Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, he was conscientious, committed to peace and momentarily

praised. His laurels burned in the bombings. His valorous and vain

efforts had but hastened upon his people.

Yet, in eulogizing this ``English worthy,'' Sir Winston Churchill, an

ardent opponent of the deceased's policy of appeasement, unexpectedly

struck a conciliatory chord toward the late Neville Chamberlain:

``It is not given to human beings, happily for them, for otherwise

life would be intolerable, to foresee or to predict to any large extent

the unfolding course of events. In one phase, men seem to have been

right, in another they seem to have been wrong. Then again, a few years

later when the perspective of time is lengthened, all stands in a

different setting. There is a new proportion. There is another scale of

values. History, with its flickering lamp, stumbles along the trail of

the past, trying to reconstruct its scenes, to revive its echoes, and

kindle with pale gleams the passion of former days. What is the worth

of all this? The only guide to a man is his conscience; the only shield

to his memory is the rectitude and sincerity of his actions. It is very

imprudent to walk through life without this shield, because we are so

often mocked by the failure of our hopes and the upsetting our

calculations; but with this shield, however the fates may play, we

march always in the ranks of honor.''

Mr. Speaker, while not serving in this Chamber during the debates on

the resolution authorizing the President of the United States to use

martial force to remove Iraq's Baathist regime for numerous just

causes, including its refusal to honor its Gulf War cease-fire and

United Nations' resolutions, during my time as a temporary custodian of

my constituents' office, I have striven to ensure our Nation's victory

in the battles for Iraq, Afghanistan, and in the overarching war on

terror. In doing so for 3 years, I have four times traveled to Iraq and

once to Afghanistan to meet with our troops; visited wounded citizen

soldiers, eulogized our fallen, and consoled their grieving families.

As a witness to their courage, sacrifice and suffering, I have been

morally compelled to support every appropriation for our military and

civilian personnel in harm's way, oppose every policy injurious to our

country's common cause of victory; advance my own ideas on how to

secure our victory, including the introduction of bipartisan, though

ultimately unaccepted, legislation to establish concerted congressional

oversight over the course of this conflict; and refused to condone a

resolution by my Republican peers which failed to meet its duty; and,

immediately afterwards, introduced a resolution of my own in order to

fulfill my duty to our soldiers, my constituents, and our country.

As a staunch supporter of our Nation's mission in Iraq, Afghanistan,

and throughout the world, I did so in the belief that it is morally

imperative for every sovereign American citizen and their congressional

servants to ensure our valiant troops victoriously come home to their

loved ones' arms. Were I to do otherwise and lapse in my moral duty, I

would not only be violating our troops and my constituents' trust, I

would be violating the dictates of my conscience.

It is equally true, of course, how within this House other Members'

dictates of conscience have led them to a decidedly different, though

equally constant course of action. To these Members and their fellow

citizens who have done so to date, I share the sentiments Sir Winston

held for Neville Chamberlain: You are ``An American Worthy,'' who

``however the fates may play, will ``march always in the ranks of

honor.'' Yet, because the resolution thrust before us is a craven

exposition of political expediency in a time of national crisis, today

many may stray from the ranks of honor.

This resolution is ``nonbinding,'' which means the resolution has no

force of law to compel future legislative acts in compliance with its

dictates. In sum, then, this resolution legally changes nothing.

Americans' money will still unabatedly facilitate our troops' continued

deployment into harm's way, despite the United States Congress

collectively condemning the President's announced troop reinforcement

plan. This impotent resolution is injurious in the eyes of its

opponents because it will undermine the morale

of our troops, their families, and our fellow citizens even as it

heartens and emboldens our enemies; and this impotent resolution is

injurious because it will not stop what many of its supporters purport

will be a loss of life in a lost cause. By neither stopping the war nor

speeding our victory and by calculatedly doing nothing in this time of

national crisis, this resolution is immoral.

This immorality is manifest in how the resolution guilefully attempts

to insinuate the United States Congress can simultaneously support our

troops and oppose their mission. During a time of war, if an act is not

i our national interest, such as the President's plan is deemed to be

in this resolution, the act is injurious to the national interest. At

best, the act will expend resources, most tragically claim lives

without furthering the cause of victory. Better than anyone, our troops

understand this. Therefore, this Congress does not support our troops

when it proclaims they are risking their lives in a doomed mission

injurious to America.

