Mr. Speaker, I appreciate so much the

opportunity that my leadership has provided in me in allowing me to

come and share some comments this evening on the floor on what is truly

a momentous and historic day for our Nation.

Within the last hour, as you know, Mr. Speaker, I understand that the

President has fulfilled the promise that he made to the American

people. That is to uphold and preserve and defend the Constitution of

the United States; and in so doing, he has vetoed the legislation that

was passed by the Democrat majority recently, last week, to provide not

just funding for our troops in harm's way but also to make 535

commanders in chief here in Congress and to spend an extra 20-odd

billion dollars on what was supposed to be a clean, clear definition of

the amount of resources needed by our troops to keep themselves safe

and out of harm's way in both Iraq and Afghanistan. So within the last

hour the President has vetoed that legislation, and this Congress will

take up that veto tomorrow.

Curiously, today we have had Members of the majority party come to

the floor over and over and over again and express a peculiar amount of

glee, glee that is highlighting their policy of failure and their

policy of defeat. Frankly, I don't understand it, Mr. Speaker. Many of

my constituents talked to me this past weekend when I was home and said

they didn't understand it either. It was peculiar from their standpoint

to understand and difficult to understand how the majority party in

this Congress could believe that abandoning our troops in harm's way

was an appropriate thing to do. And, consequently, I am as perplexed as

they with the policy that this majority party has put in place.

The policy that they have put in place, as is clear to everybody and

we will talk about that a bit this evening, is to ensure defeat and to

ensure failure of our troops. And it seems to be all, all, for

politics, which is probably as sad and distressing as anything, Mr.

Speaker.

The Democrat leadership continues to be committed to a plan for

failure in Iraq, and they seem to be doing it, as I say for political

points, scoring political points, political partnership, political

grandstanding, whatever you want to call it.

And some might ask, well, how can you be so certain of that? Well,

Mr. Speaker, we get example day after day after day. And the most

recent example is what happened today, and that is, that the bill that

this Congress passed, this majority passed last week to provide

artificial timelines and specific benchmarks for our troops on the

ground and to add incredible billions of dollars of pork to the war

supplemental, the bill was passed last week, and they did not send it

to the White House until today. Now, the President took his

responsibility seriously and he vetoed that and turned that bill around

rapidly.

But why, why, the American people are asking, why did it take nearly

a week to send that bill to the White House? Every day that goes by,

every day that is added on to our troops and our military not having

the resources that they need to be able to protect themselves, to be

able to continue the mission that they have defined, every day that

goes by that makes it so that they have to rob from Peter to pay Paul,

every day that goes by that makes it so that they are unable to repair

munitions and armaments, every day that goes by is costly to our men

and women in the military, and costly in a way that costs lives. And so

every day that goes by, by design, is a flawed policy, is a policy for

failure, and is clearly a policy that is grounded in politics only.

So the question has to be asked, Mr. Speaker, well, why did it take 5

days to send that bill to the President? Well, what we have seen today

is the answer to that question; and that is, that the other side, the

majority party, clearly wanted to score their political points, to take

advantage of a May 1 anniversary that they would define, to distort

that terribly, but to take advantage of that anniversary for political

points. It is sad, Mr. Speaker, it is truly, truly very sad.

I came to the floor last Wednesday, when this House passed the bill,

and I talked about it being a sad and a sobering day for America, and a

shame. And I talked about it being a shame because the policy that this

majority party has adopted is a policy that sends the wrong message to

our troops, it sends the wrong message to our allies, and yes, Mr.

Speaker, it sends the wrong message to our enemies. Because to our

troops it says that we don't believe in you. We don't believe you can

accomplish your mission. We don't believe that you have the ability to

do what you say you can do. We don't believe in our general that we

supported and endorsed by unanimous vote in the Senate just this year.

The message to our troops says, ``We don't believe in you.''

To our allies, the message is one that, I think if you look at it

seriously, Mr. Speaker, is one that nobody would want to send. Because

what it says to our allies is, with this majority party you can no

longer trust the commitment and the word of the United States of

America. That is what it says to our allies. I don't think that is the

message, Mr. Speaker, that we ought to be sending around the world in

this dangerous time.

