Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman from

California yielding me this time.

I suppose I speak to you here and declare it first a nonconflict of

interest. I was not here on this floor when the original resolution to

approve the use of force was made; therefore, I took as my role and

responsibility when I came in here to make sure that we did everything

in our power to make sure that our policy objectives were indeed

followed through and successful.

You know, in the other Chamber, in the original House floor there is

a beautiful sculpture sitting up there which is a clock made out of a

chariot. The clock is actually the wheel, then there is a chariot. And

in that chariot is the muse of history with this tablet in hand writing

down what we do on the people's floor, the subject and our actions in

history.

Perhaps it is good that that still stays out those doors and down the

hallways and is not here today, because when the muse of history

records what we are doing today and yesterday and tomorrow, and maybe

Friday, that history is going to be written with an element of

contempt.

There are some people who have opposed this war from the very

beginning; they still oppose it now; and I give them credit to their

commitment to consistency, although I don't necessarily agree with

their decision. Some of those have also criticized this resolution as

also being too weak of a resolution, for indeed the resolution today is

a nonbinding resolution. By definition, it means it does nothing. It

changes nothing, but allows us all to make statements for media

consumption and allows some of those who made the original vote to use

force the ability to shirk the responsibility of that particular

action.

Yesterday, I had the opportunity of going back to Baltimore and

watching a play, ``Wicked.'' And in the play, the main character, the

male lead, Fiero, is in love with Elphaba. And she tries to distance

herself from him by saying, ``Yeah, but you're thoughtless and

shallow.'' And Fiero says, ``I know, but I am a deep shallow.''

This resolution is a deep shallow. It may have words aimed at the

White House and the White House action, but regardless of those words,

when history is written the finger of accusation will not point to the

executive branch, who has been consistent, it is going to point back

here to Congress, to our actions.

Our Constitution gives Congress the responsibility of the declaration

of war. Instead, we passed a resolution approving force. With a war

declaration, there is a commitment to action and to ultimate goals. A

resolution of force implies something less, and it allows Members of

Congress who did that to say, yes, I agreed with force but I didn't

expect it to be used this way. Or, I wasn't really that serious. Or I

didn't expect it to be anything more than a little war taking place. It

is a process that allows you to be deeply shallow.

This resolution may clear the conscience of some people, it may put

political distance between others, but it does noting for soldiers, it

does nothing towards a U.S. victory, to benefit this country, or to

improve the body politic. Our words, our actions, our votes will be

looked on in history with contempt, for they are indeed in this issue

deeply shallow.

In conclusion, I would like to describe the good that will come from

this resolution for our Armed Forces.

Yes, that about sums it up.

Mr. Speaker, with disdain of the process of this flawed message that

is so limited in its scope it does nothing to help those Members on

either side of the aisle explain their nuances of their belief or this

situation.