Madam Speaker, I appreciate being recognized and

the privilege to address you here on the floor of the House of

Representatives. And I've just returned within the last few hours from

Afghanistan, arriving here this morning sometime around, oh, 7 or so

after a long and very busy weekend in places in Afghanistan that we

know as Kabul and Kandahar, Bagram, and also, a forward operating base

called Spin Boldak.

And it's been my opinion for a long time, and having made at least

nine different visits over to theaters that we do call theaters of war,

that would include six to Iraq and three trips to Afghanistan, there

are some other trips along there that I haven't chronicled, Madam

Speaker, but I've found that sitting in classified briefings here in

the United States Congress, here in the Capitol Building or over in the

secure building in Rayburn, or going out to briefings at the White

House and listening to our top military officers, our top civilian

officers, including the State Department officers, give us their

briefing on what's taking place in a region like that is not a fair

substitute for actually going into the theater and receiving the

briefings there from the people that are hands-on, on the ground, in

the field.

And having an opportunity to sit down and eye-to-eye discuss these

situations, generally with people from our home State, where we always

have something in common and where we can get down to the frank matters

of fact without hesitation because we more naturally trust each other,

and we also know somebody that knows somebody, and whether we actually

know the troops or not, we know the family members that are related to

their family members, at a minimum. And so we build that level of trust

and rapport.

This trip was similar to a number in the past. It included briefings

from top military personnel, top State Department and civilian

personnel, included a meeting that lasted for an extended period of

time with President Mohammed Karzai of Afghanistan in the palace in

Kabul, and the trip, as I mentioned, out to the forward operating base

south and a little bit east of Kandahar, right on the Pakistani border.

The position that I have taken over these years has been a strong

national defense position, Madam Speaker. And I would go back and

catalog some of that for the benefit of your attention, and that is

that, from the time we went into Iraq, and as I watched things, the

liberation of Iraq and then the stagnation of our operations in Iraq,

the war of attrition that we fought there for a while that wasn't

coming to a successful conclusion.

And on one of my trips into that area before the ``surge'' became a

word that was used in the common vernacular here in the United States

at least, I had worked through that policy and agreed with the officers

who were about to request that President Bush order the surge in Iraq.

So, in short, Madam Speaker, I was for the surge before the surge had

a name. And it has proven itself, I believe, to be the successful

tactic that's brought about what I have also defined in this Congress--

to have achieved a definable victory in Iraq. And I will get to

Afghanistan. But I introduced a resolution in February of this year

that defines the victory that we've achieved in Iraq. And it goes

through the list or the chronology or the history of the incidents that

took place in that country, the things that we and coalition forces did

to liberate the Iraqi people, and the milestones along the way, the ups

and the downs of the struggle that's taken place in Iraq.

And yet, if you put it all together, and you look at the successful

ratification of a Constitution, successful elections in Iraq, the

emergence of the Iraqi security forces as becoming ever more proficient

and ever more stable, the definition of what we were seeking to achieve

in Iraq has been very closely achieved to this point. Now, there's no

such thing as a locked in, guaranteed, free, and moderate people of any

kind. There's not a guarantee in the United States. But by comparison

with what Iraq was to what it is today, it's significantly more stable.

And we expect there will be a continued transition of power in Iraq, a

sharing of power in Iraq that will be brought about by legitimate

elections.

And so this accomplishment in Iraq, I bring out and make this point,

Madam Speaker, so that should I utter a contrast, I want you and

everyone listening to understand the foundation that I build this

judgment on, and that's that foundation that I believe we have achieved

a definable victory in Iraq. And now, that being said, and I can

certainly discount some of the things that are going on there, and I

could lay some conditions on the statement like anyone who might choose

to rebut such a position. But, by the same token, a lot's been

achieved.

And on my first trip into Afghanistan which was some time, I believe,

in 2005, without checking the records, and perhaps 2004, but we were in

some of the more difficult times in Iraq at the time that I first went

to Afghanistan. But when I came back from Afghanistan, even then, in

the middle part of this decade that we're in now, I said then that

we'll be in Afghanistan a lot longer than we'll be in Iraq. It wasn't

conventional wisdom at the time. People didn't know how we were going

to get out of Iraq. They didn't know how we were going to achieve a

definable victory there.

But even then, I said we'll be in Afghanistan a lot longer because,

Madam Speaker, Afghanistan is a lot closer to the Stone Age than is

Iraq. Iraq has resources, they have oil, they have a tradition of

education. They have a history of a more moderate and more modern

government that has, actually, a central government that reached out to

the corners of Iraq.

Afghanistan has none of those traditions and none of those histories,

and they don't have the natural resources at this point, at least, that

have been developed that's going to help the treasury of Afghanistan.

They had a gross domestic product, the previous time that I was there,

I remember the briefing documents, of $7.5 billion. That's the gross

domestic product of Afghanistan.

Now it's reported it's gone up to around $11.4 billion in the GDP.

That's only over the last couple of years. Almost a 50 percent

increase. And I suspect, Madam Speaker, that some of that has to do,

since it's measured in American dollars, with the fall of the American

dollar, the diminishment of the value of our American dollar. And when

that happens, it's going to automatically and inversely increase the

GDP of any country that's indexed to it, such as Afghanistan. But the

GDP of Afghanistan is very minimal.

