

rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 200, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

□ 1545

DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY IN IRAQ

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3087) to require the President, in coordination with the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other senior military leaders, to develop and transmit to Congress a comprehensive strategy for the redeployment of United States Armed Forces in Iraq, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3087

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) The Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002 (Public Law 107-243), enacted into law on October 16, 2002, authorized the President to use the Armed Forces as the President determined necessary and appropriate in order to defend the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by the Government of Iraq at that time.

(2) The Government of Iraq which was in power at the time the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002 was enacted into law has been removed from power and its leader indicted, tried, convicted, and executed by the new freely-elected democratic Government of Iraq.

(3) The current Government of Iraq does not pose a threat to the United States or its interests.

(4) After more than four years of valiant efforts by members of the Armed Forces and United States civilians, the Government of Iraq must now be responsible for Iraq's future course.

SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) nothing in this Act shall be construed as a recommendation by Congress that any particular contingency plan be exercised;

(2) it is necessary and prudent for the Department of Defense to undertake robust and comprehensive contingency planning;

(3) contingency planning for a redeployment of the Armed Forces from Iraq should address—

(A) ensuring appropriate protection for the Armed Forces in Iraq;

(B) providing appropriate protection in Iraq for United States civilians, contractors, third party nationals, and Iraqi nationals who have assisted the United States mission in Iraq;

(C) maintaining and enhancing the ability of the United States Government to eliminate and disrupt Al Qaeda and affiliated terrorist organizations; and

(D) preserving military equipment necessary to defend the national security interests of the United States; and

(4) contingency planning for a redeployment of the Armed Forces from Iraq should—

(A) describe a range of possible scenarios for such redeployment;

(B) outline multiple possible timetables for such redeployment; and

(C) describe the possible missions, and the associated projected number of members, of the Armed Forces which would remain in Iraq, including to—

(i) conduct United States military operations to protect vital United States national security interests;

(ii) conduct counterterrorism operations against Al Qaeda in Iraq and affiliated terrorist organizations;

(iii) protect the Armed Forces, United States diplomatic and military facilities, and United States civilians; and

(iv) support and equip Iraqi forces to take full responsibility for their own security.

SEC. 3. REPORTS AND CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFINGS ON THE STATUS OF PLANNING FOR THE REDEPLOYMENT OF THE ARMED FORCES FROM IRAQ.

(a) REPORTS REQUIRED.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 90 days thereafter, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report on the status of planning for the redeployment of the Armed Forces from Iraq. The initial report and each subsequent report required by this subsection shall be submitted in unclassified form, to the maximum extent possible, but may contain a classified annex, if necessary.

(b) CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFINGS REQUIRED.—Not later than 14 days after the submission of the initial report under subsection (a), the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff shall meet with the congressional defense committees to brief such committees on the matters contained in the report. Not later than 14 days after the submission of each subsequent report under subsection (a), appropriate senior officials of the Department of Defense shall meet with the congressional defense committees to brief such committees on the matters contained in the report.

(c) TERMINATION OF REPORTING AND BRIEFING REQUIREMENTS.—The requirement to submit reports under subsection (a) and the requirement to provide congressional briefings under subsection (b) shall terminate on the date on which the Secretary of Defense submits to the congressional defense committees a certification in writing that the Armed Forces are no longer primarily engaged in a combat mission in Iraq.

(d) CONGRESSIONAL DEFENSE COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term “congressional defense committees” has the meaning given the term in section 101 of title 10, United States Code.

SEC. 4. ARMED FORCES DEFINED.

In this Act, the term “Armed Forces” has the meaning given the term in section 101 of title 10, United States Code.

THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE.

Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TURNER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in strong support of H.R. 3087, a bill to require the Secretary of Defense to report to Congress on the status of planning for the redeployment of the Armed Forces from Iraq.

This bill is the rarest of creatures, a bipartisan compromise on one of the most significant issues facing our country today, the war in Iraq. This bill was marked up in the Armed Services Committee with the support of our ranking member, DUNCAN HUNTER of California. The committee took the excellent work of Representative NEIL ABERCROMBIE and Representative JOHN TANNER and built on it.

The committee adopted a comprehensive amendment developed by Mr. ABERCROMBIE and Representative MIKE TURNER, two of our leaders on our committee on the advancement of national defense. The bill, as amended, passed our committee 55-2.

I am proud of the work of our committee. I am glad it has been brought to the floor. The bill seeks to accomplish two primary goals. First, it affirms the critical need for comprehensive, well-thought-out planning for a redeployment of troops from Iraq, the kind of planning that, frankly, was not done for the post-war period in Iraq, the so-called phase 4 of the war before we invaded.

This will help Congress fulfill its duties to ensure that such a mistake is not repeated.

Second, it requires that the planning the Pentagon is doing for deployment from Iraq be shared with Congress, as it should. It lays out a clear statement on the need for appropriate, detailed contingency planning for our redeployment of troops from that country, including consideration of force protection for our military and civilian personnel, and the need to continue to protect our vital national security interests.

It requires by statute that the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff provide us with a report and briefing on redeployment planning from Iraq within 60 days of enactment, and that updated reports and briefings from senior Department of Defense officials continue to be provided on a quarterly basis thereafter. It will allow the Armed Services Committee to perform the oversight function, which is central to our purpose.

Time is not on our side. In my view, it's time to begin responsible redeployment of forces and a change of mission in Iraq. Members are on different places on Iraq, but we can agree that we must be engaged in serious planning for the redeployment of American forces.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TURNER. Madam Speaker, today Iraq remains the most important issue facing our Nation. The American people want congressional action in a bipartisan fashion. The rhetoric of the last 6 months has left the American people saddened that the work on this

House floor has been focused upon partisan division. The most important action this House of Representatives could take today is to support our troops by coming together in a bipartisan effort.

I want to thank Chairman SKELTON, and I also want to thank subcommittee Chairman ABERCROMBIE for his leadership on H.R. 3087, which gives us an opportunity for a bipartisan step in the Iraq debate.

I am a cosponsor of this bill, which was reported out of the Armed Services Committee by an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 55-2.

H.R. 3087, as amended, supports our troops, our national interests, and our counterterrorism operations against al Qaeda in Iraq.

The bill requires our Department of Defense to undertake robust and comprehensive contingency planning for a redeployment of the Armed Forces from Iraq. The bill recognizes that the role and mission of our Armed Forces in Iraq will change and properly acknowledges that the Government of Iraq must be responsible for Iraq's future.

As America's responsibilities shift, our focus must include planning to protect our vital national interests and our troops.

In a letter I sent to our Speaker, Speaker PELOSI, on August 1, 2007, I elaborated saying that, for example, this bill states the contingency planning element should include ensuring appropriate protection for the Armed Forces in Iraq, providing appropriate protection in Iraq for United States civilians, contractors and third-party nationals, and Iraqi nationals who have assisted the United States mission in Iraq, maintaining and enhancing the ability of the United States Government to eliminate and disrupt al Qaeda, and affiliated terrorist organizations and preserving military equipment necessary to defend the national security interests of the United States.

I want to thank Chairman ABERCROMBIE for his leadership on this bill and for his insistence that this bill come to the House floor for a vote. I urge all of my colleagues in the House to support this bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SKELTON. I yield 1 minute to my colleague, my friend, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON).

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this bill and especially in strong support of our distinguished chairman, who has done so much to continue the steady progress, the steady march towards the safe, secure redeployment of our troops.

This body is well served by the legislation introduced by Mr. ABERCROMBIE and Mr. TANNER, inasmuch as it provides intelligent and meaningful legislation that will lead to the safe, speedy and responsible redeployment of our troops and once again returns account-

ability, as this committee has insisted on, to its proper venue within the Armed Services Committee to do the kind of oversight that will be necessitated by this bill.

I commend the chairman and all of the staff for their hard work on this.

Mr. TURNER. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlelady from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER).

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. I thank the gentleman for yielding his time.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in very strong, strong support of this resolution.

You know, it has been said that no battle plan survives first contact with the enemy, and I believe that that is true. That's why our military must constantly plan for every eventuality in warfare, because failure to do so can cost lives.

The situation in Iraq is no different. We must prepare for every contingency. The day is coming when our brave men and women in uniform will leave Iraq, hopefully very, very soon. In fact, General Petraeus in his testimony last month spoke of the possibility that some of our troops will leave Iraq very soon, perhaps within weeks.

