Madam Speaker, tonight I would like to spend a few

minutes talking about an update on a situation on the various inquiries

as to what happened before 9/11. Most importantly, the work that they

are doing is taking a look at putting together a series of

recommendations that will enable us to improve our intelligence

capabilities and improve our response capabilities into the future.

As I was listening to some of the earlier speakers, someone said when

that happens and these inquiries present their work and they make their

recommendations and then Congress, of course, will have the opportunity

to review those recommendations and we may or may not implement them,

the comment then was made: and then we know that an event like 9/11

will never happen again.

As much as I would like to endorse that comment, I do not believe it

is accurate. On 9/11 we, as a Nation, were surprised; and I believe

that in the future, regardless of the recommendations that come

forward, regardless of how effectively we implement them, we will be

surprised again.

Let me just lead up to 9/11 and outline some of the things. What do

we know today? We know this: that in March of 2003, the United States,

we led a coalition of over 30 countries in Operation Iraqi Freedom. The

action was undertaken as a last resort. Iraq had been in noncompliance

or material breach of 16 U.N. Security Council resolutions spanning a

period of 12 years to remove the threat posed by Saddam to his people,

the Gulf region, and the world.

A couple of things I really want to point out here is that some have

said this was an initiative by the Bush administration, and later on I

will go through some of the quotes by the previous administrations and

also the documentation and the data that shows that throughout the

1990s, the administration, Congress, and others saw Saddam Hussein and

Iraq as a threatening menace to his own people, to the region, and to

the world. A consistent pattern.

Saddam Hussein's Iraq was a constant and immediate threat to his

neighbors in the Gulf region. And what did Saddam do in the Gulf

region? Under Saddam, Iraq fought a decade-long war against Iran and

launched an unprovoked invasion of Kuwait. After Iraq's defeat in the

Gulf War in 1991, Iraq rebuilt its military strength and continued to

use the threat of military action in attempts to intimidate neighboring

countries.

The pattern is pretty clear. In the region Saddam Hussein treated his

neighbors brutally. With his own people we know that Saddam Hussein was

a mass murderer. We removed that capability from him. The day we hauled

him out

of that spider hole, he no longer had the capability to again be a mass

murderer. He was a mass murderer and will be held accountable for the

crimes against his neighbors and the crimes against his own people.

It is estimated that somewhere between at least 400,000 and perhaps

1.2 million Iraqis were killed by his brutal regime. His security

service is responsible for the disappearance of thousands of Iraqis,

hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, perhaps millions, who ended up in mass

graves. And his military used chemical weapons not only against Iran,

but also against Iraqi citizens. For over a decade prior to Operation

Iraqi Freedom, Iraq was on the U.S. State Department's list of state

sponsors of terrorism. Saddam's regime attempted to assassinate former

President Bush in 1993.

His security intelligence services maintained strong links to

international terrorist groups. Prior to the Gulf War, Iraq amassed an

arsenal of chemical and biological weapons, and it possessed an

advanced nuclear weapons program. After the Gulf War, despite the U.N.

inspections that continued through 1998, the United States, along with

the United Nations and many individual countries, such as Germany and

France, assessed that Iraq continued to possess and develop weapons of

mass destruction.

Post-Operation Iraqi Freedom, the evidence shows that Saddam, in

contravention of Iraq's responsibilities under multiple United Nations

Security Council resolutions, continued to maintain elements of his

weapons of mass destruction programs and had a clear goal to rebuild

these programs.

It is clear: Iraq and Saddam Hussein proved an evil menace to his own

people, to the people in the Gulf and to the rest of the world. It is

not brand new.

As we go through this, there is a bipartisan consensus as to what

this looked like. February 17, 1998, this is a speech that President

Bill Clinton gave: ``Iraqi agents have undermined and undercut U.N.

inspectors. They have harassed the inspectors, lied to them, disabled

monitoring cameras, literally spirited evidence out of the backdoors.