And at one time I compared Afghanistan's GDP to the value of the beer

brewed in Wisconsin. They were about the same. A couple of years ago,

the $7.5 billion GDP of Afghanistan and the value of the beer brewed in

Wisconsin was $7 billion. So that gives you a sense of how tiny this

economy is, not to disparage the beer brewers in Wisconsin of course,

Madam Speaker. And this tiny little economy has struggled along. It's

very much agriculture and agrarian-based, and a large percentage of the

agricultural value output in Afghanistan is poppies, poppies from which

heroin and opium are made, and that produce about half of the value of

the ag products in Afghanistan, and perhaps more, if one were able to

get an accurate accounting.

The poppy business in Afghanistan, much of it in Helman province, and

neighboring Kandahar province to a lesser degree, those poppies in

Afghanistan represent about two-thirds of the world's supply of opium

and heroin in the world. So Afghanistan has long been a producer of

poppies. But the system that has emerged and developed, we knew it

then, we knew when we went in to liberate Afghanistan in the late fall

or early winter of 2001, that the heroin trade from poppies was a

significant component of the funding of our enemies, the funding of the

Taliban.

Glad it remains that way today, and in some respects it may be worse

than it was before. And yet there has been an effort under way to

reduce the production of poppies in Afghanistan and thereby reducing

the amount of dollars that go to the people that we declare to be our

enemies. And these would be presumably the people who have attacked the

United States, or plotted to do so.

I advocated, Madam Speaker, that on the day we went into Afghanistan,

the time that American forces arrived there and became a predominant

force there on the ground in Afghanistan was the time that we should

have gone in and taken out the poppies. Just sprayed them. We can

eradicate most any kind of foliage if we want to do that. And I've made

this argument with every United States ambassador--and with one

exception, their representative instead because the ambassador wasn't

available--that we've had in Afghanistan since the beginning. And their

response to me has been, We can't upset the economy in Afghanistan by

taking them out of the poppy business. And besides, do I, as a Member

of Congress, who advocates such a thing, understand the difficulty and

logistics of spraying that many poppies?

And certainly I do understand the difficulty. I'm not sure the

ambassadors do. They lay out a comparison that it would be something

like four football fields wide, all the way around the Earth at the

equator, the equivalent of taking out that much crop. Well, that's an

awful lot of crop, Madam Speaker. But we sprayed almost the entire crop

in Iowa on average more than once just last summer, and we have a few

squadrons of spray planes in Iowa that have the capability of going in

and taking out that poppy crop. And if we did that, that would shut

down billions of dollars that go into the hands of the Taliban and al

Qaeda, billions of dollars that are used against the United States.

Now, some of these briefings will say it's somewhere between $70

million and $120 million. Well, if that's the case, I would ask the

question, If it's $3 billion, $3.5 billion worth of poppies altogether,

if that's what the crop is worth, how does only $70 million to $120

million get into the hands of the Taliban or al Qaeda, and where does

the rest of the money go?

I'll submit, I think it's a lot more money than that. I don't think

it's possible for us to track that money. And I don't accept the values

that have been put on it with such confidence in places like

Afghanistan when I can't, Madam Speaker, find out from the director of

the Drug Enforcement Agency here in the United States how many dollars

are spent on illegal drugs in the streets of America in a year.

When they tell me, We don't know; we don't know what the drugs are

worth that are bought and sold and used and go in people's bloodstream

and up the noses of Americans, we can't put a value on that within a

billion dollars, how can the State Department tell me in a country that

is that close to the Stone Age that doesn't have communications like we

have, doesn't have a transportation network as anybody would imagine

for any kind of a country, how can we get that estimate close in

Afghanistan but we can't even guess at it in the United States?

So I will submit this: if they're right, the poppy crop is worth

about half of the GDP of Afghanistan 2 years ago, may or may not be

right, then we should be thinking of it in terms of roughly half the

GDP in Afghanistan today.

In any case, it's lots of money. It's tens of millions at a very

minimum, more likely hundreds of millions and maybe billions of

dollars, and large shares of that go into the coffers of the Taliban

and al Qaeda; and that money is used to pay the people that they

recruit that plot and plan and train against us and to provide for them

supplies, munitions, weaponry that get used around this world in

terrorist plots.

So the number one effort to eradicate the terrorists that are in the

breeding and training grounds in the areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan

would be to shut off the money that comes from the illegal drugs that

come from the poppy trade.

So instead, we have State Department personnel, USAID and USDA and

other personnel that are seeking to negotiate with Afghan farmers to

encourage them to raise pomegranates and fruits and nuts of all kinds,

especially vines and trees, so they have to invest in longer than an

annual crop, a perennial crop that makes them stick with that crop a

little bit longer.

We're investing millions in that, and we're providing subsidies to

Afghanistan of significant dollars. Now, here I will just pose this

number: a billion dollars, a billion U.S. dollars invested in subsidies

in Afghanistan to try to convince them that there are crops that pay

better than raising the illegal poppy crop.

Well, I think a big degree of this is poppycock, Madam Speaker, to

think that we can negotiate with people that are raising illegal drugs

and convince them if we just gave them enough subsidy, they will stop

doing that. They will always do what pays the best. That's the way

things work.

And the world does have a free market economy. Can you imagine going

down to pay the people in Mexico and Central and South America not to

raise coca or not to raise the tree that produces cocaine, and can we

convince them not to raise marijuana crops? Can we convince them not to

convert the products that are now smuggled in from China or shipped

directly into the United States into methamphetamines because there is

something that pays better? It will always find its way to the market.

