Mr. Speaker, I believe that when the political

smoke of this great debate today clears, that this bill is going to

pass with a very substantial vote. I think it is going to be passed

with a substantial vote because every one of us in this Chamber wants

to keep the commitment that we made several years ago after September

11, that we are going to support our troops when they are in the field,

when they are at risk, when they are in harm's way.

This is just another statement, as the gentleman from Pennsylvania

(Mr. Murtha) has repeatedly said today, we have spent a lot of money of

American taxpayer dollars to fund the operation, and we want to make

sure that our troops understand that we believe they are doing a good

job, and they are. We want to let them know that they are not in harm's

way in vain.

So I think the bill is going to pass with a nice vote. But do my

colleagues know something? I had a chance to be the sponsor of the bill

that appropriated $40 billion on September 14 of 2001. I had the

privilege of being the sponsor of the supplemental that the gentleman

from Pennsylvania (Mr. Murtha) talked about, that was sizable, to pay

for our troops in the field and what they needed by way of equipment.

But do my colleagues know something? Besides being a player to that

extent, I am not offended that I was not asked to write this bill. I am

very satisfied that the gentleman from Illinois (Chairman Hyde) and his

committee wrote a very good bill. I am not offended that I was not

asked to be the sponsor. The gentleman from Illinois (Mr. Hyde) is the

ideal sponsor, and those who did sponsor this bill.

So I think once the political smoke clears, this House is going to

stand up and is going to be counted and to tell our troops in the field

and to tell our troops who are recuperating in hospitals that we

support what they are doing, we believe in what they are doing, and

that we are here to do whatever has to be done to protect our country

and our countrymen from terrorist attacks and to provide support for

those who provide that kind of security for us.

I have a lot of other things I would like to say, but time is

limited. So, Mr. Speaker, I will insert the balance of my statement

into the Record at this point.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 557, which

honors the valor, courage, and professionalism with which our American

forces, and those of our coalition partners, have served in liberating

the people of Iraq.

We consider this resolution today on the first anniversary of the

initiation of military operations in Iraq. However, the difficult

decisions by Congress to authorize the use of force in Iraq and the

President's ultimate directive to send troops into Iraq were the

culmination of more than 13 years of violence and terrorism directed at

the United States and our allies throughout the world.

Saddam Hussein's movement of troops into Kuwait in 1990 threatened

the freedom and security of the people of that nation who remain one of

our country's staunchest allies. We responded as a Nation and in

partnership with the free nations of the world in Operation Desert

Storm to throw Saddam's forces out of Kuwait. Subsequently, through a

series of United Nation's resolutions, we sought to monitor Saddam's

activities to prevent him from again threatening the sovereignty of

another ally.

Since then, as this resolution points out, Saddam Hussein and his

regime have committed repeated heinous crimes against humanity,

including the murder, torture, rape, and amputation of his own people.

This is the regime that unleashed weapons of mass destruction against

the Kurdish people, killing nearly 5,000. We have found more than 270

mass graves sites in Iraq, with the remains of more than 400,000

people. Saddam Hussein poisoned the water supply of his enemies, he

even punished the Marsh Arabs by draining their marshlands, which

created hundreds of thousands of refugees and created an ecological

catastrophe.

This Congress responded in 1998 by adopting the Iraq Liberation Act,

which made it U.S.

policy to support efforts to remove Saddam Hussein and his regime from

power. President Clinton, however, after signing this act into law

never followed through.

Four years later, after little or no U.S. action to rid Iraq of

Saddam Hussein, the United Nation Security Council approved Resolution

1441 declaring that Iraq ``has been and remains in material breach of

its obligations'' under previously adopted Security Council

resolutions.

Clearly, the United States and President Bush did not start this war,

just as we did not start the global war on terrorism. We responded to a

series of attacks against the American people and our allies throughout

the world.

Recall that on February 26, 1993, six lives were lost in the first

bombing of the World Trade Center. Our response at the time was a

series of harsh words and empty rhetoric.

Three years later, on June 25, 1996, 19 U.S. service members lost

their lives in the bombing of Khobar Towers, outside a U.S. air base in

Saudi Arabia. The response again was harsh words, empty rhetoric, and

promises of a thorough investigation.

Two years after that, 259 died, including 11 Americans, in the

bombing of U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. The response again was

more harsh words and a cruise missile attack on a pharmaceutical

factory in Sudan.

Finally, feeling empowered by the continuing lack of a credible U.S.

response to past attacks, terrorists bombed the USS Cole while anchored

off Yemen, killing 17 U.S. sailors, and injuring countless others. The

U.S. response again was harsh words of outrage and the promise of a

full investigation.

The year 2001 arrived with a new President and a new set of world

challenges. However, just nine months into the Bush Administration, the

world changed forever on September 11, 2001. A hijacked airliner

crashes into the Pentagon killing 189. Two hijacked planes crash into

the World Trade Center, killing 2,801. And a hijacked plane crashes in

rural Pennsylvania, killing 44.

