Mr. Speaker, I thank my former chairman of the Rules

Committee, the gentleman from California, for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose this rule and condemn the

underlying bill, hastily leaving Iraq without any clear exit strategy.

Mr. Speaker, the timing of this legislation should raise some serious

questions for the American people. It comes at a critical point in the

global war on terror, a point at which our efforts should be focused on

defeating terrorism inflicted by Islamic jihadists, not usurping the

power of our military commanders, as this bill clearly does.

Today's debate comes on the heels of an intelligence analysis stating

al Qaeda has regrouped to a level not seen since 9/11 with a greater

ability to strike inside the United States. It comes in the immediate

aftermath of the Muslim extremist attacks in London and Glasgow. In

sum, it comes at a time when our decisions must be based

on strategic interests and not political grandstanding.

However, Mr. Speaker, this bill is not designed to help us fight

terrorism to secure the United States' interests. In fact, its timing

has nothing to do with national security at all.

Today, the Democratic leaderships want us to vote on a change of

course before we have had the opportunity to fully analyze the

President's interim report on our strategy in Iraq, and well ahead of

the much anticipated September report to be delivered by General

Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker.

So why are we debating this now? Curiously, it comes at a time when

this Democratic Congress has an approval rating as low as 14 percent.

That's right, Mr. Speaker, their approval is at an all-time low. Their

base, the extremist left, is very angry. They are angry at the

Democrats' Out of Iraq Caucus because they failed to deliver. Indeed,

Cindy Sheehan, their poster child, has now announced her candidacy

against Speaker Pelosi.

So what do the Democrats do? They take another shot at Old Faithful.

When all else fails, when they can't get anything accomplished, when

all they can deliver to the American public is the most closed Congress

in history, they engage in another round of political theater

engineered to do nothing but grab a few headlines and appease that

liberal base.

Mr. Speaker, let's not waste the time of this body by debating vague

bills with absolutely no chance of becoming law. Let's instead examine

the upcoming September report from our top military commanders and

then, yes, then make informed decisions on the best path forward.

My friend, the distinguished chairwoman of the Rules Committee, the

gentlewoman from New York, stated in her opening remarks that if we

wait until September, as I suggest, 200 more troops would be lost and

the lives of 200 families would be changed forever.

Mr. Speaker, let me remind my colleagues that within a 20-minute

period of time on September 11, 2001, 3,000 lives were lost, some of

our brightest and best; and, indeed, the lives of 3,000 families were

changed forever.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to urge my colleagues to oppose this rule

and to oppose the irresponsible underlying bill.