So we need to raise the cost of transaction. If we raise the cost of

transaction, that means knock out these poppies. They will blossom.

It's the nature of a poppy. They're easy to see from the air. I know we

have poppies growing in places where we don't go with our military, and

we're looking at perhaps as much as 90 percent of the poppies raised in

Afghanistan, which is someplace two-thirds or more of the world

production of poppies taking place in Helmand province down there where

we are going to send reinforcements.

And, Madam Speaker, I applaud the President for finally making the

decision after 3 months of--what shall I say--floating trial balloons

and deliberating, and having discussions at the White House and

deliberations. When the request that emerged in the public, a request

that was submitted by General McChrystal--and if my date is correct it

would be August 30 of this year--and by September 23, that report was

leaked into the media. Who knows where it came from, Madam Speaker, and

I'm generally a harsh critic of people inside the military system that

would leak anything that's classified information.

Now, I don't know if this request was classified, but it was leaked.

And I have not heard anyone report how it was leaked, but I suspect it

was somebody who wanted the American people to know the request was

made by General McChrystal. And I suspect that if that request of

General McChrystal, at least the substance of that request that was

leaked, that was put out into the press that was reported to be 40,000

troops necessary or risk failure in Afghanistan, if that report, if

that request had not been submitted, Madam Speaker, I suspect that we

would have never found out what General McChrystal's actual request

was.

In fact, back channels tell me that was the lowest number that

General McChrystal asked for. And back channels tell me that the number

between 40,000 and 80,000 was incrementally dialed in so that if there

were 80,000 troops sent rather than 40,000, the odds of success

increased in proportion with the number of troops. Less than 40,000, we

risk failure; and 80,000 troops would bring us to the highest

probability of success. It could be dialed down from 80,000 and still

have success, taking the risks, of course, in proportion. But dialed

down below 40,000, I don't understand that General McChrystal

entertained the thought that 30,000 troops would be enough to do the

job.

However, our military, being the brave and noble warriors that they

are, do keep a stiff upper lip, and none of them would not utter these

things to me because they know what their orders are from the Commander

in Chief by rights, by the rights of the Constitution, by the rights of

the results of the election, the President of the United States is the

Commander in Chief of our military; and implicitly in the Constitution,

the President sets the foreign policy.

Our foreign policy now is 30,000 more troops deployed into

Afghanistan starting sometime in January and then with a look at 18

months as a period of time to start to withdraw troops out of

Afghanistan. And having achieved the goals that have been defined to

the American people in the speech the President gave over a little over

a week ago--and again, I would reiterate that I was part of the first

delegation of Members of Congress to arrive in Afghanistan after the

President's speech when he announced he would send an additional 30,000

troops--this deployment of 30,000 troops and the stiff upper lip that's

being kept by our military requires one to read between the lines to

draw conclusions of what their real judgment is because they have their

orders, and they will make due.

But when I see that the lowest number--and again this is back-channel

information to me; it's not classified and it's not a briefing. Back

channel information to me says 40,000 was the lowest number asked for

by General McChrystal. General McChrystal and our troops in Afghanistan

got a number that was 75 percent of the minimum number I believe was

offered as a necessary number of troops to conduct the operations in

Afghanistan with prospects of, let me say, avoiding mission failure in

Afghanistan.

So they will make do with what they have. And we have gone out and

negotiated with some of our NATO partners; and I saw troops there from

Germany and Great Britain and from Canada and a number of other

countries that are part of our NATO partners. They are there. And

they're working hand-in-glove with American troops.

So the additional anticipation of 7,000 or more coming from the NATO

section will be very helpful, Madam Speaker. And it doesn't substitute

for the request, I don't believe. I don't think we get to say now it's

37,000. I would have rather seen--if it's going to be the minimum

number asked for by General McChrystal, I don't think his request was,

Oh, by the way, you don't need to send me any if NATO will come up with

40,000. I don't think that was part of the equation at all because our

commanders value--and they should--our American troops as being more

effective than the troops that are put together in the coalitions from

NATO themselves, even though we have valuable partners and even though they

send some very, very good people there.

A little aside: I looked around the airport in Kandahar, and I hadn't

thought about the Europeans that were deployed there in Kandahar. It'd

been a little over a year since I'd been there. But when I saw all of

these bicycles out there, I knew that I actually was in a place where

there were a lot of Europeans that were deployed, and that turned out

to be the case, Madam Speaker.

In any case, it will be 30,000 troops, not a minimum of 40,000. It

certainly won't be 80,000. One might argue we're 50,000 troops short of

what the optimum would have been, as back channels say would have been

the best wish list for General McChrystal.

And now what I find on the ground is this: the city of Kabul is more

stable than I have seen it. The streets of Kabul seem to have a certain

order to them. If you watch the people who are moving around, they're

not looking over their shoulder, they're not worried about IEDs going

off. They're conducting the business there as they have for centuries

in Kabul. Little markets, meat hanging on hooks out in the open air

collecting that Afghan dust. And if there is one word I would use to

describe Afghanistan, it's always been ``dust.'' Dust everywhere, dust

all the time. And if it rains, there's dust underneath the little layer

of crust that forms if it rains a little bit in Afghanistan. Dust there

all the time. But the streets of Kabul being, I think, as stable and

orderly as I have seen them and the signs of war have diminished some

in Kabul.

Same would go to Kandahar to a certain degree, although Kandahar not

being quite as safe in the sense that you get in Kabul itself.

