Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from New York, the

distinguished Chair on the Committee of Rules for yielding me the time,

and I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in the strongest possible opposition to this rule

and the underlying legislation. I could start this debate by quoting my

Democratic colleagues on the Rules Committee when they decried

Republican tactics over the last few years, how they railed against

closed rules and chided me personally. I am a big guy, I can handle it.

But they attacked me personally constantly for denying amendments that

were offered by both Democrats and Republicans. I could quote every

instance that they promised to do better, to have the most open and

fair Congress in the history of this country, and to not have late-

night meetings. But today, Mr. Speaker, I am not going to do that. I am

going to recognize that that would simply distract from this very, very

important issue. Instead, I

am going to simply provide the House, Mr. Speaker, and you witnessed

much of this last night, with a factual account of what took place in

the wee hours of this morning.

Shortly before 1 a.m., the Rules Committee on party-line votes

reported out two self-executing closed rules, and denied the

consideration of some 70 amendments submitted to the Rules Committee

from both Republicans and Democrats as well. That is what happened.

There is no denying it. You, Mr. Speaker, witnessed it yourself when

you were upstairs in the Rules Committee.

So regardless of the process, this supplemental appropriations bill

is a constitutionally dubious attempt at micromanaging the Iraq war

into what I believe would be inevitable defeat if it succeeds. It

enjoys such limited support on the other side of the aisle that it had

to be ladened with unrelated pork in order to win enough votes to have

any hope of passing. It is a cynical ploy that will leave dire

consequences for the region, and for our own security, in its wake.

The Constitution lays out a very clear system of checks and balances

derived from the ideas of the Framers of our Constitution. By giving

the three branches of government distinct roles, we guard ourselves

against tyranny; we guard ourselves as individuals against tyranny in

each branch.

The President cannot wage war without authorization or funding from

Congress. But if authorization and funding are granted, the President

serves as the Commander in Chief with the authority to execute the war.

Mr. Speaker, this bill ignores the intentions of those Framers, and

it attempts to turn the Constitution on its head. James Madison, Father

of the Constitution, the author of the Constitution in Federalist No.

51, wrote, and I quote, ``In framing a government that is to be

administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: You

must first enable the government to control the governed, and in the

next place oblige it to control itself.''

Mr. Speaker, Madison recognized the inherent challenges in designing

a government that is both effective and limited. He knew that, without

checks and balances, tyranny would, in fact, ensue.

This bill attempts to diminish these checks and balances. It tries to

turn Congress into a collection of 535 Commanders in Chief. This

legislation of micromanagement is based on a disastrous strategy. Its

authors fund the war, and then mandate its failure. They seek to tie

the hands of our military commanders, and then force them to retreat

when they are unable to meet impossible timetables. They mandate the

withdrawal with no regard for the situation on the ground, and then

they sweeten the deal with $15 billion in money that is unrelated

spending that has got a little something in there for practically

everyone: $283 million for the milk income lost contract program; $74

million for peanut storage costs; $1.3 billion for the Army Corps of

Engineers. Billions and billions of dollars for these projects, some

worthy, some not.

But none of them related to the troops, and what this is, this is a

war funding supplemental. None of these are emergency items.

Their only connection to emergency supplemental appropriations for

the war, Mr. Speaker, in Iraq, is that they are necessary to build

support for this bill, a bill that trades victory for electoral gains.

Make no mistake, this legislation is a political solution for

Democrats, not a strategy for winning in Iraq.

And what would the consequences of defeat be? The National

Intelligence Estimate, the 9/11 Commission, and our people on the

ground have all made it very clear that a precipitous withdrawal would

have catastrophic consequences. The carnage of the battle of Baghdad

that we are witnessing today will be just the beginning. Violence will

spill out across the country and spread to the entire region.

In our absence, Iran and Syria will be utterly unfettered in their

ability to incite a regional war that threatens global security, with

enormous casualties suffered by the people of the region.

Proponents of a policy of defeat often point to our diminished

standing in the international community. But what about our standing

with the Iraqi people? Terrorist attacks on our own soil have

demonstrated that our security and their security are directly linked.

And, Mr. Speaker, Operation Iraqi Freedom has bound us even more

closely. We have a commitment to help the Iraqi people establish

lasting security through democracy. We have a commitment not to abandon

them to be slaughtered by terrorists.

And if we retreat, we not only abandon the Iraqi people, we draw

terrorism back to our own doorstep. Have we so soon forgotten the

tragedy of attacks on our homeland?

We took the war on terror to the terrorists and have suffered not one

attack since September 11 of 2001.

With this bill, we would bring the war on terror back home. Only this

time we will have strengthened the terrorists ourselves with a road map

for success. We will have demonstrated precisely what it takes to

defeat the United States of America. We will have clearly signaled to

them that they must simply bide their time until the mandated retreat,

at which time they will be able to terrorize with impunity.

I, like many Americans, Mr. Speaker, have been discouraged by this

war. We all feel the toll that it has taken. And we are keenly aware of

the price that we are paying, especially in a human sense. Every one of

my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, has, as I have, looked in the faces of

constituents whose family and friends have made the ultimate sacrifice

in this war. Their pain is very real, and their loss is profound.

I regularly talk to a man called Ed Blecksmith whose son J.P. was

tragically killed 2 years ago this past November in the very famous

battle of Fallujah. And he has, time and time again, said to me, if we

don't complete this mission, my son J.P. will have died in vain.

But we do not honor those who have sacrificed by abandoning their

mission. We do not honor those in the field who are fighting, as we

speak, by tying their hands and depriving them of the means to succeed.

We will honor them by winning the war in Iraq so that our men and women

come home having completed their mission.

We know that their mission will not be complete in the immediate

future. As President Bush and General David Petraeus have both

acknowledged, success will take months, not days or weeks. But there

are signs of hope that the President's new plans, under General

Petraeus, are working.

As Brian Williams of NBC reported from the field in Iraq, he said,

``This change in policy, getting out, decentralizing, going into the

neighborhoods, grabbing a toehold, telling the enemy we are here,

talking to the locals, that is having an obvious and palpable effect.

There are hopeful signs.'' That was said by the NBC news anchor, Brian

Williams.

Mr. Speaker, to abandon our mission now would be disastrous. I urge

my colleagues to reject the policy of defeat, reject the return of

terrorism to our homeland, and reject this unconstitutional power grab

whose sole purpose is to cede victory to our enemies.

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

Mr. Speaker, in 1859 that great philosopher and religious

leader John Stuart Mill wrote: ``War is an ugly thing, but not the

ugliest of things. The decayed and degraded state of moral and

patriotic feeling which thinks that nothing is worth war is much

worse.''

We have yet to hear from the other side of the aisle about how we are

going to win the global war on terror. We haven't heard, as my friend,

Mr. Lungren, just said to me, the ``V'' word. How are we going to be

victorious in this war?

I urge my colleagues to vote ``no'' on this rule. This is the largest

supplemental spending bill in the history of this planet; and it is

being brought up under a closed rule.

Our colleagues in the other body will have an opportunity to amend

and discuss and debate this. Only a few Members of the Democratic

leadership fashioned this measure, Mr. Speaker. It is unfair. It sends

the wrong message to our troops. We must be victorious in this war.

With that, I urge a ``no'' vote on the rule and if they pass this

rule, a ``no'' vote on the underlying legislation.