And talking about the different types of predators of the 21st century:

``They will be all the more lethal if we allow them to build arsenals

of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and the missiles to deliver

them. We simply cannot allow that to happen. There should be no doubt,

Saddam's ability to produce and deliver weapons of mass destruction

poses a grave threat to the peace of that region and the security of

the world. There is no more clear example of this threat than Saddam

Hussein's Iraq. His regime threatens the safety of his people, the

stability of his region and the security of all the rest of us. In the

next century, the community of nations may see more and more the very

kind of threat Iraq poses now: a rogue state with weapons of mass

destruction, ready to use them or provide them to terrorists who travel

the world. If we fail to respond today, Saddam will be emboldened

tomorrow by the knowledge that they can act with impunity.''

``I have no doubt he would use them again if permitted to develop

them,'' another quote from the same speech.

One of the disappointing things that has happened, especially in the

last few weeks, is that people are trying to rewrite history, rewrite

who did what. President Bush after 9/11 did not go back and collect

these comments from the previous President and did not go back and

measure those comments versus the actions that were taken. The

President said we need to move forward. We are at war. We do not have

the time and the energy to look back and to try to point a finger or

identify a single individual or group of individuals who failed.

The President recognized exactly the type of threat that we faced,

the same type of threat that Bill Clinton identified in 1998, a rogue

state with weapons of mass destruction, ready to use them or provide

them to terrorists. Maybe the terrorists on 9/11 used a weapon of mass

destruction that was different than what we expected when they crashed

planes into buildings, but there is no doubt that there was a

consistent theme that already identified this threat in the 1990s.

But our President said it is important to recognize that we are at

war, and we need to get on a full-scale footing to combat this war and

to win this war, and we are not into the blame game. What we have seen

in the last 2 to 4 weeks is, I believe, people starting to use this and

trying to use it for partisan benefit. This issue is too important and

too critical to the future of this country for it to be used as a

partisan weapon.

I think that President Bill Clinton in the 1990s had it right. He

understood the threat. President Bush looked at the work that was done

by President Bill Clinton and, after 9/11 had the opportunity to look

through it through the lens of 9/11, and decided it was necessary to

take a much stronger position and a much stronger role than what had

ever been contemplated before, although even early in 2001, before 9/

11, President Bush had indicated that it was time to take a look at our

strategy and see if we should be more aggressive.

It was not only the President, but Members of Congress identified

this threat. People are looking at people and saying, why did we not do

this or that? Here are some quotes from the other body:

``If Saddam Hussein had nothing to hide, why would he have gone to

such lengths to prevent the U.N. inspectors from doing their job? There

is no doubt that since 1991 Saddam Hussein has squandered his country's

resources to maintain his capacity to produce and stockpile chemical

and biological weapons. If we bomb Iraq again, he would be right back

at it, claiming victory for standing up to the U.S., but no longer

under the watchful eye of UNSCOM's cameras.''

Another statement in 1998 from a colleague in the other body:

``Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction programs and the means

to deliver them are a menace to international peace and security. They

pose a threat to Iraq's neighbors, to U.S. forces in the Gulf region,

to the world's energy supplies and to the integrity and credibility of

the United Nations Security Council.'' 1998.

Another quote from the other body: ``We are here today to affirm that

we and the American people stand with the President and the

international community in an effort to end Iraq's weapons of mass

destruction programs and preserve our vital international interests.''

The rules of the House prohibit me from mentioning the names of those

individuals who made those quotes, but it is very interesting to see

exactly who they are and the clarity with which they identify the

threat Saddam Hussein and others posed to the United States.

Bill Clinton, February 18: ``In this century we learned through harsh

experience that the only answer to aggression and illegal behavior is

firmness, determination and, when necessary, action. In the next

century, the community of nations may see more and more the very kind

of threat Iraq poses now; a rogue state with weapons of mass

destruction, ready to use them or provide them to terrorists, drug

traffickers or organized criminals who travel the world among us

unnoticed.''

Here is an interesting quote. A critic of the President, a critic of

the first President George Bush. It seems some people are never happy.

I believe this is a quote from the candidate at that time for Vice

President, Mr. Al Gore. This is where Vice President Gore, Senator Gore

at that time, was talking about Saddam Hussein: ``He had already

launched poison gas attacks repeatedly and Bush looked the other way.

He had already conducted extensive terrorism activities and Bush looked

the other way. He was already deeply involved in the effort to acquire

nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction; and Bush knew

it, but he looked the other way. Well, in my view, the Bush

administration was acting in a manner directly opposite to what you

would expect with all of the evidence it had available to it at the

time. Saddam Hussein's nature and intentions were perfectly visible.''

