Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding to me,

the distinguished chairman of the House Intelligence Committee.

Madam Speaker, it has been a long and painful 4-year journey for the

people of our country since this administration acted preemptively and

unilaterally to invade and occupy Iraq, policies which I believe then

and I still believe today would not and could not stand because they

simply are not in our national character.

We were told Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. None

were found.

We were told there was yellow cake. It was a falsehood.

We were told that there were trailers containing the evidence of

deadly chemicals.

We were told the mission was accomplished.

We endured national and international shame when the horrific

pictures depicting Abu Ghraib appeared.

We learned that our troops were not sufficiently equipped.

We mourned with our constituents as the death toll of American troops

mounted and continued to mount. Just think, 137 casualties in November

of 2004, then the deadliest month overall. Today, over 3,000 precious

U.S. lives have been lost, with thousands maimed and injured and God

knows how many innocent Iraqi lives lost.

We witnessed the world community's total support on 9/11, and we have

witnessed the diminishment of America's credibility around the world

because of the Iraq war.

We have heard the President and the Vice President talk about victory

and insurgency in its last throes.

We have learned of manipulated intelligence and endured a no-

oversight Congress.

Preemptive war, unilateralism, invasion, occupation, no post-war

plan, an insurgency born of our blunders, and arrogance instead of

reality.

Meanwhile, military experts, Generals Abizaid, Odom, Powell, and

distinguished civilian leaders have called for change, a new strategy,

and the urgency of diplomatic and political engagement, all to no

avail.

One of the central findings of the recent NIE, the National

Intelligence Estimate, highlighted the lack of effective Iraqi

leadership as a main component driving sectarian and communal violence.

The bipartisan Iraq Study Group, appointed by the President, reported

the utter urgency of action by the administration.

Retired General William Odom, former director of the National

Security Agency under President Reagan and member of the National

Security Council under President Carter, wrote an op-ed in the

Washington Post on February 11.

I would ask that it be made part of the Record

He identified the shortcomings of the administration's Iraq policy

and presented some of the clearest and most prescient thinking on the

issue to date.

He places in stark relief what many of our colleagues refuse to

accept, that the preemptive, unilateral course set by the President is

not a strategy for success in Iraq.

He says: ``The first and most critical step is to recognize that

fighting on now simply prolongs our losses and blocks the way to a new

strategy. Getting out of Iraq is the precondition for creating new

strategic options. Withdrawal will take away the conditions that allow

our enemies in the region to enjoy our pain.

``Second,'' he says, ``we must recognize that the United States alone

cannot stabilize the Middle East.

``Third, we must acknowledge that most of our policies are actually

destabilizing the region. Spreading democracy, using sticks to try to

prevent nuclear proliferation, threatening `regime change,' using the

hysterical rhetoric of the `global war on terrorism' all undermine the

stability we so desperately need in the Middle East.

``Fourth, we must redefine our purpose. It must be a stable region,

not primarily a democratic Iraq. We must redirect our military

operations so they enhance rather than undermine stability.''

So many experts, so many respected leaders, so many voices of

patriots, and their critical analysis ignored.

Madam Speaker, in the preamble to our Constitution, three magnificent

words lead the document: ``We, the people.'' The people of our Nation

made the clearest and most important solemn judgment on Iraq in last

November's election. They said, in overwhelming numbers, to change the

direction of this war, to de-escalate, not escalate.

That is exactly what this debate is about. We pay tribute to and

support our troops who honor our country with their service. We say, as

the American people have said, enough is enough. I urge my colleagues

to vote for this resolution.