Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Florida for yielding

me this time and commend him for his service in this Congress and

particularly his excellent service on the House Permanent Select

Committee on Intelligence.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is appropriate to consider a resolution on

the eve of the Iraq war anniversary. I agree that the world has much to

be glad about with the fall of Saddam Hussein and the end of his

despotic regime. And I certainly hope that the Iraqi people will create

a transparent, democratic form of government for the first time in

their history, a chance that they have now that Saddam Hussein is no

longer in power. I for one, and I believe this entire Congress, will

stand by them and must stand by them and support them as they make this

transition. We must stay the course.

But there is more to this subject on the first anniversary of the

Iraq war than H. Res. 557 acknowledges. Much more. On the anniversary

of our military action in Iraq, we need to be talking about more. That

is why many of us wanted an open rule and certainly an open process so

that we could contribute to the language contained in this resolution.

As ranking member of one of the key committees with jurisdiction over

this subject, that is, the House Permanent Select Committee on

Intelligence, I would have welcomed the opportunity to share some of my

ideas to fashion a great resolution which I believe would have passed

this body unanimously. I consider myself a passionate bipartisan on

questions of defense, national security, and intelligence; and I think

that my ideas, if I had had a chance to communicate them, would have

been accepted.

For example, I am one of many Members here who has visited Walter

Reed to see the wounded from Iraq. These are very courageous kids.

Thousands have been wounded. I would have liked us to acknowledge them

and their courage.

I visited the families in my district who have lost family members in

Iraq. I would have liked to acknowledge those losses and those

families.

I have visited Iraq twice. Some have been there more. In addition to

acknowledging our troops, I would have liked to acknowledge the

intelligence community personnel who take such risks on our behalf and

the civilians working selflessly there.

I worked in 1999 and 2000 as a member of the National Commission on

Terrorism chaired by Jerry Bremer, Ambassador L. Paul Bremer. I might

have liked to acknowledge him and his selfless service in Iraq.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, it is clear to me, and I will address this

along with other Intelligence Committee members later in the debate,

that I would have liked to acknowledge the important role that

intelligence products play in force protection now in Iraq and why

those products need to be better. In my view, Mr. Speaker, and I think

many would share this, good intelligence is a force protection issue.

And so it seems to me on the first anniversary of our action in Iraq

that we should acknowledge the need for better intelligence products

and the need for this administration to fix right now, not next year

but right now, the way we source and analyze intelligence. That is a

suggestion I also would have made on a bipartisan basis if I had been

permitted to participate.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that as we commemorate the

first anniversary of the action in Iraq, we need actions and not just

words.