Mr. Speaker, first I want to make the point as

strongly as I can that I want our troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan

and anyplace else in the world where they are in harm's way as soon as

we can possibly do it without risking the security of our own Nation

and the security of our own people.

Mr. Murtha and I have been partners in this business for many, many

years, and he and I have both stood by the bedside of too many wounded

troops and have attended too many funerals, and we want this over.

As a matter of fact, the legislation before us, the appropriations

part of this defense bill is a good package. Mr. Murtha and I met prior

to him submitting this to the full Appropriations Committee and we

agreed. Basically I told Mr. Murtha that these are about the same

numbers that I would have recommended if I were still the chairman. But

we did agree to disagree on the issue of the restrictive language on

the conduct of the battlefield.

My memory takes me back, as we discuss this legislation now, to

October of 1983, where terrorists attacked the Marine barracks in

Beirut. The Marines there on a peacekeeping mission and 241 of our

troops were killed. In February of 1993, the World Trade Center was

bombed, as Chairman Lewis noted in his comments. Six lives were lost.

In June of 1996, Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, where our airmen were

being housed, was bombed. Nineteen American lives were lost. August of

1998, our embassies in Kenya and Tanzania were bombed by terrorists

again. Two hundred fifty-nine lives were lost. October of 2000, the USS

Cole off the shore of Yemen was bombed by terrorists. Again, 17

American lives lost, and almost every crewman on the ship injured.

But all this time nothing happened except a lot of rhetoric. Well, we

talked a lot. We were going to hunt them down. And you can run, but you

can't hide.

But finally, after September 11, the people of America were so

incensed by what they saw with the airplanes flying into the two World

Trade Centers, the airplane flying into the ground in Pennsylvania, in

or near Mr. Murtha's district, and the airplane flying into the

Pentagon right across the river, killing some 3,000 innocent people.

The people of America were incensed. They demanded action. The

President of the United States promised action, and the Congress

provided action. And subsequently, our troops are in Afghanistan and

are in Iraq. And it is essential that we provide whatever they need to

carry out their mission and to protect themselves while they are

carrying out the mission.

But now, what about leaving today or tomorrow or March or July, as

some of these restrictions provide?

One of our great successes was Desert Storm. In Desert Storm, we

attacked Saddam Hussein's armies successfully, and we annihilated,

basically, his army. At least they ran away. They ran for cover. They

surrendered. A lot of them lost the battle because the United States

was aggressive and our coalition partners.

But here's where we made a mistake. Once we had Saddam's armies

defeated, we left. We left before there was anything else there to

provide a reasonable, logical government for the people of Iraq.

And what happened? Saddam responded in a vicious attack upon his own

Iraqi citizens to continue the genocide that he began in earlier years.

After we left from Desert Storm, he killed thousands of Shia Iraqis.

What General Petraeus and our American troops are trying to do is to

give the Iraqi government that has been elected by the people,

Constitution approved by the people, a parliament elected under the new

Constitution by the people; General Petraeus said that the Iraqi

security forces were growing in number, were growing in capability.

Even the Sunnis are starting to join up with these security forces in

Iraq to show a Sunni-Shia coming together. Not much, but a little bit.

But to let this government exist so that we didn't have another

situation where we left, we didn't leave anybody in charge, and the bad

guys took over again.