Mr. Speaker, I thank my very good friend from Rochester,

the distinguished Chair of the Committee on Rules, for yielding me the

customary 30 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strongest opposition to both this rule and the

underlying conference report.

Mr. Speaker, this conference report implements a policy of failure.

It is nothing more than a cheap attempt to score political points at a

time when the American people have understandably become very weary of

war. Rather than offering the American people a

policy that allows us to complete our mission in Iraq and bring our

troops home, which we all want to do, this bill simply offers them a

charade.

The President, Mr. Speaker, has made it very clear that he will veto

this policy of failure, which does not have enough support to override

his veto. We will be right back here in a matter of days voting on

another supplemental. And while this political charade plays out, Mr.

Speaker, our troops will be left waiting for the funding that they need

to do their jobs, and our country trapped in a political quagmire

created by the Democratic leadership in this Congress.

Mr. Speaker, this very dangerous game of ``chicken'' could have been

avoided entirely. The Democratic leadership may be bereft of ideas, but

I know for a fact that this entire body is not. Had we considered the

original bill under an open process, which, as we all know, is the

tradition for wartime supplementals in this House, we could have had a

real debate. We could have considered the worthy ideas of Members in

this body.

Instead, Mr. Speaker, all but a very few were shut out of this

process entirely. Republicans and Democrats, liberals and conservatives

alike, were denied the opportunity to participate in this process. We

didn't get any of their ideas, their expertise, their suggestions in

bringing this measure to the floor. And what did that very small group

in the Democratic leadership come up with? A constitutionally dubious

attempt at micromanaging the Iraq war into inevitable defeat; a cynical

political ploy that will leave dire consequences for the region and our

own security in its wake.

Mr. Speaker, the Constitution lays out a very clear system of checks

and balances derived from the ideas of the very brilliant and inspired

Framers of our Constitution. James Madison I am thinking of, as I look

to my friend from Virginia, Mr. Moran, obviously a native of Virginia.

And I will tell you that that Madisonian spirit of giving the three

branches of government distinct roles, allows us to guard ourselves

against tyranny from any one branch.

The President must seek the support of Congress in order to wage war;

it is Congress that has the power to authorize; and, as we all know

very well, it must be this institution that funds a war. But, Mr.

Speaker, once funding and authorization are granted, the President of

the United States serves as the Commander in Chief, with the authority

to execute the war.

This conference report ignores the intentions of our Founding Fathers

and attempts to turn the Constitution on its head.

I mentioned, looking to my friend Mr. Moran, the father, the author

of the Constitution, James Madison. Well, Mr. Speaker, in Federalist

No. 51, Madison wrote ``that in framing a government that is to be

administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: You

must first enable the government to control the governed, and in the

next place oblige it to control itself.''

Mr. Speaker, Madison recognized the inherent challenges in designing

a government that is both effective and limited. He knew that without

checks and balances, tyranny would ensue.

Mr. Speaker, this conference report, like the bill before it,

attempts to diminish these checks and balances. It tries to turn

Congress into 535 Commanders in Chief.

This legislation of micromanagement is based, Mr. Speaker, on a

disastrous strategy. Its authors fund the war, and then mandate its

failure. They seek to tie the hands of our military commanders, and

then force them to retreat when they are unable to meet impossible

timetables. We heard in a briefing today from General Petraeus, from

Secretary England, from Secretary Negroponte and others that the notion

of timetables in fact clearly will undermine the potential for success.

Mr. Speaker, that leadership also knew it fell hopelessly short of

the necessary support within their own party for passage. But rather

than opening up the process so that real ideas and solutions could be

considered, they just loaded it up with billions of dollars in

unrelated spending. This conference report trades victory for potential

electoral gains.

Mr. Speaker, what would the consequences of defeat be? The National

Intelligence Estimate, the 9/11 Commission, our people on the ground

and those who briefed us today, have all made it very clear that a

precipitous withdrawal would have disastrous consequences. Violence

will spill out across the country and spread to the entire region.

We heard about Iran and Syria today and the challenges that exist

there. In our absence, Iran and Syria will be utterly unfettered in

their ability to incite a regional war that threatens global security,

with enormous casualties suffered by the people in the region.

Mr. Speaker, as I have said, and I know this very well, and I join

Americans who have been very discouraged by this war; it has been ugly,

it has been difficult, it has been very painful. We all, Mr. Speaker,

feel the toll it has taken and are keenly aware of the price that we

are paying, especially in a human sense.

I know as I look to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that

every single one of us has had the challenge and the difficulty of

looking into the eyes of constituents whose family and friends have

made the ultimate sacrifice in this war. Their pain is very real, and

we all know that their loss is profound.

But, Mr. Speaker, we do not honor those who have sacrificed by

abandoning their mission. I have regularly quoted my very good friend,

a man who has become a friend of mine, a former marine called Ed

Blecksmith, whose son J.P. was killed in the battle of Fallujah 2 years

ago this past November. He said that if we were to withdraw, his son

will have died in vain.

