Mr. Speaker, I appreciate being recognized and the

opportunity to address the House tonight and until tomorrow begins I

understand.

First, I would speak to this issue that we have heard as the

conclusion of my friends and colleagues from the other side of the

aisle, however optimistic they may not be in their presentation to the

American people on a regular basis.

As I go through some of the things that are in front of me and I

listened to the allegations that have been made that somehow the

President has manipulated the intelligence and led this Nation into war

because there never were any weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, I

will point out that I flat out reject that statement. It is not

possible to prove a negative in the first place, and a rational person

would understand that from the beginning.

Additionally, we know that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass

destruction. We know that he used them 1 time.

Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I would point out

that I will not concede the accuracy of that, and I do not because I do

not have that evidence and I have not seen that. I acknowledge the

gentleman's statement for the honorable individual he is, and I would

point out that we can concur then that Saddam had weapons of mass

destruction.

In fact, President Clinton made that statement in 1998 very clearly

and unequivocally, and my point is that either Saddam Hussein used his

last canister of mustard gas on the Kurds and simply ran out of

inventory or else those weapons of mass destruction still have to be

someplace, and he constructed then an elaborate ruse to dupe the world

and dupe seven or eight or nine different countries on the

intelligence.

I point out President Clinton's statement: Other countries possess

weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles. This is December

1998. With Saddam there is one big difference; he has used them. The

international community has little doubt then, and I have no doubt

today, says President Clinton, that left unchecked Saddam Hussein will

use these terrible weapons.

Again, 1998, Mr. Speaker, and allegations here on this floor and

around this country are that somehow President Bush has manipulated

intelligence and apparently misrepresented this to the American people,

and the implication is also that he has duped these people that have

made these statements, including former President Bill Clinton and a

number of other high-profile people within his administration.

The allegation would then have to hold true that somehow the governor

of Texas, now President Bush, found a way to dupe the national leaders

to somehow manipulate and maneuver hundreds of billions of dollars

worth of national intelligence to produce these kinds of results.

It is simply a ludicrous position to take. It will not hold water, it

is not logical, it is not rational, and the more the American people

hear about this, the more they begin to think about it, the more they

begin to understand it, the less they are going to believe these

allegations.

I would also point out that the individual who has had his 15 minutes

of fame and then some, the erstwhile ambassador who was sent by the CIA

to go to Niger to investigate the question as to whether Saddam Hussein

was seeking yellowcake uranium from Niger, that individual, of course,

we know as the husband of now publicly discussed Valerie Plame, at her

recommendation. As we understand, he was sent by the CIA.

He had not been in Niger in 20 years. He was not a weapons expert

like his wife may have been. But he went there, and he came back and

gave one story to the New Republic Magazine. He gave another story

under oath to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence which

thoroughly eviscerated his viability and his credibility.

So the statements that were made for publication for the fame did not

hold up under oath, did not hold up under scrutiny. One thing we are

confident of is that erstwhile ambassador

who went on a mission to supposedly represent the United States, Joseph

C. Wilson, the individual who went over there for the CIA, if one is on

a mission in a foreign country for the CIA, one would think that they

would have some level of integrity they would have to hold up, have

some level of confidentiality that they would have to hold up. One

would think that if they went on a mission, a secret clandestine

mission, first, that they would be qualified; second, that they would

maintain that level of secrecy and confidentiality, that they would

come back and report back to their superiors and it would be an

accurate report and it would be precise and it would be credible and it

would hold up under oath.

That report, alleged to have been delivered in print by one Joseph C.

Wilson, erstwhile ambassador, was not delivered in print. It was

delivered verbally, and the verbal report that we have the notes of and

the knowledge of, Mr. Speaker, is a verbal report that indicates that

the Iraqis were seeking weapons of mass destruction, yellowcake uranium

in Niger. It indicates the very thing that he alleges today was not

true.

Yet this seems to be some kind of allegations by the other side, if

they like what they hear, are enough for them to say this is confirmed

and absolute proof; and rational, thinking Americans know better.

Critical thinking Americans know better. In fact, this President would

not use any language in a State of the Union address or any other kind

of speech unless he knew that it had been thoroughly vetted, it was

reliable. And it was, by the way, vetted and reliable and delivered

into that speech on January 28, 2003, in these Chambers from just in

front of where the Speaker is right now when the President gave his

State of the Union Address.

