Mr. Speaker, this weekend many of us learned that the

Bush Administration may have a plan for a phased drawdown of coalition

forces in Iraq in the next 12 to 18 months.

Unfortunately, we did not learn about these plans from the

Administration's legally mandated yet unfulfilled reporting

requirements to Congress. We learned about it from news reports of a

leaked memo circulating in the British government.

The memo outlines the Administration's plan to cut the size of our

force in Iraq from 140,000 down to 66,000 by the middle of next year,

and describes a ``strong U.S. military desire'' to hand over control to

the Iraqi security forces in most of Iraq.

In January I released a white paper in which I proposed a timetable

for a phased drawdown of the majority of American troops by the end of

2006. If the information in the British memo is true, then the

Administration may be planning similar plans, despite its public claims

to the contrary.

Ironically, the British memo, reportedly written at least a month

ago, broke in the American press at exactly the same moment that the

Administration missed a very important deadline to share precisely this

sort of information with this Congress.

There is something wrong when we are learning about the

Administration's plans for our troops, not from the President, not from

the Pentagon, but from leaked foreign memos. Yesterday the Pentagon

should have released to Congress an essential report on the benchmarks

and guidelines for measuring progress in Iraq.

The report for ``Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq'' was a

provision of the Supplemental Defense Appropriations Bill passed by

this Congress and signed into law by President Bush on May 11, 2005.

This law required the Administration to outline a comprehensive

approach to Iraq by July 11, yesterday, with follow-up reports every 90

days thereafter.

This report presents an invaluable opportunity for the administration

to explain to Congress and to the American people their plans and

intentions in Iraq. Providing Congress with a more comprehensive set of

performance indicators will undoubtedly lead to a more informed debate

over U.S. policy in Iraq.

The congressionally mandated report calls on the Administration to

outline key measures of stability and security in Iraq. This includes

measurements of political stability, the training of Iraqi forces.

Specifically, the report mandates that the Administration provide

information on the operational readiness status of the Iraqi military

forces, including the type, number, size and organizational structure

of Iraqi battalions, as well as their ability to conduct

counterinsurgency operations.

The report requirement also calls for estimates of the strength of

the Iraqi insurgency and details on the training of the Iraqi police

force.

I urge the Administration to take this responsibility seriously and

to take this legal obligation seriously by providing this information

to Congress as quickly and as comprehensively as possible.

The information contained in this report is a critical step towards

bringing our troops home. To that end, I am a cosponsor of House

Resolution 55, the Homeward Bound Act. This bipartisan legislation

requires the President to announce a plan by December 31 of this year

for the eventual return of all elements of the Armed Forces. This plan

would be a natural extension of the report due to this body yesterday.

The bill also requires the President to begin a drawdown of our

troops on or before October 1, 2006. Beyond that date, it provides the

President with the flexibility for an orderly drawdown.

Finally, the legislation requires the President to accelerate the

training of Iraqi forces and to ensure that they are adequate to take

the leading role in fighting the insurgency.

Our troops have done everything we have asked of them in Iraq. They

have acted heroically. They have done their job. Now is the time for

Washington to do its job.