Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may

consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this bill, which seeks to impose

a strategy of defeat on our Armed Forces and our country. By binding

our military and our foreign policy in a straitjacket, this legislation

would accomplish what thousands of our enemies have sought: to force

the United States to retreat from Iraq without a plan for victory.

Proponents of rapid withdrawal would like us to ignore the reality

that Iraq is but one of the critical battlefields in an ongoing war

against Islamic jihadists, against global terrorism, a war declared by

the jihadists and which saw its beginnings in November 1979, when

Iranian radicals stormed our embassy, took Americans hostages, and held

them captive for 444 days.

From there Americans, Westerners, innocent human beings were

targeted. Where and when were they targeted? In the bombings of the

Marine barracks in the U.S. embassy in Beirut in 1983, in the bombings

of the World Trade Center in 1993, in the bombings of the Khobar Towers

in 1996, in the attacks of our embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998,

and in the attacks on the USS Cole in the year 2000.

Proponents of rapid withdrawal want us to look at the bombings in

Iraq in a vacuum, disregarding the similarities to the suicide bombers

that have killed scores of innocent Israelis, those who planned and

carried out the bombings in London, in Madrid, in Bali that claimed so

many innocent lives.

These may not be the exact individuals, nor the same groups, but they

are part of a global terrorist network working toward the same end, to

destroy and to attack us and our allies.

The Islamic jihadists will not stop their agenda of destruction

simply because we quickly withdraw from Iraq. They will, perhaps, stop

when they see our nations, our cities, our communities burning, just as

the World Trade Center towers and the Pentagon burned on that terrible

day of September 11, 2001.

They have clearly articulated their goals, listen to their words; al

Qaeda's second in command, Al Zawahiri, made it clear in May of this

year, and I quote him: ``The empire of evil, the United States, is

about to end and a new dawn is about to break over mankind, which will

be liberated from the caesars of the White House and Europe and from

the Zionists.''

Those seeking to impose an immediate withdrawal deadline are so

intent on rushing through this legislation that they appear to have

failed to consider the consequences of a U.S. national security

interest of what euphemistically is being called a ``phased

redeployment.''

How is the strategy of quick withdrawal different from the strategy

outlined by Al Zawahiri in a letter that he sent to al Qaeda operatives

about driving the U.S. out of Iraq? How would we prevent the

development of Iraq into a full base of operations for al Qaeda and

other terrorist networks? We pretend to be armchair generals, seeking

to undermine the strategies called for by our commanders on the field.

But we should not.

Some label the current strategy of failure long before this full

complement of units had been, in fact, deployed. But those doing the

fighting in Iraq know that we have not failed, patriots such as the

Parsons brothers from my congressional district.

Huber Parsons was serving his third deployment in Iraq, this time

with the Army Stryker Brigade, when his vehicle was struck by a deep

buried IED just a few months ago. His driver was killed, and Huber had

to undergo a number of surgeries. I had the honor of visiting him often

at Walter Reed. He is pictured here saluting his fallen brothers-in-

arms at a memorial service in Fort Lewis, Washington. His twin, Bill,

and his younger brother, Charlie, are both currently serving in Iraq,

also with the Army Stryker Brigade. They, like my stepson, Doug, and my

daughter-in-law, Lindsay, and so many others who are currently deployed

in Iraq, are disheartened when they hear the references to failure and

consider that the talks of this rapid withdrawal shows a lack of

confidence in their ability to defeat the enemy.

Many patriots ask me why the Congress would endanger them and their

fellow service men and women by having them engage the enemy with an

immediately reduced force. Where, in a region of jihadists, are troops

to be deployed to? What Middle Eastern government would want to host a

retreating and defeated American Army? How does withdrawal to Kuwait or

Qatar, as some have proposed, help us fight al Qaeda in Iraq? If al

Qaeda strategies worked in Iraq and forced an American retreat, how can

we not conclude that they will also pursue them in Kuwait and Qatar and

beyond?

