Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of our

troops and in support of victory in Iraq.

It is hard to ignore the inconvenient truth that this ill-timed

measure will aid the terrorists and depress the morale of our soldiers

who are fighting to defeat them. It also sends a wrong message to our

troops at exactly the wrong time. They are carrying out their mission,

as I speak, while we here in the Congress are condemning them.

It amazes me that at the same time General Petraeus was confirmed by

the Senate, this resolution was introduced condemning his

counterinsurgency plan for victory.

Never in our history has this country sent a war leader into battle,

while condemning the very mission that he and the Armed Forces will be

leading.

Make no mistake, this resolution is the first step towards cutting

off funding for our troops. As a consultant to the Iraq Study Group, I

supported the findings that failure is not an option, and that a troop

surge is necessary for security and stability. I also supported the

recommendation that a political and diplomatic surge is essential for

peace.

The time for evaluating the success or failure of this endeavor will

come soon enough, but now is not the time to be sending a message to

friend and foe alike that we no longer believe in the mission.

But many in this country and many in this Chamber insist it is in

America's interest to surrender and retreat from our obligation to help

Iraq build a stable democracy. They say that, knowing full well the

consequences of an early American withdrawal.

And what are those consequences? Chaos, instability in the region,

and, in al Qaeda's own words, a threat that America has never seen

before.

Recently, the ambassadors from Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia told me

that ``if the U.S. fails here, it will be catastrophic. We are in this

together. They will come after us and then they will come after you.''

And then they will come after you.

Recently, after meeting with them, I had to say to myself, how will

history then judge us; that when we stood at the brink, we chose

retreat over advancement, surrender over victory, and defeatism for our

children and for future generations?

Let us remember the words of President Kennedy, when he said: ``Let

every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay

any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend,

oppose any foe, to assure the survival and success of liberty.''

Where is the party of President Kennedy today? This resolution sends

a clear message across the Islamic jihad world that we will not bear

any burden, that we will not oppose any foe, that we have lost our

will, that they have won, and that they can come and they can get us.

I believe Abraham Lincoln summed it up best by saying that from these

honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they

gave the last full measure of devotion, that we here highly resolve

that these dead shall not have died in vain.

As Members of Congress, the most sobering job that we have is to

comfort the families left behind in a time of

great loss and a time of war. I have stood by, like many of my

colleagues, to honor those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice for

freedom. We all stand here today indebted to those brave Americans and

their families.

And because those heroes and those families cannot speak on the floor

of the House, I would like to share some of their words here with you

today. And these are the words of Janet Norwood, a constituent, a Gold

Star Mother, whose son, Byron, was killed in Fallujah while serving in

Iraq. And she said: In the past I have always had great hope for this

country. But, for the first time, during the State of the Union address

last month, I had real doubts. I had doubts about our winning this war

on terrorism. She said, When President Bush used the word ``victory,''

only half of the room stood to applaud. My heart sank. It was obvious

to me at that moment that party affiliation was more important to some

than victory over evil and the sacrifice our son and other sons have

made.

Well, to Janet and all the other Gold Star Mothers, I say, I couldn't

agree more. And as Abraham Lincoln said, a house divided cannot stand.

September 11 changed our lives forever. But the war on terror started

long before that. The year 1979 changed the world. When Iran took our

embassy hostage, the seeds of Islamic jihad were spread all over the

Middle East.

These seeds planted hatred and contempt for freedom in the souls of

men like Osama bin Laden. In 1983, they murdered our marines in Beirut.

In 1993, Ramzi Yousef and his al Qaeda associates bombed the World

Trade Center. They were supposed to fall that day, but that day would

come later.

They struck the Khobar Towers in 1996. They bombed our embassies in

Africa. They defeated us in Somalia. And they deliberately attacked the

USS Cole.

Each time we failed to respond. And then came September 11. It was as

if the United States was a sleeping giant. And not until the bloodiest

alarm of 9/11 did the giant finally awake. And America cannot afford to

go back to sleep again.

``It is hard to ignore the inconvenient truth that this ill-timed

measure will aid the terrorists and depress the morale of our soldiers

who are fighting to defeat them.'' It also sends the wrong message to

our troops at the wrong time. They are carrying out their mission as I

speak, while we here in Congress are condemning it.

The time for evaluating the success or failure of this endeavor will

come soon enough, but now is not the time to be sending a message to

friend and foe alike that we no longer believe in this mission.

It amazes me that just as General Petraeus was confirmed by the

Senate, this resolution was introduced condemning his counter-

insurgency plan for victory.

``Never in our history has this country sent a war leader into battle

while condemning the mission that he and the armed forces he will be

leading have been asked to complete.''

Make no mistake; this resolution is the first step towards cutting

off funding for our troops. As a consultant to the Iraq Study Group, I

supported the findings that a troop surge is necessary for security and

stability. I also supported the recommendation that a political and

diplomatic surge is essential for victory.

But many in this country, and many in this chamber, insist it is in

America's interest to surrender and retreat from our obligation to help

Iraq build a stable democracy. They say that, knowing full well the

consequences of an early American withdrawal.

And what are those consequences--

Chaos. Instability in the region. A threat that America has never

seen before. A threat that we will not be able to blindly put our head

in the sand and wish it to go away.

Al Qaeda has openly said that they consider Iraq the central front in

the ``Third World War.'' Their goal is to create a Caliphate with

Baghdad as its capital. Their plan is to then conquer the rest of the

world and force all humanity to submit to Radical Islam.

The National Intelligence Estimate released last month stated, ``If

Coalition forces were withdrawn rapidly . . . this almost certainly

would lead to a significant increase in the scale and scope of

sectarian conflict in Iraq.''

Our allies agree. The Ambassadors from Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia

recently told me, ``If the U.S. fails it will be catastrophic. We are

in this together . . . they will come after us and then they will come

after you.''

How will history judge us then? That when we stood at the brink we

chose retreat over advancement, surrender over victory, and defeatism

for our children and for future generations.

Let us remember the words of President Kennedy when he said:

Where is the party of President Kennedy today? This resolution sends

a clear message across the Islamic Jihad world--that we will not bear

any burden--that we will not oppose any foe--that we have lost our

will--that they have won--that they can come and get us.

We are better than that.

We are Americans--the same Americans who defeated the most powerful

country in the world at the time to win our independence.

We are the same Americans who defeated Fascists in Japan, Germany and

Italy.

We are the same Americans who defeated the scourge of the Soviet

Union, liberating millions more.

Now we face yet another challenge--defeating the jihadists and an

ideology of hate. But our colleagues on the other side of the aisle say

``We will support the War on Terror, except where the terrorists have

chosen to fight it.''

Our previous struggles were not easy, they were hard and required

great sacrifice. Yet all of these challenges were met, and victory was

won, and the world is a better place because of it. This struggle is

the same. If we give up now, we betray not just the Iraqi people, and

not just our place in history, but those who have paid the ultimate

sacrifice.

I believe Abraham Lincoln summed it up best by saying:

As Members of Congress, the most sobering job we have is to comfort

the families left behind in a time of great loss, in a time of war. I

have stood by, like many of my colleagues, to honor those who have paid

the ultimate price for freedom. We all stand here today indebted to

those brave Americans and their families. They are true heroes.

Because those heroes and their families cannot speak on the Floor of

the House, I would like to share some of their words today. These are

the words of Janet Norwood, a constituent and Gold Star Mother, whose

son Byron was killed serving in Iraq. She said:

To Janet and all of the other Gold Star Mothers, I say, ``I couldn't

agree more.'' As President Lincoln once said, ``A House Divided Cannot

Stand.''