Were perfectly visible.

You wonder if you went through this quote and used it shortly after

9/11, you could have written it something like this: President Clinton

and Al Gore knew that al Qaeda had already launched attacks against the

World

Trade Center in 1993, but the Clinton Administration looked the other

way.

Al Qaeda and terrorist organizations had already attacked our

embassies in Africa, but the Clinton Administration looked the other

way.

Al Qaeda or terrorist organizations were deeply involved in the

effort to attack our barracks in Saudi Arabia. The Clinton

Administration knew it, but they looked the other way.

They knew that al Qaeda or terrorist organizations were involved in

the attack on the USS Cole, but they looked the other way.

Al Qaeda, bin Laden, their intentions were perfectly clear, but can

it be said that the Clinton administration just looked the other way? I

am not sure that that is a fair characterization.

As I said, the attacks on 9/11 were a surprise. But if you take the

language that was used against then-President George Bush in 1992 and

apply it shortly after 9/11 to what happened during the 1990s and the

statements that were made and the inconsistencies, you wonder why there

was not more action taken.

You have heard the quotes from various Members in the other body. You

have heard the quotes of then-President Bill Clinton, of candidate Al

Gore.

Madeleine Albright, November 16, 1997: ``Hussein's weapons will not

discriminate if and when they are used, and therefore it is important

for the region to understand he is a threat. Our adversaries are

unlikely to avoid,'' and here she is talking about understanding the

threat of terrorism, ``our adversaries are likely to avoid traditional

battlefield situations because there American dominance is well

established. We must be concerned instead of weapons of mass

destruction and by the cowardly instruments of sabotage and hidden

bombs. These unconventional threats endanger not only our Armed Forces,

but all Americans and America's friends everywhere.''

Here is a very clear statement. Again, some folks are trying to

rewrite history saying everything was done during the 1990s. I am not

sure it was. We will talk about that a little more. They are also

saying the strategy to eliminate Saddam Hussein was recent, that it was

not policy of the United States.

May 23, remarks by Vice President Gore: ``Despite our swift victory

and our effort since the Gulf War, there is no doubt in my mind that

Saddam Hussein still seeks to amass weapons of mass destruction.''

People talk about the intelligence being cooked up. The intelligence

maybe, and we know, was not everything we wanted it to be; but it was

not cooked up. ``Saddam Hussein still seeks to amass weapons of mass

destruction. You know as well as I do,'' what a statement, ``you know

as well as I do that as long as Saddam Hussein stays in power, there

can be no comprehensive peace for the people of Israel or the people of

the Middle East.'' This is Vice President Gore, May 23, the year 2000.

They hear us talking about what the policy was, and I think it was

established a couple of years earlier. But here is what the then Vice

President says about the policy of the Clinton administration. We have

made it clear that it is our policy to see Saddam Hussein marginalized?

That is not the word that is used. Contained? No. Reformed? No. We have

made it clear, that is, the Clinton administration has made it clear,

that it is our policy to see Saddam Hussein gone. That was the policy

of the United States prior to a new administration coming into office,

prior to 9/11, because it was stated during the Clinton administration.

It goes on: We have maintained sanctions in the face of rising

criticism while improving the Oil For Food program to help the Iraqi

people directly. And just as a sidebar, while improving the Oil For

Food program, we found out now, as the details have come back, that

that was one of the greatest rip-offs ever. It was used to fund weapons

acquisition, it was used to fund palaces and to build runways in the

middle of nowhere in Iraq.

Going on with this quote: We have used force when necessary, and that

has been frequently, and we will not let up in our efforts. We will not

let up. We will not let up in our efforts to free Iraq from Saddam's

rule. Should he think of challenging us, I would strongly advise

against it. As a Senator, I voted for the use of force. As Vice

President, I supported the use of force. If entrusted with the

presidency, my resolve will never waiver.

Madam Speaker, the statements go on. Those are the statements in the

1990s. What about in 2002?

