Mr. Speaker, the debate over this fraudulent resolution is

a sad comment on the level of debate in the House of Representatives

and an insult to a colleague of ours who has dedicated his career in

the House to improving our national defense and supporting American

soldiers, sailors and Air Force personnel. No one in this body can or

should challenge the patriotism of Congressman Jack Murtha, who is a

decorated veteran who spent 37 years in the United States Marine Corps

and whose experience in uniform has helped to shape his informed views

on national security here in Congress. When he expressed his personal

and thoughtful views on the future of our Nation's involvement in the

war in Iraq he was subjected to a barrage of personal criticism that

was truly excessive, including an official statement from the

President's Press Secretary that trivialized the very nature of our

congressional debate over a very important subject.

Today the Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, usually a

thoughtful Member himself, took it upon himself to introduce a

caricature of a resolution that totally ignores many of the important

points that Mr. Murtha originally suggested, and it makes a mockery of

the process of honest and open debate in the House of Representatives.

It is difficult for me to remember a time when serious issues of

national security have ever been treated with such disdain here in the

House, and I am extremely disappointed in the Republican leadership of

the House that has allowed this circus atmosphere to take place today.

Even more astounding to me is that the House is rushing through a

rule to consider this Resolution today with the explanation that it is

ostensibly a debate over the war in Iraq. Nothing could be further from

the truth. We have not had an honest debate on the war in Iraq here in

the House even as we have seen more than 2,000 young American die in

battle. We have not had an honest debate over the quality of

information that we were given before the start of the war, or about

the inability of Secretary Rumsfeld and the Bush Administration to give

us any serious indication of our current objectives or a time line for

the ultimate re-deployment of American troops out of Iraq. I would

welcome such an honest and thorough debate, as I am sure all of my

colleagues in the Democratic party would. But what we are doing today

is a politically motivated exercise that insults that integrity and

cheapens the reputation of the House itself.

There are many troubling aspects of our involvement in Iraq that we

should be debating, including the discovery just this week that some of

the Iraqi security forces that we are training--paying for--were

engaged in the same type of torture of Iraqi citizens that

characterized the reign of Saddam Hussein himself.

What we should not be doing is considering a disingenuous resolution

that is merely intended to elicit sound bites for conservative talk

radio shows and which is a thinly-veiled attempt to insult one of the

most courageous and dedicated members of the House, Mr. Murtha. We can

do better, Mr. Speaker, and we should resoundingly reject this measure.