Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution we are considering today is deeply

flawed. The way it was handled was meant to be divisive, and it has

achieved that goal. None of us in this House knows if next January we

will have a Kerry administration or a Bush administration, but we do

know that whoever is in the White House must ensure the success of U.S.

policy in Europe. Success in time of war requires cohesion and unity.

We do not need a divisive, partisan resolution. This may be the way to

prepare a Republican tax bill, but it is not the way to prepare a

foreign policy resolution to win broad bipartisan support.

Mr. Speaker, the conflict in Iraq should not be a partisan issue. The

soldiers who are fighting in Iraq are Democrats and Republicans and

Independents. The soldiers who are wounded and killed in Iraq are

Democrats and Republicans and Independents. The families who grieve for

their sons and daughters who died in Iraq are Democrats and Republicans

and Independents. The citizens of this country who are paying for this

war are Democrats and Republicans and Independents.

Mr. Speaker, it is totally unacceptable that not a single amendment

to this resolution was made in order. This was a Republican resolution,

drafted with partisan intent by the Republican leadership. Many of us

in this House who have been committed to and who have worked for a

bipartisan foreign policy for decades know that this is a slap in our

face.

A resolution that commends our troops ought to receive the unanimous

support of this body, but this resolution has been written specifically

to prevent that result.

Mr. Speaker, war is a time for shared sacrifice, a time when we are

all united in a common struggle. This is not shared sacrifice. Some

Americans are being killed, some are being wounded, some are asked to

leave their families and risk their lives far from home; and some at

the very top of the income scale are being asked to accept massive tax

cuts.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution commends the troops, but it does not

acknowledge the supreme sacrifice of many who are fighting. This

resolution makes no reference to the more than 550 service men and

women who have died in Iraq. It makes no reference to the thousands

more who have been wounded. It offers no condolences to the families of

those who have been killed. It makes no reference to the sacrifices of

the families whose members are away from them serving in Iraq for many

months or over a year. It makes no reference to the many civilian and

humanitarian workers who risk their lives daily. It makes no reference

to the contribution of our allies who have thousands of troops in Iraq,

and it makes no mention of the death and casualties they have suffered.

And it makes no reference to the Iraqi civilians who have lost their

lives and suffered injuries, including dozens who were killed today.

Mr. Speaker, there are other serious omissions in this resolution. We

should spend our time today debating substantive legislation to fix

these problems. The American people have not sent us here just to be an

``amen'' chorus for this administration. There are serious problems,

and we should be debating serious solutions.

There is no mention in this resolution of the flawed intelligence

that was the basis of the administration's argument for going to war in

the first place. We should be debating the establishment of a truly

independent commission to examine the shortcomings of U.S. intelligence

and the way it was used.

The members of this commission must not be appointed solely by the

President, and the commission should make its findings known before

Election Day. Only a truly independent investigation, and an

investigation that the American people perceive to be independent, can

bridge the credibility

gap in our intelligence both here at home and abroad.

The failure of this Congress to deal with the problems facing our

intelligence agencies will ultimately harm our national security, the

war against terrorism, and our fight against the proliferation of

weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Speaker, we are commending our troops but we are not taking

action that we can and should take to make their lives and to make the

lives of their loved ones easier. The sacrifices being made by our

National Guard and reservists in Iraq and elsewhere are extraordinary.

Many National Guard and Reserve families have suffered serious

financial losses because of the pay gap between their military pay when

they are called up and their private sector pay. With longer rotations,

Guard and Reserve families are facing dramatically increased financial

burdens while their loved ones risk their lives far away from home. One

of the consequences is a serious problem with reenlistments in the

Reserves and the National Guard.

My legislation, H.R. 1345, legislation that I introduced 1 year ago

this week, would fill that pay gap. My bill would ensure that

government and private sector employees can continue to defend our

country without being forced to worry about their families facing

financial disaster.

Words of support for our troops ring hollow when substantive

legislation to improve their conditions is sandbagged by the leadership

on the other side.

Mr. Speaker, I very much regret that this resolution in its present

form is brought before the House today. This should be a time for

bipartisan unity and cohesion, not a time for partisanship. This should

be a time for us to deal substantively with serious problems we face in

Iraq and in our foreign policy. This should be a time for us to take

serious action to help our service men and women. All of us join in

commending our brave men and women of our Armed Forces.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.