Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished chairman of the

Appropriations Committee and compliment him on his efforts in this

very, very difficult situation.

What is wrong with doing what we are doing? Yesterday in the Armed

Services Committee, or I should say early this morning in the Armed

Services Committee, we passed a bill out that had as its pole star the

readiness of our military. That is what this effort is about. The

readiness, the funding, more than the White House has requested of us,

and that is what this is all about. The young men and young women are

entitled to have the funding come to them, and that is what this does.

I find no fault with having our looking at it as a benchmark for us,

as a benchmark for those of us who fund the troops. We are not rubber

stamps; we are a co-equal branch of the government. And as such, our

voices should be heard and there should be an agreement with what we

are trying to do: readiness and benchmarks. And that is just what we

are asking this body to vote upon.

In addition thereto, there is a proposal in this measure I suggested

some time ago, actually in late 2005, to the President that there be a

measurement of redeployment for the American troops. I suggested to him

that for every three brigades of the Iraqi Army brought to level one

that one American brigade be redeployed. I got an answer back from the

President, and when I brought it to his attention, he said it was too

rigid. When truth, in fact, it ought to be, and as it is in this

legislation, this bill, for every one soldier or battalion or brigade

that is brought to level one in the Iraqi Army, there would be a

redeployment of the American soldier, platoon, battalion, brigade at

any level. It should be soldier for soldier. It is their country. We

have been there over 4 years, and I think it is time to pass that baton

on for the security of that country to be taken over by the Iraqis

themselves. That is what the formula does, one on one. And I strongly

endorse it.

I urge the passage of this bill.