This is, indeed, a very solemn occasion; and anyone

watching this debate, either on television or in the gallery, should

understand that we take very seriously what we say here today. We may

disagree on what the final outcome should be, but we do take it very

seriously.

And I take it seriously as I recall a funeral I attended, it seems a

long time ago, for a member of the Armed Forces, Luis Moreno, who was

killed in Iraq. I remember that rainy morning, leaving the church on

the way to the cemetery, the pain and the sadness that took place in

the whole community, the pain and the sadness that engulfed a family

and everyone who was there.

We took seriously the loss of that life, and we honor every day the

fact that he was sent to that battlefield and he gave his life for that

particular cause, which we discuss today.

We are here in his honor to say that we have to make sure that we no

longer continue to escalate this war which was presented to us, it

seems again, a long time ago based on, at the minimum, false

information, and at most, sadly, lies presented to this Congress.

We have to make sure that no further loss of life takes place. So

much has been said today about supporting our troops. Well, I know of

no greater support than to bring them home tomorrow morning.

I know a lot of people will say, if you bring them home, Iraq will

become a mess. Well, has anyone noticed that Iraq is a mess?

Well, if you bring them home now, Iraq will become a country in a

civil war. Has anyone noticed that Iraq is involved in a civil war?

The question is, will we wait for more Americans to lose their lives

and more to be wounded?

When I say that we were given bad information or possibly lied to, we

were told at that time, I remember, how the weapons of mass destruction

were stored in Iraq and that we had to get them before they got us, and

how there was a link between al Qaeda and September 11 and Saddam

Hussein. And now, even the administration and its ardent supporters

agree that there was no link between Saddam Hussein and September 11,

there was no link between al Qaeda, there was no link between any of

that that we were told; and we still haven't found the weapons of mass

destruction. It was simply a desire to take us to where we shouldn't

be. And in the process, we really blew it.

I was in New York City on September 11; I was not with my colleagues

here. It was election day in New York, primary day, and I was there in

New York on that day for some local elections. I lived through that

moment, and I know how painful that was. But beginning with September

12, the world was with us. Every country was supportive of what we were

going through. It always amazed me that countries that live with

terrorism on a daily basis thought that, for some reason, the attack on

us was in many ways even bigger than the attacks on their own country,

and they supported us. We could have taken that goodwill and used it

for positive things throughout the world. What did we do? We totally

lost the goodwill by going and invading a country that had nothing to

do with September 11. And so now, the same people who supported us no

longer support us.

What we are doing here today is exerting a constitutional right. This

is not a political exercise, this is not a legislative exercise, this

is Members of Congress saying that it is our right to oversee the

President and to stop him whenever we can when we know that any

President, any administration is making a mistake.

Now, how has this administration been able to keep us supportive in

some ways up to now? By doing something which is really sad, by

questioning our patriotism. And so tonight and tomorrow and for the

next couple of days more will question our patriotism. But I ask you,

isn't a true patriot he or she who is not holding back to question the

actions of his country even during wartime? Isn't that the true patriot

who is willing to say, even during wartime, stop it now, stop the

madness before it goes any further and before we lose more of our young

people?

And so we gather here after 3,109 losses, after 23,000 wounded

soldiers saying we have to stop it now, and we have to vote for this

resolution.