Mr. Speaker, one of my colleagues suggested earlier that

debating the war as we are today is breaking the will of the American

people.

On the contrary, it's the people's will that is breaking down the

wall of a tragically mistaken policy. It has become painfully obvious

that the White House is incapable of changing course in Iraq.

The Bush administration's talking points about the situation change

from week to week, but the fundamental strategy remains the same. The

President has determined our troops will remain in Iraq no matter what.

The reality is that the government of Iraq is not meeting the

benchmark.

Six months into the surge, there is no indication that the Iraqis are

coming together to make the political decisions necessary to end the

sectarian violence that's tearing the country apart. They are unlikely

to do so as long as the U.S. military commitment remains open-ended.

We need to change course. Support this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the rule and urge my

colleagues to support the bill.

It has become painfully obvious that the White House is incapable of

changing course in Iraq. The Bush administration's talking points about

the situation in Iraq change from week to week, but the fundamental

strategy remains the same. The President is determined that our troops

will remain in Iraq no matter what.

The latest White House talking points are aimed at getting the

American people to believe that the surge in Iraq just began a couple

weeks ago, instead of 6 months ago. In fact, the President announced

the surge back on January 10, and the troop escalation began in early

February.

The White House is emphasizing today that it finds that Iraq is

making ``satisfactory'' progress in some areas, such as the cooperation

between U.S. forces and tribal sheiks in Anbar province as well as the

formation of a Constitutional Review Committee, although the

constitutional review itself is not complete. The reality is that the

Iraqi Government has not approved a law to share Iraq's oil wealth. It

has not enacted legislation to reform the De-Ba'athification laws. It

has not disarmed the militias. It has not made progress on ensuring

that Iraqi Security Forces are providing even-handed enforcement of the

law. It has not made progress toward increasing the number of Iraqi

Security Forces units capable of operating independently. It has not

made satisfactory progress toward establishing a date for provincial

elections.

In the past 6 months, nearly 600 of our troops have died. More than

13,000 Iraqis have died. The level of violence in Iraq has not

decreased. The violence and attacks have

simply shifted away from places where our forces are concentrated.

Six months into the surge, there is no indication that the Iraqis are

coming together to make the political decisions necessary to end the

sectarian violence that is tearing their country apart. Time has shown

that whatever small chance there is of the Iraqi factions coming

together, it will not happen as long as the U.S. military commitment in

Iraq remains open-ended. We need to change course. The bill before the

House does just that. It requires the Department of Defense to begin a

phased and orderly redeployment of our combat troops from Iraq starting

in 120 days of enactment, with the troop reduction to be complete by

April 1, 2008. No other way has worked to convince the Iraqis that they

need to step up and reach a political settlement to end the sectarian

violence.