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

3087, a bill that I voted for--along with 54 of my colleagues--when the

Armed Services Committee considered it in July.

As amended in committee, H.R. 3087 requires the Secretary of Defense

to submit a comprehensive redeployment strategy for U.S. troops in Iraq

and requires that the Secretary and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of

Staff brief the House and Senate Defense Committees on its contents

within 60 days, and every 90 days thereafter.

This legislation underscores the importance of contingency planning--

something I called for earlier this year when I introduced H.R. 1183,

the Iraq Contingency Planning Act. It also underscores the importance

of requiring the Defense Department to share its planning with

Congress. The sharing can be done in a classified way, but Congress

needs to be informed about these plans if we are to be prepared to

respond to what these plans may call for.

We remember that in 2003, President Bush launched a war in Iraq

without a plan for what would come after initial military sucess. We

all know where that has led us, and so as a member of the Armed

Services Committee, I want assurances that this administration is

thinking about and planning for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from

Iraq--whether it happens tomorrow or next month or next year.

Madam Speaker, this legislation isn't intended to solve the larger

problem of Iraq. To do that, we need a policy aimed at escalating

diplomatic and political efforts and lightening the U.S. footprint in

Iraq. But although there is widespread support for redeploying our

troops, there is not yet sufficient support in Congress to override a

Presidential veto on any major change in our Iraq policy.

That's another reason this bill is important. So long as we lack a

sufficient majority to override his veto, we Democrats can't force the

President to change course without Republican support. Only Democrats

and Republicans working together can find the path out of Iraq. This

bill is a small step forward in building that bipartisan support, so I

will vote for it again today, while I continue to work with colleagues

on both sides of the aisle on further steps we can take to change our

broader Iraq policy.