Again, some of my colleagues, and here is a quote from the presumed

Democratic nominee for President: I believe the record of Saddam

Hussein's ruthless, reckless breach of international values and

standards of behavior, which is at the core of the cease-fire

agreement, with no reach, no stretch is cause enough, is cause enough

for the world community to hold him accountable by use of force, if

necessary. Senator John Kerry, October 9, 2002.

Here is another quote from one of his colleagues: But that isn't just

a future threat. Saddam's existing biological and chemical weapons

capabilities pose real threats to America today, tomorrow. Saddam has

used chemical weapons before, both against Iraq's enemies and against

his own people. He is working to develop delivery systems like missiles

and unmanned aerial vehicles that could bring these deadly weapons

against U.S. forces and U.S. facilities in the Middle East. He could

make these weapons available to many terrorist groups, third parties

which have contact with his government. Those groups in turn could

bring those weapons into the United States and unleash a devastating

attack against our citizens. I fear that greatly.

Madam Speaker, it is pretty amazing, the unanimity between various

sides of the aisle, the executive and the legislative branches, as to

the threat posed by terrorism in the 1990s and the characterization and

the threats posed by Saddam Hussein.

Here is another quote: As the attacks of September 11 demonstrated,

the immense destructiveness of modern technology means we can no longer

afford to wait around for a smoking gun. I do believe Iraq poses an

imminent threat. I also believe that, after September 11, that question

is increasingly outdated. It is in the nature of these weapons that he

has and the way they are targeted against civilian populations that

documented capability and demonstrated intent may be the only warning

we get. To insist on further evidence could put some of our fellow

Americans at risk. Can we afford to take that chance? I do not think we

can.

That was the unanimity that we saw in 2002, it was the unanimity that

we saw in the late 1990s, and over the last 4 to 6 weeks, folks have

been trying to rewrite history in saying, no, no, I was not there. That

is not where I was in 1990. That is not where I was in 1998. That is

not where I was in 2002. As a matter of fact, the only person that has

messed up in this whole thing is the current administration. And that

is utterly false. There was a consensus, and what is now happening, and

what I am concerned about is that when we are at war, and that is where

I think we are, we are a nation at war.

Madam Speaker, I see my colleague, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr.

Burton) has joined me, and I yield to him.

Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for joining me,

because I wanted to talk about exactly that, and I feel fine going

there.

Because, as the gentleman may remember, a couple of weeks ago, maybe

a couple of months ago, we got this Dear Colleague memo talking about

the new strategy, and I would just highlight it tonight. Because what

we saw today, and it is tragic, the loss of American lives, the loss of

the foreign civilians in Iraq and what they did with the bodies. But we

should have known. Again that phrase, ``we should have known.''

Because here is what Zarkawi said. ``Someone may say that in this

matter we are being hasty,'' remember, this is their document outlining

the strategy of the terrorists against our forces and against the

forces that want to move forward in Iraq, ``that we are being hasty and

rash in leading the Islamic nation into a battle for which it is not

ready, a battle that will be revolting,'' I mean the acts of today,

dragging the bodies and hanging the bodies is revolting, ``will be

revolting and in which blood will be spilled. This is exactly what we

want, since right and wrong no longer have any place in our current

situation.''

He predicted. This is exactly, what we see today is exactly the

strategy, because they believe that that is the way that they can beat

us, if they are revolting, spill blood, and right and wrong makes

absolutely no difference.

I yield back to the gentleman.

Madam Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, the

gentleman and I have probably both talked to a lot of our soldiers from

our districts who have been in Iraq.

Yes, on three different occasions.

It was interesting, I talked to one of my soldiers today. He was back

in a small town in my community of New Era, Michigan. He just came home

after just about a full year in Iraq. He told me what was going on and

what the highlights were. He told me that he had been sent into a small

community of 15,000 people, I think right near Kirkuk, and I said, hey,

you kind of acted as mayor, because he was the governing authority. We

know the strategy. We send our troops in, and they are not always

fighting. He said, that is exactly what I had the opportunity to do. He

said, we rebuilt that community from nothing. And he said, the people

are thrilled that we are there; and they are looking for us to leave,

because they want their country back.

Then we had a very good dialogue back and forth.

