Mr. Speaker, for months Democratic leaders have tried to

dictate military strategy by press release with little regard for the

service men and women putting their lives on the line every day.

Perhaps my colleagues on the other side of the aisle did not realize

that the privileges of the majority come with an actual responsibility

to govern. Let me say to them, the time for tantrums is over. At long

last, we are presented with an opportunity to vote yes or no on

abandoning our mission in Iraq. But let's not mistake this newfound

direction for some kind of profile in courage.

After months of factual disarray, the Democratic Party has not

suddenly found its spine; it has simply realized that the liberal

agents who drive this majority, MoveOn.org, the labor unions, they have

run out of patience. And it is them that demand a vote on abandoning

our mission and abandoning it ASAP. Sadly, the Democrats have little

concern for the demands of our military or for its waning patience for

the funding that they so desperately need.

More than 3 months, Mr. Speaker, have passed since the President

requested emergency funding for our troops. Over the past 94 days, the

Democrats have succeeded only in putting politics over policy and

trying to substitute their judgment for that of the combatant

commanders. For the past 94 days, they have chosen to beat their chest

at press conferences, and yes, on this floor, rather than finding ways

to actually get our troops the funding that they need to achieve

victory.

But, astoundingly, over the past 94 days, Democrats have never once

grasped the consequences of resigning ourselves to defeat in Iraq. The

void created by our departure would be filled by religious extremists

and terrorists. Iran's path to develop nuclear weapons would be

cleared. Violence in Iraq would grow exponentially. Shiite death squads

and al Qaeda terrorists would further destabilize the democratically

elected government. Another rogue regime could take root, leading to

genocide. The terrorists, freshly emboldened by our surrender, would

then be able to export terrorism around the world.

Today, each of us has a critical decision to make: Do we stand by the

side of victory or on the side of defeat? Do we stand with our troops

or with those who would want to abandon them? Do we rise to the

challenge of fostering freedom, or do we capitulate to the political

pressure of special interests? The choice, Mr. Speaker, is ours. For

the sake of our soldiers and our Nation. I implore my colleagues to

choose wisely.