Mr. President, we have all heard the expression that

At no time is this more true than when we are

at war. Our military uses satellites, reconnaissance aircraft, remote

sensing devices, and long-range patrols to learn where the enemy is,

what he is doing, and how we can kill him.

But there is another type of knowledge which is just as essential if

we are to be successful in combat. The side which knows and understands

the weather the best has a large advantage.

Now, I know some may reply that we do not need to be concerned about

the weather. We have smart bombs, stealth fighters and guided missiles.

We have sensing devices which let us see in the darkness. But despite

this high technology, we still have to give Mother Nature her due.

Rain, clouds and low visibility can still ground aircraft or hamper

operations. High temperatures affect men and equipment. Dust storms can

rapidly render sophisticated machines and electronics unusable.

Our troops faced many weather extremes as we prepared for the start

of Operation Iraqi Freedom a year ago. Extreme heat, thunderstorms, and

dust storms all threatened operations. To learn more about Iraq's

weather and to gather the data necessary to predict, if possible,

weather patterns in that country, a group of brave meteorologists

dropped behind enemy lines. They fed their information to the Air

Force's 28th Operational Weather Squadron, known as ``The Hub.''

As detailed in a special being carried by the Weather Channel, the

United States Air Force dropped its Special Operations Forces

Weathermen, known as the ``Grey Berets,'' behind enemy lines weeks

before the beginning of armed conflict. The Grey Berets took

exceptional risks to gather the data necessary for our Army, Navy and

Air Force to conduct operations. For example, 5 days before the land

invasion started, Grey Beret Sgt Charles Rushing waded ashore to gather

information on fog, surf, and currents to enable a helicopter assault

team to successfully seize key Iraqi refineries on the Al-Faw peninsula

before Iraqi troops blew them up.

After the war began, the Hub reported on the biggest dust storm to

hit the region in 30 years. The storm, covering over 300 miles,

shredded tents and clogged engines and lungs. To the north, the storm

created other problems, by dumping snow and sleet on Bashur Airport,

the target of the most ambitious combat paratroop assault since World

War II. The 173d Airborne brigade was flying toward a mountainous drop

zone while Cpt John Roberts, chief Grey Beret weather forecaster, had

to make a call on whether the weather would lift long enough for 1,000

paratroopers to safely make their jump.

The actions and decisions of these two men are just two examples

where our Grey Berets helped ensure the success of our troops. There

are many, many more.

Mr. President, I commend the Grey Berets for their heroism and

professionalism and their contributions to our armed services. I also

thank the Weather Channel for bringing their achievements to wider

public notice.