Mr. Speaker, we do not honor those in the field who are fighting as

we speak by tying their hands and depriving them of the means to

succeed. We will honor them by winning the war in Iraq so that our men

and women come home having completed their mission.

We know that their mission will not be complete in the immediate

future. That was pointed out today by General Petraeus and others. As

President Bush and General Petraeus have both acknowledged, success

will take months, not days or weeks. But to abandon our mission would

be disastrous.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to reject the policy of defeat and

the potential return of terrorism to our homeland. I urge my colleagues

to reject this political charade that leaves our troops in limbo, and

let us instead have a real debate with real ideas for a real solution

in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I include the following article from the Sunday Times

for the Record.

Mr. Speaker, just a few weeks ago we lost a very dear

friend of mine, one of our Nation's great former leaders, a woman who

was a lifelong Democrat, and in 1984 she became a Republican when she

addressed the Republican National Convention. Her name was Jeane

Kirkpatrick; she served as Ronald Reagan's ambassador to the United

Nations.

I will never forget the speech that she delivered at our party

convention in 1984. She quoted the contemporary French writer, Jean-

Francois Revel, who said, ``Clearly, a civilization that feels guilty

for everything that it is and does will lack the energy and conviction

to defend itself.''

Mr. Speaker, I was struck with that because that was at a time when

there were many people who were maligning the United States of America;

they said that we had gone to hell in a handbag. They were attacking

all of the policies of Ronald Reagan, tax cuts which were ruining the

country. And I have to say that on a regular basis, Mr. Speaker, I

continue to hear the same kind of criticism, and yet we have what is

obviously the greatest Nation the world has ever known.

Today, the Dow Jones Industrial Average crashed through 13,000. We

saw last month 185,000 new jobs created, an unemployment rate of 4.4

percent. It is amazing that during this very difficult time in which we

are trying to successfully prosecute the war on terror, we are enjoying

such success because of the greatness of the United States of America

and because of our people.

I am very proud of the record that we have put forward, and I am

saddened regularly when I hear people malign us. And now we have this

debate, we have this debate, which led, as was said by my friend from

Marietta and by the gentleman from Dallas, the statement by the

majority leader of the United States Senate that this war has been

lost. I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the American people

are convinced that we can be successful.

I know that there are many who today are critical of the fact that we

have gone to war. People are very upset about the fact that we have

gone into Iraq. I happen to still at this moment believe that we did

the right thing, but I know there are many people who have said that it

was the wrong thing. And I've had constituents who have come up to me.

In fact, just over this most recent district work period, I was at

numerous meetings in California and a number of people came to me and

they said, you know, I didn't support our going into Iraq, I think it

was a mistake, but the fact of the matter is we are where we are. We

have our men and women in uniform who are in Iraq.

We have seen elections take place in Iraq. We know the threat that

continues to exist from Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, Hamas, al Qaeda, you

can go right down the line. And people have said we want to figure out

a way for victory. I've had people who said we shouldn't have gone into

Iraq say to me, we need to figure out a way that we can be victorious.

And the word ``victory'' is one that unfortunately we really haven't

heard from the other side of the aisle. In fact, one of the questions

asked today at the briefing with General Petraeus is, how do we define

what victory is? Well, it is really twofold. It still is. It is, Mr.

Speaker, an Iraq that can defend itself. And General Petraeus said to

us today that there are members of the Iraqi Security Forces who are

fighting and dying for their country, those are the exact words that he

used, and an Iraq that can govern itself, Mr. Speaker.

We understand the fragility of this government, with the Shia, Sunni

and Kurdish populations and the challenges that Prime Minister Maliki

faces, but we do believe that we can be successful because we have to

be successful.

Now we have gone through this process and we have heard people say on

both sides of the aisle that we want to make sure that we get funding

to our troops. Mr. Speaker, the best way for us to get funding to our

troops is to defeat this rule and defeat the conference report. Why?

Everyone has acknowledged that the President of the United States will

veto a bill that guarantees failure, which is what this bill would do

by establishing these arbitrary deadlines for withdrawal. So we have

all acknowledged that the President is going to veto the bill.

Mr. Speaker, why don't we make sure that our troops have the support

that everyone has said that they need by not going through the

challenge of the Presidential veto, the time-consuming process of the

Presidential veto, having this bill go to the other body to be

considered tomorrow. Let's defeat it right now, defeat the rule. And if

we don't defeat the rule, at least defeat the conference report itself

so that we can immediately get down to work. When we do that, Mr.

Speaker, I hope very much that we won't have a small cadre of

individuals within the Democratic leadership preventing Democrats and

Republicans from participating in this very important process to make

sure that we have everything that is necessary so that the American

people, who want victory, can in fact see victory achieved.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I yield back the balance of my time.