Mr. Speaker, the National Intelligence Estimate makes it

clear that the United States confronts grave challenges to our national

security. Al Qaeda grows stronger with each passing day and remains

intent on inflicting harm on the American people and others around the

world.

The NIE confirms what many of us in this Chamber already know: the

war in Iraq has stretched resources thin and continues to distract from

the global war on terror. It is nearly 5 years since President Bush

proclaimed. In that time, over 3,600 Americans

have lost their lives and 26,000 more have been wounded. Despite the

courageous efforts of our men and women in uniform, Iraq today is a

distraction from our mission to destroy the al Qaeda network. How many

more lives must be lost until the President and our colleagues realize

that we must change course?

Mr. Speaker, around the world right now, our brave troops are

fighting to protect this country and win this war. If we are going to

prosecute the war to the best of our ability, it is time to face facts

and reevaluate our strategy and begin a gradual redeployment of our

troops.