Mr. President, I rise to speak about one of the most

important issues of our time: the worldwide war on terror.

I have to say I was disappointed to read in this morning's Roll Call

that many of my Democratic colleagues are using this debate for the

2008 elections rather than focusing on the real damage that the

resolution we have been discussing will do to our national security.

One of our greatest Presidents, Theodore Roosevelt, once said, ``It

is not the critic who counts. The credit,'' he said, ``belongs to the

man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and

sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs, who comes short again

and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming.

``The credit,'' Roosevelt said, belongs to the man ``who spends

himself in a worthy cause, who at the best knows in the end the triumph

of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails

while daring greatly.''

At this very moment, our Commander in Chief and those he commands are

daring greatly.

Our men and women in uniform are paying with blood, sweat, and tears.

Yet many in this body prefer to sit in the stands and offer criticism

rather than support.

For the past 50 years, the Middle East has been a cauldron of

brutality, war, and despair. The region's instability has threatened

the entire globe and reached our shores on 9/11 with a stark awakening.

This is why we are involved in the Middle East. The future security

of our homeland is tied directly to a successful outcome not only in

Iraq but in Afghanistan, Lebanon, the Palestinian territory, and a

number of Middle East countries that harbor evil men who foment hate

through a perverted version of Islam.

Yet as our efforts in Iraq encounter fierce resistance from a

determined and evil enemy, support for our efforts has waned here in

Congress. Instead, many of my colleagues prefer to support a nonbinding

resolution that would express disapproval of the President's plan to

reinforce our troops in Iraq.

Voting for this resolution is not leadership, it is criticism--

criticism without the courage of offering real solutions. While this

resolution may be toothless by force of law, its symbolism is

dangerous. Voting to condemn the President's plan is a vote of no

confidence in the mission we have told our troops to fight and die for.

But it is also a slap in the face to General Petraeus just days after

we voted unanimously to support his leadership of our troops in Iraq.

``Godspeed, General,'' was what one of my colleagues said before

introducing the very resolution that would undermine the general's

authority and his plan for victory.

This is not leadership. We were elected to make tough decisions and

that requires understanding our choices, selecting the best choice, and

then following through. But I am afraid the critics in this body do not

acknowledge the real choices before us. There are only three:

First, to continue the unworkable status quo; second, to admit defeat

and withdraw; third, to renew our strength until we win.

I respect my colleagues who disagree with the President's strategy in

Iraq, but only if they exercise leadership and support an alternative

solution, one that proposes a serious path to victory, or announces

defeat and ends our involvement immediately, not only in Iraq but

throughout the Middle East, because America will no longer have any

credibility to carry out our work in any part of the world.

If my colleagues do not support sending reinforcements to Iraq, they

should introduce legislation blocking that action. While I believe this

is shortsighted and wrong, it would at least be genuine leadership.

My hope is we will stop trying to second guess past decisions in

order to lay blame and instead remember we are locked in a struggle

much larger than Iraq. It is a struggle of security, hope, and freedom

versus hate, despair, and fear. The battlefield is the entire world.

We must understand the stakes and demonstrate real leadership. This

is not the President's war, it is freedom's war, and we all share the

responsibility for the outcome.

A century later, Teddy Roosevelt is still correct. The critic ``who

points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds

could have done them better'' is destined to be relegated to that

terrible place ``with those cold and timid souls who neither know

victory nor defeat.''

There is only one policy worthy of the blood and sweat of our troops:

a policy that completes our mission with dignity, honor, and victory.

Mr. President, I reserve the remainder of my time and yield the

floor.