

Members who wish to offer an amendment to this bill should submit 30 copies of the amendment and a brief description of the amendment to the Rules Committee in H-312 in the Capitol no later than 2:00 p.m. on Monday, April 30. Members are strongly advised to adhere to this amendment deadline to ensure the amendments receive consideration.

Amendments should be drafted to the bill as reported by the Committee on Science and Technology. A copy of that bill is posted on the Web site of the Rules Committee.

Amendments should be drafted by Legislative Counsel and also should be reviewed by the Office of the Parliamentarian to be sure that the amendments comply with the rules of the House. Members are also strongly encouraged to submit their amendments to the Congressional Budget Office for analysis regarding possible PAYGO violations.

**PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1591, U.S. TROOP READINESS, VETERANS' HEALTH, AND IRAQ ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2007**

**Ms. SLAUGHTER.** Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 332 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 332

*Resolved*, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 1591) making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER) is recognized for 1 hour.

**Ms. SLAUGHTER.** Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER). All time yielded during consideration of the rule is for debate only.

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

**GENERAL LEAVE**

**Ms. SLAUGHTER.** Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may be given 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on House Resolution 332.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New York?

There was no objection.

**Ms. SLAUGHTER.** Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 332 provides for consideration of the conference report for H.R. 1591, making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes. The rule waives all points of order against the conference report and against its consideration. It also pro-

vides that the conference report shall be considered as read.

Mr. Speaker, after 4 years of the administration's relentless mismanagement of the Iraq war, mismanagement that has needlessly endangered our soldiers and lost countless Iraqi lives, this new Democratic Congress is determined to exercise our constitutional duty and to change the Nation's course in Iraq. We are hardly alone in our estimation of what must be done there.

A growing chorus of opinion has coalesced around the need for a new direction. Virtually all of our generals agree that this fight cannot be won militarily, and General David Petraeus has said that the American mission in Iraq is 20 percent military and 80 percent political, economic and diplomatic.

He is joined by the Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, who applauded this debate, saying it will demonstrate to the Iraqi leadership that America will no longer tolerate an open-ended commitment without any benchmarks for success.

James A. Baker and Lee Hamilton of the President's own Iraq Study Group have called for the American military to focus on training Iraqi security forces instead of conducting endless security sweeps.

Retired generals have joined in as well. Retired Lieutenant General William E. Odom, to name just one, has said that the proposed change in course will, and I quote, "re-orient U.S. strategy to achieve regional stability, and win help from many other countries—the only way peace will eventually be achieved."

What of the people of the United States of America? It is their sons and daughters, their husbands and wives, their friends and family who have fought, have been injured and died in this war by the tens of thousands.

They, more than anyone else, have demanded that America's mission in Iraq be changed. This bill is a statement that Congress will no longer fund the war as it exists today.

With it, Democrats are demanding accountability and requiring that future support be based on tangible progress being made. We are refusing to ask our soldiers to continue fighting an open-ended battle to achieve goals that are constantly being altered. Such a request is not worthy of their sacrifice.

Let me say also that while the President said that this bill is nothing more than a political statement, the opposite is the case. Our bill reconciles hard realities with our most fundamental principles. It both protects our soldiers and seeks to give them the best chance to help to produce a secure Iraq. It could not be more sincere, and it will soon be on the President's desk. If he rejects it, that will be his political statement and not ours.

Finally, I must add briefly that this legislation also contains \$18 billion to be spent on critically needed health care for the veterans injured in Iraq

and Afghanistan, particularly for the traumatic brain injury victims, for Katrina recovery operations, for the avian flu vaccines, wildfire prevention, and for health insurance for children, among many other things. Those things are what supplemental bills have always been for, not to fund wars.

The President and his allies have chosen to dismiss this spending as unjustifiable pork. They have asked Congress to deliver a clean bill, in their words, but I can't think of programs much cleaner and more worthy of our support than those I just mentioned.

The definition of a great nation is one that has the power to define its own destiny and that uses its strength wisely to help others in need. Insurgents who seek to destroy what is left of the Iraq society are abominable, but they can do far less damage to our country than we do to ourselves by pursuing flawed policies that deplete our Armed Forces, undermine our alliances, and lessen our influence and moral authority around the world.

□ 1815

Why should we do what they cannot?

At the same time, the Iraqi people deserve so much more than the life of fear they now lead. But America can be true to itself; we must have the humility and the vision to recognize what is working and what is not, and to correct our failures when reality demands it.

I believe that we are, indeed, a great Nation, Mr. Speaker. We have the ability to choose our own way forward. Starting today, starting here, we can choose to reject a path that is failing our soldiers, our citizens, and the people of Iraq. And we can set a new course that offers a real chance for a better future instead of endless, unfulfilled promises.

This bill is the first step on that new course, and I urge everybody in this body and in the White House to see it for what it truly is. It is not an admission of defeat, but it is proof that our country has the courage and the foresight needed to truly act like the great Nation that we truly are.

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

**Mr. DREIER.** Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material.)

**Mr. DREIER.** Mr. Speaker, I thank my very good friend from Rochester, the distinguished Chair of the Committee on Rules, for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strongest opposition to both this rule and the underlying conference report.

Mr. Speaker, this conference report implements a policy of failure. It is nothing more than a cheap attempt to score political points at a time when the American people have understandably become very weary of war. Rather than offering the American people a

policy that allows us to complete our mission in Iraq and bring our troops home, which we all want to do, this bill simply offers them a charade.

The President, Mr. Speaker, has made it very clear that he will veto this policy of failure, which does not have enough support to override his veto. We will be right back here in a matter of days voting on another supplemental. And while this political charade plays out, Mr. Speaker, our troops will be left waiting for the funding that they need to do their jobs, and our country trapped in a political quagmire created by the Democratic leadership in this Congress.

Mr. Speaker, this very dangerous game of “chicken” could have been avoided entirely. The Democratic leadership may be bereft of ideas, but I know for a fact that this entire body is not. Had we considered the original bill under an open process, which, as we all know, is the tradition for wartime supplementals in this House, we could have had a real debate. We could have considered the worthy ideas of Members in this body.

Instead, Mr. Speaker, all but a very few were shut out of this process entirely. Republicans and Democrats, liberals and conservatives alike, were denied the opportunity to participate in this process. We didn't get any of their ideas, their expertise, their suggestions in bringing this measure to the floor. And what did that very small group in the Democratic leadership come up with? A constitutionally dubious attempt at micromanaging the Iraq war into inevitable defeat; a cynical political ploy that will leave dire consequences for the region and our own security in its wake.

Mr. Speaker, the Constitution lays out a very clear system of checks and balances derived from the ideas of the very brilliant and inspired Framers of our Constitution. James Madison I am thinking of, as I look to my friend from Virginia, Mr. MORAN, obviously a native of Virginia. And I will tell you that that Madisonian spirit of giving the three branches of government distinct roles, allows us to guard ourselves against tyranny from any one branch.

The President must seek the support of Congress in order to wage war; it is Congress that has the power to authorize; and, as we all know very well, it must be this institution that funds a war. But, Mr. Speaker, once funding and authorization are granted, the President of the United States serves as the Commander in Chief, with the authority to execute the war.

This conference report ignores the intentions of our Founding Fathers and attempts to turn the Constitution on its head.

I mentioned, looking to my friend Mr. MORAN, the father, the author of the Constitution, James Madison. Well, Mr. Speaker, in Federalist No. 51, Madison wrote “that in framing a government that is to be administered by

men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: You must first enable the government to control the governed, and in the next place oblige it to control itself.”

Mr. Speaker, Madison recognized the inherent challenges in designing a government that is both effective and limited. He knew that without checks and balances, tyranny would ensue.

Mr. Speaker, this conference report, like the bill before it, attempts to diminish these checks and balances. It tries to turn Congress into 535 Commanders in Chief.

This legislation of micromanagement is based, Mr. Speaker, on a disastrous strategy. Its authors fund the war, and then mandate its failure. They seek to tie the hands of our military commanders, and then force them to retreat when they are unable to meet impossible timetables. We heard in a briefing today from General Petraeus, from Secretary England, from Secretary Negroponte and others that the notion of timetables in fact clearly will undermine the potential for success.

Mr. Speaker, that leadership also knew it fell hopelessly short of the necessary support within their own party for passage. But rather than opening up the process so that real ideas and solutions could be considered, they just loaded it up with billions of dollars in unrelated spending. This conference report trades victory for potential electoral gains.

Mr. Speaker, what would the consequences of defeat be? The National Intelligence Estimate, the 9/11 Commission, our people on the ground and those who briefed us today, have all made it very clear that a precipitous withdrawal would have disastrous consequences. Violence will spill out across the country and spread to the entire region.

