Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution.

Let me note, I have all along argued, and I think the people on our

side of the aisle have argued, that we are not in Iraq in order to have

permanent bases or any other such thing. American efforts in Iraq have

been totally based on benevolent and noble motives, and I would hope

that this is well-understood and appreciated by the people of Iraq

themselves.

The fact is that there is some confusion because, during the public

debate on what American foreign policy should be, far too often we have

heard in the hype of emotions the charges, even from people in this

body, that America is being imperialistic. I mean, that word

``imperialism'' has actually sprung up in several hearings that I've

been at as a Member of Congress. That is an insult to American military

personnel. We can honestly disagree about what's going on in Iraq

without having to debase the people of the United States of America by

claiming we're imperialists like the former empires in Russia and

Germany, et cetera.

No, I think we've been benevolent from the beginning. Our people

wanted to come in, to liberate Iraq from a bloody tyrant who

slaughtered hundreds of thousands of his own people. We came there to

help the people of Iraq and hopefully establish a democratic

government. Now, whether or not we succeed or not, I'm not sure. I

would hope the majority of people in Iraq appreciate that, and today,

we are reaffirming to them we are not there to have any permanent

presence.

I, in fact, will be proposing legislation this coming week which

suggests, as a sense of the House, and I would ask the Speaker of the

House to be aware of this, that we need to have a sense of the House

resolution calling on the Iraqi Government to have a referendum of

whether they want the American troops that are there today to begin an

immediate withdrawal or whether they would like American troops to stay

there until order has been restored and order has been brought to the

people of Iraq. I think that if the Iraqi people vote that we should

have an immediate withdrawal, we should go. We should go. But if the

people of Iraq decide they appreciate and want us to be there to help

them fight off radical Islamists and others who would impose their

brand of dictatorship on the people of Iraq, well, then, perhaps we

should take into consideration that the Iraqi people want us there.

So I will be proposing legislation later on in the week calling for

this referendum, and in the meantime, let us reaffirm with this

legislation that it had never been the intent of the United

States of America to use Iraq as a permanent base for America's

military presence in that region.

I thank you very much for your leadership, Madam Speaker. Thank you

for your leadership in this, and I appreciate you are an activist.

Since I've been in this Congress, you have always been an activist, and

we have been on the same side in that activism.