Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of a

colleague, a friend and someone whose judgment I respect. John Murtha

had seen a lot of battles before he came to Congress. A decorated

Vietnam Veteran with two Purple Hearts, a Bronze Star in 37 years of

service in the Marines.

I did not know him then, but I know him now. He is a Member who

carries with him a full life lived, a perspective shaped by experience

and understanding. He has accrued wisdom, which is seldom seen in a

person who carries it in such a dignified and unassuming manner.

He was one of the first gentlemen of the House to support the ``Women

In Military Service For America Memorial.'' I asked him for his support

on this project, but I did not have to explain it. He understood the

contributions women and other minorities have made in the military. He

takes a comprehensive and inclusive view of situations. This man's

actions define who he is. I find this refreshing. He speaks from a

position of knowledge. I say this because tonight we are debating a

severely amended version of the Murtha Resolution.

If we are going to seriously debate the war in Iraq, we must do so in

the scope that represents the full spectrum of the American people.

This resolution tonight is not the debate the American people have

asked for or need to hear. The American people want a comprehensive and

inclusive debate that reflects the complexity of the situation our

country finds itself in.

While agreeing with the Murtha Resolution, I do so primarily because

he has given this situation great thought and because I trust that the

author had every intent of fully debating his resolution whether

members agreed to it or not--and is willing to listen constructively.

We should follow his lead on opening up this debate--not smothering it.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that on this Friday night before we adjourn for the

Thanksgiving season to be with family and mends to give thanks, let us

give dignity to a true debate about this war in Iraq.

The American people deserve better.