I thank the chairman.

We just heard from the majority leader that this bill fully funds the

troops. He is correct, it fully funds the troops; but it doesn't freely

fund the troops. It is like giving a soldier a brand-new uniform and

then shackling his foot to an anvil. And that anvil, Mr. Speaker, is

politics. Our soldiers fight wars. They cannot take care of Iraqi

politics. And yet this bill puts 17 different stipulations on that

funding for our soldiers, to say that if these aren't taken care of,

then you lose your funding. So it is not fully funding them, because it

doesn't freely fund them.

We went to Iraq. We made some mistakes. We all on a bipartisan basis,

from John Kerry to Hillary Clinton to George Bush, thought there were

WMDs over there. There were not. We also thought that once they were

liberated, that because of American presence and ingenuity and Saddam

Hussein being deposed, that democracy would rise from the ashes. It

obviously did not, much to the disappointment of everybody in the world

community.

And I can say this as a member of the Defense Committee, we have had

4 years of almost ``happy talk'' from representatives of the Pentagon.

It has been very disappointing. Representatives not of defense as much

as from the political side of things.

But I know one thing that is true: since the surge, there has been a

glimmer of hope that we have rounded a corner. But I want to say this:

it is very important that Members understand that failure in Iraq means

that it devolves into a civil war. It means that perhaps it emerges as

an anti-Western nation state of terrorists with their hands on the

second largest oil reserve in the world, and surely those revenues will

not be spent promoting democracy around the globe.

It would also mean a decline in U.S. credibility, because if we lose,

as the Senate Democrat majority leader Harry Reid has said, who wins?

Well, al Qaeda wins. The nation isn't going to just quietly go on about

their business.

It is imperative for us to support the Petraeus plan and vote this

bill down.