I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

I deeply admire Tom Lantos, my friend, whom I have known for so many

years, and Ike Skelton, the authors of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, this is a debate about an issue we all have strong

feelings about. I regret to say it's a debate that's under a closed

rule that doesn't allow all aspects of this issue to come to the

forefront, and I deeply regret that.

We asked for a new Secretary of Defense. We wanted Rumsfeld replaced,

and he was replaced by Secretary Gates. We asked for a new general on

the ground and a new strategy, and General Petraeus was chosen.

After all that he had already done, he was willing to step in. He

received unanimous support in the Senate, unanimous support. He has

asked one thing from us with this new strategy. He said, give me until

September 15 to show what we can do with this surge.

What this resolution does is it bypasses that. It basically, in my

judgment, pulls the rug out from under General Petraeus. I think we owe

it to him, unless he were to come back and say, we need to change our

strategy right now, but he hasn't done that.

In my 17 visits to Iraq, I have seen good months and bad months.

Since December, I think it's pretty extraordinary that we have won back

Anbar province, an all-Sunni province. The irony is, we had given it

up, and it had become a mini Afghanistan with al Qaeda acting like the

Taliban. The tribal leaders came to us and said, help us get rid of

them.

If we were not there to do that, they would be stuck with an

Afghanistan with a Taliban type leadership in all of the Sunni area in

Anbar province. But, fortunately, we didn't pull the rug out from under

them. We are there to help them.

I think there are at least two inconvenient truths that we are

dealing with. One inconvenient truth is the one that Al Gore talks

about, which I wish more of us paid attention to, and that's global

warming. The other inconvenient truth is what the 9/11 Commission

report says, we are confronting Islamist terrorists.

Islamist terrorists have made it very clear that this is ground zero.

If we were to leave Iraq, Iraq, in my judgment, would be like

Afghanistan, with no troops to prevent the insurgents to do just what

the Taliban did. I just hope and pray that we find a way to work

together, that we look at bringing the Iraq Study Group presentation

before us, because we all say we can support it. Let's build on what we

can agree.

I conclude by making this point. We ask the Shia, Sunnis and Kurds to

work together and reach out to each other, but Democrats and

Republicans are having a hard time reaching out and working together.

Bring forward a bipartisan proposal and see how well it could do on the

House floor.