Mr. Speaker, I rise with respect to this resolution, H.

Res. 861.

Mr. Speaker, I pride myself on being unapologetically supportive of a

robust military. I do believe that President Wilson was correct when he

said the United States can help make the world safe for democracy. I

believe that we must stand decisively against totalitarianism in

whatever form it takes--and today, it takes the form of a twisted

misinterpretation of Islam that is radical, extremist, and murderous.

And nothing is more important to me, as a member of the House Armed

Services Committee, than supporting and honoring our troops.

Sadly and cynically, Mr. Speaker, the resolution before us has not

been drafted to unify the American people around these principles. It

has been drafted to divide the American people based on politics.

This resolution--a nonbinding sense of the House--is not a policy

statement. It is a political strategy. It is designed not to win the

war in Iraq, but to win elections at home.

First, Mr. Speaker, let there be no mistake about the legislative

intent of this resolution.

It is a sign of this Republican leadership that they would introduce

a resolution on an issue as critical as the war in Iraq; then refuse to

include in that resolution a single idea, a single solution, a single

policy that would actually win the war in Iraq; then refuse to allow

sufficient debate or even consideration of alternative resolutions that

would demonstrate our national resolve as well as our constructive

ideas on how to prevail.

Who can be against the resolution's operative statement: ``Declaring

that the United States will prevail in the global war on terror, the

struggle to protect freedom from the terrorist adversary''?

Who can be against the clause in the resolution that states that we

``Honor the sacrifices of the United States Armed Forces'' . . . that

we ``call upon the nations of the world to promote global peace and

security''?

But the Republican leadership, in their callous attempt to politicize

the war in Iraq has inserted other language that is troubling.

A clause I find questionable, Mr. Speaker, is this: ``Whereas Iraqi

security forces are taking over from United States and Coalition forces

a growing proportion of independent operations and increasingly lead

the fight to secure Iraq'';

In fact, Mr. Speaker, there are reports that Iraqi Security Forces

are not significantly leading independent operations. Proportionately,

Iraqi security forces are performing fewer combat operations than just

6 months ago.

Mr. Speaker, the Majority should have worked on a bipartisan basis to

write a plan to find Osama Bin Laden, and catch or kill him.

If the Republican Majority wanted near unanimity, they would have

removed these clauses, or at least refined them. They would have

allowed us to offer alternative language. They would have offered to

hold bipartisan consultations to find language that would unite

Congress and the American people.

Instead, they put partisanship ahead of bipartisanship on an issue

that demands cooperation from both sides of the aisle: the war on

terror, the war in Iraq, the well-being of our troops, the honor of

their sacrifices.

Mr. Speaker, let me make two final points.

First, about the importance of honoring our troops. I passionately

agree with the resolution's call for honoring our troops. In fact,

while the House debated this resolution on the floor yesterday, I

secured a public commitment from the Army at an Armed Services

Committee hearing that they would end the shortages of life-saving

coagulant products that help our soldiers from bleeding to death. Every

day for the past 2 weeks I have been working on this issue.

It is proper that we pass a non-binding resolution honoring our

troops. But I have secured a commitment from the Army to bind their

wounds. So I will not take second place to anyone in this body on the

issue of supporting and honoring our troops. And I am insulted that

some of the very same people who rail about not degrading the morale of

our troops will use the vote on this resolution to degrade the morale

of our troops.

Second, Mr. Speaker, instead of passing non-binding resolutions that

are political documents, let us pass a binding policy to win the war on

terror. The resolution we should be voting on today would require the

President to certify to Congress that number of Iraqi forces that have

reached combat proficiency, and redeploy an equivalent number of U.S.

forces. It would commit some of those forces to containing the growing

resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan and finding, once and for all,

the murderer who escaped our grasp and started the real war on terror--

Osama Bin Laden. It would commit ourselves to properly funding our

troops so that no American citizen has to dig into their own pockets

and mail life-saving coagulants to our troops because they were not

properly equipped.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, if those who wrote this resolution spent more

time unifying us around those principles and less time dividing us on

political rhetoric, we might be out of Iraq by now, and relentlessly

finding, capturing and killing those who masterminded the attacks on

our country in Afghanistan and elsewhere.