Mr. Chairman, we have actually completed our withdrawal

from Iraq. We are on our way to withdrawing from Afghanistan. There is

not a strategic need to increase the base budget for the Defense

Department beyond the BCA, Budget Control Act, agreement.

Our own military leaders have acknowledged that our debt and deficits

are the largest national security threat that our country actually

faces. We need to be building on the fiscal foundation the BCA laid in

order to provide for our children's futures and the military they will

need to defend their freedoms. Sticking to the BCA framework is our

strategic priority.

We should take a moment to remember where we were at this time last

year. There was a real threat of government and economic shutdown due

to the approaching debt limit. In the very 11th hour, we passed the

bipartisan Budget Control Act to forestall a sovereign debt crisis by

cutting $900 billion from the deficits and agreeing to cut another $1.2

trillion over the next 10 years.

Even still, our national debt has increased by $1.3 trillion since we

came to that agreement last August. In part, this is due to the failure

of the supercommittee to reform entitlements in our Tax Code.

In the coming months, we need to finish the job we began with the

passage of the Budget Control Act. Reforming entitlements and

instituting comprehensive tax reform as suggested by the Bowles-Simpson

plan is no longer an option but a national necessity. Changes scheduled

to go into effect in January would harm the economy and the middle

class while proving ineffective in true deficit reduction. Backpedaling

on the BCA is irresponsible.

By holding this body to the bipartisan law we passed last August and

reducing our debt by reducing the underlying bill's appropriation by a

mere $7.5 billion--in Washington, D.C. terms--the amendment before you

today will enhance our national economic security.

We need to stick to the spending caps and move on from the FY 2013

appropriation process so we can work on getting the next framework put

in place to responsibly address what has become known as the ``fiscal

cliff.''

The American people and businesses in this country deserve certainty

about their future. We need to do right by them, avoid a crisis of our

own making, and lay the groundwork for restoring our economy and

getting hardworking Americans back to work.

I yield back the balance of my time.