Mr. Speaker, I marveled at Mr. Lantos's good comment

that this could have been, as I understood the quote, could have been a

day for celebration. And I would submit it is a day for celebration. It

should be. It is.

This is a great day. A great thing happened yesterday in the cradle

of mankind. They elected permanent leaders. Now, there are those

Americans who have said that it was quagmire in Iraq. We had to get

out. It was a mistake to be there. Some made these statements out of

personal heartache and tragedy, but some were made purely from partisan

political motivation.

So when the question is asked, why should the leadership politicize

the Iraqi situation, that is exactly the question I have been asking.

Why? Why? Why, leading up to this election for the last 6 weeks, the

yabbers got more shrill, more hysterical that we have to withdraw? And

surely there are some people that are smart enough to know that that

risk, the election that people who saw the fliers that said, ``you

vote, you die,'' might actually take it more seriously if they thought

we were going to withdraw quickly before the ink went off their

fingers.

So I say to those who said the freedom, democracy and liberty we were

fighting for and the evil that we fought against was not worth it, it

is worth it. And the soldiers that have been there know it. That is why

the retention among the soldiers that have been to Iraq is way up. I

have talked to them.

I have not heard people ask, why are we still in Bosnia where

President Clinton said we had to go? One of my best friends from

college, we served in the Army in Fort Benning together, he just got

sent to Bosnia. Why is not anybody saying, let us get out of there? Why

are the same people not saying, we should have gotten out of Germany to

President Truman? We should have gotten out of Japan? Because our

leadership made good decisions, and we are safer of it.

Thank God for the heroes that have made America better by spreading

liberty around the world.