Mr. Speaker, I come to the well of the House today to

address America's predicament in Iraq and I do so with the thoughts of

my neighbor's son who tonight is serving in Baghdad as many of our

proud men and women, sons and daughters, husbands and wives are

serving. I am going to have his future in mind during my comments

today. I know my colleagues, both Republicans and Democrats, share

these views. They have their own kin and neighbors.

My neighbor was one who is the young man I watched growing up playing

peewee football in Bainbridge Island, Washington. He was called to

service in Iraq. He went. He served proudly for a year. He was ready to

return. He was literally on the plane to return when he was called back

to go back into Baghdad in the President's effort to send more troops

into Baghdad. He has suffered two IED explosions, just about lost his

ear in one of them. He is now in continual firefights in Baghdad. And I

think of his 1-year-old son who is being raised by his grandparents

since the mother is also serving in the United States Army in Iraq at

this time. Their lives are in my mind, and Iraq is not an abstraction

nor a partisan issue, it is a very personal one for many of us. And

those are what my thoughts will be and I would like them to infuse some

of my comments tonight.

The reason I have come, of course, is we have had this Iraq Study

Group report. It is an amazing document. I hope people who are

interested in Iraq will take some time to look at it. It is both

accurate in some places and woefully short in others, and I would like

to address both places where it is stunningly accurate and amazingly

candid and refreshingly real and the places where it falls short in

what we really have to do to accomplish our true national interests in

Iraq.

Before I do that, though, I think it is appropriate in talking about

Iraq and our obligation to our soldiers there, like my neighbor's son,

just for a moment to ask how we got in this current predicament in

Iraq. We went into Iraq with two goals: One goal was to remove Saddam

Hussein, a brutal dictator, from power, to give the Iraqi people the

chance to restore some dignity and freedom to their country. That

mission was accomplished through the incredible, efficient and

courageous act of our military men and women in fairly short order. It

was accomplished. It has been now accomplished for over 3 years. That

is mission accomplished, truly.

The second reason we went into Iraq was to make sure that there were

no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Despite scouring Iraq with a

fine-toothed comb and literally billions of dollars trying to find any

scent, any hint, any fingerprint, any dust of WMDs, that has been

eliminated as a threat because it did not exist in the first place. Our

two national missions in Iraq have been complete now for some time.

We have had a third national mission in Iraq that comes not out of

our self-interest as a Nation but out of our obligation as a fair

country to lead the world in caring for our neighbors, and that is to

give the Iraqis a fair opportunity to form a government and take

control of their own destiny. We now have been at that mission for

longer than we were fighting World War II. That mission is

accomplished. We have given the Iraqi people every opportunity to form

a meaningful government in Iraq at this time. Yet our sons and

daughters are still there tonight with the administration still tonight

committed to staying as long as the Iraqis decide we are going to stay.

The President has said that our people are going to stay there

indefinitely unless conditions that are under control of the Iraqis

will allow him to bring them home. I am here tonight to say we should

not allow the Iraqis to control when our sons and daughters come home.

That should be a decision of the United States of America. That

position finds substantial support in the report I will allude to as

well as our common sense as Americans.

Now, first I want to say I am glad this report has been issued.

Before the election, we heard a President who was bound and determined

to stay the course. He was bound and determined to never take off rose-

colored glasses. He was bound and determined to stay with his Secretary

of Defense, despite the fact that every living human being who had

looked at Iraq has seen nothing but a continued evidence of failure of

leadership in the civilian ranks in the Secretary of Defense. He was

bound and determined to have his Vice President say that we were

dealing with dead-enders and that this was just a matter of a short

period of time to roll up the opposition in Iraq. Every single one of

those statements by the President of the United States was flat wrong.

Then we had Tuesday, November 7 came along and the American people

gave a very strong verdict to the President's stay-the-course position.

We hope that has been a sobering influence on the White House.

