Mr. Speaker, 1 year ago this Friday, the President

ordered the men and women of our Armed Forces into Iraq. They performed

magnificently and have continued to do so despite an ongoing guerilla

campaign, difficult conditions, and a shortage of protective gear such

as Kevlar vests and armored Humvees.

As we celebrate their courage and skill, we must also reflect on

their sacrifice. As of today, 565 American troops have been killed in

this war including United States Army Specialist Rel Allen Ravago, IV,

one of my constituents.

I will support this resolution because it includes language honoring

our troops, but I am very concerned over what the resolution excludes

and deeply disappointed that it was not crafted in a bipartisan manner.

Our troops in Iraq are not representatives of one political party or

the other, and those who seek to exploit their daring and sacrifice for

partisan gain would do well to remember that.

This resolution fails to address a number of serious issues that have

arisen as a result of the war. Although the resolution before us makes

no mention of it, this Nation went to war over intelligence that Saddam

Hussein had both an existing arsenal of biological and chemical weapons

and an ongoing nuclear weapons program. A year has passed, and we have

yet to find evidence that this was correct.

Clearly, we must look at the totality of the circumstances that led

to such a colossal intelligence failure. This failure cannot be

minimized or, in the case of this resolution, ignored all together. To

do so does no honor to our troops who have been lost and further

imperils our future.

The planning for the post-war period of this operation was also

deficient and based on a number of unsupported assumptions. Over the

past decade and a half, our forces have been engaged more and more in

post-conflict operations. Clearly we need to organize ourselves better

to meet the challenges posed by post-conflict reconstruction.

In the coming days, I will offer a House companion to a bill

introduced in the Senate by Senators Lugar and Biden that does just

that, and I hope my colleagues will support it.