Mr. Speaker, I truly wish that I could support this

rule. National security is a bipartisan, or actually a nonpartisan,

issue. And when we commend the troops, all of us, all of us have a

stake. Every congressional district has a stake in commending the

troops.

As a matter of fact, small town and rural America have furnished 46

percent and 43 percent of the deaths in Afghanistan and in Iraq. So all

of us, whether we are from small towns or large cities, have a stake in

a resolution commending the troops, and we should have been consulted

about it. I am sorry for that.

Now, more than that, while we commend the troops, I would also have,

had I been consulted, recommended that we do our best to protect our

troops by including more body armor and extra up-armored Humvees, of

which we still do not have enough in Iraq. As a matter of fact, Mr.

Speaker, I received from the United States Army a letter indicating

that there are unfunded requirements for the extra up-armored Humvees

and the body armor, which is so necessary.

I would also have recommended that we have complete, timely, and

high-quality health care to treat the wounds and injuries for those who

have served, and to recognize those who pay the sacrifice, whether it

be in wounds, injuries, or, sadly, deaths.

I would also have recognized the contributions of and the sacrifices

of the families of our servicemen and -women, particularly in the Guard

and Reserve. I would have recognized the efforts to improve our

intelligence gaps that our troops need and so that they be better

protected in the future. And I would have recognized and recommended

the sufficient up-front funding for our military operations so we can

ensure the safety and well-being of our troops.

Mr. Speaker, I would also have included the fact that there should

have been better planning for the postwar period. I sent two letters to

the President, one on September 4, 2002, and another 2 days before the

attack on Iraq, both of which I include in the Record.

Mr. Speaker, I think that all of us should have been at least brought

to the table and all of us had an opportunity to write this resolution.

I am so proud of our troops, whether they be from Missouri or Maine or

wherever they are from. This is the best military our country has ever

seen. And I think every Member of Congress, both sides of the aisle,

should have had the opportunity to say thank you, we are proud of you,

and God bless you.

Mr. Speaker, here follows the letters to which I referred earlier in

my comments:

Mr. Speaker, I would have thought it a mere courtesy of

saying, Would the gentleman from Missouri like to read this over and

add or make recommendations? I would love to have been there in order

to support the gentleman from California.