Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman for

yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, this closed rule allows only an up-or-down vote on the

Democrats' proposal regarding needed military spending, but it contains

an unrealistic timeline for the withdrawal of troops, and it includes

bloated spending for nonmilitary expenditures.

We all want to do the right thing for our troops in Iraq and the

Iraqi people. This bill does not give us the opportunity to do either.

I offered three amendments to the Rules Committee, and none were made

in order because it made no amendment in order. One was to increase

funding for our community action programs in Iraq, like Mercy Corps,

who hire Iraqis in their organizations, and then the Iraqis are hired

to do the work.

A second amendment would have required the President to come in with

a timeline and to then require the Iraqis to meet it, and needing a 60

percent vote of support of this timeline or we leave even sooner.

The third was to encourage this Congress to debate the Iraqi Study

Group recommendations, which both Democrats and Republicans agree with.

We could have done something on a bipartisan basis. We expect Iraqis

to work out their differences and are critical when the Sunnis and

Shias are unable to find common ground. Yet we in this Congress,

Republicans and Democrats, are unable to work out our differences, and

we don't even have to fear a bomb being blown off or an assassination

attempt.

We went into Iraq on a bipartisan basis. Two-thirds of the House and

three-quarters of the Senate voted to go in. It is absolutely

imperative we get out of Iraq on a bipartisan basis.

I encourage my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to allow us

to have a bipartisan approach.