Mr. Speaker, Americans can sleep well tonight

because our soldiers are out there on the front line against terror

making sure that we can do that. And we owe them a lot. We owe them our

thanks. We owe them our appreciation. We owe them the necessary

equipment to carry out their mission, to protect themselves while they

are doing that, and we owe them our support. And it is important that

we let them know without any doubt that we support them, that this

Congress supports them. And that is why, in case there is any confusion

about how we would like Members to vote on this resolution tonight, we

want them to vote ``no.'' This is not a good resolution.

Incidentally, in case the Members have not noticed, Jack Murtha spent

more time tonight speaking on the floor than he has in the last 20

years combined presenting the appropriations bills.

Jack and I have been friends for a long time, as he suggested, and we

have worked together. He was my chairman for a long time. I have been

his chairman for a long time. We work together for the best interest of

our Nation and for those who protect our Nation. And he has received

many accolades tonight and properly so.

Chairman Hunter, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, also

deserves accolades. He was willing to offer this resolution, which we

all are going to vote against, I hope. Chairman Hunter was an airborne

soldier in Vietnam, and he led a platoon of Rangers in Vietnam.

Chairman Hunter deserves an awful lot of thanks and appreciation for

the work that he did then and the work that he is doing tonight here on

the floor.

Mr. Speaker, this is not about Jack Murtha tonight, and it is not

about Duncan Hunter. This is about 296 of us who voted to support the

President going into Iraq to fight terror, to fight Saddam Hussein and

his vicious armies. Once you have committed to a war or to a battle, it

is like some other things in life, once you are committed, you are

committed, like it or not. And we got committed when we voted to send

troops to Iraq.

Now, how do you get out of a commitment like that? Well, you can win.

That is the preferred way. Or you can

lose. We do not like that. You could retreat, or you could surrender. I

do not think we like either one of those two.

Or there is another way: we could negotiate our way out. But in a

case of global terrorists, whom do you negotiate with? They hide. They

sneak. Would you negotiate with Osama bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, Al-

Zarqawi? Whom do you negotiate with? You do not have anybody to

negotiate with because they are pure and simple terrorists.

Mr. Speaker, there are many things that have been said tonight on

both sides of the aisle that are very important. There has been a

little bit of spin here and there, but that is not unusual for a

legislative body like this. But, Mr. Speaker, there is no place, when

we are dealing with the security of our Nation and the security of the

American people, there is no place for politics on either side.

So tonight, Mr. Speaker, we need to send a strong message to our

troops and to their families. For those families who are dealing with

the loss of a loved one, for those families who are dealing with a

seriously wounded soldier or marine who might be at Walter Reed

Hospital or at Bethesda Hospital or at Landsthul in Germany, we need to

let them know that we are here to support them.

In a few short days when we will be back to legislative business,

there is another issue that we have to deal with, and I am going to

take advantage of this extra minute to tell the Members what it is.

Somebody in the Pentagon has ruled that if Jack Murtha and I go to

hospital with my wife, Beverly, which we do on occasion, and she makes

us empty our wallets to help a family that is struggling to meet their

expenses, some regulation at the Pentagon says that is illegal, that is

bribery. What can I bribe a wounded soldier to do? He has already done

everything that he can do for me. So we need to change that.

So we need to change that. Chairman Hunter and I and Mr. Murtha and I

have worked together with our counterparts in the Senate, and we intend

to fix this on the first legislative or appropriations bills we have

access to. So that is what this is about tonight, to let our soldiers

win this war against terror not only in Iraq, but in Afghanistan and

anywhere else that terrorists raise their ugly heads. This is not

limited to Iraq. Iraq is one of the major battlefields. Afghanistan is

one of the major battlefields.

My friends, we are in it for the long haul against the threat of

terrorism, and it is important that we prevail and support those on the

front line against terror and vote ``no'' tonight on this resolution

that does not do any of what I just said.