Those now infamous 16 words that are alleged to have been untruthful

to the American people start out with ``we have learned from the

British'' that the Iraqis have been seeking uranium from Africa. Now,

``we have learned from the British'' is true. That is a fact, and no

one has challenged that fact. ``We have learned from the British that

the Iraqis are seeking,'' that qualification precludes any of the rest

of that statement as long as the rest of that statement is consistent

with what we have learned from the British; and to turn that into

something that is now called a lie is disingenuous and dishonest to the

American people.

I reminded the body here last week, last Wednesday night, that there

were commercials that were run across this country on television in the

1996 Presidential campaign. There were issues there about integrity and

honesty in that Presidential campaign. Charlton Heston went on

television, and he said, looking into the camera, ``Mr. President, when

you say something that is wrong and you do not know that it is wrong,

that is a mistake. But, Mr. President, when you say something that is

right and you know it is wrong, that is a lie.'' That is the

distinction between a mistake and a lie. That distinction has not been

recognized by the other side of the aisle, and it is willfully being

ignored.

I will not concede that a mistake was made. I think the words in that

State of the Union Address are precisely accurate. I think the British

would concede that point today. I think any rational, critical thinking

person would concede that point today, Mr. Speaker. But this has been

twisted and warped to the point where it is jeopardizing our national

security, and that is why I am on the floor here tonight.

I have been over in the Middle East a number of times. The last time

I came back was August 20 of this past summer. I have been there with

our men and women in uniform when they are strapped on with helmets and

bullet-proof vests. I have been in and ridden in and inspected some of

those armored vehicles that have been hit by enemy fire, hit by IEDs. I

happen to have inspected an armored Humvee that was hit by a rocket and

an RPG almost simultaneously. It rolled off the road upside down, and

the four American soldiers that were in that armored Humvee walked away

and were on patrol the next day thanks to the armor that is there.

I have been to Fallujah, I believe a year ago last May, where the

Marines were bolting on armor then and preparing for battle that was

ahead. So we have accelerated the production of our armor for all of

our vehicles there. Some of them are not armored. They stay on the base

where they are safe. But almost all of our vehicles that go out

anywhere where they are in danger are fully armored, top, bottom, and

sideways, with bullet-proof windows in them. We have done a fantastic

job to ramp up the construction and development of armor and done a

pretty good job.

We were not ready for this. The Humvees were not designed to go into

combat. They were not designed to drive over IEDs. They were not

designed to take direct hits from RPGs or rocket fire. In fact, they

were not designed to take hits from AK-47s. They were not a combat

vehicle in the beginning of those operations. So we had to adapt to the

circumstances that were there.

We began sending steel over there, and it was cut and fitted and it

was bolted on or welded on, and our military went right to work as

quickly as they could to get as much armor up as fast as they could. We

started our factories up here. We took an existing production line and

multiplied its production capability by at least 10 times to get our

armored Humvees out in place and to put the armor on our trucks and to

get ready.

Now we do send out convoys that are fully armored on a regular basis,

and it has been a long time since we have exposed significant numbers

of vehicles or American soldiers out there in vehicles that were not

armored, Mr. Speaker. So this argument that it is something other than

that I think is specious, and I do not think it is based on fact.

The statement that the President made about the irresponsible

statements when people undermine our military efforts, I will go

further than that, and I will relate an incident for me a year ago last

June, about June 17. I was in a hotel in Kuwait waiting to go into Iraq

the next day early. I turned on the television to Al-Jazeera TV. As I

watched that television, it was Arabic audio and it was English

subtitles, and on that television came Moqtada al-Sadr, a big black

beard, and as he spoke in Arabic, the English subtitles came on

underneath on the screen, and the subtitles said, ``If we keep

attacking Americans, they will leave Iraq the same way they left

Vietnam, the same way they left Lebanon, the same way they left

Mogadishu.''

Listen to that echo in the ears of Moqtada al-Sadr, and we know that

his voice was echoing in the ears of our enemy, the people we call the

insurgents on our nice days, the people who are sitting somewhere in a

mud hut or a stone building and they have some 155mm rounds. They have

got explosives. They have got detonating devices. They have got

shrapnel built into this, and they are making improvised explosive

devices. They are watching their new satellite dish TV.

