I thank my friend for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in sorrow, not in anger, because this morning

could be a morning of unity and celebration and congratulations.

Yesterday in unprecedented numbers the people of Iraq rejected the

threats and intimidation of the terrorists and chose a new permanent

national Parliament, the first fully sovereign, elected democratic

assembly in the history of Iraq. This should be cause for celebration

for the Iraqi people, for our troops, the troops of our allies and the

Iraqi security forces who bravely protected the Iraqi people who came

out to vote. Unfortunately, the resolution before us does not do that,

and that I deeply regret.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that there is a spectrum of views on my side

of the aisle on how to deal with the difficult situation in Iraq in the

weeks and months ahead. Yesterday I was asked with a number of other

Democrats to go to the White House. I sat next to the President as we

talked about the possibility of building a united approach to this

difficult dilemma. But the leadership, in a rigid, unbending, almost

ruthless fashion, refused to take one single word of change or

modification in their resolution. It was a take-it-or-leave-it

proposal, which is inappropriate in a democratic legislative body where

some of us have been attempting to operate in a bipartisan fashion.

I introduced a resolution and asked the Rules Committee to make it in

order. My resolution congratulates the Iraqi people on three democratic

national elections, encourages all Americans to support the Iraqi

people, and commends our troops and those of our allies and the Iraqi

forces for protecting their people at election time.

That is the resolution which should be before us today. We would get

a unanimous vote, and we would send a message to our troops and to the

whole world that Congress is united. Instead, by rigidly demanding

total adherence to the Republican formula, there will be an ugly,

divisive debate in this body this morning. This is not in our national

interest.

I wish to use the balance of my time to read the resolution that I

believe ought to be before us, Mr. Speaker.

The text of my resolution is as follows:

There isn't a Member in this body who could not subscribe

to this. This is not the time for an ugly and divisive debate. And with

its rigidity and total unwillingness to listen to half of this body,

the majority has chosen to give us an ugly and divisive debate.

I would like to comment on your observation.

Thank you for your courtesy.

Thank you.

My good friend Mr. Dreier suggested that there will not be a divisive

debate this morning. That divisive debate has already begun. You need

to listen to the words of what my colleagues are saying. I attempted to

avoid this divisive debate this morning. I attempted at the end of this

session to have this Congress go home with a unanimous vote

congratulating the Iraqi people on what they have done; congratulating

our military, our allies and the Iraqi forces for making it possible

for them to vote.

There are divisions on policy, and it is an ostrich policy to pretend

that there are no divisions. I may agree with the gentleman's view

about a timetable. That is not the issue. The issue is that the last

discussion of Iraq in this body will show division, bitterness and

divisiveness, and that could have been avoided with a little bit of

flexibility and consideration on the part of the majority for the views

of almost one-half of this body.

I thank my friend for yielding.

Reclaiming my time, it is in the national interest to

show the greatest degree of unity in this body, and your resolution

does the opposite.