We heard about Iran and Syria today and the challenges that exist there. In our absence, Iran and Syria will be utterly unfettered in their ability to incite a regional war that threatens global security, with enormous casualties suffered by the people in the region.

Mr. Speaker, as I have said, and I know this very well, and I join Americans who have been very discouraged by this war; it has been ugly, it has been difficult, it has been very painful. We all, Mr. Speaker, feel the toll it has taken and are keenly aware of the price that we are paying, especially in a human sense.

I know as I look to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that every single one of us has had the challenge and the difficulty of looking into the eyes of constituents whose family and friends have made the ultimate sacrifice in this war. Their pain is very real, and we all know that their loss is profound.

But, Mr. Speaker, we do not honor those who have sacrificed by abandoning their mission. I have regularly quoted my very good friend, a man who has become a friend of mine, a former

marine called Ed Blecksmith, whose son J.P. was killed in the battle of Fallujah 2 years ago this past November. He said that if we were to withdraw, his son will have died in vain.

Mr. Speaker, we do not honor those in the field who are fighting as we speak by tying their hands and depriving them of the means to succeed. We will honor them by winning the war in Iraq so that our men and women come home having completed their mission.

We know that their mission will not be complete in the immediate future. That was pointed out today by General Petraeus and others. As President Bush and General Petraeus have both acknowledged, success will take months, not days or weeks. But to abandon our mission would be disastrous.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to reject the policy of defeat and the potential return of terrorism to our homeland. I urge my colleagues to reject this political charade that leaves our troops in limbo, and let us instead have a real debate with real ideas for a real solution in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I include the following article from the Sunday Times for the RECORD.

[From the Sunday Times, April 22, 2007]

AL-QAEDA ‘PLANNING BIG BRITISH ATTACK’

(By Dipesh Ghader)

Al-Qaeda leaders in Iraq are planning the first “large-scale” terrorist attacks on Britain and other western targets with the help of supporters in Iran, according to a leaked intelligence report.

Spy chiefs warn that one operative had said he was planning an attack on “a par with Hiroshima and Nagasaki” in an attempt to “shake the Roman throne”, a reference to the West.

Another plot could be timed to coincide with Tony Blair stepping down as prime minister, an event described by Al-Qaeda planners as a “change in the head of the company”.

The report, produced earlier this month and seen by The Sunday Times, appears to provide evidence that Al-Qaeda is active in Iran and has ambitions far beyond the improvised attacks it has been waging against British and American soldiers in Iraq.

There is no evidence of a formal relationship between Al-Qaeda, a Sunni group, and the Shi'ite regime of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, but experts suggest that Iran's leaders may be turning a blind eye to the terrorist organisation's activities.

The intelligence report also makes it clear that senior Al-Qaeda figures in the region have been in recent contact with operatives in Britain.

It follows revelations last year that up to 150 Britons had travelled to Iraq to fight as part of Al-Qaeda's “foreign legion”. A number are thought to have returned to the UK, after receiving terrorist training, to form sleeper cells.

The report was compiled by the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC)—based at MI5's London headquarters—and provides a quarterly review of the international terror threat to Britain. It draws a distinction between Osama Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda's core leadership, who are thought to be hiding on the Afghan-Pakistan border, and affiliated organisations elsewhere.

The document states: “While networks linked to AQ [Al-Qaeda] Core pose the greatest threat to the UK, the intelligence during

this quarter has highlighted the potential threat from other areas, particularly AQI [Al-Qaeda in Iraq].”

The report continues: “Recent reporting has described AQI’s Kurdish network in Iran planning what we believe may be a large-scale attack against a western target.

“A member of this network is reportedly involved in an operation which he believes requires AQ Core authorisation. He claims the operation will be on ‘a par with Hiroshima and Nagasaki’ and will ‘shake the Roman throne’. We assess that this operation is most likely to be a large-scale, mass casualty attack against the West.”

The report says there is “no indication”, this attack would specifically target Britain, “although we are aware that AQI . . . networks are active in the UK”.

Analysts believe the reference to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, where more than 200,000 people died in nuclear attacks on Japan at the end of the second world war, is unlikely to be a literal boast.

“It could be just a reference to a huge explosion,” said a counter-terrorist source. “They [Al-Qaeda] have got to do something soon that is radical, otherwise they start losing credibility.”

Despite aspiring to a nuclear capability, Al-Qaeda is not thought to have acquired weapons grade material. However, several plots involving “dirty bombs”—conventional explosive devices surrounded by radioactive material—have been foiled.

Last year Al-Qaeda’s leader in Iraq called on nuclear scientists to apply their knowledge of biological and radiological weapons to “the field of jihad”.

Details of a separate plot to attack Britain, “ideally” before Blair steps down this summer, were contained in a letter written by Abdul al-Hadi al-Iraqi, an Iraqi Kurd and senior Al-Qaeda commander.

According to the JTAC document, Hadi “stressed the need to take care to ensure that the attack was successful and on a large scale”. The plan was to be relayed to an Iran-based Al-Qaeda facilitator.

The Home Office declined to comment.

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3½ minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. McGOVERN).

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished Chair of the Rules Committee for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I want this war to come to an end now. I had reservations when I voted in support of the supplemental a few weeks ago, and I have misgivings about the conference report that is before us today. I believe very deeply that this war represents one of the biggest blunders in our history and that we must change course and bring it to an end.

But, Mr. Speaker, to defeat this conference report tonight would provide President Bush with a victory that he does not deserve and that he has not earned, and it would affirm a disastrous policy in Iraq. A vote against this conference report is a vote to support the status quo, which is essentially a vote to support a failed policy.

Since the President decided to escalate the war in Iraq, the violence has gotten worse. This administration has demonstrated a contempt for the

American people, who have demanded a change in our Iraq policy.

Mr. Speaker, this President is presiding over a policy and a war in Iraq that is making the United States more vulnerable, not more secure. He refuses to listen. He refuses to acknowledge the facts. He refuses to compromise.

Now he has threatened to veto this conference report. And if he does so, then this President will make perfectly clear to the American people that the only way this war is going to end, the only way our troops will ever come home to their families and loved ones, the only way the Iraqis will ever be held accountable for governing their own country and ending their sectarian violence, will be if Congress finds a way to end it.

Every day it becomes more and more clear that the President has decided to kick the ball down the field to make this war somebody else’s problem. Two years ago, President Bush announced his exit strategy for Iraq. He said, “That’s a problem for the next President.”

Mr. Speaker, that is unacceptable and it is false. It is a problem for all of us. None of us in this Chamber wake up each morning in harm’s way. None of us stare death in the eye or see our comrades fall to bullets and bombs. Not even the Green Zone provides a sense of security any longer.

Instead of demanding reconciliation, we are building walls to keep Shiites away from Sunnis. Every day, thousands of Iraqis are fleeing the horror that has become their country. The best and the brightest are leaving. The average shopkeeper, the next-door neighbor, all are packing their bags and trying to find a way out of town, out of the country, away from the violence, the death and destruction.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is that whenever we finally leave Iraq, it will not be pretty. This failed policy has left Iraq with few options. But until we begin to leave, no one has to make the hard choices about how Iraqis are going to live together or die together.

Mr. Speaker, this terrible chapter in our history must come to an end, and I urge all my colleagues to join with me in saying to the President of the United States, enough is enough.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, at this time I am very pleased to yield 2 minutes to the distinguished ranking member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, our good friend from Miami (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for the time.

At this difficult moment and in previous difficult moments in our Nation’s history, there have always been those ready to declare that all was lost. Now we hear the voices of those proclaiming that the war against Islamic extremists in Iraq is lost. They say they support the troops, but the soldier cannot be separated from his mission.

When I consider the Parsons brothers from my congressional district, I know

that our country has immense resources of courage and determination on which to draw. Huber Parsons was with the 101st Airborne for two long deployments in Iraq, and is currently on his third in Iraq with the Army Stryker Brigade. His twin, Bill, has served two tours in Afghanistan and two tours in Iraq. Their little brother, Charlie Parsons, is on his first deployment to Iraq. All three are serving in Baghdad right now, all three proud graduates of West Point.

Given the sacrifices and bravery of the Parsons brothers and all of the men and women serving our Nation in Iraq, we must not put them at risk by mandating artificial deadlines for withdrawal and surrender.

The consequences for our troops is a personal one for me. My stepson Doug and my daughter-in-law Lindsay both served in Iraq as marine fighter pilots, and Lindsay is currently deployed in Afghanistan.

□ 1830

Last time I spoke on the floor, I said Lindsay was about to be deployed. Well, she is there now, we are proud of her service. We are proud of all of the men and women serving our Nation wearing our Nation’s uniform.

Imposing an artificial, arbitrary deadline for withdrawal of our forces before Iraq is stable and secure will give the insurgents and the Islamic terrorists a road map, a how-to guide on how to defeat the U.S., our Iraqi partners and other coalition forces in Iraq.