That tells me that we've made some progress. Two-thirds of the

population of Afghanistan can be influenced around those urban zones

that I have mentioned, the cities in Afghanistan. The balance of that

is out there in the countryside: people that live in the valleys and

mountains. And those that have an agricultural base and foundation

whether they're raising a crop out of the soil or whether they're

herding the sheep or their goats, that rural agrarian Afghanistan is

the hardest part to reach out to. They have never had a centralized

powerful government in Afghanistan. They've never been able to project

power out of Kabul out to the corners of Afghanistan. And, today,

that's our challenge.

Our challenge, as has been laid out by the President, is to rebuild

and in some cases just simply go out and construct the institutions in

Afghanistan that are necessary to get government services out to the

corners of Afghanistan.

And to provide first for security. We have learned--and it has been

true, I believe, for all of human experience--and sometimes we have to

relearn that we can't put down insurrection if we can't provide for

stability and security. Security is number one. And then once you

establish security, then you can establish the institution of

government, the institutions of education, the institutions of a

peaceful society.

But without safety, without security, nothing can flow from it when

you have only anarchy and that bloody clash of the power struggles that

take place, if there's a vacuum for power.

So the charge for President Karzai, for our American people, and for

the NATO people is to be able to clear those areas that the Taliban now

occupy and control, where the Taliban are providing actually some

function of government, including dispute resolution. However brutal it

might be, the Taliban are providing some dispute resolution. We need to

clear those areas--this is going to sound familiar, Madam Speaker--

clear and hold and build, and then transfer.

First we need to clear those areas of the Taliban and to whatever

extent al Qaeda might exist in Afghanistan, and we need to hold them.

Once we clear a place, we can't leave it. We found out in Iraq that if

we would go in and clear al Qaeda, or any of the militia, out of a

community in Iraq and then pull our troops out of there, they would

just form back again. I don't know why we ever thought that that could

be successful.

I remember hearing reports that there was a city or two in Iraq that

were controlled by the enemy. And I was astonished that we would go in,

liberate a country, and then tolerate the enemy coming into the cities,

setting up shop and running the government there, and more or less

setting up a fortress and a training camp right there within those

cities in Iraq. We learned that lesson the hard way, and we had to go

in with the surge and clean out these cities and restabilize.

According to General Petraeus, we brought our own troops in and

essentially bunked them right there in the community so they were

invested in the security 24/7; not a patrol that just went in and

pulled back out again, but Americans that lived right there and

provided 24/7 security for the people in those communities. We are

going to have to do some of that in Afghanistan as well. But in Iraq we

had to go in under the surge, clear and hold those communities and not

give that real estate back, clear it and hold it, and then we needed to

rebuild some infrastructure.

It's not as big a job to rebuild infrastructure to prewar conditions

in Afghanistan as it is probably anyplace else I can think of. We have

to rebuild infrastructure, establish the institutions of local

government, and any educational institutions that we can set up,

outreach to the farmers to try to do the things that we can do with

American advisers and whatever comes from the NATO people, establish a

stability of security and the stability of the unity of the

institutions and hold that area. And while that is going on, we need to

go to other areas and clear and hold and build and set it up so we

could transfer then to full Afghan control.

Well, here are some contrasts, again, between Iraq and Afghanistan.

Iraq has a population of 28 million. Afghanistan has a population of 28

million. It's the same population, as close as we can count.

The geographical area of Iraq is about the size of California. The

geographical area of Afghanistan is about the size of Texas. And so

those are the differences. It means the Afghans are stretched out a

little more thinly in their population density.

The geography is significantly different in some of the areas. The

Iraq geography we know--desert and sand. When you get into the north,

then you run into some mountains and some greenness up there in the

Kurdish area. But a lot of Iraq looks the same to me when I see it.

In Afghanistan there is a sharper difference in the topography across

the country. There are a lot of stark, brutal, bold, stone mountains in

the east, around to the south and over towards the west. But also, the

further west you go, the more high plains and dust you have out that

way. It is a forbidding topography in Afghanistan as compared to that

in Iraq.

But on the security side, in Iraq we have managed to, working with

our partners and with the full cooperation and support of the Iraqi

people and the Iraqi Government, including President Maliki, now

provide a number of over 600,000 trained security personnel in Iraq

with Iraqi military and Iraqi police forces joined together. I have

watched them drill and watched some of their special forces operations.

And even though the best that the Iraqis have to offer doesn't match up

with the best America has to offer, they look pretty good. There are

just over 600,000. The last number I saw was 609,000 Iraqis trained and

on line and up and running for the security personnel.

But in Afghanistan, and I'm going to have to work off of memory here,

Madam Speaker, because it looks as though my notes don't include these

numbers. But in Afghanistan, we are struggling to put together a

100,000 Afghan Army and, at the same time, around 130,000 Afghan

police. The Afghan police have significant difficulty in achieving

credibility. The people's lack of confidence in the Afghan police comes

because of a long history of corruption. The police have been, I will

say, not paid a lot, except when it came to bribes. They supplemented

their income with bribes. The corruption that has been there in the

Afghan police makes it very hard to stand them up and think that they

are going to look like, say, New York's Finest, for example. They will

never be that. And the culture and the history of the country won't

allow that.

