I thank the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. Drake)

for doing such a wonderful job in hosting this. I thank our chairman,

the gentleman from California (Mr. Hunter), for the excellent job that

he does in providing leadership for the House Committee on Armed

Services. I think we also thank the family of Corporal Starr for their

sacrifice, and we hope that they know we join them in their sorrow.

That is so very true, and I thank the gentlewoman for

noting that, for setting the record straight.

As the gentlewoman was talking about some of her experiences, meeting

a taxi driver who was from Iraq and how he stopped to say thank you, I

was reading some things from my news clips.

Here is an article out of the Nashville Tennessean, today's paper,

November 3, and an opinion column written by Jonathan Gurwitz who is a

columnist for the San Antonio Express News. He is recounting a

conversation and a visit with a Dr. Najmaldin Karim who is Kurdish and

the headline is ``Why this war? Ask someone who is Kurdish.''

I was so touched by your examples that, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to

share a quote in this. I think it is so relevant to the discussion that

we are having tonight. And I am quoting this Dr. Karim: ``The

suggestion that Saddam Hussein's dictatorship was a `stable' form of

government is outrageous to Iraqis, not on the ideological fringe,

especially the Kurds. The war in Iraq didn't begin in 2003. For the

previous 35 years Kurds, Shiites and anyone else who threatened the

oligarchy fought against the suppression of their very existence.''

Mr. Speaker, you know, this morning I spoke on the floor about what

we are doing right to win the war on terror and the progress that we

are making in the battle in Iraq. And it seemed that the minute I

started talking there was some conversation across the aisle. And one

of my colleagues from the left got upset, and then sure enough a

Democrat Member follows me to the well during 1-minutes to speak

against the positive changes that are going on in Iraq.

You see, I think that the left in this country has to undermine this

war and undermine the resolve of the American people in order to try to

win elections next November. They have got to make you and me and every

single one of us forget the bigger picture in this war on terror. They

want us focused on the casualties and on the setbacks. And, yes, we

take one step forward, we take two steps back. It is going to be a long

war, but we are making progress.

They do not want us to ask what sort of damage will result from

withdrawing from Iraq. They do not want us to ask whether we would be

better off with a free Iraq. They simply want to point out all the

negatives and demand withdrawal in order to declare America's defeat,

and then they believe they will win elections.

Unfortunately, the national media, one would believe for all intents

and purposes, is the public relations wing of the left on this subject.

Day after day the major newspapers editorialize in both their articles

and on the op-ed pages against our efforts in Iraq. They give extensive

coverage to casualties and claim they do it to honor those lost. But

they do not cover the things these men and women did to change this

world.

They do not cover the moments of pure courage, pure courage and

strength that these men and women and their colleagues committed and

performed to fix a great wrong in this world. They only cover their

deaths, and that is a tragedy, Mr. Speaker, because it was not in their

deaths that they became heroes. It was in the day-to-day work on behalf

of this country that they became heroes. They gave their lives for

something they believed in. They were heroes long before the tragedy of

their death. We remember those lost not because they died but because

they lived and how they lived in putting others before themselves.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot say that I do not stop and wonder if these

losses would be for naught; but when I am doubting and if I am unsure,

I talk with some of those who have served in Afghanistan and in Iraq,

and I talk to their families and I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that

we can win this because they know that we can win it. And, Mr. Speaker,

they are living it; they are seeing it firsthand every single day.

When I visit Fort Campbell in my district or spend time with our

National Guard and Reserves, I see the spirit of America and I see the

commitment and the drive to succeed. They settle any doubts. They

restore my confidence. They should be our inspiration in this battle.

So tonight, despite watching Democrats come to the floor and beat the

drums of retreat in the war on terror, I want to recognize those men

and women in uniform who we see in the progress, in the change in that

region of the world.

Let me just read a list of some of the accomplishments so that

America, those watching and those listening and our constituents, will

understand the great deeds of these men and women, our heroes who are

in uniform.

As of October 24, 2005, a total of 206,500 Iraqi security forces have

been trained and equipped with the assistance of the U.S. military. On

election day in October, as our colleague from Texas previously

mentioned, 78 percent of voters backed the charter Constitution, 78

percent of those that went to the polls voted for freedom, voted for

democracy. And as our colleague from Texas mentioned, 63 percent of

Iraqis, 15\1/2\ million voters, cast their ballot. They took their life

in their hands to cast that ballots. The Iraqi Constitution guarantees

the rights of all its citizens and enshrines the rule of law. A new

parliament will be voted on in December and will form a 4-year term to

government to take office by December 31, 2005.

Who would have thought that that was possible? Iraqis appear to be

spending more money, signs that consumer confidence is improving. As

the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. Drake) mentioned, things are

turning green in Iraq. You see the fields that they have planted. My

first visit there, I said Iraqi is a khaki-colored country. It was

covered with dust.

Over 15,650 houses have recently been connected to the Baghdad water

distribution system by USAID. In all, nearly 100 kilometers of mainline

pipe have been installed in the Baghdad area.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on. We know America is once again

engaged in a great struggle that will in no uncertain terms decide what

kind of world our children are going to inherit. I want our men and

women in Iraq to know we believe in them. We believe in what they are

doing, and we know that this is going to improve the national security

for generations to come. It is going to help preserve freedom.

Our military's cause in Iraq is a noble one, despite what some in

this body would have you believe.

In closing, I would like to give you a quote, a part from Ronald

Reagan's speech on the 40th anniversary of D-Day. He said this to the

World War II veterans who were gathered with him at Normandy:

``You all knew that some things are worth dying for. One's country is

worth dying for, and democracy is worth dying for, because it is the

most deeply honorable form of government ever devised by man. All of

you loved liberty. All of you were willing to fight tyranny, and you

knew the people of our country were behind you.''

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues across the aisle will join us in

letting every man and woman in uniform and every family know this

country is behind them. I thank the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs.

Drake).