Let’s help the Parsons brothers. Let’s help all of our troops. Vote against the rule and against the conference report.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri and the Chair of the Armed Services Committee, Mr. SKELTON.

Mr. SKELTON. I thank the chairman of the Rules Committee. Mr. Speaker, I am blessed to be a Member of the House of Representatives.

Under the Constitution of our country, this is a co-equal branch of government. We are charged here in Congress to raise and maintain the military of the United States. The President is charged with being the Commander in Chief. Our job is clear. We must prepare and maintain our military to the highest standard possible.

1950, the North Koreans invaded South Korea. We had a small force there. General MacArthur, supreme commander in that part of the world, sent a unit that was untrained, under-equipped and undersized, called Task Force Smith to stem the tide of the North Korean armies. They fought valiantly and found themselves in the southeast corner of South Korea in what is now known as the Pusan perimeter, and they were in serious trouble. General MacArthur’s brilliant Inchon landing on the western coast of Korea changed the nature of the Korean War at that moment.

But the lesson of all of this is the lack of readiness of the United States

Army as it was in 1950. Our job is to see that that does not ever happen again.

This rule, this bill, this resolution is the right one for our time. It will help the readiness of the United States military, in particular our Army. I am very concerned about the stretching and the straining of the Army in Iraq, so much so we just have to fund them, and this is a major step in that direction.

Now, some object for some Iraqi language, which frankly leaves a lot to the discretion of the White House. But what we are overlooking is the fact that this bill, this resolution does lead to supporting the troops and keeping the readiness at a higher level. A large percentage of the equipment of the active duty of the National Guard and of the Reserve is not here in America, is overseas in Iraq or Afghanistan. Readiness capability of the future is what this is all about.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, at this time I am very happy to yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Indianapolis who has been a hard-working fighter on the Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. BURTON.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, on 9/11, 2001, two planes flew into the World Trade Center and killed over 3,000 Americans, the worst attack on America in the history of this country, worse than Pearl Harbor. The people who are behind it were al Qaeda, and Osama bin Laden said numerous times he wanted to destroy America. They are the mortal enemy of the United States of America.

General Petraeus today, when he talked to the Members of Congress, said numerous times that they were fighting al Qaeda, al Qaeda, al Qaeda in Iraq, the mortal enemy of the United States of America.

Now my colleagues on the other side of the aisle want to pull us out of there. And if they do succeed, then I believe that that will become a gathering point for all of the al Qaeda operatives and other fellow travelers in the world, and they will try to attack the United States in numerous ways, probably on our home soil again. They attacked the USS Cole, our embassies in Africa, they attacked housing in Saudi Arabia.

I just want to say to my colleagues, remember what you are doing. If you force us out of Iraq now, you are helping al Qaeda. You are helping al Qaeda set up a base of operation, and they will be able to attack the United States of America again.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. I will be happy to yield to my colleague.

Mr. DREIER. I will yield to my friend some additional time.

I just entered into the RECORD, and I didn't mention this in my opening remarks, an article that was in the Sunday Times of London last, this past Sunday, "Is al Qaeda Planning a Big British Attack?," and this is a report on intelligence that has just come for-

ward of a massive, large scale terrorist attack on Britain and other Western targets with the help of supporters in Iran. According to a leaked intelligence report that came forward, they talk about this attack being on a par with Hiroshima and Nagasaki in an attempt to shake the Roman Empire. And I have entered this article in the RECORD that was in the Sunday Times, and I think it is very important that this be related to the remarks the gentleman has made. And I thank him for yielding. And I would yield whatever the balance of my time is on this side to him.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Let me just say that appeasement and weakness led to World War II, and 62 million people died. We are now in the nuclear age, and we have an enemy that will tie a nuclear weapon or plastic explosives around themselves and blow themselves up. If they come to America with a nuclear device, a suitcase nuclear device, they could destroy this place and kill all of us three blocks away from here by detonating that kind of a device.

Remember, they are our mortal enemy. Osama bin Laden said it. They are in Iraq. We have got to stand firm.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TIERNEY). All Members are reminded to address their comments to the Chair and not to other Members in the second person.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota, the Chair of the Transportation Committee, Mr. OBERSTAR.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I support the conference report, but not the rescission of highway contract authority which this bill uses to offset non-highway spending elsewhere in the conference report.

The report provides an additional \$683 million for the Federal Highway Administration's Emergency Relief Program. No offset is needed for that emergency relief.

Nonetheless, the conference report rescinds \$683 million in unobligated balances of highway funds that have been apportioned to the States. Now, the rescission does protect highway safety programs, but it leaves transportation environmental programs vulnerable.

The rescission of highway contract authority is the exclusive jurisdiction of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and this provision violates clause 2 of rule XXI of the Rules of the House.

These types of rescissions adversely affect the Federal aid highway program, specifically the ability to ensure that the Nation's transportation system has modal choices.

More than a dozen States have applied these rescissions disproportionately to cut contract authority for critical transportation and environmental programs, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement and

the Transportation Enhancement Program.

CMAQ funds are only 4 or 5 percent of highway apportionment every year, but they have accounted for 20 percent of the funds rescinded in recent years, and particularly in the State of Texas.

In fiscal year 2006 States rescinded \$888 million in CMAQ funds. One out of every \$4 rescinded by States in 2006 came from CMAQ programs. In 2006 also the States rescinded 602 million of enhancements funds in which Texas cut \$223 million of enhancement funding and completely suspended its program.

The House, I think, will have an opportunity to reconsider the rescission issue in a future supplemental. And we, with all the environment problems that we have and the climate change problems, this is one area that we should not allow to be cut.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, at this time I am very happy to yield 2 minutes to a hardworking member of the Appropriations Committee, the gentleman from Morristown, New Jersey, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this rule and to this conference report.

Fundamentally, this bill is about providing funding for our troops, making sure that men and women who are on the front lines as we speak, have the resources they need to stay safe and do their military and humanitarian missions in Iraq.

It is clear that our troops have the support of this House and the American people. Surely, no one wants to see our soldiers defeated in Iraq. We all want their mission in Iraq to be as short as possible. We want the war to end. We want our young soldiers, all volunteers, to return home.

But this conference report before us today prejudices the effectiveness of our young warfighters as they seek to secure Baghdad under a new plan, under new military leadership.

This proposal starts withdrawal of our forces from Iraq on October 1, irrespective of the judgment of our military commanders on the ground.

My colleagues, the reinforcement of the Army in Baghdad and the Marines in Anbar, designed and executed by General David Petraeus, is underway. It won't be complete for weeks.

And yet, there are some signs of progress. The plan must be given time to work. Make no mistake about it. There will be wide and dangerous consequences if we abandon the Iraqi people and their government, now just 1 year old, before it is capable of governing and protecting its own people. First, for our own soldiers there are consequences. And secondly, we could have an explosion of sectarian violence, killing and bloodshed on a larger, more barbaric scale than we have now.

Mr. Speaker, we are a Nation at war and the stakes are extremely high for America. Our troops need this money now. They deserved it yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join together to honor the service of our young men and women and to work with the President, our Commander in Chief, to have some measure of success in Iraq. I urge a “no” vote on the rule and the conference report.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN).

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, last week the 2,100th American child had to be informed that they will never see their daddy or mommy again because their parent was killed in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, our military families deserve a policy worthy of their sacrifice. They deserve better. This war is going to turn out to be one of the worst military, political, economic and moral blunders in American history.

I heard my colleague refer to 9/11. We now know that we were brought into this war through deliberate deception and the politics of fear. Saddam Hussein had nothing to do with 9/11, wouldn’t allow al Qaeda into his country. In fact, he wasn’t trying to get nuclear weapons. He had no weapons of mass destruction. All those mobile labs didn’t manufacture chemical weapons. Nor is this war being paid for with Iraqi oil.

And yet, you want us, 4 years later, to believe the very same people that brought us into this fiasco. When do you start to lose your credibility? After we have had 58,000 soldiers killed as in Vietnam? We are up to 3,300 now. About 25,000 seriously wounded. And how can you stand before them and tell them that this fiasco was worthy of their sacrifice?

The government that we are supporting doesn’t go outside the Green Zone in Baghdad. They don’t serve their people. In fact, many of its ministers are corrupt. That is the reality of our policy in Iraq.

□ 1845

And the fact too is that if the government we are supporting had the opportunity, they would turn Iraq into a Shi'a theocracy. Is that really worth our military families’ sacrifice? The answer is no.

Support this rule and vote for this supplemental.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, at this time I am happy to yield 3 minutes to the former member of the Rules Committee, now working hard on the Armed Services Committee, the gentleman from Marietta, Georgia (Mr. GINGREY).

