Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may

consume.

I rise in strong support of H.R. 3087, a bill to require the

Secretary of Defense to report to Congress on the status of planning

for the redeployment of the Armed Forces from Iraq.

This bill is the rarest of creatures, a bipartisan compromise on one

of the most significant issues facing our country today, the war in

Iraq. This bill was marked up in the Armed Services Committee with the

support of our ranking member, Duncan Hunter of California. The

committee took the excellent work of Representative Neil Abercrombie

and Representative John Tanner and built on it.

The committee adopted a comprehensive amendment developed by Mr.

Abercrombie and Representative Mike Turner, two of our leaders on our

committee on the advancement of national defense. The bill, as amended,

passed our committee 55-2.

I am proud of the work of our committee. I am glad it has been

brought to the floor. The bill seeks to accomplish two primary goals.

First, it affirms the critical need for comprehensive, well-thought-out

planning for a redeployment of troops from Iraq, the kind of planning

that, frankly, was not done for the post-war period in Iraq, the so-

called phase 4 of the war before we invaded.

This will help Congress fulfill its duties to ensure that such a

mistake is not repeated.

Second, it requires that the planning the Pentagon is doing for

deployment from Iraq be shared with Congress, as it should. It lays out

a clear statement on the need for appropriate, detailed contingency

planning for our redeployment of troops from that country, including

consideration of force protection for our military and civilian

personnel, and the need to continue to protect our vital national

security interests.

It requires by statute that the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman

of the Joint Chiefs of Staff provide us with a report and briefing on

redeployment planning from Iraq within 60 days of enactment, and that

updated reports and briefings from senior Department of Defense

officials continue to be provided on a quarterly basis thereafter. It

will allow the Armed Services Committee to perform the oversight

function, which is central to our purpose.

Time is not on our side. In my view, it's time to begin responsible

redeployment of forces and a change of mission in Iraq. Members are on

different places on Iraq, but we can agree that we must be engaged in

serious planning for the redeployment of American forces.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Some will knock, Mr. Speaker, the importance of this legislation. It

is a bill to require the Secretary of Defense to submit to us here in

Congress reports on the status of planning for the redeployment of the

Armed Forces from Iraq. Further, it requires the Secretary to meet with

Congress to brief us on the matters contained in those reports.

Under the Constitution, Mr. Speaker, we are charged here in Congress

with raising and maintaining the military. It's important for us to be

able to look

around the corner to unseen challenges that are out there. The last 30

years we've had 12 military engagements, most of which were a surprise

to us. So consequently, it's important for us in Congress to understand

the progress and the status of planning for the redeployment of our

Armed Forces from Iraq, because there may be those contingencies out

there. We hope it doesn't come to pass, but if the future is anything

like the past, our forces will be necessary.

So let us understand what this bill does. I think it's a step in the

right direction. I am absolutely pleased with the bipartisanship we

have had, both in the Armed Services Committee and here on the floor.

And special thanks to my friend, my colleague from Ohio (Mr. Turner)

for his work and his amendment on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.