Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago, this Congress approved an

additional $82 billion for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. That is on

top of the other $220 billion that we had appropriated, raising the

total cost of this war to more than $300 billion. If that was not

enough, this week we are about to approve another $45 billion as a

bridge loan for the operations in Iraq, bringing the cost up to $350

billion. What have we gotten ourselves and what have we accomplished in

the last 2 plus years and after nearly now $350 billion of American

taxpayer money?

We defeated Saddam Hussein's regime, but today we find ourselves

mired in an endless occupation with the inability to find a way out of

our occupation of Iraq. In fact, the generals there say we are years

off from ever being able to extricate ourselves from Iraq. Operation

Iraqi Freedom was a war of choice. As President Kennedy once said,

One can only hope that the war in Iraq was the

right choice.

Every President in the middle of a war has thought and laid out a

vision of America after that war, how to see of all the sacrifices that

America made, how the benefits of the war would come home. President

Lincoln thought of the land grant colleges and the transcontinental

railroad system in the midst of a civil war. He saw a way of building

America when it became clear we were going to win that war. President

Roosevelt, the GI bill and universal health care; President Truman, the

minimum wage, universal health care; President Eisenhower, on the heels

of the beginning days of the Cold War as well as the closing days of

the Korean War, the Interstate Highway System today. President Kennedy,

in the midst of Vietnam and the early days of his administration of a

cold war, envisioned a man on the moon and NASA, where America would

dominate space and all the benefits that would come from that.

President Johnson saw health care as his vision, Medicare and Medicaid.

While we are fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, while Americans have

lost 1,700 of their fellow citizens, over 10,000 who have been wounded

and cost us $350 billion of taxpayer-funded entities and a taxpayer-

funded war, what is our vision? What has this President said? How does

he see America down that horizon, that point out there on the horizon

as you look forward? What are we going to build? What vision do we lay

for the next generation for all the sacrifices Americans have made, not

just in blood and in treasure, but for our sense of our country?

As I said, President Lincoln saw an intercontinental railroad system.

This President wants to eliminate Amtrak. President Eisenhower built

highways. The highway system we have today was laid out by President

Eisenhower. President Bush is threatening to veto the highway bill.

President Kennedy saw a man on the Moon. The President has walked away

from his vision of putting a man on Mars. President Roosevelt saw a GI

bill for the troops to come home. Just this last week we cut or

eliminated the opportunity for our National Guard and reservists to get

health care.

Every President during the midst of a war has had a vision of America

after that war that was bigger, grander and worth all the sacrifice

that said the benefits of that war, America's prestige, would come home

in material benefits to America. That is why we have an

intercontinental highway system. That is why we had a railroad system.

That is why we had the land grant colleges. That is why we put a man on

the Moon. We saw a vision, every President that led this country both

through war and then through peace.

It is at this time that this President needs to lay out a vision,

and, let me tell you, it needs to be larger than a tax cut. That is not

a vision. Somehow, do we have a universal broadband, so America leads

again technologically? Would you see in the midst of a war a President

who submits a budget that cuts the National Institutes of Health, a

President who eliminates from the National Science Foundation $100

million from its budget, yet we placed 16th for the first time in

computer sciences? That is not a vision of America that goes forward.

That is a smaller, a reduced America, an America that does not see

itself in the grand scheme of things.

When President Bush ran for the nomination in 2000, he announced that

he was against nation-building. You look sometimes at this budget, you

look at what he has done, and who knew it was America he was talking

about when it came to nation-building? It is time for this President to

lay out a vision that says, with all the sacrifices, his vision for

America, what we are going to do. We are going to build in the science,

we are going to build in the medical field, we are going to provide

universal health care. What is it? It has got to be more than a veto of

a highway bill, and it has got to be more than the elimination of 60

vocational programs. It has got to be more than walking away from

landing a man on Mars. It has got to be a vision that says the

sacrifice was worthy of this country and its great commitment to

democracy around the world.