Some of the communities there in Iraq have more than one satellite

dish per household. They were illegal when we first came into Iraq, but

every Iraqi today has access to satellite TV. Every Iraqi today can

watch Al-Jazeera TV. And on Al-Jazeera TV, they would see these kinds

of scenes of Moqtada al-Sadr saying, ``If we keep attacking Americans,

they will leave Iraq the same way they left Vietnam, the same way they

left Lebanon, the same way they left Mogadishu.'' And the enemy who are

making improvised explosive devices see that on television. It

encourages them. It causes them to build more bombs, not less. It

causes them to plant more bombs, not less. It causes them to detonate

more bombs, not less. It causes them to have more courage, more hope, a

stronger spirit to fight our American soldiers because of the words

that came out of Moqtada al-Sadr.

Now, imagine how encouraging that is to our enemy over in Iraq, and

many of them are not Iraqis. In fact, most of the enemy, I understand,

are not Iraqis but imported fighters from other countries. Imagine how

encouraging it is when they see on their Al-Jazeera TV, when they hear

the voice and see the face of a quasi-leader of the United States of

America, someone from the floor of Congress, someone from the floor of

the United States Senate, someone who is doing a press conference out

on the steps of the Capitol,

someone who is doing talking head television, someone who says, wrong

war, wrong place, wrong time, get them out of there, Mr. President, we

need to get out of Iraq. Imagine how much encouragement that gives to

the enemy. And what is the enemy going to do? They are going to recruit

more. They are going to build more bombs. They are going to attack more

Americans.

I reject the idea that one can say they fervently pray that the

troops come home and they support the troops. I reject the idea that

they can support the troops and reject their mission. Mr. Speaker, if

you are for the troops, you are for their mission. And if you are

against the troops, you are against their mission. But these things are

inextricably linked. They cannot be separated.

We cannot ask an American soldier to go in this country or overseas,

risk their life, perhaps give their life on a mission that we do not

believe in. We would not send them on a mission we do not believe in.

We would not ask them to do that. It would be the most dishonest,

disingenuous thing we could do as the United States Government in

Congress and the President of the United States and Commander-in-Chief

to order men and women into a theater of battle and not support their

mission.

When I talk with the families that have lost a loved one in this war

on terror, it is a sad time, and that price they have paid cannot be

felt unless we ourselves have had that loss, but we can empathize with

them. We can pray for them. We can sympathize with them. We can try to

understand. But invariably those that I talk to, those that I meet

with, will tell me they want their son or their daughter's life to have

meaning. They want that sacrifice to have meaning. And they will say do

not give up on this mission. My son believed in what he did. He

volunteered for this mission. Let us have meaning. Let us have freedom

for the Iraqi people. Let us have freedom for the Afghani people.

By the way, while I bring that up, what is the distinction between

Afghanistan and Iraq? Why do I not hear from the other side of the

aisle ``get your troops out of Afghanistan''? The statement is never

made. We forget about the naysayers that were here before we went into

Afghanistan and before we liberated the Afghanis. There were plenty of

naysayers. They said we cannot go into that part of the world. No one

has ever been able to be go into that part of Afghanistan or even

Afghanistan at all and be able to liberate, invade, occupy because the

terrain is so difficult, that Mujahideen are such tough fighters.

So 2 months after September 11, the American military were in there,

coalition forces were in there, and we still heard the naysayers. But

as the operation got wrapped up, as there was more security and more

safety and votes coming along in Afghanistan where people had never

voted before on that particular piece of real estate, they did so and

they have done so twice. They have done that because of the American

soldiers giving them that liberty. But the critics essentially shut up

about Afghanistan but not about Iraq.

Is the difference the number of lives, Mr. Speaker? Is the difference

that 200 Americans have lost their lives in Afghanistan and 2,000

Americans have lost their lives in Iraq? If that is the difference,

then I would challenge the left, the pacifist left, the people who have

difficulty figuring out how they are going to support the troops and

oppose the mission, and if they were rational, they would admit that

that dichotomy could not be accepted or tolerated. They cannot seem to

draw the line on what the difference is between Afghanistan and Iraq,

200 lives versus 2,000 lives. If the number of lives were the

difference, then they should tell us from their position how many are

enough. How many lives would they spend to free 25 million Afghanis?

