Madam President, there is no doubt that right now American

families are being squeezed on all sides. Gas prices are sky high and

climbing. The cost of food is going up. So is the cost of college

tuition and health care. So it is no surprise that ``change'' is the

word everyone is talking about.

My colleagues on this side of the aisle and I want change, too, but

we want commonsense solutions. We are the party of economic security.

We think we should keep more of the money we earn. We favor more

private sector solutions to health care. We want America's energy

future to be here in America, not the Middle East. We want to change

the disastrous policy that has been implemented and kept by our fellow

colleagues on the other side of the aisle for the last 30 years, a

nonenergy policy, no production. As a Washington Post editorial pointed

out today, Congress cannot repeal the laws of supply and demand. Demand

worldwide has gone up but supply has not.

We have the answer to that problem right here in America. We want to

change it and use the resources we have. We also want a strong

commitment in the war on terror. Changing back to the policies of the

1990s is not the way to win the war on terror. Senator Obama has said

we should go back to the 9/11 days, when terrorism was treated as just

another law enforcement matter. He pointed to the prosecution of the

World Trade Center bombers as the example to follow. That is precisely

the type of policy that led to attacks on American embassies and the

USS Cole. That is the kind of change that will make the Nation less

safe again.

If the Democrats wish to talk about change, let's talk about change,

change that matters and change that they have been unwilling to

acknowledge, a change when we started executing the war on terror by

going after the terrorists in the safe havens. We have kept our country

safe from attack since 9/11. Under the leadership of GEN David

Petraeus, Iraq has changed and changed dramatically. So why can't my

colleagues on the other side of the aisle change with it. Why can't

they change their stance and get behind our service men and women who

want to succeed and have had tremendous successes?

President Bush announced the surge and the new counterinsurgency in

2007. Iraq was a violent place at the time. Al-Qaida in Iraq held large

swaths of territory. Shiite death squads roamed much of Baghdad, and

the Iraqi political leadership appeared helpless. So President Bush,

understanding the consequences of failure and withdrawal, changed. He

changed military leadership. General Petraeus changed to a new

strategy, a strategy for victory, of counterinsurgency or COIN that

involves getting out among the Iraqi people, working directly with

Iraqis committed to a peaceful, stable Iraq. That is a change my son

saw in Al Anbar, when his Marine scout sniper platoon helped clear Al

Anbar and turn it over to Sunni citizens and police. We still face big

challenges in Iraq but with a far more optimistic picture emerging. Al-

Qaida has been almost, if not completely, routed in Al Anbar, once

declared the center and base of operations for al-Qaida in Iraq.

On May 12 of this year, a prolific terrorist sympathizer by the name

of Dir'a Limen Wehhed posted a study on the Internet in which he

laments ``the dire situation that the mujaheddin find themselves in in

Iraq.'' He is talking about his guys, the bad guys. He cites the steep

drop in the number of insurgent operations conducted by various

terrorist groups, most notably al-Qaida's 94 percent decline in

operational ability over the last 12 months. In Sadr City, Iraqi

forces, the forces of the Iraqi Shiite leader al-Maliki, have rolled

through huge Shiite enclaves relatively unopposed. Iraqi forces did the

same in April in the southern city of Basra, where the Iraqi Government

advanced its goal of establishing sovereignty and curtailing the powers

of the militias.

When General Petraeus returned to Washington in September of last

year, even at that time he reported that the number of violent

incidents, civilian deaths, ethnosectarian killings and car and suicide

bombings had declined dramatically from the previous December. But

despite all this positive change, many on the other side of the aisle

are too vested in political defeat to see it. In fact, most Democrats

opposed the surge, claiming it is more of the same and would neither

make a dent in the violence nor change the dynamics in Iraq. The

Democratic leader proclaimed ``This war is lost'' and that U.S. troops

should pack up and come home, a disastrous change that even many

thoughtful scholars and commentators who opposed going into Iraq

initially say now is not the way to go. It would be a disaster. General

Petraeus returned again to Washington in April this year, and violence

has been reduced further. American casualties have declined

significantly. Al-Qaida was virtually eliminated in the northern city

of Mosul, as verified by the terrorists themselves. There are more

Iraqi security forces. The Iraqi Government has passed a variety of

laws promoting reconciliation. Prime Minister al-Maliki continues to

demonstrate he can stand up to fellow Shiites supporting violence and

Iranian-backed special groups. There is every reason to embrace the

positive change we have seen and not abandon it and not force a

withdrawal. For that is not change but, rather, a policy that would put

Iraq back on the path toward violence, terrorism, and chaos.

The change we have made has made our country safer, going after

terrorists, helping Iraq stabilize their country, turning control over

to them, and moving our forces back from the front lines of offense to

a support role. That is the change we need to keep our country safe for

the future from terrorist attacks.

I yield the floor.