This time it was a different President with a different response.

President Bush announced that in response to these terrorist attacks on

our nation and our people we will respond by seeking out those who were

responsible and hold them accountable. We will respond by identifying

terrorist organizations and eliminate them at their roots.

Mr. Speaker, the terrorist attacks of September 11th were a direct

assault on our nation's freedom, and a test of our will to defend it.

The nations of the free world wondered if we would meet the challenge,

if this time our promises to strike back against the terrorists would

be followed by decisive action.

Just three days after September 11th, my Committee on Appropriations

and this Congress stepped forward to approve a $40 billion emergency

supplemental appropriations bill to fund recovery efforts in New York

City and at the Pentagon, and to take military action against the

perpetrators of those despicable attacks. That was the first concrete

signal to the world that this time, we as a nation were serious in

backing up the words of our President. Since that day Congress and the

America people have shown time and again that no matter how long it

takes or where it may lead, our commitment to win this war on terrorism

is unshakeable.

President Bush sent U.S. troops to Afghanistan to destroy and disrupt

al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden's operations. Our forces routed

the Taliban, killed many terrorists, and eliminated al-Qaeda main base

of operations. They also liberated millions of men, women, and children

from a cruel regime, and gave them a chance to choose their own

government and enjoy the benefits of freedom. But our victory against

the Taliban was not the end of the war on terrorism.

When the United Nations determined that Saddam Hussein was not living

up to the Security Council resolutions, President Bush acted decisively

in sending troops to Iraq.

This resolution recognizes the remarkable swiftness and precision

with which our troops advanced across Iraq to remove from power the

Hussein regime. The effectiveness of our Armed Forces caught the enemy

by surprise. Even after the end of major combat operations in Iraq our

troops have continued their mission to stabilize and rebuild that

country. They have captured 45 of the 55 most wanted Iraqis, including

Saddam himself, ensuring that he will never return to power. With the

cooperation of Iraqi security forces, our troops have captured and

killed hundreds of terrorists who sought to restore the dictator to

power. The world has also seen the humanity and generosity of America,

as our troops, using funds appropriated by this Congress, help restore

water and electricity, provide basic health services, and bring

children back to school, free from intimidation and indoctrination.

There are those in this debate today who have said that we started

the war against terrorists in Afghanistan and Iraq. The truth of the

matter is that the war started in 1993 with the first bombing of the

World Trade Center, which was greeted with such a tepid response. Thank

God that on September 11, 2001 George Bush was President and he decided

that there was enough of this one-sided war against Americans and our

allies. There was enough of us being on the receiving end of cowardly

acts of terrorism, with the bad guys getting away with it. So yes, we

did engage in combat finally to fulfill our obligation to protect our

country and our people whether in their workplace, in their homes, or

in their schools.

Having spent considerable time with our troops here at home and

abroad, including those who have been injured in the line of duty, I

can tell you that they support President Bush and their mission. These

kids; and I say kids because many who are on the front lines are 18,

19, and 20 years old; are true patriots. Those who are injured are

determined to get well so they can get back to the fight to finish the

job they have begun. They all share a strong belief that what we are

doing is right, not just for the people of Iraq, but it is right for

the freedom loving people of the world.

The battle of Iraq was another critical advance in the War on

Terrorism. Today we are establishing a Muslim democracy at the heart of

the Middle East. Representatives from all three of Iraqi's major ethnic

groups came together on march 8 to sign an interim constitution. Iraq

now has an independent judiciary and will have free elections later

this year. Because of the leadership of our President, the courage and

determination of our troops, and the strong commitment the members of

this body made to the rebuilding of Iraq, that nation is making strong

progress towards freedom and prosperity.

As many of you know, my wife Beverly and I spend many hours visiting

wounded soldiers and Marines at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center and

the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland. In addition to

comforting them and helping give them strength for their recovery, I

always take the time to remind them that the American people are

grateful for their service and their sacrifice, and proud of their

achievements. Mr. Speaker, this resolution gives Members of this body

the opportunity to remind all of our men and women in uniform that we

are thankful for their service, and proud of their victory in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, it was President Franklin Delano Roosevelt who in this

very Chamber talked about the ``four essential human freedoms.'' He

said that they are, ``The freedom of speech--everywhere in the world.

The freedom of every person to worship God in his or her own way--

everywhere in the world. The freedom from want--everywhere in the

world. The freedom from fear--anywhere in the world.''

President Bush has led the world-wide effort to ensure the freedom

from fear, anywhere in the world, whether it be the United States,

Iraq, Afghanistan, or Spain. And he has called upon the world's most

powerful and best trained soldiers of peace to carry out that mission,

which they have done with valor, with courage, with pride, with

devotion, and with unmatched professionalism.

Mr. Speaker, with the adoption of this resolution today, we can

reiterate our support for their mission which is to ensure a world

where people can truly live free from fear.