Secondly, we had this Iraqi Study Group report come out. We hope that

the combination of those two events will knock the White House off its

pedestal into a position where it will work with the U.S. Congress to

get our troops home. It remains to be seen whether or not those two

events have that desired effect.

I would like to allude to this report now. There are things in this

report that I think have not been in the news that I have reviewed,

that I think it is important to realize in substantial detail, and the

reason is that this report is the most categorical, clear, objective,

bipartisan and well-reasoned rejection of President George Bush's

assessment of the conditions in Iraq that you will find. It was

bipartisan, as people know. It had people, I don't think any of whom

had been against the Iraq war when it started, I don't believe, wiser

heads who had been around policy for many years in this country, and

unanimously they rejected the hallucinations of the White House that

things were going okay in Iraq. And it is long overdue to have had a

pronouncement from Washington, D.C. to that effect.

So, if I can, let me allude to what their conclusions have been.

Number one, and I will quote:

``The situation in Iraq is grave and deteriorating. The government is

not adequately advancing national reconciliation, providing basic

security, or delivering essential services.''

Iraqis have no electricity, they have no functioning police, they

have no employment, they have no means to run their army, they have no

functioning control over their borders. They have no functioning

government. This is a government in name only.

Number two: ``Iraqis have not been convinced that they must take

responsibility for their own future. Iraq's neighbors and much of the

international community have not been persuaded to play an active and

constructive role.'' I want to just focus on that for a moment. Iraqis

have not been convinced that they must take responsibility for their

own future. Why is that? Why have the Iraqi politicians refused to make

an agreement about disposition of oil? Why have they refused to make a

disposition about employment practices in the Iraqi government? Why

have they refused to make an agreement about how the ministries will be

handled? Well, there is one reason. President George Bush has told them that

troops will stay indefinitely in Iraqi. They do not have a real-life

incentive to form a true government in Iraq because we have given them

a crutch to lean on forever, according to this President. We have got

to change that message dramatically, immediately, and I think this

report makes that clear.

Quoting: ``The United Nations estimates that 1.6 million Iraqis are

displaced within Iraq, and up to 1.8 million Iraqis have fled the

country.'' The Iraqis are voting with their feet.

``Iraqis may become so sobered by the prospect of an unfolding civil

war and intervention by their regional neighbors that they take the

steps necessary to avert catastrophe. But at the moment, such a

scenario seems implausible because the Iraqi people and their leaders

have been slow to demonstrate the capacity or will to act.''

We have not focused their intention on the necessity of reaching

agreements to form a true national government in Iraq. We have given

them a security blanket at the cost of over 2,800 lives, over 20,000

seriously injured Americans, over 400 billion American taxpayer

dollars, and probably over $2 trillion in the long-term costs of this

war with no end in sight, with no guarantee to the American people that

this war is going to end, and with no requirement by the Iraqis that

they act.

For some time I have been bothered by this. I have been bothered that

the President has stood on the sidelines and allowed this situation to

deteriorate, with rose-colored glasses on cruise control. I picked up

the phone a few weeks ago to call one of the administration officials

to talk to them about that. I said it was my perception that there is

no Iraqi government essentially because there is no agreement about

oil. The oil in Iraq is located under the Shiites' territory and the

Kurds' territory. It is not located where most of the Sunnis live. And

the Shiites to date have been insisting at least on the new oil fields

remaining in the regional areas, meaning, bottom line, Shiites get the

oil. Sunnis who have run the country for 75 years, if not more, are

left out. Therefore, they have had continuing sectarian violence.

So I asked this official, is that assessment a fair assessment of

this situation? And he said, yes. And it is interesting because his

assessment is the same one as this report as we will talk to in depth.

I said, well, then, I hope to believe that the President has given an

ultimatum, at least privately, to Mr. Maliki and all of the other Iraqi

officials that we are leaving if they do not form an agreement about

oil. And the answer stunned me. He said, no, we have not done that. We

haven't put that pressure on the Iraqis. And I said, why not? He said,

well, we don't think that's our place.

