Mr. Speaker, I just want people to know that the whole

country is not run by distinguished women from California. But I

certainly do appreciate the leadership that you have taken. God knows

how much better off our country would have been if

we had recognized the brain power that we have with minority women in

this country. But we have that to work on.

I do not know where to start, because there are certain people that

believe that we are not supporting the troops when we are anxious that

they return home well to their families.

But I can say that I visited those that have been wounded. I have the

369th. They call themselves the Hell Fighters. They are a National

Guard outfit. They have been to the Persian Gulf. They have been to

Iraq. I am always there when they leave. I am always there when they

come home. And I want the gentlewoman from California (Ms. Waters) to

know that they appreciate what we are doing for them.

What people do not understand when they talk about the patriotism of

our fighting men and women, they are so right, unlike those of us who

have a responsibility to participate, whether we are going to have

peace or war for our great Nation, any veteran will tell you, when that

flag goes up, you are in the military, you salute it. You do not

challenge the military. You do not challenge the President. You do what

you have been trained to do, and that is to destroy the enemy.

And so no matter how patriotic our men and women are, and they are

that, bringing them home to their loved ones means we are patriotic

too.

I remember when I first enlisted in the Army. I was 18 years old. I

had not finished high school. Spinning my wheels. Did not know which

way to go. Saw the uniform, saw the check, could send the check home to

mom; my brother had before me. Seemed like a pretty good deal.

Now, no way did I know that in August of 1950 I would be sent to

Korea, which I am embarrassed to admit I had no idea where it was, to

engage in a police action, which did not sound too bad to me, being a

policeman. I went there in August of 1950 and guess what? The Second

Infantry Division that left Fort Washington to go there is still there

today.

Getting into wars in countries is a heck of a lot easier than getting

out of them. And so in that war, we did not even declare war. You know,

it was a police action. It was the United Nations. It was Truman

telling us to go. The majority of our outfit, they were either killed

or captured.

And since I had an opportunity to be exposed about education, I felt

for those who God blessed to allow to live, that we had a special

obligation not to allow that to happen to other people's kids. Here we

have a situation where people who have served their country and joined

the Reserve have been called up two and three times. Families have been

broken. I remember when I introduced my draft bill the first time, I

got a call from Senator Hollings from South Carolina.

He says, you are worried about minorities and poor folks. You better

start thinking of my Reservists. Families are being broken. People have

already served and being called two and three times. Wives are

complaining, the employers have not called them since their favorite

employee was twice called up to serve the country. Tuition has not been

paid. Marriages have been broken.

And then you take a look at the other side, the Charlie Rangels all

over the country, different colors, different backgrounds, different

languages, some not even citizens, but spinning their wheels and hoping

for a better way of life, getting an education like I got with the GI

bill. Where do they come from?

Well, just ask the Pentagon. They do not come from communities that

chief executive officers live in. They do not come from kids with

families of those in the White House or in the Pentagon. As a matter of

fact, I have talked with some of the private marketers that are hired

by the Pentagon, and as someone says, they rob banks because that is

where the money is. They fish because that is where the fish are. They

recruit where the hopeless are in terms of unemployment.

I asked the question, Do most of them come from areas of high

unemployment? Yes, that is where they recruit. It makes sense. Now we

have not got the retention. People are not being retained. People are

not volunteering. You would think that if the President of the United

States believes that, and that fighting terrorism in Iraq is in our

national defense, what a speech a President could gave to all of

America. I could hear it now.

If we do not bring freedom and liberty to every country that seeks

it, if we do not have regime change where we do not like people, if we

do not bomb and invade and superimpose our government, then our country

would be jeopardized. So what are you asking, Mr. President? We are

asking all of you not to allow the poor to just carry on this fight.

This is a fight for freedom and liberty; you should be so proud to

enlist.

So you make a plea to the poor, to the middle class and to the

wealthy, to the men and women of this country that love it. Volunteer.

Instead, what do they say when they do not meet their quotas? Well, the

$10,000 for 3 years did not work, so we doubled it to $20,000. Now it

is $30,000. So do not worry, Mr. President, it is going to be $40,000,

and we will get those kids one way or the other.

And now we have got parents saying, do not do that to my kid. He

loves us. If I were offered $40,000 at 18 years old off the street of

Harlem, I would ask how many years can I take? I mean, that is a lot of

money even with inflation being what it is today.

It seems to me that we should not need a draft if Americans thought

we were doing the right thing. Makes sense to me. You would leave your

job in the Congress if you are young enough. If there is something I

can do, I will do it because this country has been extremely good to

me.

But I know one thing, that for all of the people that are talking

about that they are supporting the war, I ask one question: Would you

put your kids in harm's way to indicate your support for this war? It

seems like it is so easy, when I was a kid for someone to pick a fight,

and then when it is time to go to fight, they said I will hold your

coat. That is what America is doing today.

