Mr. Speaker, I came to the floor to talk a little bit

about national security and where the Nation's defense apparatus stands

as of now. But I thought I also might comment on the comments that were

made by two of my wonderful colleagues, Ms. Woolsey of California and

Mr. Paul of Texas, who preceded me and commented about their position

to the effect that we should bring our troops home immediately from

Iraq. And implicit in their comments was the message that somehow

Saddam Hussein's continued rule of Iraq would have been preferable to

the American intervention.

I disagree with that theme, and let me tell you why. In listening to

Ms. Woolsey talk about the wounded, the KIA, the suffering in that part

of the world, and the burden that has been borne by American soldiers,

I think it is also important to remember the Iraq that was represented

by Saddam Hussein.

And while she has, obviously, the images that have compelled her to

take her philosophical position, the image that I have, and I keep in

my desk drawer, is the photograph of the hundreds of mothers whose

bodies are strewn across the hillside in northern Iraq, holding their

children, some of them newborn babies, some of them four, five, 6 years

old, dead in mid-stride where they were hit by poison chemical, poison

chemical that was delivered into those villages at the order of Saddam

Hussein.

And I have taken, as a guy who sometimes watches the History Channel,

to tuning in when I see the History Channel reviewing the exhuming of

bodies in these mass graves and putting together this story, this

mosaic of Iraq history under Saddam Hussein and the story of how

hundreds of people, men, women and children, would be herded across

fields and they would be executed and their bodies would be pushed into

mass graves. And now we are uncovering those mass graves.

And just like the mass graves that we found in Europe, especially

those that were filled by bodies that had been people who had been

executed by the Nazis, there are more people now in those mass graves,

we find, than what we had projected.

And as I watched the exhuming of some of those bodies on the History

Channel, I noticed that the anthropologist who was doing the particular

work noted that the mother, in some cases, who was executed would often

have a .45 bullet hole in the back of her head, and her small baby that

she was holding would also have a bullet hole in the back of his or her

head. So the monstrosity that was Saddam Hussein, the mass execution,

the killing of people with chemical weapons, is what the American

troops displaced when we moved into Iraq.

Now, it is tough to stand up a free nation and stand up a military

that is able to protect it, but that is the challenge that we are

meeting right now. And we are following the same basic pattern that we

have followed for 60 years. Whether you are talking about Japan or the

Philippines or El Salvador in our own hemisphere, first you stand up a

free government. Secondly, you stand up a military that is capable of

protecting that free government, and third, the Americans, not coveting

anything that that country has, the Americans leave.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I thought I also might speak just a little bit, as

we turn over the control of Congress to the Democrat leadership, not

only in the full House, but also the committee chairmanships, and my

own committee chairmanship now has been relinquished to the gentleman

from Missouri, Ike Skelton, my good friend and a wonderful person and a

person with a real heart for the troops. I thought that I might just

comment about where we stand right now. I think it is important for the

American people to know where we stand and what this Congress that is

going out has accomplished for national security.

First, what have we done for the troops? Well, over the last 8 years

we have increased the pay for the Army, the Air Force, the Navy, the

Marines, and the National Guard by right at 40 percent, a 40 percent

pay increase. We have increased family separation pay, the amount of

money that we deliver to our military families when they are separated

when people are deployed overseas. We have increased that from $100 a

month to about $250 a month. We have increased our combat pay.

Mr. Speaker, I know I have only got 5 minutes, so I will elaborate on

some of the accomplishments that occurred during this last Congress in

the next hour.