But we need to get the Afghan police to be as good as they can be and

the Afghan Army to be as good as they can be. And even then, our best

hopes are, by the time the President has scheduled a beginning of the

drawdown of troops in Afghanistan, the 18 months takes us into the

summer of 2011, by that period of time, the goal, the target, is about

230,000 Afghanistan Army and Afghan police that will be providing the

security in a country that is spread out more than Iraq is with the

same population of Iraq. Where Iraq has 609,000, Afghanistan would have

presumably 230,000, a good number of them just trained within the last

18 months.

We know there will be turnover. We know there will be corruption. We

know some of them will have to be pulled out by their roots and made an

example of, and others will need to be created. And those that have

credibility, honor, and integrity will have to be lifted up and

promoted.

When we look at an Afghan Army that is perhaps 100,000 strong and an

army that has not functioned in a fashion that we would imagine, and we

think of the Afghan Army as something that goes out and operates

independently, but, truthfully, they are operating with American and

NATO advisers in almost every case. An army of 100,000 for a population

of 28 million compared to an army of around 400,000, a little more than

that in Iraq, for a population of 28 million.

We have many times listened to our military advisers tell us how long

it takes to stand up a brigade commander, and they will tell us it

takes about 20 years of training and active duty to stand up a brigade

commander for our military. And yet, the charge is that we take an

army, an Afghan Army that doesn't have the traditions that the United

States has nor the knowledge nor the command and control structure, and

many times they have illiterate troops that can't read or write. In

fact, the literacy rate among Afghans is about 20 percent among the men

and 1 or 2 percent among the women. So it's awfully hard to educate

someone who can't read and write in their own language. It is hard to

identify the best talent in the population if they can't take the

written exam. They can only be given an oral exam. It's pretty hard to

command troops if you can't read. So, naturally, the literate Afghans

will be the ones that will move up through the chain of command. And we

have a whole society that needs to be educated and taught to function

in a literate fashion.

But to imagine that we can stand up an army in Afghanistan and do so

in 18 months by training brigade commanders and on up, officers to do

that in an 18-month period of time when it takes 20 years in the United

States, and do so in a language that they understand many of them only

orally, that they can't read and write in, it boggles the mind to think

about how difficult this task will be to reach this goal where we can

start to draw troops down in a year and a half.

I listened to the strategy of clear and hold and build and transfer.

I'm not surprised to hear it. I expected that's what I would hear.

I have looked at the numbers of troops that we've committed and the

numbers that we hope to recruit out of Afghanistan and the numbers that

we hope to be able to convince to come to Afghanistan from the other

NATO countries, and it looks like we've got at least a verbal agreement

on that, roughly 7,000 additional troops. I have looked at the

geography being stretched out the way it is, and I stand and look at

the Pakistani border and realize that even though we can control most

of the real estate in Afghanistan and probably will control all the

real estate in Afghanistan, by the time those additional 30,000 troops

arrive, we won't have a license to go into Pakistan. They still have a

sanctuary in the neighboring country of Pakistan. Pakistan has a

population of, I believe, 173 million. The number indicates a lot of

high population in Pakistan and more resources in Pakistan. There are a

lot of big mountains there.

The Pakistanis themselves are like people everywhere. They are going

to look out for their own interests. Well, their own interests aren't

necessarily to put all their resources in defeating the Taliban and

rooting out what is left of al Qaeda in the mountains in Pakistan.

Their interests are in protecting the Pakistani people. There aren't a

lot of them up in the mountains where we think their military needs to

go. And their interests are in protecting the Pakistani Government and

not overreaching so that the Pakistani Government doesn't get

overthrown by the Taliban. That's the struggle that is going on there.

So they will take on the Taliban that threatened the Pakistanis, but

they don't want to go out and pick a new fight with those elements that

are there whose primary objective is to damage the United States and

damage the rest of the free world.

So in a lot of the cases, Madam Speaker, it's where you sit is where

you stand, that the position that each country takes is a lot like the

position that individuals take. We will make our argument at the table

for the things that advantage us. And we are pretty creative, and we

can self-rationalize and sit down at the table and make the arguments

that defend our interests. It's true with people, it's true in this

Congress, and it's true when nations negotiate with nations.

So we should always look at what is the interests of Afghanistan;

what are the interests of Mohammed Karzai, the President. He would like

to stay in power. He would like to serve out his second full term. He

is the one that says that he was not reelected, that there was an

election. He regrets the corruption, but because his nearest opponent

pulled out of the race, he was awarded the election by default. He does

regret that, Madam Speaker; at least, those are the words he used to

speak to us on this.

But President Karzai has his interests, and the Afghan people that

have influence with President Karzai and the Afghan Government have

their interests. Taliban have their interests and al Qaeda theirs.

There are different groups of the Taliban and other groups that we are

fighting as well. It is very complicated, and it is not simple, and

it's not at all completely militarily tactical. It's very much how do

we put together the solutions of first providing security, maintaining

that security, building the institutions and the infrastructure that

are necessary so that the central government in Afghanistan can reach

out to the corners of the country, such as the place where I was just

yesterday at Spin Boldak down on the Pakistani border, and other

places.

All of that needs to happen, Madam Speaker. And as General Petraeus

said, the enemy gets a vote, too, and they will be working against us

and mounting operations where they can. But my general overall

impressions are this: I believe that the strategy that has been put

together is one where we have to thread the needle. We have the very

minimal amount of resources necessary to provide the security. If

everything works according to time frame and schedule, there is a

chance this can be successful.

