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

legislation offered by Mr. McGovern that would provide for the

redeployment of United States Armed Forces and defense contractors from

Iraq.

H.R. 2237 would significantly reduce the U.S. military presence in

Iraq over a 9-month period. It requires that the Department of Defense

begin redeployment of armed forces and military contractors no later

than 90 days after the date of enactment, allowing the Department the

time necessary to plan, prepare and execute the process of drawing down

troops. The redeployment would be completed within 6 months, at which

point further funding for an increased presence in Iraq would be

prohibited.

H.R. 2237 respects the decision-making powers of the Joint Chiefs of

Staff and U.S. military commanders in the field. It specifically leaves

decisions about where U.S. troops should be redeployed in the hands of

the Pentagon. Troops drawn down from Iraq may be redeployed to

neighboring countries, to Afghanistan, to other U.S. bases abroad, or

back to the United States in support of homeland security and other

national needs.

This legislation also recognizes and respects Iraqi sovereignty by

ensuring that the present conflict will not provide for the

establishment of permanent American military bases in Iraq. H.R. 2237

provides for the orderly transfer of bases and facilities constructed

or occupied by the U.S. military to Iraqi control. Nothing in this bill

precludes the United States from negotiating base rights or shared use

in the future, as is our practice with other sovereign nations.

H.R. 2237 provides strong support for the Iraqi people by continuing

assistance for social, political and diplomatic reconstruction.

Additionally, aid is permitted, at the request of the Iraqi government,

for assistance or equipment to the Iraqi Security Forces or

multinational forces providing security or training in Iraq. U.S.

military forces would be authorized to remain in Iraq to complete the

training and equipping of Iraqi security forces, pursue foreign

terrorist networks operating inside Iraq, and provide protection to

U.S. citizens and embassy and diplomatic personnel.

Recent news reports indicate that two days ago, a majority of Iraqi

parliamentarians signed a petition calling on the United States to

establish a timeline for our military to withdraw from their country.

Poll after poll indicates that a large majority of Iraqis believe the

large-scale presence of U.S. military forces inside Iraq is fueling,

rather than abating, both the Iraqi insurgency and an increasing

presence of foreign jihadists. Reducing our footprint in Iraq provides

that country, its neighbors, and the international community with a new

opportunity and a new environment in which to pursue reconciliation and

a political solution to the violence currently devastating Iraqi

society.

I applaud Speaker Pelosi for allowing this bill to come to the floor,

and join with members of the Out of Iraq and Progressive Caucuses in

supporting it.