Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the distinguished

gentleman for yielding, and I want to thank him also for his

distinguished service in the United States Congress, the United States

Air Force, seven of those as a prisoner of war.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to this nonbinding

resolution. And I share with my colleagues, our servicemen and women

and their families, the wish that this war was over and won. It is not,

and the resolution before us today does nothing to resolve this

conflict, does nothing to reduce the loss of American life, does

nothing to stabilize Iraq and does nothing to advance our security.

I would like to use my time today to relate some of the comments that

I have received from my constituents in the Fourth District of

Michigan. From Big Rapids: ``The Congressmen and women who are opposed

to these plans should come up with better solutions! Don't penalize our

military men and women by making politics a part of their safety and

well-being!''

From my hometown of Midland: ``Please stop playing politics with our

lives and the lives of young people who are defending our country.''

From Alma: ``I am sick of the partisan politics. We went into Iraq

united, but we have let politics divide us. It is time to realize some

things are bigger than the political parties!''

Friends, we may often disagree. But the facts are, regardless of how

it began, and irrespective of the benefit of hindsight, we are at war

and Iraq is the central battleground.

Islamic extremists are waging a jihad against us, and they are

struggling to make Iraq a base camp. Our focus must be on winning; and,

disturbingly, I see no mention of winning, succeeding, or victory in

this resolution. That in itself is telling of just how the other side

perceives this conflict: not in terms of defeating an enemy of America,

but in terms of defeating a political foe.

Our troops deserve better. The American people demand more from their

leaders.

Again, in the words of one of my constituents from Bannister: ``I

hope Congress is tough enough to do what works, not just what is

politically correct. We need to move carefully and deliberately,

showing a united front, or we are again going to be the victims of some

outrageous terrorist attack.''

Sadly, the new majority does not seem to understand what so many

Americans readily grasp. ``If you support the troops, you must support

the mission or you send the wrong message to the enemy,'' as it was so

aptly put by a constituent from Ashley.

From Farwell: ``Congress needs to get behind the President and help,

not hurt, the morale of the soldiers that are fighting. They believe in

their mission!''

And I believe in them, which is why I cannot and will not support

this resolution.

As I conclude my remarks, I want to leave you with two comments. The

first is from Traverse City: ``We should all pull together and get the

job done.''

And the second, from an airman from Corunna: ``Thank you for the much

needed support of me and my fellow airmen.''

I hope that once we dispose of this nonbinding resolution, our focus

turns to supporting our servicemen and women, making America more

secure and achieving the victory our military personnel are putting

their lives on the line for.