

The Constitution is clear. When you are fighting a war, you need one leader. When you are fighting a war, you leave it to the professionals, you leave it to the generals, you leave it to the colonels, you leave it to the men and women that are trained to do this, not bring it on the House floor. And as I said and as The Washington Post has said, trying to micromanage this war is the wrong thing to do for the Iraqi people, it is the wrong thing to do for the American people, and it is the wrong thing to do for the men and women that are in harm's way.

So I hope we are able to come together on this House floor and strip out many of those things that are in here that just make it unworkable and bad for the American people and the military.

MARKING THE END OF THE 4TH YEAR OF THE OCCUPATION OF IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ALTMIRE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, the purpose of my coming to the floor this evening, along with a number of my friends and colleagues on this side of the aisle, is to mark the fact that tomorrow will be the 4th year that our military forces instigated by the administration have attacked Iraq and engaged in what the administration has called a war in that country. Most people now have come to realize that we are not engaged in a war in Iraq, but we are engaged now in an occupation, the consequences of which are proving to be increasingly disastrous.

At 10:15 p.m. on March 19, 2003, in a televised address to the Nation, President Bush announced the start of what he refers to as "the war in Iraq."

□ 2115

The way in which the administration attempted to justify that attack has been a grave consequence for the United States, both internally and around the world. The President, of course, and others in his administration contended that there was a connection between Iraq and the attack that took place in New York and at the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, that Iraq was somehow involved in that attack, when all of the evidence and information indicated that that was not the case.

In spite of that, the administration continued to make that allegation. They then went on to say that it was important that the United States invade Iraq for the safety of our country and for the safety of others because Iraq was a country that possessed what they referred to as "weapons of mass destruction," alleging that there was substantial amounts of chemical and biological weapons in Iraq.

They then went on to assert that Iraq had a nuclear weapons program, and the President of the United States in a 2003 State of the Union Address to a joint session of Congress and to the Nation here in this House asserted that the British Government had learned that Iraq had imported enriched uranium from Niger. When he included that sentence in his State of the Union Address, he was very much aware that the intelligence agencies in our country had said that there was no proof that that was the case. In fact, they had examined the documents upon which those assertions were being made, and they found those documents which had been stolen from the Nigerian Embassy in Rome were, in fact, forged.

So what we have here is an unnecessary and unjustified and consequently illegal attack on another country and a subsequent disastrous occupation which has gone on now for 4 years, and we will be beginning the fifth year starting tomorrow.

As a result of this occupation, over 3,200 American servicemen and women have been killed in Iraq since our invasion over 4 years ago. Over 24,000 troops have been wounded in action in Iraq, and the number of Iraqis killed is unknown, but the estimates range as high as 200,000 Iraqi civilians, mostly women and children, who have been killed in that country as a result of the military action.

We are spending now about \$275 million per day in Iraq. More than \$8 billion every month is being spent in that country. And as the Speaker of the House noted earlier this evening in her speech on the floor, at least \$10 billion of that money is completely unaccounted for, and much of the rest has been spent in ways that have not been productive, but have been extraordinarily wasteful.

The President in January called for what he referred to as a surge of nearly 30,000 additional soldiers into Iraq. So far that has amounted to 21,500 additional troops that have gone to Iraq in January, and 4,400 more just two weeks ago.

The circumstances there continue to deteriorate as a result of the corrupt and incompetent way in which this illegal invasion and subsequent occupation have been carried out by this administration.

Roughly half of all of the ground equipment that the U.S. Army owns is now located in Iraq and Afghanistan. Since the invasion, the Army has lost nearly 2,000 wheeled vehicles and more than 1,000 armed vehicles. To make matters worse, according to the GAO, the Army has not been keeping accurate track of what they have and what they need to reset the force, and they cannot provide sufficient detail for Congress to provide effective oversight.

Between 75,000 and 100,000 pieces of National Guard equipment worth nearly \$2 billion are now located in Iraq and Afghanistan. This is equipment that is

needed by the National Guard here in our country to carry out the obligations and responsibilities of the National Guard around the United States. And they are now increasingly being deprived of their ability to carry out their responsibilities and obligations because of the loss of their equipment.

The Regular Army has lost so much equipment which has not been replaced that they are now using the equipment of the National Guard to replace the equipment that they have lost and which this administration has failed to provide replacements for.

We have a situation that is confronting us now in Iraq which is increasingly damaging, dangerous, and on the verge of being disastrous for our country as well as for others in the Middle East.

We need this Congress to assert its obligations and responsibilities to oversee the activities of this administration, and that is clearly necessary because all through the 4 years during which this illegal invasion took place followed by this occupation, there has not been any significant oversight by this Congress, which, of course, was controlled by the Republican majority for all of that period of time.

