Mr. Speaker, one would not travel to a foreign country

without making a plan. And one would not buy a house without first

making a plan, so why does the Bush administration insist on fighting a

quarter trillion dollar war without a plan to end it? It is totally

irresponsible for the White House to ask 150,000 United States troops

to serve in a dangerous country halfway around the world without a plan

to bring them home.

With over 1,700 American soldiers killed in action thus far,

representing more than 1 percent of our total force in Iraq, our

government owes them the courtesy of planning on how we are going to

bring them home.

Unfortunately, the government has failed our troops in Iraq from the

very beginning. First, we did not have a plan on going in and why we

were going in.

Next, the Pentagon neglected to provide life-saving body armor for

each and every one of our troops. A study by the Pentagon released last

year stated that nearly one-quarter of those killed

during the first year of the war could have been saved with the proper

body armor; but we did not plan to protect them well.

Now with over 1,700 American soldiers dead, the government has

continually neglected to plan for an end to this disastrous war.

President Bush likes to talk about the importance of high troop morale,

but he needs to talk to the Veterans Against the Iraq War. They will

tell Members the best way to ensure high morale, and they will say the

best way is for our soldiers to be assured they will actually be coming

home, they will leave Iraq and there will be a plan to make it happen.

The way to ensure that and to raise their morale is by starting to

bring them home. Why then has President Bush not stated America's long-

term intentions in Iraq? His comments on the subject have been limited

to statements like, We will stay until the mission has succeeded and

not one day longer.

Mr. Speaker, how does he define the mission as succeeded when he will

not even acknowledge that there is an actual end to the mission?

Even if the President will not create a plan to end the war in Iraq,

there are many in Congress and around the country who will. Earlier

this month nearly one-third of the House voted for the amendment I

offered to the defense authorization bill to urge the President to

create a plan for the withdrawal of troops from Iraq. This sensible

amendment would not have whisked our troops out of Iraq prematurely, it

simply asked the President to get busy and develop a plan for the end

of this war.

Believe me, if he does not, we will because the people of this

country want to bring our troops home. Fortunately, there is a plan

that would secure America for the future, SMART Security. SMART is

Sensible, Multilateral American Response to Terrorism for the 21st

Century. SMART will help us address the threats we face as a Nation and

will make war the last option.

SMART Security will prevent acts of terrorism in countries like Iraq

by addressing the very conditions that allow terrorism to take root:

Poverty, despair, resource scarcity and lack of educational

opportunity.

SMART Security encourages the United States to work with other

nations to address the most pressing global issues. SMART addresses

global crises diplomatically instead of by resorting to armed conflict.

Efforts to help the Iraqi people must follow the SMART approach,

humanitarian assistance coordinated with our international allies to

rebuild Iraq's war torn physical and economic infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, the American people clearly prefer the SMART approach to

our current policies in Iraq. Nearly 60 percent of Americans believe

the war in Iraq has been handled poorly and that the United States

should immediately begin withdrawing some or all of our troops. Let us

support our troops in Iraq and the will of 60 percent of the American

people. We can do both by beginning to bring home our troops serving in

Iraq. The time is now. The time is now to end the United States

military occupation of Iraq.