Mr. Speaker, I just returned from Iraq on a

congressional delegation trip with Senator McCain. And I wanted to

report to my constituents.

The first thing that I have concluded in looking at the situation

there and in visiting there is that we need a special envoy sent by the

President of the United States to move forward with a national unity

government.

Things on the ground are not going well. Things are deadlocked. There

has been no government since 3 months after the election. We have a

lame duck government, and we have a crucial international situation

going on.

The current government is riddled by corruption and inertia. So, Mr.

President, we need to send a special envoy.

Secondly, I visited the troops in Iraq, some New Mexicans and many

others from across the country. And when I think of what they have done

since the invasion over 3 years ago, it makes me very proud. Saddam

Hussein and his sons are out of commission. We have held three

elections, and the Iraqis have adopted a constitution.

We have trained over 224,000 troops to the highest levels of

training, more than 100,000 police and security personnel. We have

spent billions of dollars in reconstruction.

The Iraqis have made progress, and I do not know what more we can ask

of our troops. But overall this visit solidified my belief that it is

time for the Iraqi people to step forward and take control of the

situation in their country.

Our troops are caught in the middle of religious and ethnic disputes.

Sectarian violence is rampant in many areas. Iraqis must step up to the

plate and resolve these disputes themselves.

As President Kennedy said of South Vietnam in the summer of 1961,

``In the end, it is their country, and they are going to have to fight

for it.''

Therefore, we need a change of course in our foreign policy. Staying

the course is no longer acceptable. We need to take two actions: One is

announce a phased redeployment of our troops outside of Iraq. This

redeployment should be complete by the end of this year, by 2006.

Number two, we need to put the Iraqis on notice that they must assume

responsibility. Of course, as we phase this redeployment, we need to

assist them and train them and do everything we can during that period

to make sure they have the best chance of success.

But this is their fight at this point.