Mr. Speaker, Members of the House of Representatives,

last week the President of the United States gave a speech to this

Nation that he intends to escalate the war against Iraq. Compounding

his speech was the point-by-point recitation of his intention to

continue to escalate tensions between the United States and the

sovereign nation of Iran.

At this moment, when this Congress has honored the memory of Dr.

King, it bears reflection as to whether or not we in this Nation have

the capacity to begin to pursue a path of nonviolence in our relations

with other countries.

Our President is intent on escalating a war against Iraq. He is

intent on precipitating a war against Iran. Whatever happened to the

science of human relations? Whatever happened to using our head in

dealing with people so that war is not an acceptable option, but that

peace becomes inevitable because we pursue talking to one another?

If we had taken the case for Iraq to the U.N., we would not have

gotten approval for an attack against Iraq. How much better it would

have been if this Nation had not decided to attack Iraq, because Iraq

had no weapons of mass destruction, did not have the intention or

capability of attacking the United States, was not trying to get

uranium from Niger, did not, in effect, constitute a threat to the

United States of America.

And yet, we attacked a nation which did not attack us, at tremendous

consequence, the death of over 3,000 American men and women who served

this country valiantly, the deaths of over 650,000 innocent Iraqis,

according to the Lancet Report, during the conduct of the war; complete

annihilation of so much of the cities of Iraq.

What are we doing? What do we stand for as a nation? Does this really

represent what America is all about? Or does America have a higher

destiny? Is it our destiny to rule the world with our military might?

Or is it our destiny to hold up our values of peace and justice, and to

live them in our own

Nation, and to nourish them abroad through following international law?

It is a critical moment for America, Mr. Speaker. This Congress must

stand up. We must not just set aside the escalation, we must set aside

the occupation. We must not simply challenge this President and his

buildup to war in Iran. We must let this President know that any action

he takes against Iran will have constitutional consequences.

We are at a moment when we need to defend our Constitution. We need

to stand up for the American way, which is not the way of war. It is

not the way of aggressive war. It is not the way of preemption,

unilateralism and first strike.

Mr. Speaker, it is really time for America to take a new direction in

the world, and that direction is to work with the nations of the world.

I put forth a 12-point plan for Iraq. It called for America to

announce the end of the occupation, the closing of the bases,

withdrawal of our troops. But we cannot do that unless, simultaneously,

we let the nations of the world know that we are going to take a new

direction in world affairs. We need to ask the world community to help

us, to mobilize a peacekeeping and security force that will move in as

our troops move out so that the people of Iraq can be secure. When we

do that we can build a basis for a reconciliation in Iraq between the

Kurds, the Shiites, the Sunnis. When we do that we can have a

legitimate program for reconstruction and reparations for the Iraqi

people. We can help safeguard their oil wealth for the people of Iraq,

not for private American oil companies.

Iraq should be a turning point for this Nation. It should be a

turning point away from war as an instrument of policy. It should be a

turning point where we address the needs of the people of the United

States, the real human needs, for health care, education and jobs. And

that is what my 12-point program leads to.