But probably the most important message is the message that it sends

to our enemies. To our enemies it says, if you happen to have a

difference with the United States of America and you believe that the

destruction of the United States of America is at the core of your

belief, then all you have to do is wait, all you have to do is wait;

America will give up. That is the wrong message, Mr. Speaker. That is

the wrong message. And it will ultimately end up in a more dangerous

world if it is allowed to succeed.

If that message is allowed to succeed by the policies of this Nation,

it will ultimately end up in a more dangerous world. It will certainly

end up in a more dangerous Middle East. And it will end up, I believe,

and many scholars and experts in the military believe that it will end

up causing greater amounts of casualties for the American people, and

certainly for our military who will have to engage in a way and in a

manner that is almost incomprehensible to us right now.

Most of us in this Chamber, who we are privileged to serve, but most

of us have members of the military who have come from our district; all

of them have sacrificed to serve. They have recognized the importance

of service to our Nation. They have stood up and they have said, I hear

the call. If you talk to them, most of them will say that they are not

in favor of the kind of policy that has been adopted by this majority

party. One of them has been very open about that in this letter that I

am going to read. It comes from a Lieutenant Jason Nichols, United

States Navy, who is serving currently in Baghdad, in Iraq.

The statements by the majority leader in the United States Senate

recently about the war being lost have hit a nerve, they have struck a

cord on the part of our men and women in the military. They have struck

a cord across this Nation, Mr. Speaker. And the cord that they have

struck is one that says, how on earth can we have a majority party, a

majority leader who makes that kind of statement in the middle of

conflict when our men and women are in harm's way? What kind of leader

is that?

This letter, as I say, comes from Lieutenant Jason Nichols, United

States Navy, it is addressed to Senator Reid. And he says, ``Senator

Reid, when you say we've lost in Iraq, I don't think you understand the

effect of your words. The Iraqis I speak with are the good guys here,

fighting to build a stable government. They hear what you say, but they

don't understand it. They don't know about the political game, they

don't know about a Presidential veto, and they don't know about party

politics. But they do know that if they help us, they are noticed by

terrorists and extremists, and they decide to help us if they think we

can protect them from those terrorists. They tell us where caches of

weapons are hidden. They call and report small groups of men who are

strangers to the neighborhood, men that look the same to us but

are obvious to them to be a foreign suicide cell.

``To be brief, your words are killing us. Your statements make the

Iraqis afraid to help us for fear we will leave them unprotected in the

future. They don't report a cache, and its weapons blow up my friends

in a convoy. They don't report a foreign fighter, and that fighter

sends a mortar onto my base. Your statements are noticed, and they have

an effect.

``Finally, you are mistaken when you say we are losing. We are

winning, I see it every day. However, we will win with fewer casualties

if you will help us. Will you?''

Respectfully, Lieutenant Jason Nichols, United States Navy.

Do you hear that, Mr. Speaker? The message that we are sending to our

enemy, as I said, is all you have to do, if you oppose the United

States, is just wait. But it is more than that, isn't it, Mr. Speaker?

As Lieutenant Nichols said, quote, ``To be brief, your words are

killing us.'' Mr. Speaker, who is ``us'' in that letter? Who is ``us''?

``Us,'' Mr. Speaker, are the brave men and women who stand up and fight

on behalf of the United States of America, who stand up and defend our

liberty and our freedom.

Mr. Speaker, there are some people in my district who wonder why the

action of Members of Congress who will make those kinds of statements,

why that isn't defined as treason. I get asked those questions at home.

They are tough to answer. They are tough to answer. I ask you, Mr.

Speaker, why? Why? Why do we have leaders that make those kinds of

statements?

It is not just members of the military that are saying that this

policy that's being adopted and the kind of language that's being used

are detrimental to our Nation and to our alliances and to our men and

women in harm's way. There are all sorts of press reports and press

opinions, editorials across this Nation that say what on earth are the

Democrats doing? What on earth is the majority party doing?

