Mr. Speaker, I applaud the gentleman from California

for his insightful and thoughtful remarks and particularly his

observation that this is not about micromanaging the war. This is about

accountability.

And I daresay that if over the course of the past two previous

Congresses that there was oversight and that there was more monitoring,

we would not find ourselves in this unhappy moment.

Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would commend to my friends and colleagues who spoke

previously that they take the time and review the National Intelligence

Estimate that was released by the Bush administration in September of

2006, because the American intelligence agencies found that the

American invasion and occupation of Iraq has helped spawn a new

generation of Islamic radicalism and that the overall terrorist threat

has grown. What we want to accomplish is to defeat terrorism, but we

are not doing it with this strategy.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his concern and

respect for the families and the soldiers that serve. He should know

that there are many that are serving today in Iraq that agree with you.

Let me quote from a private in Baghdad who was shot at and who is

enduring the vagaries and the vicissitudes of living every day in hell.

This is what he had to say in a paper just recently.

``We can go get into a firefight and empty our ammo, but it doesn't

accomplish much. This isn't our war. We're just in the middle.'' And

that is Private First Class Zach Clausen.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I agree with my friend and colleague from Florida. This is a special

country

and a special Nation and our men and women who are serving us in Iraq

are special to us, to all of us.

The article that I alluded to earlier and mentioned the name of

Private Clausen, I would like to quote from other soldiers who are in

Baghdad currently who are fighting, are in the combat, and their

observations, and I would encourage my colleagues on both sides to

listen to their words. They get it. They understand. They know what is

happening on the ground. They know the reality of Iraq.

Lieutenant Antonio Hardy. These are his words:

``To be honest, it's going to be like this for a long time to come,

no matter what we do. I think some people in America don't want to know

about all this violence, about all the killings. The people back home

are shielded from it. They get it sugar-coated.''

Sergeant Herbert Gill:

``What is victory supposed to look like? Every time we turn around

and go into a new area, there's somebody waiting to kill us. Once more

raids start happening, they'll melt away. And then 2 or 3 months later,

when we leave and we say it's a success, they'll come back.''

Our troops get it.

I referred earlier to Private Zack Clausen. Let me repeat his words:

``We can get into a firefight and empty our ammo, but it doesn't

accomplish much. This is not our war--we're in the middle.''

Listen to these voices. These are not the voices that come and appear

before us in congressional hearings. These are our brothers, our

children, our sons, our daughters that are serving every day in

Baghdad. Let's listen to the troops.