Yet, if Congress persists in this insanity, the Members must meet

their responsibility to enumerate the reasons they disapprove of the

President's plan and, in point of fact, the mission upon which our

troops have already embarked. But this resolution does not provide any

rationale for its conclusion. Thus, rather than deserving our

collective concurrence, this resolution deserves our universal

condemnation.

To this, some supporters will object and allege two defenses for this

resolution's fatal omission. Do not these supporters' floor remarks

provide the rationales sufficient to sustain this resolution? No. If

floor remarks alone are sufficient to sustain the resolution's

conclusions, then floor remarks alone would be sufficient to derogate

the President's plan and, ergo, vitiate any necessity for a written

resolution. Conversely, if it is imperative for the plan's detractors

to express their opposition in a written resolution, it is also

imperative to express their reasons in writing. Alas, such logic pales

before some Members' impulsive muse of the moment.

Let us, then, move to some of the resolution's supporters' second,

far more distressing defense: ``A vote of disapproval on the

President's plan will set the stage for additional Iraq legislation

which will be coming to the House floor.'' As no one who participated

in the crafting of this covert legislative agenda has deigned to inform

the American people as to its aims, one wonders if it will cut off

funding for our troops in harm's way or cut off critical reconstruction

funding in the supplemental appropriations bill, thus toppling an

unheralded but essential pillar of the President's new victory strategy

and proving the perspicacity of the present resolution. While we wonder

and worry, according to newspaper reports there is a strategy to make

this rumored legislative plan palatable to the public. This strategy's

tactics, which its instigators are more than happy to relate to the

media, are reputed to include a coordinated multimillion-dollar TV

campaign by leftist special-interest pressure groups. No doubt

somewhere beyond this ephemeral stream of time there lurks a jealous

Clement Vallandigham. But, in fairness, let us disdain a priori

speculation, and instead examine a previous resolution to glean the

potentialities of the present resolution's supporters' secret

legislative plan. The following passages are excerpted from a previous

resolution which, albeit more forthrightly, also opposes the Commander

in Chief's decisions:

``Resolved, That this convention does explicitly declare, as the

sense of the American people, that after 4 years of failure . . . by

the experiment of war, during which, under the pretense of a military

necessity of war-power higher than the Constitution, the Constitution

itself has been disregarded in every part, and public liberty and

private right alike trodden down, and the material prosperity of the

country essentially impaired, justice, humanity, liberty, and the

public welfare demand that immediate efforts be made for cessation of

hostilities . . . to the end that, at the earliest practicable moment,

peace be restored.''

This previous resolution too expresses its support for our troops in

harm's way:

``Resolved, That the sympathy of the Democratic Party is heartily and

earnestly extended to the soldiery of our Army and sailors of our Navy

who are and have been in the field and on the sea under the flag of our

country, and in the events of its attaining power, they will receive

all the care, protection, and regard that brave soldiers and sailors of

the Republic have so nobly earned.''

This previous resolution is the Democratic Party platform of 1864.

If the past is prologue, let us be firm in a fair request: If the

resolution's supporters possess a victory strategy, or otherwise, for

Iraq, these public servants must immediately reveal it to the sovereign

citizens of the United States. If these stealth strategists refuse,

they will incur the American people's inference this legislative plan

assumes and will hasten our Nation's defeat in Iraq. How else could one

explain these individuals' already having a legislative plan and an

accompanying media plan premised upon our troop reinforcement failure,

and doing so regardless of potential American victories on the ground

or the advice of our military commanders? Perhaps while they demur from

revealing it, these anonymous commander in chiefs will dubiously coin

their legislative plan an ``exit strategy.''

It is an irrelevant distinction. Right now the enemy is actively

seeking to murder more American and Iraqi soldiers and civilians. So

right now and for the immediate future, an exit from Iraq is a defeat

in Iraq. Whatever one pretends to the contrary, one will never convince

our enemies otherwise.

Yes, it is all too human to wish the world were different; all too

human to rationalize away one's misguided actions. Being composed of

frail, fallible human beings, even great assemblies such as this have

succumbed to the temptation. We must not.

