Mr. Speaker, the United States invasion and occupation

of Iraq violate America's core values of honesty, responsibility,

security, justice and freedom. This has been a dishonest war from the

word go. The President said he had hard evidence of weapons of mass

destruction in Iraq. It turns out he did not. To date, no weapons of

mass destruction have been found. The President himself has officially

called off the hunt.

Irresponsible behavior has been a guiding principle of the

administration's behavior in leading the Nation to war in Iraq.

Specifically, what has been the response of our leaders when they have

been exposed for misleading the country, or for sending American men

and women to their deaths without imminent threat to American security,

or what has been the response for keeping our National Guard troops in

Iraq for many months longer than they had agreed, or for signing off on

orders that led to torture in American prisons?

Our leaders do not take responsibility for their failures. Instead,

they change the subject, make excuses, or worst of all, blame an

underling. Not a single administration official has resigned as a

result of the mistakes that led us into this misguided and dangerous

war. George Tenet received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, Alberto

Gonzales and Condoleezza Rice are up for promotion, and Donald Rumsfeld

is still the Secretary of Defense, although if he traveled to Germany,

he could possibly be arrested as a war criminal.

The Iraq invasion has made the Middle East a more violent and

unstable place, and it has made America less secure at home by creating

a terrorist breeding ground in a country that was not a haven for

Islamic fundamentalists before we invaded it. It seems too ironic to be

true, but after our Nation was attacked on 9/11 by Islamic

fundamentalists, the Bush administration's response was to bomb and

kill civilians in one of the few countries in the Middle East that was

actually inhospitable to Islamic fundamentalists.

Speaking of justice, there is no justice in an operation that has

caused the deaths of over 1,400 Americans and untold thousands of

Iraqis for the purely ideological reason that our leader did not like

their leader. Nor do we serve the cause of freedom by killing innocent

people in a country that did not ask for our help, by destroying a

nation's roads, schools and hospitals; and in the process we have

created a playground for Islamic fundamentalists.

Freedom is very important to Americans, and I believe that the

President's recent inaugural address made a mockery of the word

``freedom.'' He should ask the people of Iraq, many of whom have

suffered because they lost a loved one or had a friend maimed by

foreign bullets, just how free do they feel today.

Some say that we have a responsibility to the people of Iraq to keep

our troops there, that we not abandon them. This belief misses the

point. Our very presence in Iraq is the cause of much of the violence.

We have a moral responsibility to leave in order to stem the

violence. We owe this to the people of Iraq, who have been killed by

the thousands and thousands. We owe it to our troops who are sitting

ducks for terrorists. That is why later today I will introduce

legislation calling for a withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Iraq.

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

For the 21st Century, which calls for a sensible, multilateral American

response to terrorism. Adopting a smart approach to foreign policy will

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

Iraq.

By supporting my call to bring the troops home, we will send a

message to the President, one, asking that he develop and implement a

plan to begin the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq; two,

develop and implement a plan for the reconstruction of Iraq's civil and

economic infrastructure; three, convene an emergency meeting of Iraq's

leadership, Iraq's neighbors, the United Nations, and the Arab League

to create an international peacekeeping force in Iraq and to replace

U.S. military forces with Iraqi police and national guard forces to

ensure Iraq's security; and, finally, take all necessary steps to

provide the Iraqi people the opportunity to completely control their

own internal affairs.

Mr. Speaker, it is time we pursued a SMART security strategy for

America, and we must do this by withdrawing our troops from Iraq. It is

not too late to make the smart choice, the right choice, the choice to

bring our troops home.