

York (Mr. BISHOP) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise with grave concerns about the situation in Iraq.

As I indicated during a Special Order organized last week by the gentleman from Connecticut, Mr. LARSON, I believe the war in Iraq is the centerpiece of the administration's failed foreign policies. The war in Iraq has proven to be a diversion from what should be our primary foreign policy focus, winning the global war on terror. Our preoccupation with Iraq is decimating our Armed Forces, who now find themselves entrenched in a civil war where they do not belong.

The administration's failure to measure progress in Iraq is matched by its broader foreign policy failures. North Korea and Iran present greater risks to our safety and security than they did when the President identified them as the "axis of evil" in his 2002 State of the Union address.

Today, the situation in Iraq is a tragedy, for America, for our brave troops in uniform, for the future of our Nation, and for the prospect of Middle East peace which fades every day we stay in Iraq and as the violence between Israel and Hezbollah continues.

Although 2006 was supposed to be a "year of significant transition" pursuant to last year's defense authorization law, we are no closer to finishing the year with any measure of positive transition than we were when the year started.

I call my colleagues' attention to a new book by Thomas Ricks, the Washington Post reporter who appeared on Meet the Press on Sunday, to discuss "Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq." As Mr. Ricks explained, the administration's foresight and planning was as poor as its conduct of the post-war period. It is why, 3½ years later, we are still paying the price for such negligence, and why 2006 is not on track to be the year of significant transition that not only had we hoped for, but that we simply must have.

Halfway through the year, these statistics show that we are moving backwards, away from our goal of handing Iraq over to a safe, secure and stable democracy. There were 3,149 civilians deaths in the month of June. That is up from 1,978 civilian deaths in January. For the year, more than 14,000 Iraqi civilians have died. That is an average of 2,400 a month. Another way of looking at that is every 5 weeks, Iraqi civilians die in the number that we lost on September 11.

The overwhelming majority of deaths have occurred in and around Baghdad. If the Iraqi police and army can't provide security, is it any wonder that the Iraqi people have turned to the militias? That is not a measure of progress in any year, but particularly in a year of transition, that would be a turn for the worse.

Every day focusing on combating sectarian violence is another day and an-

other dollar we divert from what should be our priorities, increasing oil production, rebuilding infrastructure, promoting more dialogue between Sunnis and Shia and developing a long-term political solution for a stable, lasting democracy.

The Iraqi leadership isn't showing much progress either, particularly following remarks by Prime Minister al-Maliki and Speaker al-Mashhadani, who both openly condemned Israel in recent weeks.

Combined with the fact that nearly 50 percent of Iraqis support attacking our troops, Iraq is no closer to what the neo-conservatives envisioned as a partner for Israel who would catalyze change and bring about stability in the Middle East.

When the prime minister addresses a joint session of Congress tomorrow morning, I would hope he says the following: First and foremost, that Iraq is indebted to America for the sacrifice of 2,500 of its sons and daughters. Second, that he regrets and retracts his comments about Israel. Third, that he is committed to routing terrorists, sectarian violence and corruption and disarming the sectarian militias. Fourth, that his government will honor the rights of ethnic and minority constituencies by revisiting divisive sections of Iraq's constitution.

Still, Mr. Speaker, it will take much more to accomplish the long-term political goals necessary to restore stability, liberty and democracy, not only in Iraq, but to a region suffering under the strain of so much violence and uncertainty. But we have a long way to go. Reaching our objectives will be further down that path as a result of the administration's failure in the pre-invasion planning and the conduct of the post-war period.

The tragedy of Iraq is perhaps the most solemn and vivid reminder of why a change in leadership is long overdue, and why America deserves a new direction in its foreign policy.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FRANKS of Arizona addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

VETO ON STEM CELL RESEARCH PUTS A ROADBLOCK IN THE WAY OF SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, the European Union agreed today to continue its funding for embryonic stem cell research, research specifically involving the use of embryos that would otherwise be discarded from fertility clinics. Today's agreement among the Euro-

pean nations paves the way for a 55 billion Euro science program designed to improve and move this important research forward. Unfortunately, Europe's progress is in stark contrast to the embarrassing path chartered by the White House.

Mr. Speaker, America has long had a history of leading the world in scientific discovery are. President John Fitzgerald Kennedy made it a national priority to be the first Nation in the world to send a man to the moon. His leadership showed the rest of the world that the United States was the undisputed international leader in scientific progress.

By using his very first presidential veto to continue a misguided ban on stem cell research, President Bush has diminished American scientific standing in the world.

Mr. Speaker, 5 years ago, President Bush said that stem cell research had profound ethical questions. Today, I say that there are no more profound ethical questions than the fate of 100 million American lives, lives that can be saved, lives that will be lost if we don't move this vital research forward.

Last week, we sent to the White House a bipartisan bill that ethically advances stem cell research, a practice supported by 70 percent of Americans. Instead of embracing stem cell research, President Bush chose this moment in time to strike a blow against science and against hope and against saving lives.

The promise of stem cell research is great. One researcher at Harvard Medical School wrote in the New England Journal of Medicine, "The science of human embryonic stem cells is in its infancy," but he cautioned restricting stem cell research would "threaten to starve this field at a critical stage."

Last October, the prestigious, peer-reviewed Journal of Immunology featured a study by four researchers from the University of Minnesota who developed human embryonic stem cells that could destroy cancerous cells.

Mr. Speaker, when we tout the potential for stem cell research to develop future treatment for diseases like cancer, like Parkinson's, opponents of the research will say we are just dreamers, that the proof just isn't there. Well, Mr. Speaker, four cancer survivors live on my street in Lowell, Massachusetts. Shame on anyone who would take a dream away from them.

Nearly 35,000 cases of leukemia were diagnosed last year. In fact, about 30 percent of cancers in children from birth to 14 years of age are leukemia. Today, scientists are using embryonic stem cells to treat leukemia and lymphoma.

We are dreamers, Mr. Speaker, but those dreams are supported by hard science and research. Stem cells have the potential to develop into any kind of body tissue, including blood, brain, or nerve tissue. Scientists believe that this unique ability can lead to even more breakthroughs in the number of illnesses that now are untreatable.