The Chicago Tribune described the Democrat surrender bill as ``Self-

Defeating.'' They had in an editorial on the 27th of April, just 4 or 5

days ago, ``Establishing a timetable now would be self-defeating. A new

defense secretary and a new commander on the ground should have time

and flexibility to see if they can succeed where their predecessors

failed,'' which is exactly what Americans believe. But there is this

peculiar glee on the other side of the aisle that they are

accomplishing something for political gain; however, that something

puts America at greater risk.

The Chicago Tribune goes on to say, ``President Bush will veto the

spending bill approved by Congress this week because it contains a

timetable for withdrawing U.S. combat troops from Iraq. He is right to

do so.'' Mr. Speaker, this isn't a paper that is known to be terribly

supportive of this President, but they understand the consequences of

the actions of this majority party, they understand that they put us at

greater risk.

And finally, the editorial from the 27th of April from the Chicago

Tribune goes on to say, ``Establishing a congressionally mandated

timetable for withdrawal would straitjacket the ability of General

Davis Petraeus, the top commander on the ground, to pursue the

stabilization of Iraq as events and conditions warrant.

``Senator Harry Reid said recently the war is lost. This legislation

would all but guarantee it.''

So in addition to having a certain amount of glee with the actions

that are occurring, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the Democrat

leadership in both the Senate and the House is vested in the defeat of

the United States in Iraq. They are now on record as being in favor of

the defeat of the United States. It is a very peculiar strategy, Mr.

Speaker. And the only way it makes sense is if you believe that this

Congress ought to act for short-term political gain by a given

political party; that is the only way it makes sense. No other way

could it be deemed as being appropriate for the policy of this Nation

to hamstring, to handcuff, to tie the ability of our generals on the

ground in Iraq and Afghanistan to make decisions. It seems truly that

failure and defeat are the goal of the majority party. How sad, how sad

for a once proud party in this Nation to have failure for the United

States be their new strategy.

The Wall Street Journal sees it similarly. They say that Washington

Democrats are taking ownership of the defeat in Iraq. In an editorial

on April 25, just last month, they say, ``In calling for withdrawal,

Mr. Reid and his allies, just as with Vietnam, may think they are

merely following polls that show the public is unhappy with the war.

Yet Americans will come to dislike a humiliation and its aftermath even

more, especially if they realize that a withdrawal from Iraq now will

only make it harder to stabilize the region and defeat Islamist

radicals. And they will like it even less should we be required to re-

enter the country someday under far worse circumstances.''

It is peculiar, when you think about it, Mr. Speaker, because what

you hear from the other side, what you hear from the Democrat majority

in all of their discussion and all of their points, their political

partisan points that they make about this, all that you hear is about

this issue of failure. You never hear about what the next step is.

We are going to talk about that a little bit tonight, about what the

next step ought to be, about the consequences for failure. Because it

is important that the American people appreciate that the decisions

made in this Congress will affect this Nation for a long period of time

if the decisions aren't made in the light of day and with eyes wide

open about what the consequences of failure in this day and time in the

Middle East will be.

The Wall Street Journal also went on to say, ``At least Mr. Bush and

his commanders are now trying to make up for previous mistakes with a

strategy to put Prime Minister Maliki's government on a stronger

footing, secure Baghdad and the Sunni provinces against al Qaeda, and

allow for an eventual honorable U.S. withdrawal. That's more than can

be said for Mr. Reid and the Democratic left, who are making the job

for our troops more difficult by undermining U.S. morale and Iraqi

confidence in American support.''

It gets to the issue of what kind of message, Mr. Speaker, we are

sending to our allies.

The San Diego Tribune was another paper that weighed in on this

issue. They went on to describe the Democrat surrender bill as ``a sham

that is detrimental to our efforts.'' They said, ``The Democratic

campaign is a textbook lesson in why the war cannot be managed by a

committee of 535 bitterly divided lawmakers. The Constitution gives

Congress control of the Federal purse strings, to be sure, but this

authority has never been an effective instrument for directing forces

in a combat zone. The Constitution gives that authority to the

commander-in-chief alone.''

