Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this

rule, H. Res. 861. I firmly believe that the installation of democratic

governments in Afghanistan and Iraq, coupled with the recent completion

of Iraq's National Unity Government and ratification of a Constitution,

the elimination of Abu Musab al Zarqawi, and the continued success of

our reconstruction efforts in these countries are tremendous

accomplishments in the global war on terror.

We are at a point in Iraq where we can build on these successes. We

can advance democracy and freedom and stand by the Iraqi people while

honoring the commitment that we have made. Or we can withdraw, as many

on the other side of appeasement are suggesting, leaving the progress

we have made and the future of Iraq to chance. Just as in Europe and

Japan following World War II, there is only one option, Mr. Speaker,

and that is to stand by the Iraqis until their government, police,

military can ensure the security of their own nation. Then, and only

then, will be the appropriate time to disengage, leaving a strong ally

and flourishing democracy as an example of a peaceful and free nation

to others in the Middle East region.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we simply cannot give in to the anti-war

rhetoric which only serves to embolden our enemies, while offering

little hope and little vision. Rather, we must continue to advance

policies which make our Nation safer, which are responsible for the

liberation of over 50 million people in Iraq and Afghanistan. It has

led Libya to abandon their weapons of mass destruction program, and it

makes every new year worse than the previous one for the terrorists.

In this fight for the future of peace, freedom and democracy in the

Middle East and around the globe, winning should be our only option.

This past Friday we heard Prime Minister Maliki of Iraq make the

following statement: ``With our allies we will persevere to make Iraq a

prosperous democracy in the heart of the Middle East.''

Mr. Speaker, it is easy to see great hope and potential in the Iraqi

government and the Iraqi people. Unfortunately, the minority party

offers no hope. All we hear are ill-conceived and shortsighted

strategies which threaten any chance of Iraq becoming a bastion of

democracy in the Middle East.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support this rule and

the resolution, which sends a clear and a positive message to the new

Iraqi government and its citizens. But just as importantly, Mr.

Speaker, it sends a clear message to those soldiers who have been

injured or killed and their families that this Congress will never

break faith with them.