Mr. Speaker, last week the New York Times reported that

Iraq is falling well short of the political progress they were supposed

to have made by now. Still no constitutional reform. Still no local

elections. Still no final action on a law governing distribution of oil

revenues. Still no reversal of the de-Baathification laws.

The Bush administration is now saying that their military escalation

needs time to work and that these political goals will not be met until

the end of the year.

I think it is clear what is going on here. What we have is another

tactic by the White House in an attempt to run out the clock until

January of 2009 when they can hand over the reins and make Iraq look

like someone else's problem.

The President has said that the military commitment to Iraq is not

open-ended; yet all evidence is to the contrary.

The supporters of this war, a group whose numbers are dwindling by

the day, tell us the next 6 months are critical. This really is the

last chance for success. Time and time again, deadlines are established

and not met, but there are no consequences, nor is there

accountability. I am of the belief that the Iraqi Government won't get

its act together until it is forced to govern on its own, until it is

no longer propped up by the presence of more than 150,000 American

soldiers.

As it is now, as long as we continue with this military occupation,

Iraqis have absolutely no incentive to push for democratic reform. As

the Times article indicated, the President has waved off these

concerns, accusing those of us who want to apply deadlines, pressure of

being part of a culture of instant results.

Instant results? I am sorry, the President has had 4 years and more

than $400 billion to make this work. Besides, it is this administration

that assured us we would be greeted as liberators, that democratizing

Iraq would be a cinch, that there would be hardly any sacrifice at all.

Now that they have turned out to be monumentally wrong, they are

wanting to know why we are demanding answers 4 years later.

I, for one, am tired of being told to be patient, especially when

this body is asked to write another enormous check for this war,

especially when my country is becoming a global pariah, especially when

we learn that our Iraq policy has increased the threat of terrorism,

especially when Americans are dying by the thousands, and those lucky

enough to make it home alive

face a mountain of red tape, substandard care, rodent-infested living

quarters at Walter Reed.

I believe we must move toward a fully funded military withdrawal now,

not in August of 2008, not at some future date to be determined by the

President. End the occupation and start bringing the troops home so

that every last one of them can be out of Iraq and with their families

in time for the holidays.