Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I

commend the gentleman from Massachusetts for offering this important

piece of legislation.

I voted against the war in Iraq, but I have since voted to give our

troops the resources to succeed in their mission. They have done

exceptional work. But they are now being asked to take sides in a civil

war. This is not what we sent them to do, and it is time to bring our

troops home.

Let us be clear. Removing our troops from the midst of a civil war

does not mean we are abandoning Iraq. We will continue to train Iraqi

security forces, support political reconciliation and economic

reconstruction, and engage the international community to promote a

lasting peace. Most importantly, we will continue to hunt down al Qaeda

wherever they may hide. What we will not do is blindly follow the

President's failed strategy, which has damaged our military without

improving national security.

The situation on the ground has changed, and our plan should too. I

urge my colleagues to support this legislation to demand a new

direction and end the conflict in Iraq and bring our troops home.

I thank the gentleman for offering this important piece of

legislation.

Mr. Speaker, this measure will allow us to begin redeploying our

combat forces in Iraq and pursuing a new strategy for success. I voted

against giving the President authority to go to war, but I have since

voted to give our troops the resources to succeed in their mission.

They have done exceptional work, but they are now being asked to take

sides in a civil war--resolving conflicts that stretch back for

centuries. That is not what we sent them to do, and it is time to bring

them home.

Let us be very clear about what this bill does, because there is a

lot of rhetoric clouding this debate. Removing our troops from the

middle of a civil war does NOT mean we're abandoning Iraq. We will

continue to train the Iraqi Security Forces. We will continue to

support political reconciliation and economic reconstruction. We will

continue to engage the international community to promote a lasting

peace. Most importantly, we will continue to hunt down al Qaeda

wherever in the world they may try to hide. What we will not do is

blindly follow the President's failed strategy--a strategy that has

damaged the readiness of our military without improving our national

security. The situation on the ground has changed, and our plan should

be adjusted accordingly. Sadly, the President has decided to trust his

own judgment over that of our military commanders, millions of Iraqis,

and, most importantly, the American people. I urge my colleagues to

support this legislation to demand a new direction that strengthens our

military and ends the conflict in Iraq.