Mr. Speaker, as I began to consider the comments I would

make during this debate tonight on the occupation, escalation and

gravitation of the U.S. military action in Iraq, I concluded that my

visit to this well must somehow echo the threat and frustration of the

people who sent me to represent them in the people's House.

Tomorrow, the United States of America should begin a massive and

voter-mandated salvaging operation in Iraq. Yes, as bad as conditions

have gotten, there are important and valuable things that could be

salvaged. A tarnished international image clings to a nation like a

shadow to a human being. It follows a nation to the next

world crisis. It cannot be blamed for faulty intelligence, and it

spoils opportunities to influence a world desperate for direction.

Henceforth, we must conduct our foreign policy in a manner which

salvages our sunken international image.

Because of the way we launched a long-range military action in Iraq,

our prestige among the community of nations has surely suffered.

Nothing deflates as a punctured international image. We can salvage our

image not only by de-escalating in Iraq but also by reestablishing

desperately needed dialogue with all the sovereign nations in the

neighborhood with Iraq. It takes many, many people, and not just one to

put a policy together.

Now, with regard to peace in the Middle East, it has become crystal

clear that the United States cannot whistle a symphony.

It will take an orchestra of many international players willing to

make music in the same key. The days of the international soloist or a

conductor without an orchestra are past. We must salvage our

relationship with the family of nations. We must salvage what is left

of our Treasury.

Mr. Speaker, for most Americans war does not pay, but it must be paid

for. And, to date, we have spent billions and billions of dollars that

could have been spent for valuable programs to set this Nation on the

right course. We must salvage soldiers. Yes, thousands of brave young

U.S. soldiers have been killed, and Iraqis are dying weekly by the

hundreds. If this conflict continues, there will be only two classes of

young people, one half in graves, the other half in hospitals.

Some have said this conflict will last for decades. Nevertheless,

that kind of policy or lack thereof has caused young Americans to ask:

Will we ever see the last of this war, or will it see the last of us?

The Kansas City Chiefs is my team. The general manager, Carl

Peterson, would never go to the sports editors of the local media and

admonish them not to criticize the game plan of Coach Herman Edwards,

because to do so would demoralize the players. Such a warning by the

general manager would be ludicrous, if not loony. Why? Because the

players of the Kansas City Chiefs are professionals who cannot be so

easily defamed. And, friends, neither can the men and women who form

the fiercest fighting force in the history of this planet.

After all the ethnic and sectarian human butchering, after all the

billions spent, after all the children of God killed, after all the

maimed who have been hospitalized, after all the dissenters who have

been heard, after all the purple thumbs that have been raised, the war

drum still throbs, the sabers still rattle, and the blood still flows.

Yet, we can salvage the soul of the Nation, even though at this hour we

seem to have lost our way.

Tomorrow, this Congress must adopt House Concurrent Resolution 63 as

bold and beckoning to begin salvage operations.

Mr. Speaker, as I began to consider the comments I would make during

the debate on the occupation, escalation, and gravitation of the U.S.

military action in Iraq, I concluded that my visit to this well must

somehow echo the fret and frustration of the people who sent me to

represent them in The People's House.

For more than 132 years, the steamboat Arabia lay beneath the fathoms

of the waters of the mighty Missouri River. Not until Bob and Florence

Howley committed their life savings to a massive salvaging operation,

did the rusting of this once stately riverboat cease. Today, the

salvaged cargo of this retrieved vessel is on display in Kansas City's

Historic River Market. Since I first walked into the Arabia Steamboat

Museum in 1992, I have become a serious supporter of salvage

operations. Anything of great value that is lost or damaged is worth

salvaging.

Tomorrow, the United States of America should begin a massive and

voter-mandated salvaging operation in Iraq. Yes, as bad as conditions

have gotten, there are important and valuable things that can be

salvaged.

A tarnished international image clings to a nation like a shadow to a

human being. It follows a nation to the next world crisis, it cannot be

blamed for faulty intelligence, and it spoils opportunities to

influence a world desperate for direction. Henceforth, we must conduct

our foreign policy in a manner which salvages our sunken international

image. Because of the way we launched a Lone Ranger military action in

Iraq, our prestige among the community of nations has surely suffered.

Nothing deflates as fast as a punctured international image. We can

salvage our image not only by de-escalating in Iraq, but also by re-

establishing desperately needed dialogue with all the sovereign nations

in the neighborhood of Iraq. With regard to peace in the Middle East,

it has become crystal clear that the U.S. cannot whistle a symphony. It

will take an orchestra of many international players willing to make

music in the same key. The days of the international soloist, or a

conductor without an orchestra, are past. We must salvage our

relationship with the family of nations.

We must salvage what is left of our treasury. Mr. Speaker, for most

Americans, war does not pay, but it must be paid for. To date, we have

appropriated $380 billion for the armed conflict in Iraq, and the

President has requested an additional $142 billion in the FY08

supplemental. With this amount of money, we could have fully funded No

Child Left Behind and the COPS program (which places badly needed

police on the streets in high crime neighborhoods). We must salvage

respect from our noble veterans who, today, are outraged that they are

showered with praise when they are in battle but blasted with neglect

when they return home. Soon enough, they will discover that the

President's recently submitted budget raises fees on veterans for their

health costs by $355 million in FY08, $2.3 billion over 5 years, and

$4.9 billion over 10 years. Those who serve--deserve!

We must salvage soldiers. Yes, thousands of brave young U.S. soldiers

have been killed, and Iraqis are dying weekly by the hundreds. If this

conflict continues, there will be only two classes of young people: one

half in graves and the other half in hospitals. Some have said that

this conflict will last for decades. Nevertheless, that kind of policy,

or lack thereof, has caused young Americans to ask, ``Will we ever see

the last of this war, or will it see the last of us?''

Let me address a part of this debate which has frustrated me because

of its defective logic. Over and over again, many of my honorable

colleagues have stood behind this distinguished desk and warned that

the debate on House Concurrent Resolution 63 will demoralize our troops

in Iraq. Nothing could be further from the truth. I will never accept

the premise that U.S. troops are demoralized by the debate in a

democracy. The President's stated goal in Iraq is to aid in creating a

nation where citizens and public officials can debate in a robust

democracy. And then to denounce debate in The People's House as

demeaning or damaging? My friends, that denigrates the democracy we so

proudly extol and that our troops valiantly fight to defend. We cannot

lead others to the light while we stand in the dark.

The Kansas City Chiefs is my team. The General Manager, Carl

Peterson, would never go to the sports editors of the local media and

admonish them not to criticize the game plan of Coach Herman Edwards

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