This brings up the interesting issue, Mr. Speaker, of how this

Congress can believe that it ought to be having 535 commanders-in-

chief. It doesn't make any sense, because it puts every one of the

Members of Congress who believe that they know better what ought to go

on on the ground in a position that ties the hands of our generals.

It is not unusual for the Democrat party to believe that Congress

knows best. Oftentimes their decisions affect people in kind of

peripheral and tangential ways. In this decision, Mr. Speaker, it

affects our military men and women who are putting themselves in harm's

way very directly and adversely.

Now, I want to be clear that those of us in the Republican Party

believe that this is an appropriate debate for Congress to have. It is

appropriate for Congress to say, as the paper that I just cited says,

that Congress has the power of the purse string, and it is appropriate

for Congress to say, if it so desires, if the majority party so

desires, that we ought not fund the troops anymore in Iraq or in

Afghanistan or wherever else this majority party deems that it is not

appropriate for us to fund troops. That is an appropriate debate. That

is a clear debate, that is a clear vote, which is why we asked for a

clear vote, a clean vote, on the war supplemental. Because, Mr.

Speaker, when that happens, then it is very clear what people are

voting upon. That, yes, we believe there ought to be resources

available for our men and women in harm's way; or, no, we do not. That

is a clear vote.

We muddy the waters and we confound the issue and we do a disservice

to our Constitution and we do a disservice to our men and women in the

field, certainly, when we put arbitrary timelines and benchmarks in a

bill that clearly, clearly, is not appropriate, and makes it so that

the Constitution becomes undermined.

The San Diego Union Tribune goes on to say more on April 26. General

Petraeus was here, who is the Commander of American forces in Iraq on

the ground. He visited this Congress last Wednesday and was not given

the opportunity to speak to the House of Representatives as a whole in

this Chamber. In fact, it is curious, Mr. Speaker, because the Speaker

of this House went out of her way to visit the President of Syria on a

visit recently to the Middle East, but she didn't go out of her way to

visit with the American commanding general when he visited Congress.

So, the San Diego Tribune last week said, ``Yesterday's pleas to

lawmakers by General David Petraeus, the top commander in Iraq, not to

micromanage the war were brushed off without serious consideration in

the House's partisan stampede. Meanwhile, essential funding for the

troops has been sidetracked by the phony legislative exercise playing

out on Capitol Hill.''

That is what I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, that the only rational

conclusion that one could come to about why we are going through this

process, why we are going through this ``sham bill,'' as the San Diego

Union Tribune calls it, why we are going through this exercise and

putting the American people and our troops in harm's way through this

exercise, is all about politics. It is all about politics. How sad, Mr.

Speaker. How sad.

The Union Tribune concludes, ``And even though this sham bill is

merely a political show, the Democratic majorities in the House and

Senate managed to lard it up with nearly $25 billion in wasteful pork,

most of it entirely unrelated to war funding.''

So, Mr. Speaker, it is not just our men and women in the field who

say that this is a wrong-headed policy. It is not just those of us on

the minority side of the aisle who say that this is a wrong-headed

policy and it sends the wrong message to our troops and to our allies

and to our enemies. It is cogent individuals across this Nation who

have come to that same conclusion.

The opportunity to come to the floor is a true privilege and a great

opportunity to share with the American people what our belief is about

this supplemental war bill, and I am pleased to be joined by a

colleague, the gentlelady from Tennessee, Congresswoman Blackburn, who

is a true leader in this House and has been a true leader on this

issue, because she understands and appreciates the importance and the

consequences of the decisions that we make as they relate to our troops

in the field and as they relate to our Nation and to our future liberty

and our future freedom.

