I thank my friend from Wisconsin.

Mr. Speaker, 4 years ago, President Bush used soldiers and sailors as

stage props to declare that major combat operations in Iraq have ended.

Well, indeed those combat operations should have ended, in fact, they

never should have begun. This combat is constitutionally and

strategically unjustifiable, operationally poorly executed with regard

to armoring and deploying the troops, and politically and

diplomatically disastrous.

This war is not making anyone more safer or more free, and it cannot

be won militarily. As retired General Odom said, the challenge we face

today is not how to win in Iraq but how to recover from a strategic

mistake, invading Iraq in the first place.

The President continues to squander American influence, blood and

treasure. It is the President's intransigence that forces us to pass

this bill to force a change in the course in Iraq. The President needs

to know that the days of congressional blank checks in support of a

failed policy are over. We cannot continue to buy time with American

lives.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of our troops and for ending

President Bush's war in Iraq.

This bill gives the President all the money he needs to ensure our

troops have the equipment, ammunition, fuel, food, spare parts, and

anything else they need to ensure their safety and security. What this

bill does not give the President is the blank check with no questions

and no accountability that he's come to expect over the last 4 years.

Those days are over.

Yesterday's Washington Post front page story on the President's

``surge'' strategy was entitled ``Commanders in Iraq See `Surge' Into

'08.'' While General Petreaus told the Congress earlier this year that

we could determine the effectiveness of the troop increase within

several months, General Odierno is trying to ``get until April (2008,

that is) so we can decide whether to keep it going or not.''

If the Post's report is accurate--that the surge that was supposed to

last several months will now last for well over a year--then it is more

imperative than ever that we place clear limits on our future

involvement in Iraq. We cannot continue to buy time with American lives

and taxpayer dollars to support a fundamentally flawed policy.

Nor should we continue down this road when the Iraqis themselves fail

to take the steps necessary to heal the divisions in their own country.

Americans deserve to know that Iraq's government is about to take a 2-

month vacation--while Baghdad burns and American troops continue to die

daily amid the crossfire of Iraq's civil war. As the current U.S. troop

``surge'' reaches completion around mid-June, Iraq's parliament will

adjourn for 2 months.

If Iraq's government is prepared to go AWOL in the middle of their

civil war, why should we stay? Why should more of our troops die to

help protect a government that leaves town with the battle raging on

the streets of Baghdad?

I want to thank my friend, the gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr.

McGovern, for offering his own blueprint for redeploying our forces

from Iraq. I'm pleased to be able to support this measure, and I

commend Mr. McGovern for his relentless commitment to help this House

get it right on Iraq--to demand accountability for those responsible

for the situation in Iraq.

That's what this debate is really about: getting Iraq's leaders to

take responsibility for their country's security and its future. We

can't end their civil war--only they can, but only if their political

leaders cancel their 2-month vacation and get down to the hard work of

building a new Iraq.

If enacted, this bill would incentivize them to do exactly that--it

would force them to focus their full energies on reaching a political

solution to Iraq's civil war, or face the prospect of a cut off in U.S.

aid.

Mr. Speaker, President Bush announced his intention to veto this bill

before it ever came to the House floor. His veto threat proves that

he's more interested in continuing his war with Congress than he is in

finding a bipartisan solution to the war in Iraq. That threat is all

the more reason why we need to pass this bill so we can do what the

American people have asked us to do: to end America's tragic

misadventure in Iraq.