Mr. Speaker, last night I testified before the Rules

Committee asking that the Iraq Study Group report be made in order for

debate today. The Iraq Study Group offers the way forward, a new

approach, and is authored by former Secretary of State Baker and former

chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Lee Hamilton. Yet

there has been no vote allowed. The American people have been shut out

with regard to having a vote on the Iraq Study Group report. You cannot

pick and choose with regard to the Iraq Study Group.

Let me read you some of the comments that have been made by the

members who served on the Iraq Study Group. Lee Hamilton, Jim Baker:

``There is no magic formula to solve the problems of Iraq. However,

there are actions that can be taken to improve the situation.

``Our political leaders must build a bipartisan approach to bring a

responsible conclusion to what is now a lengthy and costly war. Our

country deserves a debate that prizes substance over rhetoric, and a

policy that is adequately funded and sustainable.''

That is the Iraq Study Group. Members on both sides have said they

support the Iraq Study Group, and yet there is no vote allowed on the

Iraq Study Group.

``In this consensus report,'' Hamilton and Baker go on to say, ``the

10 members of the Iraq Study Group,'' bipartisan, five and five,

``present a new approach because we believe there is a better way

forward.''

The better way forward, and the gentleman who just spoke mentioned

the Iraq Study Group, is the Iraq Study Group, and yet the Rules

Committee last night foreclosed a vote on the Iraq Study Group which is

bipartisan.

Lee Hamilton, Jim Baker, Leon Panetta, Bill Perry, Ed Meese. Ed

Meese's son is one of the colonels with General Petraeus. Leon Panetta,

who served here in the Congress, but yet for some reason the American

people are not to be given an opportunity whereby their Congress can

vote on the Iraq Study Group.

There are good people on both sides. Every resolution should be in

order. God bless you, what you are offering is fine, but give the

country, give the American people, give us an opportunity to vote on

the Iraq Study Group. You cannot pick and choose.

I urge a defeat of the resolution and urge that we allow this to be

voted on whereby we can have a successful policy to bring this country

together.

Mr. Speaker, I rise against this rule and against the underlying

resolution.

I've been to Iraq three times since the United States sent Armed

Forces there. I continue to be deeply concerned about the violence that

continues to take the lives of U.S. personnel as well as innocent Iraqi

citizens.

That's why, upon my return from my third trip in 2005, I worked to

promote an independent, bipartisan review of ongoing operations in

Iraq--what I called ``fresh eyes on the target. ``

I initiated the legislation authorizing and funding the Iraq Study

Group, which was set up through the U.S. Institute of Peace. The 10-

member group--5 Republicans and 5 Democrats--was led by cochairs James

A. Baker III, the Nation's 61st Secretary of State and honorary

chairman of the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy at Rice

University, and Lee H. Hamilton, our former colleague in this House and

director of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, who

also cochaired the 9/11 Commission.

The other members of the study group included: Lawrence S.

Eagleburger, former Secretary of State; Vernon E. Jordan, Jr., former

advisor to President Clinton; Edwin Meese III, former Attorney General;

Sandra Day O'Connor, retired Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme

Court; Leon E. Panetta, former White House chief of staff for President

Clinton; William J. Perry, former secretary of Defense; Charles S.

Robb, former Governor and Senator of Virginia, and Alan K. Simpson,

former Senator from Wyoming.

After more than 8 months of work, the panel presented its report last

December 6. The Iraq Study Group was a truly bipartisan group who came

together--like this body should be coming together--and offered the way

forward in Iraq.

I believe the group's work provides an important framework to move

forward in Iraq and on January 24 I introduced H. Con. Res. 45,

expressing the sense of Congress that all the recommendations of the

Iraq Study Group become the new baseline strategy for dealing with

Iraq. That's the resolution we should be advancing today.

In my car coming to the Capitol this morning I heard a member of this

body on a radio interview say he's voting for H. Con. Res. 63 because

what we're looking for is a new solution for Iraq. We have that. It's

the Iraq Study Group report. Look at the cover of the report--``The way

forward--A new approach.''

The Iraq situation has created a bitter divide in our country. We all

want to see an end to the fighting in Iraq and stability there, as well

as an end to violence perpetrated by terrorists around the world. I

continue to pray for the protection of the American service men and

women and civilians who are putting their lives on the line every day

and also for their families here at home who continue to make

tremendous sacrifices.

The Iraq Study Group met the test of developing a bipartisan

consensus on how to succeed in Iraq. When our country is divided we are

weak. When we are together we are strong.

I want to read from the letter penned by Secretary Baker and

Congressman Hamilton as the prelude to the Iraq Study Group's

recommendations:

This last sentence is the essence of what we should be addressing

this week. The recommendations of the Iraq Study Group provide the

blueprint for a consensus. The work has been done. The recommendations

have been made. Now is the time for implementation.