Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for accommodating me

so I might have some time to speak on this issue this evening.

Today, Speaker Pelosi has continued with what is called a debate on

the Iraq war, but this is not a debate. The floor here is empty, except

for the Members scheduled to come to the floor for the record and

comment on the failures or success of the war on terror, the conflict

in Iraq, prewar intelligence, the search for weapons of mass

destruction, reconstruction efforts, al Qaeda, Saddam Hussein and, yes,

George Bush. No real debate.

School children across America who are schooled in debate would not

recognize what has happened here today, which should be the

intellectual process of argument, because to call these series of

speeches a debate is fiction, just as to call the nonbinding resolution

proposed by the Speaker as congressional action is fiction.

This resolution has no binding effect on the administration, and it

does not even have any binding effect on this body of Congress. This

resolution is not a document from which decisions will be made or any

action taken. This is not policy. This is not governance. It is, at

best, a press conference. It is just talk.

The travesty of this fiction of a debate on the House floor is that

there is no plan debated or alternatives for us to consider, only

opposition. We do not have on the table a plan, an answer, or an action

for us to take.

Now, I was not a Member of Congress when this House was asked in

October of 2002 to grant the President authority to go into Iraq, and

neither were 66 of my Republican Members of Congress. If they were with

me they would fill this well, 66 of us that were not here on the

Republican side when the President asked for authority to go into Iraq.

However, I believe there are 55 Democratic colleagues who voted to send

troops to Iraq who are still here today, and yet even those 55 Members

who voted to send troops to Iraq offer no alternative plan. At a

minimum you would think if you voted ``yes'' to send troops you would

feel responsible and have a plan before publicly disapproving of the

President's plan.

Now, there is certainly enough about the administration's handling of

the Iraq conflict to disapprove of if we were to have a real debate.

There is no question that serious mistakes have been

made in the execution of the Iraqi conflict. But today we will not

debate solutions because, unfortunately, this resolution does not

provide any.

In the war on terror, we have real enemies who want to kill Americans

and our allies. No nonbinding resolution passed on this House floor

will change that reality.

This is not a debate but it should be. The risks to our country are

great. Our enemies and our men and women in uniform are listening. The

only proposal brought forth by the Speaker is a statement of opposition

and disapproval.

The House and the administration should work together on a bipartisan

plan for winning the war on terror, a plan with a commitment that is

not undermined by political expediency or partisan division.