Now that we have a Democratic majority in Congress, that oversight is beginning. Appropriate hearings are being conducted both in this House and in the Senate, and more and more information concerning the way in which this operation has been carried out is being made available to the American people, and as a result of that, more and more people across the country are realizing what a disaster this has been. More and more Americans are understanding how they were intentionally and purposefully misled and deceived by this administration in order to carry out this invasion which had absolutely nothing to do with the attack of September 11, and which cannot be justified in any way whatsoever.

This action is unlawful, and appropriate oversight and supervision based upon detailed and focused hearings by this Congress is now absolutely necessary.

We have with us this evening several of my colleagues who are interested in speaking about this issue, and I would now like to recognize my very good friend from Ohio, who will address the House at this time.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY) for his superb remarks and for his organizing this Special Order in order to express our opinions on behalf of our troops and for a course correction in Iraq and the Middle East in general.

When you think about it, we are being asked this week to vote an additional \$100 billion in what is called a supplemental, mainly to escalate the war in Iraq, and the money we are voting on will be just for today until the end of September of this year. This \$100 billion is put on top of what has already been appropriated to be spent on

the war, and it is typical of this administration's mishandling the war and its accounting, always underestimating every year what it will really cost to carry out the activities.

If you look at the chart that shows what we are spending in Iraq, it is absolutely escalating every single year.

The best advice we were given on a recent trip to Iraq, Afghanistan and the region was from our generals, who said: What does victory mean? Victory means one-third military, two-thirds diplomacy and good governance. The two-thirds is missing. So, therefore, we are asking our soldiers to bear all of the burden of a flawed strategy for Iraq and the surrounding regions that is ripening terrorism in every single country, and we are losing respect. The coalition of the willing has dried up. The neighbors of Iraq have not been convened in a constructive way, and we watch other nations in the region border on destabilization because of what we are doing in Iraq.

My deep concern is that the violence could spill over into Jordan, Turkey, Bahrain, Kuwait, Pakistan, Lebanon, even Saudi Arabia. And so America has to face a strategic challenge much larger than Iraq, and the administration is not leading us there.

This evening I wanted to say a word about the theater in which Iraq is operating. She is not alone. So many of our soldiers, our patriotic brave soldiers, are in Iraq, and they are the finest military in the world, but they exist in a sea of discontent. And I would like to say that the face of terrorism that we see springs from a view, fair or not, that the United States allies with the rich but not the poor across the undemocratic Islamic world. And how can America stand for democracy in Iraq, but not in all of the oil kingdoms and theocracies to which our Nation has been tethered for most of the last century and now into this century?

Why would I say that? I would say that because recent polls in the region show exactly that. It shows that America is viewed as not on the side of rising popular expectations for a more democratic way of life. Rather, we are seen as tethered to an old power structure where the poor remain poor, and the rich, outlandishly rich, and becoming more so; and where religion has become the metaphor for political change of those excluded economically and politically.

Unfortunately, the Gallup poll shows how harshly the United States is viewed across the region. Right or not, the people there view us as a promiscuous culture in moral decay, and Abu Ghraib affirmed their views.

If we look at our closest ally, Turkey, a valued ally of ours for over 50 years in NATO, the disapproval rating of our country has risen from 48 percent in 2000, and we weren't doing so well back then, to 88 percent this year. So 88 percent of the citizens of Turkey disagree and disapprove of what we are doing.

The ruling secular party of Turkey has lost control of its Parliament, and now at the local level who is winning elections in Turkey? Parties that are tending more and more religious. And I am not saying that the religious parties of Turkey are like those of Pakistan or Saudi Arabia, but we have to recognize what is happening across the region as America falls into disrepute.

In Pakistan, home to tens of thousands of madrassas, schools funded by Wahabi donors from Saudi Arabia, young boys are being turned out by the thousands to revenge against America.

America's favorability ratings in Pakistan have fallen to 27 percent. When we were visiting Pakistan a few weeks ago, a female Parliamentarian was assassinated on the western side of the country, people who are trying to relate to the broader world outside of Pakistan.

In Egypt, which signed a peace treaty with Israel three decades ago, 70 percent of the public unfavorably views the United States. And more than 90 members of the anti-American Muslim Brotherhood were elected to Parliament recently, and that Parliament has about as many members as we do. So 90-plus members is a significant number in the Egyptian Parliament.

I could go down the list. King Abdullah of Jordan was here a couple of weeks ago. What did he ask us for? Peace now, time is short; peace now, time is short. The U.S. favorability rating in Jordan dropped to 15 percent. Are we paying attention to what is going on?

