Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution.

Since the Taliban's ouster in Afghanistan, great strides have been

made on the path towards democracy in that country. A freely elected

president and parliament, a nascent professional national army, and the

beginnings of economic development were all accomplished through nearly

5 years of development assistance and military commitments by our

country and the international community.

But the future of a stable, peaceful, and democratic Afghanistan is

still gravely threatened. A resurgent Taliban with increasing terrorist

attacks, the slow pace of reconstruction, and the scourge of opium

poppies are reversing the tide of success. We may be nearing the point

where we can lose Afghanistan again.

It is in times like these when we learn who our true friends are in

our global war against the enemies of democracy and freedom. During

these critical moments, we come to appreciate more fully those

countries that are willing to place their soldiers in harm's way in the

international fight against terrorism, extremism, and tyranny.

In the case of the international efforts in Afghanistan, Canada is

one such country. Our neighbor Canada has 2,200 troops serving in

Afghanistan. Canada has also assumed responsibility for the Provincial

Reconstruction Team in Kandahar, which was originally established by

our own military.

In Kandahar, Canadian men and women are at the forefront of the

coalition effort to combat the resurgent

Taliban and other terrorist forces in the lawless southern portion of

the country. Since 2002, the Canadian people have lost 16 soldiers and

one diplomat in this struggle. Last month on the same day that the

Canadian Parliament voted to extend its mission in Afghanistan, Canada

suffered its first-ever female combat death. We honor the ultimate

sacrifice that Captain Nichola Goddard made in service to her country

and salute the brave efforts of all the men and women in uniform,

Canadian and American, who fight shoulder to shoulder in Afghanistan.

Madam Speaker, I urge all NATO members to follow Canada's example and

commit troops to even the most violent areas of Afghanistan.

I strongly support our resolution and ask all of my colleagues to do

so as well.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.