Mr. Speaker, these are real e-mails from veterans,

active duty members, and National Guard and Reservists:

``John, my son, a Marine gunny sergeant embedded with the Iraqi Army

around Rimadi, called a few weeks ago. I asked him if he knew about the

President's plan for more troops. He hadn't heard about it, but his

only comment to me was `We can use them.' Please support the President

and the troops. It may be our last, best chance to win this thing.

Winning is the imperative. Semper Fi.''

And another: ``We have to let our generals be generals and wage this

war as only they are trained to do and have hope that the announced

troop buildup will be the final key that is needed by the Iraqis to

build a secure, united country.''

We have to hope that it is not too late for the U.S. to make a

difference in Iraq.''

Another: ``We need to send the message to our troops that America

wants them to succeed in Iraq by giving the buildup a chance to

succeed.''

Still another: ``My fellow Guardsmen are ready. We will do whatever

is asked of us. Please ensure that the resources, funds and equipment

continue to flow. Supporting the troops means giving us the means to do

our job.''

And another: ``We also need to stay in Iraq and put forth the

necessary will and resources that will allow our strategy to succeed.''

And another: ``Moreover, our troops need more open rules of

engagement to do their job effectively.''

Another e-mail: ``Elections have consequences, and for our recent

election the consequences have been a major setback in the war on

terror and a greater threat to terrorist attack at home.''

Still another: ``Like Vietnam, our enemies view us as not having the

stomach to fight a protracted war. If we withdraw, however, the

credibility of the U.S., our military, and our assurances would be lost

for years, probably decades.''

Another: ``The overwhelming response among officers is we must stay

and finish what we have started. Many of these officers have built

strong relationships with local Iraqi and Afghan citizens who want to

raise their family in peace.''

Another: ``We do in fact have many more Iraqi Army and National

Police units moving into Baghdad and many are effectively partnering

with U.S. units.''

Another: ``They did pass their budget for 2007 last week,'' sooner

than the U.S. Congress, incidentally, ``and have made some progress

with other legislation, which indicates they can work some political

compromises.''

I will end with this: ``I would hope that your colleagues would be

able to continue to support what we are doing, because it honestly does

have a reasonable chance at success.''

These are real communications with real soldiers, Active Duty, in

Iraq, National Guardsmen, reservists, and veterans throughout our

country who say there is no substitute for victory. We have to win this

campaign. It is in our national security interest to support moderate

Arab states.

John, my son, a Marine Gunny Sgt. imbedded with the Iraqi army around

Rimadi, called a few weeks ago. I asked him if he knew about the

President's plan for more troops. He hadn't heard about it, but his

only comment to me was: ``We can use them!'' Please support the

President and the Troops. Maybe our last, best chance to win this

thing. Winning is the imperative. Semper Fi!

We have to let our generals be generals and wage this war as only

they are trained to do, and have hope that the announced troop buildup

will be the final 3 key that's needed by the Iraqis to build a secure

and united country.

We have to have hope that it's not too late for the U.S. to make a

difference in Iraq.

We need to send the message to our troops that America wants them to

succeed in Iraq by giving the buildup a chance to succeed.

The main effort is really the political reconciliation and the

security of the population is the key precondition to that. The

language and some action from the Iraqi government and Army leaders

have been good in the past several weeks. The next several months will

be critical--probably decisive--and I believe there is reason to be

realistically hopeful.

I believe that what we are doing in Iraq and Afghanistan supports the

NSS. What I have heard in the debate is that we no longer have a

security interest in Iraq. What part of out NSS is to support moderate

Muslim governments? Another part of the NSS addresses humanitarian

rights, to include rights of women.

My fellow Guardsmen are ready. We will do whatever is asked of us.

Please, ensure that the resources, funds and equipment, continue to

flow. Supporting the troops means giving us the means to do our jobs.

We have not had a failed Iraq policy--we have just had overly

optimistic expectations of how fast the Iraqis would be able to

establish a stable government and a unified country that functions in a

manner to our satisfaction. Ironically, we want the Iraqis to pursue a

unity government and national reconciliation, but we don't do that

ourselves. The partisanship that we are seeing here in the U.S. is no

different that the partisanship that we are seeing in Iraq.

