Rep. Peter Welch issued the following statement after President Obama announced this afternoon that the U.S. will end its military presence in Iraq by the end of the year.

"In 2008, the American people sent a clear message that it was time to end the war in Iraq and bring our troops home. President Obama promised he would do so. Today he has followed through on that promise.

"At long last, this costly and unnecessary war is coming to an end. American soldiers heroically did everything asked of them. They reported for duty, served valiantly and sacrificed mightily. Characteristically, Vermonters answered the call to service and paid a price greater than that of any other state. I know I join all Vermonters in being proud of their service and humbled by their sacrifice."