Mr. Speaker, on Monday, Defense Secretary Gates

confirmed what many of us in Congress have long suspected: the Bush

administration plans to leave nearly 130,000 troops in Iraq until the

day he leaves office next January.

The war in Iraq has been misguided from the start and mismanaged in

its prosecution. It has led to a significant military readiness crisis,

deteriorating conditions in Afghanistan, a readiness crisis for

National Guard forces here at home, and a record low standing for us

abroad.

This month, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau said that 88

percent of our stateside Guard units are ``very poorly equipped'' with

less than half of what they needed to respond to a domestic crisis.

Five years of war in Iraq is indeed straining our troop force and their

equipment. Yet the Bush administration wants more of the same.

Mr. Speaker, this Democratic-led Congress will continue to fight to

change direction in Iraq and responsibly redeploy our troops home.