In order to facilitate a very safe and orderly withdrawal, it is important that our military leaders plan appropriately, and they must also consult with the Congress so that we can provide the needed support to ensure that our troops are safe and that our vital national interests are protected.

Prudent planning leads to success and provides the ability to react quickly to events on the ground. I believe that this resolution encourages such prudent planning. That's why I supported it when it came before the House Armed Services Committee, when it was debated then, and why I would urge the entire House to support it today. As was just mentioned by the chairman, it was a bipartisan vote and it passed 55-2.

The issue of our troop presence in Iraq has caused great debate across our country, has polarized this Congress, and I believe that this resolution is a demonstration that a bipartisan way forward can be achieved, that it can happen. In fact, it must happen for our Nation to move forward.

I certainly want to express my appreciation to the sponsors of this bill. I want to express my appreciation and deep regard and respect for the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Mr. SKELTON, as well as our ranking member, DUNCAN HUNTER, great American patriots, all of them.

Let us hope that the day is coming soon when our troops will come home with honor, with honor, our brave men and women who so proudly and bravely have protected and exported liberty and freedom, democracy.

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to my friend, my colleague, the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE), who is the chair-

man of the Air and Land Forces Subcommittee of the Armed Services Committee and is also an original cosponsor of this legislation along with Mr. TANNER from Tennessee.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Madam Speaker, I would at this point like to thank Mr. Mike Turner for working with us and the committee, right from the get-go, and also Mr. Phil English as well, to demonstrate what we have been saying here that Republicans alone, Democrats alone cannot bring this to an end. It requires us all to work together.

Now, there are some, I am sorry to say, on both ends of the spectrum of the parties who want to diminish what the bill is all about and what its intent is all about. Someone went so far yesterday as to say, well, this bill is like naming post offices.

Well, yesterday, we named two post offices for marines that were killed in Iraq. I don't suppose the author of that kind of commentary would like to speak with the family of the marines who have been killed about why these post offices were named.

I think it's pretty important that we concentrate on those who are bearing the brunt of the policies that we approve of in this body. That's what this is all about. We want to end the party sniping. We want to end the commentary about advantages being taken from one party or another.

Cover has been mentioned, about whether it would be given to one party or another. The only cover that we are interested in is the cover that has to be obtained by our fighting men and women in the field, because they are engaged in battle as a result of the policies that we either approve or disapprove of.

It's time for the Congress to take back its responsibility.

Madam Speaker, I would like to enter into the RECORD a commentary from the Government Accountability Office as of the end of July of this year.

Issues that DOD needs to consider in planning and executing the draw down and redeployment of forces from Iraq:

DRAW DOWN SCOPE, COSTS, TIMETABLE, AND CAPACITY ISSUES

What forces will be drawn down, and over what period of time? (i.e. the process for determining the order in which specific forces will draw down, the timetable for the draw down, and planning for the consolidation and relocation of forces and related force protection issues).

How will DOD estimate, budget, and report costs associated with the draw down? (i.e. the use of baseline budgets versus GWOT-specific funding requests for related costs, and the determination of which cost elements will be directly associated with draw down and redeployment operations).

What will be DOD's responsibilities for transporting, protecting, housing, and supporting other government civilian personnel and contractors during the draw down and for those forces that will remain behind? (i.e. civilian personnel from the Department of Defense, State Department, USAID, and defense contractors).

What forces will stay in theater after the draw down, and what will the footprint be for forces remaining in Iraq and Kuwait? (i.e.

stabilization forces in Iraq, forces to protect and maintain prepositioned equipment sites in Iraq and Kuwait, and forces to protect the U.S. Embassy in Iraq).

How much equipment and supplies will be redeployed from Iraq and Kuwait, and over what period of time? (i.e. types of equipment and supplies, numbers and sizes of the pieces of equipment and supplies, tonnage, and amounts and types of shipping vessels that will be needed).

To what extent does DOD have the capacity in Iraq, Kuwait, and CONUS to support the draw down? (i.e. personnel, facilities, storage, and transportation).

What equipment will stay in Iraq and Kuwait, and how will this equipment be protected and maintained after the draw down? (i.e. equipment transfers to the ISF and Iraqi forces, prepositioned equipment sites in Iraq and Kuwait, and numbers of maintenance contractors or service members needed to maintain equipment in Iraq and Kuwait).

LOGISTICS ISSUES

What are the logistics elements that DOD will need to consider in the redeployment of troops and other personnel from Iraq and Kuwait? (i.e. personnel security, housing and food, medical support, and airlift requirements).

What are the logistics elements that DOD will need in the United States to accept and process troops and personnel re-entering the United States? (i.e. determining where the troops and personnel will be sent, demobilization requirements, housing and food, medical and dental support, and veteran affairs issues).

What are the logistics elements that DOD will need to consider in the redeployment of equipment and supplies from Iraq and Kuwait? (i.e. transportation requirements, security and protection of in-transit assets, storage and handling requirements, port operations and facilities, and requirements for shipping containers and vessels).

How will DOD maintain accountability and visibility over in-transit assets? (i.e. establishing accountability over assets in theater before redeployment, and maintaining accountability and visibility throughout the redeployment process).

What are the logistics elements that DOD will need in the United States to accept and process equipment and supplies re-entering the United States? (i.e. port operations and facilities, transportation requirements, storage and handling requirements, maintenance requirements, equipment reset requirements, and depot capability and capacity issues).

REBUILDING UNIT CAPACITY AND MAINTAINING STABILITY IN THE REGION DURING AND AFTER THE DRAWN DOWN

How will DOD plan for rebuilding unit capacity and resetting the forces, including establishing goals for readiness levels and investment priorities? (i.e. personnel re-training and re-manning).

What will be DOD's and other federal agencies' roles and responsibilities regarding Iraqi refugees? (i.e. security, shelter and food, and medical support).

How will DOD coordinate with coalition forces on the draw down and redeployment processes, and what will be the roles and responsibilities of the coalition forces during and after the draw down? (i.e. coalition forces that will remain in Iraq after the draw down, and force protection issues during the draw down).

What agreements will DOD need to make with other neighboring countries in the Middle East to facilitate the draw down and redeployment? (i.e. airspace rights, logistics support during redeployment, and roles of other countries in the region in maintaining regional stability).

What issues will the Department of Defense consider in the planning and executing of the draw-down and redeployment of forces from Iraq? It includes the draw-down, scope, the costs, the timetable, the capacity issues, logistics issues. These are the serious and sober subjects of what will be presented to us by these redeployment plans.

You cannot have a redeployment by wish fulfillment alone. You have to have the practical realities in front of you in order to accomplish it. That's what we are seeking to do. That's what the Armed Services Committee on a bipartisan basis sought to accomplish with this bill. This is serious and sober business.

Section two of the measure states the strategy required "shall include planning to achieve the following." That's what we mean by the status of the planning. Status of the planning will include the transition of combat forces from policing civil strife or sectarian violence in Iraq.

It has to include a projection in the number of members the Armed Forces required for the missions described in the redeployment. The details of what these redeployment plans will encompass are included in the bill, and so the preamble that is there that says the original resolution has now been accomplished takes us to this final conclusion that we reach today, the redeployment of our troops in a responsible way and a bipartisan manner.

PERMISSION TO REDUCE TIME FOR ELECTRONIC VOTING

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that, during further proceedings today in the House, the Chair be authorized to reduce to 2 minutes the minimum time for electronic voting on any question that otherwise could be subjected to 5-minute voting under clause 8, rule XX.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

Mr. TURNER. Madam Speaker, I want to commend the committee chairman, NEIL ABERCROMBIE, for his leadership in bringing this bill to the floor.

Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to Mr. CASTLE from Delaware.

□ 1600

Mr. CASTLE. I thank the distinguished gentleman from Ohio for yielding and for his work on this legislation.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3087, legislation requiring the administration to work closely with Congress and our military leaders in communicating a comprehensive post-surge strategy for Iraq.

Since 2003, over 3,800 American military personnel have been killed in Operation Iraqi Freedom, and more than 27,000 have been injured. These are very difficult times, and it is our duty to do everything possible to support those who have risked so much in service to their Nation.