How many lives would it cost to free 25 million Iraqis?

And, yes, the price has been high, and it has hurt. And it will hurt

far more if this job, this task, is not completed, if this freedom that

has been so hard fought and won is allowed to go back to a state of

tyranny where a dictator would take over in Iraq and where we would see

a center for Islamic terrorism for al Qaeda.

It would clearly be there if we pulled out of there today. I would

wager if you put this up for a ballot to the Iraqi people and asked, do

you want the United States and the coalition forces to pull out as fast

as they can, that ballot referendum, I believe 95 percent would say,

no, we would like to have the Americans leave not real soon, just soon

enough to get control of our country.

That is moving along at an acceptable rate. I will not say I am happy

about the speed. It is a tough job. The infrastructure in Iraq has been

depreciated and dilapidated over 35 to 40 years of neglect. So there is

old equipment that does not function very well. Parts and materials to

keep it in shape, many have to be manufactured. The oil fields need new

wells and distribution systems. They need to get their refineries up to

shape. They need a distribution system that will get that oil out of

the country so they can get some cash coming back in.

But Saddam Hussein, when he was in power, was killing an average of

182 of his own people every day. Every day on average. Hundreds of

thousands of them have been found in mass graves. The 800,000 Swamp

Arabs that were there before Saddam Hussein decided they were an enemy

of the state were decimated down to 220,000. Some escaped. In the end,

about a fourth of the population of Swamp Arabs in the area of the

wetlands, Saddam Hussein dried them up in order to take away their

livelihood and way of life. That area is twice the size of the

Everglades, and that way of life was destroyed by Saddam. We have

reconstructed about the size of the Everglades, and the Swamp Arabs are

starting to repopulate. But that is one-thirtieth of Iraqi population

doing what they can.

The argument that Saddam Hussein did not have weapons of mass

destruction, and now we hear from the gentleman from Massachusetts that

he did, what did he do with them? Where did they go? Matter can neither

be created nor destroyed. Saddam Hussein said, I have those weapons of

mass destruction. He defied 17 U.N. resolutions stretching back to

1990. We know from September 11 that we cannot wait until a threat is

fully developed.

The question still remains, we do not know, we do not know how large

the stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction were. We just know he had

stockpiles. He used them. We do not know what happened to them. But the

King rule of physics is everything has to be someplace. So where are

they? There is no evidence he destroyed the weapons of mass

destruction. But due to Saddam Hussein's obstruction, the materials

once declared by the Saddam regime were never accounted for, even

though he declared them.

I also want to point out that in October 2002, a bipartisan majority

of Congress authorized President Bush to use force if necessary to deal

with the continuing threat posed by Saddam Hussein. We also had a

national policy that Congress endorsed of regime change in Iraq.

All of these things were consistent with the will of the people of

America, as debated and voted on in Congress. H.J. Res. 114 stated that

by continuing to possess and develop a significant chemical and

biological weapons capability, and actively seeking a nuclear weapons

capability and supporting and harboring terrorist organizations, those

were the activities going on by Saddam Hussein.

And the intelligence of countries that concurred with ours. The 15

members of our intelligence community in this country, and additionally

some of the other countries who concurred with our intelligence were

Great Britain and France. France opposed our operations there,

concurred with our intelligence. Germany opposed our operations and

concurred with our intelligence. Russia same story: concurred with our

intelligence, opposed our operations there.

What do those three countries have in common? The answer is those

three countries were three of the most vocal opponents to the

liberalization of Iraq. I said at the time that the decibels of their

objections to the liberation of Iraq can be directly indexed to their

interest in the oil development contracts that they had access to that

they designed with Saddam Hussein prior to the beginning of our

operations of the liberation of Iraq.

They had a vested interest in the oil in Iraq. They had contracts

signed with Saddam Hussein, which of course were nullified by the

liberation of Iraq. Come to find out after the fact, it was not just

legitimate oil contracts that had them all in a dither; it was also the

Oil-For-Food fraud campaign that was replete through those three

countries, a number of others besides, and through the United Nations

itself. Also, the U.N. Security Council echoed the congressional

assessment of the threat posed by Iraq. Even the U.N. Security Council

agreed with our intelligence: there was a fair amount of fraud going

through the Oil-For-Food program.

