I thank the chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill. But it is not the bill I

wanted. I think we should begin an immediate troop withdrawal, but this

is a good compromise bill that has the virtue of setting a date

certain.

Now, I hear my colleagues on the other side of the aisle talking

about ``micromanagement.'' Well, I will tell you, we have great United

States troops who perform admirably in spite of the incompetence and

lack of planning by this administration. And I will tell you what our

troops deserve. Number one, they deserve that we meet the readiness

standards that our military has established, and this bill says it. We

will meet our readiness standards, and we will make sure our troops are

adequately trained and adequately prepared before we deploy them.

The second thing they deserve, and this is very important, they

deserve accountability by the Iraqi people. The Iraqis need to disarm

their militias. The Iraqis need to come up with a political solution.

The Iraqis need to divide the oil revenues. That is not something the

military can do.

Third, our troops deserve a date certain not because we are ``losing

the war,'' but because we are going to take a new direction that relies

on negotiation and diplomacy, rather than warfare and bloodshed.