Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed that Republican

leadership is again attempting to score political points on the backs

of our troops. I congratulate the Iraqi people for their brave actions

during yesterday's election and hope for them that this is a turning

point in their country's history. Had the Republican leadership allowed

our ranking member on the House International Relations Committee, Mr.

Lantos, to offer his resolution to this effect, we could have offered a

unanimous statement of support from Congress and avoided this ugly and

divisive debate.

The basic flaw in the resolution that we are debating is that it

assumes that victory in Iraq is a military outcome to be achieved by

U.S. troops. Our men and women in uniform have done everything which

we've asked of them. They have won every battle, but a successful

future for Iraq requires a strategy to secure the peace that builds on

what our troops have achieved.

It makes no sense to remain in Iraq until victory is achieved if our

continued military presence brings Iraq no closer to stability.

Instead, we need a plan to change the course in Iraq and achieve the

best possible outcome for Iraqis and Americans. I have laid out a plan,

as have Mr. Murtha and others. Rather than a divisive debate over a

politicized resolution, we should have an open and honest debate over

how to best proceed in Iraq. The American people deserve no less.