have committed over $400 billion to this war and this occupation has

now fueled a civil war. It has left our military overstretched and

unable to respond to crises in other areas.

I tell you, the bottom line is our Nation now is less safe due to

this unnecessary war in Iraq. The 9/11 Commission has given the Bush

administration and this Republican Congress D's and F's in terms of how

we have moved forward in keeping our Nation safe and implementing these

recommendations.

There can be no ``stay the course'' in a no-win occupation. There can

be no ``stay the course'' as long as our troops remain the target of

the insurgency. We must go in a new direction. We have to bring our

troops home and end this occupation. And when they come home, we must

make sure that they all come home and ensure there be no permanent

military bases in Iraq.

Eighty-four percent of America's top national security experts have

said that America is not winning this war on terror. So it is time that

we stop misleading the American people by trying to convince them that

the horrific events of 9/11 were somehow connected to the war in Iraq

and to Saddam Hussein. They are not. It is time to bring our troops

home.

It is time to support Congresswoman Woolsey's H.R. 5875 and revoke

the War Powers Act, or the war powers authorization that this House and

the Senate gave to the President.

Let me just thank you again for your calling this special

hour and for allowing all of us to participate, and also for reminding

us that as we promote democracy abroad, especially in Iraq, we are

shutting it down here in America.