I thank my friend, the distinguished Rules

Committee member from Massachusetts, for yielding me time.

Last night I made the statement in the Rules Committee that I would

not participate in the debate. I do not intend when the debate begins

to have anything to say, and quite frankly if I had the wherewithal, I

would ask my colleagues on the Democratic side not to say anything as

well. But I do know a little bit now, having served on the Rules

Committee for a little while, about closed rules, and I know when we

have closed rules, we restrict democracy.

We come here to advocate for democracy in Iraq, as rightly we should.

But I come this morning to advocate democracy for the Members of the

House of Representatives who have a different point of view that needs

to be heard regarding this important matter having to do with our

Nation. Like my friend and mentor, Tom Lantos, I feel that there will

be division as a result of the resolution as filed. I quite frankly am

a bit surprised that so many people in the majority who argue that the

war should not be politicized have done an act, although subtle and

nuanced, that is as political as most things that we do here.

I do not decry politics. That is what we do for a living. But when it

comes to this Nation, we all have a responsibility to stand together.

There is no one in this Congress that does not support the military of

the United States in every aspect of what it has done. There is no one

in this Congress that wants us to fail in achieving victory in Iraq and

anywhere that terror exists in this world. We have a vested interest in

that. We have a natural right to pursue that particular interest.

But to fashion a resolution that ignores the language that Mr. Lantos

offered, that does precisely the same thing with civility all

throughout it, I cannot imagine that we have passed yet another closed

rule and that we have restricted a sensible, civil resolution offered

by Mr. Lantos, Ms. Pelosi, and Mr. Hoyer.

In that light, I consider it to be the kind of act that is seemingly

becoming the pattern with so many people in this House who represent so

many constituents who are not being heard.

Mr. Speaker, in 20 seconds I put to the

Chair a simple question: If this resolution is so simple and

noncontroversial, why did it come through the Rules Committee? And is

it not true that Mr. Lantos' resolution is also simple, and there was

nothing to preclude the Committee on Rules from hearing the Lantos

matter, had you chosen? And are you not the greatest exemplar of not

having closed rules, Mr. Chairman?

I thank the chairman for not answering my

question.