Mr. Speaker, it has been 4 years and we are now in

our fifth year of war, and once again the Nation stops to assess where

are we? And probably the best indicator of where we are was the front

page of the Washington Post today.

The first article, ``CIA Said Instability Seemed Irreversible.'' That

is the instability in Iraq.

Second article, ``White House Gives Iraq Mixed Marks in Report.''

Unfortunately, Iraq did not meet any of the benchmarks set by the Bush

administration and the Congress.

Third article, ``U.S. Warns of Stronger al Qaeda.'' What we are

talking about there is the resurgence of al Qaeda in Pakistan and in

Afghanistan where it is no longer safe for girls to go to school once

again, and where the drug crop is stronger than ever and where we have

made no gains at all. Why haven't we made any gains after 4 years?

Because we have been dragged into Iraq, into a war without end, by a

President who did not understand the region, who is indifferent to the

problems, the cultural differences and the problems they are

experiencing, and who has not listened to the world. He has not

listened to America, and has not listened to his generals and advisors

on this.

Now they are asking us for more time. As a member of the Armed

Services Committee, there is nothing that upsets me more than hearing

somebody stand and ask for more time after 4 long years; more time for

the surge, I heard today, that the surge hasn't had time to work. My

question to the gentleman was: Which surge are we talking about? I lose

track because we have had so many surges. Which surge are we talking

about?

Then they say that the President needs more time. Then I hear General

Petraeus needs more time. Always we need more time.

How about this. We have a democracy, a young democracy, the President

says, in Iraq, and more than half of the people in that parliament

signed a petition asking the United States to leave. Now we said we

would leave if another nation like Iraq asked us to leave. And yet we

hear absolute silence from the President. He will not leave despite of

the fact that the government he had elected there has asked us to

leave.

It costs us $10 billion a month. When I speak to my constituents,

they are all asking, why don't we have money have money for this? We

need money for health care. We have a problem with infrastructure. And

we just don't have the money for this; this program is being cut back.

And my answer over and over is what everybody else is having to tell

the good people in this country who need our resources, this is what we

have to tell them, you can't have two wars, tax cuts for the top 1

percent, the greatest deficits in history, and still provide for the

American people.

We have a decision to make. We have an opportunity finally to provide

a responsible road map out of Iraq; and yet we have a President and an

administration that is indifferent to this road map.

It is now our responsibility to respond to the American people, to

respond to the world and try once again to get the President's

attention and once again to ask to please end the craziness here after

the thousands of deaths of American soldiers, the injuries which we

will be paying for, and should pay for. It is our obligation to honor

our commitments to our soldiers, but we will be paying for this for so

many years. And we also have an obligation to the Iraqis. We don't even

know how many have died because we don't really count them.

What we do know about Iraq is that that culture has been decimated,

that those who can leave have left. The countries surrounding Iraq have

a large number of refugees, and people living inside Iraq are afraid to

go out on their streets.

When I was in Iraq in March, I had an opportunity to speak to Sunni

and Shiite women. It was very clear to me that they were unable to

resolve their differences. They were so full of mistrust and hatred for

each other that they were in the midst of a civil war. Yet we stay

there and we continue to put our soldiers in the middle of a civil war,

and we continue to be deaf to the cries of the rest of the world.

So we are standing here tonight asking once again for the President

to listen to the American people, to listen to reason, to listen to the

military leaders who never talk about a military victory any more. They

simply talk about stabilizing Iraq, and the question has to be

stabilizing Iraq; wasn't Iraq stable 4 years ago? Is this the result we

get after 4 years of war?

I thank our soldiers for their incredible commitment to this country.

I have had an opportunity to see some of them leave. I have nothing but

the deepest respect for them. I know that the Army is suffering under

the strain of a 4-year war. The soldiers and their families are

suffering under the strain. I know that they have asked us to speak up

for them because they are unable to.

So we stand here once again tonight for the people, for the soldiers,

and ask the President to please start a responsible road map out of

Iraq.

It's very important. I sit on the Armed Services

Committee and the Subcommittees on Personnel and Readiness. So I hear

every day what the President's impact has had on personnel and on

readiness. I would like to address both of them.

