Mr. Speaker, throughout the centuries a test of

the human spirit has arisen; a test of our foresight; and, a test of

our most basic, fundamental belief that we are endowed by our Creator

with inalienable rights that no person--through tyranny, terror or any

other mechanism--may deprive another.

Today, we face a new evil that is unique in history. It comes not in

the form of another nation. It calls radicalism home, while living in

every country, spreading quietly like a cancer awaiting the most

opportune time to strike.

The question we face is simple: Will we rise to that challenge or

will we exit the arena leaving future generations to battle a more

emboldened enemy?

We, as Americans, are blessed as a free people and are obliged to

defend liberty. It is an inherited responsibility that does not end at

our borders; and while the major battlefield is halfway around the

globe, it is a challenge that cannot be dismissed by distance--a fact

the last two World Wars should have taught us well.

On September 11, 2001, terrorists, in a murderous rage, sought to

shake our foundation in hopes we would abandon the cause of freedom.

Since that bloody day, our men and women in uniform have not only

answered our Nation's call to duty; they have not only served ably and

nobly; but they, like thousands of American soldiers before them, have

responded without hesitation to freedom's call for help and they have

followed her voice into the darkest comers, bringing new life and new

light to generations of the oppressed.

Today, because of their actions Afghanistan is rid of the Taliban;

Iraq has been released from the iron grasp of Saddam Hussein; Osama bin

Laden has been sent scurrying; and, his ``Prince of Al Qaeda,'' Abu

Musab al-Zarqawi, has been delivered to his final fate.

After nearly two decades of being left virtually unchecked, we are

now fighting back and beating back the terrorists. This is not a war on

paper; it is a war with real costs and real lives are being lost--not

the least of them the more than 3,000 innocent civilians who were

murdered on 9/11.

We owe them and the men and women now serving on the front lines who

have given the ultimate sacrifice an un-repayable debt of gratitude. We

must live our lives in such a way as to be worthy of their sacrifice

and we must pick up their cause and see it through to the end.

Make no mistake about it, the debate we are having today is an

important one. The war we wage will dictate the course of human freedom

for years to come. We can allow the terrorists to turn Iraq into a safe

haven from which they can hatch and launch their plans to destroy our

way of life, or we can create a stable Iraq that is an ally to free and

democratic nations around the globe.

At every turn the people of Afghanistan and Iraq have made the right

choice. Despite threats of violence, Iraqis voted not once but twice in

national elections to establish a new government with new leaders. They

have now completed the formation of that government and are on the

brink of reclaiming their country.

My friends, I choose to continue to support our new friends, the

Iraqi people, in their struggle. I choose to support our men and women

in uniform. And, I choose to stand steadfast in this global war on

terror.

I urge my colleagues to join with me and support this resolution.