Mr. Speaker, having returned from my fourth

trip to Iraq over the Memorial Day break, I rise in support of H. Res.

861.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of America. I rise in support of our

active troops and those who have given their lives and those who will

give their lives so that we will prevail in this global war on

terrorism. These troops are part of an all-volunteer force that is the

envy of the world.

I rise to reassure the American and Iraqi people that we reject any

timetable for the withdrawal or redeployment of U.S. forces in Iraq

before victory.

AI Qaeda and other terrorist organizations have attacked our family,

neighbors and friend numerous times over the last three decades. What

has been the response? For the most part, there has not been an

adequate response.

And Mr. Speaker--that is hard to admit. Some would tell you we didn't

respond due to lack of political will, others would say America just

didn't have the stomach.

From the killing of 241 U.S. service members in Beirut in 1983 to the

attack on the USS Cole in 2001, America responded in a cautious manner.

This is no longer the case. Due to the events of September 11, 2001

our country was forced to reevaluate our defensive and offensive

strategies.

Led by our Commander-in-Chief and with the support of the Congress,

our government decided to take the fight to every cave the enemy hides

in--sending an unmistakable message. We will fight the enemy overseas

and prevent him from reaching our shores.

Having been to Iraq during the recent Memorial Day holiday, I am

pleased to report the message is getting across. Our enemies are

starting to realize that America and its allies are not leaving and are

not intimidated.

I say to the Iraqi people--we will not abandon you. We are committed

to the completion of the mission to create a sovereign, free, secure

and united Iraq.

During my 4 trips to Iraq in the last 3 years I have been heartened

by the continued resolve of our forces. After receiving briefings from

the Generals, I always make sure to spend an equal amount of time with

the senior enlisted men and junior officers who are leading at the tip

of the spear. The casualty count among this group is rising--and that

is hard to grapple with--but it is for a purpose.

A man who was responsible for so many of these casualties--Zarqawi--

is now dead. He was killed by a 500 pound bomb dropped from an F-16.

This weapon and this method of employment were thoroughly developed and

tested at Eglin Air Force Base in Okaloosa County, Florida.

The dedicated air force active duty, civilian personnel and

contractors from the Test and Evaluation Community and the Air Force

Research Laboratory can be equally proud.

I would like to remind my colleagues and the American people of the

courage it must take to vote in a country that has never known

democracy while under the threat of death--simply for making one's

voice heard. This courage is commendable and is a cause worth fighting

for.

Mr. Speaker, America and her citizens are strong. We will continue to

lead the way in showing the Iraqi people how to establish a free and

democratic nation and we and they will never forget the sacrifice of

those who made their democracy possible.