Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to address the deteriorating

situation in Iraq. Over the past 10 days, we have seen a country on the

brink of civil war slide into civil war.

On February 22, a bomb exploded at the Golden Mosque causing

significant damage to one of Shiite Islam's holiest shrines and setting

off the latest and most violent sectarian violence since the war began

in 2003.

Since the war began, we have witnessed almost daily bombings in Iraq.

Thousands of IEDs have been exploded. Hundreds of suicide bombings have

been staged. Tragically, the number of such attacks has grown each

year, a stark contrast to the Vice President's prewar assessment that

we would be greeted as liberators.

According to the U.S. Department of Defense, the number of insurgent

attacks on our soldiers, Iraqi security forces, and civilians increased

29 percent in 2005 when compared to 2004. Specifically, the number of

car bombs increased to 873 in 2005, more than twice of the number of

car bombs in 2004, and the number of suicide car bombs went to 411 from

133.

Conservative estimates suggest that more than 30,000 Iraqi men, women

and children have been killed since the war began. Unfortunately,

Iraqis are not the only ones caught up in these attacks. More than

2,296 U.S. soldiers have died in Iraq and more than 16,825 have been

injured. And I am sorry, I do not have the number of amputees or

suicides tonight. But they are serious.

Our very presence in Iraq fuels the death, destruction and has helped

create the civil war which now endangers millions of lives. These are

not just my words. The same thoughts and sentiments are being echoed

throughout conservative America.

It was said here earlier tonight, William F. Buckley, Jr., the

founder of ``The National Review'' recently wrote,

Bill Kristol, one of the war's staunchest defenders recently said,

Even columnist George Will recently described Iraq in this manner.

he said.

The bombing of the Golden Mosque pushed Iraq over the edge. Thousands

of Iraqis are in the streets protesting and others are attacking their

historical enemies in retaliation to the bombing of the Golden Mosque.

According to today's Washington Post, more than 1,300 individuals

have been killed, and more than 1,000 Sunni mosques have been attacked

since last week's bombing of the Golden Mosque. Instead of putting a

stop to the violence, Iraq's security forces are contributing to the

murders. It is clear that some Iraqis have joined the Iraq Army to

continue family or tribal feuds under the protection of the Iraqi

military uniform and that many Iraqis do not trust the military because

of ethnic divisions.

This is a stark difference from the President's words that the Iraqis

are successfully assuming the role of protecting their fellow

countrymen. It is very interesting to note that the very week that Iraq

has seen the most violent sectarian violence in years, the Defense

Department announced that the number of Iraqi Army battalions capable

of fighting the insurgency without U.S. help had fallen from one to

none since September 2005.

Last summer, a defense official claimed that there were three

battalions ready to take on the insurgency. However, in September 2005,

General George Casey, the top U.S. commander in Iraq, told the Senate

Armed Services Committee that the number of Iraqi battalions capable of

fighting independently of U.S. troops had dropped from three to one.

Therefore, despite 3 years and more than $260 billion, we find that the

number continues to decrease.

Now, the President is asking Congress to pass a supplemental

appropriations request of $75 billion for the Iraq war, the war on

terrorism, and the gulf coast recovery efforts. The lion's share of

this money, about $63 billion, is for the Iraq war. If this bill

passes, the total amount we will have spent on the war will be over

$350 billion.

The President is asking us to spend $350 billion a war that his

Administration claimed would be of minimal cost to American taxpayers.

Perhaps worse, the President wants to spend hundreds of billions of

dollars on this war at a time when the Congress is pushing through tens

of billions of dollars in cuts to Medicare, education, Community

Development Block Grants and other important programs.

Mr. Speaker, the Administration has failed. It is long past time for

our troops to come home. Civil war has broken out--we can not expect

our soldiers to try to sort out which side is which in this civil war

and we should not take sides. I urge the President to conclude this war

and bring our troops home.