Madam Speaker, while our troops continue to perform

heroically in Iraq, President Bush's troop surge has not lived up to

its promise of producing essential political reconciliation.

As a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I helped lead the

opposition to our involvement in Iraq in the first place because I felt

that we should let the weapons inspectors do their jobs before rushing

into a preemptive military strike.

After our Iraq policy failed, and the rationale for going to war was

invalidated due to the absence of weapons of mass destruction, we're

told that the so-called military surge would help bring about a

political solution in Iraq. That has not happened. Senior military

commanders have indicated that the inability of the Iraqi Government to

achieve political reconciliation is a greater threat to our troops than

the insurgency in Iraq.

Many of us here in Congress believe that the Iraqi Government will

not begin to address the political reconciliation until it is clear

that our troops are coming home.

Last month, House Democrats once again passed a bill that provided

our troops with $50 billion in funding and a strategic plan that brings

them home. We must bring our troops home. We demand a change in the

direction in Iraq.