To this point, however, the U.S. Congress has been consumed by partisan infighting, which has resulted in gridlock and has prevented debate on substantive proposals like the Iraq Study Group Recommendations Implementation Act.

The American people deserve a straightforward understanding of our involvement and long-term objectives in the Middle East. The legislation before us today, of which I am a proud co-sponsor, takes an important step forward by requiring the Secretary of Defense to submit regular reports to Congress regarding the status of post-surge planning.

Clearly, the U.S. Congress should not be acting without considering the advice of our military commanders in Iraq, and this legislation will ensure that Secretary Gates, General Petraeus and other senior officials are capable of communicating developments with Members of Congress and the administration.

This information will also provide a greater understanding of progress made on General Petraeus' proposal for the redeployment of U.S. troops, and it will assist Congress in budgeting for the possible missions that may continue in Iraq, such as efforts to disrupt terrorist organizations and train Iraqi security forces.

H.R. 3087 is the first of what I hope will be a substantive, bipartisan effort in Congress to work with our military and foreign policy leaders to achieve stability in Iraq and bring our soldiers home to their families.

Last week, 14 Democrats and 14 Republicans endorsed such an approach by signing the Bipartisan Compact on Iraq Debate. Like Mr. TANNER's proposal, the importance of developing a clearly defined and measurable mission in Iraq is one of eight central principles agreed to in the Bipartisan Compact.

Mr. Speaker, I am hopeful that by finally agreeing to consider H.R. 3087, Members from both parties will signal a willingness to set aside the partisan tactics that have crippled our efforts over the last several months.

The Iraq war provokes intense and genuine feelings from individuals at all points of the political spectrum. However, politics as usual in Washington, D.C. should not be allowed to consume our efforts in lieu of progress.

Bridging this critical political divide in Washington is our only hope for transitioning responsibility to the Iraqi Government and bringing about real substantive change in Iraq.

Let us all join together to support H.R. 3087.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to my colleague and my friend from Tennessee (Mr. TANNER) who is an original sponsor of the bill together with Mr. ABERCROMBIE.

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to also add my thanks to Mr. ABERCROMBIE and Mr. ENGLISH and Mr. CASTLE, Ms. SCHWARTZ, and particularly to

you, Mr. Chairman. The point of this is that our soldiers, sailors, airmen, guardsmen, marines, are not dying in the name of the Republican Conference or the Democratic Caucus. They're dying in the name of the United States of America. We owe them a unified Congress to help them. This bill is a unifying factor here that starts us on the road to behaving as Americans first and political partisans second. Their sacrifice demands nothing less than that.

I have a sense of urgency about this that I'm afraid did not come through in the hearing, particularly from Ambassador Crocker. Not that I'm criticizing him. I think he's doing a fine job. And I have no higher regard for anybody in uniform, past, present or future, than General Petraeus. But the sense of urgency I have is to bring us together so that we can move in a meaningful, constructive way, as Congress, to play a role in the civilian leadership aspects and management of this conflict.

As has been noted previously, it requires the Pentagon to, in some way, bring Congress in in a meaningful way really on the strategy of the war for the first time.

As I said earlier today, the strategy of waiting for the Shia and Sunni in Iraq to try to work, sit down and work something out in a central government in Baghdad is a less than viable option when our men and young men and women are patrolling the streets of Baghdad dying every day and we're asking the taxpayers of this country to spend \$3 billion a week for people who half the time boycott their sessions. And to say that we're going to do this until maybe they can get together is not, in my judgment, something that we can endorse.

And so, Mr. Speaker, the original authorization, which provided basically two things, one is to remove the threat posed by the then-Government of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, who has been captured, tried, convicted and executed, and to enforce the U.S. resolutions with respect to the weapons of mass destruction having been accomplished, it's not the war that we haven't won; it's the peace that we're having trouble with. And I want us to get together as a Congress to move forward to win the peace. That's what our mission is now.

And the strategic mission that the administration had been following, the civilian leadership is not working out too well; 4½ years later, one can't leave the Green Zone without getting one's head shot off. I think we need the Congress to engage in a constructive, meaningful way. I think this vehicle will allow that to happen. And therefore, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you and all of those people who had anything whatsoever to do with it. A big bipartisan vote today, I think, will begin this unification process we so desperately need in this country.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to Representative ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, who worked with the

original bipartisan legislation with Representative TANNER.

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3087, the Tanner-Abercrombie-English Iraq planning bill. And I want to thank my two colleagues at the front end of that title, particularly, for their extraordinary efforts to move this bill forward.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that Congress speak with a clear voice on Iraq. The American people need to know that their representatives are trying to seek out the best policy to protect American interests overseas and reduce our footprint in that troubled country.

The Iraqi Government needs to know that the U.S. Congress is not prepared for our Nation to carry the burden of defending Iraq's security indefinitely and that that must become an Iraqi undertaking.

Our allies need to know that we remain committed to the war on terror, and that although Congress may be deeply divided on the means to pursuing our goal, that ultimately, politics ends at the water's edge.

This bill sends important signals. It sends a signal to our troops that their deployment is purposeful and that we're prepared to respond to changing conditions.

It sends a strong bipartisan message that Congress is ready to respond to changing circumstances on the ground and recognizing the coming and necessary transition of our role in Iraq from combat operations to strategic support.

Secretary Gates has already acknowledged that DOD would have little difficulty complying with the terms of this bill, so this legislation simply calls on the administration to make transparent the planning processes that prudent military leaders would undertake normally as a matter of course.

Our legislation is a very simple bill, but it is still significant. H.R. 3087 has gained support from a broad spectrum of Members of this body, Republicans and Democrats, liberals and conservatives. It cleared the Armed Services Committee with overwhelming bipartisan support.

I encourage my colleagues to use this important bill as a launching pad for a new debate in the House on how we may find a new way forward in Iraq, while keeping faith with our troops, with our constituents, with our allies, with the Iraq nation and with all who stand for order and democracy in the face of the creeping menace of terrorism.

The message we send today will be heard in our hometowns, on the battlefields of Iraq, and all around the world. That message is that we in this Chamber are prepared to stand together to do what it takes to forge a strong, sustainable and bipartisan U.S. policy in Iraq.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to my colleague, the gentlelady

from California (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ) who, by the way, is a member of the House Armed Services Committee.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3087, and I thank my colleagues, all of you, for getting it here to the floor. I voted for this bill in the Armed Services Committee with bipartisan support. It passed 55-2, and I think this is the beginning of the way. I'm happy that we're trying to find a way to move in Iraq.

We are here today because after more than 4 years of the President's war, it has become painfully clear that the administration didn't adequately plan for this war. Plan. Planning. And this is what this bill is about. And that the administration really didn't understand the substantial investment that it was going to take for American troops beyond the initial invasion. In fact, when the President declared "Mission Accomplished" on May 1, 2003, we had only lost 139 of our troops in Iraq; however, since then, 3,660 of our troops have been lost. So the American people have called for a redeploying of our troops from Iraq, and we need to start doing it, and we need a plan to do that redeployment.

So today, with this legislation, Congress is mandating that proper planning be done, so that whenever the redeployment begins, our troops will be brought home safely to their families.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlelady from Pennsylvania (Ms. SCHWARTZ) who is a co-sponsor of this legislation.

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Mr. Speaker, after all the loss of life, personal sacrifice and billions of taxpayer dollars, the President still does not have a plan for securing the peace in Iraq and bringing our troops home.

After the continued failure of the Iraqi Government to make progress on political, social and economic benchmarks, the President chooses to stay the course in Iraq. After nearly 4½ years, Iraq remains politically unstable and tragically violent.

Instead of changing course and offering a viable plan to conclude America's military involvement, the President calls for an open-ended commitment to keeping our troops in Iraq for years to come. It is time to demand a new direction for Iraq, to focus our military on combating and defeating terrorism, to insist on a comprehensive diplomatic strategy to move the Iraqi Government toward national reconciliation, and to bring our troops home.

This Congress stands by our troops. They've performed with great honor and they've accomplished all that we have asked them to do. It is time to bring them home.

Vote "yes" to demand a redeployment plan. Vote "yes" to demand accountability from this President to bring our troops home from Iraq safely and responsibly.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlelady from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Mr. TANNER is right. It is not the war we haven't won; it is the peace. And I want to encourage my friends on the other side of the aisle, join me in a bipartisan stand to bring our troops home now.