So while our sons and daughters are dying tonight, and my neighbor's

son is in Baghdad when he should be home with his 1-year-old son, the

White House doesn't think it is its place to put pressure on the Iraqis

to reach an agreement about oil so that they can form a government and

we can get our troops home. This is the most callously indifferent,

negligent attitude of this administration and it is costing our country

dearly and it is wrong. And this report on a bipartisan basis has said

it is wrong. It has said very clearly that we need to make a statement.

It goes on to say, ``There is no action the American military can

take that by itself can bring about success in Iraq.'' This requires a

political resolution. Yet our President has not insisted on a political

resolution. He has essentially told the politicians they can diddle,

they can squabble, they can bicker, they can disagree, they can create

these little deals where the Shiite radicals, al-Sadr gets three

ministries and maybe the Sunnis get half a one, and the sectarian

violence goes out of control and our kids get killed, with no threat

whatsoever that we are bringing our troops home.

That is one of the reasons that we are in the pickle we are in. The

report goes on to say, ``The United States must not make an open-ended

commitment to keep large numbers of American troops deployed in Iraq.''

That is exactly what the President has done. He has made a commitment

to keep these troops there indefinitely. As long as we have been in

Japan or Germany, and apparently people still think that this is like

World War II, when the Vice President and Mr. Wolfowitz and the whole

group of them essentially said we would be welcomed like we were in the

streets of Paris in World War II. They still have that image of what

this is all about in Iraq.

As a result, our policy is failing, because they still are

essentially saying, we are going to stay there for 50 years like we

have in Europe, and that is a policy inconsistent with our national

security goals.

Next statement, ``While it is clear that the presence of U.S. troops

in Iraq is moderating the violence, there is little evidence that the

long-term deployment of U.S. troops by itself has led or will lead to

fundamental improvements in the security situation.''

Now, that is a profound statement. We believe, because we are truly

the greatest Nation on Earth, and we are, we have done remarkable

things. We have the most efficient, most capable, most dedicated

military force the world has ever seen. We have the best soldiers, Air

Force and sailors the world has ever seen. They are great people. I

know I visited two of them in a military hospital in Landstuhl,

Germany, two young men from Bremerton, Washington, on my return trip

from Iraq about a year and a half ago.

These two young men had very, very serious leg injuries, and I went

and saw them in their hospital beds and they had their legs propped up

and tubes and pins and everything in their legs, and they had only been

out of Iraq 2 or 3 days. I asked them how they were doing, and both of

them said, sir, I just want to get back to my unit as fast as I can,

sir.

That was a pretty impressive moment for me that these young men who

had such bad injuries, the first thing they could say is they wanted to

get back to their unit. Anyone who has dealt with the people, Americans

serving in Iraq, you would be so proud of their service and what they

are doing. We have incredible talent and dedication there. They have

been amazingly dedicated through a very difficult 3 years, many of them

serving on their second, third, fourth rotation throughout Iraq,

without complaint. It is really pretty amazing.

So we have got the best people, we have got the best equipment, but

we do not have the best policy, and a policy that essentially allows

the Iraqi government to dawdle and not form an agreement is one doomed

for failure. That is the policy of the President tonight unless

something changes, and we are calling for strong changes in that

regard. There is a real clear reality in Iraq. No deal on oil, no

peace. No deal on petroleum, no way for us out, and we have got to

insist on that, and that has not happened.

The report goes on to say, the composition of the Iraqi government is

basically sectarian, and key players within the government too often

act in their sectarian interest.

Now, we are all thrilled when there was voting going on in Iraq. We

would like to think that they, in Iraq, were as committed to their

government when they voted as we are to ours. We know how government

works. We have had a peaceful transition of power here in the United

States Congress. The people were dissatisfied with the course of the

Nation this November 7, and they spoke, and I think they spoke very

clearly that they wanted a change of course in Iraq.

