Mr. Speaker, I rise today because I believe the

resolution before us only tells part of the story about our efforts in

Iraq. I will vote for this resolution because of my thanks to our brave

service personnel for their efforts and my hope for the creation of a

free and democratic Iraq, but I am deeply disappointed in the partisan

way that such an important resolution is being used to further divide

our country.

This resolution portrays the case that we went to Iraq solely based

on the brutality of Saddam Hussein's regime. Americans were told that

Saddam Hussein presented a clear and immediate danger to the safety of

the United States, and our soldiers were told they were going to Iraq

to protect our country from a direct attack on our soil. We now know

that justification to be false, and I believe it is a disservice to our

soldiers who are risking their lives and our citizens if we do not

honestly address the failures in the use of intelligence.

Saddam Hussein was a brutal tyrant who oppressed and murdered his

people. It is good that he is gone. The Iraqi people now have the

opportunity to create something they have never had: a free and stable

country. That is a goal that I fully support.

I am proud of our military personnel for performing above and beyond

the call of duty. They have demonstrated that they are the best

fighting force in the world, and we should show our gratitude for the

professionalism and skill with which they have carried out their

mission.

But that is not the whole story. This resolution fails to recognize

the great sacrifices made by our military personnel and their families,

or offer condolences to the over 540 families who have made the

ultimate sacrifice. This resolution offers no recognition of the

dedication shown by our citizen soldiers who have been asked to serve

in far greater and more dangerous capacity than many of them ever

imagined. We cannot afford to forget these sacrifices.

If we truly wish to honor our soldiers. I ask my colleagues to work

together in a bipartisan way to provide not just words, but actions. We

need to provide the proper support so that they may safely carry out

their mission, and we need to recognize that our responsibility to our

soldiers does not end when they take off the uniform. We need to

recognize that caring for the veterans of this country and the veterans

of this war is part of the cost of defending our Nation.