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, firmly and resolutely opposed to both this rule and the underlying conference report.

I regret to say that the Democratic leaders have once again demonstrated that it is either their way or the highway, except this time it is our fighting men and women who are left stranded in the middle of the road.

Mr. Speaker, I am truly saddened and, in truth, even angered by the ma-

jority’s insistence on putting this war, our generals, and our war fighters on auto pilot with a forced retreat and an inflexible timetable.

The consequences of this decision, should it become law, will echo long beyond this date, this year, this decade. Defeat should not be an option, and yet it seems that this majority believes it is the only option.

We are at a critical juncture in history when the defenders of liberty and freedom have to stand firm against tyrants and terrorists.

And I will remind the gentleman from Virginia that just spoke, indeed, the famous quote says, “There are times in our history when the tree of liberty must be nourished by the blood of patriots.”

Sure, without question, this war has been hard fought every step of the way, and it will continue to be. But few things worthwhile in life are ever easy.

Regrettably, this majority was bought and paid for by MoveOn.org and liberal extremists, and now they have come to collect, unfortunately, at the expense of our military and our security, today, tomorrow, and for decades to come.

When the Speaker of the House pushes to rewrite our foreign policy and yet refuses to meet with General Petraeus, our commander on the ground in Iraq, it becomes abundantly clear this majority would rather push left-wing politics over sound policy.

This political theater would be funny if its consequences weren’t a matter of life and death, of victory and defeat. Every day that we delay a legitimate war-funding bill, the resources of our military and our soldiers’ quality of life are diminished. In fact, this delay has forced the Pentagon to move \$800 million from the Air Force’s personnel accounts, money to pay our servicemembers, to make up for the gaps in the war funding.

I implore my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, oppose this rule, oppose this conference report. Let us end this political game and truly give victory a chance.

We can do better, Mr. Speaker. We have an obligation to do better for the sake of the men and women who put their lives on the line in Iraq and Afghanistan to protect ours.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, take a moment to travel through the Nation’s hospitals and speak to those in this final injury ward, see the young women bending over their soldier husbands who now have lost the use of all of their limbs, 25,000-plus injured and 3,000-plus dead.

It is not the policies of this Democratic majority that is causing this absolute disaster. It is the misdirected policies of those in the administration who are causing harm to our soldiers.

Let me thank our soldiers for their leadership, for their service, and their patriotism. But as I stand here today and look at my Members, the Speaker of the House who went into the Midwest, Mr. Giuliani, there is no white flag on this side of the aisle, and I reject your insult and insensitivity.

This legislation will not give the administration a blank check. It will give a new direction to Iraq. It will begin to redeploy soldiers if the President cannot certify the readiness in July and then in October of 2007. It provides funding for veterans hospitals, for the injured with spinal injuries, with brain injury. And, yes, there are those on this side of the aisle who understand the shedding of blood of our soldiers.

That is why this legislation will allow us to go and fight the terrorists, to find Osama bin Laden, and to do the job that we have not done since the tragedy and the terrorism of 9/11.

This is a sad day in this body. I want us to support the rule and the underlying bill because there is no white flag. We have the solution, and that solution is a policy that responds to the needs of the American people and our soldiers on the battlefield. No more nine soldiers of the 82nd Airborne. We thank them for their service. We declare a military success. And we bring our soldiers home.

And maybe it will be good if some of those who did not serve would understand what it means to serve.

Mr. Speaker, as a proud member of the Progressive and the Out of Iraq Caucuses, I rise to speak in support of the Conference Report on H.R. 1591, the “U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans’ Health and Iraq Accountability Act.” I support the Conference Report because this compromise offers us the first real chance to end the misguided invasion, war, and occupation of Iraq. It puts us on the glide path to the day when our troops come home in honor and triumph and where we can “care for him who has borne the battle, and for his widow and orphan.” This legislation helps to repair the damage to America’s international reputation and prestige. It brings long overdue oversight, accountability, and transparency to defense and reconstruction contracting and procurement. Finally, it places the responsibility for bringing peace and security where it clearly belongs and that is squarely on the shoulders of the Iraqi government.

Mr. Speaker, the House and Senate conferees have approved legislation providing \$124.2 billion primarily for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. As part of the legislation, conferees approved a sensible plan to redeploy U.S. forces in Iraq paired with progress made by the Iraqi government in meeting diplomatic and security benchmarks. These legislative provisions, which are subject to a Presidential waiver, will ensure adequate rest between tours of duty of both active duty and Guard and Reserve forces, while also requiring that their service in Iraq not be extended beyond a year for any tour of duty.

President Bush would be required to certify that the Iraqi government is meeting the diplomatic and security benchmarks. If he makes that certification, deployment shall begin no later than October 1, 2007, with the goal of

completing the redeployment within 180 days. After that period, a limited number of U.S. forces could remain in Iraq for force protection, training and equipping Iraqi troops, and targeted counterterrorism options. The legislation makes it possible for the U.S. military to focus its resources on Osama bin Laden, whose organization attacked the nation on 9/11, and destroying his base of operations in Afghanistan.

Additionally, the U.S. commander in Iraq would provide regular progress reports to Congress on both the progress of the Iraqi government to take control of that country as well as the status of the redeployment efforts.

Finally, the conferees are also to be commended for providing needed funding to improve health care for returning soldiers and veterans, for continued Hurricane Katrina recovery for the Gulf Coast, to fill major gaps in homeland security, and to provide emergency drought relief for farmers.

Overall, the conference agreement provides more than \$100 billion for the Department of Defense, primarily for continued military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The legislation includes a \$1 billion increase for the National Guard and Reserve equipment and \$1.1 billion for military housing. The legislation also provides \$3 billion (\$1.2 billion more than the President's request) for the purchase of Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles (MRAP)—vehicles designed to withstand roadside bombs and more than \$5 billion to ensure that returning troops and veterans receive the health care that they have earned with their service.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not point out that the tragic loss of life last week at Virginia Tech still weighs heavily on our hearts and minds. Neither the mind nor the heart can contemplate a cause that could lead a human being to resort to such senseless violence to injure and destroy fellow human beings. The thoughts and prayers of people of goodwill everywhere go out to the victims and their families. In the face of such overwhelming grief, I hope they can take comfort in the certain knowledge that unearned suffering is redemptive.

The war in Iraq has also caused a lot of unearned suffering in Iraq and here at home. This is the same war, Mr. Speaker, whose proponents misrepresented to the nation would last no more than six months and likely less than six weeks. This same war in Iraq, we were led to believe by the Administration, would cost less than \$50 billion and would be paid out of the ample revenues from Iraq's oil fields. The war in Iraq, the American people were promised, should have ended years ago with Americans troops greeted as liberators by jubilant Iraqis throwing rose petals at their feet.

The President has threatened to veto the legislation now before us if it passes. According to the President and the Vice-President, H.R. 1591 "would undermine our troops and threaten the safety of the American people here at home." Coming from an Administration that has been wrong on every important question relating to the decision to launch the Iraq War as well the conduct of it, this claim is laughable. Little wonder that nearly 70 percent of Americans disapprove of the way the President is handling the war. But more important, the President's claim is simply not true.

Mr. Speaker, many of the nation's most highly respected generals have endorsed H.R.

1591; all of them oppose the President's plan to escalate the war in Iraq. Take, for example, Maj. Gen. John Batiste, U.S. Army, Ret.

"This important legislation sets a new direction for Iraq. It acknowledges that America went to war without mobilizing the nation, that our strategy in Iraq has been tragically flawed since the invasion in March 2003, that our Army and Marine Corps are at the breaking point with little to show for it, and that our military alone will never establish representative government in Iraq. The administration got it terribly wrong and I applaud our Congress for stepping up to their constitutional responsibilities."

Maj. Gen. Paul Eaton, USA, Ret. Supports this legislation because it "gives General Petraeus great leverage for moving the Iraqi government down the more disciplined path laid out by the Iraq Study Group." According to Major Eaton, the real audience for the timeline language is Prime Minister al-Maliki and the elected government of Iraq:

The argument that this bill aides the enemy is simply not mature—nobody on the earth underestimates the United States' capacity for unpredictability. It may further create some sense of urgency in the rest of our government, beginning with the State Department.

Lt. Gen. William E. Odom, U.S. Army (Ret.), President Reagan's Director of the National Security Agency, supports the bill because it "gives the president a chance to pull back from a disastrous course, re-orient U.S. strategy to achieve regional stability, and win help from many other countries—the only way peace will eventually be achieved."

Mr. Speaker, to date, the war in Iraq has lasted longer than America's involvement in World War II, the greatest conflict in all of human history. But there is a difference. The Second World War ended in complete and total victory for the United States and its allies. But then again, in that conflict America was led by FDR, a great Commander-in-Chief, who had a plan to win the war and secure the peace, listened to his generals, and sent troops in sufficient numbers and sufficiently trained and equipped to do the job.

