Mr. Speaker, the Greek historian Herodotus is often

called the ``father of history.'' In his work, The Histories, he

attempted to chronicle the origin and outcome of the Greco-Persian War

so that future generations could learn from experience. Unfortunately,

for the men and women in Iraq and their families and for the American

people, President Bush refuses to use what we have learned to revise

our strategy for Iraq, redeploy our troops, and refocus on the

priorities and protection of America's families.

The President continues to insist that America's involvement in the

war in Iraq is an integral part of the war on terrorism. The Iraq Study

Group, among other objective observers, repeatedly refuted this

statement. Perhaps worse than this statement is that, despite the

President's claims, the evidence indicates that progress is not being

made in Iraq:

America's families unjustly continue to bear the burden of war; they

have paid the price with the loss of 3,600 lives and with injuries to

26,000 service men and women. The order of nature has been violated--

fathers and mothers are burying their sons and daughters. How many more

of our loved ones will pay the ultimate sacrifice for the freedom of

others?

America's families have paid more than $450 billion in taxes that

have been use to fund failure instead of our future. We build stronger

families and a stronger America when we provide our citizens with

access to quality education, affordable housing and healthcare, well-

paying jobs, and financial security. How much more will we spend before

we realize that the very foundation of our future has crumbled beneath

our feet?

The Iraqi Government has failed to meet critical benchmarks endorsed

by the President in January. The President has said, ``when they stand

up, we'll stand down.'' The Iraqis have not amended their Constitution,

passed an equitable oil sharing law, reformed laws to provide

government jobs to former members of the Ba'ath Party, or held

provincial elections. When are the Iraqis going to stand up?

Seventy percent of Americans support withdrawing almost all U.S.

troops from Iraq by April 2008; half do not believe that the increase

in U.S. forces since January of this year has made a difference. In

addition, several Republicans have joined Democrats in calling for a

new direction in Iraq. However, the President continues to wage a war

with complete disregard for the concerns of the American people and the

counsel of military leaders. When will the President connect the dots

and see that the picture he has drawn is not a pretty one?

The Iraq Study Group stated that the use of the military in Iraq has

passed; it is time for diplomacy to take place. Regrettably, diplomacy

has not been seriously considered by the President, and internecine

warfare and outright civil war has filled the vacuum of this viable

option in Iraq. Also, the refugee problem in Iraq has worsened the

situation in the Middle East; to date, the United States has taken in

less than 200 refugees from Iraq after promising to take in thousands.

Why haven't we taken in more refugees or fully allowed diplomacy to

bear fruit?

These are among the many reasons why I support H.R. 2956, the

Responsible Redeployment from Iraq Act. I have opposed this war from

the beginning and have been engaged in a continuing fight to change

course. While our troops have performed heroically, violence remains

high, and we must remove them from harm's way; we must require Iraqis

to take responsibility for their own fate, and we must refocus on

investing in America's families. This legislation--which is consistent

with the advice of military and foreign policy experts, ensures the

safety of our men and women in uniform, addresses our commitment to

fighting terrorism, and reflects the will of the American people--

allows us to do just that. This bill:

Acknowledges that our military has accomplished the mission they were

given in the original 2002 authorization to use force and that Iraq is

now responsible for its own future.

Requires American forces to begin redeploying within 120 days and to

complete the transition to a limited presence by April 1, 2008.

Reiterates that the redeployment must be done in a safe and orderly

way, with maximum attention paid to the protection of American forces.

Requires a comprehensive strategy by January 1, 2008, for U.S. policy

in Iraq, including a discussion of American national security interests

in Iraq and the broader region, the specific missions remaining forces

would undertake, and minimum force levels required to accomplish them.

Names specific missions that the President must consider, but it does

not require or authorize those missions.

Requires the President to submit updates on the use of and need for

any forces remaining in Iraq every 90 days starting on July 1, 2008.

Dag Hammarskjold, a Swedish statesman and United Nations official,

once said, ``There is a point at which everything becomes simple and

there is no longer any question of choice, because all you have staked

will be lost if you look back. This is life's point of no return.''

Certainly, the President and administration have reached that point.

For them, the decision to stay the course is simple because it is too

difficult to admit failure. However, as the representative for 670,000

of God's best in Michigan's 13th Congressional District, I am willing

to make the hard choices. I believe the majority of my colleagues are,

too.

The President can no longer afford to let his pride get in the way of

making the right decision. Our troops, our families, our international

reputation, and our future are at stake.

In the Bible, we read in Chronicles 7:14 that ``If my people, which

are called by my name, shall humble themselves . . . and turn from

their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and . . . will heal

their land.'' The international community--the billions of us who

inhabit our home of planet earth--are children of God. We must learn to

walk in the light and in love. It is out of my love of God, my love of

the Constitution, my love of this country, and my love of my

constituents, that I ask my colleagues to join me in support of the

Responsible Redeployment from Iraq Act.