Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend for yielding.

I want to thank my good friend and colleague from the Bay Area,

Barbara Lee, for bringing this timely legislation before us today.

The last thing Congress and the American people want in Iraq is to

keep U.S. troops there permanently. We need a rational and reasonable

exit strategy. Yet the administration has signaled that it intends,

instead, to put down roots in Iraqi soil, soil that is already soaked

with the blood of our soldiers and countless Iraqis.

Mr. Speaker, enough is enough. Building huge military bases in Iraq

to last the ages is not the answer. We want to bring our servicemen and

servicewomen home to Nebraska and Idaho and California. Our legislation

will prohibit spending funds to establish permanent military bases in

Iraq, and I support it wholeheartedly.

Let me be clear. This measure does not prohibit us from protecting

our embassy and other vital interests and fighting terrorism. It only

ensures that our troops do not put down permanent roots.

The administration has drawn a parallel between our proposed,

sustained presence in Iraq and the U.S. obligation to South Korea after

the Korean War. Mr. Speaker, we have been in South Korea for more than

54 years, and I hope we won't be as long as that in Iraq.

The Korean peninsula for over half a century was vital to our

security interests during the Cold War, but Iraq is not Korea. It is

now beyond question that our national security is being harmed, not

helped, by our continuing vast footprint in Iraq.

As long as huge numbers of our forces are there, the Iraqi Government

will limp along, failing to undertake the far-reaching political and

security changes desperately needed to promote lasting stability in

that long-suffering country.

And it will only anger the Iraqi people to promote the erroneous

impression that our troops will be there permanently. In fact, a

commitment not

to establish permanent bases may facilitate an earlier, safer, more

orderly exit, as it will reassure Iraqis that our intention is not to

have a permanent presence in that country.

I, therefore, strongly support this resolution to ensure that the

administration heads in the right direction in Iraq.