Mr. Speaker, I understand this or any administration's

defensive posture when it comes to criticism of policy. And I

understand the members of his party feeling the need to defend it. This

interim report, ordinarily, I would be one who would wait until

September. But this interim report that shows an appalling lack of

progress on the political front in Iraq leads me to this conclusion.

I was on active duty for 4 years during Vietnam, and I went down to

Vietnam Wall the other night; 50-something thousand dead American names

down there. We have now, 3,500-plus dead American names on the Iraq

wall.

And what was true then, to me, is true now. And General Petraeus

himself said it not long ago when he said, military action is

necessary, but any student of history recognizes that no military

solution to a problem like

Iraq is there. Military action may be necessary, but it is not

sufficient. There needs to be a political aspect.

The political aspect, as reported in this interim report, shows this:

Of the 275 members of the Iraqi parliament, over one-third are

presently boycotting meetings. Over one-third of the ministers are

boycotting the meetings. Two years after the Iraqi elections, the

government there is dysfunctional.

Now just listen to General Petraeus's words. We have to have a

political aspect. And this present strategy, whether the surge works or

not, is beside the point. These people are unwilling or unable to come

together, after 2 years of a government, to work together to build any

kind of civil society that we can support.

I think that it is now time, with this interim report and the lack of

political progress there, to send a message. Nobody's talking about

precipitous withdrawal. What we are talking about is this Congress

engaging with this administration to support the troops and help them

from this morass.