But the fact of the matter is, this is more like sort of a gangs

dealing up turf in Iraq than it is a working government. Right now

three of the ministries are controlled by Mr. al-Sadr, who runs this

brigade of perhaps 60,000 people in a personal militia, and those three

ministries of the government we are supposed to be helping and allied

with, will not even work with Americans. Three of the major ministries,

might be 40 percent of the government in Iraq, won't even talk to us,

and these are the people we are trying to help.

This is not a working situation. And have we basically said to the

Iraqis, to Mr. Maliki, you must disarm that Sadr militia? You must get

access to those agencies of the government? No, we haven't said that.

We haven't said that at all. We have said we will just stay there

forever if it takes that long. You can just play whatever difficult games you have in the sectarian

tensions in Iraq, and we will stay forever. That is the wrong message

to Iraq.

We have got to tell them they are going to stand on their own feet

very quickly, or they will fall, and only the Iraqis can make that

decision ultimately, and we have made a decision, a commitment, and I

know a lot of people who are against this war, myself among them.

I was very vocally opposed to this war when we started. I thought

that we did not receive proper intelligence. I thought the intelligence

was cherry picked. I thought that the threat was vastly overstated.

Even though it was popular to be for the war at the time and the war

drums were beating, I and 164 other Members of the House voted against

the war.

Many of my constituents felt the same way I did. But even though they

were very, very strongly against the war, they felt there was some

national obligation on our part to give the Iraqis some reasonable

chance to form a government. We had destroyed a government, we had some

obligation to give them a chance to reestablish security and a

government in Iraq.

But that cannot be a never-ending responsibility of the United

States, and we have now spent longer in and given the Iraqis longer

than the greatest generation took to win World War II. We have to

realize that even though that period of time has gone on, the situation

according to this bipartisan report isn't getting better, it is getting

worse, and we have to recognize that reality. We have to have a major

change in Iraq.

It goes on to say the security situation cannot improve unless

leaders act in support of national reconciliation. Shiite leaders must

make the decision to demobilize militias. Sunni Arabs must make the

decision to seek their aims through a peaceful political process, not

through violent revolt. The Iraqi government and Sunni Arab tribes must

aggressively pursue al Qaeda. None of those things are happening, and

we have not insisted on any of those things happening. We have been the

patsy while this sectarian conflict has gone on, and we have not

insisted that it stop, or we are removing our troops tomorrow.

As a result, these folks have refused to make the very difficult

compromises it takes to form a government. I have got to tell you, I

know how difficult it is. It is difficult enough around here in peace

time, and I know it is difficult for leaders in Iraq. But American sons

and daughters cannot be expected to be sent to the streets of Baghdad

when Iraqis will not go.

You know what happened when we decided to pull troops out of Al Anbar

Province where the insurgency is essentially taking over to send into

Baghdad, and we called for six groups to come of the Iraqi forces? Only

two of them showed up. We still don't have the troops the plan called

for months ago to get security into Baghdad. Why didn't they show up?

They didn't show up because they don't have a government to stand up

for yet, because the politicians will not make the compromises

necessary to do so, because we haven't required it. We have got to have

a tough position in Iraq, and the tough position is one of tough love.

Tough love is you tell the Iraqis they have got to fish or cut bait,

because our ability to sustain this is not unlimited.

This goes on to say the problems of the Iraqi police and the criminal

justice system are profound. Significant questions remain about the

ethnic composition of some Iraqi units. Specifically they will carry

out missions on behalf of sectarian goals instead of agenda. Units lack

leadership, equipment, personnel, logistics and support.

I want to take a moment, if I can, to talk about what this

administration has not done in the pursuit of its own policy. You know,

for 3 years now, the President has said we will stand down as the Iraqi

military stands up. But this administration has always wanted to fight

this war on the cheap. It has never been willing to commit the

resources to what a successful pursuit of this mission would require,

and a successful pursuit of this mission, for the last 3 years, would

be to equip, arm and train an Iraqi military as rapidly as possible,

and we haven't done 40 percent of that effort.