Then I did ask him, I said, okay, you have your Congressman on the

phone. You are going back. You are going to be in the country for a

couple of more weeks, but you are leaving west Michigan later on this

week, and in a couple of weeks you will be back in Italy. I asked him,

I said, you have your Congressman on the phone. What do you want to

tell your Congressman?

He said, you know, can you do anything about the news media?

Because he said, when we were in Iraq, he said, we

could get CNN. He said, we finally turned it off, because what we saw

on CNN had absolutely no relationship to what we were seeing in Iraq.

The gentleman from Indiana and I are not denying that these five

Americans died today. That happened, and it is tragic, and it is sad.

We are not denying that the four foreigners and the rioting and the mob

scene in Fallujah, that happened. But, at the same time, in much of

Iraq today, and the soldier quoted to me. He said, I think 98 percent

of the people are there with us, and they are working with us, and they

never get any coverage.

I yield to my colleague.

Madam Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, I think the

gentleman and I are in total agreement that if at this point in time we

step back, the terrorists will have won. And that does not mean that

the terrorists will go back to their home in Afghanistan or in the

remote regions of Pakistan and say, well, chalk one up for the bad

guys. They will say, let us now go back, and they will say, yes, it

works.

Let us go attack them in New York and what we will now

have is we will now have a safe haven. We can plan out our attacks and

we can work on our schedule and when it is appropriate to attack, we

will attack. We will now have a safe haven to develop chemical weapons,

biological weapons, and it is kind of like that is one direction,

backing off.

That is not where we can go. We need these folks to wake up every

morning and the first thing that they have to fear is that an American

helicopter or American Special Ops force is going to come through their

door.

Or that a missile is going to come from somewhere up in the sky from

a

Predator, and they are never going to see it coming.

We saw that a war on terrorism can be won. I mean, who would have

thought that our colleague, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr.

Weldon), would address the General People's Congress of Libya? Who

would have thought that 3 months ago? I think that happened within the

last 4 years that our colleague was over there.

I was in Libya about four or five weeks ago. I think within the last

month we have picked up, what, 500 tons of mustard gas and chemicals

and equipment. Who would have thought that that amount of progress

could have been made in that short time? This is a win for the good

guys.

Madam Speaker, reclaiming my time, maybe my colleague

heard the quote that I read from candidate for Vice President Al Gore

talking about the first Bush administration where he said, ``He had

already launched poison gas attacks repeatedly. Bush looked the other

way. He had already conducted extensive terrorism activities and Bush

had looked the other way.'' Can one imagine what would happen if we

pulled out of Iraq and pulled out of the war on terrorism and the next

terrorist attack occurred and somebody would come to us and say excuse

me, they attacked the World Trade Centers, you looked the other way.

They attacked our barracks, you looked the other way. They attacked the

Cole, you looked the other way. They attacked our embassies, you looked

the other way. They attacked the Trade Centers a second time and took

them down, they attacked the Pentagon and you guys looked the other

way. What were you guys thinking?

I think that we were all in this together. We recognized the risk

during the 1990s; and Congress and the executive branch, I think, did

not take enough direct action. And so we can go back. But I think the

criticism should be why did America not act earlier against bin Laden

and against these threats in a more decisive way? Because the pieces

were out there that said these folks are a threat, and it is only a

matter of time before they try something big in the United States. I

will yield to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. Burton).

Madam Speaker, reclaiming my time, I am not looking for

the media to support the President, it might be nice, or to support the

country or to support the direction or support our troops. It would

just be nice if they presented a balanced approach, fair and balanced

approach to what needs to get done.

And it is why when I go home it is good to take a look at the local

papers because the local papers will cover the stories of our soldiers

that come home. The soldier that I talked to today said he has been in

Iraq for 11, 12 months. He is home with his family for the first time.

One would think he would say, man, I am just going to sit back on the

couch and I am going to vegetate and just enjoy this. He is going to

the schools, he is going all over his community telling them about what

he did and what America did in Iraq. He is proud of it. He says, I am

doing it because nobody else is. We are not getting any help from the

media. I am going out and I am telling the story because I was there.

And has my colleague been to Iraq?

We have looked into the eyes of the Iraqi people. We

have shaken their hands. We have heard them speak. We have seen the

sincerity. I always say this is not easy. And there are going to be

other ugly days and other ugly events. We are not going to fix this all

in one day. We are not going to fix it in 24 months. This takes work.

