Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

By the end of 2006, most Americans could see that our strategy in

Iraq was not working. In January of this year, President Bush outlined

his plan to win the war in Iraq. And just last week, Speaker Pelosi and

the Democrat majority announced their plan to end the war in Iraq. The

only problem with that, Mr. Speaker, is that, as George Orwell wrote,

the quickest way to end the war is to lose it, and I believe that the

Democratic plan to micromanage our war in Iraq with benchmarks and

deadlines for withdrawal is a prescription for retreat and defeat.

Common sense and the Constitution teach us that Congress can declare

war. Congress can fund or choose not to fund war. But Congress must not

ever attempt to conduct war. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the

aisle to heed the call of the Constitution and common sense and reject

the Pelosi plan for retreat and defeat in Iraq.

It turns out, Mr. Speaker, that I am actually not alone in my concern

about the constitutionality and the commonsense value of the current

plan for withdrawal from Iraq being propounded by the majority. The

newspaper of record in the home State of Speaker Pelosi, the Los

Angeles Times, wrote an editorial yesterday under the title ``Do We

Really Need a General Pelosi?'' adding ``Congress can cut funding for

Iraq, but it shouldn't micromanage the war.'' Allow me to quote further

from yesterday's lead editorial in the Los Angeles Times:

And even in today's Washington Post, another lion of the liberal

media in America, under the lead editorial headline, The Pelosi Plan

for Iraq, they write:

It is truly extraordinary how politics and common sense and the

Constitution can make such strange bedfellows. I scarcely think, Mr.

Speaker, that I have ever come to the floor of this House and quoted at

any length the lead editorial in either the Washington Post or the Los

Angeles Times. Those two newspapers tend to bookend the country from a

liberal perspective in the media. But in both cases, both newspapers

have identified what I asserted in the beginning, that my colleagues

should heed the call of the Constitution and common sense and reject

the Pelosi plan for retreat and defeat in Iraq.

It is the purview of the Congress to declare war. It is the purview

of this Congress to vote up or down on whether we should continue to

fund military

operations. And I would never question that right. But it is not the

purview of the Congress, according to our history and Constitution and

tradition, to interpose our will, our decisions, our timetables, on

military commanders in the field.

I will close, Mr. Speaker, by simply saying that we do have but one

choice in Iraq and that is victory. It is my hope and prayer that after

much political debate here in Congress, we will give our soldiers the

resources they need to achieve victory in Iraq and bring home a much-

deserved freedom for those good people and another victory for freedom

for the American people.