The reason I know that--I went to Iraq, and I talked to the Iraqi

forces, and they say we don't have any equipment, we don't have any

communications, we don't have any payroll system, we don't have any

recruitment system, we don't have any logistics system, we don't have

any medical evacuation system, we don't have any communication system

with the public. We are some people with AK-47s in pickup trucks who

have been given a very short training period by the United States

Government.

As a consequence, a difficult situation where you had extremely low

motivation anyway to stand up for the government has been made worse.

In fact, it was so bad that a year and a half ago, my friends the

Republicans limited the amount we were going to spend training the

Iraqi army. They wanted to reduce it. I said if the way out of Iraq is

to stand up an Iraqi army, it seems to me we should do this as quickly

as possible.

So I offered an amendment to the military appropriations bill that

was accepted that at least didn't cut the training for the Iraqi army,

but the fact of the matter is, any military assessment of the Iraqi

army is they can't fight. They don't have the wherewithal to fight. We

go into battle with armor, communications, Medevac, howitzers,

gunships, F-16s.

We tell the Iraqis to go out with some pickups and AK-47s and no

communications equipment. Why is that? Well, it is because the

administration has never been willing to ask the sacrifices that are

necessary of the American people to complete this mission successfully.

It has tried to fight the war on the cheap, and the people paid dearly

with both our losses of 2,800 people, 20,000 people who are seriously

injured, and goodness knows how many Iraqis who have lost their lives.

You know, maybe we would have a different attitude if we had a chief

executive who was committed to this commission enough to ask for

sacrifices of the American people, but we don't have that. We have a

situation where for 3 years this has been essentially a half-hearted

effort, an unwillingness to get tough with the Iraqis and an

unwillingness to commit the resources necessary to do the job, and a

debacle has unfolded. Probably the largest foreign policy debacle has

unfolded in the last of America's history.

So this is a stunningly disturbing report, and I note that it

contains many of criticisms that I and my colleagues and what's called

the Iraq Watch have been making on the floor of the House now for 2

years. We have come to the floor of the House in the evening. Many, if

not all of these criticisms we have espoused. I think they have more

reliabilities now that a bipartisan group has essentially been saying

what we have been saying about the failure of this administration

policy in Iraq. So the question now becomes what should be the change?

Well, the first thing is there has to be a change in the Iraqi

government. I will quote this report, the composition of the Iraqi

government is basically sectarian, and key players within the

government too often act in their sectarian interest. The security

situation cannot improve unless leaders act in support of national

reconciliation. Shiite leaders must make the decision to demobilize

militias. Sunni Arabs must make the decision to seek their aims through

a peaceful political process, not through violent revolt. We must

insist on this. We must require. We must compel it. Today we have not

done so.

Now, what conclusions has this report drawn? It gets a little bit

murky reading the report. It is not entirely clear what this group

actually said. It is a committee of individuals who signed a report,

and most people know the old saying that a camel is a horse designed by

a committee, and what this group really recommends is a little bit

ambiguous in part. But I would suggest there is one thing that is

important and one thing that has a little lacking in this report.

The first thing is it demands a change in our policy, it demands a

realistic assessment of our policy, and it demands that we get tough

with the Iraqis to demand a political solution in Iraq, because that is

a central prerequisite to any progress being made in Iraq. And that is

a very import offering of this report, that we have to do that

Now, the question then becomes, what do we do as far as troop levels

and our military mission in Iraq? Their report is a bit of weak tea in

that regard. It essentially alludes, and you will hear news reports

that this calls for essentially removing our major combat missions by

the end of next year, by 2008, by the first quarter of 2008.

The report isn't quite that clear. It says that by the first quarter

of 2008, subject to unexpected developments in the security situation

on the ground, all combat brigades not necessary for force protection

could be out of Iraq. ``Could be.''

At the time U.S. combat forces in Iraq could be deployed only in

units embedded with Iraqi forces in rapid reaction and special

operations teams and search and rescue. ``Could.''