My dear colleague Mr. HINCHEY talked about Saudi Arabia, where the majority of 9/11 terrorists had come from. The United States is disliked by three-quarters of the people in Saudi Arabia. So we look at our troops inside of Iraq because the Commander in Chief of this country sent them there, but if we look at what is happening in the region, America is not winning.

One of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle just said, just measure the body count. Measure the American losses as a sign of how well we are doing.

It is taking us twice as much money every year just to keep the body count where it is now. Look at the casualties. Look at the Iraqi casualties that no one wants to talk about. Look at what is happening in the region. We are not being successful in the war on terrorism, as hard as our soldiers try, because they cannot do it alone.

□ 2130

Why are we asking the military to bear the full burden when the diplomatic channels of this government have crashed?

Can you believe that the neighbors of Iraq have not been assembled by our Secretary of State in any constructive way now going on 4 years? Unbelievable.

Can you believe that we have allowed nations with which we have been

friends for 50 years just to fester at the end of a failed diplomatic pipeline?

The President's job is not just to be Commander in Chief. It is to be Diplomat in Chief for this country, and yet across that region we see ties that have been forged by this country for generations just ripped into shreds. What a tragedy.

I was thinking yesterday, I grew up in an era when John Kennedy talked about the Peace Corps and the great alliance for progress across Latin America. Look at the Latin Americans demonstrating against the United States.

We cannot ask our soldiers to fill a gap, a failed diplomacy and failed politics across the region. The world wants change. The world is begging us for change. The world is demonstrating for change. It just is not America that is demonstrating for change.

So this evening, Mr. Speaker, I would thank my colleague so very much for allowing me some time to talk about regaining America's standing in the world by correcting what has gone wrong in Iraq.

I just might end by saying today in USA Today there was a major story of Poland, people risking their lives going to Iraq, asking the Iraqi people what they think. What it shows is compared to 2005, just a couple years ago, when 71 percent of people in Iraq said their life was fairly good, today it has dropped to 39 percent.

In Baghdad, where so many of our soldiers are being sent, what percentage of the people rate their basic household needs as being served by the current regime? You know what the number is? Zero. Zero. Fallen in the last 2 years from 78 percent of their basic household needs. That is like food, water, down to zero.

Electricity, you know what percent of the people in Baghdad say their service is good? Zero. Zero, down from only half in 2005.

What about clean water? In 2005, 68 percent said they could get clean water. You know what the number is? Zero.

How can this be good? How can America win this? How can we ask our soldiers to fill a failed policy? Our soldiers will do anything we ask them to do. We have the best military in the world. We have the most committed generals, the most committed soldiers. We love every single one of them, but we do not want to give them a mission impossible in a sea of discontent where the Diplomat in Chief has abdicated his responsibility to them and to the kind of strategy that can win America friends again.

I thank the gentleman for yielding to me, and it is a real privilege to be able to participate in this Special Order this evening.

Mr. HINCHEY. Thank you very much. I very much appreciate the statement that was just made by our colleague from Ohio, MARCY KAPTUR, the respect that she has given to our military, appropriately so, and her examination of the consequences that we

are confronting now in Iraq as a result of the incompetent way in which this administration has dealt with the political and economic circumstances there in that country.

I would like now to yield time to my friend and colleague from New York, JOHN HALL.

Mr. HALL of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank very much Congressman HINCHEY and thank Congresswoman KAPTUR for her remarks.

Today marks the start of the 5th year of the war in Iraq; and as I begin my statement, I want to recognize the honorable service of the men and women who have served our country in Iraq. I want to honor the memories of the 3,188 servicemembers who have given their lives in Iraq, including five men from my district and over 50 officers of the United States Army who graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point, which I am proud is in my district. While I believe the war in Iraq has been a mistake, I deeply respect the honor and integrity of those who have given their lives following the orders of their Commander in Chief.

In light of the sacrifices of so many of our men and women in uniform, it saddens me that I have to come to the floor of the House of Representatives and say I believe this war has been a strategic blunder in our efforts to fight terrorism.

On September 11, our Nation was attacked and many people from my district, including police and firefighters, died at the World Trade Center. The United States correctly responded by pursuing those responsible for 9/11 in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, this administration decided to change its focus and start a war of choice with Iraq, a country which had not attacked us and was not an imminent threat to the United States.

Now our military is trapped in the middle of a civil war instead of pursuing Osama bin Laden, Mullah Mohammed Omar, and other al Qaeda affiliates throughout the world responsible for 9/11 and other similar attacks and groups planning to attack the United States again.

Because we are focused in Iraq, the progress made in Afghanistan is slipping. The Karzai government does not control the territory outside its own capital. We see an increase in the drug trade that funds regional warlords. The Taliban emerges at night to terrorize the local population, and our military expects increasing attacks throughout this spring. However, because of our continuing overcommitment in Iraq, the United States has little ability to increase its troop numbers in Afghanistan and respond to that deteriorating situation.

