Mr. President, I rise to express my strong opposition to

this measure before the Senate, and I will cast my vote against it.

This measure places undue constraints on the utilization of our brave

military, together with our allies working with us and, indeed,

constraints on the utilization of the Iraqi military, which likewise

has followed through with a brave performance with our forces.

This is a very complex situation on the battlefield, and in the

government, with respect to Iraq. Last fall, with other Senators, I

returned from my eighth visit to Iraq and I said the complexity of the

battlefield has forced the sovereign nation of Iraq to ``drift

sideways.'' Regrettably, it continues, in my judgment, to drift. Our

forces, and indeed our allies in that country, have fought bravely and

are following through on their mission to try and bring about a greater

degree of security in Baghdad.

While I expressed some concerns about the ``surge'' operation when it

was announced on January 10, it is an ongoing operation now. We are

losing life and limb daily, and we must allow our troops to be properly

funded to carry out their missions.

Now, we heard yesterday from General Petraeus, and in my judgment, he

gave a very factual, pragmatic, professional military opinion, showing

objectivity. He is to be commended and our forces bravely fighting

under his command should likewise be commended as well.

I want to bring to the attention of my colleagues a comment made by

our distinguished Secretary of Defense, Secretary Gates, during his

trip. He said, ``our commitment to Iraq is long-term, but it is not a

commitment to have our young men and women patrolling Iraqi streets

open-endedly.'' In no way does he question the long-term need for our

Nation to show its resolve and commitment to give security to this

region of the world. But he clearly says it is not open-ended.

We cannot ask our forces, nor the Iraqi forces, to risk life and limb

during their missions, unless the Iraqi legislature and the government

of Iraq begins to give an equal or greater measure of commitment to

perform their responsibility to achieve political solutions. A military

solution, we all acknowledge, will not alone achieve a strong,

survivable, sovereign Iraq. A political solution and a framework of

legal reconciliation is essential.

And we must, at this point in time, bring to light a serious

potential problem, which I have been told, that the Iraqi legislature

might possibly take a 2-month recess during July and August. That is

not acceptable. An action of that consequence would severely hinder

those of us, myself and others, who are looking at the greater issue

beyond Iraq as to the impact on this region if the combined efforts of

our country and other nations fail.

We are seeing some progress as it relates to the international group

of nations coming together, the border nations are scheduled to meet a

second time. It is through only political reconciliation measures and

bold leadership by the Prime Minister and each and every Member of the

Iraqi Legislature, that this conflict can bring forth a stable,

sovereign government, that is fully functioning, and is capable of

providing for its own security. In so doing, Iraq will then be able to

play an integral role in the security of this region.

Further, we must again, and again, signal to Prime Minister Maliki

and to each of the Members of the Iraqi Legislature that they must do

their job in a timely manner because every day Iraqi and American lives

are being lost in their heroic effort to provide the security for the

Iraqi government to function.

Finally, while I will vote against this report, I pledge to work with

other Senators on how to rewrite the next bill, following the veto

process, for these funds are essential for our troops and as we draft

the next bill, we must we must assure the world of our resolve and

commitment to the region.

I yield the floor so that others may speak.