Today, March 20th, marks the 47th year of Tunisia's independence. In 1797, the United States signed a Treaty of Peace and Friendship with the North African country of Tunisia. Over 150 years later, Tunisia peacefully gained independence from France. Today, we congratulate Tunisia as she celebrates 47 years as an independent nation.

The Republic of Tunisia has remained a steadfast friend to the United States, joining Allied forces during World War II and continuing support throughout the Cold War. Today, as we continue in our efforts against terrorism, Tunisia remains by our side as a Muslim nation and a loyal ally. Tunisia's ongoing efforts to work with the United States in the campaign to eradicate terrorism has been absolutely critical.

Tunisia's flourishing economy offers great hope for African and Middle Eastern countries, while she also continues to play an increasingly important role in the politics of the international community. One of Tunisia's most valuable assets has been its continued willingness to support a Middle East peace process. Despite being surrounded by nations engulfed in political turmoil, Tunisia continues to take an active role in combating international unrest.

I congratulate Tunisia on 47 years of independence and look forward to the United States' continuing strong relations with Tunisia for years to come. I urge my colleagues to join me in celebrating the 47th Anniversary of Tunisia's independence.

COMBATTING TERROR AND EVIL

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 20, 2003

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, last night, the United States continued its march against those who threaten the security of the United States. As the United States leads a coalition of nations willing to combat terror and evil, I offer my prayers to our heroic men and women who have been called on to defend our freedom. These brave soldiers are the latest of a long and proud history of courageous Americans dedicated to protecting the citizens of the United States.

For 12 long years, Iraq has failed to disarm and live up to the agreements it promised to uphold. By choosing not to disarm or to surrender power peacefully, Saddam Hussein has left us with no other option but to disarm him by force.

This is a critical moment in American history. We could either choose the path of appeasement or choose the path of forceful disarmament. History has shown that appeasement has never prevented war; it only postponed war. America must not wait for Saddam Hussein to build an arsenal strong enough and deadly enough to blackmail the Free World. The time for action is now. May God Bless America.

ARMED FORCES TAX FAIRNESS ACT OF 2003

SPEECH OF

HON. BOB ETHERIDGE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 19, 2003

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my support of H.R. 1307, the Armed Forces Tax Fairness Act of 2003. It is only appropriate during this time of conflict that we take every opportunity to recognize and support the brave men and women of our armed forces. The original version of this legislation provided a number of significant tax benefits for our armed forces, National Guard and Reserves, and I am pleased and relieved to see that the bill has been restored to its original form and intent.

As a veteran of the United States Army, I know firsthand the contributions our military service personnel make in defense of our nation and the tremendous burden their families are forced to bear. Here in the U.S. House, I serve on the Army Caucus, and I have worked on a bipartisan basis to support our men and women in uniform. Furthermore, North Carolina's Second Congressional District includes Fort Bragg and Pope Air Force Base, home to many soldiers now on the ground in Southwest Asia. Our service personnel are dedicated, professional and devoted to duty. Congress must stand up for these brave men and women who risk their lives to defend our country, our ideals and our interests around the world.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1307 includes a number of provisions to reduce taxes for the members of the armed services. It provides capital gains tax relief to soldiers who invest in a home for themselves and their families but have to move due to reassignment or deployment before they satisfy the five-year qualifying period.

The bill also provides National Guard and reserve members an ''above-the-line'' tax deduction for overnight expenses when they travel more than 100 miles from home to attend National Guard and Reserve meetings, as well as filing extensions and penalty-free withdrawals from education accounts for students attending one of our service academies.

Mr. Speaker, prompt passage of this legislation is a small gesture of support to active duty personnel as well as members of the Reserves and National Guard. In these uncertain times, we must remember that many of our soldiers put their civilian lives on hold in service to our country. More than 50,000 Reservists are supplementing active duty forces for our war against terrorism, and another 120,000 have been mobilized for our conflict with Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I urge quick passage of H.R. 1307 in the House and Senate, and I hope the President will promptly sign it into law as a gesture of support and respect for our armed forces. The brave men and women of America's armed forces need to know that Congress stands behind them, and passing this legislation will demonstrate that Congress will put national interests ahead of special interests.

PATRIOTISM OF THE TOWN OF CORNWALL

HON. SUE W. KELLY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 20, 2003

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to report to the House the strong sense of patriotism sweeping through a small town in the heart of New York's 19th Congressional District. The Cornwall Town Board has passed a resolution in support of all of our troops that are deployed overseas to protect our freedom and liberties.

The Resolution states that the Board supports of those brave men and women of Cornwall currently ''serving in the armed forces and of our great country and their families and support the armed services for the great sacrifices they must make in the service of our country in the name of freedom.''

I commend the Cornwall Town Board for their patriotic actions and ask that the entire text of the Resolution be placed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

RESOLUTION BY THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF CORNWALL IN SUPPORT OF OUR TOWN RESIDENTS WHO ARE SERVING OUR COUNTRY IN THE ARMED FORCES, IN SUPPORT OF OUR ARMED FORCES IN GENERAL AND FOR WORLD PEACE

Whereas, heretofore the Town Board of the Town of Cornwall recognizes the great freedoms and liberties that this great nation of our's provides, and

Whereas, the Town Board recognizes that to insure that these great freedoms and liberties exist it is necessary to provide for a national defense, and

Whereas, the Town Board recognizes that the United States Armed Forces protect and defend our country from all enemies foreign and domestic and thereby serve with great dedication, personal risk and sacrifice in the risking of their lives and sacrificing the comfort of being with their loved ones when serving on distant shores, and

Whereas, the Town Board supports our own brave men and women and all members of the armed forces currently serving and preparing to defend our liberties and freedoms and protect us from our enemies and also supports their families in these times of heightened security alert, and

Whereas, the Town Board recognizes that world peace and security is paramount and we support and pray that all diplomatic efforts to secure world peace and security will succeed, now, therefore, be it

Resolved as follows:

1. That the Town Board of the Town of Cornwall supports our residents who are serving in the armed forces of our great country and their families and support the armed services for the great sacrifices they must make in the service of our country in the name of freedom and democracy.

2. That the Town Board of the Town of Cornwall call upon our leaders and other world leaders to bring about world peace as quickly and with firm resolve as possible by whatever means necessary.

3. That the Town Clerk forward a copy of this resolution signed by all members voting herein to our congressional representative SUE W. KELLY and ask that it be read into the Congressional Record at her earliest convenience.