While the administration and its allies say we are battling the terrorists in Iraq, the United States intelligence agencies say otherwise. The National Intelligence Estimate released in April 2006 stated: "The Iraq conflict has be-

come a 'cause celebre' for jihadists, breeding a deep resentment of U.S. involvement in the Muslim world and cultivating supporters for the global jihadist movement." Iraq is not the central front in the war on terror as the President likes to say. Instead, it is a rallying point, a recruiting poster that Osama bin Laden uses to recruit more terrorists.

The war in Iraq has seriously weakened our military. A recent report found that 90 percent of our National Guard youths are rated "not ready" to respond to a national disaster or terrorist attack in the United States. Further, in order to meet their recruitment goals, the military has lowered the minimum standards for being accepted into the service, and our military faces a crippling loss of mid-level officers as larger and larger numbers decide not to reenlist and face multiple deployments.

It is time for a new direction. Our intelligence agencies know it, our military commanders know it, and the American people demanded it last November. General Petraeus, commanding general in Iraq, stated on March 8: "There is no military solution to a problem like that in Iraq, to the insurgency of Iraq." And just last week, Pentagon analysts admitted that the war in Iraq is a civil war.

Unfortunately, our President refuses to face reality and the will of the American people. He wants to put more troops in the middle of a civil war. He wants an open-ended commitment to keep combat troops in Iraq indefinitely. He wants to leave the problem of Iraq to the next President. And, once again, he has returned to Congress and asked for another blank check to continue this misguided war. Unlike the President, this Congress will face reality and realize that we must change direction in Iraq.

Some of our colleagues speaking earlier from the other side of the floor criticized us for trying to, as they say, micromanage the war. There cannot be 435 or 535 Commanders in Chief. We would not need to take this kind of action to manage or, if you will, micromanage the war if the President and Commander in Chief were doing his job, if the leadership were coming from the top, as our structure of government ordinarily calls for it to come.

But because there is a vacuum in the top, because the President has continued to disregard or turn a blind eye to the reality of what is happening, not only around the world, as our Congresswoman just mentioned, in terms of the reputation of the United States, which ultimately in the long term is what will determine our security, our reputation, the approval of the United States and its policies by other peoples and other countries around the world will ultimately determine in the long run how secure we are, we do not have enough money to spend our way into security if we continue to make more enemies and lose our friends.

General Petraeus is correct. We need a political solution to the war in Iraq instead of a military escalation. It is time for a diplomatic surge. The United States must push the Iraqi Government to meet its commitments that it made to its partners in Iraq. It is time the United States reached out to our allies in the region and throughout the world.

By requiring the Iraqi Government to achieve a list of objectives and establishing a timetable for U.S. involvement in Iraq, we can end the culture of dependency developing in Iraq. We can make the Iraqi Government stand up and take control of its own fate. If they do that, we will stick by them. We will help them train police and military forces and rebuild their country. If they are unwilling or unable to take that responsibility, we will know that the United States does not have a serious partner in Iraq.

If we are to defeat the people who did attack our country on September 11, those who continue to seek to destroy us, we must pivot away from Iraq and back to Afghanistan and al Qaeda, the people who actually attacked us. We must draw down in Iraq and let our military redeploy, rebuild, and refocus.

The United States faces a gravely serious threat, and we must be prepared to defeat it. Our 4-year involvement in Iraq has seriously endangered our ability to do that. At home, our National Guard has been undermined. It is unprepared to respond to a terrorist attack or a natural disaster. Abroad, our military forces are stretched thin and unable to shift quickly.

If we really want to defeat Osama bin Laden, al Qaeda and the other terrorist groups that seek to kill us, we must return our attention to that war and leave the civil war we currently face in Iraq to the Iraqis. If we rebuild our forces and refocus on the threats in Afghanistan, Pakistan and throughout southeast Asia, we will be able to truly defeat our enemies and truly protect the United States of America.

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and friend JOHN HALL from New York for his strong presentation and for joining us this evening in this discussion about this critical issue.

I would now like to recognize my friend and colleague from California, BARBARA LEE.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for calling this Special Order tonight and for your leadership.

Today marks the fourth anniversary of the invasion and bombing of Iraq. It is a solemn occasion that reminds me with a very heavy heart of our brave troops who we want to protect and who we want to bring home.

As the occupation now enters its 5th year, it is really an appropriate time to review some of the history. It is also an appropriate time to recall that the case for this war was false.

All the talk about aluminum tubes and yellowcake, remember that? Right.

Colin Powell's dramatic presentation to the United Nations? I still wonder why such a distinguished Secretary of State would do that.