But I do not see, when I look at the plan, that there is a redundancy

that's built in, that there is a fallback position, that there's an

overbuild that comes in. The ``just in case'' resources don't appear to

be there.

Now, I have spent a lot of my life planning logistics and taking on

projects. No, not directing wars. But, for example, if I would go into

a construction site, and it might be 40 acres of cornfield, and we need

to turn it into a school complex, there are a lot of challenges that go

on. Things go wrong. The weather works against you. You have people

with different interests that are undermining the overall goal. They

are breaking up the sequence of the scheduling you set up. Machines

break down. And sometimes they throw a wrench in the works, a permit

that wasn't required before. You have to plan. You set a schedule. You

plan to meet the schedule, and you have to have reserve resources to

make sure you can make up for the difference. It might be bring in more

men, more workers we say now. It might be bring in more machines. It

might be overlap the duties that are assigned from contractor to

contractor. It might be go to a different supplier if one of them can't

get the materials in time for you. It might be work 7 days a week. It

might be work 24/7. It might be double up with crews and go 24/7. But

however it is when you have to meet the deadline, when you have the

goal, you have to be planning what you'll do if things don't work out.

Now we have a plan in Afghanistan, 30,000 more troops, starting to

insert them in January to get them in position for the beginning of the

fighting season, which, I guess, nobody can really tell you when that

is--that's when the enemy attacks us in a greater number than it is

right now--but roughly mid-to-late March would be what we can

anticipate. And that we have 18 months to clear any areas in

Afghanistan that are held by our enemy--and I am going to define that

enemy as they define the enemy to me, the Taliban; clear and hold, and

build the institutions and rebuild the infrastructure, and then

transfer in 18 months.

Now, we've been there for 8 years, Madam Speaker, 8 years in

Afghanistan. There has been a lot accomplished. And we should not

diminish the accomplishments in Afghanistan. They have been significant

in that Afghanistan has a Constitution that has been ratified, they

have held successful national elections--and some here will object that

there was voter fraud in the last election, and there was, no one

denies that. And to the extent that the voter fraud was there, I would

like to know exactly how many votes were stolen or how many ballot

boxes were stuffed by the supporters of either side. And I don't think

Karzai would tell us that it didn't happen on his side--I think it's

almost certain that it did. Were those numbers great enough to change

the result of the election? Probably not.

I will lament any ballot that is not a legitimate one, but the

question then becomes: Is this government legitimate? Well, it is among

the most legitimate governments that Afghanistan has ever had. We know

that the first election electing nationwide offices and leaders on the

soil in Afghanistan took place because American and NATO forces allowed

that to happen. They provided the security so people could go to the

polls.

I remember that there were Iowa National Guard troops on the ground

guarding the polling places for the first time in the history on that

real estate for people to go to the polls and vote in a national

election. It had never happened before. So they have come a long way,

Madam Speaker, and we should not diminish the accomplishments.

When you think of the United States of America establishing the

Declaration of Independence in 1776, and we fought a war that went on

for several years--I'll say 7 years or 8 years--the Treaty of Paris was

signed by John Jay in, I think, 1783. By 1787, we produced a

Constitution; by 1789 we ratified a Constitution. Thirteen years from

the date of the Declaration of Independence until the ratification of

the Constitution--which didn't guarantee the centuries-old existence of

the United States; it laid down the foundation where we could continue

to fight for liberty and fight for freedom and shape a Nation.

I don't think it was imagined that the United States of America would

become the unchallenged greatest Nation in the world. I don't think

they knew where the Pacific Ocean was--in, fact I know they didn't.

They had to guess how far it was. And Lewis and Clark chartered it in

1803 and 1804, that's when we found out, not in 1789, when the

Constitution was ratified.

So this dream of manifest destiny, this dream of this great Nation,

wasn't really in the imagination of the Founding Fathers. And yet in 13

years we got where we did with a ratified Constitution from the time of

the Declaration. When you look at Iraq and Afghanistan, both of those

countries have outpaced the development speed of the United States of

America itself, if you measure elections, and even if you measure

legitimate elections, and if you measure the ratification of

constitutions where there was no tradition before.

So we should be, I think, respectful of the accomplishments that have

been made in Iraq and in Afghanistan. It takes a long time to build

institutions. We shouldn't just automatically think that because when

we opened up the geography book when we were studying eighth-grade

geography and looked at the map of the world, and that wooden pointer

up there by the chalk board said, here's Pakistan, here's Afghanistan,

here's Iran. When we looked at those borders, we envisioned them as

borders like we would envision borders of the United States of America,

at least. And those borders don't look like I anticipated that they

would, Madam Speaker.

But the borders of Afghanistan, especially with Pakistan, are not

clearly defined. We have a place that we declare to be the border, but

it's not recognized in the same fashion by the people that live near

the border. They want to be able to move back and cross across the

border and do commerce and trade like they always have. And the

agreement on exactly where that is is not a handshake even between

Afghanistan and Pakistan; there are still tensions there, there is

distrust there. There is the worry that Pakistan focuses towards India

with a fear of India as their primary enemy, and they're afraid that

Afghanistan will make common cause with India. Those little tensions

play out just like they play out between people and neighbors and other

countries as well.

But the difficulty of the task in Afghanistan needs to be measured

with the reality of what is going on there on the ground and within the

historical context of what we are living with today, and that is that a

lot of progress has been made, and that the central government in Kabul

has never reached out to those borders, those borders that we see on

the map that aren't really at all like the borders we would imagine

when we look at Afghanistan and look at the map itself.

