I appreciate the gentleman from Texas (Mr. Thornberry)

for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, on Monday night the Rules Committee met and after hours

of testimony from members of both parties, the Democrat members of the

committee voted along party lines to shut out every opportunity for

amendments to be a part of this debate of this

resolution today that we will be debating for the next 2 days.

Our colleague from Texas, Congressman Sam Johnson, brought an

amendment that would have clarified that Congress and the American

people support our troops and that funding for our Armed Forces serving

bravely in harm's way should not be cut off or restricted in any way.

Our colleague from Virginia, Frank Wolf, also brought to the Rules

Committee a very comprehensive amendment that would have made clear

that Congress supports the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group,

with its emphasis on providing American commanders serving in Iraq with

the strategy and tactical means that they need for success and

accelerating cooperation with Iraqi leaders to meet specific goals, as

the strategy for moving forward to success in Iraq.

A number of other Members also spent a lot of their evening sitting

in the Rules Committee waiting to share their ideas about how to

improve this resolution which thus would help America in our message to

not only the President but also the world. However, the 13 members of

the Rules Committee are the only ones who had the benefit of hearing

and debating these good ideas because none of them were given the

opportunity to be considered and voted on by the House. Instead, rather

than allowing this body to consider good ideas, today we are continuing

debate on the floor with a completely closed process to debate a

nonbinding resolution with no teeth and serious logistical flaws.

In two short paragraphs, without explicitly stating that funds will

not be cut off for our troops that serve in harm's way, the resolution

asserts that Congress and the American people will continue to support

the members of the Armed Forces who are serving in Iraq. This

nonspecific language is something that every single Member of this

House already supports. It also states that Congress disapproves of the

President's plan to deploy 20,000 reinforcements to Iraq to bolster the

mission and provide additional support to the troops already there

serving on the ground. This resolution gives no direction on how we

should proceed in Iraq. Instead, it settles for some generic language

about supporting the troops without guaranteeing that Congress will

continue to fund their efforts and stand behind them as they remain in

harm's way. And it simply amounts to a vote for the status quo.

Mr. Speaker, this is a serious debate about the serious challenges

that America faces in not only this fight in Iraq but also against

Islamic terrorism. We all understand the cost of failure in Iraq is too

great to bear. It would embolden radical Islamic terrorists and give

them a base from which to train from and to attack America for

generations. But with this resolution, my colleagues on the other side

of the aisle provide the troops with nothing: no guarantees that we

will continue to fund their heroic efforts; no guarantees that Congress

will heed the advice of the Iraq Study Group, which notes on page 73 of

their report that it would ``support a short-term redeployment or surge

of American combat forces to stabilize Baghdad, or to speed up the

training and equipping mission.'' Nor does this resolution provide the

American people with a clear picture of our direction in Iraq. It

simply says ``no.'' It says ``no'' to the only strategy for success

that has been placed forward. President Bush said, ``If you disagree

with me, then come outthink me.'' This resolution in its simple form

does not do that.

Mr. Speaker, I think Congress can do better than this nonbinding

resolution for the status quo of Iraq. I know that a number of my

Republican colleagues tried to improve this legislation but were denied

that opportunity. But I know that our troops serving in harm's way and

the American people deserve better than this simplistic resolution that

provides no new ideas, outlines no strategy for victory, and makes no

guarantees that we will continue to stand behind our troops with

funding. I am greatly disappointed in this resolution and the Democrat

majority's efforts to prevent this body from considering meaningful

amendments.