The fact is there was no connection to al Qaeda. There were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, and there was no connection between the horrific events of 9/11 and Saddam Hussein in Iraq.

Some of us opposed the war from the beginning. In fact, if my amendment to the authorization to use force had been used 4 years ago, the United Nations inspectors would have had the opportunity to finish their job and confirm what we believed and some of us knew at that time, what the world now knows, namely, that Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction.

□ 2145

It is an appropriate time now to review the disaster that has taken place in Iraq, so that the administration does not rewrite this tragic history, and also to put the administration on notice and in check from starting a preemptive war against Iran, which many see as looming. It's appropriate tonight to review this history because the administration who brought us this debacle would now like us to accept an open-ended commitment to it.

Why is it appropriate for us to remind the country of all of this tonight? Because the same people, the same administration who brought us this disaster are now asking us to trust them again. They are saying that we should give the President another chance. They are saying, in effect, that our commitment to supporting their failed policies should be open-ended.

Think about that for a minute. The people in this administration who have been wrong about every single major decision about this war are now trying to make it seem unreasonable to suggest that we should not continue to write blank checks to support this debacle.

Well, it is not unreasonable. That is where the American people are on this issue. They know better. It is time for this unfortunate chapter of our history to close. It is time to end the occupation of Iraq and bring our troops home.

At various points the administration has told us that the mission has been accomplished, that we were turning the corner, or that the insurgency was in its last throes. As we now know, those pronouncements were all false.

The truth is that the administration's conduct of this war has been nothing short of shameful. We may never know how many of the roadside bombs that kill our troops every day are made from explosives looted from weapons depots that were left unguarded because the administration chose to ignore the advice of our military commanders on how many troops would be needed. Whatever the number is, it is too many.

It is an appropriate time tonight to review the cost of the administration's

failed policy in Iraq. The human cost of this occupation has been terrible. More than 3,200 United States servicemen and women have died, and more than 32,000 have been wounded. That is an average of 67 deaths and 500 wounded every month, not to mention the death and injuries of countless Iraqis.

The financial cost is unsustainable. Already we have spent more than \$400 billion on this invasion and occupation. We are averaging more than \$8 billion per month. That is staggering.

The cost of our security has been devastating. The Bush administration's military and foreign policy doctrine of preemptive war, like you can start a war based on perceived future threats, this was supposed to solve the problem posed by the so-called axis of evil.

Four years after putting the doctrine to test in Iraq, the results are in, and it is a total failure. Iraq posed no imminent threat to our security, but today the vast majority of our security resources are bogged down in Iraq. North Korea has obtained nuclear weapons, something the doctrine was to prevent, and Iran is empowered and emboldened. The occupation is undermining our efforts to fight international terrorism.

According to the National Intelligence Estimate of April 2006, and this is in their words, they said the Iraq conflict has been the cause celebre for jihadists, breeding a deep resentment of the United States involvement in the Muslim world and cultivating supporters for the global jihadist movement. Now, this is what the National Intelligence Estimate said.

Furthermore, the toll that the occupation is taking on our Armed Forces is stretching the military beyond the breaking point. The Washington Post reported today that Army and Marine officials are referring to a readiness death spiral in which the ever more rapid pace of war zone rotations has consumed 40 percent of the total gear, wearied troops, and left no time to train to fight anything other than insurgents now at hand.

The administration likes to talk about the situation in Iraq in terms of winning and losing, because it is convenient to portray critics of their policies as opposed to victory or supportive of defeat. The fact is you cannot win an occupation, just as there is no way for the United States to win an Iraqi civil war.

The Bush administration understands this just as they understand that there are no pretty or clean options for bringing a responsible end to our policy there. They are content to mouth the words of victory while they try to run out the clock, playing a cynical game of political chicken, where whoever acts to bring a responsible end to their failed policy will be accused of having lost Iraq.

The trouble is, though, that an average of 67 troops die in Iraq each month, and 500 are wounded, and we can't forget that. As General Petraeus and the

Iraq Study Group both pointed out, there is no military solution to this civil war and occupation. For me, the cost of going along with the President's escalation charade and risking our brave young men and women's lives is way too high. It's time to bring this war and occupation to an end. It's time for military measures to be replaced with diplomacy and engagement with Iraq's neighbors. It's time to take the target off our troops' back and to bring them home.

Thank you, Mr. HINCHEY, for this Special Order tonight, and let's hope the American people raise their voices loudly and clearly with regard to what is taking place with this war and bring it to an end very soon.

Mr. HINCHEY. I thank you for your very articulate expression of all of those facts, your leadership here and for joining us this evening.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to recognize my friend from California (Ms. WOOLSEY).