Mr. Speaker, George Orwell said that the quickest way of ending a war

is to lose it. We should be discussing strategies for victory, not how

to ensure our own defeat.

And let me close, Mr. Speaker, by reading the words of General

Petraeus in an interview just a few days ago word for word. He said,

``I can think of few commanders in history who wouldn't have wanted

more troops, more time or more unity among their partners. However, if

I could only have one at this point in Iraq, it would be more time.

This is an exceedingly tough endeavor that faces countless

challenges.'' General Petraeus continues, None of us, Iraqi or

American, are anything but impatient and frustrated at where we are.

But there are no shortcuts. Success in an endeavor like this is the

result of steady, unremitting pressure over the long haul. It is a test

of wills, demanding patience, determination and stamina from all

involved.

General Petraeus, as we know, was unanimously confirmed by the United

States Senate to be our commander in Iraq, yet somehow we have become

better war commanders than General Petraeus.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

. Mr. Speaker, before I yield to the gentleman from

South Carolina (Mr. Inglis) who has traveled to Iraq several times, I

yield myself a minute to answer some questions posed on the other side

of the aisle.

What we have here is a nonspecific, nondetailed, nothing planned for

victory. The bill on page 3, since the gentleman refers to the bill,

let's look at it. It talks about a reduction, a transition, a limited

presence, a limited presence, again, with maximum attention paid to the

protection of our Armed Forces. What does that mean? So you want our

troops to face the terrorists with even less protection?

It shall be further implemented as part of a comprehensive strategy.

What do these phrases mean? What would General Petraeus do if this

legislation were to become law, which it will not? This is not a plan.

It says nothing. It is making a political statement.

I am pleased to yield 3 1/2 minutes to the gentleman from South

Carolina (Mr. Inglis) who has been to Iraq and understands the

situation well.

Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may

consume because I'd like to comment on a point that was raised by my

good friend from Indiana (Mr. Burton) regarding the intentions of Iran.

The deputy interior minister for security affairs and the former

deputy head of the Revolutionary Guards in Iran said on April 26 of

this year, ``Iran has long-range missiles that can make nowhere safe

for America.''

He also said, ``Iran is able to fire tens of thousands of missiles

per day at American targets on a daily basis and, with its long-range

missiles, can threaten Israel which is acting as America's'' proxy.

So it is clear to us, Mr. Speaker, that Iran seeks not just to wipe

Israel off the map, as Ahmadinejad has said time and again, but to

destroy the United States. So is the plan to immediately leave Iraq so

that Iran can begin its takeover of the region? Is this in the national

security interests of the United States? Is that going to make us

safer?

I think that we should carefully consider what will happen were we to

withdraw immediately as, it has been called for.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of our time.

Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may

consume.

Generals on the ground were consulted on this bill? Seventy percent

of Americans support this bill, support immediate withdrawal of our

troops?

This bill before us is nothing more than political hyperbole,

partisan politics using our troops as cover, because the American

people don't have this bill in front of them. We didn't have this bill

before us until just a few hours ago.

Let me show you exactly what the Democratic leadership has scheduled

for us to debate, and I use the term lightly. For an entire day, rather

than do the hard work of our Congress that we need to do to have more

serious discussions on Iraq, on this bill, on appropriations, it's six

pages long, six pages long.

It was introduced yesterday, so I don't know what commanders on the

field we consulted with. I would be interested in doing that, in

finding that out. The first page is the title. The second page, it's a

``sense of Congress,'' language, nonbinding. The third page says

``reduce forces to limited presence.'' Who understands what that is?

Certainly not the drafters of this bill. The fourth and the fifth page

calls for a strategy.

Yet this Congress already has demanded a strategy from the President,

and it is due in September, a report. That's what the Democrats say

they have asked for. But yet they are not willing to wait for that

report.

The last page is definitions. This is what we are debating today,

Democratic politics using our troops as pawns. Commanders on the field

who were consulted? Give me a break.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of our time.