

May God bless and protect our men and women in Uniform and continue to bless the United States of America.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, as we speak and assemble on the floor of the House tonight, young men and women of our Armed Forces are ready to pay the ultimate sacrifice in the service of our Nation. Indeed, 12 American and four British soldiers died when their U.S. Marine helicopter crashed in Kuwait just hours ago. My condolences and prayers are with their families at this most difficult time.

About 3,600 of the troops honorably serving in the Persian Gulf today are from Fort Bliss in my own district. I have been fortunate and honored to meet many of them and their families. These men and women have already shown their remarkable abilities, manning Patriot missile battalions that successfully defended Kuwait and allied troops against Iraqi Scud missiles earlier today. I am very proud to represent these brave and capable soldiers. My thoughts and prayers are with them as they face the dangers and uncertainties of war. And my thoughts and prayers extend to their families as well, who must anxiously await their loved ones' safe return. The mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, wives and husbands, and brothers and sisters of our service members are making sacrifices of their own, and enduring a challenging time. They deserve our recognition and appreciation.

I commend all the members of our Armed Forces serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom for their patriotism, bravery, and professionalism. I also wish to express my appreciation to the British and Australian troops who are fighting alongside Americans in combat, and to the personnel from other allied countries who are providing support to our forces.

I support our Government's efforts to prosecute this war swiftly and successfully, with a minimum of military and civilian casualties. Our soldiers deserve our fullest support, and they can count on me for that for however long this war may last.

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for the men and women of our armed services. These courageous Americans are putting their lives on the line in order to serve our country, and I pray that they succeed swiftly in their mission and return home safely.

I also want to express my support for the families of our troops, who are patiently awaiting their return with heavy hearts. My thoughts and prayers go out to you during these difficult times.

While I fully support our troops, I am frustrated and deeply disappointed by the resolution that we are being asked to consider tonight. I vehemently disagree with the President's decision to abandon a diplomatic solution to disarm Saddam Hussein, and cannot support a resolution that endorses that decision.

I was proud to support H.J. Res. 27 two weeks ago, a resolution commending the service of our Armed Forces. However, it is with a heavy heart that I must oppose the resolution we have before us tonight.

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, I back this resolution because of my complete support and admiration of the brave men and women in our armed services. Each of us owes a debt of gratitude to these selfless individuals who have put themselves in harm's way in service of our Nation. Like many of my fellow Ameri-

cans, I still disagree with the process that brought us to this juncture and my vote here does not represent any change in that belief. But I pray for a quick end to this conflict and for the safe return of all of our men and women in uniform.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight in support of H. Con. Res. 104. It is very fitting that we honor those men and women who tonight are making the world a safer place. Their mission is legal and, more importantly, just. I am certain they will succeed in changing an evil regime, they will succeed in eliminating dangerous chemical and biological weapons, and they will succeed in liberating the people of Iraq.

Our thoughts and prayers must also go out to the families of our troops. Their sacrifice is great and must be acknowledged.

There is no greater love than the love of a family, so as a nation, as family America, we must send our love to families whose members are in harm's way defending our freedom.

And finally recognizing our President for his leadership, his strength, his decency and his commitment to the American people.

I hope and pray for a swift and safe return for all of our troops. May God bless our military and their families. And may God bless America.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to vote to support our brave armed forces. I will vote for this resolution. My thoughts and prayers are with the men and women in uniform who are serving our country in the Persian Gulf and elsewhere. They will, without doubt, perform admirably. While I am disappointed that this resolution contains dubious and politically opportunistic language regarding Iraq and the war on terrorism, that cannot stop me from endorsing the valor and dedication of our troops. Although I remain concerned that this war will make our country less instead of more safe, I deeply respect the personal sacrifice and commitment of our armed forces. Our democracy permits and even encourages disagreement, but it cannot tolerate disrespect towards our men and women in uniform.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, as we vote today to commend our troops, I would like to take the opportunity to express my personal support for our brave men and women in uniform who are in harm's way, and to hope for their safe return home after a victory on the battlefield.

The time for debate over the wisdom of going to war has passed. Although I was unsuccessful in arguing that such a war be undertaken only after the passage of a constitutionally-enacted Declaration of War, it is time now for us to line up behind our troops. As a Vietnam era veteran of the U.S. Air Force I understand how important it is to troop morale that each and every fighting person know all Americans stand behind them.

Once this war has ended we should seriously reconsider the direction of our foreign policy. The American people have seen the ineffectiveness of our reliance upon our so-called "NATO allies" and the United Nations. Hopefully this will lead us to reconsider our role in these organizations. I hope this will be the last time Americans fight under the color of U.N. resolutions. Once this war is completed I hope we will reassess our foreign entanglements, return to the traditional U.S. foreign policy of non-intervention, and return to the standard of our own national security.

For now all such foreign policy debates are on hold, and I hope all Americans will join in supporting our troops in the successful completion of their mission.

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to voice my unequivocal support of our men and women in uniform currently participating in Operation Iraqi Freedom. I would also like to thank my colleague Chairman HUNTER for bringing this important and timely resolution to the floor.

As we speak, our armed forces are beginning the second day of their quest to end the reign of one of the most diabolical tyrants the world has ever known. As they advance on their objective, the professionalism and abilities of our troops are obvious. These brave men and women—so far from home—bear upon their shoulders the task of keeping the world safe so that the rest of us can enjoy the comforts of freedom.

While no one doubts that ultimate success will be theirs, the dangers our troops face are all too real. Not long ago we received the sad news that a helicopter crash has claimed the lives of 12 U.S. Marines and 4 British soldiers. It is unlikely these casualties will be the last, but we are comforted in the knowledge that the sacrifices they have made will help make the world a safer place.

Saddam Hussien had ample opportunity to join the peace-loving nations of the world, but he refused at every turn. Thus, if falls to our troops to finally put an end to his murderous regime. Earlier today they crossed the line of departure, and are now closing with those enemy forces that chose to put up resistance. But more important than the fear they bring to the allies of Saddam is the hope they bring to the Iraqi people, who soon will see their great and ancient civilization flourish once again.

As for Saddam, he will experience for a second time that there is no great friend, no worse enemy than a member of the U.S. military.

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support our brave troops in harm's way, as they fight to disarm Saddam Hussein of his weapons of mass destruction.

My gratitude and prayers are with the 270,000 brave American troops at war to protect the American people, including 2,512 Minnesota National Guard and Reserve Troops.

Mr. Speaker, politics stops when war starts. It's time for all members of this body to take off their political hats and put on their American hats in support of our troops. At time of war, there are no Republicans, no Democrats and no Independents, only Americans.

As Americans, we have the will power and the staying power to accomplish this mission and bring our troops home safely.

Thanks to our brave troops, I am confident we will be successful at disarming this brutal and murderous dictator of his weapons of mass destruction. And for that, Mr. Speaker, they deserve our deepest gratitude, respect and prayers.

May God bless our troops and our Commander-in-Chief, and may God bless America!

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I stand 100% behind our troops. The brave men and women in uniform who have volunteered to defend our country are in my thoughts, and in my prayers. I pledge to work to ensure that they have all the resources necessary to help them accomplish their mission quickly and safely so that they can return home to their families.