Mr. Speaker, really in one sense, it does not matter how

people vote on this resolution because it has no effect, but some

things need to be said about it.

Every Member here supports the troops. Every Member here applauds the

sacrifices the men and women of our Armed Forces have made. Every

Member here understands that America needs no one's permission to

defend this country from attack.

But when American leaders choose to wage a preemptive war against a

country that did not attack the United States, when those leaders

attempt to rally the American people to their support on the basis of

faulty information and bad intelligence, when that unilateral decision

costs more than 500 American lives, when it costs thousands of American

wounded, when it costs the lives of uncounted thousands of innocent

civilians, that decision does not, despite the claims of this

resolution, it does not leave us in a stronger and safer position, as

this resolution falsely suggests. In fact, it could be argued it does

just the opposite.

Are we really in a safer and stronger position when the world and our

allies know that we went to war unilaterally on the basis of wrong

intelligence? Are we really going to be in a stronger position to

persuade the world to follow us the next time we tell them it is

necessary to act; for example, in the case of an American conclusion

that North Korea has nuclear weapons?

Are we really in a safer and stronger position in persuading more

Americans to serve in the military when they see that we rushed to war

before 45,000 U.S. troops were supplied with the ceramic inserts that

they needed for their body armor, when they see their government did

not provide the shields that protect Humvees and their occupants from

roadbed explosions, or when they see that their government did not

supply our troops with the electronic jammers needed to protect those

troops against remotely detonated bombs and mines?

Are we really in a safer and stronger position when we are forced to

police Iraq largely on our own, with little help from our allies? Have

we really created a safer world when, by our actions, we have told the

Indians and Pakistanis, who have been close to nuclear war with each

other, that a doctrine of preemptive war is acceptable? Are we really

as safe and strong as we would be if we had not diverted to Iraq key

personnel and taken intelligence resources away from the crucial task

of finding Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan?

Last night, many of us sang the praises of John Hume, the great Irish

peacemaker. Hume said last night that there has been no war in history

that has not killed more innocent civilians than it has combatants.

Are we really safer and stronger in a world where thousands of young

Muslims now are being told to hate the United States because we waged a

war against a Muslim country that had not attacked the U.S., rather

than focusing like a laser on destroying the al Qaeda network which is

the justifiable target of our rage?

Many Members who vote for this resolution today will do so despite

the misstatements it contains, because it contains an expression of

support for our troops. Many who vote against it will also do so

because of the unwarranted assertions in this resolution that

needlessly detract from our focus on the sacrifices those troops have

made.

Mr. Speaker, shame on the House leadership for drafting this

resolution in a way that needlessly divides us rather than unites us.

By not allowing meaningful alternatives to be debated and voted on,

they do not promote democracy; they mock it.

Mr. Speaker, I am inserting in the Record after my statement a copy

of the resolution on which we should have been allowed to vote.