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

time.

In my almost 19 years in the United States House of Representatives,

I have cast many difficult votes. And I have often spoken to groups of

constituents over the years, and in the course of their asking me

questions, inevitably one of the questions will be, What is the most

difficult vote you have taken as a Member of the House?

And I am always quick to respond, even though there have been many

difficult votes, clearly the most difficult vote I have had to make as

a Member of the House is to vote to send our troops into war.

And certainly the vote that this House made to authorize the

President to send our troops to Iraq this most recent time was a very

difficult vote for all of us. Some of us, it seems, have changed our

minds and wish we hadn't cast that vote. But the fact is we did cast

that vote. We voted in the majority to start this war.

I believe, based on my reading of history, my studies of past

engagements, military engagements, it would be a tremendous mistake for

the Congress of the United States to attempt to micromanage this war

and bring it to a conclusion through artificially constraining

decisions on the battlefield.

I have spoken face to face with the President of the United States

about this war. I know he is trying his best to bring this war to a

conclusion. He is trying his best to make sure that the interests of

the United States, as well as the interests of the people of Iraq, are

served as he plans strategy and works with our military leaders to plot

the best course for ending this war and preserving and serving the

interests of the United States.

He has a new strategy in play. It seems to be working. We are getting

favorable reports from the commanders in the field.

Let us give this Commander in Chief and his military leaders a chance

to serve this country, to serve Iraq, and end this in the best possible

way for the United States. Let us not try to micromanage from the

Congress, with 435 in the House and 100 in the Senate, telling our

leaders how to conduct this war and when to end it. That is the wrong

course of action for this country.