Mr. Speaker, 1 month ago, we gathered in this

Chamber to debate what was called a symbolic resolution on the war in

Iraq. I never subscribed to the notion it was symbolic because I

believe any official act of this body has consequences. When Members

speak, the world listens, friends and enemies alike.

Two weeks ago after that vote, I traveled again to Iraq and

Afghanistan to observe conditions in these two fronts on the global war

on terror and to meet again with our soldiers. I was the only

Republican on the trip, but I view opportunities like these to travel

to war zones with colleagues from the other side of the aisle as

invaluable.

We all saw that the plans to stabilize Baghdad by reinforcing U.S.

troops and integrating them with larger Iraqi units around the city are

already under way. Our military commanders in Iraq are already

executing their plans to clear, hold, and build; and early reports

point towards some progress.

And yet tomorrow, in fact, we vote on a bill, portions of which could

potentially affect the safety of our brave young soldiers in Iraq, the

lives of millions of Iraqis, and damage our national interest in the

Middle East and elsewhere. That is why I oppose this bill in its

current form.

Every Member of this House, Republican and Democrat alike, should be

working together to achieve some level of success in Iraq and to give

our soldiers the dollars they need. We should not be tying the hands of

our battlefield commanders, nor undercutting our brave soldiers and

marines as they work to secure the peace as we debate here this

afternoon and tomorrow.

Make no mistake about it, withdrawal from Iraq before that peace is

better secured will have wide and important ramifications. We could

potentially have an explosion of sectarian violence in Iraq, killing

and bloodshed on a larger, more barbaric scale. Al Qaeda and other

jihadists could get a new and more dangerous base of operations. The

influence of Iran would grow. The Saudis and moderate Arab states

themselves could be threatened. Turkey, a strong NATO ally, could be

drawn into the war. And Iraq's neighbors could see even more waves of

refugees.

Mr. Speaker, we are a Nation at war, and the stakes are extremely

high for America. Our troops need this money now. They deserved it

yesterday. But the Congress has decided to make them compete with

nonmilitary, nonemergency, politically motivated spending.

We must give our commanders on the battlefield, and our brave young

war fighters, the resources they need to protect themselves and fight

the enemy.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join together to honor the

service of these young men and women and to find a way forward in Iraq

that protects our Nation and results in a stable Iraq that can govern

and protect itself.