Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to thank my

colleague from Indiana who takes seriously his public service and his

time and his trips to Iraq.

As you comment on the installment plan we have, I don't mean to do

this, but we've tried the ``blank check approach.'' You may not like

this installment plan, but we have tried for 4 years an approach of

being a blank check. No oversight, no accountability, no questions

asked. And that has resulted here.

Our men and women, and I know this is true for everybody here, we

have great respect for what they have done. We asked our Armed Forces

to seize a country. We asked our Armed Forces to take down an enemy's

army. We asked our Armed Forces to seize the capital. We asked our

Armed Forces to capture a dictator. They've done all of that. They have

been unbelievably successful.

So tell me why we've got the problems we have in Iraq. It is because

there has never been a political strategy associated with the success

of the Armed Forces' military effort. And General Petraeus is right:

you can't solve this militarily. You can only solve this with a

political solution.

So here we are, our Armed Forces are up to 160,000 troops. We have

over $600 billion that has been appropriated for this. We have lost

3,300 lives and 25,000 wounded fellow citizens. So the need for a

political solution, and the Iraqi answer? We're taking the summer off.

Going fishing.

This bill says, no way. You have got to be accountable for your

country and get off the sidelines and get onto the playing field and

taking ownership of your country's future. If the men and women in our

Armed Forces are supposed to give the Iraqis the political space to

come together, we do not do that by taking the summer off and not

finding common ground.

We have plenty of differences here, but we have common ground here.

It is the Iraqis that need to find the common ground, not us. We have

the right approach. We have asked our folks to do everything.

Just a month ago we celebrated the 4-year anniversary of ``mission

accomplished.'' We know there is a lot to be done in Iraq, and what we

are trying to do is provide our troops the resources they need, the

equipment they need, the training they need, and when they come home,

the veterans, the health care they need, and, most importantly, the

policy that has been absent. The reason we never lost a single soldier

in our efforts in Bosnia and in the Balkans is because the policy that

a President implements is as important to the protection of those

soldiers as the Kevlar vests they wear.

What has been missing from this policy and what has been missing from

this endeavor is a policy that is equal to the endeavor of our Armed

Forces. We have a policy that has been reduced to one simple thing,

more troops, more money, more time, more of the same, and you cannot

continue a status quo-plus policy.

It is time for a new direction, and I am proud that we have offered a

new direction to our Iraqi policy.