I didn't support this bill originally, but I support it now because I understand that we make steps one by one. But I don't want to be chastised about bipartisanship because I want us all to work in a bipartisan way to, one, bring our troops home, and to recognize that it is not only the military power but it is the diplomatic power.

This legislation is the right direction. It commands an intervention by the Congress, a 60-day report, how are we going to redeploy, and a 90-day update.

But, Mr. Speaker, I am looking forward to our troops coming home as heroes, and I'm working every day for them to come home with their families, a proclamation of their military success, a welcome home party in every single hamlet and village, and all the flowers that they can tolerate. That's what I call a declaration of the end of this tragedy.

But this is a good step today because we are in the mix. We're fighting to get them home. We are demanding that they come home. We are getting a report. We are forcing the Pentagon to think, and that is what we need to do.

But I look forward to my colleagues joining us and having a bipartisan vote on a time certain for these troops to come home.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT).

□ 1615

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, this resolution has rightly earned a place on this uncontested Suspension Calendar. So long as it is not misinterpreted as suggesting that Congress supports a long-term troop presence in Iraq, it merely generates another report that does no harm and not any significant good.

We know that, in addition to the blood of the brave, President Bush is hemorrhaging money as fast as he can get it, \$8 billion every single month, building toward a price tag of \$1 to \$2 trillion on this tragedy.

The Senate version of Senators KERRY and CLINTON has a better approach in demanding cost estimates on each alternative redeployment and in asking that one of these redeployments occur by the end of next year.

Our problem in Iraq is not a lack of reports, but a lack of the collective will in this Congress to initiate the change in course that President Bush will never undertake on his own. And I

hope we have the courage of our troops, the courage to take that action as soon as possible.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to Mr. SHAYS from Connecticut.

Mr. SHAYS of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I consider this an extraordinarily important moment. And, Chairman SKELTON, I just want to share my tremendous respect for you in marshalling out a bipartisan beginning to something that can lead to more. That is what I think we all think that this is the beginning. So the Tanner-English-Abercrombie bill, congratulations to all three of you, becoming the Abercrombie-Turner bill in committee. It is a bipartisan, effort that says we can agree on something and build on the little and then have it be more significant.

It makes sense to ask the Secretary of Defense to submit a plan to Congress that tells us specifically how they intend to fight this war and the factors involved in their anticipation of what can happen in the future. It makes sense to let them have 60 days to do this, because they already know right now what they intend to do, and it should not be all that difficult to describe it and then explain it to Congress.

It makes sense for every 3 months, every 90 days, for this plan to be updated and for individuals in Congress to understand whether we are ahead of schedule or behind schedule.

We went into Iraq on a bipartisan basis, two-thirds of the House, including Mr. SKELTON and Mr. LANTOS, who lead the two most important committees dealing with this issue; and the Senate, three-quarters of the Senate voted to go into Iraq. We need to leave Iraq on a bipartisan basis. It's called "compromise." It's what our Founding Fathers practiced when they created the Constitution of the United States. Compromise is not a bad thing. Bipartisanship is not a bad thing. Our troops are hungry for their leaders in Washington to work together.

It is my hope that we will have a time line, a time line that is sensible, a time line that tells the Iraqis we are not going to stay forever and a time line that tells Iraqis we are not going to pull the rug out from under them and leave tomorrow. We need a sensible time line, it seems to me; and I hope this becomes part of that ultimate report.

So I will just conclude by saying something I have already said. Congratulations to Members on both sides of the aisle. Congratulations again to Mr. SKELTON for beginning on that side of the aisle to preach and work for a bipartisan approach. And I thank Mr. TURNER for his work and Mr. CASTLE and Mr. GILCHREST and Mr. ISRAEL for what they have done.

This is the beginning, I think, and our troops should be very hopeful it

will lead to a lot of good for them and for the Iraqi people.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield at this time 2 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY).

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have no more than 4 minutes to address the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CAPUANO). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. HINCHEY. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I think all of us know by now that the military occupation in Iraq, which is referred to as a war but is really a military occupation, is an increasing disaster. We all know that now more than 4,000 military personnel have lost their lives, tens of thousands have been injured. We ought to be taking decisive action to put an end to that illegal, disastrous military occupation.

This bill is presented as a means of attempting to do so. But it is a false presentation. It does nothing to that effect. This bill, if it is passed and signed into law, would simply require a plan to be developed within 60 days after that signing and then another 90 days an additional plan, another 90 days an additional plan. So what we are likely to see, unless this Congress is able to take more decisive, more progressive, more positive action, is four, five, maybe even six plans coming out of this administration and no responsible action taken with regard to the disastrous circumstances that occur on the basis of this illegal military occupation.

This legislation does nothing productive to deal with this very difficult, dangerous, and disastrous situation. The circumstances for the security of this country have worsened as a result of this illegal invasion and the subsequent military occupation, and that worsening continues.

One of the other things in this legislation is also, frankly, very interesting. Congress finds, it says, the following: that the President has the ability to use the Armed Forces as the President determined necessary and appropriate in order to defend the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by the Government of Iraq at that time, at the time that that resolution was passed back in October of 2002, which a number of us voted against.

What this suggests is that that was the proper thing to do at that time. It was not the proper thing to do in October of 2002. It would have been much more proper if this Congress realized at that time what I believe most of us realize now: that the alleged justification for the illicit, illegal invasion of Iraq, the idea that there was a connection between Iraq and the attack of September 11, that Iraq had so-called weapons of mass destruction, that there was an alleged nuclear weapons

development program in Iraq, and that there was some connection between Iraq and al Qaeda, all of which was false. Now, many did not realize that at that time and subsequently they voted for it. Many of us did realize it and voted against it.

We should not have anything asserting in any legislation that comes before this House anything that suggests that what was presented at that time to justify that resolution authorizing this administration to engage in this illegal invasion and the subsequent disastrous occupation of that sovereign country was true when it was all falsified, intentionally and purposefully falsified.

So I could appreciate what some people may think they are doing here, and I certainly have a great deal of respect and affection for the Members who are the sponsors of this legislation. But I tell you, you look at this and you will say to yourself if this legislation passes, what it will authorize is a continuing falsified plan, much of which can be classified, coming from this administration, plan after plan, and the remaining military forces will be in that country until sometime after January of 2009.

This doesn't do what we are supposed to do. We shouldn't be passing it.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to my friend, our leader, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. I thank the chairman for yielding. I thank the committee for bringing this bill to the floor. I appreciate what my very close and dear friend and one of the best Members of this Congress, in my opinion, MAURICE HINCHEY, has just said. Like many Americans, he thinks and many Americans think this doesn't go far enough. From the perspectives of perhaps everybody in the Chamber, it doesn't go far enough towards the position they would like to take. It is not a perfect resolution, but then again none are.

What it does do, however, is try to say that if we are going to make decisions in the House of Representatives on an issue so critically important to our country and to the welfare of our troops that are in harm's way that we have the advice or at least the opinion of the administration as to how actions ought to be taken. Therefore, if there are those of us who believe, as I know my friend from New York does and some others, that we ought to redeploy, change course, redirect our efforts, the best advice and counsel that we could get on how to do that ought to be from our military leaders.

And what this resolution simply says is, and I agree with my friend from Connecticut that we can say, hopefully, with a somewhat unified voice, perhaps not unanimous but somewhat unified voice, if we were to take the position that the gentleman and I shared when we voted for redeployment within a timeframe, tell us how that would be done. Tell us how it would be done consistent with the safety of our troops.

Tell us how it would be done consistent with trying to leave behind as stable a government or community as possible in Iraq. Tell us how it could be done to enhance the possibility of political reconciliation in Iraq.

The surge has not accomplished that. If the surge was intended to bring political reconciliation, General Petraeus said it had not. Ambassador Crocker said it had not.

So I congratulate and thank the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. TANNER), the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE), and others who have joined in this effort to try to come to a step that will be a positive step. I think this is one of those steps.

And I would urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, whatever your particular position is, that we ought to have in front of us a considered, considerate plan of how we would accomplish an objective if this House, hopefully, could summon the votes to seek that objective and mandate that objective.

