Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may

consume.

Mr. Speaker, as has been said, this legislation cites the fact that

the House of Representatives has passed six, one, two, three, four,

five, six separate bills prohibiting or expressing opposition to the

establishment of permanent military bases in Iraq, including three,

one, two, three, which have been enacted into law by the President.

In fact, the language contained in H.R. 2929, which is before us

today, is nearly identical to the language adopted under a Republican-

controlled Congress in section 1519 of the John Warner National Defense

Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007.

This is the bill before us today. This is the law.

The fiscal year 2007 bill states:

``No funds appropriated pursuant to an authorization of

appropriations in this Act may be obligated or expended for a purpose

as follows:

(1) To establish any military installation or base for the purpose of

providing for the permanent stationing of United States Armed Forces in

Iraq.

(2) To exercise United States economic control of the oil resources

of Iraq.''

That is law. That has been passed a couple of times. And now the bill

before us this morning says this:

``No funds made available by any Act of Congress shall be obligated

or expended for a purpose as follows:

(1) to establish any military installation or base for the purpose of

providing for the permanent stationing of United States Armed Forces in

Iraq; and

(2) to exercise United States economic control of the oil resources

in Iraq.''

Once, twice, three times. We can pass it again. But why are we here?

Why are we spending valuable time, Mr. Speaker, debating an issue that

the Congress on a bipartisan basis already has agreed to, once, twice,

three times, four times, five times, six times? The majority's attempts

to score political points on a range of issues, including particularly

Iraq policy, has already paralyzed precious months of military planning

and congressional business, including the 9/11 bill.

It was only last night when the majority conferees finally agreed to

incorporate into the 9/11 conference report critical language offered

by the ranking member of the Homeland Security Committee, my good

friend Mr. King of New York, which would provide immunity to passengers

and commuters who report suspicious activities.

In a post-9/11 world, Mr. Speaker, passenger vigilance is essential

to our Nation's security. An alert citizenry is our first line of

defense against those who may seek to do us harm.

Yet, some of our colleagues, rather than supporting or encouraging

such personal commitment and involvement from our citizens, would have

preferred to leave them vulnerable to frivolous lawsuits and, instead,

engage in debates on legislative items and policy already enacted into

law and discussed once, twice, three times, four times, five times and

six times.

However, since we are having this ``Groundhog Day'' discussion, it is

important to once again note that there are no permanent United States

bases overseas. Rather, the scope and the duration of U.S. basing

rights are determined by individual agreements and entered into with

host governments throughout the world.

It is also important to clarify that a policy position that does not

support permanent bases in Iraq does not translate into either a

prohibition against the American troop presence in Iraq, we could have

that discussion on another bill, or a prohibition against the existence

of any U.S. military installation in that country.

But that is not what is before us today. The bill before us in its

``findings'' section states that the Iraq Study Group Report recommends

that ``the President should state that the United States does not seek

permanent military bases in Iraq.''

Correct.

The bill also specifically highlights the other component of that

recommendation, which says, ``If the Iraqi Government were to request a

temporary base or bases, then the United States Government could

consider that request as it would be in the case of any other

government.''

This legislation therefore accepts the prospect of a negotiated

agreement for a future relationship with the Government of Iraq to,

among other things, allow U.S. military and security forces to operate

from U.S. installations within Iraq, including through a possible

status of forces agreement that would define the legal status of U.S.

personnel in Iraq and would define the rights and responsibilities

between the United States and the Government of Iraq. Furthermore, this

legislation before us today does not prohibit the United States from

entering into the interoperability agreements that allow the United

States and Iraq to share common infrastructure and bases.

Mr. Speaker, I do not object to this legislation. We have supported

it before and look forward to supporting it again.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may

consume.

If I could point out that the most recent reincarnation of this very

same issue was passed earlier this year in this very House, and I would

like to read verbatim what it said. I was proud to vote for it, and I

will vote for it.

Sec. 1222. Continuation of prohibition on establishment of permanent

military installations in Iraq or United States control over oil

resources of Iraq.

Section 1519 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act

for Fiscal Year 2007 (Public Law 109-364; 120 Stat. 2444) is amended by

inserting after ``this Act'' the following: ``or any other Act for any

fiscal year''.

Mr. Speaker, with that I am pleased to yield with great pleasure such

time as he may consume to a great American, the ranking member of the

Armed Services Committee, the gentleman from California (Mr. Hunter),

who has also voted for this measure six times.

Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may

consume.

Mr. Speaker, were we seen as occupiers in Haiti, in Bosnia? Do we

not, as some have said on Iraq, have a sustained military presence in

these countries? Did we not intervene in Haiti to restore democracy and

remain to prevent the increased violence?

In fact, as our distinguished Speaker, whom we'll be hearing from in

just a few moments, when she argued for a sustained U.S. deployment in

Bosnia, Speaker Pelosi said, Is the Bosnian mission without danger and

risk? No. With strong leadership there are always risks. These risks

have been minimized. They are risks for peace, risks for ending years

of bloodshed, risks for freedom. We risk far more by failing to act.

We risk far more if we allow the tenuous peace to collapse and watch

the flames of war ignite again. I agreed with Speaker Pelosi then when

she said that on December 13 of 1995, and I agreed with her when she

said on September 19 of 1994, when advocating for a sustained U.S.

presence in Haiti, the Speaker said, setting a date certain for troop

withdrawal will unnecessarily endanger both our troops on the ground

and our efforts at promoting democracy in Haiti.

I say that we have no less at stake here in Iraq. The bill before us,

as we have said before, is a fine bill. We support what it seeks to do

because, in fact, it is law. It is already United States law.

We want to make sure that the Iraqi people have the same level of

commitment that we have shown to other oppressed people throughout the

world. We should not ignore the consequences of a rapid withdrawal from

Iraq in a vitally important region of the world.

But, like I have said, this is not the issue addressed in this bill.

Some have remarked about the greater issue of Iraq in their discourse

today. On the bill before us, it is already public law. We have passed

it six times in the House. It has been law three times, and we have no

objection to the bill becoming law a fourth time, a fifth time or a

sixth time.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of our time.