Mr. Speaker, last week, on March 19, our Nation marked a

somber milestone. We began the fourth year of the Iraqi war. It is

becoming quite clear that this falsely conceived war is proceeding

disastrously, with no end in sight. The administration's repugnant use

of the phrase as bombing began, has deteriorated

into a war of attrition.

The situation in Iraq continues to deteriorate precipitously. In the

last month alone, there has been an escalation of sectarian violence.

Dozens of suicide bombings, insurgent attacks and the like have left

almost 1,000 more people dead since a bombing destroyed the dome of

Samarra's Golden Mosque, a sacred and holy site to Shiite Muslims.

Iraq is still without a functioning government, as the Iraqi

parliament has convened just once and for only 30 minutes. Moreover,

there was an automobile ban in place throughout Baghdad to prevent car

bombings that same day. A city-wide ban on cars, Mr. Speaker, is not a

safe city. A nation where journalists cannot travel to report is not a

safe country.

Headlines from newspapers around the globe have the same theme, civil

war in Iraq. The administration, however, does not seem to see it that

way. The President was in Ohio last week and made the following

comment:

Well, I think the President has it the other way around, Mr. Speaker.

The world sees a lot this President doesn't. Three years ago, we saw

the administration did not have a plan to win the peace, and he and his

narrow group of advisers led us down the path to war. We also see what

he cannot see today, that our presence in Iraq has led to an increase

in violence and terrorist activities in the Middle East and around the

world, making us less safe as a nation.

Three years ago, on the eve of the invasion, I warned, and I quote

myself,

So the President has traded a brutal sectarian regime for an unstable

nation that looks more and more every day like a dawning theocracy.

Events in the last few weeks seem to show this is indeed becoming the

case. By refusing to prepare for the possibility that we would be

considered occupiers rather than liberators, these architects of this

war never afforded an opportunity to truly win the peace. Hospitals and

medical services were ignored. Iraqi organizations open to the West

were never consulted. Western media was not culturally appropriate

inside that region. The seeds for unrest were sown before U.S. troops

even entered Iraq.

Achieving military success without winning the hearts and minds of

the public is a hollow victory, and now the President tells us troops

will remain in Iraq until he leaves office in 2009, who knows when.

May I remind the body this President held a theatrically staged press

event on a U.S. aircraft carrier on May 1, 2003, with a

banner flying in the background. Major combat operations

in Iraq have ended, he announced.

Two weeks ago, the United States launched the largest aerial assault

in Iraq since 2003. More than 1,500 of our soldiers were deploy in the

Samarra region to root out insurgent strongholds and seize weapons

caches and the like. That sounds like a major combat operation to me,

and it sounds like we are losing ground rather than making progress.

Statements by those in the administration prior to the invasion show

how wrong the Bush administration has been. Donald Rumsfeld in February

2003 said,

Vice President Cheney in March 2003 said,

We are into the fourth year, almost as long

as it took to fight World War II.

The toll this war has taken is staggering. Since March 2003, 2,322

U.S. soldiers have died, another 18,000 troops have been injured as a

result of hostilities, with numbers doubling between 2003 and 2004 and

increasing again in 2005.

Mr. Speaker, this evening I wish to place in the Record names of

Ohioans, 104 of them, brave patriots who have died in service to our

country in Iraq. God bless them.