Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon among a sea of voices

that I quickly confess I do not understand. Now, some of them are my

friends and some of them are very good people and I don't want to make

any mistake about it. I understand the pressures they are under. I

understand what it is like when you have major news media outlets who

will not even take individuals who attack innocent civilians in the

United States and destroy our property and they won't even call them

terrorists. I understand the pressure when they control much of the

media that we get across the country.

I also understand what it is like, Mr. Speaker, when we have Web

sites that are filled with hate, that spew poison out throughout all of

our congressional districts, and I understand the pressure that we get

when we have people who don't want to listen but simply want to scream,

who stand outside and protest at our offices. I understand those

pressures. What I don't understand is the response that I am seeing

here today on this floor.

Just a few years ago, I had the privilege of traveling with then

Speaker Denny Hastert to the 60th anniversary of one of the greatest

military achievements the United States has ever seen, and that was the

invasion of Normandy. Almost every historian agrees it was the battle

that literally saved the world. It was of particular importance to me

because my dad had died just a few months before and he was there

during World War II. Mr. Speaker, I sat that day in the sun among a sea

of heroes who didn't come up to the microphone and pound the desk and

they didn't speak in shrill voices. They sat with quiet silence because

they had done the hard work and they had literally saved the world. And

after that ceremony, I had the honor of just walking with them, in the

same presence with them, as we walked down on the beach at Omaha Beach

and stood there literally speechless as the military historians first

told us that that was a victory that didn't necessarily have to be a

victory, that we could have easily lost that battle. And if we had lost

Omaha Beach, we would have lost that invasion. If we had lost that

invasion, Germany would have signed a treaty and Europe would have

looked much different than it looks today.

And they told us about the guns that were pointed up and down Omaha

Beach, huge cannons and the machine guns locked on the front that

created virtually killing fields for our young men that would have to

come on that beachhead.

And then, Mr. Speaker, they told us about the very first Chief of

Staff, Lieutenant General Frederick Morgan, who had warned against

doing exactly what we are doing today when he said this: ``Do not have

efforts that end in the production of nothing but paper, but we must

contrive to produce action, not paper, if our goal is victory, not

defeat.''

Mr. Speaker, they described how when General Eisenhower, one of the

most beloved generals of our time, when he was strategizing that great

vision, his own generals disagreed with him on many issues. In fact,

some of them threatened to quit because there were different

strategies. Some said don't go today, some said go today, some said do

it a different way.

But then as they watched that invasion, greatest victory of all

times, let me tell you what happened early that morning. Our airborne

men, some of them were dropped into the flooded lowlands, and they

drowned without a bullet ever being fired on them because we dropped

them in the wrong places. Some of them were dropped in the midst of

German positions, and they were captured or they were killed.

Less than a half of the 82nd Airborne's gliders ever reached their

assigned landing fields. By early morning, 4,000 men of the 82nd and 60

percent of their equipment was unaccounted for.

The high seas that day swamped many of our boats, and we lost our

radios in the bottom of the sea, and only three out of 16 of our

bulldozers survived. But what was worse, in the first 4 minutes we had

97 percent casualties on that beach. The Germans were elated.

Mr. Speaker, as I have listened to this debate, I could only think

what would happen if the leadership controlling this floor had been on

the command ships sitting off of Omaha Beach, because you and I know

what would have happened. One by one, they would could came up to the

podium, they would have grabbed a microphone, they would have pounded,

and they would have looked at all the things that happened. At the end

of all that, do you know what it would have resulted in?

It would have had a note that they would have passed to the 29th

Division, and those young boys on that beach, some of them 17, 18, 19

years old, who were hunkered down on that beach in the sand, some of

them paralyzed with fear not knowing what to do. That note would have

said, we love you, we support you, we just want to let you know we

disagree with the action that you are taking. We don't know what to

tell you, we just disagree with the action that got you here.

But fortunately, that was not the leadership that governed that day.

The leadership that governed that day was people like Brigadier General

Cota who went up and down that beach and he looked at those young boys

and he said, essentially, don't look at the beach. Don't look at the

bullets that are flying here at you, because if you do you are going to

die on this beach and you are going to lose everything you believed in.

What he told them to do, he said, Look at that hill. We have got to

take that hill. He said, Rangers, lead the way. Americans, lead the

way. You know what? They took that hill, and they won the greatest

military victory in the history of this country. As a result, they

saved the world.

Mr. Speaker, I hope and I pray that we will continue to birth voices

that say don't look down, don't look at the mistakes, look at that

hill. We have got to take this hill, and we have got to save the world

from this threat of terrorism that so threatens us.