Madam Speaker, the devastating blast in the Baghdad

market over the weekend was the worst suicide bombing since the

American occupation began nearly 4 years ago, 121 killed and 226

wounded. The Iraqi Interior Ministry says approximately 1,000 people

have been killed over the last week alone.

This so-called ``surge'' that the President is force feeding us is

getting off to quite a start, isn't it? Indeed, The New York Times

reported on Sunday that Iraqis are saying that the security situation

has gotten worse, not better, with the escalation of American troops.

The National Intelligence Estimate released last week offers little

hope that sectarian violence will abate or that Iraq can repair its

political rifts between Sunni and Shi'a. Under these circumstances,

with American soldiers thrown into this unwinnable occupation with no

hope of turning the situation around, there is only one solution, bring

our troops home.

I have introduced a bill, H.R. 508, with Congresswoman Lee and

Congresswoman Waters and 30 others, which will do just that. H.R. 508

will end the occupation within 6 months of enactment. H.R. 508 will

prohibit the construction of permanent U.S. military bases in Iraq. It

will restore the sovereignty of the Iraqi people, even as we continue

to provide nonmilitary assistance and to support a short-term

international stabilization force will be available, if requested by

the Iraqi government.

What a difference from the White House approach. Staring at the

colossal, tragic failure of his Iraq policy, what did the President do

today? He submitted a budget that asked Congress to sign off on $145

billion to continue waging war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Meanwhile, he

wants us to make his tax cuts permanent, and he says the budget will be

balanced by 2012. So where is the money going to come from? Why, of

course, it is going to come from the most vulnerable members of

society, that is where.

Actually, over time, the very troops and their families, who are

sacrificing life and limb in Iraq today, will be paying for this debt.

The President's budget seeks deep Medicare and Medicaid cuts at just

the moment when we need to be expanding access to affordable health

care. Actually, it is simple, Madam Speaker. The money is there for the

folly of occupying Iraq. The money is there for wealthy people to get

tax breaks; but when old and when poor people need nursing home care,

or kids need immunizations, suddenly it is time to tighten the belt.

It is a disgrace, Madam Speaker, this ongoing occupation of Iraq. It

is not only morally indefensible; it is fiscally irresponsible. So many

of our own communities need investment. So many of our own poor and

middle-class families are taking on more and more risk, struggling to

get by, getting squeezed economically. But we are spending our

grandchildren's money on a fantasy that is getting young soldiers

killed, igniting a civil war, inciting jihadists, inspiring hatred of

the United States around the world, harming national security and

making Americans less safe.

There is a solution: One, end the occupation; two, return Iraq to the

Iraqis; three, spend our foreign affairs budget on humanitarian

endeavors, not on war and conquest. Spend it on economic development,

on democracy promotion, on building schools and hospitals.

In addition, bring our troops home. Bring our soldiers home. Bring

our tax dollars home where they can be put to work meeting the needs of

Americans, strengthening American communities.