``Could'' is not a strong enough word for what this situation demands

of American leadership. The word ``must'' must be in our response from

Congress about Iraq. It is time to talk turkey with the Iraqi

government. We cannot shade it. We can use polite language, but we

cannot use language that is susceptible to multiple interpretations.

We must tell the Iraqi government that their training wheels have to

come off, they have to strike the political deals on oil that have to

be made, because our troops are coming home at a date, if not certain,

that is at least within certain parameters. There is no reason that

that process should not start now in a way that is militarily

defensible. We have to send that strong message to the Iraqis, and only

our actions will do so.

Frankly, language like ``could be'' I don't think is going to

register on the streets of Baghdad, where 100 to 200 bodies are being

found every couple of days. We need to send a stronger message.

The question is, how do we do that? I would like to think the

President of the United States would have an epiphany reading this

report. I would like to think that he will shed those rose-colored

glasses that he has worn for 3 years. I would like to think that he

will decide not to heed the advice of his vice president, who has been

wrong on virtually every single thing in Iraq policy.

I would like to think that he will then come to the U.S. Congress and

say, ``I am totally changing my statement on Iraq. I now believe we

have to start bringing our troops home, because nothing less will

result in the Iraqi government having an incentive to form a real

government.''

If those things happen, Congress will be able in short order to reach

an agreement to end this war in Iraq and give the Iraqis what they

need, which is an incentive for action on the political front.

I am not all that hopeful that will happen. The President since the

election has said some gracious things. The day after the election he

said that he wanted to work on a bipartisan basis, and those words were

greeted happily by us and we would like to believe that was the case.

Two weeks later, the President sent up six judges that he knew would

be rejected by the U.S. Senate because of their entirely right-wing

beliefs. Last week he appointed an individual to take care of the

contraceptive program of the United States, to give women control over

their destiny, and he appointed a person who thinks contraception

somehow should be illegal, or at least inappropriate.

So the signs have not been entirely favorable that the President

received the message from the American people given him on November 7.

Some of my colleagues have. In the earlier discussion here, we had some

of my colleagues, Republicans, quite a number of them, doing a

valedictorian speech tonight who had come out on the short end in the

election. I think they received the message. Many of them I consider

friends, and they are good people, and they are credible people and

hard-working people, and I know the taste of defeat, so I have some

empathy for them.

But the American people have spoken, and we need the President to

listen to them, and we need the President to listen to this report, and

we need the President to listen to his troops, and those messages are

we need a radical rethinking of Iraq policy.

Now, I have a message I would hope my colleagues will also consider

tonight, and that is if the President does not heed that message of the

American people, we here in the House of House of Representatives have

a responsibility to act. We cannot just be folks who give speeches

about Iraq, all though that is what I am doing here tonight. We cannot

be people who just issue press releases about Iraq. We cannot be

Congressmen and women who simply send letters to the White House.

If the President of the United States refuses to change course in

Iraq in a meaningful way, this Congress has to use the ability granted

to it by the United States Constitution to assure that there will be a

change in Iraq, and we have an opportunity to do so through the

appropriations process.

This war cannot be fought and the President cannot continue to put

these troops in harm's way without funding. The geniuses in

Philadelphia established the People's House and gave as its first

obligation responsibility for the fiscal condition of the Nation.

No President can continue a war without funding. If the funding stops

for the Iraq war, our troops will come home, and this Congress has to

have the gumption to take such action if the President does not heed

the will of the American people.

Now, people say, oh, isn't that fraught with political risk? You

know, it might be. And that is why people in Vietnam waited 3 to 4

years after it became obvious that our policy was wrong, of not

removing our sons and daughters at that time, and my friends at that

time and my colleagues at that time, from harm's way in Vietnam.

Iraq is not Vietnam. It is dangerous to draw comparisons between

Vietnam and Iraq. They are manifestly different in many, many ways,

including our national interests and the nature of the threat and the

extent of the losses that we have suffered.

