Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. Larson for yielding. I want

to thank him for organizing this event this evening to give us a chance

to spend a little extra time talking about what is going on.

I think the American people, as they look at this situation, have

every reason to be very confused about what is going on in Iraq; and I

want to try to help them understand it.

The first thing you have to understand is that everything that is

happening on this floor and in the other body has to do with the 7th of

November, the election. Don't ever lose sight that what is being done

here is to influence the American people to keep the Republicans in

power in the next election.

Now, the confusion you feel is being created by the very people who

want to retain power. If you ask yourself where are we today, well, on

Saturday in the morning they announced in the London Times that Prime

Minister Maliki wanted reconciliation. He wanted to have a

reconciliation plan coming out, and he wanted to meet with the Sunnis

and try to defuse the situation.

You would think that would be in everybody's interest. Did you hear

one word from the White House about the Iraqis standing up and trying

to defuse the situation? Did you hear any support? None. Because the

basic underlying fact that my colleague from Washington has pointed out

is we have no intention of leaving Iraq. We intend to be there with

50,000 troops and permanent bases for an extended period of time. But

we won't say that. We say exactly the opposite.

What we are saying to the Iraqis is, now, look, this is what we mean.

We mean we are not going to stay here. But the Iraqis open their eyes

and they see this permanent stuff, and they say to themselves, it

doesn't make any sense. They are not here on a temporary basis.

An Arab friend of mine in Jordan told me that one of the things that

Americans do not understand is what it means to an Arab when you occupy

his land, and as long as we occupy their land, they will fight. He

said, you can do all the talk you want, but until the United States

indicates clearly that they are pulling their troops out, you will

never get any peace in the area.

That was on Saturday morning. Then we come to the New York Times the

next day, Sunday, quoting General Casey. Now this is the President that

says, stay the course, stay the course; and the New York Times leaks a

story saying that they have drafted a plan for withdrawing troops by

September.

This is a leak. Did the President jump up and down and say, send out

the FBI to find out who leaked that plan? No. Because they want to send

that out to one part of the population. They want part of the United

States to think we are actually going to pull the troops out, when in

fact there is no real evidence that they are going to take them out.

The American people have got to stay awake. Ronald Reagan said you

should trust, but verify. The President says stuff, but when you try to

verify it, you can't find it. He is against leaks, as long as it is an

official leak of something he wants to get out there. Karl Rove really

wants to get it out there.

Our election. One of the fascinating things about it

is, I don't know how many times the President has said, we will stand

down when the Iraqis stand up. Well, that makes sense to people. People

say, yes, that is right. As soon as they are ready to take over their

country, we will back out and we will leave. So we think he really

means it.

Then we have Maliki, the new prime minister, stand up and say, I have

got a reconciliation plan, and I would like to talk with you guys about

a timetable for you to leave.

Have you heard the President say one thing about the prime minister

standing up? Of course not. They have ignored the fact that the Iraqis

that they maneuvered into charge of the place are actually standing up

and saying, yes, we are going to have to talk to the Sunnis, because we

are Shiia and they are Sunnis, and they feel like they are left out;

and, secondly, we have to do something about all this fighting that is

going on.

Mr. Speaker, well, one of the questions you have to

ask yourself is, Did Mr. Maliki and the Iraqi Government sit down and

come up with this reconciliation package all by themselves? Does

anybody think that the American Government was not, in the form of the

ambassador, involved in those discussions, or that talked to the

military? Of course they did.

So what you have got is our own government talking out of both sides

of its mouth. The Iraqis, all they know is we are staying there. We

have got a $500 million embassy, the largest embassy in the world. It

is really Fortress America. We have got military installations which

are very permanent, and we are saying we are leaving tomorrow or

sometime, whenever you are ready to run your own country.

The fact is that we have shown nothing to suppose that we really mean

that we will one day say, you guys are doing such a great job, we are

going home. See you later. That is not what we are up to. We are trying

to control the natural resources of the area and trying to give ourself

a platform to operate some place in the Middle East, and we simply are

going to have this fight continue unless, and I could not help

thinking, I was sitting over thinking about what I was going to say

today.

I remember during the Vietnam War, back in 1968, coming up to an

election. What was Mr. Nixon saying at that point? I have a secret plan

to end the war. Ha. A secret plan to end the war. After he was

reelected, we went on for 4 more years. This issue, if the President is

serious, then he ought to explain to us why he let his commanding

general go out there talking about setting a deadline and bringing

troops home.

Does he mean to do that, or is that just to throw smoke up in the air

and get people confused? I think it is the latter. I do not think he

intends to bring any troops home if he is going to give the impression

that they are leaving Iraq. And that is why we have to continue to get

out here and talk about what is in the newspapers.

I mean, you do not have to read very far. The London Times, the New

York Times, the Los Angeles Times, a few papers, and you can see it if

you put it all together in one place. And that is why it is important

for us as a body to have these hours when we do this.