Ms. WOOLSEY. First of all, I would like to thank the gentleman from New York for this Special Order and for including me and allowing me to speak once again on this House floor about this war and this occupation of Iraq.

On the evening of March 19, 2003, speaking from the Oval Office, the President of the United States started his address to the Nation with these very words, and I quote him.

"My fellow citizens, at this hour, American and coalition forces are in the early stages of military operations to disarm Iraq, to free its people and to defend the world from grave danger." Here we are, 4 years later, and it's fair to ask, indeed, it's incumbent upon us to ask, have we disarmed Iraq?

Well, first off, as we all know, there are no weapons of mass destruction to disarm, so that whole entire premise was flawed.

The question we have to ask is have we made Iraq safer? We may have deposed Saddam Hussein, but with insurgents, militias and vigilantes terrorizing Iraqi neighborhoods, some of them with the tacit support of the Iraqi Government, it's impossible to say we have disarmed Iraq or made its people and communities more secure.

Have we freed Iraq's people? Well, I can think of at least 60,000 Iraqis for starters who haven't been freed. That's the most conservative estimate of Iraqi civilian deaths over the last 4 years, at least 60,000 killed for the cause of their so-called liberation.

Many of those who have escaped death live in fear of it, afraid to go to the market or send their children to school, if there is still a school for them to attend. Too many Iraqis live in communities without electricity, without sewage or basic services. Have we freed them?

What about those who are so flush with freedom that they have chosen to flee their own country? I am talking about the 1.5 million-plus Iraqi refugees. Why don't we ask them if they feel free?

Have we defended the world from grave danger? Indeed not. One study by the Center for Security Studies at New York University Law School concludes that the rate of fatal Muslim terror attacks worldwide has increased by a factor of seven since the Iraq war began. I repeat, that is seven times as much terrorism since we started this occupation, more people call it a war, but it is really an occupation, because this occupation that they keep telling us is the central front in the war on terror is not getting rid of terror.

It's clear our Iraq policy has had a major impact in the war on terrorism. Unfortunately, it appears to be helping the wrong side.

So to go back to the President's statement of exactly 4 years ago, it would appear he has accomplished none of these three tasks, tasks he claimed to have begun that night 4 years ago. Iraq is not disarmed, its people are not free, and the world is more dangerous. It was never supposed to get to this point. You remember this was going to be quick, it was going to be painless. We are going to finish these guys off without breaking a sweat, remember.

On the very same day that President Bush spoke in front of the Mission Accomplished banner, prominent neoconservative Richard Perle actually published an op ed in a major national newspaper entitled "Relax, Celebrate Victory." The cost? Don't worry, they told us, Iraq oil revenues will cover the entire thing.

They fired the top White House economic adviser for daring to suggest that the war had cost as much as \$200 billion. What would they have done to him if they had known he was underestimating it by a few hundred billion dollars?

We have to ask our colleagues who authorized the President to launch the preemptive strike on Iraq, is this what you voted for, to invade a country that had no weapons of mass destruction, no link to 9/11; to occupy that country for 4 years, helping foster a vicious insurgency and fan the flames of civil war?

If you had known these things, and if you had known that it would cost us over 3,200 lives to date, and upwards of \$400 billion, uncounted civilian deaths, and between 35,000, as the Pentagon tells us, or over 200,000, as reported by the Veterans Administration, wounded, we have to ask, can you look the American people in the eye and say you would have done the same thing all over again knowing what you know now?

If your answer is no, if you believe the war has been a mistake, then it makes absolutely no sense to let it continue any longer, and it makes even less sense to hand the President an additional \$100 billion with which to pursue the same disastrous policy.

Our troops have done their job. They and their families have sacrificed more than enough. They have been forced to dig for scrap metal in order to armor their vehicles. They have endured sub-

standard care, bureaucratic delays and squalid conditions at Walter Reed Hospital. They have been betrayed by the grievous mistakes of their civilian supervisors and superiors.

Support our troops. Bring them home.

I have four grandchildren who weren't born 4 years ago. They have never lived in a world unclouded by this shameful, destructive and unnecessary occupation. I fear that if this Congress doesn't act, they will be living with these consequences well into their adult lives. It is for them, for the America they will inherit, that I want this war to end.

It's time to act boldly. Americans are crying out for leadership, for their elected representatives to hear their frustrations about Iraq and to move decisively in response.

This is a gut-check moment. Do you want it said about the 110th Congress that it failed the test of history, that it continued to send young Americans to kill and be killed on a mission that did nothing to enhance our national security or promote U.S. foreign interests? Do you want it said that we made a tragic mistake; even worse, that we blindly rubber-stamped a failed policy that has ignited a civil war and inspired a new generation of terrorists?