We need to understand that many of the enemy are living undisturbed

in the mountains in Pakistan. And even though we get a report

occasionally that an unmanned drone strayed across the border and

dropped a missile in to a household that happened to have some al Qaeda

terrorists in it, even though we get some reports of that, operations

in Pakistan, if they exist, they don't exist formally and they don't

exist in any kind of an organized tactical sense.

And so I ask the question, Madam Speaker: Has there ever been an

example in the history of the world where a foreign power went into

another country and took on an insurgency that operated within that

country that also had a sanctuary in a neighboring sovereign nation? In

other words, as it was impossible to defeat the Vietnamese as long as

they could pull back to North Vietnam or go back up the Ho Chi Minh

trail, as long as they could choose the time of engagement and the

method of engagement, as long as they had a sanctuary to hide in, a

line across which we would not go, it was, I don't believe, possible to

defeat the Vietnamese. Same with North Korea. We didn't go after them

where they planned their operations, and therefore we ended up with a

negotiated settlement.

As I pose this question, I bring it out, Madam Speaker, so we

understand here the great difficulty in defeating an enemy that has a

sanctuary in a neighboring sovereignty. In other words, if al Qaeda or

the Taliban can come into Afghanistan, attack American troops or attack

the Afghan people or their military or their police, security

personnel, and disengage and go back to Pakistan, and we can chase them

to the border, and we've got to stop, and if the Pakistanis are not

standing there to meet them, then they can choose the time and the

place of their engagement. They can build up and train and gather

munitions and then conduct those operations. They can plan operations

all over the world, and they have, because they are protected in a

sanctuary.

So my argument here, Madam Speaker, is, there needs to be political

support for going to the sanctuaries of our enemies, wherever they may

be, to take out our enemies that have pledged to kill us. And I

remember sitting through a whole weekend of analysis of this--it would

have been in January or February of 2003--when we brought in experts.

It was a bipartisan retreat weekend, Democrats and Republicans

together. And in this retreat weekend, Tom Friedman gave the opening

address and raised a series of question. And we sat around all weekend

going, What did we ever do to make them hate us? How can we make them

like us again so they don't attack us like they did on September 11?

What was wrong with us that caused them to attack us? Who do we repair who we

are as Americans?

Madam Speaker, that was the mindset going on here in the United

States, especially over on this side of the aisle, and to some degree

over on the Republican side of the aisle as well. What if there was

nothing wrong with us? What if it was all that was wrong with them? We

didn't anticipate in 2001 that there was an enemy that believed as

strongly as they did that their path to salvation is in killing Jews,

Christians and capitalists, probably in that order. And if they could

get a twofer--and they almost always did--they counted that to be a

very good thing.

That's why they attacked the economic center of the United States,

because they believed that they could kill capitalists at the same

time. They despise freedom, they despise liberty, they despise

capitalism, they despise Judeo-Christianity. All of that is the enemy

of the radical jihadis that we are seeking to psychoanalyze instead of

defeat. And believing that we can rebuild institutions in 18 months

that we haven't been able to rebuild in 8 years, it smacks of a

significant degree of optimism, which I am willing to cautiously buy

into provided we provide the resources to do that, and provided we are

willing to go where the enemy is.

If that is in Pakistan, I don't want to sit and wait for them to

decide to come and attack American troops, or plant IEDs and take out

Americans that are there trying to rebuild the institutions and allow

the enemy to hide in a neighboring Pakistan. When Pancho Villa came

into the United States and murdered about 17 people back in 1912--in

fact, Madam Speaker, it might have been the other way around; it might

have been 12 people murdered in 1917--we sent our military down there

to chase Pancho Villa around because we wouldn't tolerate attacks that

came from foreign countries. We knew we couldn't let them have a

sanctuary.

If we let our enemies have sanctuaries, they chose the time and the

place that they attacked us. We knew that in the early part of the 20th

century; we seem to have somehow forgotten that in the early part of

the 21st century. We've got to go take the enemy on where they live,

where they train, where they lay up, where their munitions are, where

their equipment is. We've got to be willing to do that.

And any country that will harbor terrorists doesn't deserve the

support of the United States of America. I remember President Bush

saying words to the effect of, If you harbor terrorists, you're a

terrorist. You are either with us or against us. He made it very clear

at the onset of this, and now we seem to be reluctant to even declare

who our enemies are.

Another component that I think is significant, Madam Speaker, for the

American people to know is that there has been a significant

diminishment in the focus on Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda. It seems as

though the position today of the White House and the military is that

al Qaeda no longer exists in any significant way in Afghanistan. I

remember about two weeks ago or a little more, General Jones--a general

handpicked by President Obama--said that the numbers of al Qaeda in

Afghanistan are less than 100, less than 100 al Qaeda in Afghanistan.

Now, maybe that's true, I don't know. I don't think we have a way of

knowing. But if that is the best intelligence that we have, and that is

the intelligence that's been delivered in public to the American people

by General Jones, then I have to say I don't have any supplemental

intelligence that trumps that number.

It just doesn't seem plausible to me that we would mobilize all of

this effort and focus ourselves on an enemy called al Qaeda, and have

the President of the United States repeatedly, at least 40 times,

declare his dedication to going after Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda and

defeating them where they are. That was at least 40 times as candidate

Obama, then United States Senator Obama, sold himself to the American

people and sold his national security credentials to the American

people. Forty times, at least, he said he would go after Osama bin

Laden, and that he would defeat al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden, and

occasionally he added the Taliban to it.

