Madam Speaker, in the last 2 days there have been two

major stories about comments made by the prime minister of Iraq. In the

first, he said that terrorism in Iraq has been defeated. In the second,

the Iraqi prime minister said he wants to negotiate a departure date

for U.S. troops.

Yet, because the Defense Department has requested more money for Iraq

this year than any year of the war so far, you can rest assured that we

will not be leaving any time soon. This war has always been more about

money and power than about any real threat to the U.S. Saddam Hussein's

total military budget was only a little over 2/10 of 1 percent of ours.

As the conservative columnist Charley Reese wrote a few years ago: We

attacked a country that had not attacked us, that had not even

threatened to attack us, and was not even capable of attacking us.''

Now some are gloating about the success of the surge as if this

somehow justifies all the deaths, all the injuries, and all the waste,

fraud, and abuse of previous years. Well, surely with the expenditure

of hundreds of billions of dollars, there would be a few successes

along the way.

It is not criticism of the troops to say that this was a very

unnecessary war that we should never have been in, in the first place.

This war has meant massive foreign aid, huge deficit spending, and has

put almost the entire burden of enforcing U.N. resolutions on our

taxpayers and on our military. It has gone against every traditional

conservative position I have ever known.

The Democrats recently passed a budget raising our national debt

limit to $10.5 trillion. We are still borrowing staggering amounts of

money, and this war has been our largest single expense. The Defense

Department, like any giant bureaucracy, always wants more money, yet we

simply cannot afford to keep spending at the rate our military leaders

want.

Georgie Anne Geyer, the conservative foreign policy columnist, wrote

a few months after the Iraqi war started that,

This war has already become the most expensive and wasteful war in

American history. There has not been anything fiscally conservative

about the war in Iraq. In fact, there has been so much waste of money,

so much fraud, so much excessive and lavish spending that fiscal

conservatives should be the ones most upset about all this.

According to the Government Accountability Office, we already have

$53 trillion to $54 trillion in unfunded future pension liabilities on

top of our national debt, and this figure is going up every day. We are

now spending at the rate of $500 million a day, every day, for our

military ventures in Iraq and Afghanistan. In just a few short years we

will not be able to pay our Social Security and veterans pensions and

all the other things we have promised our own people with money that

will buy very much.

Evan Thomas in the June 23 issue of Newsweek wrote,

He wrote that Saddam Hussein and Slobodan Milosevic were frequently

compared to Hitler. Thomas wrote,

Both parties are falling all over themselves trying to prove their

patriotism, and thus are afraid to question any Pentagon expenditure.

And the Defense Department seems to know that no matter how wasteful or

inefficient it becomes, that Congress will keep on giving it huge

increases.

Where are the fiscal conservatives? Where are those who will say

that, since the surge has been successful, we need to spend less money

in Iraq, not more? Where are those who supported this war who will not

back up the Iraqi prime minister and say it is time to start bringing

our troops home?

Surely conservatives, who have always been the biggest opponents of

world government, are not going to say we should keep on running Iraq

and simply stay there forever regardless of how the Iraqis themselves

feel.

At some point we need to start putting our own people first once

again. At some point, Madam Speaker, we need to stop borrowing hundreds

of billions to spend in other countries, and take care of our own

people.