The Iraq policy of the last 4 years has proven ruinous and misguided at every turn by any objective measure. As a matter of humanitarian obligation and political accountability, it's time to change course.

In the name of national security, fiscal responsibility and basic human decency, we must get our troops out of Iraq and bring them home by the end of this year. Bring them home for the holidays.

I thank you again, Mr. HINCHEY.

Mr. HINCHEY. I thank you, Lynn Woolsey, for your leadership and the way you have directed your attention to this issue over and over again on the floor of this House so many times, and done it so well.

Mr. Speaker, now I would like to yield time to my dear friend and colleague from California (Ms. WATERS).

□ 2200

Ms. WATERS. I would like to thank my friend from New York for taking this time out this evening and sharing it with those of us who feel a real need to come to the floor of this fourth anniversary of the war in Iraq and share with the people of America how we really feel about what is going on.

First, I think it is important for the people of America to know that some of us are listening. We hear what they are telling us. We know what their expectations are. The polls today are very, very clear about the overwhelming number of Americans who want us out of Iraq.

This war has truly taken a toll on this country: over 3,200 dead; 24,000 injured. And I don't mean just minor injuries. Serious injuries. It has been

documented what is happening at Walter Reed, brain injuries, eyes gouged out, limbs lost. Serious injuries. And the information that was just shared with us, about 20 percent of the returning troops with mental illness.

Not only is it taking a toll on these young men and women who are sacrificing in this war; it is taking a toll on our domestic agenda, over \$400 billion spent on this war in Iraq and Afghanistan. The President now has a supplemental appropriation before this House asking for \$100 billion more. The President recently came to us and told us he was going to increase the troops there by another 21,000, and a few days ago he added to that another 8,500. The requests keep coming: more troops, more money. And there is no end in sight.

The President has said we should listen to the generals on the ground. Whenever we try and share our feelings and give some advice, he rejects it out of hand. Well, he just got information from General Petraeus on the ground, and he said to the world there will be and can be no military solution. But this President continues to persist in increasing the military and misrepresenting to the American people what is going on.

With this request that he has made, the supplemental request, there are those who truly believe that we can ask him for progress reports and he will give us good information. I listened very carefully early this morning to what the President and all of those in his administration would say on this 4th-year anniversary. They simply are spinning the information about this war the way they have always spun the information about this war.

First of all, as it has been said over and over again, they told us we would be welcomed with open arms. They told us there were weapons of mass destruction. They told us we were making progress with the training of soldiers, Iraqi soldiers, and they were just around the corner, they would be prepared and willing to take over the security of that country.

Well, I listened as they did their spin this morning. In the middle of all of this carnage, in the middle of the fact that we wake up to more suicide bombings, more loss of American soldiers, and the expansion of the bombings in putting chlorine into the bombing and into the materials, they were spinning it again this morning saying we are making progress. And that is what I expect them to say if we give them the opportunity to tell us what progress is, come July, as it is indicated in the legislation that some would like to go forth from the floor.

We cannot depend on them to tell us the truth. We cannot depend on them to follow and honor benchmarks that a lot of people are alluding to. We cannot depend on this President to get out of Iraq as long as we are giving him the money. We said that we didn't support the surge, but there are those who could suggest that we turn around and

support the surge, \$90 billion to support the expansion of this war. Why should he get out as long as we are giving him the money?

What are we supposed to accomplish? What are we trying to do? The President would tell you that somehow we are supposed to provide the security and we are supposed to train so that the Iraqis will be able to provide security. We are supposed to make the Shiites get along with the Sunnis and the Sunnis get along with the Kurds. I don't think so. I think that we don't understand the history. And I don't think that we understand, no matter who we think we are, we cannot forge the kinds of relationships that somehow we are going to stay there until we make people love and like each other and work together.

Who wants us in Iraq? They call us the occupiers. As a matter of fact, we find that legislators that are supposedly in this new democratic government, one was revealed this morning to have all kinds of weapons found at his house. All kinds of weapons. And they found traces of chemicals in his four automobiles. This is one of the so-called elected members of the parliament. They do not want us there. The Shiites don't want us there, the Sunnis don't want us there, the Kurds don't want us there. And we have our young people at risk. They are at risk. They are being attacked by the militias, and they are being attacked by the very police forces that are supposed to be on the ground helping to provide security.

Well, in the final analysis, our only response must be to have an exit strategy. The Out of Iraq Caucus that was organized 1½ years ago did not say when we should get out; it did not tell the President exactly what the strategy should be. We simply created a platform for discussion and debate so that the Members of Congress would keep their eyes on the ball so that they would understand what was going on and not have information swept under the rug. We invited in speakers. We had generals to come in; we had writers to come in. We had many people come in and talk with us about what is going on there. But this President doesn't get it. He is intending to stay there until he does something called "win," with young people losing their lives, the children of families all over America, not just from inner cities but most of them now we are finding coming from rural America. They will continue to die.