I am so pleased you would join us this evening. I look forward to

your comments.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentlewoman's

comments. I am struck by the general sense by the majority party, or

seeming sense by the majority party, that their actions don't really

make any difference to date. In fact, the delay we have already had, I

have heard from some folks in the military that they are not able to

keep up some of the repair of some of the equipment in other areas, not

in the field of war right now, but in other areas, which makes us less

safe as a nation.

I was wondering if you had anybody you talked with who was giving a

similar story?

I appreciate those comments, because it is an

incredible privilege and honor to represent a nation where we have men

and women who are willing to stand up and serve, to volunteer to stand

up and

serve to protect the freedoms that you describe, which is why in my

district people are so confounded by the kind of policy that is being

pushed by the majority party at this point. Because what they see is a

majority party now that is saying to our troops, we don't believe in

you, we don't believe you can accomplish your mission. It is saying to

our allies that you can't believe in the commitment of the United

States. And it says to our enemies that all you have to do is wait. It

is very strange policy.

I yield to the gentlewoman.

I appreciate you bringing up the extra $20-plus

billion in the bill. And I am not often struck by the candor of some of

our friends in the Democratic Party, but I was moved and struck by the

candor of the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, Mr.

Rangel, who was on one of the Sunday shows. I think it was ``Meet the

Press'' with Mr. Russert. And Mr. Russert said: Why did you put all of

that money in the bill? And Chairman Rangel, to his remarkable credit

of candor said ``because we needed the votes.''

So it is clear that the reason that the extra $20-plus billion of

pork spending is in that bill is because, exactly as you said, they

believe that people won't be able to vote against the bill if that kind

of pork spending is in it.

I thank you once again for pointing out this

incredibly prescient and clear perspective on this issue, if people in

the majority party would just step back and take a look. And that is

why it is important that you pointed out that the bill number is H.R.

1591 and how to find it online, and I urge people

to look at the area in the bill that has the artificial time lines and

benchmarks. What we oftentimes hear from our friends on the other side

of the aisle is there is no specific time line; but the bill is very

specific. It says by October 1, we will begin to bring the troops home.

So it is clear that their mission is politics. The majority party's

mission is politics. There can be no other reason for the remarkably

foolish, if you want to support the United States, the remarkably

foolish policy that they put on the table. The only reason can be

politics, and short-term politics at that.

Absolutely.

Exactly.

I thank the gentlelady because it is the

question that needs to be asked, and it is a question that our friends

on the other side of the aisle asked all the time about what the

President asked once Saddam fell, what next? What we ask them now,

given our current situation: Where is your strategy? If you succeed

with your policy of ending the funding

for the troops and ending our involvement in Iraq, what next? What

happens then?

There are some very good scholarly individuals who have looked at

this, and they have said what they believe will happen next. In fact,

the chart that I have here shows what the National Intelligence

Estimate, the NIE, says will happen if we fail in Iraq. That is

important because that group, the National Intelligence Estimate, is

the group that our good friends cite all of the time, incorrectly, I

might add oftentimes, but they cite them as the source for information

about what ought to be done in Iraq.

But what the National Intelligence Estimate has said that the

consequences of failure in Iraq would be: ``Coalition capabilities,

including force levels, resources, and operations remain an essential,

stabilizing element in Iraq.'' Essential stabilizing element in Iraq.

Last week when General Petraeus was here and what he said, and it was

so distorted by our friends on the other side of the aisle, but what he

said on April 26 was: ``As I noted during my confirmation hearing,

military action is necessary but not sufficient. We can provide the

Iraqis an opportunity, but they will have to exploit it.''

He also said: ``And again I note that we are just really getting

started with the new effort.''

He went on to say: ``Success will take continued commitment,

perseverance and sacrifice, all to make possible an opportunity for the

all-important Iraqi political actions that are the key to long-term

solutions to Iraqi's many problems. And because we are operating in new

areas and challenging elements in those areas, this effort may get

harder before it gets easier.''

Mr. Speaker, that is the kind of information that is imperative for

this Congress to appreciate and recognize and utilize in its formula

for where we go from here. If we ignore that kind of information from

our general that was unanimously approved by our Senate, if we ignore

that kind of information, we do so at our peril.