We also need to stay in Iraq and put forth the necessary will and

resources that will allow our strategy to succeed. Imagine a Super Bowl

football team quitting the game in the third quarter simply because

they were behind. The premise is so absurd it is inconceivable so too

would be our quitting a war to protect our way of life simply because

battlefield conditions are not going perfectly.

Moreover, our troops need more open rules of engagement to do their

job effectively. This is war, and they are soldiers, not police

officers. The U.S. and Iraqi governments must expect civilian

casualties and collateral damage. It's unavoidable. The irony in this

matter is that most Iraqi people would welcome the increase security.

Elections have consequences. And for our recent election, the

consequences have been a major setback in the war on terror and a

greater threat to terrorist attack at home.

Like Vietnam, our enemies view us as not having the stomach to fight

a protracted war. If we withdraw, however, the credibility of the U.S.,

our military, and our assurances would be lost for years, probably

decades.

The Iraqis are watching all of this, and they can see which way the

wind is blowing. They know if we leave either the Sunni insurgency or

the Iranians would likely come in, and their newly gained freedoms

would be lost. This reality shapes the thoughts and actions of all

Iraqi officials, from Prime Minister al-Maliki, down to the police

officers on the street.

Many Americans are in denial about the threat from radical Islam.

Unfortunately, it may take another 9/11 before they wake up. God help

us if one of our cities gets nuked when that happens.

The overwhelming response among officers is that we must stay and

finish what we started. Many of these officers have built strong

relationships with local Iraqi and Afghan citizens who want to raise

their families in peace. They feel we have given our word as a country

that we will stand by them. I agree with this sentiment.

Lincoln/Sherman figured out that to truly defeat the south, he had to

march to Savannah to convince the locals that it was not worth

continued conflict. WWII had similar actions for resolution like

Hiroshima. While these were waged against conventional forces, Congress

must understand that the current conflict is more than between

insurgents and U.S./Coalition forces.

If we do not have the will to do this hard work, we need to get out

now. We cannot continue to try to get the job done with the minimum

force. If anything we should send more than we think we need. Our focus

on being liberators has caused us to misjudge what is needed. You

cannot liberate until you have gained control. We never got there and

must do so now.

Speaking of which, my two cents. The most basic job of government is

to protect its citizens. If the Surge is properly designed to do that,

then it is a good idea. I say give it a chance, even though it should

have been that way to begin with. From my experiences in Desert Storm

'91, I firmly believe that most people, Middles Easterners included,

just want to protect their family, practice their religion, and have an

opportunity to prosper.

We have to be able to go after all the killers regardless of who or

where they are. The Iraqi follow-on forces then have to maintain the

peace, not bring in their individual hatreds to the power vacuum.

Helping them secure their borders from fighters through Jordan and

Syria and equipment from Iran is also critical (Navy and Air Force

tasks with limited ground support?). Getting the ``Rule of Law''

established will eventually replace the need for ``Self Protection''

(Militias).

The biggest hurdle is at home. If the media continues its selective

reporting (failures only), then even if it’s an unqualified success on

the ground, it will be perceived as a loss at home due to its depiction

on TV and Press reports. Tying Iraqis to a yardstick measuring success

or failure seems to be a good idea.

Press the Senate not to pass the latest Resolution limiting support--

it is just a grand standing event for presidential hopefuls.

We do in fact have many more Iraqi Army and National Police units

moving into Baghdad and many are effectively partnering with U.S.

units.

They did pass their budget for 2007 last week (sooner than the U.S.

Congress, incidentally) and have made some progress with other

legislation, which indicates they can work some political compromises.

Everyone is forced to telescope political, economic, and security

reforms that would normally take 7-10 years into 7-10 months.

So the question that you are debating is whether or not $100 billions

(less than 0.8% GDP) and tragically, probably 700-900 U.S. soldiers'

lives is worth a 50% chance of preventing a national security crisis

that will set back U.S. policy for decades.

If you are the parent or spouse of one of those soldiers who may die,

it is GD probably not worth it. But if you are a national leader, I

would hope that your colleagues would be able to continue to support

what we are doing because it honestly does have a reasonable chance of

success.