Madam Speaker, the American people have been opposed to

the occupation of Iraq and they have been demanding the redeployment of

our troops for a very long time now, but the word obviously hasn't

reached our Nation's leaders.

Last Wednesday, the Secretary of Defense asked Congress to

appropriate billions of dollars more to continue the occupation of

Iraq. He said that American troops will remain in Iraq for years to

come with no end in sight.

The occupation has already cost nearly half a trillion dollars, and

what have we gotten for that investment? Even General Petraeus couldn't

say for sure that our involvement in Iraq has made us any safer when he

testified before Congress last month. And the National Intelligence

Estimate warned us in July that al Qaeda is using the occupation to

energize extremists, raise money, and to recruit and indoctrinate

operatives for attacks on the U.S. homeland.

Madam Speaker, the way to make America truly safer is to end the

occupation, restore our moral leadership in the world, and use

diplomacy to strengthen the structure and institutions of international

cooperation and peace. That's why it is time to tell our leaders in the

White House that Congress isn't going to be their friendly neighborhood

ATM machine any more. Congress has the power of the purse. We can use

it to force the administration to change course. We must refuse to

appropriate one more dime for the occupation. Instead, we must fully

fund the safe, orderly and responsible redeployment of American troops

and military contractors out of Iraq.

Redeployment of our troops is the necessary first step on the road to

peace. It is clear that Iraq will never stabilize while American troops

and the vast unaccountable army of 180,000 American military

contractors are there.

Our occupation of Iraq prevents Iraqis from finding solutions to

their own problems, and it delays the regional and international

diplomatic efforts needed to jump-start a true peace process.

The administration has said that it plans to redeploy some troops,

but this is just a tactic, I believe, to win political favor. The

arithmetic proves it. We began this year with 130,000 troops in Iraq.

The escalation brought the level to 160,000. Now the administration

says it will bring out 30,000 troops so by next summer we will again

have 130,000 troops.

So, Madam Speaker, we end up with the same number of troops, but the

administration calls it a reduction. I call it fuzzy math. President

Bush has created a national mathematics panel to study ways to improve

math education in America. That is a really good thing, because the

President himself needs help with addition and subtraction.

Actually, Madam Speaker, the only way to make sure that our troops

are out of harm's way is to proceed right now with a full redeployment

and end the fantasy that there is a military solution to this quagmire.

If we fail to use our power of the purse, if we continue to spend our

taxpayer dollars on this occupation instead of ending it, we will have

failed politically, we will have failed economically, and we will have

failed morally. And we will have failed our brave troops along with all

of the American people. It is time to bring our troops home.