Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2956,

Responsible Redeployment from Iraq Act of 2007.

For months, I, along with many of my colleagues in this chamber, have

been calling on the President to forge a new direction with the war in

Iraq. Our pleas have fallen on deaf ears.

Despite failing to meet his own benchmarks of progress, despite new

reports of the unsustainable cost of this war, despite the tremendous

dissatisfaction and disenchantment of the American people and members

of his own party--the President recently made public statements to the

effect that he is unwilling to change the course and try a new

strategy.

The American people are dissatisfied with the deteriorating situation

in Iraq. They are tired of finger-pointing and political gamesmanship.

They want some answers, and they quite rightly expect and deserve one.

As their elected representatives and leaders, I believe it is our

responsibility in Congress to work together to move this country

forward to an honest solution.

It is clear that American troops have accomplished their military

mission. Yet we have now tasked them with forging political compromise

as well, leaving them in the middle of a burgeoning civil war in Iraq.

It is widely recognized that the sectarian strife taking place in Iraq

right now cannot be solved through military means alone, and the

President's refusal to entertain any new strategies has put our troops

in an untenable position. I cannot continue in good conscience to ask

our brave troops to risk their lives because I don't believe their

sacrifice is being met with an equal commitment from the Iraqi people.

The tough but necessary political compromises are not being made.

While the Iraqis are moving toward a transparent and effective

government, what is missing is the necessary political accommodation to

move the country towards reconciliation. Unfortunately, Iraqis by

themselves appear incapable of achieving political progress. Instead,

years later, they continue to lean on the United States and our

military for stability, teetering on the brink of full-blown civil war

without the will to make the political compromises necessary to peace.

Be assured that I am the last person in this chamber that wants to

take irresponsible actions that would take the country into complete

chaos. But American military power is not the solution to the war. More

troops, more time, more money--these are not the answers. Congress

needs to understand, as the American people do, that we must begin

planning for a responsible withdrawal and redeployment of U.S. troops

from Iraq. H.R. 2956 provides for a safe and orderly reduction of

troops in Iraq and a transition to a limited presence of American

troops in country for force protection, training of Iraqi Security

Forces, and counterterrorism missions. I urge my colleagues to support

this measure.

We must send a clear message to the Iraqi government that the

patience of the American people is not endless, and that they must take

control of their future. Passage of H.R. 2956 will help send that

message.

I believe strongly that we must not wait any longer to send this

message. The time to act is now, to force the hand of this

Administration and the Iraqi government. Waiting any longer will simply

lead to more fatalities for U.S. soldiers, Iraqi military, and

civilians.

Finally, I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks and undying

admiration for our men and women in uniform for their service to our

country. May God bless them and their families during this difficult

time. May God provide his special blessings and care for those who fell

in the line of duty. And may God continue to bless these United States

of America.