Mr. Speaker, as a fellow Ranger, I thank the

chairman. It is a great honor to serve in this Chamber. I think the one

thing that has been very humbling to me is the experiences I shared

visiting many of my friends that I have known for 28 and 29 years,

serving around the world, serving in Afghanistan, serving in Iraq; and

I think that their story is never told in this Chamber.

Their story is very rarely told in the American media; and if it is

told, it is told almost as an afterthought. The one thing I would share

that my classmates from West Point, friends from when I served as an

enlisted soldier, friends who are in command of units on the ground now

in the theater, returned to the United States with one common feeling

towards the American media and toward the left, and that is anger at a

complete misrepresentation of what they are doing.

I think the thing that we need to understand very clearly is that the

battle to defeat the insurgents in Iraq is not taking place in Baghdad.

It is not taking place in Tikrit and Fallujah and Mosul and Ramadi.

That is where the kinetic end of the business is; but the insurgents

are desperate. If Abu Mosab al-Zarqawi and Ayman al-Zawahiri in Iraq

and Afghanistan can make the clear statement that they see the center

of gravity of this fight right here in the United States and right here

in American public opinion and in the willingness of American citizens

to simply accept a call to duty, that is so clear when the American

people have the facts.

As I travel in my district and as I have traveled in this country,

the one thing I find very clearly is if an American citizen has taken a

moment to speak to a soldier or Marine who has served on the ground in

Iraq or Afghanistan, they have a completely different opinion, a

completely different opinion of what is happening.

I think the thing that is remarkable to me, and I remember when I

first joined the Army, is that the members of the left mocked the

military. I remember receiving the Hitler salutes and being called a

baby killer if I showed up on a college campus in uniform. The thing

that is remarkable to me and some of the deceit about the American

left, and frankly some of the deceit I see in this Chamber when we talk

about the greatest struggle that the United States has faced since the

end of the Second World War, is now the American soldier, to their

disgust, is being used as a human shield to attack their use in defense

of this Nation and defense of our freedom.

To those on the left and my colleagues on the other side who go to

great lengths to talk about how much they care about the American

military, where were they when 18,000 American servicemen died between

1983 and 1986 during peace and war in the service to this country? I

think your lack of an answer to that ever in the media speaks for

itself.

When we talk about the success, I think it comes down to the fact

that there is a political agenda that is driving this that has to do

with taking America down at the expense of right. Moreover, I think

that if we listen to what Abu Mosab al-Zarqawi and Ayman al-Zawahiri

are really saying, they are more and more desperate, and ironically it

feeds into the liberal media's desire to control the message in this

country.

I recently met with an editorial board of a major newspaper. We got

into this very discussion when I met with the soldiers of an airborne

unit I deployed in the Middle East with, the 1st 508th Parachute

Infantry, now in the 173rd Airborne Brigade. The national media did not

want to cover their successes. They were looking for disgruntled troops

and could not understand why 100 percent of those soldiers wanted to

reenlist. It is very simple: they believe in the mission they see on

the ground.

I brought this up with this editorial board about the successes of

the 2nd Brigade Combat Team in East Baghdad that have totally

neutralized that area, which was once very violent, working closely and

receiving great support from the Iraqi people. In fact, the Iraqi

people are moving more and more into the front lines providing

intelligence, providing the needed information. They are in the fight.

This editor of a major American daily newspaper looked me in the eye

and said, ``Geoff, car bombs are more sexy than opening schools.'' My

heart broke when I heard that, because for the sake of a few dollars of

profit, for a bit of readership, he chose to distort the very heart of

what is happening in the world in the struggle that we face.

I would challenge those in this Chamber, as the left is selective, I

would challenge those in this Chamber who want to talk about soldiers,

and those watching on C-SPAN from around the United States, ignore the

politicians. Talk to the soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines. I would

challenge that in every community in the United States of America,

invite a Marine, invite a soldier who has been on the ground, who has

been in the theater and served working with the Iraqi people and

trained the Iraqi security forces, and who understands who an IED is,

and that it is not some convenient means to beat up on the

administration or to engage in partisan political attacks, but has

lifted a friend who has put his life on the line out of a wreckage.

I would tell you to invite those people to talk to your Rotary clubs

and your chamber of commerce, talk to the editorial boards of the local

paper, and bypass these people who are bent on one thing, which is

deceit of the actual mission, or a complete cultural misunderstanding

of what is happening, and share those successes as we hear over and

over again from the troops on the ground in every unit that comes back.

There are is lack of recruits for the Iraqi security forces, and our

units in combat are reenlisting at rates of 100 percent, and it means

one thing: they believe in the mission. They see the success. They

understand the seriousness of this fight; and ultimately they care

about us in this Nation enough to serve.

I thank all of you men and women who are serving on active duty right

now who have accepted the call to duty. My prayer is that this Nation

will rise up, that citizens all across this country will rise up on the

east and west coasts and in the heartland and will accept the call to

duty that we have as a Nation and this generation to protect the

foundation of our freedom, to finish this job and to have the forces of

tyranny and suppression of truth know once and for all that they cannot

prevail.

That is why they will not fight us in the street. They seek to win in

American public opinion in the media or in criminal attacks against

innocent civilians.

With that, I thank the troops for serving. I thank my colleagues for

having the courage to stand in this body and point the truth out, to

cut through the political rhetoric. I challenge those in the media to

cover the truth of what is happening and to bring our soldiers and our

Marines' stories into the forefront so the American people get a true

perspective.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for allowing me to

speak tonight.