So what happens if we have failure in Iraq, according to the National

Intelligence Estimate, well, one, Iraqi security forces would be

subject to sectarian control. What does that mean? That means in

essence the nation breaks into three warring factions, three warring

factions, and some would say that is what is happening right now. The

difference is there would be no stabilizing influence whatsoever, and

the estimates are that ten of thousands if not hundreds of thousands of

Iraqis would be slaughtered. Mr. Speaker, that is a sobering

assessment. That is a sobering assessment.

Secondly, interference by neighboring countries in an open conflict

is what the National Intelligence Estimate says is likely with failure

in Iraq. What does that mean.

Mr. Speaker, as you well know, what that means is that the

conflagration, the battles, the war in Iraq becomes a war in the larger

Middle East in a way that can only be described as a nightmare not just

for the Middle East but for peace in the world, for peace in the world.

The National Intelligence Estimate went on to say there would be

massive civilian casualties and population displacement, as I mentioned

before. The estimates range from tens of thousands to hundreds of

thousands of individuals slaughtered, killed, murdered, in sectarian

violence that would put the kind of violence that we are seeing right

now, which is horrendous, but it would make it seem like just a

prelude, just a prelude.

Fourth, the al Qaeda in Iraq would plan increased attacks inside and

outside Iraq.

This is important because if al Qaeda, if in the larger war on terror

which we sometimes or oftentimes in this Chamber seem to lose sight of,

but if in the larger war on terror the terrorists, the Islamic

terrorists whose stated desire is to wipe Israel off the map and to end

our way of life, that is their stated desire, not my opinion, that is

their stated desire. If we fail in Iraq, what results is a haven of

significant size and significant ability to attract terrorists in a way

and to allow them the opportunity to plot for significant violence and

attacks both inside and outside Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, as we saw outside Iraq doesn't just mean next door. It

means around the world. As we saw on September 11, around the world can

mean violence and horrendous activities visiting our shores when we

least expect it.

Finally, the National Intelligence Estimate says there will be

spiraling violence and political disarray, including Kurdish attempts

at autonomy in Kirkuk. What that means is the nation breaks apart. And

if Iraq breaks apart in the way that the National Intelligence Estimate

has stated would be the likely outcome of failure in Iraq, if that

nation breaks apart, what happens is it becomes a magnet for terrorism

and a terrorist haven in the Middle East, a less stable Middle East, a

more endangered Middle East, an emboldened enemy, a likely scenario

that would bring about significant violence upon our shores once again.

So, Mr. Speaker, the consequence of the actions that have been

adopted by this majority party, by this bill that the President has

vetoed this evening, the consequences of moving forward with that same

kind of legislation, which the majority party has threatened to do, and

``threatened'' is the right term because it threatens to place, Mr.

Speaker, at greatest risk and in greater harm's way, if we continue

along that path, what we do is bring about a less stable Middle East,

certainly a less stable Iraq, a greater threat to Israel and other

Nations in the Middle East and certainly a greater threat to the United

States.

I was quoting earlier, Mr. Speaker, from some news reports and

newspapers from around the Nation on what they believed was the essence

of this bill that the President has appropriately vetoed this evening.

The Washington Times said that, ``The Democrats' lack of interest in

the real-world impact of their legislation is reflected in their shabby

treatment of the commander of U.S. forces in Iraq, Lieutenant General

David Petraeus. Last week, House Democratic leaders initially declined

General Petraeus' invitation to brief Members, reversing themselves

only after coming under fire from Republicans. And by tying funding for

the war to a surrender bill that the President will veto, the Democrats

are showing studied contempt for our troops in the field.''

Studied contempt, Mr. Speaker, which brings me back to the original

letter that I read from Lieutenant Jason Nichols, who clearly

appreciates this studied contempt, but also takes it to the next step

and describes what that studied contempt does. I quote Lieutenant

Nichols once again, ``To be brief, your words are killing us.''

A powerful statement, Mr. Speaker, and we ought to be listening. We

ought to be listening to the brave men and women who stand up to defend

our liberty.

