Mr. Speaker, the American people want U.S. soldiers

out of Iraq. A majority of Iraq's elected Parliament want U.S. soldiers

out of Iraq. And I want soldiers out of Iraq, out of harm's way and out

of the middle of a civil war.

This is what the American people elected us to do in November,

knowing the best way to support our troops is to protect our soldiers

and get them out of Iraq.

Since January, 431 U.S. soldiers have died in Iraq; 83 American

soldiers died in January, 80 died in February, 81 died in March, 104

died in April, and 83 Americans have died in Iraq so far in May.

Since January, 2,496 U.S. soldiers have been wounded in Iraq. In

fewer than 5 months, the U.S. casualties in Iraq is already exceeding

the number of soldiers who died or were wounded in Iraq in 2003. But

the President insists we're winning. The reality is his stubbornness

and intransigence has lost the war and the peace.

Outside my office, we honor the fallen heroes of the State of

Washington by showing the photographs of 78 men and women killed in

Iraq. Adding more pictures will not sustain their memory. We honor

these fallen heroes only by protecting the living.

The way forward is not more casualties, as the President freely

admits will occur.

The way forward in Iraq is not claiming phony ties to 9/11, fake

intelligence, or outright fabrication, although these are the

trademarks of this administration.

Demanding a timetable to get our soldiers out of Iraq, as I have done

repeatedly, is the strongest support anyone in this Congress or country

can do to support our soldiers.

I voted today to support U.S. soldiers by voting against a bill that

approves an endless war and provides the President with a box of

preapproved blank checks. A Nation does not support its soldiers by

accepting more Americans killed and wounded in Iraq while carrying out

the flawed mission of a failed presidency. The Congress does not

support our soldiers by passing flawed legislation that supports a

President who is totally out of touch with reality.

Spending more money in Iraq without a timetable to get out of Iraq

only buys more casualties in a needless military disaster ordered by a

President who can mislead, but not lead, America in war or peace.

The invasion of Iraq was and is all about oil. The one and only

benchmark that matters to the President is for Iraq to pass an

American-engineered oil law that delivers the oil wealth of Iraq into

the hands of Western oil companies.

The President would not listen when a majority of Iraq's parliament

signed a petition last week demanding a timetable for the withdrawal of

U.S. forces. That's because it doesn't matter what they think; only

what the President and his neocon friends want. And they want oil. They

want it so much that the President will keep the U.S. soldiers in Iraq

until he can strong arm the passage of a law that provides cover for

Western oil companies to control Iraq's vast oil wealth. That is the

President's definition of mission accomplished.

The American people elected us to stand up to a President who is out

of touch and out of control. Over 3,000 U.S. casualties ago, we were

handed the gavel to lead against the President who had taken his

Republican majority in Congress to suspend the coequal branch of

government.

The President issued orders, and the Republicans bowed their heads

and complied. We must lead, not capitulate.

American soldiers will never be safe as long as the President can

order a military escalation in one breath and, in the next, predict

growing casualties. The Iraq people will never be free so long as the

President has the freedom to occupy their Nation. The American people

will never be served as long as the President can go it alone in Iraq

and in the halls of Congress.

The American people gave us a mission, but on this day, we have

failed in that mission.