Madam Speaker, I rise today to encourage all of my

colleagues in the House and the Senate to exercise the courage to begin

a true new direction in Iraq.

Our brave men and women serving in our military are completing every

mission they have been asked; and for that I thank them and America

thanks them. But the President keeps moving the goalposts and

redefining the mission.

Last week, the President announced a potential drawdown of troops

from Iraq by July of 2008, leaving approximately 130,000 troops in

Iraq. This is no change, and it is unacceptable.

The American people will not be fooled by these smoke-and-mirror

tactics. The President said the surge was intended to provide time for

the Iraqis to make political progress; yet, there has been no political

progress and no improvement in the situation in Iraq. The Iraqis have

only met 3 of 18 benchmarks for success, all the while they are mired

in a religious civil war.

Enough is enough. It is time for real change and direction in Iraq.