Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman from Massachusetts

(Mr. Delahunt) would yield, one can only have that kind of a dialogue

if we can entertain a legitimate political discussion on the issue.

When those who are trying to bring these facts forward, those who have

this perspective are enunciating it, are in turn denounced for failing

to support our troops, denounced for failing to want to carry forward

the war on terrorism, as it is always referred to, are denounced for

presumably being unwilling to face up to the cold hard realities of

what constitutes terrorism and its origins, then it is very difficult

to do as the gentleman suggests.

I had the experience of having the Governor of my State of Hawaii

taken to Iraq for purposes that are beyond my ability to understand,

other than when she came back she announced that President Bush's Iraq

policy should not be the subject of political discussion, that we

should not politicize the war.

Now, that suggestion is as problematic, I suggest to the gentlemen in

turn, as it is unrealistic. Foreign policy and defense policy are

always legitimate topics for political debate. That is how we do things

in a democracy. Unfortunately, today we had a resolution ostensibly

addressing these issues 1 year after the invasion of, or the attack on,

Baghdad, as I term it, after which a war started. The voting public has

every right to a full and open airing of different points of view.

We did not get to do that today. We were unable to attempt to amend

the resolution dealing with these issues. It is most particularly

pertinent, I think, when we are dealing with the lives of our

servicemembers and the Treasury of our Nation. The resolution that

ostensibly addressed these issues today very firmly supported by the

Vice President, as you mentioned who, by the way, in my judgment is the

most sinister Vice President we have ever had since Aaron Burr, this

resolution tells us that the Iraq policies are out of bounds for

discussion. We were not permitted to make amendments or to attempt to

pass amendments with regard to this resolution.

The document simply amplified the administration's viewpoint, an

election-year endorsement of this policy. It will no doubt be denied

and is being denied even now, I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that this has

anything to do with politics. In fact, it is blatantly political; it is

transparently political. It is in-your-face political.

Our troops deserve better than this cursory salute swaddled in

suffocating layers of political celebration. Our troops have earned our

gratitude for their patriotism, their courage, and their spirit of

sacrifice, something particularly missing from this debate today.

More to the point, they deserve a solid commitment for their well-

being and the well-being of their families. This is something that the

majority today refused to do and has refused to do.

Last week in the budget committee, the gentleman from Texas (Mr.

Edwards) and others proposed some simple measures along these lines. I

want to recite them to you: Tri-care medical service for reservists, a

boost in the imminent-danger pay, improved military housing, higher pay

for senior enlisted personnel, increased family separation allowance,

more funding for family support centers. All of this to be offset by a

modest roll-back of the tax bonanza that we granted to people making $1

million a year and more.

What was the response of Mr. Cheney and his party? Forget about the

troops. Our allegiance is to people making $1 million a year or more.

I do not have any statistics, Mr. Speaker; but I suspect there are

not too many millionaires serving in Iraq or going soon.

Mr. Speaker, would the gentleman yield on that

point? My contention is that it is one thing to argue about

politicizing the war. This resolution today politicized support for the

troops. The characterizations that were implicit and explicit in the

discussion today made it clear that not voting for this resolution

somehow called your patriotism into question, somehow called your

support for the troops into question, somehow called into question your

capacity, ability, in fact, even your desire to conduct a war against

terrorism.