Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding, and I urge

all my colleagues to reject this rule.

Mr. Speaker, as we embark on this debate, I believe it is important

to recall the debate we had during the first Persian Gulf crisis.

In 1991, we were on the brink of war with Iraq over Saddam Hussein's

invasion of Kuwait. Emotions were high, and the parties were divided.

We Democrats were in the majority then, and we allowed over 30 hours of

debate on three different measures representing profoundly differing

points of view.

I wish to repeat this, Mr. Speaker: we allowed over 30 hours of

debate on three different measures representing profoundly differing

points of view.

And the critical vote, Mr. Speaker, was on a proposal of the

Republican minority sponsored by the Republican minority leader, Bob

Michel. It was supported by some of us on the majority Democratic side,

myself included, and it prevailed.

And in 1999, Mr. Speaker, as the people of Kosovo bled from the

wounds of Serbian bullets, this House had a highly emotional debate

over three different resolutions relating to proposed U.S. action to

end the humanitarian disaster. Again, the minority was afforded an

alternative which barely lost on a tie vote.

Today we are purportedly debating how to end the war, rather than

whether to begin one, and an equally vital debate given the lives at

stake. But the Republican leadership has thrown out all precedent and

instead of giving the House a chance to work its will, they are forcing

us into a charade.

Members will not be given a chance to offer amendments or

alternatives to

let the House work its will. Rather, all that is offered is 82 seconds

for each Member to state a view on the complex and difficult subject of

the Iraq war.

Mr. Speaker, I tried to work on this resolution with my good friend,

Chairman Hyde, on a bipartisan basis as I always have. But the

Republican leadership expanded the original draft far beyond Iraq and

rejected every one of our substantive suggestions.

Mr. Speaker, this rule should allow all Members to offer their own

ideas through amendments to this resolution. At a minimum, it should

allow a Democratic substitute, and it should provide enough time so

that every Member has at least 5 minutes to express his or her views.

Mr. Speaker, just as the Democratic majority gave Republican minority

leader Bob Michel an alternative in 1991 during the first Iraq debate,

our Democratic leader, Nancy Pelosi, should have the same opportunity

to offer a Democratic alternative with the same chance of prevailing in

this House.

Instead, the Republican leadership has turned what could have been a

serious debate into a charade.

I urge a ``no'' vote.