Now, al Qaeda has been pulled out of the dialogue with Afghanistan,

Osama bin Laden's name has only been uttered four times by the

President of the United States in the year and a month and 3 days since

he has been elected President, and those four times, three of them were

in response to direct questions asked by the press, and the other time

he brought it into another discussion. But at no time has the President

said, since he was elected in 1 year and 1 month and 3 days, I will go

get Osama bin Laden, I will defeat bin Laden and al Qaeda in

Afghanistan. That stopped. That rhetoric stopped abruptly. The 3rd of

November, 2008 was the last time Barack Obama spoke of taking out Osama

bin Laden. So that actually makes it 1 year, 1 month, and 4 days, to be

precise, since the President has said he is going to take out Osama bin

Laden.

And now here we are with a minimum number of troops, minus about 25

percent of the minimum number, to go in and stand up the security

forces in Afghanistan, take those numbers up to around 230,000, and

then have a goal to take that number up higher than that, but to get

that recruitment done and the training done with the commanding

officers necessary. Even though we know it takes 20 years to get them

ready, we are going to do it in 18 months, with a minimum number of

resources, and we are going to rebuild the institutions, we are going

to clear, we are going to hold, we are going to build, and we are going

to transfer.

All of that sounds right, and it sounds good to me. I know a plan

when I read one. I understand when I read the contingency plans the

redundancies that are built in. I look for that because, for part of a

success in a mission, it is necessary to make the contingency plans

because things never go the way you plan them to be. There are always

pitfalls along the way. There are always things that don't work well.

Sometimes it's just bad luck.

I know from my own experience, when I plan logistics as precisely as

I can and when I build in the contingency plans and build in the

redundancy, then things fall apart anyway. I have to go back and put

together a new plan and present that new approach; but about the third

time I do that, I finally get to that point where I realize I can keep

throwing resources at this over and over again and always add just the

minimum to get it done.

Sometimes just the minimum to get it done is just enough to guarantee

it isn't going to work. At a certain point, you have to pour enough

resources in where you can say, by golly, this will fix it, and I'm

done re-devising the plan, and I'm done dragging this out through days

and months and weeks and years. We're going to solve this problem.

We're going to solve it with enough resources. If we don't do that,

we can't move on to the next thing, the next mission, the next

challenge for America.

So I'm going to stand here, proposing that we provide not only the

resources that are necessary for our military to protect and to advance

the destiny of America but that we provide backup plans, contingency

plans, redundancy and that we're ready to alter this plan with more

resources, if necessary, in order to achieve or to set about achieving

in both Iraq and in Afghanistan a definable victory. We have done so in

Iraq. We seek to do that in Afghanistan.

President Karzai recognizes that the Bush doctrine remains intact,

that promoting freedom and a stable self-governing country in

Afghanistan lays out the foundation consistent with the Bush doctrine,

which is to provide for that foundation of legitimate government. If

that happens, the voice of the people is heard. When the voice of the

people is heard through the ballot box and through other means of self-

expression--freedom of the press will be another one--then the tension

diminishes.

We don't have to have revolutions in America because we have

elections in America. They don't have to have terrorists and

revolutions in places like Iraq or Afghanistan if they have elections

there, if the voice of the people is heard and if there is dispute

resolution by a legitimate means under the rule of law.

President Karzai understands the Bush doctrine is not dead. The Bush

doctrine is very much alive. The directive of the strategy that was

laid out by President Obama actually maintains and holds the Bush

doctrine intact. It just does so with a minimum number of resources,

and we're going to have to look forward to, I'll say, the utter

excellence of our noble American troops to bring about an

accomplishment there that, I think, could use more resources to ensure

a successful result in Afghanistan.

While this is going on, I want to, Madam Speaker, continue to press

the President of the United States and the people in America to look at

a strategy that goes beyond this amorphous line around through the

mountains and between Afghanistan and Pakistan that we cannot defeat an

enemy that has a sovereign sanctuary, an enemy that can choose its time

to attack us and to lay up and hold up and train.

Furthermore, we'd better start paying attention to this global war on

terror. It is not a police action. It is a war against people who

ideologically oppose us. We are now raising in the United States

terrorists from within the United States who are attacking free people

in other parts of the world. We had five terrorist operations that

emerged in a single day.

There was one in Dallas, two in New York, one in Chicago, and another

one in North Carolina. I think that covers most of them, homegrown to

some extent. We have the Somali terrorists out of Minneapolis--

homegrown. We have the individual who was just arrested today, or

charged today, with helping to plan the massacre that took place a

little over a year ago in Mumbai. These are Americans who are now

projecting terror around other parts of the world.

We need to get with this and understand the enemy that we are

fighting. We need to put a plan in place to clean this up in the United

States of America, to eradicate the habitat that breeds terrorists like

that, to defeat the culture that breeds people who believe their path

to salvation is in killing freedom-loving, God-fearing people like we

are here in the United States of America.

This is not just a little bit of an engagement of our law

enforcement. This is a clash of ideologies. They are committed. We need

to be. We need to understand our enemy, Madam Speaker.

That has been the purpose of my discussion here this afternoon. I

appreciate your attention to this matter.

To all of the Members of Congress, as you tune in and listen and to

the American people who have the benefit of this open dialogue, I urge

our attention to the matter, to the educational upgrade of all of the

people in this country.