Madam Speaker, American involvement in Iraq should not

be an open-ended proposition, and we should not be sending more troops

there to serve as referees in that nation's devastating civil war.

The status quo simply cannot continue. It is time this Congress

seriously level with the Iraqi Government that it must meet the

benchmarks the President himself outlined earlier this year. And if

they cannot meet those benchmarks, it is time to start bringing our

troops home.

It is time the Iraqi Government is held accountable for its actions.

The Maliki government must realize that it has to meet political,

economic and diplomatic benchmarks in the region, and that if serious

improvements are not seen in the coming months, then we will begin the

process of redeploying our troops out of Iraq.

This week, we will have an opportunity to exert pressure on the Iraqi

Government to meet the President's own benchmarks. If the Iraqi

Government continues to believe that our involvement there is

indefinite, what kind of pressure are they going to have to make the

necessary reforms? They are not, and that's why this change in

direction is much needed at this time.