Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from

Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt) for yielding to me and I especially thank

the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Strickland) for his very poignant remarks.

It is clear that the administration has had a very difficult time in

leveling with the American public, and it is also very clear that it

has been the Iraq Watch that has been able on a regular basis, and I am

so proud to see that you once again have taken to the floor to inform

the American public the way you have with regard to what is happening

to our troops in the field and what is taking place here on the floor

of the Congress.

More often than not in traveling home to my district and conducting

forums, people will routinely say, why are people not speaking out in

the United States Congress? And several have commented that it seems

like the only voice they have heard has been the Iraq Watch.

So I commend the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt), the

gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. Abercrombie), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr.

Strickland), and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee), and of

course the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Ryan) who was here earlier.

It is rather interesting in listening to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr.

Strickland) speak that Bush the elder warned us very succinctly about

what would happen if we chose this policy of unilateralism and

preemption. He said essentially that if we were to invade Iraq that we

would end up being not liberators but occupiers, and we would

immediately lose our allied support around the globe and turn Arab

nations against us.

As Ambassador Jordan said to us on a trip over to Saudi Arabia, in

essence, we would accomplish what Osama bin Laden failed to do. There

would be a united Islamic jihad against the United States. And so what

we have witnessed in the very cavalier statement of saying that ``we

are fighting them over there so we do not have to fight them here,''

oversimplifies the problem that we have created for ourselves. In fact,

it has intensified the insurrection that has taken place within Iraq.

I believe and I am grateful to the Iraq Watch for you constantly

bringing forth these issues that the United States has to be both safe,

secure and strategic with regard to our troops that are in the field.

It is in everyone's best interest to make sure that they have a safe

and secure and strategic return home.

I especially applaud the efforts of the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr.

Abercrombie) on the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on

Appropriations with respect to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr.

Murtha) in making sure that they have categorized a strategy for

success, a strategy that embraces a common-sense approach in a region

where we desperately need leadership that starts with the President's

ability to level with the American people. And most importantly as the

gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Strickland) points out, the need for us to

level with our National Guard and Reservists in terms of their

deployment, in terms of their commitment to this great Nation of ours

and to the American public, as the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr.

Delahunt) so eloquently puts forward about the enormous cost that we

are incurring that is unpaid for and is only debt that we are heaping

on the backs of our children.

Also, with respect to tough love with our allies in the region, let

us be honest about this. In the Gulf War, the United States expended

$10 billion. As the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt) said

earlier, we are already over $330 billion and growing. Ten billion

dollars because we had the support of the entire world with us. Because

Bush, the elder, made sure that we had that kind of support instead of

going off with this new policy of unilateralism and preemption that has

turned the rest of the globe against us.

Many of us stood in this Chamber and voted because we felt strongly

about our commitment to fight terrorism in Afghanistan, and the whole

world joined us only to find we were abandoned in Iraq because of

policies that made little sense and that now, as we learn almost daily

about the concocted reasons by which we went into war with Iraq. Yet,

if the gentleman will allow me, we find we also desperately need

policies in this region that hold the Arab League, Pakistan, India,

China, and Russia accountable for making sure that we bring stability

to this region.

We also need an energy policy here at home, that the gentleman from

Washington (Mr. Inslee) has so eloquently spoken about, that embraces

alternative fuels, fuel cell technology, and gets us off of this

ensnarled position that we find ourselves in, this awful entanglement

and dependency on foreign oil, when we know we could extricate

ourselves from it if we just embraced the very technology that we can

develop here in our own country, here in both my State of Connecticut

and across this country, that will embrace the hydrogen economy and the

bounty of fuel cell technology that exists out there.

We must also embrace religions around the globe. There should be a

call on the President's part, and also on the part of religious

leaders, to talk about the perversion of terrorism and turning these

young men into terrorists by perverting the great teachings of the

book. It is so important that we embrace these things conceptually and

comprehensively in a manner that will draw the world together in an

understanding about what we have to accomplish in that region.

General Zinni said it very clearly. We need more troops in this area,

but not American troops. We need to take the American face off the

occupation here and get the Arab League, get the United Nations, NATO,

Russia, China, India and all involved in bringing stability to this

region. It is a world responsibility. Our men and women in the services

have done their job and done it extraordinarily well. This country

simply cannot continue to afford both the human capital and the

enormous capital that we are expending, as the gentleman from

Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt) points out, over $330 billion.

I yield to the gentleman and I apologize for going on.

If the gentleman will yield, I want to say

as well that I mentioned I conduct forums all the time, and I am most

proud to say that at a forum recently in West Hartford, where over 400

people attended, that one of the questions that came forward from one

of my constituents was in praise of one of our colleagues, one of our

Members, and that is the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. Jones), who

I truly believe, as important and as critical as I think the Iraq Watch

has been, if there is a profiles in courage award that should be given,

it should be for this humble man of conscience.

When residents of the State of Connecticut recognize Members of

Congress, like yourself who have come here, but especially in the case

of the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. Jones), who has gone against

the grain and is merely speaking from his heart and from his conscience

and speaking directly to the American people about his feelings, about

his discussions that he has had with his constituents about this war

that we are involved in, a war that he voted for but has come to the

principled conclusion, and in a safe, secure and strategic manner, as

the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. Abercrombie) has outlined on the

Committee on Armed Services, and as the gentleman from Pennsylvania

(Mr. Murtha) has called for in terms of very severe and tough

guidelines and deadlines that the President and this administration

must meet, all with an eye in mind of a strategy for success, yet my

constituents say this all the time, where was Congress during all of

this?

Shakespeare said, ``Would Caesar be a wolf if the Senate was not a

sheep?'' And that is so true, but not for the Iraq watch, speaking out

consistently. And not for people like the gentleman from North Carolina

(Mr. Jones), who was able to come down to this floor and talk from his

heart and from his head about what he truly feels and believes.

That is what makes us the great Nation that we are, and that is what

I think gives the American public hope; that people like yourself, who

have been at this for some time and who continue to come down here and

speak in the words not only of the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr.

Jones) but of the reservist who is going back to Iraq for the fourth

time.