Mr. Speaker, we are going to talk about economic

competitiveness in the economy tonight, but before we start on that

topic, I just want to draw attention to a couple of things that have

appeared in the newspaper and talk about Iraq and the Middle East.

There is an article that I pulled from the wires today, 2,000

demonstrate at an Iraqi bombing site, and this is really quite an

amazing story, Mr. Speaker. This is from Baghdad: More than 2,000

people demonstrated Tuesday at the site of a car bombing south of

Baghdad that killed 125 people chanting no to terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, our hearts go out to those individuals and their

families, those that have lost their lives, and certainly our hearts

continue to go out to the families of each and every man and woman in

our military service. I think we join with every one of them, all of

our military families and with all of these Iraqis who love freedom and

are loving having the opportunity to grasp on to freedom, and we join

them in saying no to terrorism and standing strong for freedom.

Another article that I saw today from Newsday, Mr. Speaker, some

Arabs see beginning of a new era, and I think this is very important

that we pay attention to this. One of my colleagues was talking about

the headlines that we do not see on some of the national media, some of

the leftist media, and I think this one is worthy of a mention.

It was a scene the Arab world's autocratic regimes have dreaded, and

through the power of satellite TV, it could catch on as fast as the

latest music video. Peaceful, enormous crowds carrying flags and

flowers, bringing down a government. What happened in Lebanon this

week, analysts say, is the beginning of a new era in the Middle East,

one in which popular demand pushes the momentum for democracy and

people's will can no longer be disregarded.

Mr. Speaker, our President has said that would happen. Repeatedly, he

talks about how in the heart of every man and woman is the desire to be

free and to seek that freedom and to have hope and to have opportunity.

We have all heard our President say freedom is not our gift to the

world; freedom is God's gift to all people.

It is so appropriate that we acknowledge that freedom, that we

appreciate the sacrifice that is there for that freedom because it is

through the expansion of that freedom that we enjoy the fruits and the

benefits of a free society.

One of those is the opportunity to dream big dreams and have great

adventure, have great successes and to see that lived out in our lives.

For many Americans, that is the opportunity to reach economic goals;

to build businesses, to have a better life for their family. And

tonight we are going to spend an hour discussing the Republican

policies about encouraging entrepreneurship and economic growth in this

great Nation.

We are going to highlight the Republican agenda for creating jobs in

America. And it is clear that after battling the recession of 2001,

weathering a terrorist attack cost us billions. There are even

estimates that the cost to the American economy of September 11 and the

travesty that took place there was $2 trillion, a full quarter of our

Nation's productivity for a year.

After fighting an expensive global war on terrorism, being in the

middle of that fight, we have faced significant challenges and we have

made some very wise decisions. Over the past couple of years, despite

very heavy criticism from some of our colleagues and from the tax-and-

spend liberals, we, as a Congress, have made tax cuts, have reduced the

tax burden that the American people are paying.