The publication Inside Defense of July 6 reports,

with regard to your estimations as to the cost, this was just prior to

the advent of the meeting between the Iraqis and the Iranians. A group

of advisors, I am now quoting from this July 6 article in Inside

Defense. A group of advisors to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld is

preparing a report warning that the huge costs associated with

prolonged bloody operations in Iraq and Afghanistan may become part of

a U.S. adversary's strategy. U.S. led operations in these two

countries, quote, have tapped out the ground services active and

reserve components, unquote, stated June 29, briefing slides prepared

for the working group of the Defense Science Board. The Defense Science

Board, as my colleagues know, is the group designated to report to the

Secretary of Defense on these issues. Quote, we therefore find

ourselves without resources for any other campaign at this scale, a

prospect not long lost on our adversaries, unquote.

The panel was part of the larger Defense Science Board which is doing

a study for the Defense Department on transformation. Further

quotation, the requirements U.S. forces face in the global war on

terrorism to not only prevail in the traditional combat phase of the

military operation and restore stability afterwards, but also to

establishing a functioning free economy and robust democracy are

significant and expensive. Quote, these new goals, that is to say,

establishing the economy and the democracy, these new goals dwarf the

complexity cost and scope of achieving victory on the battlefield,

unquote.

Now, last summer the incremental additional estimated cost for

stabilization and reconstruction in Iraq was estimated at $72 billion

according to the Defense Science Board Panel. That was the previous

estimation.

Now these costs are likely to be at least $500

billion and perhaps close to $1 trillion, unquote. Total military

spending on operations in Afghanistan and Iraq from 2001 through this

September 2005 is $252 billion according to Steve Kosiak with the

Center For Strategic and Budgetary Assessments. Spending on non

military aid in these missions at the same time period is $27 billion

in addition to the $252 billion.

The Congressional Budget Office in January estimated that between the

fiscal year 2006 and 2015, the costs of supporting these operations

could total $393 billion.

I never said, of course, that we are going to get

any value received for this money. We are going to spend the money, but

as the gentleman well knows and I think the record shows that what we

are getting for the money is corruption, thievery, failure to

significantly alter the infrastructure of Iraq in any significant way.

It does not surprise me in the least that there would be an accord or

an attempt at an accord being undertaken between Iraq and Iran. After

all, they live in the same neighborhood. We do not. What we are engaged

in right now is another one of these false premises that somehow a

military in an inherently insurgent situation is going to be able to

provide political answers through military activity and subsequently

having the military take on the task of helping to provide a civil

infrastructure. It cannot be done. It will not be done.

The only victims of that will be the Guard and Reserve and active

duty military forces of the United States so that the numbers of

wounded, grievously wounded and dead will continue to rise.

Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield on that

point, my intention is not to take up time

necessarily on Iraq Watch on the question of H.J. Res. 55, the joint

resolution number 55, but that is the tangible substance of the

commitment of the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. Jones) and others

at this point, including myself, to try to put legislation forward that

will respond precisely to the commentary that the gentleman from

Connecticut found in his West Hartford meeting.

The resolution asks the President to develop and implement a plan for

the withdrawal of the United States Armed Forces from Iraq. It makes a

reference, the short version of it, joint resolution 55, as Homeward

Bound. The principal point here, rather than going over it point by

point, the principal point in the context established tonight, and I am

referring to one of two findings here, is that the United States has in

place a timetable for training, equipping and employing Iraqi security

forces to take over the counterinsurgency mission from coalition

forces. That is a statement of fact.

Speaking as a member of the Committee on Armed Services, I can say to

you in all candor and openness that we do have timetables. We do have

timetables. We do have benchmarks. We do have indications and timelines

for those indications of what constitutes success, what constitutes a

capacity for the counterinsurgency mission to be taken from coalition

forces by Iraqi forces of all kinds; from border police to interior

ministry, to defense personnel police and armed forces.

In order to explicate that clearly to the American people, this House

passed, in overwhelming numbers, an emergency supplemental

appropriations for defense, the emergency supplemental appropriations

act for defense on the global war on terror and tsunami relief. Public

Law 109-13. In that, a joint explanatory statement accompanied the

conference report, which required the Secretary of Defense to report

not later than July 10.

As we speak, it is now approximately 8:45 p.m. on the East Coast on

July 19, some 9 days past the deadline established by the Congress of

the United States, passed by Democrats and Republicans in overwhelming

numbers. Not with this Member's vote, to be sure. But nonetheless, my

position as enunciated then in opposition to it, to the bill, because I

felt we were not carrying forward on what we said we were doing,

nonetheless the overwhelming majority gave the Secretary of Defense the

opportunity to report to us no later than July 10 and every 90 days

thereafter on measures for security, political, and economic progress

in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I received a letter from the Secretary of Defense

yesterday indicating they were working hard on this report. I have no

doubt. But we are already 9 days late. We are already 9 days of more

killings, more murders, more terrorism, more grievous wounding, more

terrorism worldwide, and yet we do not have this report from the

Secretary of Defense.

My plea is that other Members and the audience that may be listening

to us tonight take a look at House Joint Resolution 55 that has been

developed on a bipartisan basis with one of the leading advocates being

the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. Jones) and other Members of the

Republican Party and Democratic Party as well. This is not an

ideological construct, this is not a resolution made to embarrass the

President. On the contrary, House Joint Resolution 55 in some respects

has been characterized by some as saying what are you doing helping

President Bush? We should be in opposition to President Bush, but I

feel the politics will take care of itself in time to come. There is no

question about that. We can make that point later. This resolution is

about backing up our troops now on the mission they have accomplished,

and to get the political side, the economic side, the civilian side of

this moving forward the way we say it should be.

So we set in this resolution the opportunity for the President to

enunciate a plan commensurate with the time tables he has set for the

establishment of a government in December, and to move forward with the

troops that the Secretary of Defense himself has said are being trained

so we can begin to withdraw, bring homeward bound our troops.

So when people inquire of you what is it Congress is doing, we can

look at H.J. Res. 55. It is not perfect. It is a legislative project.

The only perfect set of rules, the only perfect legislation was the Ten

Commandments, and I understand Moses took 40 days to do them. And as he

came down the mountain he said, Well, I got them down to 10. That is

what the legislative process is. You talk things over.

So House Joint Resolution 55 is not a perfect vehicle, but it is a

legislative vehicle to join with the President and make an offer to the

President to join with us in the Congress in setting a timetable and

plan for the withdrawal of these troops commensurate with the mission

as enunciated by everyone.

Mr. Speaker, we do no service to the support of our

troops by continuing to have them engage in military activity which

undercuts that which they have accomplished to this point.