First, I want to thank my dear friend, and a genuine

American hero, for yielding time to me today.

Mr. Speaker, speaker after speaker on the other side of the aisle

have come to the floor to speak against the past decision to go into

Iraq. They criticize past lapses of intelligence, they criticize past

actions, they criticize past setbacks. They want to live in the past.

Regardless of whose war this was in the past, today it is an American

war. And the Democratic majority must decide do they support the

mission, or do they not support the mission?

Now, certainly we are all disappointed that we have not achieved the

success that we would have desired by now. And I myself do not know if

the new strategy will prove successful. I think it can be successful. I

hope it will be successful. And I know it is a strategy that has been

recommended by the Iraqi Study Group and our new battlefield commander.

So until such a time as somebody comes to me with a more compelling

strategy, or until somebody convinces me that somehow my Nation and my

family will be more secure by our premature withdrawal from Iraq and

subsequent implosion, I feel I must support this new strategy. I will

support this new strategy. Defeat is not an option.

What are the options, Mr. Speaker? Clearly, many. Many, if not most,

of my Democrat colleagues want to cut off funding for our troops and

withdraw from Iraq. This is well known. And I respect their views when

they are heartfelt. But since Democrats control a majority in both

houses of Congress, why are we voting on a nonbinding withdrawal

resolution?

That is why this is a sad day. Somewhere over in Baghdad right now is

a marine sergeant who is tired, he is resolute, he has dirt on his

face. But you know what? He volunteered, he loves America, he loves his

freedom. He has a picture in his wallet. His parents are praying for

him. He is thinking about his wife.

Who, who in this body, what Member can go to that marine and say, you

know what? I don't believe in your mission. I don't believe you can

succeed. I don't believe you can win, and I am going to oppose

reinforcements. Guess what? I have the power to bring you home, but I

am just not willing to do it. Because if I do it now everyone will know

it, and I have to take responsibility, and I am just not willing to do

that.

Mr. Speaker, if you believe in something, stand up for it. Where is

the courage? Where is the conviction in a nonbinding resolution?

Mr. Speaker, we all know that fighting this war is costly. Like many

Members of this body, I have met with the mothers of the fallen

soldiers. Their burden and sacrifice is profound. But I never, never,

never want to meet with the mothers whose children may perish in the

next 9/11 if we accept defeat in Iraq.

Iraq must be seen in the larger context of the war with radical

Islam, and whether we like it or not, the battle lines are drawn in

Iraq. Don't take my word for it, listen to what the jihadists have to

say. Listen to Osama bin Laden, ``The epicenter of these wars is

Baghdad. Success in Baghdad will be success for the United States.

Failure in Iraq is the failure of the United States. Their defeat in

Iraq will mean defeat in all their wars.''

We must soberly reflect on the challenge that we face. Listen to al-

Zawahiri, who is number two in command. ``Al Qaeda has the right to

kill 4 million Americans, 2 million of them children.''

Listen to Hassan Abbassi, Revolutionary Guard's intelligence adviser

to the Iranian President. ``We have a strategy drawn up for the

destruction of Anglo-Saxon civilization.''

Listen to Iraqi Ayatollah Ahmad Husseini. ``Even if this means using

biological, chemical and bacterial weapons, we will conquer the

world.''

This is the enemy we face, and we face him foremost in Iraq. If we

leave Iraq before subduing him, he will follow us to America. Make no

doubt about it, the consequences in Iraq are immense. Don't take my

word for it. Read the report of the Iraq Study Group. Read the National

Intelligence Estimate. Read the work of the Middle East scholars at the

American Enterprise Institute, Heritage Foundation, Brookings

Institute.

If we do not pursue success, Iraq will become what Afghanistan once

was. It will be a breeding ground, a safe haven for the recruitment,

training, financing and sanctuary of radical Islamists bent upon

attacking our Nation and our families. We cannot wish it away, we

cannot hope it away, we cannot dream it away. There will be no greater

event to empower radical Islam than our defeat in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, it doesn't have to be this way. We are Americans. We can

meet this threat. We can work together. Vote against this resolution.

Support our troops. Protect our Nation and our children from this

threat.