. Mr. Speaker, there will be a great debate in Congress in

the coming days about the administration's escalation strategy in Iraq.

The administration has been trying during this time to influence that

debate by launching a saturation public relations campaign designed to

convince us that the escalation is working. Before the debate in

Congress begins, however, it is really important for every Member of

this House to know the facts; and the truth is the escalation is not

working. It is failing. Here are the facts:

First, this summer has been the bloodiest summer of the occupation

for American troops since the occupation began. Between June and

August, 261 of our brave troops died. Over the same three months last

year, 169 died. That is too many, absolutely; but it is a 54 percent

increase this year over last year.

Second, the escalation has been deadly for U.S. troops ever since it

began: 654 U.S. troops were killed between February, when the

escalation began,

and this August. That is 63 percent more than over the same period last

year.

Third, the escalation has been a disaster for the Iraqi people. Over

5,000 more Iraqi civilians were killed between the start of the

escalation in February and this August than died over the same period

last year; and according to news reports, the number of internally

displaced Iraqis has more than doubled since the escalation began, from

500,000 to 1.1 million refugees.

Next, despite the administration's claims of progress on security,

the Government Accountability Office has reported that average daily

attacks against civilians have remained unchanged, unchanged, since the

escalation began and that the Iraqi Government has failed to meet most

of its key benchmarks for military and political progress. A National

Intelligence Estimate describes the Iraqi leaders as unable to govern

effectively and that the Iraqi Government's ability to bring about

political reconciliation is likely to become even more precarious.

Fifth, and finally, the statement on Monday that the administration

might, might, might, that ``might'' is the operative word, might

consider bringing a few troops home, I believe that was a brazen

political maneuver designed to give Members of Congress who are needing

a reason to stay the course a way out.

Mr. Speaker, it is outrageous that the administration is playing

politics with the lives of our troops and with the emotions of their

families. But their real goal couldn't be clearer: General Petraeus

told a congressional delegation that went to Iraq in August that

American troops will have to be in Iraq for 9 or 10 more years. I doubt

that even the White House's most ardent supporters want the occupation

to continue for another 10 years. Yet, incredibly, that could be the

plan.

We can only come to one conclusion, which is that under the

administration's leadership, there is no light at the end of this

tunnel. There will be more deaths, more wounded, more refugees and more

destruction, with absolutely no end in sight. Meanwhile, our standing

in the world will continue to deteriorate. The terrorists will continue

to hatch their plots against us in their safe havens far from Iraq, and

the occupation will continue to rob our Treasury of the resources we

desperately need for healthcare, for education, for infrastructure, for

energy independence, for the environment and real homeland security.

The administration will never end the madness in Iraq. The American

people have called upon Congress to do it, and history will judge each

of us by how we answer that call.