Mr. Speaker, 4 years ago this Congress voted to authorize

the President to engage in a preemptive attack to Iraq, a country that

had not attacked the United States. I supported the military action

against Afghanistan because they gave sanctuary to Osama bin Laden and

those who attacked us on 9/11. But I opposed the President's unilateral

and preemptive attack on Iraq, because I believed that this action

would destabilize the Middle East, isolate us in world opinion, and

weaken our influence in the world. Our opposition was vilified. Our

patriotism was questioned, and that continues today.

We are told that if we oppose the President's intensification of the

war, we are giving aid and comfort to the enemy. Well, I, for one, am

tired of those who have been consistently wrong about this war

lecturing those of us who have been right from the start. I am tired of

the manipulation of intelligence by this administration. I am tired of

the stubbornness of an administration that didn't have a clue about the

Middle East realities when they got us into this mess, and don't have a

clue now about how to get us out.

Sadly, there will be no happy endings to this war. The President's

policy has done so much damage that there is no good way for us to get

out, whether it happens in 6 months or a year or 5 years.

Our troops won the war, God bless them. But the problem with the

President's plan is that it calls upon our troops to do something they

do not have the power to do, and that is to convince the Iraqi factions

to stop killing each other and work together on a political compromise.

Instead of the President's surge, in my view, we should set a rough

target for repositioning our troops out of the area. We should

recognize that Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds, will never join together in a

strong central government. We should tell the Iraqis that if they do

not amend their Constitution to allow for a loose confederation with an

oil sharing agreement between the Sunnis and the Shiites, that we will

leave them to each others' tender mercies. We should participate in

regional discussions with all parties, including Syria and Iran. We

should resume aggressive leadership to resurrect a meaningful Middle

East process, peace process, and Congress should pass legislation

prohibiting an attack on Iran without authorization by this Congress.

Given the chaos that the administration's policy has produced, none

of these suggestions may work. But all of them would be better than

continuing to be stuck in another 5-year period in an endless war with

endless promises to the American people and with endless failures on

the ground.