I have to point out George Galloway, as a Brit, was apparently

profiting significantly from Oil-For-Food, and his wife had a number of

six-figure checks deposited in her checking account; and the facts are

coming home to roost in the case of Mr. Galloway.

So the objections to the liberation of Iraq, many of the countries

that objected had a conflict of interest. That vested interest reminds

me of Barbara Conable's famous statement of hell hath no fury as a

vested interest masquerading as a moral authority.

That is what we heard prior to the liberation of Iraq. We know Saddam

Hussein had sufficient time to shuffle his weapons of mass destruction.

They could have buried or spirited them out of the country.

By the way, Iraq is a country where everybody digs holes. It looks

like one big prairie dog village. That countryside has a lot of open

holes and a lot of things buried. We found a fully operational MiG-29

buried in the desert in Iraq. That is a whole lot bigger than you would

need for a stockpile of the weapons of mass destruction. Did we find it

because of intelligence or we had a metal detector or because somebody

had good instincts, or because we had some scientific way to fly over

the top and notice the difference in the terrain? Or did somebody tip

us off to find that fully operational MiG-29 buried in Iraq?

Mr. Speaker, no, we found it because the wind blew the sand off the

tail fin. If there had been weapons of mass destruction inside that

plane, if it just filled the cockpit, that would have been plenty

enough to convince even the skeptics on the other side of the aisle

that the weapons of mass destruction are not really the question that

is before this country or the world, but a red herring that is designed

to throw the American people into a frustration with the decision-

making process and the effort to convince Americans that things are

going badly there.

Whenever we lose an American, that is something going very, very

badly. Whenever we have Americans exposed to enemy, we will have

casualties, Mr. Speaker. But when we look objectively at what has been

accomplished in Iraq, when we objectively look to see that there were

milestones set on the calendar, the effort over there has met or

exceeded every single milestone.

Certainly the liberation of Iraq came around a lot faster than

anybody thought it would. I point out to the American people that the

city of Baghdad, about 5 million people, is the largest city in the

world, ever in the history of the world, to be invaded and occupied by

a foreign power. It happened in the blink of a historical eye with an

extraordinarily small number of casualties for a city that size. No one

quite believed on that Thursday, an American armored column had gone

into Baghdad, driven in and came back out, and the enemy had given up

the ghost and essentially disappeared.

But that is what happened. They met that deadline. They set a new

milestone for armored columns going across the desert and for the

liberation of 5 million people. They were way ahead of the agenda, the

targeted timetable.

And then we set up the CPA, the provisional authority under Paul

Bremer. The idea was to establish a functional government in Iraq and

be able to pass that over to the Iraqis so they could govern

themselves. This began in March of 2003. March 22 was the date Baghdad

was liberated.

I happen to know, since I was in Mosul sometime after that, that

General Patrais and the 101st Airborne that liberated Mosul, they held

open and free elections in May of 2003. They elected a governor and

vice governor and put together a government of the people by the people

and for the people, a Kurd, and I am not sure actually of the religious

definition of the other individual, but I watched them interact with

each other and I watched them do business. They brought a businessman

that could speak English. They were optimistic about the city of Mosul.

In fact, when the 101st Airborne left Mosul and deployed after their

year tour of duty, the Iraqis took a boulevard, a broad boulevard in

Mosul. And I only saw one street sign in all of Baghdad my first trip.

Most everything had been looted and stripped for the metal. The one

street sign in Baghdad was a street named Jihad. So they left that up

and tore down the other street signs.

Go over to the city of Mosul and I did not notice any street signs

there, but I have a picture of a street sign in Mosul, that sign is

101st Airborne Air Assault Division. They named that street after the

101st Airborne. And this was not something put up by the 101st Airborne

unless they had the same difficulty with spelling that the Iraqis had.

They misspelled ``division'' and they misspelled ``assault.'' That

makes it genuine in that effort.

I am quite proud of the way the Iraqis responded to the Americans. I

am proud of the way they respond to them in most of the areas of Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to fly over Fallujah, where we have

had as much conflict as anywhere, and see people come out into the

streets and wave and smile. They come out and wave because they are

grateful to Americans for giving them a chance at freedom.

