Mr. Speaker, on June 6 we commemorated D Day, the

day that American military forces stormed the coast of France 62 years

ago to turn the tide in one of the most brutal conflicts the world has

ever known. The United States sustained 6,603 casualties that day, yet

the final victory over the forces of fascism remained nearly a year

away.

Rows of silent graves at the American Military Cemetery in Normandy

bear witness to the high price of freedom. They solemnly remind us that

there is no substitute for perseverance and sacrifice if we are to

prevail over the threats which challenge this Nation and the world

today.

The global war on terror is a different war from the wars of the

past. This is not a war of uniformed armies on clearly defined

battlefields. It is a war that invades tranquil space and time without

warning, carried out by those who hide among and behind civilian

populations, seeking to exploit the vulnerable for ruthless purposes.

While we have endured the sacrifice of global wars during the past,

we have never waged a war in an age of globalization, in an age when

technology eviscerates the concept of distance, magnifies our losses,

trivializes our accomplishments, and places our adversaries in a far

better position to leverage the freedoms of our society against us.

In seeking to prevent another 9/11, the President and the United

States Congress would have been utterly irresponsible to ignore the

threat posed by Saddam Hussein in Iraq. It is important to note that in

1998 President Clinton ordered U.S. Armed Forces to strike military and

security targets in Iraq because Iraq's nuclear, chemical and

biological weapons programs posed a credible and serious threat.

But I am not here to argue the case for war today. The United States

and our coalition partners made judgments to enter Iraq based upon the

best available evidence, and now the commitment is ours to complete. We

are all in this together, and the successful progression of our

commitment in Iraq, from which I remain convinced that an abrupt

withdrawal of U.S. troops would do more harm than good, is vital to

achieving national security for America, stability and hope for all

peoples of the Middle East, and establishing the prospects for civil

reforms and long-term peace throughout the entire world.

While our mission continues to be dangerous and costly, it continues

to make strong progress as well. The recent establishment of democratic

institutions in Iraq is without cultural or historical precedent. This

fact, combined with rapid progress in the deployment of Iraqi security

forces, gives us realistic hope of diminishing conflict and a stable

foundation for the prospects of long-term peace.

As we proceed with our obligation, may each one of us endeavor to

discharge our responsibilities in a manner that is worthy of the

sacrifices of the United States Armed Forces.

And may each of us recall that this obligation is ultimately

connected to the mantle of leadership that has fallen to the United

States, not only for our own welfare, but for the welfare of the entire

world.