Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California

so much for yielding.

The gentleman from California (Chairman Hunter) has done a wonderful

job in leading in this war on terror and leading in securing this

homeland and homeland security, which is right at the top of concerns

of the American people. He is a true leader, and this House is

fortunate to have him as chairman of the Committee on Armed Services.

This country is fortunate to have his leadership on this issue.

Madam Speaker, over the last few weeks, I have noticed a change in

the rhetoric, a troubling trend in the rhetoric. We have heard some of

it here tonight, and it really saddens me when those that are opposed

to an aggressive war on terror speak as they speak.

Increasingly we are seeing those that oppose the war downplay the

importance of the war, or they are trying to minimize the seriousness

of the sacrifice that our military is making. I find that very sad.

I do not know what the intent of those comments are. I dare not even

venture to think what the intent of those comments might be that we are

hearing from the far left in this country, and I certainly hope that

they will reconsider those comments, but unfortunately, the message

those on the left are sending is that we do not favor an aggressive war

on terrorism and that we are not winning.

Madam Speaker, they could not be further from the truth, and I want

to say thank you to all of these military families, especially the

families whose family members the chairman is going to read those

citations tonight, thank them for that sacrifice, thank these moms and

dads who are here. They really are on the frontline in homeland

security, these moms that are tending to children, the dads that are

tending to children, while their spouse is deployed. Right here in this

country, they are on the frontline. They are making a tremendous

sacrifice, and we appreciate that.

My hope is that some of these families are watching tonight and will

hear this, and I want to thank every man and woman who is in uniform,

and I want them to know this. We are grateful and so thankful for their

courage and their commitment. We believe that what we are doing in

Afghanistan and Iraq, Guantanamo Bay and around the world, we believe

in it. We believe in this mission, and we do not believe that the work

in Iraq is in vain.

I would say this to them: Do not let anyone from the left or the

right make you think otherwise. We believe in you. We know it is tough.

We all know it is tough. Do we mourn each and every time we lose an

American service member? Absolutely. It breaks our heart. Are there days

when we think the sun will not shine on our mission? Absolutely. But

Madam Speaker, we fight through those moments of doubt because we do

not want our kids and our grandchildren to ever face another September

11. We do not want our kids to pay the price for inaction, and that is

the price they would be called on to pay.

I could stand here and I could read through a list, all of my

colleagues could join me in reading through a list, of achievements in

Afghanistan and Iraq and not even begin to mention the other Middle

Eastern countries, but I am not going to do that. It would take a long

time. I could talk about how we are dismantling al Qaeda, piece by

piece, every single day. I could talk about the fundamental change we

are trying to bring to a region that has spawned terrorism for decades

before we responded, but I know my colleagues are going to speak to

that.

So I simply want to thank our troops and thank our families. I want

to thank the men and women who are serving at Fort Campbell, the 101st

Airborne, which is currently deploying. I want to welcome home from

Iraq Tennessee's own 278th Regimental Combat Team of the National

Guard. They are returning to their families and loved ones this week,

and we welcome them.

To the families whose loved ones will not be coming home, you are in

our thoughts and our prayers. Your suffering is one we cannot fully

comprehend, but your sacrifice is never going to be forgotten. We thank

you, we appreciate you, and we pray God will bless you.