As the gentleman from Florida said, we just passed a $459

billion bipartisan Defense appropriation bill, and it funds the troops,

it funds the health care, it funds almost all the Defense Department.

It does not fund the war in Iraq.

Now, when I spoke out 2 years ago, I said we need stability in the

Middle East. All of us want stability in the Middle East. We can talk

about Iraq, but it's not in isolation that you talk about Iraq. You

have to talk about Pakistan and what's happening in Pakistan and why we

haven't had an overall diplomatic success there. You can talk about

Turkey, on the verge with tanks moving towards the border and might go

into Kyrgyzstan, which would completely disrupt what is going on in

Iraq.

You can talk about Iran and the policy that we have had in Iraq and

how it has disappointed us with the influence that Iran has gained.

When we were attacked, Iran was one of the first countries to come to

the support of the United States with their concern about what had

happened, their concern about al Qaeda.

What we are trying to do here today is stop torture. We do it by

saying the Army Field Manual has to be the guideline for torture. If

you're going to have prisoners, and I have talked to service people,

Colin Powell agrees with this, Gates agrees with this, almost all the

military understands if you don't have guidelines set by the Army Field

Manual, it hurts our troops. It's pretty hard to argue. If you're for

torture, I don't say you vote for this or you vote against this bill,

but this stops torture by saying you've got to comply with the Army

Field Manual.

The other thing we say in this bill is you have to have fully

equipped and fully trained troops. Can anybody argue about that? Is

there anybody that can say to me we shouldn't have fully trained and

fully equipped troops? I don't think so.

The other thing, it sets a goal. And the goal is to start the

redeployment out of Iraq and have them out within a year. That doesn't

mean that we are going to necessarily get it, but we have to start it.

At some time we have to convince the Iraqis that we need to change the

direction and they are going to have to take responsibility. I think

they have started that. I think we have backed off a little bit.

What we did in Vietnam was make the mistake that every time they made

a mistake, we took over. In this particular case, we have to let the

Iraqis continue to do their job.

Now, the government has let us down; there is no question about it.

The government has not changed the policies. There has been ethnic

cleansing. There have been 4 million people ethnically cleansed either

by sending them out of the country or by moving them from Sunni areas

into Shiite areas or vice versa.

This is one of the reasons that the military commanders have said

over and over, the Iraqis are finally taking an interest. The al Qaeda

has been defeated, according to what the military commanders are

saying.

What is the point in us being there if al Qaeda has been defeated? I

said a couple of years ago, there are only 2 or 3,000 al Qaeda, and the

Iraqis know where they are and know what they have to do to take care

of them.

I am convinced that this bill starts to force the Congress to have

oversight. We are the board of directors, somebody said to me today.

The President is the executive officer. We are the board of directors.

When the board of directors sees the policies going in the wrong way,

and actually, the people of the United States are the board of

directors and we act for the board of directors by the people of the

United States. If we think it is going the wrong way, we have to change

the policy.

This is a change in policy. This holds the President accountable for

the decisions he is making. It doesn't tie the commanders' hands. No

torture. They are supplied with equipment and training. That is not

tying the hands of the commanders. And we are starting to get them out

already.

Al Qaeda has been defeated. The civil war has wound down. It is time

to get us out. Let's remember, stability in the Middle East doesn't

depend just on Iraq. It depends on Pakistan with nuclear weapons or the

possibility of nuclear weapons. Stability depends on Iran. Stability

depends on Syria. Stability depends on Turkey, our allies. We need a

diplomatic effort.

As I said and the Chief of the Joint Chiefs said, we cannot win this

militarily; it has to be won by the Iraqis and it has to be won

diplomatically.

This helps us hold the administration accountable, and I would ask

for all Members to vote for a bill that changes the direction of this

Congress and this country in this effort in Iraq.

I would say to my good friend from New Jersey, he voted

for the $459 billion bill where we had a CR that fully funded the

MRAPs, fully funded, $16 billion for the year. We are not holding up

the MRAPs. And we provided the transportation.

We were very careful with this bill. The gentleman knows how careful

I am in taking care of the troops. The gentleman knows how careful he

is in taking care of the troops. None of us are trying to put

roadblocks in the way. What we are trying to do is hold the

administration accountable for what they have done. We want stability

in the whole Middle East, not just in Iraq. So we have got to focus

also on the future of the country. Russia is starting to come up, China

is starting to come up. And in our bill, which the gentleman from New

Jersey was a part of, we started to look ahead. Iraq is occupying us as

well as we occupying Iraq.

So I have to say to the gentleman, I just want to make sure we keep

the facts straight. We have fully funded the MRAPS, even though it's

costing $150,000 per MRAP to get them overseas because of the lateness

of the request.