These people are experimenting with a free press, representative

government, free markets. They are doing this for the first time after

30 years of a brutal regime.

Madam Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, one point,

he is right, it is going to be somewhere over a million people

probably, in a country of 27 million. That means 4 percent of the folks

in that country were brutally murdered. In our country that would be

about 11, 12 million people.

Madam Speaker, reclaiming my time, I think that is one

of the things that we as a Nation need to recognize. I was on a TV

program earlier today and someone asked me what are you guys

accomplishing, or who is responsible. I said, well, obviously, there is

plenty of blame to go around. But not only is it the executive branch,

and by executive branch I mean generic, not this President, because I

agree with my colleague, this President has shown the leadership that

is necessary to fight this war on terrorism, not only is there blame to

go around in Congress, but there is also a certain responsibility of

the American people.

Because our actions sometimes are too often guided by public opinion.

And for folks to say, well, you should have done more in 1998 or you

should have done more in 2001, the real question is do we really think

that the American people would have embraced it.

We know that even after 2001 some of them have been restrained in

their support or been openly hostile to going after al Qaeda and going

after bin Laden and going into Afghanistan.

The other thing is my colleague and I both probably know that the

quickest ticket to unemployment in Congress is to show any interest in

foreign affairs. One goes on a trip and learns more about the Middle

East or whatever, and it is, oh, you do not care about us back home

anymore. The American people bear some of that responsibility because

we are the world's sole superpower economically and politically and

militarily. That carries an awesome responsibility with it. I think it

is one of the great cases for federalism.

This place should focus on national security. It should focus on

international trade agreements and our relationships with the rest of

the world. Many other issues ought to be dealt with on a State and

local level. We have a tremendous responsibility to address these

issues.

Madam Speaker, I love the analogy of play the ball

where it lies because that is exactly what President Bush did after 9/

11. He went back and took a look at what capabilities we had and the

threats that were out there, but never went back to try to assess blame

on something that happened 5 or 6 years ago or the Deutsch Doctrine

that gutted our human intelligence. When we should have built

intelligence up in the mid-1990s, it was gutted. That is exactly what

happened when we get to 2001 and here we are in 2004 and we would like

to have a human intelligence capability, we say, God, where did it go?

We scrubbed it because we got rid of all the bad guys in 1995 and 1996

who spied for us. And one can say, well, when we are dealing with a

terrorist organization, the only people that are in terrorist

organizations are bad folks to begin with.

But that is not where the President was. He took a look at 9/11, took

a look at where we were strategically, militarily, and what we needed

to get done, and went forward, never trying to pin blame anywhere but

just said, hey, I am playing it where it lies.

We will look at how it got here to make sure it does not happen again

in the future, but I am not going back and say that guy took a bad

swing or he sliced it or whatever; I am going to take it and move it

forward. Because, again, I think in some ways Americans are getting a

little lackadaisical. There is a real threat out there. And this

President and this administration, and I hope Congress in a bipartisan

way, stay focused on the threat that is out there and put in place a

strategy to fix it.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague; and I hope he

recovers his voice soon. We would miss it if he lost his voice.

There is a lot of stuff that has happened in what we have talked

about. There are a couple of other documents that I just want to talk

about, and we have talked a little bit about rewriting history.

There was some testimony just from the last couple of days in front

of the joint inquiry; and it really I think in many ways, from my

perspective, boils down to partisan politics, partisan politics at its

worst. Because national security is too important an issue to take down

into the partisan battleground, and it is one of the very positive

things about serving on the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

There have been a couple of things in the last few weeks that have

been disappointing, but, by and large, the commitment by members of the

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence is to do their work

aggressively, effectively, but to leave the partisan labels at the door

and to recognize that the issues that we are working on are too

important to drag down into a short-term, partisan, political game

because, at the end, the country loses.

Here is what Dick Clarke said. The Bush administration decided in

late January to do two things: one, vigorously pursue the existing

policy, including all of the lethal covert action findings. The point

is, while this big review was going on, the lethal findings were still

in effect. The second thing the administration decided to do was to

initiate a process to look at those issues which had been on the table

for a couple of years and get them decided, and that is in August of

2002.