Writing well before Churchill's magnanimous eulogy of Chamberlain

and, to the contrary, warning the British people's representatives how

history was pitiless, George Dangerfield coldly assessed his national

leaders' mismanagement of state affairs during the pre-Great War years

of 1910 to 1914: ``Along that row of distinguished and original faces

there would pass from time to time, as lightly as a shadow upon the

waters, an alarming, an alien spirit, a spirit dangerous and

indefinite, the Spirit of Whimsy . . . In the hush of crisis, in the

tumult of abuse, or when the stuffy air of the Commons seemed almost to

glitter with the shining, salt ripples of sarcasm, there it played,

airy, remote, and irresponsible.''

Is an inchoate angst over history's final verdict the reason some

supporters of this resolution have taken to this floor, though not in

this resolution itself, and verbally professed three key defenses of

their decision? One defense is they were misled into supporting an

Iraqi regime change because of the false claim it did or might possess

weapons of mass destruction. Mercifully, let us stipulate these elected

officials performed their due diligence on the matter and, especially

for our Democratic colleagues so situated, they did not overly trust

the some many of them had accused of stealing a Presidential election.

Again, there were numerous justifiable reasons for authorizing the

President of the United States to militarily execute a regime change in

Iraq. As those reasons are written in that resolution, I will not dwell

upon them, for they do not constitute the crux of the matter, which is

this: the war aim of regime change was a success. It is the post-war

failure of Iraqi reconstruction breeding our present perils.

Thus even if a Member of Congress can be excused for authorizing

force on the basis of being ``misled,'' the Member of Congress cannot

be excused for failing to demand adequate post-war reconstruction

planning, nor for a 3-year failure to demand constructive changes to an

inadequate post-war reconstruction plan.

Dovetailing with this defense, some of the resolution's supporters

now claim their initial ardor for the regime change was a mistake

because this administration has botched Iraqi reconstruction beyond

salvaging and the fledgling democracy is now in a state of civil war.

This argument has the

merit of being partially correct, for despite the hard-learned lessons

of our Nation's former successes in doing so, this administration

utterly failed to comprehend and implement the fundamental principles

of reconstructing a defeated, belligerent nation. Importantly, this

does not preclude reconstructing Iraq now.

While rife with sectarian violence, much of it instigated and

perpetuated from external elements, Iraq is not in a civil war.

Relative calm exists in most of the beleaguered nation's provinces, and

if one dares to look, there are the agonizingly slow but significant

signs of incremental progress in the establishment of order. This

progression will be expedited by the administration's new plan, which

finally incorporates the two fundamental principles of Iraqi or any

reconstruction plan, one, a liberal democratic society evolves upward

from its traditional roots of order, not from a centralized

bureaucratic government downward; and, two, a nation's transformational

evolution into a liberal democracy must contemporaneously provide

transactional benefits to its citizens. These fundamental principles

will be implemented through critical initiatives, such as provincial

reconstruction teams, an accord on oil revenue allocations, and a

national reconciliation process, amongst others.

But to earn the support of terrorized Iraqis, security must first be

established so they may commence securing the blessings of liberty.

This is why the troop reinforcement is required and why the twin

pillars of troop reinforcement and grass-roots reconstruction can

achieve a joint American and Iraqi victory over the enemies of liberty.

The ineluctable fact of our victory is it must be won with the help

of Iraqis, which is disconcerting to many of this resolution's

supporters who believe the Iraqis are unwilling to fight for their

freedom and are incapable of perpetuating once it is secured. This

argument often intersects with the charge our mission in Iraq has been

untenably shifted from effectuating a regime change to erecting a model

democracy; and for the above reasons, they think this is impossible.

This deplorable argument is antithetical to the self-evident truths

written into our own Declaration of Independence, though, sadly, it is

not without precedent. Once more, let us reference another resolution,

this one opposing a military mission creeping toward a decidedly

different goal:

``Resolved: that the emancipation proclamation of the President of

the United States is as unwarranted in military as in civil law; a

gigantic usurpation, at once converting the war, professedly commenced

by the administration for the vindication of the authority of the

Constitution, into a crusade for the sudden, unconditional and violent

liberation of 3 million Negro slaves; a result which would not only be

a total subversion of the Federal Union, but a revolution in the social

organization of the Southern States, the immediate and remote, the

present and far-reaching consequences of which to both races cannot be

contemplated without the most dismal foreboding of horror and dismay.