Supporting the troops is a lot more than putting a yellow ribbon on a

car. The ``Support the Troops'' sound coming out of the White House

rings hollow to my ears after 6 months on the Armed Services Committee.

I will give you an example. Here we have the most wonderful troops in

the world, committed volunteers who signed up out of love and

patriotism for their country. It came time for a pay raise, and the

President only wanted 3 percent.

The House of Representatives, bipartisan, said they wanted 3.5

percent pay raise. So, how much is 3.5 percent versus the President's

percent? Well for an E-4, it would be $200 a year. I know, from sitting

on the Personnel Subcommittee, what a strain this is on their families

and the cost of having a loved one gone and having to get day care and

having to get extra help and not having the same support system that

they have when they have their spouse or family member with them.

Yet the President said 3 percent was sufficient. He was angry enough,

when the House voted for a 3.5 percent pay raise, that he listed it as

one of the reasons that he would consider vetoing the bill. If you

can't give an E-4, who is serving his or her country, $200 a year, then

all the talk you want about supporting the troops is hollow, and it

really ranks sour for the rest of us.

You look at readiness, and you realize the Army has been so impacted

by this, that I actually voted to grow the size of the Army. I also

voted for the largest, we all did, the largest military budget in

history.

As a direct result of the President's misguided policy, he has left

us in such a weakened state around the world, that we have to grow the

size of the Army. We have to put more incentives in there, and we have

to put the largest budget in there.

You know, we do have enemies in this world. We know that. We have a

lot of enemies. They weren't in Iraq, but we do have enemies.

Peter Pace, a general, was asked if he were comfortable with the

ability of the United States to respond to an emerging threat around

the world. He paused for a moment, and he said, no, I'm not

comfortable. That should frighten all of us.

If the general doesn't feel that we could respond to an emerging

threat because all of our resources and all of our treasure and all of

our people are planted inside of Iraq, we have a real problem. This is

why we had to have that vote today, and this is why we need to get out

of this war.

You know, I have been very disturbed by the way it has been treated

like a political issue. It's not.

The freshman class that came here to make the change have been going

to Iraq at great personal risk to themselves to have a look and to be

sure that they are right about their position against this war. One by

one we have come back, as you know, and said, no, we were right about

this. What we saw was horrific. We saw a very sad, destroyed country.

We saw a country at war with itself in Iraq, and we saw our troops

stuck in the middle of the civil war.

Fortunately, there are some Republicans who are now breaking away

from the President's grip and speaking the truth about this war. I just

wanted to read a couple of them. I will leave their names out, because

who they are is not important, except to say that they are Senators.

Here's one, ``We need to be fighting terrorists, not civil wars . . .

Iraq's peace is one they must win on their own. We cannot win it for

them. Our might should be focused on stopping terrorists who are

plotting to bring harm to the United States.''

Here is another Republican Senator, ``A policy of responsible

military disengagement with a corresponding increase [in] nonmilitary

support is the best way to advance our Nation's interests.''

Another one, ``There's nothing to wait for. Almost everybody that has

any knowledge of the reports . . . would indicate they are not going to

show any degree of a big change that we needed. So we are just wasting

time.''

If we are going to fight terrorism, first of all, we need to protect

our own homeland.

You know, if you know there is a burglar in the neighborhood, first

thing you do is lock your own door. We didn't do that. If you look at

the little money we have invested in Homeland Security, you will know

that we are no safer than we were before 9/11, that we took the money

and we went to Iraq.

Now why did we go to Iraq? I guess that's the question that hangs in

everybody's mind. There were no Iraqis on the plane that day. There was

no evidence that Iraq was ready to attack us. We were misled,

misguided, got into this war. What's happened to us? Are we safer here?

No, of course not.

Are we in more danger there? Yes. Have we destabilized the region?

Yes. Do we have to worry about growth of al Qaeda? Yes.

However, the good news is, yesterday at a hearing on global security,

there was a Member of the CIA and a couple of others who spoke, and

they said that we do not have to fear Iran's sway over Iraq.

Let's remember, Iran and Iraq were bitter enemies who fought an 8-

year war. They are not natural allies. They are only allies right now

because of us. Once we leave, it's my fervent hope and belief that it

will calm down.