Members of the House, this country

has given the best of its young men and women in the battle in the war

in Iraq and much of its treasure on the theory that we were fighting

terrorists in Iraq so that we would be safer at home, on the theory

that we were fighting terrorists in Iraq to eradicate them. We have

lost over 4,000 young men and women in that battle, and tens of

thousands of more seriously wounded, and almost $1 trillion of our

treasure. Yet, this last week we saw our troops were not called upon to

go against insurgents, to go against al Qaeda. They were called upon to

enforce one side of an election battle of Shias against another band of

Shias.

Our troops were put into battle over this last week because there was

a fear by the Maliki government that the Supreme Council of Iraq would

lose an election in Bosra. So they declared a battle against Muqtada

al-Sadr's supporters in Bosra. They were unable to do it. They were

unable to effectively carry it out. And they didn't force American

troops into that battle.

Our troops should not be engaged in trying to square the field for

the election advantage of one group of Iraqis over another. That is

what elections are about, that is what democracy is about. But it

should not be with the lives of our troops and the treasure of this

country.