Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Congresswoman Waters and

all of the members of the Out of Iraq Caucus for keeping the awareness

in this Congress on the need for America to take a new direction in the

world because we are not just speaking about opposition to a war which

should be opposed as illegal, but we are talking about the need for

America to take a new role in the world, one where our country does not

engage in preemption or unilateralism or first strike, one where

America cooperates with the world community on matters of international

security.

Remember, before 9/11, the felicity that America was held within so

many parts of the world. Remember, right after 9/11, how the world

community opened its heart to the United States.

But over at the White House, just off the Oval Office, at a meeting

of the National Security Council, Donald Rumsfeld and people in the

administration were plotting the attack on Iraq the day after 9/11.

Yesterday the President mentioned 9/11 again. How many times does he

have to mention 9/11 when he talks about Iraq? Why does he keep

mentioning 9/11 when he talks about Iraq? Iraq had nothing to do with

9/11. This is the big lie. And it is this big lie that the whole policy

is based on. The Bible says, that which is crooked cannot be made

straight. That becomes prophecy when you are talking about Iraq because

everything about what the President is doing in Iraq is crooked.

Let us look at his speech last night. Why did he spend so much time

talking about Iran? Let us think about this. We know that in the last

year, this administration has taken steps to try to move within the

soft circumference of war against Iran. Our Air Force selecting bombing

targets, moving in place 24 bunker busters with nuclear tips into the

region. Last night talking about moving an aircraft carrier into the

region, talking about Patriot missiles into the region, rattling sabers

for war. He appears to be setting the stage for a wider war in the

region. He has blamed Iran for attacks on America. He is saying that he

is going to disrupt Iran. He is going to add this aircraft carrier.

Isn't one war enough for this President? Isn't one misguided war enough

for this President?

You know, it is time that the media and the Congress, as Mr. Conyers

pointed out, started to pay attention to what this President is saying

and to what he does. It is imperative that Congress exercise its

constitutional responsibility. And I think we are finally starting to

see that. I think we are seeing people on both sides of the aisle

realizing that there is a threat to our very democracy here; that our

country is in peril by a Commander in Chief who has run amuck; who is

without control; who stands by while Lebanon is basically annihilated

south of the Litani River and actually, we found out later, was

encouraging it; who is letting a civil war grow and fester in Iraq

because he is going to send more troops and pour them into it. Or,

Members of Congress, is the talk about a 21,000 troop increase in Iraq

for the purposes of dealing with problems in Baghdad? Is that just a

pretext? Since very few things are on the level with this

administration, will some of those troops instead be sent to the border

with Iran to provoke a conflict?

These are questions we have to be asking because nothing this

administration has said has been the truth. They don't have the

capacity to tell a straight story to the American people, and they have

spun the people of this country so much that people have become

disoriented, but they are finally waking up, and they woke up in

November. You want to talk about a surge? There was a surge in

November. There was a surge to the voting booth, and that surge

accomplished a new Congress. And the issue was Iraq, and our leadership

told us that before the election. Three issues, they said, will guide

this election: Iraq, Iraq, Iraq. And so was created a new Congress. And

so it is imperative that Congress step up to its obligation.

We have to say that we are not going to give this President any more

money for the war, but we have to use the money that is in the pipeline

right now to bring the troops home and, Mr. Speaker, to set in motion a

process, because we understand; we don't want to abandon the people of

Iraq. But we know that the only way that we can get our troops out is

to establish an international process, and we are not going to

establish an international process until such time that we give up the

occupation, that we remove our troops and close our bases because that

is what is fueling the insurgency. So we can turn this around.

But this President and administration, which has such a talent for

war, is determined to wreak chaos throughout the region. That is what

they want. More chaos, more war, more control, as America moves towards

fascism. Let's call it what it is. We are losing our democracy here.

What do we stand for? What are those troops out there for? They believe

in this country. They love this country. And if we love this country

and the troops, we have to bring them home. But, instead, we have got

an administration that is prepared to do something else because, in

Iraq, his new plan is a plan for more door-to-door fighting. It is a

plan for more war, more civilian casualties, more troop deaths, more

wasted money, more destabilization in the region and more separation

from the world community. This President wants to send more troops to

Baghdad in the middle of a civil war. This President wants to continue

a war that everyone knows in Iraq the situation cannot be won

militarily.

Does anyone in this administration have any sense at all? Does anyone

in this administration have any heart, that we can send our troops into

this miasma and cause not only their deaths but the deaths of innocent

civilians when the President talks about taking the restrictions off

our troops? What does that mean? Is that licensing wholesale slaughter

of civilians and then a counter reaction which results in our troops

getting slaughtered? This whole thing is wrong. This is not what

America should be about. And everyone knows that.

And yet the President last night had the nerve to talk about the

Iraqi oil again. He can never talk about Iraq without talking about

oil. They want to privatize Iraq's oil. Big surprise. Our troops were

sent into Iraq. What was the first thing the administration had them

do? Go to the oil ministry. They didn't have them go to protect

antiquity, protect children. No. Protect oil.

Do you know the Baker Report pointed out that 500,000 barrels of oil

are being stolen every day? With 140,000 to 150,000 American troops

there, how in the world can we have all that oil being stolen? How can

that happen?

Do you know what the market value of that oil is? If you run the

numbers, about $62.25 a barrel. That is over $11 billion worth of oil a

year stolen. The patrimony of Iraq is just being stolen.

How are we going to have peace if the U.S. is sitting on top of oil,

talking about privatizing the oil for the President and all of his

buddies in the oil industry? We are going to have peace in that region?

Those people are going to step back and let that happen? No way.

That is why we have to get out of Iraq, end the occupation, bring our

troops home, close the bases and give the Iraqi people control of their

oil once again and begin a process of reconciliation.

We need to create a new context where the international community

helps us, because we are on our way out of there. The international

community is not going to help the United States as long as we are

occupiers.

You know, Mr. Speaker, this President wants to expand the war and the

American people should be very concerned because it is not just the

sons and daughters who are over there, but it is more who will be sent

through an expansion of the war. It is the jeopardy of an escalation.

Have we not learned anything from the experience in Vietnam? Have we

not learned that this march of folly we are on has been duplicated in

the past? Have we not learned that the attempt to use raw military

power is doomed to failure in a world that is interdependent and

interconnected? Don't we know that we have a capacity to evolve? Isn't

the American Revolution really a series of evolutions of our upward

march into something better than we are? Aren't we prepared to take

that? I think we are.

I think the American people know it is time for us to take this new

direction, to reconnect and reunite with the world community. And we

will begin that when this Congress takes a stand and says no more money

for war; when this Congress takes a stand and says use the money that

is there to bring the troops home; when this Congress takes a stand and

says close those bases, don't privatize the oil. When we become

actually a co-equal branch of government, which was the intention of

our Founders in drawing up the Constitution and in ratifying the

Constitution of the United States.

That is what America was always supposed to be about, not about an

imperial Presidency. We rejected kings. We rejected autocracy when this

country was founded. We didn't come through this long constitutional

experience to the administration of George Bush just to turn our back

on everything America is about, turn our back on what our real purpose

as a Nation is. It is about taking care of our people.