Mr. Speaker, I would

like to thank the gentleman from Illinois

(Mr. HYDE) for yielding me this

time, and I thank both him and the

gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS)

for your leadership on the floor

during this debate.

I would like to thank, Mr. Speaker,

all my colleagues, all these Members of

this House of Representatives. Today I

have had a rare opportunity. I had an

opportunity to listen to most of the

speeches, and it was a good debate

about a serious subject. Mr. Speaker,

this is a serious moment for each and

every one of us, and you can see it

weighing in our hearts.

Every now and then, Mr. Speaker, we

are called upon to understand and

reach deep into our hearts and minds

to understand who we are as a Nation.

I have seen it before my eyes in all the

scenes we have seen described here tonight

and the horror of the attack and

the splendor of our heroic response.

Even in the most brief circumstances,

with our hearts broken, we reached out

to help others across this land.

I think, Mr. Speaker, there is one

phrase from our sacred documents that

tells us who we are, why are we here,

why did we come to this land from all

other this world, with all our different

creeds, denominations, Nations of origin,

nationalities.

We came here in search of one thing.

We came here to secure the blessings of

liberty for ourselves and our posterity.

That is what we wanted. We have had

to struggle too many times, Mr. Speaker,

in the history of this great world as

we have tried to play out that wonderful

drama as a marvelous experiment

in the history of the world. We have

had to struggle against our own imperfections

and there has been hurt; and

we tried to overcome that hurt.

On so many other occasions we have

been called upon to struggle for the

freedom that we love so much against

the enemies of freedom. Even in the beginning

of this great Nation, with the

minutemen, we took to our muskets to

win our freedom. And another time we

fought with one another, and just

about lost the greatness of this Nation

and we brought it back together.

But for the most part, Mr. Speaker,

we have had to spend our young men

and women in the defense of freedom

for other people, and I always admired

us so much for that.

What Nation ever in the history of

the world has so much loved freedom

that they spent their own peace to defend

the freedom of people other than

themselves? That is to be known, that

is to be respected, that is to be cherished,

if only by ourselves.

And now we are challenged again.

Why do they challenge us? What do

they seek to achieve? Are they wanting

to change our commitment to freedom

across the globe? Do they think we are

a bother to them as they try to suppress

other people and deny them their

rights? A great Nation does not change

the course of its policies towards other

nations and other people because of the

cruel, inhumane acts of terrorism by

barbaric people who do not understand

respect. We will not change who we are

and what we stand for in this world and

who we have been and what we have

stood for in this world because of this.

I am told that in some instances,

with some of these people, they hate

our religion. We only ask that we all

gather together and give respect for

one another in our religious beliefs. We

try to do that for others, and I believe

as a Nation we do it well. Not perfect,

but well. And we work so hard at doing

that for others we require that it be

the same for us.

Tonight, we have gathered here to

discuss something, and I have heard so

many of my colleagues in this body say

it, it is something we do not want to

do, to join again in authorization with

our President, the commander in chief

of the United States of America, to

commit our young men and women in

uniform to the field of danger in the

defense of freedom. A simple thing,

done over and over and over again.

We have been reminded by others,

some of us, of the costs we might expect

these young men and women to

pay, the costs that have been paid by

the heroes we have talked about in this

debate. This will not come cheap.

There will be mamas and daddies with

broken hearts with the loss of the most

precious gift the good Lord has ever

given them: their children.

But when mothers and fathers in this

great land lend their children to the

cause of freedom, they do just that. We

do not commit our children for frivolous

reasons to fields of danger. This is

not about revenge. It is not in our

heart. We are a good Nation. We are a

kind Nation. We will forgive our enemies

in victory; and we struggle to

forgive ourselves for our imperfections,

but we do not commit our children to

acts of vengeance.

We do not cheapen the heroism of our

great American heroes with the quest

of territory or the thought of dominance

of other people. We will spend

our heroes only for freedom, decency

and respect; for the right to live an ordinary

mundane everyday life, to go to

work and be left alone, to do our bit

and share with others, to hold our children

and put them to bed at night with

a very simple little kiss on the cheek

and a very soft little assurance: sleep

safely, my darling, for you are in

America and you are free and you are

safe and our heroes have made it so for

you.

Mr. Speaker, let us vote for this resolution.

Let us take this harsh task. Let

us ask our young men and women once

more in America to go out and be the

sensational heroes at risk that they

never wanted to be and, bless our

hearts, that we never wanted them to

have to be. Let us get this done. Let us

remove this blight on the world. And,

Mr. Speaker, let us have the blessings

of liberty for ourselves, but oh so much

more importantly, for our posterity.