Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois for

yielding me this time.

First of all, I want to say that I have the utmost respect for the

gentleman from Pennsylvania. He has been a leader in this Congress for

a long, long time; and I have seen him in action in the Middle East and

other places. He has the utmost concern for our men in uniform and

respect for them and compassion for them.

However, I have to take some difference in his conclusion; and I just

want to say that when we made that decision to move into, first of all,

Iraq, we all made decisions based on the information we had before us,

information that a previous President had, information that we had in

the Senate, information that we all looked at. It was the best

information that we could bring before us. I do not think anybody in

this Chamber or in this town tried to deceive anybody on that

information. I would stand shoulder to shoulder with him and say we

tried to make the best decisions for our men and women in this country

with the information that we had.

We still do not know where weapons of mass destruction are: if they

are buried, if they are in a lab someplace, or where they are. But we

know that the enemy at that time had the potential to make those

weapons; and for all we knew, they had those weapons.

So I rise today in support of this resolution, and I urge my

colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support it. This resolution is

quite straightforward. My constituents back home would call it plain

talk. It is common sense. It commends the Iraqi people for adopting an

interim constitution. It commends our military for their brave efforts

in liberating Iraq. And it affirms to the world that the world is a

better place without Saddam Hussein in power. That is what it does.

It is hard to imagine that anyone in this Chamber could be against

it; yet some are. Politicians sometimes behave in strange ways in

election years. We all know that. And there are those who have vowed to

change our national leadership no matter what it takes. But the ``no

matter what it takes'' approach causes folks to do some foolish things,

to cast some foolish votes.

How can anyone vote against a resolution that commends our troops as

they fight a just war overseas? How can anyone defend a dictator who

used rape rooms as a matter of state policy? How can anyone forget the

400,000 victims in mass graves that had already been found in Iraq,

brutally murdered by the Hussein regime?

There has been a lot said in the press and even on this floor about

the victory of the Spanish Socialists in last Sunday's election in

Spain. Clearly, the Spanish people have a right to elect their own

government. But I hope that the terrorists do not draw the wrong

conclusion about that election. Europe should have learned a painful

lesson in the 1930s and should never return to a peace-through-

appeasement strategy. Our country, the United States of America, must

never adopt a policy of appeasement. We must never let terrorists take

encouragement from anything that we do on the battlefield or in this

Chamber.

We all must say with one voice that we were right to rid the world of

the murdering thug Saddam Hussein; that our troops did the right thing

to bring Uday and Qusay and all of Saddam's brutal henchmen to justice;

and that the long march to democracy that has started finally both in

Baghdad and Kabul is both inexorable and inevitable.

Today, with this resolution, we start the public trial of Saddam

Hussein. Let us never forget the pain that he caused countless Iraqis,

his neighbors, and even his so-called friends. Let us never forget the

threats that he posed to America and America's allies or his willful

disregard of the 17 United Nations Security Council resolutions. And

let us never say that this war was in any way unjust or illegitimate.

Every brave man and woman who sacrificed their lives, their limbs, or

their blood and sweat and tears to fight the Hussein regime did so for

a righteous and just cause. This is not like Vietnam. Vietnam is over.

This war we fight now is a war against terrorists. It is a war against

those who have attacked and killed Americans abroad and on our own

soil. Saddam Hussein was a terrorist of the worst kind.

Some of my colleagues might be looking for the shades of gray in this

debate, but I simply do not see the gray. Saddam Hussein and Osama bin

Laden are cut from the same cloth. They are both brutal killers. They

both hate America with every ounce of their being. And because we are

free, we want all people on Earth to be free. And they both must be

brought to justice. We have Hussein, and we will get bin Laden.

Take a stand against terrorism. Take a stand for our troops. And vote

for this important resolution.