Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I fully respect the views of the

gentleman from California, but I do get troubled when I hear anybody on

this floor questioning the commitment of any other Member of this floor

to our troops.

I did not suggest for a moment that the other side was not supportive

of our troops when they underfunded our troops, when they didn't

provide enough up-armor for their Humvees, when they didn't provide

enough armor for their vests, when they allowed Water Reed Hospital to

deteriorate.

When these things happened, I never questioned the commitment of the

other side to our troops. And I think we would all appreciate it if we

confine our differences to honest policy debate and not suggest that

any Member of this body does not support the brave men and women who

are fighting for our country.

I support this resolution because it is another attempt at good-

faith, honest compromise with the President of the United States. Two

weeks ago we offered a compromise to the President. We said we will

give you everything that you have asked for, for operations in Iraq,

and we will give you more for operations in Afghanistan, where the war

on terror began. We will give you more money for Walter Reed, for post-

traumatic stress disorder, for traumatic brain injuries. And the

President

said, no thanks. I want a blank check and I want to be able to spend a

blank check eternally.

And now we are back offering a new compromise which says we will fund

operations in Iraq. We will strengthen our capabilities in Afghanistan.

But we want accountability for the first time, Mr. President. And all

we are saying is this: report to the United States Congress, certify

our progress, and in 2 months we will have a choice. Some people can

say the status quo is working fine, progress has been made, the

management of the administration is going well, and vote to continue

operations in Iraq. And others will have the opportunity to draw a

different conclusion and suggest a strategic redeployment. That is a

commonsense compromise. And, frankly, if the President of the United

States vetoes this compromise, he is saying to the American people I

don't want accountability. I don't want oversight. I want it my way. I

want it myself.

I just want to thank the gentleman for including language that was

originated by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. Skelton) that codified

the President's own language that for every Iraqi soldier that reaches

combat proficiency, an American is redeployed. The President has been

saying that for 4 years.

If 378,000 Iraqis have reached combat proficiency, why did we need a

surge of 20,000? Why do we need another 13,000 that the President

called for? All we are doing is codifying the President's own language:

for every Iraqi soldier that is trained, an American is redeployed.

I thank the chairman for including that language. I thank the

gentleman from Missouri for originating it.