Mr. Speaker, I do not find myself

critical of the intelligence community. The criticism I and many others

have is of the political leadership which I think misused the

intelligence and made faulty decisions.

The gentleman talked about people who work in dark places. I did not

talk about the Vice President. I do not know how he got into this

debate.

The point about what we are saying is this. We now, without weapons

of mass destruction, without a tie to al Qaeda, have been told that the

rationale for this was essentially to extend democracy. I am in favor

of extending democracy; although extending it by military invasion is a

difficult policy. There are plenty of undemocratic, tyrannical

governments in the world, and I want to oppose them, but I am not

generally for invading them. But what troubles me is that in the name

of advancing democracy internationally, the majority is debasing it at

home.

No one can think, who understands the tenets of democracy, that this

procedure today comes close to it. There is no justification whatsoever

for this legislation to have been drawn up and then brought to us

without amendment. Will someone explain to me why this could not be

amendmentable? Were we too busy? That would not pass the laugh test.

The reason is that the majority is afraid that if amendments were

available, it would bring into discussion things they do not want to

talk about.

Of course, we support the troops. Voting for or against this

resolution is wholly uncorrelated to supporting the troops. A

resolution that simply congratulated the troops would have been passed

unanimously. What we have here, frankly, is an effort to use the troops

for political purposes. It is an effort to say that because Americans

are proud of our fighting people, we will put into a resolution some

phrase for them which contains a number of other politically more

controversial items; we will bring it forward in a way that does not

allow the democratic process to go forward.

I hope the Iraqis will not be watching this and think that this is

the way a democracy should work, that it should be up or down, that the

Constitution should not be amendable, resolutions should not be

amendable. We do not advance democracy by debasing it as we do in this

procedure.