The Washington Times went on to say on April 26, ``When it came to

the 150,000 U.S. troops now fighting in Iraq, lawmakers included enough

poison-pill language to ensure a presidential veto which will in turn

delay much-needed support for military operations in Iraq.''

In another paragraph in that same article on April 26, ``To satisfy

the MoveOn.org types, particularly in the House, the bill stars the

pullout as early as nine and a half weeks from now. In an effort to

provide political cover for House `Blue Dogs' from more conservative

districts who want to vote with Mrs. Pelosi, it contains troop-

withdrawal language that sets a `goal' for pulling out rather than a

deadline.''

However, Mr. Speaker, if you read the bill H.R. 1591, what it states,

indeed, is a hard and fast deadline.

I want to quote one more individual who has stood tall and taken a

lot of heat for it, and this is Senator Joseph Lieberman who last week

wrote in the Washington Post that the Democrat surrender bill is

``dangerously wrong.''

He went on to say, ``And today, perversely, the Senate is likely to

vote on a binding timeline of withdrawal from Iraq. This reaction is

dangerously wrong. It reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of both

the reality in Iraq and the nature of the enemy we are fighting there.

What is needed in Iraq policy is not overheated rhetoric but a sober

assessment of the progress we have made and the challenges we still

face.''

He went on to say on April 25 of this year, ``Indeed, to the extent

that last

week's bloodshed clarified anything, it is that the battle of Baghdad

is increasingly a battle against al Qaeda. Whether we like it or not,

al Qaeda views the Iraqi capital as a central front of its war against

us.''

Finally in that article, Mr. Speaker, Senator Lieberman said, ``In

the two months since Petraeus took command, the United States and its

Iraqi allies have made encouraging progress on two problems that once

seemed intractable: tamping down the Shiite-led sectarian violence that

paralyzed Baghdad until recently and consolidating support from Iraqi

Sunnis, particularly in Anbar, a province dismissed just a few months

ago as hopelessly mired in insurgency.''

So, Mr. Speaker, where do we go from here? Well, I think that it is

time for the majority party to regroup, to reassess, to appreciate that

what they have done is spent four months on a policy that is candidly

shameful; that brings about a discredit and a disservice to our troops;

that sends the wrong message to our allies saying that you cannot trust

the United States of America; and certainly sends the wrong message to

our enemies saying that if you oppose the United States and you are in

a conflict, all you have got to do is wait because the United States

will not live up to its commitment.

So, Mr. Speaker, what we need to do from here, the President has

vetoed this bill this evening. I would challenge the leadership in the

majority party to bring the House together. I would challenge the

Senate to work together in a bipartisan way and come up with a bill

that the President can sign and to do so in very rapid fashion. Every

day that we delay makes it more harmful for our troops, makes it so

they know not whether or not they will get the resources that they need

to carry on their mission, makes it less predictable, continues to

erode their morale because of the comments like the ones by the Senate

majority leader last week. So we must in short order come together and

pass a bill that the President can sign.

Mr. Speaker, regardless of what you believe, what one believes about

the nature of this battle and whether or not it is indeed the central

front of the war on terror, it is incumbent that we live up to our

responsibilities, to our oath as Members of the United States House of

Representatives, that we live up to the responsibility and the duty

that we have. That primary responsibility is to preserve and to protect

and to defend the United States.

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that one of the issues about preserving

and protecting and defending the United States is making certain that

the men and women who stand up and volunteer to protect our liberty and

our freedom deserve all of our support and the resources that they

require to protect themselves and to carry out their missions.

So, Mr. Speaker, I challenge the leadership of the House and the

Senate to make certain that this week we act to bring forth a bill that

will pass both chambers of this Congress, and that the President can

sign, that does a credit and honors our troops; that sends the correct

message to our allies, and that is, that you can count on the word of

the United States of America; and sends the correct message to our

enemies, and that is, that if you engage the United States in military

battle, that you have met an enemy that you cannot defeat.