Mr. Speaker, this morning the President of the United

States said this about Iraq:

Except, Mr. Speaker, it is completely unclear what constitutes

success under these circumstances. Saying we will stand down when they

stand up, well, that is just a talking point that gives the American

people no clear guide as to when they can expect this war to end.

By leaving this question vague, by defining success entirely on his

own secret terms, the President is allowing himself an open-ended

commitment and a blank check in Iraq. As for his hand being forced by

American politics, what the President calls American politics is

actually a majority of Americans, American citizens outraged at the

loss of life, the hundreds of billions spent, and the global

credibility we have squandered.

Our people see 2,499, as of yesterday, U.S. troops killed; more than

18,000 U.S. soldiers gravely wounded, and thousands of others mentally

and physically traumatized from their experience in the war. They see

us losing the equivalent of one battalion every month in Iraq.

And they want answers.

All these sacrifices, and for what? None of it is making Americans or

Iraqis safer. In fact, the presence of nearly 150,000 American troops

in Iraq has become a rallying point for anti-American extremists in the

Arab world.

This war becomes a bigger catastrophe with every passing day. And yet

the President and the Republican majority have no plan to end it. From

the President we get the usual platitudes and this week a photo-op in

Iraq. And in this body, what is supposed to be the people's House, we

are embarking on a pointless debate on a nonbinding Iraq resolution

that is long on rhetoric and short on constructive solutions.

It is time we listened to the American people. It is time that the

Commander in Chief stepped up by offering a solution instead of

dismissing Americans' anxieties as ``just politics.''

I have outlined a plan that will end the occupation in Iraq while

helping Iraq build a free and democratic society. We must engage the

international community, including the U.N. and NATO, to establish a

multinational interim security force for Iraq. The U.N.'s Department of

Peacekeeping Operations is particularly well suited for this task.

We must shift the U.S. role from that of Iraq's military occupier to

its reconstruction partner by working with the Iraqi people to rebuild

their economic and physical infrastructure, and we must work with the

U.N. to establish an International Peace Commission comprised of

members of the global community who have experience in international

conflict resolution to oversee Iraq's postwar reconciliation process.

They, our troops, have served admirably. They have sacrificed more

than enough. We can return them to their families and we can do it

without abandoning Iraq. This is what the American people want, Mr.

Speaker. They want an end to this war. They are not certain exactly how

or when, but it is our job to execute those details. They are looking

to us for leadership and it is time the President of the United States,

as the Commander in Chief, provided it.