Mr. Speaker, Dick Armey, our former majority leader, said

in an interview with a major newspaper chain last week that he deeply

regretted voting for the war in Iraq. Mr. Army said, ``Had I been more

true to myself and the principles I believed in at the time, I would

have openly opposed the adventure vocally and aggressively.'' Chris

Matthews, on MSNBC on election night, said, ``The decision to go to war

in Iraq was not a conservative decision historically.'' And he added

that it ``asked Republicans to behave like a different people than they

intrinsically are.''

William F. Buckley, Jr. wrote in 2004 that if he had known in 2002

what he knew then, he would have opposed the war. And in 2005 he wrote

that to continue there beyond another year would indicate ``not

steadfastness of purpose but, rather, misapplication of pride.''

What about this surge? The conservative columnist George Will wrote

in opposition to it and said it would take a miracle for it to succeed.

Very few people, Mr. Speaker, pushed harder for us to go to Iraq than

the columnist, Charles Krauthammer. A few weeks ago he wrote that the

Maliki government we have installed there cares only about making sure

the Shiites dominate the Sunnis.

``We should not be surging troops in defense of such a government,''

Krauthammer wrote. ``Maliki should be made to know that if he insists

on having this sectarian war, he can well have it without us.''

But listen to what the enlisted men say: Specialist Don Roberts, 22,

of Paonia, Colorado, now in his second tour in Iraq, told the

Associated Press: ``What could more guys do? We cannot pick sides. It

is like we have to watch them kill each other, then ask questions.''

Sergeant Josh Keim of Canton, Ohio, also on his second tour said,

``Nothing is going to help. It is a religious war and we are caught in

the middle of it.''

PFC Zack Clauser, 19, of York, Pennsylvania, told the McClatchy News

Service: ``This isn't our war. We're just in the middle.''

Sergeant Clarence Dawalt, 22, of Tulsa, Oklahoma said, ``They can

keep sending more and more troops over here, but until the people here

start working with us, it's not going to change.''

And Sergeant First Class Herbert Gill, 29, of Pulaski, Tennessee,

said: ``Sunnis and Shiites have been fighting for thousands of years''

and he said that after our raids melt insurgents away, ``2 or 3 months

later when we leave and say it was a success, they'll come back.''

Saddam Hussein was an evil man, Mr. Speaker, but he had a total

military budget only a little over two-tenths of 1 percent of ours,

most of which he spent protecting himself and his family and building

castles. He was no threat to us at all. As the conservative columnist

Charley Reese has written several times, Iraq did not threaten us with

war. They did not attack us and were not even capable of attacking us.

But even before the war started, Fortune Magazine had an article saying

that an American occupation of Iraq would be ``prolonged and

expensive'' and would make U.S. soldiers ``sitting ducks for Islamic

terrorists.''

Now we have had more than 3,000 Americans killed, many thousands more

wounded horribly and have spent $400 billion and the Pentagon wants

$170 billion more. And as one previous speaker said with all the added

medical and veterans' costs, the ultimate cost of this war could reach

$2 trillion. There is nothing fiscally conservative about this war.

Most of what we have spent has been purely foreign aid in nature,

rebuilding Iraq's infrastructure, giving free medical care, training

police, giving jobs to several hundred thousand Iraqis and on and on

and on. Our Constitution does not give us the authority to run another

country as we have in reality been doing in Iraq. With a national debt

of almost $9 trillion, we can't afford it. To me, our misadventure in

Iraq is both unconstitutional and unaffordable. Some have said it was a

mistake to start this war but that now that we are there we have to,

quote, finish the job and we cannot cut and run. Well, if you find out

you're going the wrong way down the interstate, you do not keep going,

you get off at the next exit.

There is no way, Mr. Speaker, we can keep all of our promises to our

own people on Social Security, veterans' benefits, and many other

things in the years ahead if we keep trying to run the whole world. As

another columnist, Georgie Anne Geyer, wrote more than 3 years ago,

Americans, quote, will inevitably come to a point where they will see

they have to have a government that provides services at home or one

that seeks empire across the globe.

We should help other countries during humanitarian crises and have

trade and tourism and cultural and educational exchanges. But

conservatives have traditionally been the strongest opponents to

interventionist foreign policies that create so much resentment for us

around the world. We need to return to the more humble foreign policy

President Bush advocated when he campaigned in 2000.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we need to tell all these defense contractors

that the time for this Iraqi gravy train with their obscene profits is

over. It is certainly no criticism of our troops to say that this was a

very unnecessary war. It has always been more about money and power and

prestige than any real threat to us or to our people. And this war went

against every traditional conservative position I have ever known.

It is time, Mr. Speaker, to bring our troops home.