As a result of the colossal miscalculation in deciding to invade Iraq, the loss of public trust resulting from the misrepresentation of the reasons for launching that invasion, and the breath taking incompetence in mismanaging the occupation of Iraq, the Armed Forces and the people of the United States have suffered incalculable damage.

The war in Iraq has claimed the lives of 3,316 brave servicemen and women (64 in the first 16 days of this month). More than 24,912 Americans have been wounded, many suffering the most horrific injuries. American taxpayers have paid nearly \$400 billion to sustain this misadventure.

The depth, breadth, and scope of the President's misguided, mismanaged, and misrepresented war in Iraq is utterly without precedent in American history. It is a tragedy in a league all its own. But it was not unforeseeable or unavoidable.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1591, the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health and Iraq Accountability Act the House passed last month provides real benchmarks and consequences if the Iraqi Government fails to live up to its commitments. First, it requires the President to certify and report to Congress on July 1, 2007 that substantial progress has been made on

security, political and reconstruction benchmarks by the Iraqi government.

If the President cannot certify that the Iraqi government has made substantial progress, redeployment of U.S. combat troops must begin, with a goal of being completed within 180 days (by December 31, 2007). If the July certification is made, redeployment of U.S. combat troops must begin by October 1, 2007, with a goal of being completed within 180 days (by March 31, 2008).

The measure changes the mission of U.S. troops in Iraq after redeployment from combat to training and equipping Iraqi troops, targeted counterterrorism operations, and force protection.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, the Iraqi Government is not off to a good start. The Green Zone surrounding Baghdad remains insecure. Two weeks ago, a suicide bomber managed to penetrate the security perimeter of the Iraqi Parliament and detonated a bomb that killed at least three members of the Iraqi parliament and wounded scores of others. Additionally, the market represented by Senator MCCAIN as an example of the improved security situation in Iraq was turned into a killing field within days after Senator MCCAIN's visit. And just last week, we saw the bloodiest and deadliest day in Baghdad since the so-called "surge" began when 198 Iraqi civilians were massacred by insurgents.

Mr. Speaker, radical Shiite Muslim cleric Muqtada al-Sadr has reasserted his political power by yanking his loyalists from the Cabinet, a move aimed at showing his supporters he retains his credentials as an opposition leader and which increases the pressure on Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki to loosen his embrace of the U.S. occupation, which many Iraqis blame for violence in the country.

These developments, Madam Speaker, illustrate the wisdom of requiring benchmarks the Iraqi Government must meet to justify continued American blood and treasure in Iraq. Moreover, because those benchmarks are established pursuant to President Bush's policies, it is passing strange indeed that he would threaten to veto the bill since it necessarily means he would be vetoing his own benchmarks for the performance of the Iraqi government. He would be vetoing his own readiness standards for U.S. troops. The President demands this Congress send him an Iraq war bill with "no strings." But the only "strings" attached, Madam Speaker, are the benchmarks and standards imposed by the President himself.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the enormous financial cost, the human cost to the men and women of the United States Armed Forces has also been high but they have willingly paid it. Operation Iraqi Freedom has exacerbated the Veterans Administration health care facility maintenance backlog; placed an undue strain on the delivery of medical treatment and rehabilitative services for current and new veterans; and exacted a heavy toll on the equipment, training and readiness requirements, and the families of the men and women of the United States Armed Forces.

The emergency supplemental acknowledges the sacrifices made by, and the debt of gratitude, we and the Iraqi people owe to Armed Forces of the United States. But more than that, it makes a substantial down payment on that debt by providing substantial increases in funding for our troops.

The supplemental includes a total appropriation of \$2.8 billion for Defense Health Care, which is \$1.7 billion above the President's request. The additional funding supports new initiatives to enhance medical services for active duty forces and mobilized personnel, and their family members. Included in this new funding is \$450 million for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder/Counseling; \$450 million for Traumatic Brain Injury care and research; \$730 million to prevent health care fee increases for our troops; \$20 million to address the problems at Walter Reed; and \$14.8 million for burn care.

Unlike the Republican leadership of the 109th Congress and the Bush Administration, the new Democratic majority is committed to America's veterans. What's more, we back up that commitment by investing in their well-being. For example, the supplemental includes \$1.7 billion above the President's request for initiatives to address the health care needs of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans and the backlog in maintaining VA health care facilities, including \$550 million to address the backlog in maintaining VA health care facilities so as to prevent the VA from experiencing a situation similar to that found at Walter Reed Medical Center.

We provide an additional \$250 million for medical administration to ensure there are sufficient personnel to support the growing number of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans and to maintain a high level of services for all veterans; \$229 million for treating the growing number of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans; \$100 million for contract mental health care, which will allow the VA to contract with private mental health care providers to ensure that Iraq and Afghanistan veterans are seen in the most timely and least disruptive fashion, including members of the Guard and Reserve; and \$62 million to speed up the processing of claims of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Madam Speaker, when American troops are sent into harm's way, America has an obligation to do all it can to minimize the risk of harm to the troops. That is why it was so important that we included additional funding above the President's request to support our troops. We provide \$2.5 billion more to address the current readiness crisis of our state-side troops, including ensuring that they are better equipped and trained. We include \$1.4 billion more for military housing allowances and \$311 million more for Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles for troops in Iraq. And there is included in the supplemental \$222 million more for infrared countermeasures for Air Force aircraft to address the growing threat against U.S. air operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Equally important, Mr. Speaker, the supplemental contains language directing the President to adhere to current military guidelines for unit readiness, deployments, and time between deployments.

The supplemental requires the Defense Department to abide by its current Unit Readiness policy, requiring the chief of the military department concerned to determine that a unit is "fully mission capable" before it is deployed to Iraq. The President may waive this provision by submitting a report to Congress detailing why the unit's deployment is in the interests of national security despite the assessment that the unit is not fully mission capable.

The Defense Department is also required to abide by its current policy and avoid extending

the deployment of units in Iraq in excess of 365 days for the Army and 210 days for the Marines. The provision may be waived by the President only by submitting a report to Congress detailing the particular reason or reasons why the unit's extended deployment is in the interests of national security.

Mr. Speaker, to reduce the incidence of combat fatigue and enhance readiness, it is important that our troops have sufficient "time out of the combat zone and training between deployments. That is why we require the Defense Department to abide by its current policy and avoid sending units back into Iraq before troops get the required time away from the war theater. The President may waive this provision by submitting a report to Congress detailing why the unit's early redeployment to Iraq is in the interests of national security.

Mr. Speaker, the American people spoke loudly and clearly last November when they tossed out the Rubber-Stamp Republican Congress. They voted for a New Direction in Iraq and for change in America. They voted to disentangle American troops from the carnage, chaos, and civil war in Iraq. They voted for accountability and oversight, which we Democrats have begun to deliver on; already the new majority has held more than 100 congressional hearings related to the Iraq War, investigating everything from the rampant waste, fraud, and abuse of Iraq reconstruction funding to troop readiness to the Iraq Study Group Report to the shameful mistreatment of wounded soldiers recuperating at Walter Reed Medical Center.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the President should sign this measure, in order to get these needed resources to our troops and to our veterans and to hold the Iraqis accountable. By signing this legislation the President can help deliver the message to the Iraqi people that they must take responsibility for their own future. By signing this measure the President can show some leadership in the transitioning of the mission of U.S. troops from combat to training Iraqi troops and counterterrorism. Last, this legislation will help restore and strengthen our military, with a new Strategic Reserve Readiness Fund among other measures.

Last November the American people signaled clearly their loss of confidence in the President's leadership and their desire for a new direction in Iraq. In less than 120 days, the new Democratic majority has begun to deliver. And we will not rest, Madam Speaker, until we are clearly on a glide path to the day when our troops come home.

And even then our work will not be done. We must still be about the business of repairing the damage to America's international reputation and prestige. But this Democratic majority, led by the Progressive Caucus and the Out of Iraq Caucus, has ushered in a new era of oversight, accountability, and transparency to defense and reconstruction contracting and procurement.

I urge all members to join me in supporting the Conference Report to H.R. 1591. This is the best way to ensure accountability to our soldiers who have been sent into battle without proper training or equipment or a clear mission. It is the best way to keep faith with our veterans who are not getting the best medical care when they come home. Passing this supplemental appropriations bill is essential to restoring our military that is being stretched to the limits by the Bush policy. Last,

it is absolutely necessary to regain the confidence of the American people who demand a new direction in Iraq.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All Members of the House are once again reminded that they should direct their comments to the Chair.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, at this time I am very happy to yield 3 minutes to one of our hardest-working fighters, the gentleman from Dallas, Texas (Mr. HENSARLING).

