I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I always find the majority leader's comments compelling

and moving. He is among the best communicators I think in this

generation of leaders in this House. And let me say as a conservative

Member of this House who was in Baghdad one month ago, I believe that

it is imperative that we express to the Iraqi Government an urgency

about performing on all the issues that the majority leader just

addressed.

But the reason why I rise in opposition to this bill is because under

the Constitution of the United States, Congress can declare war,

Congress can choose to fund or not to fund war, but Congress cannot

conduct war. And the latest Democratic plan to micromanage our war in

Iraq is ``war on the installment plan,'' and it should be rejected on

the basis of proof on the ground and common sense and history.

The proof on the ground is this: Baghdad is not safe, but it is safer

as I saw a month ago. Due to more than two dozen U.S. and Iraqi

installations set up throughout the city, insurgent violence is down.

Thanks to the fact that 20 of 22 tribal leaders have stepped forward to

support U.S. and Iraqi governmental forces, violence in the al-Anbar

province is coming down.

Now is not the time for us to say we will do war on the installment

plan and come back in 60 days and evaluate.

My Democrat colleagues heard General Petraeus on the Hill 10 days

ago. He said by late summer we will have a better idea whether the

surge is taking hold. He pledged to report to this Congress in

September. So why this? Why do we come here tonight with a 60-day

timetable for another vote?

As our troops do their duty on the ground in Iraq, our duty is clear.

Let's set aside the politics of the moment. Let's find a common ground

and build legislation that is constitutionally sound and fiscally

responsible. Let's give our soldiers the resources they need to get the

job done and then come home safe.