Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong

support of our military men and women. I will strongly support our

soldiers serving in harm's way in Iraq and Afghanistan. I support all

off our veterans, men and women who have served our country with great

honor and distinction, and because of my support for our military men

and women, I also rise in support of this resolution.

I support this resolution because I see no evidence that an increase

in troops will lead to anything other than more lost American lives. I

do not think a troop surge will bring stability to Baghdad. I do not

think the surge will enable the Iraqis to stand up and defend

themselves, and I do not think the surge will end the religious and

ethnic strife that has existed in the Middle East for centuries.

So here we are this week debating the President's proposal to send

more troops into Baghdad. And as expected, the rhetoric from our

friends on the right has at times been shameful. To suggest that

Democrats and Republicans who support this embolden the enemy, that

they are defeatist, and that we do not support the troops, and that we

want to micromanage the war, and that we do not want to preserve

freedom and liberty in our great country puzzles me.

It seems to me our friends on the right do not like discourse, they

don't like questions, and they do not like meaningful discussions. They

do not want us to question the President's strategy, instead they want

us to follow him like sheep down a tragic street that dead-ends in

failure.

Attempts to use fear and insults to quiet the administration's

critics are distasteful and quite frankly hurt America. Why do those

who oppose this resolution want to discourage the type of action that

led to the founding of our Nation? The very actions that allowed the

United States to continue evolving towards that never ending goal of a

more perfect union.

Our country derives its strengths from the diversity of views and

ideas that comes from its people. If we disagree with the President's

proposal, it is our duty, particularly as Members of Congress, to say

so. I maintain that is the highest of patriotism, and I am not the only

one who thinks so.

The President Theodore Roosevelt said, referring to the Presidency,

and I quote him, ``That there should be full liberty to tell the truth

about his acts, and that this means that it is exactly necessary to

blame him when he does wrong as to praise him when he does right. Any

other attitude in any American citizen is both base and servile. To

announce that there must be no criticism of the President or that to

stand with the President right or wrong is not only unpatriotic and

servile, but it is morally treasonable to the American public.''

I do not know about the majority of Republicans in Congress, but I

agree with Teddy. Our actions this week do not dishearten the troops,

nor reflect a lack of support for our troops. Defense Secretary Gates

and General Pace both testified before the Senate Armed Services

Committee that a resolution disagreeing with the President's proposal

would not dishearten the troops.

In my opinion, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff may have a

little better idea of troop morale than Members of Congress. I strongly

disagree with the notion that our actions this week embolden the enemy.

If our lack of support for the President's plan emboldens the enemy,

then public opinion polls also embolden the enemy, since polls show the

majority of Americans disagree with the administration's policy in

Iraq. And if this is the case, why do not we see condemnation of the

American people for their views? It is because politically those who

oppose this resolution know they cannot criticize the American public,

but can criticize those of us who serve here in Congress.

If the actions of the House and American people embolden the enemy,

then we need to consider everyone's comments. Iraq's prime minister al-

Maliki recently said that the Bush administration's description of the

Iraqi government's being on borrowed time, listen, gives a morale boost

to the terrorists. The prime minister of Iraq is accusing the

administration of doing the same thing that many of us are being

accused of doing in this House chamber. How shameful. Let's get real.

I contend that the American people, the Democrats, the Republicans,

and that President Bush loves America. The discussion we are having in

Congress this week is an extension of the cure for America, because we

all want what we think is best for our country. And what do we want?

Success. We want security.

In order for us to have success and security we must force the Iraqi

people to fight for their own country. In my opinion, the way we do

this is not by adding more troops to the kill zone in Baghdad, but

rather take our troops out of the kill zone and force the Iraqis to

step up their efforts.

We should put our troops in a position to support the Iraqis when

they need us. This way the pressure is on the Iraqis, not on our

fighting men and women. The idea that we are going to cut and run from

the Middle East and allow terrorists to control Iraq is false and has

no basis in reality or in history.

We did not leave Germany after World War II, we did not leave Korea

after that war, and we will not leave the Middle East after our

soldiers' responsibilities in Iraq have ended. We did not leave the

Middle East after the Persian Gulf War and we will not leave the Middle

East now.

Mr. Speaker, the French did not win the Revolutionary War for us and

we cannot win this peace for the Iraqis; they have to win it for

themselves.