Mr. Speaker and my esteemed colleagues, one of the most

grievous blunders in the whole Iraq debacle was the total failure to

figure out what we would do after toppling Saddam Hussein. The

architects of this war thought that was the whole task. Mission

accomplished.

There was no plan for how to manage the aftermath. No plan for

keeping the peace in a country with deep sectarian divisions, no plan

for how to institute democracy in a society with no democratic

infrastructure or institutions. Well, now we see history repeating

itself, because The Washington Post reported yesterday that the Bush

administration and top military commanders apparently have no idea what

the next step is if the troop escalation plan fails, which General

Petraeus himself believes probably will.

The Post reports that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff,

Peter Pace, told a meeting of the Nation's Governors:

Well, confidence is one thing. Single mindedness is another, and,

frankly, if the Bush national security team had a better track record

of smart decisions and strategic successes, I might be willing to give

them the benefit of the doubt. But as it turns out, these folks have

been wrong, very wrong, throughout most of this occupation.

Indeed, when President Bush announced the so-called surge nearly 2

months ago, he essentially conceded that mistakes had been made and not

everything his administration has done in Iraq has gone by design.

But as yesterday's Post article points out, we are way beyond plan B.

This is more like plan D. There have been many times that we have been

told the necessary adjustments are being made to achieve victory,

whatever that means, in the context of Iraq.

But here we are, 4 years into this war, still spinning our wheels and

nearly 3,200 Americans dead, and the ones who come home in one piece

sent to military hospitals that are in deplorable conditions, often

delivering substandard care. How many more chances does the Bush

administration get to make things right in Iraq? I say: none. There is

only one solution: bring our troops home in short order as soon as

logistically and safely as possible.

In a way, actually, all the discussion about whether plan A, B, C, D,

is, at best, something of a distraction is like arguing about what was

the worst part of a root canal. The fact is, the whole Iraq enterprise

was fundamentally flawed from the beginning and never should have been

launched in the first place. There is not much we can do now to reverse

the unforgivable mistake of this Iraq occupation and the unspeakable

damages done, but we can do something to ensure it doesn't last a

minute longer. We can here in the United States Congress use our

Constitutional powers to ensure that not one more family has to lose a

son or daughter, a husband or wife, a mother or father for someone

else's ideological mess.

It is time, Mr. Speaker. It is time for this tragic chapter in

American history to finally end. It is time to bring our troops home.