Mr. Speaker, before I get into the substance of

my close, I simply want to remind my friends on the other side of the

aisle the simple fact is, despite their insistence to the contrary, our

side never received a substitute amendment to consider. The Rules

Committee received four amendments, none of which was a Democratic

substitute. We cannot make in order what is not submitted to the Rules

Committee.

Let me say that I suspect that this procedural problem really

represents the fact that there is not a cohesive alternative presented

by the other side. We have watched again and again and again as the

Democratic Party has struggled to come to grips with this issue and

find a united position, and so far no united position has emerged.

As I pointed out in my opening remarks, we do indeed have a united

position. It is one that you can agree with or disagree with, but it is

a resolution that we can put forward and we can command the

overwhelming majority of our Members to support. And, frankly, I hope

and trust that many Members on the other side will also be supportive

of that position.

Make no mistake about it, Mr. Speaker. What is at stake in Iraq is

the war on terror, whether or not we will be successful. That is the

central battlefield of this particular moment.

Everybody on both sides agrees that removing Saddam Hussein was a

good thing to do. He was an evil man, a dangerous man, a tyrant to his

own people, a threat to world peace. That removal was not going to come

about by accident or by internal revolution. They had indeed tried to

do that. Unfortunately, they had failed. It took direct military

intervention by the United States of America to rid the world of one of

the worst tyrants we have seen in the second half of the 20th and the

opening of the 21st centuries. Once there, the terrorists, our enemies,

made this the central battlefield. And, frankly, over the course of the

last 3 years, they have inflicted enormous damage on the Iraqi people.

I, for one, am enormously proud of how the Iraqis have responded to

that challenge. To see a people who, in the face of terror and death

and destruction, have gone out to the polls not once, not twice, but

three times with ever increasing numbers of participants; to see them

write a constitution in the midst of turmoil and challenge; to watch

them create a permanent government; to watch that government take

control; and to see their people, thousands of their people, stepping

forward to defend their country and fight their enemies who are also

our enemies is, frankly, an inspiring and a noble sight. I think we

have a terrific chance to succeed in Iraq because of the Iraqi people,

because of the valor and the skill and the professionalism of the

American military.

The real battle and the real arena, as my friend Mr. Shays suggested,

is here on the floor of this Congress and in the court of public

opinion in the United States. If we maintain the resolve, if we

maintain the commitment, if we keep our promise to the Iraqi people, we

will be successful. If we do not, we not only will fail, we will

strengthen and harden our enemies and, frankly, will bring dishonor on

ourselves.

I am extraordinarily proud of this President. I am extraordinarily

proud of this Congress with its bipartisan commitment to succeed in

Iraq.

To close, I would urge my colleagues to support this rule and the

underlying legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the

previous question on the resolution.