Madam Speaker, this Congress remains committed to

forging a new direction in Iraq. Overwhelmingly, the American people

support our plan to establish important benchmarks and a responsible

timetable to redeploy the troops.

Yet, the President has threatened to veto our legislation, even

though it ensures our troops have everything they need, and for our

veterans when they return home. However, just last week, Defense

Secretary Robert Gates said, and I quote: The debate in Congress has

been helpful in demonstrating to the Iraqis that American patience is

limited.

Mr. Gates went on to say that the strong feelings expressed in the

Congress about the timetable probably has had a positive impact on

communicating to the Iraqis that this is not an open-ended commitment.

To ensure that the Iraqis step up and take control of their own

country, we must continue to demonstrate that the American people will

not stand for an open-ended commitment of American resources or

personnel.