Mr. Speaker, as one who opposed the invasion of Iraq and as

one who has led efforts to end the occupation of Iraq, I rise today to

support the Orderly and Responsible Iraq Redeployment Appropriations

Act of 2007.

First, I would like to thank Speaker Pelosi, Chairmen Obey and Murtha

for really crafting this historic legislation that takes the first step

to end the occupation of Iraq. This bill's main purpose, main purpose,

is to begin to fund the end of this occupation.

This is also the very first time that this Congress will explicitly

tie funding to bringing our troops home. It mandates a start date for

the President to begin redeployment of our brave troops within 30 days

of his signature. It also once again puts Congress on record

prohibiting the establishment of permanent military bases and United

States economic control of Iraqi oil and also of torture.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is not perfect. I strongly feel that

there should be additional clarity on the numbers and nature of U.S.

forces that remain for protection of diplomats and training of Iraqi

forces. And given the President's determination to protect his legacy

by allowing the occupation to continue indefinitely, we really must be

wary of providing him opportunities to prolong or extend this war.

So we made sure in this legislation that this bill explicitly states

that ``the primary purpose of this $5 billion should be to transition

the mission, redeploy troops in Iraq, and not to extend or prolong the

war.''

But I am also disappointed that the end date in this legislation is a

goal no later than December 2008. But hopefully, the Senate will pass

this and send it to the President.

This legislation does conform to what Congresswomen Waters, Woolsey

and myself have been working on all year. Earlier this year, we

authored the Lee amendment that stipulates funding for Iraq should be

used to fully fund, fully fund, the safe and orderly redeployment of

our troops from Iraq. We did this way back in March. Now, 92 Members of

Congress wrote to the President to put him on notice to this effect. So

I am glad this remains the main purpose of this legislation.

This legislation represents for many of us a very important step

forward to end the combat operations in Iraq. Otherwise, believe you

me, I would never vote for it.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation does not give the President a blank

check for his occupation. It provides a down payment on redeploying our

troops from Iraq and ending the occupation. It clearly says these funds

are to be used to begin to end the death, the violence, and the

destruction that the Bush administration has brought on Iraq, which he

has brought on our brave young men and women, and our country and the

world.