Mr. Speaker, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Iran's

vitriolic, anti-American, Holocaust-denying leader, just concluded the

first ever trip to Iraq by an Iranian President. Many commentators in

the Middle East hailed the visit as a diplomatic success for him.

Before our invasion, no Iranian President would have dared to step foot

inside Iraq. He was received by Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki

not with one, but four kisses for luck at a staged press conference

with Iraqi media.

I quote Ahmadinejad:

After 6 years in Iraq, 4,000 American lives lost, tens of thousands

wounded, and $570 billion spent, this is what we have to show for it?

Iran's anti-American leader being given the opportunity to try to

humiliate us at a joint press conference with Iraq's leader?

Mr. Speaker, we are seeing the fruition of our strategic blunder in

Iraq. The groundwork has been laid for a Shiite-dominated Iraqi

theocracy, loyal to Iran and diametrically opposed to our strategic

interests in the region. We can stay this course or chart a new

direction that will end this failed policy and bring our troops home.

It's about time we chose a direction that is worthy of the patriotism

of our troops and the sacrifices of their families.