I thank the gentleman for yielding me this

time.

Mr. Speaker, I have been in my office listening to the rhetoric. It

has been very interesting. People have been talking about how this

resolution divides us. I do not think it is the resolution. I think it

is the rhetoric. We are all in support of our troops, but those who

have been over there, as we were just a couple of weeks ago, know that

our troops know they are doing the right thing. They know that the

Iraqi people are happy that Saddam Hussein is gone. We talked to people

when I was over there that said they did not have 400,000 people in

mass graves, people that were tortured in the prison; but they believe

it was more like between 1 million and 1.3 million. Over 1 million

people were thrown into mass graves. That alone is reason enough to get

that guy out of there.

But let us talk about weapons of mass destruction. In the 1980s, the

Israelis attacked a nuclear reactor in Iraq because they knew he was

going to build a nuclear weapon, and a nuclear weapon is a weapon of

mass destruction. He used, as we all know, chemical weapons to kill

thousands and thousands of Kurds, women and children, and he used those

same things in the Iran-Iraq war that went on for 7 years. So this guy

used weapons of mass destruction. He violated every single U.N.

resolution that came out of the United Nations. So why should we

believe that he would not have weapons of mass destruction, that he

would disarm himself when he violated every agreement that he made? And

he used weapons of mass destruction.

The President had every right to do what he did. Saddam Hussein was a

threat not only to the region but to the whole world. As far as working

with al Qaeda, you will never convince me that he was not working with

the international terrorist network, including al Qaeda. That guy

wanted to destroy our way of life and everything we believe in.

Some of my colleagues today have been down here on the floor

haranguing about how they feel about this. I want to quote some of my

Democratic colleagues and what they have said in the past. On December

17, 1998, regarding Iraqi women and children and how they should be

protected, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. Jackson-Lee) said:

``I also say that we in this body, along with the Commander in Chief,

must have a definitive policy to protect the suffering women and

children and to make sure that democracy comes to the region.'' That is

a little different than the tone we are hearing today. My distinguished

colleague for whom I have high regard, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr.

Skelton), said:

``Had the President not ordered the attack, many would have bitterly

criticized him for not having followed through with the tough words he

uttered just 1 month ago.'' And also my distinguished colleague from

Massachusetts (Mr. Meehan) came to the floor to decry criticism of

President Clinton's motives for ordering air strikes on Iraq. He said:

``To my colleagues who have questioned the President's motives in the

midst of this crisis, shame on them. Shame on them for breaking the

longstanding tradition that leaves party politics at our Nation's

shores.'' What are we hearing today? Party politics. This is a

resolution congratulating our troops and talking about doing the right

thing in Iraq, and we ought to be working together instead of

criticizing each other for this. Then the gentleman from Florida (Mr.

Wexler) echoed those sentiments at the same time when he said, ``For

one day we should have been patriots, not partisans. Politics should

have stopped at the water's edge.'' How about today? That is what the

Democrat colleagues of mine were saying just a few years ago.

And, of course, the distinguished minority leader, the gentlewoman

from California (Ms. Pelosi), said on National Public Radio's ``Talk of

the Nation'' program, ``There is no question that everyone wants regime

change in Iraq. The question is change to what?'' And then on the

``O'Reilly Factor'' she said in 2002, ``I think Americans and those in

Congress are unified in wanting and joining the President in wanting a

regime change in Iraq.''

Then let me quote the gentleman from New York (Mr. Ackerman), who

said in 2002, ``We cannot simply hope that Saddam Hussein will be

deterred. He has shown himself to be an inveterate and dangerous

gambler.'' The gentleman from New York was not wrong. This is a good

resolution. We ought to all join together to pass it.