This Appropriation Committee will have appropriated $1.2

trillion for this war and for the Defense Department in one year. When

I came to Congress, we had appropriated $100 billion for defense for

the whole year.

We keep talking about progress; that's what the military leaders in

Iraq talk about. I wish we saw progress.

I voted for this war because I believed that our Nation was

threatened. Two or three weeks later, I realized that we weren't under

any threat; we were misled. There was no threat to our national

security. We went in with inadequate forces. I'm the one that found the

lack of body armor, 44,000 troops without body armor, without armored

Humvees; and now 4 years later, we're arguing about timelines where the

Iraqis ought to take over the war themselves. We're arguing about

allowing the Iraqis to do what the President agreed to. And we want to

set a timetable so that they are forced to agree to it. There is no

question in my mind every time the Iraqis stumble, the United States

steps in and puts our American troops in between the civil war.

I just visited Fort Hood, Fort Stewart and Fort Bragg. The troops are

somber. The troops are going to do their job. They're valiant. I am

inspired by the troops. But let me tell you, they're burned out. In the

schools in Fort Bragg they say they need counseling. In the schools of

Fort Bragg they say there's higher truancy. They say the students'

achievement has dropped. You know who's suffering? We talk about

fighting this war. We're not fighting this war. A very small segment of

this population is fighting this war, and they're burned out. I've had

troop commanders who were there three times say, we can only spend 10

months in combat and we start making bad decisions; and I believe that.

They say there's progress, and I've just seen over 200 killed in 2

days. We've lost more Americans in the last 4 months than any other

period during this war. That's not progress. The electricity production

is below prewar level. Production of oil is below prewar level. How do

you measure? Rhetoric doesn't measure progress.

In my estimation, this war has been so mishandled. Congress has an

obligation to set a standard, to have accountability. And this bill is

called the Iraqi Accountability bill, and that's what we're trying to

do. We're trying to hold this administration accountable for the

mistakes that they have made.

Does anybody know we have 125,000 contractors in Iraq? 125,000. And

when we pointed this out to the Secretary of Defense, do you know what

he said? He said, ``They're making more money than I make.''

The Secretary of Defense said these contractors are making more money

than he makes, 125,000 of them. They couldn't tell the committee for 2

months how many contractors they had.

They have got a fellow fueling a truck on one side, and he's making

$25,000, and right beside him is a guy making $80,000 fueling a truck.

Why is that? Are we meeting our recruiting standards when we need

125,000 people that are contractors in Iraq riding around shooting

people, as I saw in the Washington Post the other day, shooting

inadvertently at people? They want to kill somebody, this one guy said?

That's the face of America? We've lost credibility because of some of

these contractors and the actions of these contractors.

I say we need to set timelines. We need to set a benchmark. We need

to say to the Iraqis, it's time for you to take over and decide your

own fate, like we did in our own revolution.

I ask Members to vote for this benchmark set by the gentleman from

California.

It's interesting to hear the gentleman say ``we.'' ``We

fight.'' ``We aren't going to give up.'' ``We aren't going to

surrender.''

Let me tell you something. We are not fighting this war. It's the

troops overseas. And when I talk to the families, when I go to the

hospital, I see the results of this war.

Don't tell me we're fighting this war. It's the troops in the field,

a very small segment of the American population that are fighting this

war. If the President thinks we should continue the war, he ought to

call for a draft and spread it out and let everybody serve in this war,

not this small segment making such a sacrifice.

Don't tell me we're fighting in this air-conditioned office. We're

not fighting this war. They're fighting it. And I'm proud of every one

of them. But don't stand here in this air-conditioned facility and say

we are fighting this war.

I am proud of these troops and what they have done. They have won the

war. The mission was accomplished. We cannot win it militarily. It can

only be won diplomatically.

Mr. Speaker, let me just say to my good friend from

California, that in the Revolutionary War they fought for 7 years

against the greatest army in the history of the world at that time,

ragged, with no shoes, no ammunition, and they outworked them and

outfought them because they were on their homeland.

That is what I am saying the Iraqis should do. It is the Iraqis'

country. The Americans should not be dying for Iraqis, caught in this

civil war.

We have appropriated $1.2 trillion. We have appropriated over $140

billion more than the White House asked for, $140 billion more for the

troops, to support the troops. We have given everything they asked for.

In this Iraq accountability bill, we give them $4 billion more than the

President asked for. We put a strategic reserve in, and we also take

care of the health care, the post-traumatic stress. We take care of

brain damage. We take care of the troops. We want to make sure the

troops have what they need.

And to go back to the Revolutionary War, my great-grandfather's

grandfather fought in the Revolutionary War on the right side and he

prevailed. We don't have any letters from him, but we have letters from

my great-grandfather who served in the Civil War on the right side, and

he talks about how tough it was in the Civil War. But we

fought our own Civil War, and my great-grandmother lived to be 96; I

was 6 years old, and she said, you are put on this Earth to make a

difference.

We need to make a difference in this Congress, to change the

direction of a mishandled war. We need to have oversight and

accountability for the $1.2 trillion that we have spent on the Defense

Department in 1 year.