Madam Speaker, I thank you for the time to debate the

very important issue of the war in Iraq. The resolution we are debating

today is technically non-binding--however, we must not discount the

influence of the words of this body. I am here today to reiterate to

the American people that the war in Iraq, as a part of the larger

Global War on Terror, is absolutely vital to the security of our great

nation as well as the rest of the free world.

It is true, we were led into this war with poor intelligence; yet

intelligence that every major fact-finding and data-gathering agency in

the world believed to be true. Nevertheless, spreading freedom to the

Muslim world is our best long-term strategy in the Global War on

Terror.

Four years after the invasion of Iraq, our brave military men and

women are still actively engaged in combat, and their actions have not

gone without great achievement--the Iraqi people participated in their

first true democratic election, they have established a representative

government, elected a parliament and written an Iraqi constitution.

These great accomplishments should not be brushed off as mere side

notes, because to do so would diminish the achievements of the Iraqi

people and the tremendous courage of our soldiers; some of whom have

bravely given their lives for the chance an Iraqi citizen would be able

to vote and live free from fear.

The establishment of a democracy in the Middle East is fundamental to

winning the Global War on Terror. The United States is in our 231st

year of a democratic government, and as I am sure many of my colleagues

will agree--we haven't exactly perfected it yet. The Iraqi people are

barely in their second year of a democratic government. The Iraqi

government needs time to grow their citizens' confidence in the

institution of democracy and become a stabilizing force in the region.

We must help them achieve this.

We are fighting an enemy who does not believe in democracy, freedom,

or the inherent value of human life. These radical Islamic terrorists

see a democratic Iraqi government as a direct threat to the mayhem and

havoc they seek to impose on the free world. To retreat from Iraq--to

wave a white flag in submission to these terrorists, would only worsen

the instability we now see in the region, and embolden terrorists

around the world.

When the United Sates ridded Iraq of Saddam Hussein, we committed

ourselves to assisting the new Iraqi government become self-

sustainable. The President has consulted his commanders in Iraq, who

have heard from the soldiers on the ground. The result of these hours

of consultation has led the President to ask for an increase in troops

so we may finish the job we set out to do. I ask my colleagues to trust

the military commanders, and allow our courageous military do their

job. I ask my colleagues to not support this resolution.