Mr. Speaker, I rise to associate myself

with the words of the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Murtha) and

salute the troops and emphasize that the world is not yet safe.

Mr. Speaker, every one of us in the House of Representatives supports

our troops. We are proud of their services for this Nation. However,

this is a complex issue. The War in Iraq has become costly and

contentious. The American people are concerned for the future of Iraq,

and for our own future. They deserve to hear that the House of

Representatives is engaging in a thoughtful discussion of the progress

and challenges before us in Iraq.

Unfortunately, on the one-year anniversary of the invasion of Iraq,

instead of looking objectively at the situation in Iraq and discussing

how we got there and how we could have

done things better, we are spending hours on the Floor just discussing

a partisan resolution that is just an opportunity for the leadership to

wave the flag and pat each other on the back. The American people and

our troops deserve a more thoughtful process.

The Republicans put out a resolution, with no input from the many

Members on our side with decades of experience on issues of diplomacy

and foreign policy. The resolution is deeply-flawed in its

incompleteness. It jumps out at me that there is no mention of the

words ``democracy'' or ``women'' or even ``freedom''. What are we

fighting for? What do we want out of this struggle? It used to be about

Weapons of Mass Destruction, but now we are hearing that there probably

have not been any banned weapons in Iraq in over a decade. It used to

be about 9/11; now even the President has admitted that there is no

connection between Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden. Now it is about

``liberating'' the people of Iraq. That is what we lost almost 600 of

our sons and daughters for, and almost $200 billion--while thousands of

Iraqis and losing the respect and admiration of the world community.

But if liberation was the goal, why does the Republican resolution not

mention the principles we are fighting for, and the tremendous costs we

have incurred fighting for them?

Obviously, I feel the discussion this week should be taking a much

different course.

In a time when we are trying to encourage democracy in Iraq and

Afghanistan, we should not be hindering democracy in our own Congress.

I had three amendments that would have enhanced the underlying

resolution, drawing attention to some of the successes that have come

from the toils of our troops and the Iraqi Governing Council, and

pointed to directions where progress is needed.

The first amendment simply would have encouraged the Iraqi Governing

Council to enhance the role of women in the governing process. During

the transition from a brutal dictatorship to a true representative

democracy, it is critical that women are not left out of the mix. Great

strides are being made to provide opportunities for Iraqi women to take

leadership positions. That should be encouraged and reinforced. Instead

the subject is not mentioned in H. Res. 557. I believe the omission was

probably just an oversight that could have been easily corrected with a

quick amendment. Instead we are missing an opportunity because the

Republican leadership is not allowing amendments to their resolution.

Similarly, I was surprised to notice that the word ``democracy'' is

nowhere to be found in the underlying resolution. Isn't it the

principles of freedom and democracy that our soldiers are fighting for?

My second amendment would have added a sense of Congress that the Iraqi

Governing Council should continue on the path toward making Iraq a free

and just democracy.

My third amendment may have been more controversial, but I believe it

would have made the most important contribution. Our soldiers are now

risking their lives fighting for a cause that has been called into

question by our own experts and those from around the world. I didn't

vote to send our troops to War, but I understand that many who did

thought they were doing it to prevent a chemical, biological, or

nuclear weapon from being launched at the U.S. from one of Saddam

Hussein's alleged stockpiles of such WMDs. Now we are learning from Dr.

David Kay and others, that such stockpiles were probably not there when

War broke out. Other Members and some people in the American public

supported the War because they were told Iraq somehow helped cause 9/

11. Now, the President had told us that there is no reason to think

there was such a connection.

I agree that Saddam Hussein was a horrible man. A decade ago, he was

also dangerous to our allies in the region. But a decade of sanctions,

precision strikes by our brave pilots, and patrols of the no fly zone--

left him basically impotent. We need to find out why this

administration was telling us otherwise. It is the duty of Congress to

exercise our oversight of the executive branch, to immediately launch

full Congressional hearings to determine how our intelligence failed,

or how intelligence might have been misused or abused in the run-up to

war. We owe it to our soldiers and our future soldiers to prevent

future lapses.

Some may argue that ``Intelligence is never perfect.'' Misjudging the

size of a stockpile is, or thinking the missiles with anthrax are in

Baghdad when actually they are in Tikrit--that is an ``imperfection''

in intelligence. However, when our President, Secretary of Defense,

Director of the NSC, and Secretary of State are warning us of imminent

threats and mushroom clouds--when the U.N. weapons inspectors are on

the ground getting unprecedented access and can even bring senior Iraqi

scientists to the U.S. for questioning--When we go to war and kill tens

of thousands of Iraqis, and lose almost 600 of our own sons and

daughters, and billions of dollars of taxpayer dollars, and lose the

respect of the world community--that is not ``imperfection'' that is

just a fundamental breakdown of our system.

We cannot base our foreign policy on such flawed intelligence in the

future. It is up to Congress to find out what went wrong and start to

fix the problem. My amendment would have started the process by calling

for immediate hearings and a report to be produced by the end of the

year.

But, we could not even debate that possibility on the Floor. It does

not make sense. It is undemocratic. I would have liked to support the

underlying resolution, but its failure to be forthright, to admit the

need for more progress on the war on terrorism and the need for further

investigation of our nation's representation that Iraq had at the time

of the war, Weapons of Mass Destruction leaves me little choice but to

vote no on partisanship.

I did not think we needed to go to War last year, while U.N.

inspectors were making unprecedented progress in demonstrating that

Saddam Hussein had no WMDs. We could have waited, and focused on

terrorists like Al Queda and Osama bin Laden instead of broadening our

scope and getting distracted by Iraq. Now we have compromised our

military, compromised our budget, compromised our world standing, and

embarked on a mission that could leave us in more danger than we were

before.

As we look at the tragedy last week in Madrid, and then today with

the bombing of the Palestine Hotel in Baghdad, we see that there is

much work left to be done to make the world safer. It does not make

sense to embark on that mission only drawing on half of our

government's expertise. We need to work in a bipartisan fashion and in

support of our troops and for real peace in Iraq and around the world.

It would have been a symbolic first step to work together on today's

resolution.