Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition to this

intellectually dishonest resolution. I do so in order to challenge the

majority party to put their legislating where their mouths have been.

The endless criticism to the war in Iraq is clouded by political

opportunism and has done little or nothing to improve our chances of

victory.

We need an honest debate. We need answers from those who support this

resolution. What is next? What is your plan? It should come as no

surprise that the resolution we are debating today says very little.

There are less than 100 words. And while the rhetoric has been flying

during the debate, it seems to me that the new Democratic majority is

hoping to avoid debate in which they might have to defend their plan in

Iraq.

What we have here is nothing more than a political exercise, a

nonbinding resolution, words with no meaning. Make no mistake, their

opposition to the President's plan is political. There is no

constructive criticism here. Read their resolution.

Iraq is the battleground, Madam Speaker, a key battleground against

extremism, terrorism and the expansionist goals of our enemies.

If we fail, Iraq will be a hotbed of radical Islamic activity, a

pivotal safe haven, a base from which to plan and fund attacks against

us.

Madam Speaker, how is the danger associated with defeat in Iraq not

clear? I ask my colleagues, what evidence do you need? Have you

listened to the words of our enemies? Must we have more casualties in

American cities before you accept the nature of this global threat? How

quickly we forget, Madam Speaker.

I urge my colleagues to listen carefully to the words of Osama bin

Laden. Last year, bin Laden said, ``Iraq is the focal point of the war

on terror. The most important and serious issue today for the whole

world is this Third World War. It is raging in Iraq. The world's

millstone and pillar is in Baghdad, the capital of the caliphate.''

Another one, ``Jihad against America will continue. Jihad against

America will continue economically and militarily. By the grace of

Allah, America is in retreat. But more attacks are required.''

Madam Speaker, Osama bin Laden, as well as other Islamic extremists

around the world, view the conflict in Iraq as the central battleground

in their ideological struggle.

Make no mistake, we are at war, and it is about time that some of our

members of our government figured it out.

Someday soon, the Representatives who are supporting this resolution

will have to explain to the voters what they have done to make us safer

at home and abroad. Since this resolution does nothing more than

embolden our enemies, demoralize our troops, and send mixed messages to

our allies, they will have a difficult task before them.

Today, unfortunately, we won't hear much about the Democrat plan for

Iraq. We will, instead, hear a lot about failure and defeat. We might

even hear a conspiracy theory or two. And, of course, we will hear a

lot of political posturing.

But Madam Speaker, the American people deserve to know the truth.

What happens next, Madam Speaker, to those who believe the President is

wrong, to those who believe we rushed to war, to those who can't get

beyond our national intelligence failures and, instead, persist on

conspiracy theories? Tell us, what is next? What is your plan to

protect the American people?

Madam Speaker, I demand answers from the authors of this resolution.

The American people have a right to know. Is your plan to simply stand

aside and allow an ideology of hate to consume the Middle East?

I implore my colleagues, if you won't heed the warnings of our

military and intelligence organizations, listen to al Qaeda's own

words. They are speaking directly to you.

This is from Deputy leader al-Zawahiri recently. ``I wish to talk to

the Democrats in America. You aren't the ones who won the midterm

elections, nor are the Republicans the ones who lost; rather, the

Mujahadin are the ones who won and the American forces and their allies

lost.''

I ask my colleagues, how can you offer this resolution, knowing the

enemy we face? Do you really have nothing to offer the American people

but this? Is this resolution the best effort of the new Democrat

majority in response to our challenge in Iraq?

Madam Speaker, we should have an honest debate about Iraq. And my

friends who are convinced that the war is wrong need to be accountable

for failing to say what is right.

In closing, I want to say how proud I am of the men and women who are

fighting for our freedom and security all over the world. They don't

deserve what we are doing to them today. This resolution is a sham. It

is nothing more than political grandstanding, and it is feeding the

propaganda machine of our enemy.

I have been to Iraq. I have seen the efforts of our soldiers

firsthand. They want to win. They have seen the face of the enemy and I

can assure you they are committed to winning. If you are committed to

winning, vote ``no'' on this resolution