Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution.

More importantly, I rise today to express my support for our Commander

in Chief and the men and women serving in the Armed Forces. It is

simply not possible to claim that you support the troops while

completely disavowing their mission.

Our troops in Iraq put their mission first, above all else, even

their own safety. How can we even consider passing a resolution stating

that we do not support providing them the manpower that they need to

accomplish their mission? How does this support the morale? How does

this show them that we have confidence in their abilities?

As we all know, this resolution has no real legal authority, it is

preemptive, purely political, without taking the difficult step of

offering an alternative proposal. At first I thought this debate was

simply political theater, 3 days of speeches and sound bites.

But now we are learning this resolution is simply the first step. The

gentleman from Virginia quoted in The Washington Post yesterday,

saying: This is just the bark, this resolution is the bark, the real

bite will be in 2 weeks when they trot out a continuing resolution or

appropriation bill that will cut off the funds to the troops.

I hope you are all relishing the opportunity to support that

appropriation to cut off the troops. This is the bark. The next the

step is to cut off the funds.

I supported the original resolution authorizing force. I have served

on the Intelligence Committee for 8 years, and I believe we have done

the right thing. I believe our troops have done the right thing.

Saddam is gone. He has been tried and executed; 12 million Iraqis,

over 70 percent of the people, have voted for their own leadership. The

army and the police are being trained. Schools and hospitals are being

built and opened. Coalition forces have done the best they can under

extraordinary circumstances.

Iraqis need to continue to take control of the security. And in every

discussion we have had with the Commander in Chief, he has been on the

phone talking to the Prime Minister, persuading him that the American

people are becoming impatient, that he has to take control of his

government, he has to stand up an army, he has to stand up a police

force.

I believe the Commander in Chief, the President, will hold the Prime

Minister's feet to the fire and hold the Iraqi Government accountable

so that they can begin to take full control of the responsibilities.

I think when that happens we will have achieved a great deal. I will

not vote for this resolution that does nothing but show our enemies

that the House of Representatives does not support our military. This

ignores the more than 3,100 men and women who made the ultimate

sacrifice. We turn our backs on the 3,100 when we pass a resolution

like this.

And we also turn our backs on those that are doing the hard work in

Iraq today. When I have had opportunities to visit those who have

served from my district, who have come back, I have not heard one word

of complaining, not one word of whining, no wringing of hands, only an

opportunity to serve.

And so I urge my colleagues to stand up for the troops, stand up for

the military, stand up for those who have done the hard work. Stand up

for those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. Vote down this

resolution and send the message that we stand with those who stand for

freedom and hope and opportunity.