In the spring of 2001, the Bush administration began to change

Pakistani policy by a dialogue that said we would be willing to lift

sanctions. So we began to offer carrots which made it possible for

Pakistanis I think to begin to think that they could go down another

path, which was to join us and break away from the Taliban. So that is

really how it started.

A few minutes ago, we talked about the victory and the progress we

have made in Libya. Back in 2001, the Bush administration, before 9/11,

was talking about changing the policy in Pakistan to forge that

partnership which then and now has enabled us. I met with the head of

the Pakistani intelligence agency just a few weeks ago, right when they

were sending a number of troops into their tribal areas, and they had

lost a number of Pakistani troops. But who would have thought maybe

even 2 or 3 years ago that by 2004 that the Pakistanis would not only

be cooperating in our war on terrorism but they would be sending their

own troops into these regions to find al Qaeda, to find the leadership

of al Qaeda and to help us take out the Taliban and al Qaeda elements

that were seeking refuge in Pakistan.

Again, I had a question today about when Condoleezza Rice and the

President and this administration had really provided unprecedented

support for the subcommittee that I served on in the Permanent Select

Committee on Intelligence that did a review almost directly after 9/11,

provided full support and access to the joint House-Senate inquiry and

now to the independent Commission. This is a statement that the

Commission made on March 30.

``The Commission welcomes the decision of the President and the Vice-

President to meet in one joint private session with all 10

commissioners.

``We also commend the President for his decision to accept the

Commission's request for public testimony, under oath, by the Assistant

to the President for National Security Affairs, Dr. Condoleezza Rice.''

Remember, Dr. Rice had already testified to this Commission for 4

hours in private session.

``These decisions represent a significant contribution by the

President to the work of the Commission, consistent with our mandate to

`provide a full and complete accounting' of the terrorist attacks of

September 11.

``The President has consistently stated a policy of strong support

for the Commission and instructed the executive branch to provide

unprecedented extraordinary access to the Commission.''

This is what the Commission said. ``The President has consistently

stated a policy of strong support for the Commission and instructed the

executive branch to provide unprecedented and extraordinary access to

the Commission. His decisions today reflect that policy of strong

support, and we welcome them.''

The Commission recognizes what is going on and that the President's

support has been unprecedented, and we have got to remember that this

is not looking back in history and saying, well, what happened during

the war on terrorism. We are still fully engaged in the war on

terrorism. We are still in the middle of fighting that war, and what is

unprecedented about this President's cooperation is that there have

already been I think 20 witnesses from the executive branch in front of

the Commission.

Now Dr. Condoleezza Rice has already testified in private, will now

testify in public, but the public nature of this reviewing the

decision-making process at the very time we are still conducting the

war, not when it is done, but at the very time, digging into the inner

reaches of an administration and asking about how they are conducting

policy, how they are making decisions, and it is one thing to do it in

private. It is another to do it fully in public.

Someone asked me earlier this week and said in some ways I think the

administration has gone almost too far. We are at war and the

information is provided in private or secret session to those folks who

are entrusted to make the decisions and the recommendations that enable

this country to move forward responsibly, aggressively and effectively,

but I sometimes worry that there are some in the world today who take

comfort and believe that they are being successful in their efforts to

defeat us in this war on terrorism when they see the partisanship that

we sometimes are engaged in. This issue is too big to move down into

partisanship.

The last comment that I wanted to make is today I talked with one of

our soldiers today who was back from Iraq. I have met with the family

of one of our soldiers who was killed in Iraq. I have met with the

family of one of our soldiers who was very badly wounded in an

incident. In each of those cases, they have said, make sure that we win

this war on terrorism, that we dedicate the resources to this war on

terrorism. But they also said, do not forget the sacrifices of the

families that have been asked to sacrifice, the families that have seen

a son and husband gone for a year, the family that has seen a father

and a husband and a son killed on a battlefield in Iraq and the family

of the son and the husband of a soldier who has been badly wounded and

will live with that for the rest of his life.

But I think we need to remember all of these folks and the troops

that are still serving over there, and I hope that we as a Nation, that

we as a Congress, continue to remember these families and these

individuals in our prayers.