Mr. Speaker, the bodies of 20 kidnapped and murdered

bus drivers were found in Iraq today. That occurred just before a

suicide bomber walked into a Baghdad restaurant and blew himself up,

killing seven people.

Then Secretary of Defense Don Rumsfeld arrived on an unannounced

visit and said: That is a

direct quote from the UPI.

Iraq is convulsed by sectarian violence. It is a nation

disintegrating into homicidal chaos. It is a killing zone where Iraqi

citizens purchase fake documents in hopes of staying alive if

confronted by militias. It is a place where the killing has moved from

the streets to inside the homes of Iraqi citizens. It is a country

whose leaders acknowledge it is on the brink of all-out civil war, and

the President's secretary of war, the man controlling the fate of

129,000 U.S. soldiers in Iraq stands up and flat out misleads the

troops who don't get to go home to the United States at the end of the

day like Mr. Rumsfeld does.

America's independent government watchdog agency, the Government

Accountability Office, just released a report that confirmed what

everyone except the President and his political appointees already

know: There is no adequate plan to stabilize Iraq, and the occupation

by U.S. forces is fueling the sectarian violence.

Rumsfeld can claim things are getting better to reporters while

standing inside a fortified U.S. base, but that flies in the face of

the facts. U.S. troop strength in Baghdad has been increased from

40,000 to 55,000 people. The Los Angeles Times reported on Sunday about

rampant corruption inside the Iraqi security forces, including direct

ties to the insurgents.

Our soldiers are becoming surrounded by a growing insurgency, and the

civilian leader says things are getting better.

Secretary Rumsfeld was going to meet with Iraqi government leaders to

tell them how to deal with the crisis. He told reporters he was going

to tell the Iraqi leaders to do this:

He

went on to say,

He neglected to say that plan was tried and failed last month. It was

called Operation Forward Together, and it didn't work. How could it?

The presence of an occupying force is fueling the violence. And

despite the

fact there are 267,000 Iraqi security forces, the American people are

told repeatedly that they cannot defend Iraq on their own.

Three years later, the only plan the President and the secretary of

war can articulate is to . Our military generals

know full well this so-called plan guarantees more needless U.S.

casualties, and Iraqi leaders know it guarantees more sectarian

violence.

In the past, I and others have called for the resignation of the

Defense Secretary, Mr. Rumsfeld. Today, I offer a better plan. The

President should keep his political appointee. In fact, the President

should transfer Secretary Rumsfeld to Iraq. He should be stationed

there until every last U.S. soldier leaves the Nation we are now

occupying.

The Secretary says he sees progress every time he visits. Imagine

what he might see by actually living and working there.

There is no higher priority for the President, the U.S. military and

America these days than Iraq. It stands to reason that the President's

military appointee should be directly able to report for duty in

Baghdad. Rumsfeld could personally work with the leaders of the Iraq

government and show them how to implement his plan. By working in Iraq,

the Secretary could accept direct responsibility for generating more of

what he calls progress every time he visits Iraq. He could show America

and the rest of the world the progress that only he and the President

pretend to see.

The only true thing we can say about Iraq today is that it is on the

brink of dissolving into unspeakable violence.

We cannot pretend our way out of Iraq, and we cannot pretend that the

Iraqi people believe that our presence is stabilizing the country.

Iraq needs a plan that does not include the occupation of that

country by foreign soldiers, including U.S. soldiers. Until this

administration admits that it cannot shoot its way to victory, Iraq

will grow more and more violent.

If Defense Secretary Rumsfeld was stationed there, America might

finally get an honest assessment of the war and a road map to peace.