But it is similar in this way: If we follow the failure of the

Congresses in the early 1970s who refused to stand up to a chief

executive to demand a change in course, we will have fallen victim to

what they did during the Vietnam years. We have at least 15,000 names

on the Vietnam Memorial wall as a result of Congress' refusal to be

willing to use the appropriation mechanism to bring our troops home.

That is not a failure of will or courage or backbone that we should

suffer. We have an obligation to these kids and not-so-kids in Baghdad

tonight, and we should know, we should be willing to do so, and we

should say we should be willing to do so, so that the President of the

United States knows that we are serious in our discussions.

I am hopeful that is not necessary. I am hopeful we can forge a

bipartisan agreement with the President to heed the recommendations of

this report and the will of the American people from November 7. But we

have to be prepared to do our duty here, and I think that is important

for us to say early in this discussion, so that we can move forward.

I want to, if I can, say another thing that I think would be

important for the President to do. He can do this tomorrow and he

hasn't done it. He can have a statement to the people of Iraq that the

United States of America does not intend to have permanent military

bases in Iraq. This is a statement that the Iraqi people need to hear.

In polls, 75 percent of the Iraqi people believe we are not a

positive influence in Iraq. Sixty percent of the Iraqi people in a poll

believe it is appropriate to attack Americans in Iraq. Think about

this. These are people that the war was started out, at least in its

later chapters, to try to give Iraqis a chance at democracy. We have

spent $400 billion, 2,000 lives, 20,000 injured, the honor of the

Nation to help Iraqis, and 60 percent of them believe it is okay to

attack Americans.

This is not a situation where we are capable of helping them

militarily. Our presence there is a reason, at least one of the

reasons, for violence in that country. And we lost 10 of our best

yesterday and 24 in the last 2 days. It is a recognition that we have

to come to grips with.

One of the reasons for that antipathy is a conviction, as much as we

don't share it, that the Bush administration wants to have permanent

bases in Iraq. But because of stubbornness and willfulness and refusal

to show any flexibility to reality, this administration has refused to

say that. That would be helpful. That would be a first start, and we hope that that happens.

So we now have an obligation to follow one conclusion of this, and

the first phase of this report, if I can in conclusion read, ``Current

U.S. policy is not working.'' That is the most powerful statement in

the whole report. And we need radical changes, the ``radical changes''

is my language, not the report.

Quoting the report, ``Current U.S. policy is not working as the level

of violence in Iraq is rising and the government is not advancing

reconciliation. Making no changes in policy would simply delay the day

of reckoning at a high cost. Nearly 100 Americans are dying every

month. The United States is spending $2 billion a week. Our ability to

respond to other international crises is constrained. The majority of

the American people are soured on the war. The level of expense is not

sustainable over an extended period, especially when progress is not

being made. The longer the United States remains in Iraq without

progress, the resentment will grow among Iraqis who believe they are

subjects of a repressive American occupation.''

We need a change, and we need it now, and we cannot dither or dally

or wait or have debates amongst ourselves. We have to take action now.

And I hope my colleagues will join me in a willingness to do that.

That will be difficult. While we have troops in the field, it is

always difficult to talk about the mission. But I am here tonight,

proud of my neighbor's son who is tonight in Baghdad. I am proud of the

mission he has done and is doing, and I am caring about he and his 1-

year-old son.

I believe the U.S. Congress owes an obligation to him and his own to

insist that this President come to grips with the reality of Iraq, send

a message that our troops are coming home; that this is something the

Iraqis have to deal with quickly because they are going to be on their

own. We can no longer keep training wheels forever on Iraq at the

expense of our sons and daughters.

That statement, I believe, in the long run will be best, with the

least possible damage to all concerned. And I don't offer a panacea. I

don't offer a silver wand in Iraq. But I can say that the current

situation is not acceptable, and we will change it one way or another,

and the sooner the better.