Mr. Speaker, I am thinking about a teddy

bear that is in my office, and I think about it because I remember

going to a funeral when a mother placed a teddy bear and a red fire

truck in the coffin of her young fallen hero, a member of the United

States military that lost his life in Iraq.

No, it is not the Iraq Caucus that is running this very poor and

devastating agenda of this White House. Rather, I would like to say

that I am proudly a member of the Iraq Caucus. And I thank Mr.

McGovern, the Speaker of the House, Mr. Obey, and Mr. Murtha for

understanding that our children are dying and that we must do something

that faces the fact that our troops have won the victory. So I hope

that we will debate H.R. 930 that says there has been a military

success but this is a devastatingly wrong political mission that we are

on.

The President has to listen. This is 90 days plus 180 days, 9 months

to redeploy. That's fair. We will fund our troops. That's fair. It is

time now to bring our troops home because we love our children and we

love America.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2237, the ``Iraq

Redeployment Act.'' I rise in strong support of this legislation

because I am listening, and responding to the will of the American

people. Last November, Americans went to polls by the millions united

in their resolve to vote for change. They voted for a new direction and

a change in the Bush administration's disastrous policy in Iraq. The

new Democratic majority heard them and responded by passing H.R. 1591,

the Iraq Accountability Act. The President vetoed the bill, demanding

instead a continuation of the ancient regime under which the

Republican-led Congress gave him a blank check to mismanage the

occupation and reconstruction of Iraq.

Those days are over. No matter how many veto threats the President

issues, this Congress is not going to give him a blank check to

escalate and continue the war ad infinitum. It is long past time for

change in Iraq. It is time for the people and government of Iraq to

take primary responsibility for their own country. It is time for the

President to recognize the reality on the ground in Iraq. The time when

a surge in troops is useful and necessary is past. It is now time to

redeploy our troops and launch a diplomatic surge for national and

political reconciliation in Iraq. H.R. 2237 will help achieve this goal

and that is why I support the measure.

Mr. Speaker, there is no more important issue facing the Congress,

the President, and the American people than the war in Iraq. It is a

subject upon which no one is indifferent, least of all members of

Congress. The Framers understood that while the military does the

fighting, a nation goes to war. That is why the Framers lodged the

power to declare war in the Congress, the branch of government closest

to the people. They knew that the decision to go to war was too

important to be left to the whim of a single person, no matter how wise

or well-informed he or she might be.

Four years ago, President Bush stood under a banner that proclaimed

``Mission Accomplished.'' If the mission was to further place our

troops in harm's way at the hands of insurgents and sectarian violence,

then it is mission accomplished. After spending more than $400 billion

dollars sacrificing the lives of 3,381 of America's finest citizen-

soldiers, what have we accomplished and where are we headed?

I cannot support the President's waging of a war that has no clear

direction, does not meet the benchmarks that the President set, and has

no visible target.

Four years after launching the invasion, conquest, and occupation of

Iraq, the evidence is clear and irrefutable: the preemptive invasion of

Iraq, while a spectacularly executed military operation, was a

strategic blunder without parallel in the history of American foreign

policy. This is what can happen when the Congress allows itself to be

stampeded into authorizing a president to launch a preemptive war of

choice.

It is time to change our strategy in Iraq. It is time to engage the

key stakeholders in the Middle East and make real strides towards

securing a just and lasting peace in Iraq and for the Iraqi people. And

most important, bring our troops home so they can be reunited with

their families, friends, and neighbors.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, in February of this year I introduced H.R.

930, the ``Military Success in Iraq and Diplomatic Surge for National

and Political Reconciliation in Iraq Act of 2007.'' Title I of my

legislation, the ``Military Success in Iraq Act of 2007'' (M-S-I-A) or

``Messiah,'' offers an honorable deliverance from Iraq. Let me explain.

