I appreciate the gentleman's courtesy, as I

appreciate him bringing this amendment to the floor.

I think it's telling that our friends in European NATO countries,

since 2008, have reduced their defense spending 12 percent. They're

having tough times. They're retrenching. They recognize the new posture

in terms of security. We should do the same thing. We should do the

same thing. Absolutely.

It's ironic that this Chamber is going to be considering massive cuts

in food stamps to have more responsibility and accountability that some

of us think are draconian. But for heaven's sake, why can't we, 60

years after World War II, almost 25 years after the collapse of the

former Soviet Union, can't we help Europe assume a little larger role

for their own defense? For whom are these troops positioned in terms of

some sort of military posture?

I think most of us agree that it's highly unlikely they'll be used in

combat. Any cost that would be incurred by accelerating it is money

that's going to be spent anyway, notwithstanding all the costs to keep

them there.

So I think the gentleman is spot on. I'm happy to cosponsor the

amendment. I'm happy to speak in support of it. I hope this body

approves it in a small way to help the Europeans assume their own

responsibility and for us to be able to focus on things that are more

important for us.

It is rare that I disagree with my good friend from

Ohio, but I do. I think that it is appropriate to move forward in this

direction.

As my good friend from the State of Washington indicated, we are

probably going to do this, I think he mentioned, by 2015. The point

here is that this reassessment has been proceeding at a glacial speed.

It is important for us to be on record to move this forward. There are

major things that we are going to have to do. This is relatively small

potatoes compared with what we are going to have to do if we are going

to meet our challenges both in terms of a different security

arrangement with regard to the threats that the United States faces and

our fiscal problems.

Now, we have had this sitting on the back burner for years. We are,

if anything, late to the party; and of course, as long as they are

there, that is a disincentive for our NATO allies to step up and to do

what they need to do in their own defense. We have plenty of assets

around the world. We have opportunities with naval and air strikes. The

notion that we are going to be throwing ground forces that are

stationed in Europe into the fray in Israel or in some battle in

Africa, I think, is near-fetched at the least. Look at what we have

done in the past and how we've gone about it.

With all due respect, I think, in a world where we have the

capacity--as we have shown--to be able to stage and move troops when

needed, this is a small step in the right direction. I think my friend

from Ohio is overstating the case in the notion that somehow it costs

money to do the redeployment so we should just keep them there. We are

going to be redeploying them anyway, so the costs of redeployment are

going to be incurred sometime this decade or sometime this century, but

it costs money to keep them there.

I have a nephew who makes a very good living teaching Americans in

Europe in military schools. I think it's time for my nephew to come

home and teach in the United States. I think there are more cost-

effective ways for us to meet our security obligations. I do think it

is time for our European friends and allies to step up. We can no

longer be paying almost half the defense costs of the world when many

of the others in that mix are people who are our friends and allies. I

think this is a small step in the right direction. I urge the adoption

of the amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.