Madam Speaker, throughout our Nation's rich history, we

have reached moments where we arrive at what President Ronald Reagan

described as a time for choosing. Today is such a day.

This week, the House is asking ourselves a simple question: Will we

choose to go forward with the resolve and determination needed to win

the war on terror by supporting our brave troops, or will we retreat

and wait for the fight to return to American soil?

It was Winston Churchill who once said, ``Never believe any war will

be smooth or easy or that anyone who embarks on a strange voyage can

measure the tides and hurricanes he will encounter.''

With this in mind, I acknowledge that the war in Iraq is not going as

well as we all had hoped or wanted. Mistakes have been made. Thousands

of precious lives have been lost, and there are likely more tough times

to come.

My wife and I pray for the men and women in uniform and grieve for

every loss of life and injuries inflicted on these heroes who proudly

serve our Nation. I, as much as anyone else speaking today, want this

war to be over. But this resolution essentially tells these soldiers to

give up because the cause they have nobly served is no longer worth the

courage and vigor necessary, and protecting the American people and

keeping terrorists off American soil are no longer national priorities.

As Americans we are reluctant warriors, but throughout history, when

our troops have been in harm's way, America has supported them and made

certain our troops have the necessary resources to accomplish their

mission.

In a cynical way, this resolution says America has already lost and

the leaders of our country no longer believe our troops can achieve

victory. It tells other nations that we are unreliable as an ally, and

they can no longer count on us in times of distress.

My son proudly served in the Army. And during this time of service, I

got to know many of his peers in uniform. I am not prepared to say to

these men and women, nor to the young man fallen in battle, that I will

go to right after this speech at Walter Reed Hospital, that I support

you but I don't support the mission you serve, and the blood you shed

on the battlefield was in vain.

I am not prepared to call for a precipitous withdrawal from Iraq that

will leave the Nation ripe for terrorism and ultimately bring the war

on terror back to American soil.

My neighbors in south central Michigan and across the country deserve

to be protected from enemies of freedom. And they ought to have a

Congress that doesn't shirk its responsibilities to soldiers and

sailors and airmen sent into harm's way to ensure this war is fought

off American soil.

So we come to this time of choosing today. Are we willing to abandon

our troops as they implement the new strategy based on quantifiable

goals and measurable results? I hope not.

I challenge my colleagues to honor America's brave men and women

serving in the name of freedom and oppose this resolution of retreat.