Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about an issue which

is beginning to be much more of an issue in this Congress, and

certainly in this country, and that is the question of how long are we

going to stay in Iraq?

There are those who think that we should stay endlessly, apparently.

The military is preparing for a couple of years of staying. Last week a

couple of oil workers from Iraq came through talking to various Members

of Congress. These 55-year-old Iraqi oil workers said there will be no

peace in Iraq until the occupation is over. Until you leave, the

present conditions will continue.

Now, there are a lot of people who still believe the President.

Remember, this is the President that told us that there were weapons of

mass destruction and there were connections to al Qaeda, and that now

they have the White House saying we are in the last throes of the

insurgency.

But when you talk to Iraqis who live on the ground, work on the

ground, work in the oil industry, they said we are at 1\1/2\ billion

barrels a day, and we will never get any more than that until we are

able to get some peace and calm and some investments to come in and

change the oil industry.

Now, you say, well, that is just two oil workers. Well, 82, remember

that number, 82 Iraqi Parliamentarians have sent a letter to their

Speaker of the House demanding that the U.S. withdraw its troops from

Iraq.

Those are not wild-eyed people in the United States who are calling

for the withdrawal of American troops. This is 82 members of the Iraq

Parliament who were elected. I mean, we say they have a democracy over

there. Some of these leaders come from the United Iraqi Alliance, which

is a collection or a coalition of religious Shiite parties that has a

majority of the 275 seats.

So, again, we are not talking about a splinter group somewhere, we

are talking about people in the main governing group in the Iraqi

Parliament are calling for an end. Their demand is still, although not

a majority, it is a large majority, and it has not been endorsed by the

Prime Minister yet.

But the demand will certainly come from an ever greater number of

Parliamentarians as time goes on. At the moment, most Iraqi politicians

already wish the United States would leave, but are afraid that the

guerilla movement will kill them without U.S. protection.

This letter has not been released in the United States. You have to

find it somewhere on the Web. Now, in this House we have a group called

Out of Iraq Caucus.

And the question is, what are we up to? What do we really want to do?

Well, I think you ought to have a plan. And there are certainly a lot

of plans that have been laid out. One of them is laid out by Gerald

Helman, who was a former Ambassador of the United States, who says,

first of all, the United States should have a phased withdrawal to be

completed in 1 year.

Why is that? Because you do not want to create chaos. If we walked

away tomorrow, we would have chaos.

The second thing he says, by prearrangement before that withdrawal

occurs, the Iraq and Arab League, or collection of Arab states, would

ask the United Nations Security Council to establish a transition

political, economic development, and peace enforcement authority to

assist the Iraqi Government in its recovery efforts. And finally, the

United States could offer logistical support. We are really the only

ones capable of doing it, and the financial support as well as the

military units on a transitional basis under U.N. command, under U.N.

command.

I think we can handle a Brit or a German or somebody being in

command. The United States, Japan and the other oil Arabs can

contribute money and NATO could provide much of the staff, planning and

headquarters personnel, but competent boots on the ground will be hard

to find. They are going to have to use some of our people. We all

watched the United Nations do this very same thing in Cambodia. Most

people were unaware of it, but that is exactly the method.

We have to begin the process of withdrawal from Iraq. There is no way

we are going to win it all and have peace and harmony as long as we are

viewed as conquerors and occupiers, and 82 members of the Iraqi

parliament have asked. That must be only the beginning.