Mr. Speaker, on October 10, 2002, despite the objections

of 133 Members, myself included, this body, the House of

Representatives, voted to give the President of the United States the

authority to launch a preemptive strike against Iraq.

If we had the information on that day that we have now, I wonder how

many votes the war resolution would have garnered. If we had known that

Saddam Hussein had no weapons of mass destruction; if we had known that

the President was hell bent on going to war no matter what, regardless

of the intelligence, with or without the U.N.'s blessing; if we had

known that we would have still been occupying Iraq nearly 4 years

later; if we had known that our occupation would give rise to a violent

insurgency, sectarian strife, and all-out civil war; if we had known

that the cost of this war would approach $.5 trillion; if we had known

that more than 2,550 brave Americans would never come home and

thousands upon thousands of Iraqi civilians would be killed for the

sake of their so-called liberation; if we had known of the atrocities

and constitutional desecrations that would be committed in the name of

war, from Abu Ghraib to domestic spying to Guantanamo Bay.

Along with many of my colleagues, I raised these concerns at the

time. We were vocal critics of the war before we even knew what a

debacle it would become. But our objections were ignored and our voices

drowned out by a steady drumbeat of misinformation coming from the

administration and its allies. They raised the specter of a mushroom

cloud in the chilling and disingenuous words of Condoleezza Rice. They

insisted that the Iraqi people would greet us as liberators. They

claimed that the war would be a cakewalk, with minimal cost of lives

and taxpayer dollars. They assured us that the Iraq invasion would

spread freedom and democracy throughout the Middle East, an assertion

that has been proven tragically wrong by the recent hostilities between

Israel and Lebanon. Anyone who disagreed with this view of the Iraq

occupation had his or her loyalty of America called into question.

Today the American people know the truth, that those of us who seemed

like lonely dissenters were right all along. The American people agree

that it is time to find a way out of Iraq, to end this occupation,

because they know you cannot win an occupation.

Our troops have been put in an impossible position without the proper

training or equipment. They are being asked to carry out an open-ended

occupation of a country wracked with centuries-old religious conflict

and few democratic conditions on which to fall back. Moreover, this

occupation has no legitimacy whatsoever, having never been authorized

or ratified by the United States Congress.

So today I introduced the Iraq War Powers Repeal Act of 2006. It

would reverse the fateful decision of nearly 4 years ago and allow

Congress to reassert its constitutional authority on matters of war and

peace. It would strip from the President the powers he has shamelessly

abused. From there we can and we must end this occupation, while using

diplomacy, humanitarian and peacekeeping tools to help Iraq achieve

long-term security and stability. But we must return Iraq to the Iraqis

and return our brave soldiers to their families here at home, who

anxiously await their return.