Mr. Speaker, we have spent over $200 billion so far on

the war in Iraq. According to the Congressional Budget Office, by 2010,

our expenses might be as much as $600 billion.

The two hundred billion dollars we have spent so far would be enough

money to provide health care for the 45 million Americans without

health insurance.

That two hundred billion dollars would permit us to hire three and a

half million elementary school teachers.

That two hundred billion dollars for the war in Iraq is going on

America's credit card and that goes right to the deficit--a debt to be

paid by our children and grandchildren.

All this might be worth it if we had something to show for it. I

think two hundred billion dollars for peace and democracy is a bargain.

But we haven't gotten peace and democracy. That two hundred billion

has bought us: over seventeen hundred dead Americans; an unknowable

number of Iraqi civilian deaths; a dysfunctional country that cannot

move its political process forward; a new haven and proving ground for

anti-American extremism; a wellspring of mistrust from longtime friends

and allies around the world; and a devastating erosion of American

leadership and credibility.

So what are we still doing there? The President says we are pursuing

our ``ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world.'' But the President

has dragged onto a path that, at best, muddles that message.

We are building our nation's largest embassy in Iraq; even before it

is complete, we have more than 1,000 embassy staff in Iraq. What is the

average Iraqi on the streets of Fallujah--or average Jordanian on the

streets of Amman--going to think when he sees that we are building the

Largest American Embassy in the World in Baghdad?

I am sure the average Iraqi does not mourn the savage brutality of

Saddam Hussein's regime. The question is whether he equates our never-

ending American presence in Iraq with a new form of tyranny, rather

than the freedom the President says he seeks to spread.

The underlying problem with our endless occupation of Iraq--a country

that does not threaten the United States--is that it undermines our

leadership on issues that DO threaten the United States. North Korean

and Iranian nuclear weapons, global terrorism, emerging deadly

international diseases--all these issues are imminent threats that we

must confront. Our ability to convince other nations to join us in

boldly confronting these threats has been hobbled both by our deceptive

entry into Iraq and our lingering departure from it.

Mr. Speaker, our Iraq policy has become a festering wound that bleeds

away more and more of America's wealth, America's security, America's

leadership, and even America young men and women in uniform. I ask all

my colleagues to join me in asking the President seek an exit from this

venture at the earliest possible moment.