Mr. Speaker, as I rise I do want to say a special

thank you to our troops who are deployed tonight, to those that are

from Tennessee's Seventh Congressional District, many of those from

Fort Campbell, and our National Guardsmen, our Reservists, certainly to

our veterans.

I can think of no more wonderful gift to give those and to leave for

those you love than the gift of freedom. And certainly, on Valentine's

Day, on Valentine's evening that is an important, important thought for

us to have. And I appreciate all of our men and women and the efforts

that they make to keep this Nation free, and to be certain that our

children and our grandchildren have the opportunity to grow up in

freedom and to enjoy the America that we have enjoyed.

As we have talked about this resolution, the 97 words that exist in

this very short resolution, we have talked about it from different

angles, how a nonbinding resolution and a no confidence resolution

affects our troops, the thoughts that went into creating this

resolution. And one of the questions that I continually come back to

that actually was posed to me by some of the veterans in my district,

is whose side are you on? When you offer a resolution like this, whose

side are you on?

And the other question that keeps coming back is who are you

listening to?

Certainly, I would hope that we would all be standing on the side of

freedom. I would hope that we would all be standing on the side of our

troops. And I do hope that we would all be listening to our commanders

in the field.

There has been some mention this evening of General David Petraeus,

who this weekend took control of command in Iraq. And I will give you

some of his quotes, some of the things that he has had to say in the

last few days as he is over there and working those. And I quote from

him. ``Our job in the months ahead, supporting and working with Iraqi

forces, will improve our security so that the Iraqi Government can

resolve the tough issues it faces, and so that the economy and basic

services can be improved. These tasks are achievable. This mission is

doable.''

Indeed, those on the ground believe this is doable. We know that it

is doable, and we know in the global war on terror we have to win. We

cannot lose. We have to win. The civilized world depends on defeating

terrorists and winning.

We also know that Iraqis are making progress. There has been some

debate and some mention tonight about progress not being made in Iraq.

And, Mr. Speaker, I will offer to you that indeed you are not going to

hear this on the 6 o'clock news, the 10 o'clock, 11 o'clock news around

the country because the major media outlets just don't want to report

it. But we are finding out that while this body sets aside a political

debate that some think will benefit them, what we see is our troops in

the field in Iraq are making progress. They understand their mission.

They know what they are about every day. We see that even just in the

last few days, when you are talking about Baghdad, three Iraqi Army

brigades are now deploying to Baghdad to reinforce the six Iraqi Army

brigades and nine National Police brigades that are already there.

These are steps that are taking place. This is progress that the Iraqi

people are making on behalf of their quest for freedom. These are their

steps, these are their steps toward freedom and toward leadership.

How dare we discount that? How dare we not recognize that? How dare

we not encourage that? And how dare we take steps to embolden and

encourage the enemy who would seek to strike them down?

Mr. Speaker, we should be very, very careful whom we listen to, and

we should be very thoughtful as we answer the question, Whose side are

you on?

I am so grateful, Mr. Speaker, that those that have gone before us

chose to be on the side of freedom.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Michigan for

yielding the time, as we come to the floor to debate this nonbinding,

no confidence resolution that is going to serve to discourage our

troops and embolden our enemies.

I have noted that this obviously is the best that the Democrats have

to offer when it comes to national security and to their thoughts on

how we deal with the situation in Iraq, and that is a disappointment to

me.

I think that the question that we have to ask is, whose side are you

on? Whose side are you on? Are you on the side of winning? Are you on

the side of freedom? Or are you on the side of allowing the terrorists

to get an upper hand?

And as I begin my remarks, I do want to thank the troops that live in

my district, those of the 101st Airborne at Fort Campbell, members of

the National Guard who have served with distinction, Reservists who

have been deployed more than once. I want to thank their families, and

I want to thank the veterans that served in an advisory capacity to me

as we look at these issues and as we make decisions about how best to

approach preserving freedom, preserving liberty, and preserving the

sovereignty of this great Nation as we know it. I thank them. I am

grateful for their sacrifice. I am grateful for their service to this

Nation, and I want it to be noted on this day. They have a commitment

and a perspective and a love of freedom that few Americans will ever

know. I wish that we all did.

I am grateful also that they can articulate so fluently their mission

and what they are called on to do every day in Iraq, in Afghanistan,

and in the 30 countries around the globe where Americans fight to

preserve freedom. They articulate this in e-mails and blogs, and even

in notes and letters to their Member of Congress.

I also, Mr. Speaker, want to recognize the Kurdish community that

calls Nashville, Tennessee home, and recognize their commitment and

their appreciation to our U.S. troops. One of the points that many of

them make to me regularly and also one of the points that our men and

women in uniform make regularly is to remind us of why we are in this

fight, why we are in this fight and providing the historical

perspective that is so important. This didn't begin on September 11. It

did indeed begin long, long, long ago.

Indeed, the radical Islamists have fought Judaism and Christianity

not for decades but for centuries. This is something that we all know.

The Islamic radicals did get a toe-hold in Iran in the late 1970s with

the approach at that point by President Carter, then President Carter,

and those around him. And now those radicals tell us, they tell us that

Iraq is indeed the central front in the global war on terror. We know

that they want to change the Middle East and then they want to change

the world. And, Mr. Speaker, that is not the type change that we want.

I want my children and grandchildren to live in freedom. I want them to

know an America that is free and strong and independent.

Our soldiers are fighting. They are fighting every day. They are

fighting the insurgents in the field, they are fighting the battle of

ideas; and the battle of ideas is a very, very powerful fight in Iraq

at this point in time.

Now, too many in this Chamber want to add another fight to our

military men and women, to their agenda every day. They want them to

have to fight the battle of public opinion here in the United States. I

see that as a disservice to the men and women in uniform. This

legislative body does have a role in oversight of the war, but I do

believe, I personally believe it is inappropriate, Mr. Speaker, that we

try to micromanage from the comforts of Washington. I do believe that

we should be listening to our troops and our commanders in the field.

General David Petraeus, who has taken the command, accepted the

coalition flag this Saturday, said it very well and I will enter his

comments for the Record. He reminds us that progress is being made and

lays that out, and I will enter that for the Record and have the

opportunity to talk about it again later. I think that what we have to

do is realize the resolution before us, Mr. Speaker, will not build

morale with the troops on the ground, and it does give the terrorists

just what they want. We have to fight back. We have to realize

sacrifices do have to be made in order for us to further the cause of

freedom and liberty in this great land.