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in great opposition to this rule and to this conference report.

We are here, yet again, discussing a Democrat plan for a statutory date certain for America's defeat in Iraq. We are here, yet again, discussing the Democrats' "slow bleed" strategy for our brave men and women in uniform in Iraq, designed to gradually deny them the critical equipment, support, and reinforcements they need to do the job. We are here, yet again, discussing just how much pork and unrelated spending can be shoved into this conference report to encourage or persuade reluctant Members to support this legislation.

And, Mr. Speaker, according to today's L.A. Times and other major media outlets, we are likely to have this vote again and again and again because the majority party's leadership somehow believes it is in their political interests to do so.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we all know about the recent announcement of the Democratic leader in the Senate. He has announced to our troops, he has announced to al Qaeda, he has announced to the world that the war in Iraq is lost.

Mr. Speaker, Corporal Tyler Rock of the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines seems to disagree. I would quote him directly, but I believe the House rules would not permit it; so allow me to paraphrase that he has a quote for the Senate majority leader. Let me go on to say that he has said, "We could leave this place and say we are sorry to the terrorists, and then we could wait for 3,000 more American civilians to die before we say, 'Hey, that's not nice again.'"

Mr. Speaker, I suspect that Corporal Rock speaks for most of our troops. Let's not cut their support. There will be no greater event to empower radical Islam than our defeat and retreat from Iraq.

The terrorists that we fight there believe they have the moral authority to kill 2 million, 2 million of our children, two of them being my own.

They are the ones that say the battlefield is in Iraq. Why can't we understand that in the Halls of Congress?

There is no doubt that fighting this war is costly. There is no more difficult duty I have, or any of us have, than to meet with the mothers of those who have lost loved ones on the field of battle. But as difficult as that duty is, I

never, never, never want to meet with the mothers who lose children in the next 9/11 because we turned our back on our duty.

The cost of fighting this war is great. The cost of losing it is greater.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL).

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, according to our military leaders, the status quo is not working in Iraq. Major General Batiste said, “The administration got it terribly wrong and I applaud Congress for stepping up.” Lieutenant General Odom said our bill “gives the President a chance to pull back from a disastrous course, reorient U.S. strategy to achieve regional stability, and win help from many other countries, the only way peace will eventually be achieved.”

Our military has done everything the President and the Congress and American people have asked it. The President asked our men and women in uniform to invade a country, and they did. The President asked them to go to war against a nation’s army, and they did. The President asked them to seize a capital, and they did. The President asked the men and women in uniform to depose a dictator, and they did. The President asked the men and women in uniform to capture that dictator, and they did.

Given all these military achievements by our Armed Forces, why do we have today the worst national security crisis in over a generation? There is not now, nor has there ever been, a political plan that matches the military leadership that we have seen from our Armed Forces. But this administration has offered no real plan for success, and our troops have been asked to back the Iraqi Government that has yet to stand up for itself. The entire plan over the last 4 years offered by the President and the Republican Congress has been more troops, more time, more money, and more of the same, even though we know that the challenges we face today require more than the status quo. The President’s policy has come down to the status quo plus.

Secretary of Defense Gates had it right: “Any solution in Iraq is not purely military but also political.”

Our plan holds the Iraqi people accountable for their own nation. It requires the Iraqi people to meet the benchmarks for success, the same benchmarks that the President outlined on January 10 before he turned against his own benchmarks. We will give our troops and commanders the resources and freedom to do their job. But we will do the one thing that a Republican Congress has refused to do over the years: demand accountability from the Iraqis.

I urge my colleagues to support the rule and to support this legislation.

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

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gen-

tleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN).

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from New York for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, the President says send him the money. Let’s be clear. This bill provides every penny the President asked for to fund the troops in Iraq. It also provides for something the President did not ask for: funds to help improve the treatment of our wounded soldiers at Walter Reed and other places around this country.

It also provides something that the American people have now insisted on but the White House doesn’t ask for, and that is accountability with respect to the war in Iraq. That is why the President doesn’t like the bill before us. We know the White House has become an accountability-free zone. The White House got used to a Congress, the old Republican Congress, that gave the President a blank check, money without accountability. And this provides funding with accountability. That is why they don’t like it.

Let us be very clear. If the President vetoes this bill, he will be saying “no” to ensuring that our troops have the training and equipment that they need. If he vetoes this bill, he will be saying “no” to ensuring that we hold the Iraqi Government accountable to the benchmarks which the Bush administration and the Iraqi Government have said are absolutely necessary to achieve political stability in Iraq. If he vetoes this bill, he will be saying “no” to those additional funds for our wounded soldiers at Walter Reed and for our veterans health care system.

He will also be saying “no” to the additional funds that we put in this bill to the fight against al Qaeda in Afghanistan. Here we are so many years after the attacks of September 11, 2001. Al Qaeda remains a vibrant organization and Osama bin Laden remains at large; we provide funds to go after Osama bin Laden, additional funds; the President will be saying “no” to that.

And the President, if he vetoes this bill, will be saying “no” to the overwhelming sentiment of the American people who understand the failed policy and say we need to change direction.

Let’s change direction. Let’s say “yes” to this conference committee report.

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Ms. SLAUGHTER. I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE).

(Mr. INSLEE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, we here highly resolve that starting today we will no longer allow President Bush to make an infinite number of mistakes with an infinite number of our sons and daughters.

We know one thing, the President believes he has done a heck of a job in Iraq; the American people disagree.

The people who are now doing our bidding in Iraq proudly are standing up for democracy, and we want some democracy here. We know that there is a difficult road to hoe in Iraq, but we know there should be an infinite wisdom in one source in America, and that is the American people.

There is no sovereignty, there is no king, there is no person who always does a heck of a job. When push comes to shove, we have got to listen to the American people, and the American people have spoken to us loudly. They have said it is time for the Iraqi leadership to quit fiddling around and form a government. And they know, as we do, as the retired generals who have come out full force and said that the American people are right, we cannot expect our service personnel to solve the political problem in Iraq. And now, 13 months have gone by since supposedly they formed this constitution and they were going to solve this problem of what to do with their oil, and they still haven’t got an agreement. They are still fiddling around while our sons and daughters die.

Now, the troops and the generals understand that there is a message being sent by this resolution, and the message is to Maliki and the rest of the Iraqi leadership: You have got to stop fiddling around and form a government, and you have got to reach an agreement about oil. And until you do, there is going to be civil strife, civil war and Americans driving in the middle of that. This is a message to them: Solve this problem.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I will yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS).

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, we have a moral obligation to support our troops while they are in combat and when they come home; that is why in this bill we fully fund our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. So a “no” vote against this bill is a vote against \$3.1 billion to build better barracks, housing and training facilities here at home for troops returning from war.

We believe that supporting our veterans is a real cost of war, just as real as guns, tanks and bullets. A “no” vote on this bill is a vote against \$1.8 billion and funding high priority health care programs for our veterans, with a special focus on taking care of those who need it the most, those suffering from traumatic brain injury, PTSD, or a loss of arms and legs. Our veterans’ sacrifices don’t end after they come home, and neither should our commitment to them.

A “no” vote on this bill is a vote against a \$100 million for contracting out health care services so that members of the Guard and Reserves in rural areas can receive the timely health care that they need and deserve. For some, that timely care can mean the difference between good health and depression, for others the difference between life and death.

To prevent a Walter Reed Annex 18 tragedy from occurring in VA hospitals, we fund \$550 million to address serious maintenance and repair needs at our VA facilities. A "no" vote on this bill is a vote against that funding for veterans. The needs addressed in this bill are real, the dollar amounts are fiscally sound, and our troops and our veterans deserve no less.

A vote for this bill is a vote for better health care and housing for America's heroes. By voting for this bill, we can honor and respect our troops, our veterans and their families, not just with our words, but with our deeds.

I urge a "yes" vote on this rule and a "yes" vote for our troops on this conference report.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ANDREWS).

(Mr. ANDREWS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation because where continuity is merited, we have continuity, and where change is demanded, we have change.

The continuity comes from the fact of a bipartisan consensus to provide every dollar that our troops in the field need, and this bill does that. That will not change. What must change, though, is the abrogation of constitutional responsibility by the erstwhile majority.

For over 3½ years, the erstwhile majority, Mr. Speaker, vacillated between apology and inaction. Yes, the President is the Commander in Chief, but no President should be the sole source of law and judgment. And for nearly 4 years, the erstwhile majority sat silently by as the quagmire deepened. That is changing under this legislation.

What also must change is the policy itself. We have been asked what our plan was. Here it is. We say to the Iraqis, you promised to pass an oil law. Pass it. You promised to have local elections. Have those elections. You promised to stand up your own security and police forces. Put them into the fight. If you succeed, we will then stay for an 18-month period of time to facilitate your success, but if you fail, the days of the blank check and the endless commitment are over.