In October 2002, the Congress authorized the President to use

military force against Iraq to achieve the following objectives:

1. To disarm Iraq of any weapons of mass destruction that could

threaten the security of the United States and international peace in

the Persian Gulf region;

2. To change the Iraqi regime so that Saddam Hussein and his Baathist

party no longer posed a threat to the people of Iraq or its neighbors;

3. To bring to justice any members of al Qaeda known or found to be

in Iraq bearing responsibility for the attacks on the United States,

its citizens, and interests, including the attacks that occurred on

September 11, 2001;

4. To ensure that the regime of Saddam Hussein would not provide

weapons of mass destruction to international terrorists, including al

Qaeda; and

5. To enforce all relevant United Nations Security Council

resolutions regarding Iraq.

Every one of these objectives has long been accomplished. Iraq does

not possess weapons of mass destruction. Saddam Hussein has been

deposed, captured, and dealt with by the Iraqi people. The American

military has caught or killed virtually every member of al Qaeda in

Iraq that was even remotely responsible for the 9/11 attack on our

country. Last, all relevant U.N. resolutions relating to Iraq have been

enforced. In other words, every objective for which the use of force in

Iraq was authorized by the 2002 resolution has been achieved.

Mr. Speaker, since the objectives which led Congress to pass the 2002

Authorization to Use Military Force (AUMF) have been achieved, I

believe the authorization to use that military force expires

automatically. My legislation affirms this proposition. Additionally, I

believe, and my legislation provides, that it is the Congress that is

the ultimate arbiter as to whether the objectives set forth in a

congressional AUMF have been achieved.

Mr. Speaker, where a Congressional authorization to use military

force has expired, the President must obtain a new authorization to

continue the use force. My legislation requires the President to do

that as well. Finally, my bill requires that if the Congress does not

vote to reauthorize the use of force in Iraq within 90 days after

determining that the objectives set forth in the 2002 AUMF have been

achieved, all American armed forces in Iraq must be redeployed out of

Iraq. Thus, under my legislation, an up-or-down vote must be held by

the House and Senate to continue waging war in Iraq.

I am not talking about ``cutting and running,'' or surrendering to

terrorists. And I certainly am not talking about staying in Iraq

forever or the foreseeable future. The Armed Forces won the war they

were sent to fight. Their civilian leadership has not succeeded in

winning the peace. That is why the United States should surge

diplomatically and politically.

Title II of H.R. 930, the ``Diplomatic Surge for Political and

National Reconciliation in Iraq Act,'' implements 12 of the most

important recommendations of the Iraq Study Group. Significantly, it

creates a high-level Special Envoy for National and Political

Reconciliation in Iraq (SENPRI). This Special Envoy would consist of

individuals like former Secretary of State Colin Powell, Madeleine

Albright, or James Baker who would undertake the peaceful

reconciliation of the major stakeholders in a free and democratic Iraq,

particularly the Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds.

All 6 of Iraq's neighbors--Iran, Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia,

and Kuwait--have an interest in a stabilized Iraq because

as the Iraq Study Group report makes clear, none of these countries

wants to live with an Iraq that, after our redeployment, becomes a

failed state or a humanitarian catastrophe that could become a haven

for terrorists or hemorrhages millions more refugees who will stream

into neighboring countries.

Mr. Speaker, every day when I walk into my office I am reminded of

the courageous young men and women who have given their lives in

service to our Nation. Outside my office I have displayed a poster-

board that displays the names and faces of those who made the ultimate

sacrifice. The poster-board is nearly full. I do not want to start

another board.

That is why I rise in strong support of H.R. 2237. This legislation

significantly reduces the U.S. military presence in Iraq over a 9 month

period. The legislation does not abandon the Iraqi people. On the

contrary, it recognizes the need to complete our mission by training

Iraqi military forces and providing Special Forces to continue to

pursue al-Qaeda, Osama bin Laden, and destroy terrorist networks

working out of Iraq. The bill also provides the full array of non-

military assistance for Iraq's economic and political reconstruction.

This legislation recognizes and respects Iraqi sovereignty. This bill

also respects the decision-making judgment of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

and U.S. military commanders in the field in determining where forces

leaving Iraq might next be deployed. Finally, this legislation provides

balance between the security priorities of the United States and Iraq

to complete key military missions, and the political imperative to

reduce the presence of U.S. military forces inside Iraq.

For all of these reasons, I strongly support H.R. 2237 and urge all

members to do likewise.