Madam Speaker, President Lincoln warned, ``A house

divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot

endure permanently half slave and half free. It will become all one

thing or all the other.''

Today, our House is divided; tomorrow, it will become all one thing

or all the other. What are the possibilities?

In our divided House, one side believes we must win in Iraq to avoid

a catastrophe; another side assumes we can lose in Iraq without

consequence.

One side believes we must support our troops in harm's way and

continue their funding; another side claims we can support our troops

in harm's way and cut their funding.

One side assumes we must defeat al Qaeda in Iraq; another side

asserts we can retreat from al Qaeda in Iraq.

And one side believes the American people voted to change course in

Iraq to win; another side feels the American people voted to change

course in Iraq to lose.

Shortly, we will see how divided we are. One side will vote to

support the President's plan to win in Iraq by reinforcing our troops,

and then pray to God we are right; one side will vote against the

President's plan. And in this question rests the answer to the future

of our divided House.

My friends, many of you are about to put yourselves in a precarious

position, for no one knows what the future holds. While we may feel

sure of our decisions in the evanescent present, the unfathomable

vagaries of fate have yet to fully play upon the stage of human

history. As a result, many supporters of this resolution made an

ominous omission while urging its adoption: In denouncing the

President's plan, too few of you have openly hoped our troops' new

mission would win the day and prove you wrong.

Being your colleague, I know you share this hope in your hearts. But

your fellow Americans in fields abroad and constituencies at home must

now wonder, will you cut our troops funding to prove yourselves right?

Sooner than you imagine, this nonbinding resolution will instigate

binding legislation to commence a ``slow bleed'' of funding cuts while

our troops battle against the enemy. Again, because I serve beside you

every day, I know you abhor the thought of American soldiers being

harmed by such an abject betrayal of their trust during combat, but it

is upon this crucible of conscience you will be judged by all. And when

the time comes to confront the consequences of today's expediency, I

pray you make the right decision. If, however, you make the wrong

decision, you will not only betray our citizen soldiers' trust, you

will disastrously unite this House in a callow contentment with our own

liberty and a calloused apathy to others' enslavement.

Could there be any more dishonorable epitaph for our free Republic's

revolutionary experiment in democracy? True, some allege I exaggerate

the danger, but they have turned a blind eye to the epitaphs of liberty

etched above the ruins of nations once gloried, now dead: the Athenian

city-state, the Roman Republic, the Weimar Republic.

Thus, even as we today divide in our own House, we remain compelled

to unite behind the cause of our free Republic in this dangerous age of

globalization, wherein humanity's destiny is daily entwined across the

disparate reaches of Earth.

Our cause is this: Our world cannot permanently endure half slave and

half free. It will become all one thing or all the other, as it has

before in the darkest ages of human existence.

My friends, at this crossroads of our Republic, we must heed the

better angels of our nature. We must unite our divided House behind the

self-evident truth that all human beings are endowed by their Creator,

with the inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of

happiness.

We must extend freedom to the Iraqis and, in so doing, enhance the

liberty of ourselves and all free peoples and inspire our fellow human

beings caged in

tyranny's embrace. And emulating our nation's greatest generations, we

must let hope to flow from God's heart to our humble hands so we may,

where He allows, emancipate humanity into a new birth of freedom for

ourselves and generations unborn.

Madam Speaker, we must reject this resolution, unite behind our

heroic troops and, God willing, win our country and humanity's mortal

struggle to be free.