So I thank Mr. SKELTON for bringing this to the floor. I thank him for his leadership on this issue, and I would urge all of my colleagues, understanding full well the concerns that have been expressed so ably by the gentleman from New York, my friend (Mr. HINCHEY), that this legislation will send a strong message to many, including the administration, that we want to have the information that we need to make the best decisions that we can make. We may differ on what those decisions ought to be.

But, hopefully, what we will not differ on is that if we can have the best information and advice as to how to obtain an objective, then the legislation we pass will be better, will provide for the safety of our troops and provide, hopefully, for the success of a redeployment within a timeframe that many of us believe is absolutely essential.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I too want to thank Mr. TANNER, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, and Mr. SKELTON and our Republican colleagues for coming together.

Mr. Speaker, this is what I refer to as a soaring golden moment in this Congress because this is the beginning. This is a beginning of effective planning for bringing conclusion in a very responsible way to what the American people truly want.

And why is this a golden moment? This is a golden moment in this House because the only way that we are going to bring this Iraqi situation to a positive conclusion is with Democrats working with Republicans.

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Democrats cannot do it by ourselves, Republicans cannot do it by themselves.

The other point why this is a golden moment, Mr. Speaker, is because this

shows, and the process of this legislation and the reporting and the involvement of the Congress shows, that we are not going to make the same mistake ending our involvement in Iraq that we made in going in; and that was poor planning, bad information, and ineffective intelligence. That's why I commend this.

It's very important for the American people to see us finally, as Democrats and Republicans, working together in this start to take this great step. And let us dare not lose this golden moment of bipartisan cooperation.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Thank you, Mr. SKELTON, Mr. ABERCROMBIE and Mr. TANNER, for bringing this forward. It's important not just for what you're doing, but for what this represents, to be able to get the debate going here on the floor and to expand it.

This resolution represents the lowest common denominator, I think, but it's important for us to expand it, to deal with budget accountability. I personally don't want to have one more dime for waging war but, rather, move it forward in terms of securing the peace.

I want to stop the open-ended commitment, hopefully revisiting the terms of the authority, move legislation to deal with the poor souls who are trapped in Iraq, refugees who relied on the United States and we've turned our back on them. Let's have some added accountability for the outsourcing of the war through private contractors, and certainly stop the drumbeat of war for Iran. I hope this will be the first of many debates on specifics every week, hopefully every day.

I appreciate, Mr. SKELTON, what you have done. There is no one who cares more deeply about our troops. There is nobody who has tried to sound the alarm about these disastrous policies. I hope we can work with you to expand this debate, to increase the accountability so that ultimately we achieve peace in Iraq.

Mr. SKELTON. May I inquire of the Chair how much time is remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Missouri has 3 minutes; the gentleman from Ohio has 6½ minutes.

Mr. SKELTON. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Some will knock, Mr. Speaker, the importance of this legislation. It is a bill to require the Secretary of Defense to submit to us here in Congress reports on the status of planning for the redeployment of the Armed Forces from Iraq. Further, it requires the Secretary to meet with Congress to brief us on the matters contained in those reports.

Under the Constitution, Mr. Speaker, we are charged here in Congress with raising and maintaining the military. It's important for us to be able to look

around the corner to unseen challenges that are out there. The last 30 years we've had 12 military engagements, most of which were a surprise to us. So consequently, it's important for us in Congress to understand the progress and the status of planning for the redeployment of our Armed Forces from Iraq, because there may be those contingencies out there. We hope it doesn't come to pass, but if the future is anything like the past, our forces will be necessary.

So let us understand what this bill does. I think it's a step in the right direction. I am absolutely pleased with the bipartisanship we have had, both in the Armed Services Committee and here on the floor. And special thanks to my friend, my colleague from Ohio (Mr. TURNER) for his work and his amendment on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Chair again for his leadership for this bipartisan legislation, where this body will be able to come together for the important statement on the war in Iraq and for the important planning that needs to ensue.

Mr. BOYD of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3087.

This bill requires the administration to develop a new, redefined mission regarding our involvement and long term interests in Iraq.

This body has taken many votes this year on the issue of Iraq, but this is the first bill to address this issue that has come to the Floor with overwhelming bipartisan support.

A bipartisan approach is critical to put an end to the political infighting that has thus far stymied congressional debate on Iraq.

As a member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense and a Vietnam veteran myself, it is my utmost concern to see that our troops are receiving the resources that they need, but I will continue to assert that our military has done all that we have asked it to do and now it is time for the Iraqi Government to take responsibility for the country's future.

Given that, our Commander in Chief owes this Congress and the American people a plan for a redefined mission that reflects this reality.

I have always believed that bipartisanship equals progress and in no other situation is the need more immediate. In fact, I hope that my colleagues know me as a person who puts these words into action. In the near future, I will be leading a bipartisan congressional delegation to visit our men and women stationed in Iraq.

It is my sincere hope that our upcoming bipartisan trip and this vote today begin a new era where Members continue to join together on areas in which we find agreement in order to make progress for the good of the American people and our great country.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3087, legislation that will require the administration to develop and share with Congress a comprehensive strategy for the redeployment of U.S. forces from Iraq.

Our Nation recognizes that we cannot remain in Iraq indefinitely. Just last week, General George Casey, the Army Chief of Staff, testified before the House Armed Services Committee that ongoing operations in Iraq

were having a detrimental impact on our military readiness, endangering our ability to deal with other contingencies or problems. Our troops have done a superb job in a difficult mission, but they were not sent to Iraq to referee a civil war, and we need to bring them home. The violence in Iraq does not have a U.S. military solution; the answer lies in the Iraqi political reconciliation, which we must support with different methods.

The legislation before us today demonstrates Congress's commitment to ending our military presence in Iraq by mandating that the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, report on the status of planning for redeployment of U.S. forces from Iraq and to provide periodic updates about their implementation. This information is vital for congressional oversight so that we ensure our policies are informed by sound judgment and reflect the complex logistical considerations involved with an undertaking of such magnitude. The administration's poor planning for the post-invasion period led to widespread problems in reconstruction and created the environment of instability that reigns to this day. We must avoid making that mistake again so that our withdrawal from Iraq does not exacerbate existing problems or create new ones.

I will continue to work with my colleagues to demand a swift and safe withdrawal of our U.S. forces from Iraq, and I encourage all of my colleagues to support this measure.

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent to revise and extend my remarks.

I'd like to thank my colleagues, Congressman TANNER and Congressman ABERCROMBIE, for their hard work on this issue and their dedication to a new direction forward in Iraq.

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3087.

Mr. Speaker, a change of course in Iraq is long overdue.

The cost of this war is already too high. America has spent over \$455 billion and lost more than 3,700 lives in Iraq.

This responsible legislation would require the President and senior administration officials to develop and submit a comprehensive redeployment strategy to Congress within 60 days, and every 90 days thereafter.

Additionally, this bill recognizes that the U.S. Armed Forces and U.S. civilians have worked valiantly, and that it is time for Iraq to manage its future.

The bill also notes that when Congress authorized military force in 2002, it was concerned about an Iraqi government that has since been removed from power.

The brave men and women of America's armed forces have served their country valiantly and will continue to do so.

But it is time to bring them home from Iraq.

We must refocus our mission on the global threat of terrorism.

As a veteran, I voted against this war in 2002 because no one could convince me why we needed to be there.

Now, after five years of the President's failed policies, Congress must take action.

I urge my colleagues to cast a vote for a new direction in Iraq and for the future security of America, and support H.R. 3087.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3087, a bill that I voted for—along with 54 of my colleagues—when the Armed Services Committee considered it in July.

As amended in committee, H.R. 3087 requires the Secretary of Defense to submit a comprehensive redeployment strategy for U.S. troops in Iraq and requires that the Secretary and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff brief the House and Senate Defense Committees on its contents within 60 days, and every 90 days thereafter.

This legislation underscores the importance of contingency planning—something I called for earlier this year when I introduced H.R. 1183, the Iraq Contingency Planning Act. It also underscores the importance of requiring the Defense Department to share its planning with Congress. The sharing can be done in a classified way, but Congress needs to be informed about these plans if we are to be prepared to respond to what these plans may call for.

We remember that in 2003, President Bush launched a war in Iraq without a plan for what would come after initial military success. We all know where that has led us, and so as a member of the Armed Services Committee, I want assurances that this administration is thinking about and planning for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq—whether it happens tomorrow or next month or next year.

