Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the chairman yielding me the

time.

Mr. Speaker, I think this debate is about the rule, and that is what

we are going to be talking about in order to have more chances to

articulate the sentiments as were just expressed so articulately by the

gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Murtha).

And I have the highest feelings of praise also for Mr. Murtha and his

very strong record on behalf of our defense forces, our troops. He

knows the subject, and he attends to them very well. And I am sorry

that the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Murtha) is aggrieved by the

procedure today.

I need to tell you that I was not consulted either. This is a

leadership resolution that is simply designed after 1 year of fighting

the war on terror, the chapter in Iraq of the book on the war on

terrorism for 1 year and all the extraordinary success and work that

has happened over there. It is entirely appropriate to commend our

troops who are working so hard and the members of the Coalition. That

is the main thrust of this resolution.

Now, I admit it also says that we are commending and acknowledging

and recognizing the courage and the accomplishment of the Iraqi people

to go through very difficult days. And it is entirely appropriate to do

that. It is no mean thing to come up with an interim constitution in

the operational climate that those folks are operating.

And I think it is entirely appropriate for the House of

Representatives of the Congress of the United States, the people's

House, to say we sympathize with them, we understand what they have

been through. And we are very grateful that they have got the patience

to go forward with it and the commitment to do this hard work.

This is a democracy-building exercise in an area where democracy has

had many false starts and very little success. This is good news. It is

entirely appropriate for us at the end of the year to celebrate the

good news.

There has been some concern, as we saw last night in the Committee on

Rules, about whether or not we should be declaring that we are better

off without Saddam. And the language that was used was that the world

is safer without him. We did not say the world is safe. We are in the

middle of a war on terror. And everybody needs to know that.

And we need the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Murtha) and all his

good works and everybody's good works in this body to support the war

on terror because the war on terror will not be won without commitment.

We know how these people work, and we have to be smart enough to resist

the temptations, the wedges they drive, the propaganda they put out,

apply our capabilities and get the job done. It will take all of us.