In another year we are going to have thousands that will be dead. In another year there will be thousands that will be injured. And the shame of it all is that they won't find the kind of medical care. They had a big article today and information about the homeless veterans returning from Iraq. They are homeless, they are not being cared for, they are not getting the benefits. But we are going to continue this war. I would submit to you it is time for a change. Bring our soldiers home.

Mr. HINCHEY. Ms. WATERS, I thank you very much for your dynamic leadership and for joining us this evening and for those remarks.

I yield to my good friend and colleague from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE).

Mr. PAYNE. Let me begin by thanking the gentleman from New York for this Special Order and bringing to the American people the very important issue that stands before us. And I would like to commend the Out of Iraq Caucus, but primarily the three women from California, Congresswoman WOOLSEY, Congresswoman LEE, and Congresswoman WATERS, who have kept this particular issue alive, have continued to work with us to shape a policy or keep the conscience of America focused on this situation, a situation that we gave preemptive strike authority to the President of United States, which all of us opposed, when they said there were weapons of mass destruction; and when none were found, said, well, it was regime change was the final one.

But today, we mark the fourth anniversary of the occupation in Iraq. Ironically, it was almost 4 years ago on May 1, 2003, that President Bush deemed the operation in Iraq as "mission accomplished," affirming an end to the major combat in Iraq. As you may recall, he flew in a military plane on an aircraft carrier with a big sign and a brilliant smile on his face, "Mission Accomplished."

By that time, approximately 175 Americans had lost their lives in combat. Too many, but 175. Yet 3,197 lives later, American lives later, the war continues; 3,197 more from the pronouncement of "mission accomplished." Included in this number are 50 fatalities from my home State of New Jersey.

This weekend, thousands of protesters took to the streets to demand an end to the war in Iraq. As an early and staunch opponent to this war, I have watched every single prediction made by this administration. They have boldly said what they predicted, and every time the prediction was wrong: from the duration of the war, wrong; the reception we would receive, wrong; the costs, wrong; the number of casualties, wrong; the existence of weapons of mass destruction, wrong. This administration has proven itself wrong, wrong, wrong. The countless number of Americans and Iraqis who have lost their lives is sad.

The administration should listen to the Baker-Hamilton Commission, which has offered a stinging assessment of virtually every aspect of the U.S. venture in Iraq and calls for a reshaping of the American presence and a new Middle East democracy initiative to prevent the country from slipping into anarchy.

There is a great sense of sadness among those of us who foresaw over 4 years ago the tragedy that is now unfolding in Iraq. The war that many assumed would be swift and certain now

continues to rage, but I urge my fellow colleagues to take this day and all of the days forward to push for a change, beginning with an orderly withdrawal of American forces from Iraq. This approach will send a message to Iraqis that they must take more responsibility for their own security and would reduce the strain on our military forces. For that, we will not need a surge to the war to continue and continue surge after surge.

I thank you very much for the time.

Mr. HINCHEY. I thank my friend DONALD PAYNE from New Jersey for his leadership and for joining us this evening.

Mr. Speaker, the point that we have made here tonight is that perhaps at no time in the history of this country, except for perhaps our own Civil War, have we faced the kind of circumstances that we are presently being confronted with as a result of the way in which this administration incompetently and corruptly has led us into this illegal occupation in Iraq.

We need to correct these circumstances. It is the responsibility of this Congress to do so. We need to hold this administration accountable. It is the responsibility of this Congress to do so. We need to remove our military forces from Iraq in an appropriate and timely way. And it is the responsibility of this Congress to take that kind of leadership.

I thank my friends and colleagues for joining us here on this very important 4-year anniversary of the illegal attack and subsequent occupation of Iraq. We need now to change these circumstances.

OUR SOUTHERN BORDER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRBACHER) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, today I discuss a black mark on this administration. And while I realize this is the fourth anniversary, and I have enjoyed the comments of colleagues, comments with which I may have some disagreement, I would like to discuss another issue. Because no matter what we do in Iraq, one way or the other, whether we succeed there or not, if our southern borders are not secure, if the southern borders are open to an invasion of illegal immigrants and open to an invasion of our country by terrorists and others who would do us harm and drug dealers and drug cartels, America is in great jeopardy. So no matter what is happening overseas, and I would grant you that the President may have made some mistakes and he may well have been well motivated, but his motives in determining the policy of what is happening at our southern borders is not what is in question. It is his actions. And what we have today is a dangerous threat to the safety of our people, the security of our country at our southern border.