Madam Speaker, this legislation isn't intended to solve the larger problem of Iraq. To do that, we need a policy aimed at escalating diplomatic and political efforts and lightening the U.S. footprint in Iraq. But although there is widespread support for redeploying our troops, there is not yet sufficient support in Congress to override a Presidential veto on any major change in our Iraq policy.

That's another reason this bill is important. So long as we lack a sufficient majority to override his veto, we Democrats can't force the President to change course without Republican support. Only Democrats and Republicans working together can find the path out of Iraq. This bill is a small step forward in building that bipartisan support, so I will vote for it again today, while I continue to work with colleagues on both sides of the aisle on further steps we can take to change our broader Iraq policy.

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to a resolution that does nothing to end the war in Iraq.

Does H.R. 3087 call for our troops to immediately be brought home? No, it does not.

Does it at least call for redeployment over several months, or even years?

No, it does not.

Or at the very minimum, does it demand that the Pentagon actually develop and outline to a Congress a strategy on how redeployment might occur? No, it does not. As introduced, the bill would have done so. But in committee, this weak bill became even weaker.

There's no there there, if there ever was.

All the bill does is require the Department of Defense to report to Congress on the status of planning for redeployment.

Let's not kid ourselves about what the result of today's resolution will be. Every 3 months, President Bush's Secretary of Defense would tell Congress that the administration has not and will not develop a plan for the withdrawal of all our brave men and women in uniform.

That much I already know. I don't need a Bush lackey to repeat the bad news on a quarterly basis.

The only plan President Bush has is to keep our troops in harm's way for years if not decades. He wants to continue wasting tens of billions of dollars abroad while domestic needs go unmet at home.

I urge all my colleagues to vote against H.R. 3087 and instead support an immediate end to the war in Iraq.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in favor of H.R. 3087.

H.R. 3087 requires the Secretary of Defense to report to the Congress within 60 days, and every 90 days thereafter, "on the status of planning for the redeployment of the Armed Forces from Iraq." This bill specifies that the Pentagon is to describe a range of different possible scenarios for withdrawal, and create multiple timelines for completion of withdrawal. These reports will be valuable to the Congress as it carries out its oversight responsibilities and considers future legislation regarding Iraq. While it is necessary to require the Department of Defense to draft plans for withdrawal for Iraq, it is not sufficient. President Bush must finally implement these withdrawal plans so that our brave men and women can return home to their families having served honorably under extremely difficult conditions.

It is clear that President Bush is content to allow the next President to clean up his mess in Iraq, and that is a travesty. The bill that we are considering today will at least make that job slightly easier for the next President, as the Pentagon will have already drawn up detailed plans for our withdrawal from Iraq. As we know only too well today, responsible planning and foresight was one of the earliest casualties of President Bush's war in Iraq. If the Congress must force such planning to be done, so be it.

Mr. Speaker, while I support H.R. 3087 and encourage all members to vote for its passage today, it is tragic that due to opposition from Republican leaders in the Congress and veto threats by the President, we have not yet been able to make further progress on withdrawing our troops from Iraq. There was no connection between the 9/11 attacks and Saddam Hussein and no nuclear weapons in the sands of Iraq, yet the President seems to have no intention of bringing this mistaken and ill-conceived war to an end. It is a war that has made the United States less secure, yet the President refuses to even begin thinking about a new strategy. It is long past time for the United States to hand over security in Iraq to the Iraqis, and I hope that this bill will move us closer to that goal.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3087, which requires the President, in coordination with the Departments of State and Defense, to transmit to the Congress a strategy for the redeployment of U.S. forces from Iraq. The bill also requires the Secretary of Defense, not later than 60 days after the enactment of this act, and every 90 days thereafter, to submit to congressional defense committees a report on the status of this planning. In addition, the bill requires the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to brief these same congressional committees on the matters contained in the report. Furthermore, the legislation contains "sense of Congress" language that the contingency planning should: address the protection of Iraqi forces, Iraqi nationals, third party nationals and U.S. civilians who

have assisted the U.S. mission, enhance the ability of the United States to fight Al-Qaeda and affiliated terrorist organizations, and preserve military equipment necessary to defend the national security interests of the United States. Additional provisions in the bill include supporting and equipping Iraqi armed forces to take full responsibility for their own security.

This resolution is an important component of Congress's oversight of the Iraq war, and compels the administration to engage with Congress on the planning for responsible redeployment of our combat troops. The President's Iraq policy of putting our brave men and women in the Armed Forces in the position of policing the streets of Baghdad and other Iraqi cities in the midst of a sectarian war is the wrong strategy and one that continually puts them in harms way. I will continue to advocate for an immediate start to the responsible redeployment of our combat troops from Iraq, but in the meantime, it is important to garner as many votes as possible within the Congress to send a strong message to the administration that it must begin to plan for a comprehensive redeployment of our forces to provide for the best possible protection of our brave men and women in uniform.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3087, which requires the President, in coordination with the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other senior military leaders, to develop and transmit to Congress a comprehensive strategy for the redeployment of the armed forces in Iraq. I am in favor of requiring the President to develop a comprehensive strategy for the redeployment of American forces out of Iraq. A good plan is a good thing. A bad plan is a bad thing. But worst of all, is having no plan at all, which has been the sad state of affairs in Iraq for the past four years. So H.R. 3087 represents a small step in the right direction. However, there is more to be done, much more.

While I am not opposed to this legislation requiring the administration to develop and transmit to the Congress a comprehensive strategy for redeploying our troops out of Iraq, I believe I speak for most Americans when I say that what we really want is to have the 160,000 brave men and women wearing the uniform in the service of their country reunited with their families and friends and contributing to their communities back here in America.

I am working toward the day when our soldiers, marines, sailors, and airmen can leave Iraq and return to the United States where they can receive the heroes welcome they deserve. I am working toward the day when the President of the United States issues a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe a national day of celebration commemorating military success in Iraq. I can foresee the day when our troops who have known heat and hardship and horror in Iraq are again returned to their own land where they can be with family and friends and enjoy freedom and faith and fun. If H.R. 3087 hastens that day by just 24 hours, I can support it. But I will never be satisfied until our troops have been delivered out of Iraq and back to their loved ones.

Mr. Speaker, the administration has consistently placed far too great an emphasis on military objectives and solutions, and has consequently not allowed diplomacy the role it was intended to play in our global system. The

administration stated, "In the coming months, the United States will continue to operate along four lines of operation—security, political, economic, and diplomatic—to advance our objectives." In our war on terror, diplomacy cannot be used as a last resort. A war on terrorism is, as the Bush Administration has stated, a war for the "hearts and minds," which simply cannot be won through military action.

Mr. Speaker, our troops in Iraq did everything we asked them to do. We sent them overseas to fight an army; they are now caught in the midst of an insurgent civil war and political upheaval. I have, for some time now, argued the importance of the Congress going on record acknowledging for all the world to know the success of the America's armed forces in Iraq. Our brave troops have completed the task we set for them; it is time now to bring them home. Our next steps should not be a continuing escalation of military involvement, but instead a diplomatic surge.

As the former chairman and vice chairman of the 9/11 Commission, Thomas H. Kean and Lee H. Hamilton, recently stated, "Military power is essential to our security, but if the only tool is a hammer, pretty soon every problem looks like a nail. We must use all the tools of U.S. power—including foreign aid, educational assistance and vigorous public diplomacy that emphasizes scholarship, libraries and exchange programs—to shape a Middle East and a Muslim world that are less hostile to our interests and values. America's long-term security relies on being viewed not as a threat but as a source of opportunity and hope."

Despite the multitude of mistakes committed by President Bush and former Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, our troops have achieved a military success in ousting Saddam Hussein and assisting the Iraqis in administering a democratic election and electing a democratic government. However, only the Iraqi Government can secure a lasting peace. Time and time again, the Iraqi Government has demonstrated an inability to deliver on the political benchmarks that they themselves agreed were essential to achieving national reconciliation. Continuing to put the lives of our soldiers and our national treasury in the hands of what by most informed accounts, even by members of the Bush administration, is an ineffective central Iraqi government is irresponsible and contrary to the wishes of the overwhelming majority of the American people.

