Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to draw attention to the

surge, or escalation, of the occupation of Iraq. This time it is not an

escalation of troops; it is the escalation in spending to continue this

senseless, apparently endless occupation.

Recent estimates put the cost of the military actions in Iraq and

Afghanistan at $808 billion by the end of this year. That's just

knocking on the door of $1 trillion, Mr. Speaker. Let me say that

again: we are closing in on $1 trillion, and we haven't even begun to

put together a plan to bring our troops home.

This administration has talked about a Korean- or Vietnam-like

presence in Iraq. This could mean as much as 50 more years of U.S.

boots on the ground. Conservative estimates put just one more decade of

military spending at $1.5 trillion. Who knows what it will be after 20

or 30 or 50 years.

The United States has an obligation, both moral and political, to

help the people of Iraq to rebuild their nation. Whether through

reconciliation or reconstruction, our commitment must be ongoing. But

we can't start either of these while we are funding this

administration's occupation.

Despite the bravery of our men and women in uniform, we all know that

we can't bring peace and stability to another country down the barrel

of a gun.

A recent report by the Congressional Progressive Caucus found that

this misdirection of funds may actually be endangering our own

homeland. Each of my colleagues can go to my Web site,

[www.](http://www.)Woolsey.house.gov, and find out what it is costing their

congressional district.

My district of Marin and Sonoma counties in California have already

paid $1.3 billion for the occupation of Iraq. That could have paid for

nearly 25,000 public safety officers or nearly 18,000 port container

inspectors to provide real security for our homeland.

Instead of passing on a war deficit to our children and

grandchildren, we could have been investing in their future and, Mr.

Speaker, we must. So far in paying for the occupation, we could have

paid for 20,000 more elementary school teachers, or we could have

provided almost 500,000 more children with health care, or 200,000

college scholarships to worthy students.

America's working families have demanded, they went to the polls in

November, they want us to end this occupation. They want real

investment in their own communities. They want this Congress to stand

up to the White House and demand that our troops and military

contractors be brought home, not in 10 years, not in 50 years. They

want our troops home in a safe and orderly responsible manner by the

holidays.

Enough of the endless occupation. Enough of the misspent billions.

Enough is enough, Mr. Speaker. Let's bring the troops home. Let's

provide for a secure future for American and Iraqi families