Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues

in honoring those serving in our Armed Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan,

and all the civilians serving here at home and abroad to protect

America from terrorism.

With the support of their families, the brave men and women of our

Armed Forces have performed their duties with professionalism and

distinction. They and their families deserve the gratitude of this

nation. We especially honor, and will never forget, the more than 2,500

Americans who have made the ultimate sacrifice in our nation's service.

And their families have our enduring sympathies for their loss.

To honor all who have taken an active part in the war in Iraq and the

fight against terrorism in Afghanistan and around the world, it is the

duty of Congress to aggressively pursue the most effective strategy for

winning the Iraq War by demanding accountability for poor planning,

mismanagement, and lack of oversight, in addition to developing a new

direction that includes a responsible redeployment of U.S. Forces.

While I agree with most of the content of H. Res. 861, I cannot vote

in favor of it because it does not acknowledge the need for a new

direction in Iraq. This resolution was offered without any opportunity

for amendment, preventing the House of Representatives from holding a

full and fair debate on the most important matter facing our nation

today. Our troops, and all Americans, deserve a better and more

responsible debate. While I will not support this resolution, I will

always continue to stand by our troops and their families.