Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support H. Res. 861 and

to stand beside the members of our armed services who have gallantly

fought and died for our freedom.

Early in the morning on September 11, 2001, our Nation was at peace.

Then at mid-morning a group of terrorists attacked us. What had we done

to deserve such an attack? We saved the world from fascism in the

1940s; then rather than punish our enemies, we helped them rebuild

their war-torn countries. We saved the world from communism and helped

those who were trapped in darkness behind the Iron Curtain see the

light of freedom. We are the world's first responders to every

emergency, but because a group of murderous cowards hate our way of

life, our liberty, and our compassion and values, they attacked us.

Last September, I traveled to Iraq and had the privilege of seeing

firsthand our troops' brave actions in combating terrorism. I spent a

great deal of time listening to them and learning their perspectives.

And these perspectives are contrary to what the American people hear

from the media.

Their morale is extremely high and they are proud to serve their

country. They believe that we are winning the fight against terrorism

and that perseverance and patience will ensure our long-term victory.

The most moving part of my trip came when I visited the Air Force

Theater Hospital in Balad, Iraq. I was not surprised, but deeply

touched, to see that all those I spoke with who were wounded in combat

were eager to return to their units.

Mr. Speaker, I respect every Member's opinion on this extremely

important subject. However, I submit that we cannot say we support our

troops and also continue this overheated political rhetoric about Iraq

being a mistake or an ``un-winnable war.'' This undermines the efforts

of our troops and jeopardizes our mission--just as was done during the

Vietnam war. Having served on active duty for 4 years in the early 50s,

I understand that.

Our brave men and women are winning this fight for us in the streets

of Baghdad so we don't have to face terrorists on the streets of

America. As long as I am in this body, I will continue to fight for our

troops and veterans and I ask my colleagues to do the same.