Last month, the House Foreign Affairs Committee, of which I am a member, heard testimony on the Government Accountability Office report on Iraqi progress toward the 18 legislative, economic, and security benchmarks. The Comptroller General of the GAO informed members that only three of these benchmarks have been met by the Maliki government. Despite the surge, despite increasing U.S. military involvement, the Iraqi government has not made substantial progress toward stabilizing their country. The more than 3,750 U.S. casualties and the \$3,816 per second we are spending in Iraq have not bought peace or security.

We are not here today to debate whether there has been some decrease in violence in Baghdad. The United States military is a skilled and highly proficient organization, and where there are large numbers of U.S. troops,

it is unsurprising that we see fewer incidents of violence. However, it is our responsibility to take a longer-term view. The United States will not and should not permanently prop up the Iraqi government and military. U.S. military involvement in Iraq will come to an end, and, when U.S. forces leave, the responsibility for securing their nation will fall to Iraqis themselves. And so far, we have not seen a demonstrated commitment by the Iraqi government.

Mr. Speaker, President Bush stated in June 2005, “Our strategy can be summed up this way: As the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down.” Instead of concentrating on building local capacity and applying pressure to the Maliki government to force them to take responsibility for the destiny of their nation, the Administration has chosen to pursue policies, namely the Baghdad security plan, that focus on continued combat by U.S. forces, rather than transferring responsibilities to Iraqis. As a result, Iraqi security forces, ISF remain entirely dependent upon U.S. troops; the August 2007 National Intelligence Estimate reports that the ISF “have not improved enough to conduct major combat operations independent of the Coalition” and “remain reliant on the Coalition for important aspects of logistics and combat support.” With the New Way Forward strategy, American troops continue to shoulder the majority of the war effort.

How will we know when the American forces are no longer needed? In testimony before a Joint Foreign Affairs-Armed Services Committees hearing last week, both General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker painted an optimistic picture of the situation in Iraq, making frequent reference to the progress and success in the Anbar province. However, Iraqi Parliament member and leading Shi'a cleric, Jamal Al-Din, said in a Congressional Briefing the following day that he did not recognize the country they described as the Iraq he represents, an Iraq that continues to be riddled with factionalism, extremism, and domestic strife. Even the administration's report projects a daunting list of challenges that face American troops on Iraq as well as Iraqis. These include: communal struggle for power between Shi'a majority and Sunni Kurd and other minorities; Al-Qaeda extremists in Iraq acting as accelerants for ethno-sectarian violence; Iranian lethal support to Shi'a militants; and foreign support to extremists in Iraq. And while General Petraeus and the Bush administration have been stressing the progress made in the region and the need for more time, they failed to note that sizeable increase in ethno-sectarian deaths in July and August and the fact that ethno-sectarian violence presents a substantial challenge to stability in the region, particularly in rural areas where security presence is light.

And while the situation in Iraq presents an open-ended military challenge to our forces abroad, our presence in the region may be hindering the security of our Nation. Evidence suggests that not only is increased U.S. military presence in Iraq not making that nation more secure, it may also be threatening our national security by damaging our ability to respond to real threats to our own homeland. The recently released video by Osama bin Laden serves to illustrate that President Bush has not caught this international outlaw, nor brought him to justice. Instead, he has diverted us from the real war on terror to the war of his choice in Iraq.

Recently, the former chairman and vice chairman of the 9/11 commission, Thomas H. Kean and Lee H. Hamilton, published an op-ed in the Washington Post examining the question of whether our nation is safer today, six years after 9/11. Kean and Hamilton concluded, “We still lack a sense of urgency in the face of grave danger.” The persistence of this threat is attributed to “a mixed record of reform, a lack of focus, and a resilient foe,” and the authors note that our own actions have contributed to a rise of radicalization and rage in the Muslim world. Kean and Hamilton write that “no conflict drains more time, attention, blood, treasure, and support from our worldwide counterterrorism efforts than the war in Iraq. It has become a powerful recruiting and training tool for al-Qaeda.”

Mr. Speaker, Iraq faces a severe crisis. With a factionalist government in which parties are based on religion, a qualification that is strictly forbidden within the Iraqi constitution, religious, tribal, and ethnic tensions remain high and mere subsistence has become a challenge to the average citizen. The UNHCR has recently said that more than two million Iraqis have claimed refugee status abroad since the invasion, while an additional 60,000 people flee their homes each month. In a recent statement, Ambassador Crocker the admission of refugees was “bogged down by major bottlenecks.”

The Administration has spent so much time and money on its military strategy that it is ill-equipped to handle the human rights atrocities that are occurring. And while the United States delays admission of refugees based on a myriad of bureaucratic security checks, Ambassador Crocker states, “refugees who have fled Iraq continue to be a vulnerable population while living in Jordan and Syria.”

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw attention to the lack of adequate oversight of the American war effort. Given the enormous amount of resources involved, coupled with the catastrophic costs in human lives, we would certainly expect adequate management of U.S. funds and military supplies. We would expect clear records of exactly where those \$10 billion a month is going, and to whom it is being given. And yet, the GAO reports that the Pentagon has lost track of over 190,000 weapons, given to Iraqis, particularly in 2004 and 2005. The report states that the U.S. military does not know what happened to 30 percent of the weapons the United States distributed to Iraqi forces from 2004 through early this year as part of an effort to train and equip the troops. These weapons could be used to kill our American troops.

In addition, only yesterday, the Iraqi government stated that it would review the status of all private security firms operating in the country. This announcement came after a controversial gunfight on Sunday, involving the U.S.-based firm Blackwater USA, left eight civilians dead. Mr. Speaker, reports indicate that there are currently at least 28 private security companies operating in Iraq, employing thousands of security guards. This incident suggests the need for superior oversight and accountability for contractors in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, the real tragedy of this war has been the deaths of so many of our American sons and daughters. At current count, the Department of Defense had confirmed a total of 3,808 U.S. casualties. In addition, more than 28,009 have been wounded in the Iraq

war since it began in March 2003. June, July, and August have marked the bloodiest months yet in the conflict, and U.S. casualties in Iraq are 62 percent higher this year than at this time in 2006. This misguided, mismanaged, and misrepresented war has claimed too many lives of our brave servicemen; its depth, breadth, and scope are without precedent in American history.

Before I close, Mr. Speaker, I would like to discuss briefly an important legislative proposal that I will soon introduce. This legislation, the “Military Success in Iraq Commemoration Act of 2007,” recognizes the extraordinary performance of the Armed Forces in achieving the military objectives of the United States in Iraq, encourages the President to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe a national day of celebration commemorating the military success of American troops in Iraq, and provides other affirmative and tangible expressions of appreciation from a grateful nation to all veterans of the war in Iraq.

There are many interesting and important legislative proposals relating to the war in Iraq. Most of them, however, are contentious and divisive making it difficult for them to attract broad support across the aisle. In this respect my legislation is different. That is because it involves an issue over which there should be widespread and broad-based consensus. We should all be able to agree that one good and sufficient reason to redeploy U.S. troops out of Iraq is because they have achieved their mission objectives. They have been victorious in every battle and have won the military victory they were sent to win in March 2003. They are victors and heroes who have never been defeated on the battlefield.

Blaming the current chaos in Iraq on our military is like blaming the Continental Army for the outbreak of the Civil War. In each case, the armed forces did their jobs—they won the war they were sent to fight; in each case, it was the civilian leadership that failed to win or maintain the peace.

The Armed Forces of the United States are not to be used to respond to 911 calls from governments like Iraq's that have done all they can to take responsibility for the security of their country and safety of their own people. The United States cannot do for Iraq what Iraqis are not willing to do for themselves.

When our heroic young men and women willingly sacrifice life or limb on the battlefield, the nation has a moral obligation to ensure that they are treated with respect and dignity. One reason we are the greatest nation in the world is because of the brave young men and women fighting for us in Iraq and Afghanistan. They deserve honor, they deserve dignity, and they deserve to know that a grateful nation cares about them.

Outside of my office there is a poster-board with the names and faces of those heroes from Houston, Texas who have lost their lives wearing the uniform of our country. I think to myself how lucky I am to live in a nation where so many brave young men and women volunteer to the ultimate sacrifice so that their countrymen can enjoy the blessings of liberty. Now is the time to remind our heroes they have not been forgotten. More importantly, America has not forgotten them.