The erstwhile majority, Mr. Speaker, has a hard time recognizing this plan because they have no plan. Their only approach is to ratify the failure of the status quo. The troops in the field and the American people deserve much, much better, and that is what this legislation provides.

I urge a "yes" vote.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time is remaining on both sides.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California has 8 minutes remaining; the gentlewoman from New York has 1½ minutes remaining.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, just a few weeks ago we lost a very dear friend of

mine, one of our Nation's great former leaders, a woman who was a lifelong Democrat, and in 1984 she became a Republican when she addressed the Republican National Convention. Her name was Jeane Kirkpatrick; she served as Ronald Reagan's ambassador to the United Nations.

I will never forget the speech that she delivered at our party convention in 1984. She quoted the contemporary French writer, Jean-Francois Revel, who said, "Clearly, a civilization that feels guilty for everything that it is and does will lack the energy and conviction to defend itself."

Mr. Speaker, I was struck with that because that was at a time when there were many people who were maligning the United States of America; they said that we had gone to hell in a handbag. They were attacking all of the policies of Ronald Reagan, tax cuts which were ruining the country. And I have to say that on a regular basis, Mr. Speaker, I continue to hear the same kind of criticism, and yet we have what is obviously the greatest Nation the world has ever known.

Today, the Dow Jones Industrial Average crashed through 13,000. We saw last month 185,000 new jobs created, an unemployment rate of 4.4 percent. It is amazing that during this very difficult time in which we are trying to successfully prosecute the war on terror, we are enjoying such success because of the greatness of the United States of America and because of our people.

I am very proud of the record that we have put forward, and I am saddened regularly when I hear people malign us. And now we have this debate, we have this debate, which led, as was said by my friend from Marietta and by the gentleman from Dallas, the statement by the majority leader of the United States Senate that this war has been lost. I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the American people are convinced that we can be successful.

I know that there are many who today are critical of the fact that we have gone to war. People are very upset about the fact that we have gone into Iraq. I happen to still at this moment believe that we did the right thing, but I know there are many people who have said that it was the wrong thing. And I've had constituents who have come up to me. In fact, just over this most recent district work period, I was at numerous meetings in California and a number of people came to me and they said, you know, I didn't support our going into Iraq. I think it was a mistake, but the fact of the matter is we are where we are. We have our men and women in uniform who are in Iraq.

We have seen elections take place in Iraq. We know the threat that continues to exist from Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, Hamas, al Qaeda, you can go right down the line. And people have said we want to figure out a way for victory. I've had people who said we shouldn't have gone into Iraq say to

me, we need to figure out a way that we can be victorious. And the word "victory" is one that unfortunately we really haven't heard from the other side of the aisle. In fact, one of the questions asked today at the briefing with General Petraeus is, how do we define what victory is? Well, it is really twofold. It still is. It is, Mr. Speaker, an Iraq that can defend itself. And General Petraeus said to us today that there are members of the Iraqi Security Forces who are fighting and dying for their country, those are the exact words that he used, and an Iraq that can govern itself, Mr. Speaker.

We understand the fragility of this government, with the Shia, Sunni and Kurdish populations and the challenges that Prime Minister Maliki faces, but we do believe that we can be successful because we have to be successful.

Now we have gone through this process and we have heard people say on both sides of the aisle that we want to make sure that we get funding to our troops. Mr. Speaker, the best way for us to get funding to our troops is to defeat this rule and defeat the conference report. Why? Everyone has acknowledged that the President of the United States will veto a bill that guarantees failure, which is what this bill would do by establishing these arbitrary deadlines for withdrawal. So we have all acknowledged that the President is going to veto the bill.

Mr. Speaker, why don't we make sure that our troops have the support that everyone has said that they need by not going through the challenge of the Presidential veto, the time-consuming process of the Presidential veto, having this bill go to the other body to be considered tomorrow. Let's defeat it right now, defeat the rule. And if we don't defeat the rule, at least defeat the conference report itself so that we can immediately get down to work. When we do that, Mr. Speaker, I hope very much that we won't have a small cadre of individuals within the Democratic leadership preventing Democrats and Republicans from participating in this very important process to make sure that we have everything that is necessary so that the American people, who want victory, can in fact see victory achieved.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely hard pressed to see how some people define "success."

I read in the New York Times front page that 80 percent of the marines who died of upper body wounds would have lived if only they had the proper equipment. I know that soldiers who serve in the National Guard and Reserve are losing their homes and their jobs, but never mind about that because the stock market is great. Aren't we doing well? It hasn't hurt us a bit. We haven't called for any sacrifice at all from the American people in this.

My heart is broken. I am ashamed and chagrined that this business about

the booming economy could be brought into this debate about life and death. My worry is about the young people who go over there and don't get the proper care that they need.

I couldn't believe the testimony of Tillman's brother yesterday and Jessica Lynch who said the military lied about them. What are we doing in this country? The country that fought the Second World War to save this world, we've been reduced to this, that we decide as long as the stock market is good, the world is good, and let them go over there and die because we are going to give them some kind of government we don't even know they want? For heaven sakes, to every man and woman in country there comes a moment to decide, Mr. Speaker. This is one of those moments.

□ 1915

We either vote for this rule and this bill, and we tell the President of the United States if he vetoes this, he is absolutely continuing on a road to absolute failure and that we are not going to be a party to it. We want to take care of the soldiers. And if he vetoes the money, it is on his head, not ours. But we will continue until we can get those soldiers and marines out of that morass.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I stand before you in opposition to this resolution. Once again, it champions a dismally irresponsible and dangerous course of action. Setting a date certain for withdrawal of our troops from Iraq would envelope Iraq in a cloud of chaos and self destruction and expose us to a heightened threat of terrorism at home. It ignores the President's plan for success in totality. It makes no consideration for the effort to make progress on diplomatic and economic fronts—essential components for that success to occur. They offer no solutions in this bill, only criticism.

Mr. HOYER's failed attempt on April 19th to correlate my involvement regarding the U.S. efforts in Bosnia in the 1990s to that of the situation in Iraq today stretches into the realm of absurdity. However, what was clear from that debate was that Mr. HOYER at the time, as well as Mr. MURTHA, agreed that we should not tie the hands of our President in military operations, even in operations that the Congress did not approve.

Mr. Speaker, let me refresh everyone's memories of that debate which took place in this Chamber, a debate in which I was the lead sponsor of three significant resolutions or amendments that set the course of this Congress—all three which passed by significant margins with support from both sides of the aisle.

But before I begin let me remind the Nation that there are significant differences and some similarities between the debate of Bosnia and today in Iraq. First, Congress did not authorize the President to use force in Bosnia. Congress did authorize the President to use military force in Iraq. Second, we did not begin the conflict in Bosnia, but we did in Iraq. Third, the Republican majority in Congress did in fact try to work with President Clinton to find a solution. Former Senator Bob Dole and I with others traveled with President Clinton to Bosnia

and worked with him to set benchmarks for the civil implementation of the Dayton Accords. I did not assign a date certain to define success for each benchmark, this would have been folly. At the time the leaders of the peace were once leaders during the war and they focused more on these differences than that which brought them together as a nation. President Clinton did a very good job focusing the Bosnian leaders to accomplish the benchmarks and move to resolve their differences and build their new nation.

Last week on the House Floor my colleague, STENY HOYER attempted to re-write the history of my involvement, claiming that I supported a date certain for withdrawal of our troops from Bosnia and therefore I should do the same with our forces in Iraq. The two contexts are dissimilar. Let me set the record straight.

On October 30, 1995, the House agreed to House Resolution 247, a bill that I sponsored with my Democrat colleague, Paul McHale of Pennsylvania, by a vote of 315 to 103. Representatives HOYER, MURTHA, and PELOSI voted "no," Mr. SKELTON voted "yes." The bill stated that there should not be a presumption that the United States Armed Forces would be deployed to enforce a peace agreement that resulted from the negotiations regarding the conflict in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In early December 1995, the Dayton Accords concluded, laying a basis for the path to peace in Bosnia.

On December 13, 1995, I sponsored House Resolution 302 with IKE SKELTON, a bipartisan bill that passed the House by a vote of 287 to 141. Representatives HOYER, MURTHA, and PELOSI voted "no." That bill reiterated the serious concerns and opposition to the President's policy that would result in the deployment of 20,000 members of the U.S. Armed Forces on the ground in the territory of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Despite the expressed will of the House, President Clinton chose to proceed with the deployment of those members of the Armed Forces to enforce the Dayton peace agreement in Bosnia. H.R. 302 declared the policy of the House was that the President should rely on the judgment of the commanders of U.S. forces on the ground on all matters affecting safety, support, and well being of U.S. forces. Congress also declared to furnish the resources to support the needs of President and the Secretary of Defense.

