Mr. Speaker, I was here on the floor yesterday and thought

I would only speak once. As I heard the debate of thoughtful Members on

both sides of this issue, I was reminded of something I said yesterday

that needed to be said again. Although the people you are hearing from

mean well on both sides, less than a third of the Members speaking on

this House floor served in the U.S. military, although everyone was

eligible, and less than a third have traveled to Iraq, although

everyone was eligible. Perhaps we will give the freshmen a pass.

This is, in fact, a debate by people who are not military experts. I

count myself among those, who although I served in the military and

have been to Iraq, I am not a military expert. I don't pretend to play

one on television and before the American people, and yet that is what

we are doing here for four solid days.

We are in fact, pretending to be military experts. Well, Mr. Speaker,

this morning I had a military expert in my office, Staff Sergeant Bain.

He is only a staff sergeant. How is he an expert? He is just finishing

3 years in Walter Reed, 3 years of recovery from terrible wounds. He

came in doing a very good job with his artificial leg. He came in and

shook my hand, even though he cannot feel with that hand.

All I could do was thank him for his service and hand him a coin and

wish him well in his civilian life. But he took the time to tell me

that he disagreed with the President sending 20,000 troops to Iraq.

He said, I am sorry I can't be there for that. He said, they ought to

send 100,000. What we did there we need to finish. Staff Sergeant Bain

got it right. The United States military and its experts believe we

need to get this finished and get it right.

Now, the staff sergeant is 3 years out of Iraq, so I will forgive him

for not being sure about whether it should be 20,000, as our military

leaders, including General Petraeus, have asked for, or whether it

should be 20,000 more if necessary, or 100,000. But it is important

that Staff Sergeant Bain be heard.

Because in fact what you have here are a bunch of people, most of

whom did not serve in the military, most of whom have not bothered to

go to the combat zone, and those of us who did for the most part had a

relatively quick tour in and out. We have not experienced what our

troops have experienced.

And I know there is some disagreement among those who have been

there. But, Mr. Speaker, I ask the American people to ask a vet of this

war, their own vet, their own neighborhood, and they are going to find

out they want to win this peace just as they won the war.

They toppled Saddam, and now they are being told to cut and run. That

is what this is leading to. Mr. Speaker, we cannot do that and we know

it. And yet for political expedience this body is pretending to be

military experts.

Mr. Speaker, I will close simply by reminding this body of something

we do know about. This is a body filled with people who understand

history. Under fascism; we took on Japan, Germany, Italy and their

allies. And it took 4 years before we did it, while they grew, and 4

years to defeat them. And it took a decade or more to turn those

countries into functional democracies.

Yet America stayed the course. And we had troops deployed there and

we have troops deployed there today, even though they are functional

democracies.

Mr. Speaker, for more than 50 years we fought the other ``ism,''

communism. China, the Soviet Union, and the rest of the Soviet Bloc

stood there threatening annihilation, but the American people put up

with unspeakable amounts of money and significant loss of military

lives, over 100,000 in two side battles of the Cold War.

We spent countless billions. Sometimes as much as 50 percent of our

government's budget went to the military. And we did it. Now we are

being asked to deal with radicalism. And I cannot name a country of

radicalism. And I cannot say radical Islam or radical Islamic fascism,

I simply say radicalism, because these radicals come from different

sects of Islam, but they have one thing in common: They seek to conquer

countries to put an ``ism'' onto them that is not of their choosing,

and without freedom.

Won't the American people stand here today with the Congress

representing them and stand against this ``ism'' for at least as long

as we stood against fascism and at least as long as we stood against

communism?