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.