Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. Lewis for yielding.

All I can say, Mr. Speaker, is that it is about time that we got this

job done. Three and a half months to respond to our troops and to their

families is too long.

Frankly, I think if we had been interested in getting this job done,

most of us could have taken out a yellow legal pad and written 30 or 60

or maybe even as much as 90 days ago what the House would finally vote

on that would solve this impasse in supporting our troops.

While we have let this process drag on, the military has had to

cancel noncritical contracts, defer home station unit training

activities, defer any nonabsolutely critical orders for spare parts,

defer maintenance, put off summer programs that have affected spouses

and families while military personnel were assigned to Iraq, and that

is unfortunate.

What is fortunate is that we have come up with a bill that funds the

needs of the troops and sets benchmarks for the Iraqis. House

Republicans have been saying since January this bill needs to include

benchmarks for the Iraqis. I have been saying almost since that time

those benchmarks need to have consequences. We have done that in this

bill, and that is a good thing. We are requiring the Iraqis to step up

and do their part of the job.

Equitable distribution of oil resources is something that needs to

happen if this country is going to achieve stability. Establishing a

High Electoral Commission and establishing a deadline for regional

elections is something that we have been talking about since January

that tonight we are going to say the Iraqis have to do or there are

consequences. Militia disarmament is important here, as it is also

important, as you deal with the military, not to undermine the military

or change military leadership if they are doing the job that needs to

be done in ending sectarian violence. Protecting minority political

parties in Iraq is something that we are going to be monitoring. The

Iraqis have to come up with the brigades that they need to be part of

the operation that General Petraeus is leading. The President has to

certify these items. All these are things that many in this House have

been talking about for most of the 109 days this debate has been

dragging on.

It is time to bring this debate to an end. It is time to support the

troops. It is time to support their families and do the job that the

Congress needs to do rather than trying to figure out the job that the

commanders in the field need to do. They need to do what is necessary

to be successful. This is a step in giving them the tools to do that

and giving the Iraqi Government the incentive to be who they are

supposed to be.

. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for the 30 seconds.

And I would say in response to those questions, first of all, by

definition the last Congress must not have been a rubber stamp, or it

wouldn't have taken the time that you suggest this Congress sees as so

important to do the job.

And what the last Congress was doing was, one, trying to get a bill

the President would sign in circumstances that the Defense Department

said was dramatically different than this; and, two, eliminating $14.5

billion of spending that we didn't want and the President didn't want.

We didn't do that part of this job.