Also on December 13, 1995, the President expressed to Congress that the military mission in Bosnia would be accomplished in 1 year, and our troops would be pulled out no later than December 1996. No one believed that the goal could be accomplished within 1 year. A date certain does not define success, the mission does.

However, despite that assertion, in November 1996, without the consent of Congress, President Clinton announced that the timeline was slipping and that our troops would not be withdrawn until June 1998.

By that point, the United States Armed Forces had acted quickly to achieve their military objectives in Bosnia. In short order, the courage, dedication, and professionalism of those personnel resulted in a significant mitigation of the violence and suffering in that region.

However, the implementation of the civil infrastructure—the humanitarian support, the es-

tabishment of a judicial system and a validated police force—all of the fundamental parts that help make a society function had stalled and there was no definitive plan to remedy the situation.

In response, on June 24, 1997, I offered an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act of 1998 that passed the House by a vote of 278 to 148. Representatives HOYER, MURTHA, and PELOSI voted "no," SKELTON voted "yes." That amendment would have cut funding to U.S. military operations in Bosnia after June 30, 1998—a date set by the President. I did not set the date Mr. HOYER, this was President Clinton's date. This amendment was later incorporated into the conference report that included provisions that would allow U.S. forces to remain if the President made certain certifications and accomplished certain benchmarks. While I used the date certain given to us by the President, I made it clear that I supported benchmarks that set the conditions for a withdrawal of U.S. forces after the mission had been successfully completed.

President Clinton had set an arbitrary date without articulating a comprehensive plan—he did not identify the conditions to be met into order to trigger a troop withdrawal from Bosnia. He simply set a date, and then revised that date. We in Congress took that date, and required certain benchmarks to be met, while at the same time allowing the President the flexibility to allow troops to remain if he thought it was in the interests of U.S. national security.

In Bosnia, we worked in a bipartisan manner with the President to set the conditions for success in Bosnia and gave the President maximum flexibility. Today, this President gets no such deference or flexibility from the Democrat majority. Mr. HOYER and Mr. MURTHA want to enforce a date certain for this President. They do not want to work with this President to set the conditions for success. They simply want to trigger a date for withdrawal, before the mission is done.

It is ironic that Mr. HOYER and Mr. MURTHA voted against that amendment—they did not want to set a date certain for withdrawal and tie the hands of their President. They wanted to give him the latitude that he needed to insure that the mission in Bosnia met with success; to re-establish civility, an effective government, a validated police force and civil infrastructure. Today, their position is the opposite. President Bush is not setting a date certain as President Clinton had done.

Speaker PELOSI, Majority Leader HOYER and Mr. MURTHA all are seeking to tie the hands of this President. They want to cut off funds to our forces who are only doing what this Congress has asked them to do.

Congress should not tie the hands of the President with a date certain for withdrawal from Iraq. Unlike President Clinton with Bosnia, President Bush had the approval of Congress to go into Iraq. He has given us a plan, conditions that must be met before we start to bring our troops home. Yet, Mr. HOYER and his party want to set an arbitrary date, a date certain for withdrawal that does not correspond to those conditions whatsoever—cut off funding for our troops who seek only to succeed in their mission. This is defeatist strategy.

We need to help establish a stable Iraq before we withdraw our forces—the provisions in this bill do not allow us that flexibility and

the price that we will pay is chaos in Iraq and further exposure to terror here at home.

The majority leader of the Senate, HARRY REID talks about polling data from Senator SCHUMER that indicate “political” gains by their party on Iraq. It is unfortunate that the Democrat majority think of Iraq in terms of political points, not national security. If we do not resolve this issue with immediacy, the readiness of our troops will be compromised. They are struggling to determine how they will redistribute funds to pay for their operations while we are here politicking. We must stop the defeatist strategy of the majority now—the one by which they hope to gain political capital from to the detriment of our troops in the field.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time and move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 226, noes 195, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 264]

AYES—226

Abercrombie	Delahunt	Kennedy	Perlmutter	Scott (GA)	Tierney
Ackerman	DeLauro	Kildee	Peterson (MN)	Scott (VA)	Towns
Allen	Dicks	Kilpatrick	Pomeroj	Serrano	Udall (CO)
Altmine	Dingell	Kind	Price (NC)	Sestak	Udall (NM)
Andrews	Doggett	Klein (FL)	Rahall	Shea-Porter	Van Hollen
Arcuri	Donnelly	Langevin	Rangel	Sherman	Velázquez
Baca	Doyle	Lantos	Reyes	Shuler	Visclosky
Baird	Edwards	Larsen (WA)	Rothman	Skelton	Wasserman
Baldwin	Ellison	Larson (CT)	Royal-Allard	Slaughter	Schultz
Barrow	Ellsworth	Lee	Ruppersberger	Smith (WA)	Waters
Bean	Emanuel	Levin	Rush	Snyder	Watt
Becerra	Engel	Lewis (GA)	Ryan (OH)	Solis	Weiner
Berkley	Eshoo	Lipinski	Salazar	Space	Welch (VT)
Berman	Etheridge	Loebssack	Sánchez, Linda	Spratt	Wexler
Berry	Farr	Logren, Zoe	T.	Stark	Wilson (OH)
Bishop (GA)	Fattah	Lowey	Sanchez, Loretta	Sutton	Woolsey
Bishop (NY)	Filner	Lynch	Sarbanes	Tanner	Wu
Blumenauer	Frank (MA)	Mahoney (FL)	Schakowsky	Tauscher	Wynn
Boren	Giffords	Maloney (NY)	Schiff	Thompson (CA)	Yarmuth
Boswell	Gillibrand	Markey	Schwartz	Thompson (MS)	
Boucher	Gonzalez	Matheson			
Boyd (FL)	Gordon	Matsui			
Boysd (KS)	Green, Al	McCarthy (NY)			
Brady (PA)	Green, Gene	McCullom (MN)			
Braley (IA)	Grijalva	McDermott			
Brown, Corrine	Gutierrez	McGovern			
Butterfield	Hall (NY)	McIntyre			
Capps	Hare	McNerney			
Capuano	Harman	McNulty			
Cardoza	Hastings (FL)	Meehan			
Carnahan	Herseth Sandlin	Meek (FL)			
Carney	Higgins	Meeks (NY)			
Carson	Hill	Melancon			
Castor	Hinchey	Michaud			
Chandler	Hinojosa	Miller (NC)			
Clarke	Hirono	Miller, George			
Clay	Hodes	Mitchell			
Cleaver	Holden	Mollohan			
Clyburn	Holt	Moore (KS)			
Cohen	Honda	Moore (WI)			
Conyers	Hooley	Moran (VA)			
Cooper	Hoyer	Murphy (CT)			
Costa	Inslie	Murphy, Patrick			
Costello	Israel	Murtha			
Courtney	Jackson (IL)	Nadler			
Cramer	Jackson-Lee	Napolitano			
Crowley	(TX)	Neal (MA)			
Cuellar	Jefferson	Oberstar			
Cummings	Johnson (GA)	Obey			
Davis (AL)	Johnson, E. B.	Olver			
Davis (CA)	Jones (NC)	Ortiz			
Davis (IL)	Jones (OH)	Pallone			
Davis, Lincoln	Kagen	Pascarella			
DeFazio	Kanjorski	Pastor			
DeGette	Kaptur	Payne			

NOT VOTING—11

Blunt	Goode	Watson
Cubin	Lampson	Waxman
Davis, Jo Ann	Radanovich	Westmoreland
Gilchrest	Reynolds	

□ 1937

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio changed his vote from “aye” to “no.”

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

U.S. TROOP READINESS, VETERANS’ HEALTH, AND IRAQ ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2007

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 332, I call up the conference report on the bill (H.R. 1591) making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 332, the conference report is considered as read.

(For conference report and statement, see proceedings of the House of April 24, 2007, at page H3823.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include tabular and extraneous material on the conference report to accompany H.R. 1591.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Wisconsin?

There was no objection.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 9 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, this bill gives the President the exit strategy from the Iraqi civil war that up until now he has not had.

Next Tuesday will be the fourth anniversary of the President’s “Mission Accomplished” landing on that famous aircraft carrier. On that date, U.S. troops had won the war in Iraq, but since that time the administration’s mismanagement, their misjudgments, and their missed opportunities have entangled us in a quagmire that has become a prolonged civil war. That civil war has gutted our influence in the Middle East and much of the world. In the last 4 years, the administration has spent over half a trillion dollars. It has stretched the Army to the limit, brought our Guard and Reserve to the breaking point, and reduced our military to the lowest state of military readiness in modern history.

The President has refused to finance this war through the normal appropriations process. He has chosen to mask the true cost of the war by paying for it on the installment plan through a series of supplemental requests. He has