I thank the Chair.

Well, Vice President Cheney was in form last weekend in Florida

addressing a small group behind closed doors. He attacked the House of

Representatives for passing the Iraq Accountability Act. I am not

certain whether it is because he objects to the fact that we are going

to make this administration review the readiness of our troops, their

equipment, before they're rushed to Iraq in an attempt to escalate the

war. They don't want that kind of accountability, because it failed our

troops, from day one, on equipment and readiness.

And then maybe it's the other part, the part where we are going to

demand accountability of the Iraqi Government. Time and time again

President Bush sets benchmarks. ``Those benchmarks will be met.'' They

are never met. There has to be a diplomatic and political component.

You cannot resolve a civil war with military force in Iraq. But time

and time again the Bush administration has let the Iraqi Government

skate. This bill says they will meet the President's own chosen,

President Bush and al Maliki's, own chosen guidelines and benchmarks or

we will begin to bring our troops home. Plain and simple, not a war

without end, not a war that will be settled by future Presidents, as

George Bush said a year ago, but if this administration and the Iraqi

Government fail to do what's necessary for our troops, we are not going

to strand them in the middle of a civil war.

But the Vice President objects to those things. He says if they

really support the troops, then we should take them at their word and

expect them to meet the needs of our military on time, in full, no

strings attached.

Let's review the administration's record on those issues. Let's

review how the Bush-Cheney administration met the needs of our troops.

First of all, it was an unnecessary war. They were pursuing a necessary

war against al Qaeda, the Taliban, Osama bin Laden. Remember them? Dead

or alive? Dead or alive? They abandoned that war for an unnecessary war

launched under false pretenses in Iraq.

Now, something called the Office of Special Plans phonied up the

intelligence. Dick Cheney put together the Office of Special Plans with

some of his own hand-picked people, I think one of whom is now on the

way to jail, in fact, Scooter Libby. In fact, he personally,

unprecedented for a Vice President, kept visiting the CIA and saying,

no, they didn't have the intelligence right yet. I.e., they didn't say

what he wanted. Niger yellow cake, Chalabi, all that stuff. He was so

wrong. And then he said, ``Simply stated, there's no doubt that Saddam

Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction.'' Vice President Cheney in

August of 2002 as he was pushing us toward war.

But then on the eve of the war, even after their myths about weapons

of mass destruction, the yellow cake, the aluminum tubes had started to

fall apart, he said, ``We believe that Saddam has in fact reconstituted

nuclear weapons.'' Vice President Cheney. A man who has been so wrong

and put our troops in harm's way unnecessarily, jeopardized the

security of the United States by distracting us from the real fight in

Afghanistan, challenges this Congress on the Iraq Accountability Act?

No, I think last November the American people started to ask about

accountability for him and his supposed boss, George Bush.

And then let's look at their military planning. General Shinseki, a

good man. They fired him. It was said we didn't need 350,000 people.

Rummy said, ``Oh, don't worry. We can do it with 100,000 or so.''

Shinseki said, that would lead to strife, civil war and chaos. He was

right. They fired him. But presidential economic adviser Larry Lindsey

said, ``It's going to be very expensive. Very expensive.'' No, Cheney

and his cohorts said, ``No, don't worry. Iraq can pay for it

themselves.'' Well, we are now at $2 billion a week, hundreds of

billions of dollars on this war. So wrong.

And then our troops, how did they serve them? Vice President Cheney

again, ``We believe we will, in fact, be greeted as liberators. I think

it will go relatively quick. Weeks rather than months.'' So they didn't

give our men

and women body armor, didn't have armored Humvees, they didn't have the

equipment they needed. Congress had to uncover those scandals after we

heard from the troops in the field. We had to provide it over the

objections of this administration, and this guy has the gall to say we

aren't serving the troops as they want to keep our troops mired down

forever in the middle of a civil war?

This is extraordinary. And, most recently, Vice President Cheney last

year, no, 2 years ago, ``I think they're in the last throes, if you

will, of the insurgency.'' I guess he still believes that.

These people have done an extraordinary disservice to our troops, our

country, our national security and the fight against true terrorism

that attacked us on 9/11. We will not be distracted or bullied anymore.

The Iraq Accountability Act is a strong response to their mismanagement

and it offers the United States a way to bring this war to a successful

conclusion and soon.

Bring the troops home.