Do not tell me that these young people want to fight, I suppose those

people being drafted do, that would be an insult to all of the heroes

and sheroes that have been drafted, or at least the men that have been

drafted that defended this country. But the truth of the matter is that

if we have a draft, if we had a draft, we would not be in Iraq today.

If we had a draft, we would not be rattling swords in North Korea. If

we had a draft, we would not be threatening Syria and Iran. We would go

to the international community with the strength of the United States

of America and persuade those countries that terrorism is not just an

American problem, it is an international problem, and with mutual

respect, sit down and talk with them to see how we can bring peace to

the Middle East.

This is going to be one of a series of nights that we know how

awkward it is to be against the President when the Nation is at war.

But that is true of so many things that happen that we are not proud

of. It is so easy not to stand up. It is so easy to say, I hope they

know what they are doing in Washington. It is so easy to hope that

everything is going to work out okay.

But we have had a lot of problems in this country because people are

waiting for someone else to do something. And I think as our numbers

grow that we will soon make it comfortable for people just to ask the

question: Why did we go in the first place? Was there a plan which

projected for the 21st century to go to knock off Saddam Hussein before

9/11? Did everyone that was in the Cabinet that has written books,

Clark did, Woodward who wrote the book on this, did O'Neill, who was

Secretary of the Treasury when they said that after 9/11, the President

was committed to go after Saddam Hussein, even though there was no

evidence that they should go that way?

You hear more about the papers from England, the intelligence reports

that we have got to show that even the British intelligence indicated

that was the route that we were going. We find now all of the reasons

that were given were not true. And as you hear us over and over, and

listen to the priests and the nuns and the ministers and the imams and

the rabbis recognize that all we are talking about is not defending our

country, we have got a new standard now.

You do not go to war just when you are attacked. You do not go to war

just

when you have imminent danger of being attacked. Now, subjectively, we

can go to war to avoid the attack being imminent. That subjective

standard will no longer be just ours. It will belong to North Korea,

South Korea. It will belong to India and Pakistan, and the moral value

of the greatest democracy that has ever been created would be shattered

just because no one stood up.

Well, we have seen what happened in history and we want to make it

very comfortable for you not to get involved politically but to listen

to the facts. And at the end of the day, when Condoleeza Rice and the

President are asked, and maybe some Democrats, if you knew then what

you know now, would you have committed this great country to war?

Because all you got out of it is a pretty crummy election even by

Florida standards, and the fact that we have no clue as to where we are

going to get additional troops to stay there until they get their act

together or to train them.

So I thank the three gentlewomen from California and especially,

well, not especially, because all of the gentlewomen are giants in

this. And one day, and I hope one day soon, the people who held us in

suspicion because we are standing up, and we have to thank God that we

have constituents that allow us to do it, that the least that we can

say that we have done is to create an atmosphere where good people can

stand up when they know in their hearts that they are doing the right

thing.

Let me try that. Suppose they did call and the mother

would say, Would you remind me as to why my beloved child lost his or

her life? Would they say because Saddam Hussein was a mean, evil man

when we have so many mean and evil people in this world? Would they say

that we wanted to show them what democracy really is and they had an

election? Would they say that we want to bring order to this part of

the world? Would they say that, and we are prepared to do this further,

the President's inaugural address and speeches he has given?

How would they answer about the weapons of mass destruction if the

bereaved asked?

Suppose they asked, Was this connected with the attack of 9/11? What

would they say? Suppose they said, well, Whatever happened to Osama bin

Laden? Was he not the villain, or did 15 of the 19 terrorists come from

Saudi Arabia? Suppose they asked, What were you doing tip-toeing

through the gardens at the ranch with the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia?

Suppose they asked, Why did the Saudis get special treatment in

leaving the country to go to Saudi Arabia? I do not know. Maybe, just

maybe, we should not ask a mother to get those kind of answers. And

just maybe, we should not have to lose a child to challenge those type

of answers.

I tell you as a lawyer and someone that would advise

somebody, I would not ask them to ask to see Secretary Rumsfeld.

Members have to remember this is the same person that told the whole

country that he did not know whether we were winning or losing the war.

Is that something to tell someone?

He said that it is a slog, whatever the heck that is. And he said

something that he was so right in, that he really did not know whether

we were creating more terrorists than we were killing. And we can

answer him, and the world can, because we lack the sensitive

sophistication to understand that a life is a life, whether it is an

American, whether it is an Iraqi, in the tens of thousands and

sometimes the hundreds of thousands.

I talked with Colin Powell about this and I asked him, How do you

train a young patriotic soldier to go to a foreign country to kill

terrorists that you do not know what they look like, what uniform they

wear, what language they speak, and you can only react when you are

being fired upon? Can you imagine how many terrorists we create when

these cowardly people go to a school, go to a hospital, go to a mosque

and fire at our troops? And those who have served would know, you have

no option except to destroy where that fire is coming from. And if you

destroy innocent people, we no longer call that human life. You know

what we call it? Collateral damage.