Mr. Speaker, international terrorism is an

issue of life and death, not just for each of us individually but for

our Nation and our way of life.

We did not want this fight. We didn't invite this fight. We did not

wish to engage in this battle. However, once our enemy crossed over the

line and confirmed for us and the world that they were unwilling to

respect international law, respect individual liberty, and respect the

sovereignty of nations, and that they were willing and desirous of

engaging in mortal battle, no other option was left to us or to the

civilized world.

Abu Musab al Zarqawi, on January 23, 2005, said this: ``We have

declared a fierce war on this evil principle of democracy and those who

follow this wrong ideology.'' So this discussion over the past few days

comes down to a fundamental question: What is the appropriate strategy

and tactic to adopt to win the war on terror? Will we withdraw and

simply defend a policy of isolation and containment, or will we

aggressively combat terrorism and take the battle to our enemy?

Now, this war is unlike any other in history. Our enemy has no single

home. It recruits and trains its army from nations around the world.

The only unifying element is hate, hate for democracy and hate for

liberty. Thankfully, we have stayed the course. Thankfully, we have

persevered in both Iraq and Afghanistan, because the greatest threat to

terrorism is freedom and liberty and democracy in the Middle East and

beyond.

And great progress is being made. Last week, the U.S. and Iraqi

forces eliminated al Qaeda's top terrorist, Zarqawi. This was

accomplished with excellent intelligence, and that information came

from Iraqi citizens themselves. A very positive sign. And while Zarqawi

was eliminated, finding him brought a wealth of information, allowing

U.S. and Iraqi forces to dismantle many more pieces of al Qaeda's

puzzle. And Iraq just this past week selected three more officials,

cabinet ministers, to serve in its standing government. These are very

positive accomplishments.

But it is also important for us to remember what led up to this war,

and just a short look at a couple of the incidents over the last 30

years will bring it into focus and vividly demonstrate the death,

destruction, and terror brought to Americans by our enemy.

The Iran hostage crisis in 1979, where our hostages were held for 444

days;

1983 suicide bomb attacks in Beirut, Lebanon, killing 242 Americans;

1985, the Achille Lauro hijacking, where an invalid American was

murdered in his wheelchair;

1988, Pan Am 103 bombing over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing 259 people

on board;

February 26, 1993, the first World Trade Center bombing;

1996, Khobar Towers bombing, U.S. Air Force barracks in Saudi Arabia,

killing 19 U.S. military personnel;

1998, U.S. Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, killing over 300;

The year 2000, the USS Cole bombing, killing 17 U.S. sailors;

And then, September 11th.

Now, treating these incidents as crimes and not as acts of war,

providing reactionary measures rather than moving proactively will not

work. And how do we know? Because that is precisely what we did for

decades, and the consequence was 9/11.

The campaign against the United States and its allies is ambitious,

simple, and clear. Terrorists will stop at nothing to achieve their

distorted sense of reality. We could have stayed out of this conflict.

However, giving terrorists free rein would not make us any safer, and

history has proven that. The price would be more innocent lives lost,

more bombings, and not an ounce of peace. We must not be held hostage

by terrorism. That is not living in liberty and freedom.

There are defining moments for every generation. And for this

generation that defining moment is how we engage in this war on terror,

highlighted by a very different post-9/11 world. When we came to that

defining moment, to that tragic day, we, as a Nation, with our allies

around the world, decided we would not allow terrorists to win.

Mr. Speaker, freedom isn't free. The choice is clear, our resolve is

clear: we must and we will prevail.