Mr. Speaker, this bill is not cut and run. It's think and

succeed. It's a good policy to try.

Mr. Speaker, tonight this House will adopt this reasonable conference

report that fully funds our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan and that

responds to the will of the American people, who are demanding,

demanding, that our Nation change course. I urge all of our Members

here, on both sides of the aisle, to support this bill.

After the Senate passes this conference report and it is sent to the

White House, I urge and implore the President to sign this bill, even

though he seems determined to veto this legislation, thereby defying

the will of the American people, 70 percent of whom disapprove of his

handling of the war in Iraq.

I know there is not a Member in this body who does not pray for our

success in Iraq and for the safe return of our brave servicemen and

women who serve us there. However, we cannot ignore the facts. After

the loss of more than 3,300 American soldiers and nearly 25,000

injured, and after the expenditure of more than $400 billion, which

will be after the end of this fiscal year some $600 billion, on a war

now in its fifth year, even President Bush and Secretary of Defense

Gates acknowledge that our efforts are not succeeding.

The Defense Department has concluded that the situation in Iraq is

``properly descriptive of a civil war.'' The Army Chief of Staff has

issued warnings about the effect of the war on America's overall

military readiness. And the Iraq Government has failed to meet

political goals, such as reversing debaathification, drafting a plan

for national reconciliation and disbanding militias, all of which are

essential if we are to reach a political solution, as General Petraeus

says is necessary.

In fact, last week, six ministers loyal to Muqtada al Sadr withdrew

from the Iraqi Government, imperiling the chances of political

resolution, which General Petraeus, as I said, says is imperative

because, quoting again General Petraeus, ``There is no military

solution to a problem like that in Iraq.'' General Petraeus: ``There is

no military solution to a problem like that in Iraq.''

Meanwhile, the violence in Iraq continues. In just the last 2 weeks,

a suicide attack inside the Iraqi Parliament killed eight, and

spectacular car bombs, which occur almost daily, have killed hundreds.

Thus, Mr. Speaker, the question before the Members again today is

this: Will we change direction in Iraq, or will we continue to stay the

course with a failing policy? That is the question before this House

tonight.

The answer, I think, is clear. After 4 years of rubber-stamping this

administration's failed policy, not a service to the American people,

this Congress must insist on accountability and a new direction. As the

Speaker has said, more blank checks from this Congress would constitute

an abdication of our responsibility and of our duty.

In short, this conference report protects our troops, requiring

deployments to adhere to existing Defense Department standards. Mr.

Murtha has not adopted these standards, nor has Mr. Obey, nor have any

of us on this side of the aisle. These are Defense Department standards

for training, acquiring equipment and armor, while allowing the

President to waive those standards that are the Defense Department

standards if, in his judgment, national security requires it. How much more responsible a position can we take?

The conference report holds the Iraqi Government accountable. I think

that reflects the sentiments of the American people, who believe that

the Iraqis need to step up and take responsibility. What Secretary

Gates said was if we do not have a consequence of not taking

responsibility, they will not do it.

In fact, even if Mr. Maliki wants to do it, he will not be able to

get the disparate factions in Iraq to do it, unless they feel a

necessity to do it. We've seen that here in this Congress. That's

democracy at work. So this is an assistance to the Iraqi Government to

bring people together, because it says if you don't, there is a

consequence. The American public supports that alternative.

And it includes a responsible strategy for a phased redeployment of

U.S. forces and refocuses, refocuses our efforts on fighting al Qaeda

and the Taliban in Afghanistan. There is nobody in this Congress who

does not want to nor is not committed to confronting and defeating

terrorism. No one should be misled by the false claims of those who

argue that we must follow the same failing stay-the-course strategy.

This bill does not constitute capitulation or micromanaging this war.

This may sound harsh, but had somebody told Custer that you are not

supporting the troops unless you leave them here, they would have been

wrong. As retired General Paul Eaton, who was in charge of training the

Iraqi military in 2003 and 2004 recently stated, ``This bill gives

General Petraeus great leverage for moving the Iraqi Government down

the more disciplined path laid out by the Iraq Study Group. The real

audience for the timeline language is Prime Minister Maliki,'' as I

have said, ``and the elected Government of Iraq.'' So concluded Paul

Eaton, the general in charge of training Iraqis in 2003 and 2004.

Mr. Speaker, the American people want and deserve a Congress that

holds the Iraqis accountable for making progress. The American people

are paying a steep price; our children are paying a steep price for

this war. They haven't been given the bill yet, but they will be. And

our young men and women, and not so young men and women, are paying

with their lives, with their limbs, and with their health.

The American people want and deserve, as I have said, a Congress that

holds the Iraqis accountable, that holds the administration accountable

for implementing a policy designed to succeed. This conference report

gives us that opportunity.

I urge all of my colleagues, on every side of the aisle, from

whatever party, support this conference report. I urge the President,

when we pass this conference report, when the Senate passes it and we

send it to the President, sign this conference report. It fully funds

our troops, it does not micromanage the war, it tells the Iraqis we

expect accountability; because if they take accountability, our troops

will be safer, our country will be better off and Iraq will be on the

path to democracy that we hope for her and pray for her.