Mr. Speaker, America has suffered the worst defeat in

memory, and not by any insurgents. The world is rightly shocked and

appalled by the pictures from Iraq. Rogue U.S. soldiers have committed

atrocities that sicken us. They have harmed Iraqi citizens. They have

endangered every decent U.S. soldier, and they have turned more people

against us. The world must know that America stands for justice, and

that justice should be carried out quickly against those responsible

for these despicable acts.

The Iraq war just keeps getting worse for America, Mr. President. For

those who mistrusted us before, the pictures will inflame their

rhetoric. For those who hate us, the pictures will impassion them to

find new recruits.

Every decent American can only feel enraged that the sordid conduct

of a few people will be portrayed worldwide as representative of our

Nation.

Iraqis were insulted and humiliated, but seven officers have received

only a reprimand, a slap on the wrist. They were not even demoted or

discharged. The world will ask, is that what America calls justice? No,

it is not; and this administration had better take this seriously.

The U.S. would have gone to war if our citizens had been treated like

this in another country. Remember our outrage when they hung some of

our people from a bridge. The administration's response is just one

more mistake. It is completely inadequate.

Iraq has been a mistake from the beginning. The administration

refused to get help and support from the international community, and

the administration continues to spout rhetoric that no one in the whole

world either believes or accepts. Every day, literally, the

administration switches from one policy to another.

First, the Baathists were bad, aligned with Saddam and no friend to

the U.S. Then the U.S. hired a Baathist general to try and get us out

of the mess in Fallujah. Then the U.S. replaces the guy after Iraqis

protest the general's role in Hussein's regime. Now a new guy is in;

but the insurgents, heavily armed and fortified, have already rejected

the new general.

Fighting has broken out in several cities, and U.S. artillery is

shelling positions near the Baghdad airport. There have been more U.S.

casualties, and U.S. soldiers remain in grave danger all over Iraq

while the administration test-fires a few possible solutions.

Note, Mr. President, this is not a test. Iraq is not a laboratory.

They are shooting real bullets, and we keep pretending we have a

policy. Some say Iraq is not like Vietnam. Iraq looks more and more

like Vietnam every day.

In southeast Asia, there was always more reassuring rhetoric from a

Democratic President, by the way, than there was truth or policy to

back it up. In Iraq, there is all this talk of growing a democracy; but

in reality, we are seeding a civil war, with our soldiers' blood right

in the middle of the violence.

What is the American administration going to say, We are working on

it? The Pentagon said a few hours ago that 135,000 U.S. soldiers will

remain in Iraq at least through 2005. In other words, the only thing

being handed over on June 30 is a bill of goods, meant more for the

American people and the election than the Iraqis.

It is time this administration faced the American people and the

truth of their mistakes. Either get an international solution now,

before more U.S. lives are lost, or get out and admit you should have

never gone into Iraq in the first place. All the rhetoric in the

administration's arsenal can start a debate, but it cannot stop a

bullet.