The proclamation invites servile insurrection as an element in this

emancipation crusade, a means of warfare, the inhumanity and diabolism

of which are without example in civilized warfare, and which we

denounce, and which the civilized world will denounce as an

ineffaceable disgrace to the American people.''

So much for the prognostications of the ``Peace Democrat'' controlled

Illinois legislature's 1863 resolution. Thankfully, by the grace of God

and the sanguine sacrifice of the American people, it was this Illinois

legislature, not our African American brothers and sisters and our

Nation's great emancipator, who are to be denounced by the civilized

world for all eternity.

What of our legislative body? Now resurrects the specter of our own

judgment, which hovers above and shadows us as we seek to ensure we are

not forever weighed in the balance and found wonting. It is as it

should be, as it must be, for notwithstanding its nonbinding nature,

even after this resolution's disposition, our duty demands we make

moral decisions affecting our Nation's victory or defeat, and our

fellow citizens' lives or deaths. Is this not why, even while bearing

malice towards none of them, in defending his own war plan, our own

maligned President warned his opponents history is a harsh mistress:

``Is it doubted, then, that the plan I propose, if adopted, would

shorten the war and thus lessen its expenditure of money and of blood?

Is it doubted that it would restore the national authority and national

prosperity and perpetuate both indefinitely? Is it doubted that we

here, Congress and Executive, can secure its adoption? Will not the

good people respond to a united and earnest appeal from us? Can we, can

they, by any other means, so certainly or so speedily, assure these

vital objects? We can succeed only by concert. It is not `Can any of us

imagine better?' but `Can we all do better?' Objection whatsoever is

possible. Still the question recurs `Can we do better?' The dogmas of

the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is

piled high with difficulty and we must rise to the occasion. As our

case is new, so we must think anew, act anew. We must disenthrall

ourselves and then we shall save our country.

``Fellow citizens, we cannot escape history. We of this Congress and

this administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No

personal significance or insignificance can spare one or another of us.

The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down, in honor or

dishonor, to the latest generation. We say we are for the Union. The

world will not forget that we say this. We know how to save the Union.

The world knows we do know how to save it. We, even we here, hold the

power and bear the responsibility. In giving freedom to the slave, we

assure freedom to the free, honorable alike in what we give and what we

preserve. We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best hope of

Earth. Other means may succeed; this could not fail. The way is plain,

peaceful, generous, just, a way which, if followed, the world will

forever applaud, and God must forever bless.''

My friends, history harkens your honorable hearts to reconsider

supporting this immoral resolution. If one believes all human beings

are equally God's children, whether they be free or yearning to breathe

free, one cannot, after a cruel sip of hope, condemn 20 million of

God's equally beloved children to a saturnalia of slaughter. If one

supports our troops, one cannot deride their cause as injurious to our

country. If one seeks our victory in the war on terror, one cannot

advocate a retreat and defeat in the face of our enemy.

My friends, through the fog of war, our fiery trial illumes and

creeps ever nearer along the trail. Rather than curse the darkness and

dread the echoes of history's verdict, let us acquit ourselves with

lasting honor by leading our searching Nation through these trying,

transformational times and into a transcendent, triumphal tomorrow. Let

us earn the esteem of the latest and later generations of all free

people by reaffirming our revolutionary Republic cherishes the self-

evident truth that all human beings yearn to breathe free. Let us, in

our Nation's finest traditions and truest character, remove the Iraqi

people's bonds of oppression and replace them with bonds of brotherhood

amongst our free, sovereign, and secure peoples.

Let us, in the face of terror, march always in the ranks of honor and

courageously and selflessly secure the Iraqi people's blessings of

liberty and, in so doing, secure our own blessings of liberty for

unnamed generations of American children.

Mr. Speaker, fully cognizant of my moral duty to our troops, my

constituents, my country, and my Creator, I cannot in good conscience

support this resolution, which is injurious to the cause of our

Nation's victory and in consequence is patiently immoral. Therefore, I

urge this resolution's rejection and pray God graces, guards, and

guides the steps of all who bear the burden of our decisions made on

behalf of the majestic American people.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.