Mr. Speaker, last week, the President called for an

enduring relationship with Iraq, a relationship that extends beyond his

administration. He did not tell us exactly how long this would last,

but we have to have a good idea, because the White House and the

Secretary of Defense have said that our involvement on the Korean

peninsula should be the model for Iraq. That would mean they are

planning to occupy Iraq for 50 years or more.

Consider what this means: A lame duck administration is committing

the United States to decades of occupation that will cost trillions of

dollars and result in the deaths of countless American troops and Iraqi

civilians. This is simply, simply, intolerable.

We were also told last week that the next Petraeus report will come

in this coming March and we must wait for that report before we act.

But we can't sit around and we can't wait. We can't wait for another

Petraeus report; we can't sit around and wait for another Crocker

report, because we are fiddling while Iraq burns. We have already had a

4\1/2\-year sugar-coated spin and TV show from the Oval Office.

Mr. Speaker, enough is enough. The occupation is damaging America

morally, politically and economically, and it must end. The Congress

has the constitutional power and the Congress has the responsibility to

end it.

It is time to take bold action. It is time to use our power, our

power of the purse, to bring our brave troops home. We must pass a bill

requiring that all war spending be used for one purpose and one purpose

only, to fully fund the safe, orderly and responsible withdrawal of

American troops and military contractors. Commanders on the ground

would be given what they need to ensure the safe redeployment of all

troops. The bill should also set firm and doable dates for the start

and the end of the withdrawal.

We can then help the Iraqis by replacing military action that isn't

working with the strong regional and international diplomatic efforts

that can work, work to bring about reconciliation and reconstruction to

Iraq.

By using our power of the purse, the Congress can set the political

agenda. We can build political momentum for withdrawal by offering the

American people a clear and easily understood plan for ending our

involvement in Iraq. And we can change the terms of the debate from the

narrow to

If we use our constitutional power of the purse, the administration

would surely attack us. They would say we are cutting off funding for

the troops. But that would be false. The troops would get every single

last dollar they need to come home to their families, come home safe

and come home sound.

To those who might have objections to this plan, I would say, is

there a better way to end the occupation once and for all? I think the

answer is no, there is none.

I ask all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me. Do

what the American people sent us here to do: End the occupation of

Iraq, and end it now