Mr. Speaker, 2,000 American troops have now lost their

lives in Iraq. It is time to end this war. Let us bring our troops home

and restore U.S. credibility in the world community. This war was based

on fiction. That is a fact that is no longer disputed. There were no

weapons of mass destruction and no ties to al Qaeda. There was no

imminent threat. This administration, with the acquiescence of

Congress, rushed into a war that, according to Secretary of State Colin

Powell's former chief of staff Lawrence Wilkerson, has made our country

more vulnerable, not less, to future crisis.

The Bush administration has stubbornly refused to reassess the

situation. They have refused to listen to the words of military and

diplomatic leaders who have warned that a continuing U.S. presence in

Iraq will not calm the violence or lead to a more stable Iraq. The U.S.

presence in Iraq is now a major part of the problem. Al Qaeda is in

Iraq today because we are there. The abuse and torture by U.S. forces

of detainees at Abu Ghraib prison and the near 3-year occupation by

U.S. troops have made us an unpopular force in Iraq even among those

who originally supported the U.S. invasion. We have spent over $300

billion on the war with no end in sight. It is estimated that another 2

years of war will boost that amount to $1 trillion. Our military is

stretched to the limit, with much of the burden falling on our Guard

and Reserves.

There are some politicians in Washington who say that, no matter

what, we must ``stay the course.'' I strongly disagree. It is worth

pointing out that it is not Congressmen, Senators or members of the

Bush administration whose lives are on the line in battle. It takes no

courage for anybody in Washington to wave the American flag and

send more troops. We owe our brave fighting men and women so much more.

Washington made a mistake in going to war. It is time for politicians

to admit that mistake and fix it before any more lives are lost.

``In Vietnam, we didn't have the lesson of Vietnam to guide us,''

says David Halberstam, who won a Pulitzer Prize for his coverage of

that war. He goes on to say, ``In Iraq we did have those lessons. The

tragedy is that we didn't pay any attention to them.''

Mr. Speaker, we have now sacrificed the lives of 2,000 members of our

Armed Forces in Iraq. Thousands of others are wounded. Tens of

thousands of civilians from Iraq and elsewhere have died since the U.S.

entered Baghdad and ostensibly took control of the nation.

This week I am introducing a resolution to prohibit the use of

taxpayer funds to deploy United States Armed Forces to Iraq. This bill,

however, will allow funds to be used for the safe and orderly

withdrawal of our troops. It will allow us to support transitional

security provided by other countries, including international

organizations like NATO and the United Nations. The bill will also

allow for continued support for Iraqi security forces and international

forces in Iraq, as well as funding for reconstruction efforts. This is

not a cut and run strategy. Rather, it is a way to support efforts that

I believe can be more helpful in creating a more stable Iraq. But the

bill makes clear, no more U.S. boots on the ground in Iraq. Ultimately,

the future of Iraq will depend on whether the various factions in the

country genuinely and truly want to live with each other. No

constitution or election can fully determine that outcome.

This war has cost us dearly in terms of human life and treasure. At a

time when we are shortchanging our veterans here at home, our schools,

health care and even our homeland security, it makes no sense to throw

good money after bad in this quagmire in Iraq. Sometimes great nations

misstep, as I believe we have done in this case. It is now time to ask

the tough questions and face the hard truths. It is time to end this

war.