Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we saw a

varying level of discourse and debate over an enormously important and

I might say singularly important issue that is facing the American

public, and that is the question of the war in Iraq.

No matter how you touch the hearts and minds of Americans, whether or

not they suggest that this Congress and this President is not paying

enough attention to the domestic concerns, woven into the crisis of

where we stand today is the conflict in Iraq.

I think Americans understand Afghanistan more than we might think

they do. They know that this Nation was attacked on September 11, 2001.

They know that when the Nation is attacked, the Commander in Chief,

leaders of this government have the responsibility of defending the

honor and the security of America. They see Afghanistan as defending

that honor and that security. They know that the Taliban, Osama bin

Laden, those who collaborated were the basis of the attack against the

World Trade towers and other sites in this country. They know that our

lives have changed because of the horrific tragedy of 9/11. And they

are willing to accept that. They faced up against new laws that seem to

undermine their liberties, and within reason they are willing to

acknowledge that things must change. I am grateful, however, that there

are those of us who understand that the greatest success of a terrorist

is to cause you to terrorize yourself. So many of us have asked to

modify and assess the PATRIOT Act. We are looking to redo the FISA law

that deals with electronic surveillance. But mostly in debating this

question, Americans understand that their lives have changed.

But the Iraq War continues to be a questioning action by this

administration. All of us have tried to give respect to the basis and

the reason of this direction that this government took in the fall of

2002. I, for one, was very hesitant to speak about a war for oil. I

recognize that there might have been many deliberations that have

occurred that might have caused this administration to make this

unfortunate leap of preemptive attack.

I have come full circle now, however, and I am enormously

disappointed in the thought process and the respect not given to the

American people. For the American people, over 56 percent, want this

war to end, want these troops to come home, want to see a troop

reduction.

So this debate today was not a frivolous debate. And the leadership

of the Democratic Caucus, the leadership of this Congress took great

pains to try to address this in a fair and dignified manner. They

worked very hard to bring a concise document that spoke to the safety

and security of the troops, the respect of the troops, the

acknowledgment of their hard work; but yet to insist that a plan be

laid out by this administration to reduce the number of troops in Iraq

while at the same time ensuring that if there are outstanding

conflicts, firefights, terrorists to be fought, that we'd have the

troops on the ground.

I believe that this has been the most misdirected war that history

will record. I believe that it beats out the Civil War, the War of

1812, World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War,

Persian Gulf. For any of those who opposed those wars, and I was not

there for all of them, if there was any opposition for reasons that I

don't know, this has to be the single most dangerous and devastating

action that this Nation could have ever taken. There is no sense for

it. There is no basis for it. But if there was a case that you could

make, you could make the case that the military has done every single

thing that it was asked to do.

So, Mr. Speaker, that is why I was moved to write the Military

Success Act of 2007. It indicates that Congress recognizes that the

military, in the invasion of Iraq, as authorized by a resolution given

to the President in 2002, going into Baghdad was probably one of the

best executed military operations in modern history, alongside of the

Persian Gulf. The armed services successfully toppled the regime of

Saddam Hussein.

And as I close, it lists a whole series of successes. And then it

indicates that every single aspect of the 2002 resolution has been

complied with. And, therefore, that means that the task of the 2002

resolution has ended. And it calls then for the troops to come home,

for them to be acknowledged, for them to be given free, with no

attachment, $5,000 for each returning troop from Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, this was a difficult debate, but I think and know that

we made the right decision. But we could do even more. We can affirm

that these troops need to come home, and we can celebrate them for the

heroes that they are.