My legislation, the Military Success in Iraq Commemoration Act of 2007, pays fitting tribute to the valor, devotion, and heroism of

those who fought in Iraq in the following ways. First, my bill provides an express finding by the Congress that the objectives for which the AUMF resolution of 2002 authorized the use of force in Iraq were achieved by the Armed Forces of the United States.

Second, my bill authorizes the President to issue a proclamation calling upon the American people to observe a national day of celebration commemorating the Armed Forces' military success in Iraq. This will help ensure that the Iraq War does not suffer the fate of other open-ended engagements like the Korean War, which is often called the "Forgotten War."

Third, my bill authorizes funds to be appropriated and awarded by the Secretary of Defense to state and local governments to assist in defraying the costs of conducting suitable "Success in Iraq" homecoming and commemoration activities and in creating appropriate memorials honoring those who lost their lives in the war. Many of the casualties in the Iraq War come from small towns and villages in rural or economically depressed areas. The local governments are already facing substantial fiscal pressures and need help coming up with the necessary funds.

Finally, my bill creates a program and authorizes funds to be appropriated pursuant to which the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall award to each veteran of the Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom a grant of \$5,000 to facilitate the transition to civilian life. We don't want veterans to end up homeless or unemployed or unable to take their kids on a vacation or start a business. This \$5,000 bonus is but a small token of the affection the people of the United States have for those who risked their lives so that we may continue to live in freedom.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps no issue will more define this Congress than how we conclude this misguided conflict. I am proud to be a part of a Congress that is listening to the clearly expressed will of the American people, and I remain, as ever, committed to ending this truly tragic conflict.

Mr. TURNER. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3087.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on suspending the rules and passing H.R. 3087 will be followed by 2-minute votes on motions to suspend the rules with regard to:

House Resolution 635,

House Concurrent Resolution 203,

H.R. 2828, and

House Concurrent Resolution 200.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 377, nays 46, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 927]			
YEAS—377			
Abercrombie	Doolittle	Larsen (WA)	Rogers (AL)
Ackerman	Doyle	Larson (CT)	Rogers (KY)
Aderholt	Drake	Latham	Rohrabacher
Akin	Dreier	LaTourette	Ros-Lehtinen
Alexander	Duncan	Levin	Royal-Allard
Allen	Edwards	Lewis (CA)	Royer
Altire	Ehlers	Lewis (KY)	Ruppersberger
Andrews	Ellison	Linder	Rush
Arcuri	Ellsworth	Lipinski	Ryan (OH)
Baca	Emanuel	LoBiondo	Ryan (WI)
Bachmann	Emerson	Loebssack	Salazar
Bachus	Engel	Lofgren, Zoe	Sali
Baker	English (PA)	Lowey	Sánchez, Linda
Barrow	Eshoo	Lucas	T.
Bartlett (MD)	Etheridge	Lungren, Daniel	Sanchez, Loretta
Bean	Everett	E.	Sarbanes
Becerra	Fallin	Lynch	Saxton
Berkley	Farr	Mack	Schakowsky
Berman	Fattah	Mahoney (FL)	Schiff
Berry	Feeley	Manzullo	Schmidt
Biggert	Ferguson	Marchant	Schwartz
Bilbray	Filner	Markey	Scott (GA)
Bilirakis	Forbes	Marshall	Scott (VA)
Bishop (GA)	Fortenberry	Matheson	Sensenbrenner
Bishop (NY)	Fossella	Matsui	Sessions
Bishop (UT)	Foxx	McCarthy (CA)	Sestak
Blackburn	Frelinghuysen	McCarthy (NY)	Shadegg
Blumenauer	Gallegly	McCaul (TX)	Shays
Blunt	Garrett (NJ)	McCullom (MN)	Shea-Porter
Boehner	Gerlach	McCrary	
Bono	Giffords	McGovern	
Boozman	Gilchrest	McHenry	Baird
Boren	Gillibrand	McHugh	Baldwin
Boswell	Gingrey	McIntyre	Barrett (SC)
Boucher	Gohmert	McKeon	Barton (TX)
Boustany	Gonzalez	McMorris	Brady (TX)
Boyd (FL)	Goodlatte	Rodgers	Burton (IN)
Boysda (KS)	Gordon	McNulty	Buyer
Brady (PA)	Granger	Meek (FL)	Cannon
Braley (IA)	Graves	Meeks (NY)	Capuano
Brown (GA)	Green, Al	Melancon	Carter
Brown (SC)	Green, Gene	Mica	Cleaver
Brown, Corrine	Gutierrez	Michaud	Conyers
Brown-Waite,	Hall (TX)	Miller (FL)	Davis (IL)
Ginny	Hare	Miller (MI)	DeGette
Buchanan	Harman	Miller, Gary	Flake
Burgess	Hastings (FL)	Miller, George	Frank (MA)
Butterfield	Hastings (WA)	Mitchell	
Calvert	Hayes	Mollohan	Carson
Camp (MI)	Heller	Moore (KS)	Cubin
Campbell (CA)	Hensarling	Moran (KS)	Davis, Jo Ann
Cantor	Herger	Murphy (CT)	Hastert
Capito	Hereth Sandlin	Murphy, Patrick	
Capps	Hill	Murphy, Tim	
Cardoza	Hinojosa	Murtha	Higgins
Carnahan	Hirono	Musgrave	Jindal
Carney	Hobson	Myrick	Kilpatrick
Castle	Hodes	Nadler	Lee
Castor	Hoekstra	Napolitano	
Chabot	Holden	Neal (MA)	
Chandler	Honda	Neugebauer	
Clarke	Hooley	Nunes	
Clay	Hoyer	Oberstar	
Clyburn	Hulshof	Orbey	
Coble	Hunter	Ortiz	
Cohen	Inglis (SC)	Pascrill	
Cole (OK)	Israel	Pastor	
Conaway	Issa	Paul	
Cooper	Jackson-Lee	Pearce	
Costa	(TX)	Pelosi	
Costello	Jefferson	Peterson (MN)	
Courtney	Johnson (GA)	Peterson (PA)	
Cramer	Johnson (IL)	Petri	
Crenshaw	Johnson, E. B.	Pickering	
Crowley	Jones (NC)	Pitts	
Cuellar	Jones (OH)	Platts	
Culberson	Jordan	Poe	
Cummings	Kagen	Pomeroy	
Davis (AL)	Kanjorski	Porter	
Davis (CA)	Kaptur	Price (GA)	
Davis (KY)	Keller	Price (NC)	
Davis, David	Kennedy	Pryce (OH)	
Davis, Lincoln	Kildee	Putnam	
Davis, Tom	Kind	Radanovich	
Deal (GA)	King (NY)	Rahall	
DeFazio	Kingston	Ramstad	
Delahunt	Kirk	Rangel	
DeLauro	Klein (FL)	Regula	
Dent	Kline (MN)	Rehberg	
Diaz-Balart, L.	Knollenberg	Reichert	
Diaz-Balart, M.	Kuhl (NY)	Renzi	
Dicks	LaHood	Reyes	
Dingell	Lampson	Reynolds	
Doggett	Langevin	Richardson	
Donnelly	Lantos	Rodriguez	

NAYS—46

NOT VOTING—10

Franks (AZ) Moran (VA)
 Grijalva Olver
 Hall (NY) Pallone
 Barton (TX) Hinchey
 Brady (TX) Holt
 Burton (IN) Pence
 Jackson (IL) Rothman
 Johnson, Sam Serrano
 Capuano Shimkus
 King (IA) Stark
 Carter Kucinich
 Cleaver Tancredo
 Lamborn Velázquez
 Lewis (GA) Waters
 Davis (IL) McCotter
 DeGette Watson
 McDermott McDermett
 McNerney Woolsey
 Moore (WI)

□ 1701

Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. WATSON, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ and Messrs. ROTHMAN, FRANK of Massachusetts, CANNON, BURTON of Indiana, DAVIS of Illinois, CONYERS and LAMBORN changed their vote from "yea" to "nay."

Messrs. BROUN of Georgia, RADANOVICH and WESTMORELAND changed their vote from "nay" to "yea."

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The title was amended so as to read: "A bill to require the Secretary of Defense to submit to Congress reports on the status of planning for the redeployment of the Armed Forces from Iraq and to require the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and appropriate senior officials of the Department of Defense to meet with Congress to brief Congress on the matters contained in the reports."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.