Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation

calling for the safe and responsible redeployment of U.S. troops from

Iraq. Make no mistake about it: The administration's incompetence in

planning and executing the post-war occupation has brought us to this

point. It is now Congress's responsibility to stand up for the majority

of American voices who seek an end to this war. This bill provides for

a redeployment of our troops not only so that they will be safe, but

also so they will be focused on securing our Nation, not caught in the

crossfire of a sectarian civil war in Iraq. We must provide for our men

and women in uniform and their families.

Some assert with no basis that the war in Iraq has made us safer

when, in fact, the opposite is true. I am deeply troubled by today's

report from the National Counterterrorism Center which states that al-

Qaeda is stronger now than at any point since 9/11. Terrorist cells

capitalized on our preoccupations in Iraq to reestablish a presence in

the Middle East and beyond. For years, the Administration has

stubbornly insisted that Iraq is the central front of the War on

Terrorism, but today's report clearly indicates just how damaging this

war has been to our national security.

The President's progress report on Iraq issued today shows

unsatisfactory improvement of security benchmarks. The report predicts

a rise in insurgent violence in the coming months and an increased

effort to disrupt life for Iraqis. In addition, there appears to be no

improvement in eliminating the sectarian influences that have

infiltrated Iraqi security forces. This is not acceptable. The

administration has not delivered on its promises in Iraq and now we

must move forward to establish a new direction. It simply is not fair

to ask our soldiers and marines to continue to police someone else's

civil war. It is especially irresponsible when considering the

mountains of evidence from our own intelligence agencies pronouncing

that this conflict cannot be solved by our military might alone. We

must refocus our attention on the true threats to our Nation and our

citizens.

Americans owe a debt of gratitude to our troops and their families

for the sacrifices they have made during this difficult time.

Service members have had to endure difficult assignments and failed

civilian leadership; but they have done so with honor and dignity. We

must not forget the families who had to go without their loved ones for

months at a time; the missed birthdays, baseball games, long nights

away.

Mr. Speaker, the time for talking has ended; we must act, without

delay, to redeploy our brave troops out of Iraq.