Mr. Speaker, last week in his surprise visit to Baghdad,

President Bush was full of happy talk.

he said.

But as usual, with this administration, there is a side of the story

you don't hear until it leaks out.

Over the weekend, the Washington Post reported on a memo under the

name of U.S. Ambassador of Iraq Zalmay Khalizad, which describes the

treacherous living conditions faced by Iraqi nationals who work for the

U.S. Embassy.

The cable cites harassment from militia groups, hostility from

security forces, the ones we have trained, sporadic utilities in 115-

degree heat, scarce and expensive fuel, women forced to cover their

faces in public, kidnappings of family members, fear of recrimination

if it is discovered that they are employed by the embassy and are thus

aiding the occupation. Some of these men and women haven't even told

their families where they work.

Mr. Speaker, is this the freedom that the President says is

transforming the Middle East?

The dispatch describes the central government, the one we have heard

the Bush administration pump up to no end, as ineffective and

Embassy staff report that it is actually local militia and

neighborhood governments that control the streets.

After 2,500 American deaths, more than a quarter of a trillion

dollars spent, and our global reputation lying in tatters, we still

don't have a grip on basic security in Iraq. It is absolutely

scandalous.

Mr. Speaker, if the men and women who work for the U.S. Government

feel threatened, how can we possibly hope to maintain peace, rule of

law and basic services for millions of ordinary Iraqis living outside

of the bubble of the Green Zone?

It couldn't be clearer. We are not trusted, respected or beloved in

Iraq. Our military presence is not providing relief from an atmosphere

of resentment, danger and paranoia in Iraq; we are contributing to it.

In fact, we are exacerbating it.

There is only one answer, Mr. Speaker. It is time, in fact, it is

long past time, for our troops to come home. We can help Iraqis build a

more promising future. We can help them rebuild their country and do

our best to help them resolve sectarian strife. But we can do it only

as a partner, not as an occupier. We can do it only if we end this

disastrous war, only if we return Iraq to the Iraqis and return our

troops to their families.