Mr. Speaker, today President Bush, as required by

Congress, has reported on progress made by the Iraqi Government on

political and military benchmarks. He reported that the Iraqis have not

accomplished any of these goals.

It is time, in fact past time, for the Iraqis to take control of

their own future. It is time for the Iraqis to move forward, resolve

their internal conflicts and begin the process of national

reconciliation.

More than 3,600 Americans have paid the ultimate sacrifice to bring

freedom

and democracy to Iraq. Our military has performed exceptionally; for

that and for their sacrifices, our Nation will be internally grateful.

But without progress by the Iraqis themselves, there is little more

that our military can do. And despite the stubbornness of our President

to stay the course, it is time for us to bring our troops home.

I am proud to be with the majority in Congress and across America in

supporting this responsible plan to redeploy our troops, set a new

course in Iraq, and lead our Nation towards greater security here at

home and across the world.

I rise in support of the Responsible Redeployment from Iraq Act and I

stand in support of a change in strategy for U.S. involvement in Iraq:

one that sets a timetable for prompt and safe withdrawal of our armed

forces.

For many of us on the House Floor today this is not the first time we

have voted for such a change, or demanded a new plan from the

President.

In March, we voted to withdraw U.S. forces from Iraq, improve troop

readiness, and demand accountability from the administration. The

President vetoed our plan.

In May, Congress enacted specific political and military benchmarks

for the Iraqi government. By tying the goals to funds for military

action in Iraq, we made it clear that progress is a prerequisite for

continued assistance by the United States.

Today, President Bush, as required by Congress, reported on progress

made by the Iraqi government towards those benchmarks. He reported that

the Iraqis have not accomplished any of these goals.

More than 3,600 Americans have paid the ultimate sacrifice to bring

freedom and democracy to Iraq. Our military has performed

exceptionally. They removed a government hostile to the United States

and took responsibility for providing enough stability to enable the

Iraqi people to establish their own free and independent government.

For that and for their sacrifices, our Nation will be eternally

grateful.

Yet, as the war enters its fifth year, sectarian violence and failure

of political progress has put our troops in a more and more threatening

and dangerous situation. This volatility and the President's surge

strategy have increased U.S. and Iraqi casualties and injuries.

It is time --well past time--for the Iraqis to take control of their

own future. It is time for the Iraqis to move forward to establish an

effective system of government, to resolve their internal conflicts,

and to begin the process of national reconciliation. Without these

actions by the Iraqis themselves, there is little more our military can

do. It is time--well past time--for us to bring them home.

On behalf of the American people, we are seeking to do just that.

Today we will vote once again to end our military involvement on the

frontlines in Iraq and bring our troops home despite the stubbornness

of our President to stay the course.

It is my hope that that Republicans will join us in supporting this

responsible plan to redeploy our troops and to press the President for

a new course in Iraq. As Democrats, we will lead this country towards a

more responsible--more strategic path--to end our military involvement

in Iraq. In so doing, we remain committed to protect our nation, our

people and our strategic interests at home and around the world.