But this message that the American people are getting that the

credibility of the administration is not there disappoints me a great

deal. It undermines our American troops. It does give aid and comfort

to the enemy. It encourages the enemy to attack more Americans. It is

costing American lives.

When people come to this floor of Congress, when they step out into a

press conference, when they speak on the floor of the Senate, they are

viewed as quasi-leaders of the United States of America. This

encourages our enemies. When I see a soldier anywhere in America,

particularly in my district, serve their second tour of duty, and they

lost their life defending freedom in their second tour of duty, it is

infuriating to me because I believe if we stuck together as a Nation,

if we stuck by the deal and the agreement that this Congress has when

we have our vote on the floor of this Congress, when the vote goes up

and men and women go to war, you stand with them, you stand beside

them, you support them with everything you have. That means, yes,

bulletproof vests; yes, armored Humvees; and, yes, support and

equipment and training and tactics and technology and great leadership.

But it means support the mission, Mr. Speaker. You cannot ask a

soldier to go to war and tell him that you do not support their

mission. And so the pessimism that abounds that seeks to undermine the

presidency here and seeks to establish a majority in the House and the

Senate in the upcoming election is all about negativism. It is all

about dragging down our foreign policy. It is all about trying to prove

to the American people that the administration has not been successful.

But each milestone that is reached in Iraq, handing over the CPA of

Paul Bremer's over to the temporary civilian government, that happened

2 days early. And then they had elections, and the elections were there

to put people in temporarily into their temporary parliament and the

temporary parliament got together and they agreed on a constitution and

the constitution was rolled out on time. And they had an election to

ratify the constitution, Mr. Speaker, all in an extraordinary amount of

time.

The United States of America declared its independence July 4, 1776;

and yet we did not get our Constitution ratified until 1789, 13 years

later. Now it took a while to earn our freedom, I grant, and the war

was long, and it was bloody, and it was costly, and it was brutal. We

have our freedom, and we have our Constitution. In fact, the Iraqis

have their constitution far sooner than the American Constitution has

been established, and it is ratified by a full vote of the Iraqi

people.

Now, about 1 month from today, the Iraqis will go to the polls, and

they will select a new parliament, and this will be a sovereign nation

when that new parliament is seated. It will have all the legitimacy of

any nation that sits at the United Nations today. Iraq will be fully,

fully legitimized. The vote of the people will seat the members of

parliament. They will select a prime minister and their leaders and

that legitimacy that is there takes them to another level.

But this is an astonishing thing. This is far, far more freedom, far,

far closer to establishing a functioning rule of law than has ever been

seen in that part of the world before. And the inspiration for the Arab

people all around Iraq that see that a nation like Iraq can have

freedom, when people breathe free, they give inspiration to others who

see them breathe free and out of that yearning will bring them to the

streets like it did in Lebanon.

The Lebanese reached out for their measure of freedom, and that is

part of the inspiration of Iraq, and it is part of the inspiration of

Afghanistan. It is part of the inspiration that this President has laid

out in an articulated way to the world, the inspiration that we have

been attacked by enemies from without. We did nothing to provoke them.

They attacked us and killed approximately 3,000 Americans on September

11, 2001. And we went to Afghanistan and liberated 25 million people,

and we went to Iraq and liberated 25 million people. Fifty million

people that had not been free before in any substantive way are free

today. Those two countries can become and I believe will become the

lodestar nations, the Arab nations that can be the inspiration for the

rest of the Arab world.

The habitat that breeds terror is a habitat that breeds poverty,

ignorance, jealousy and hatred. That is the environment that is being

exploited by the wahabis and the madrassas that are teaching this

hatred in the young people. And the pressure that comes on those

countries from the measure of that kind of hatred, they are being

taught that, somehow or another, it is part of this age-old philosophy.

I really do believe that if you would scramble up all of our cultures

and all of our people and erase our institutional memory and toss us

into a totally new environment in a random way, some of us would wake

up in the morning and think, huh, my glass is half full, and I am going

to go to work and see if I can fill it up the rest of the way. And

others, they look at their glass and say mine is half empty and that

fellow over there, he is seeking to fill his glass. If he were not

doing that, mine would fill spontaneously. That is the class envy,

jealousy, hatred that comes.

It has always been this conflict between freedom and communism,

freedom and fascism, freedom and national socialism, and freedom and

militant Islamic extremism, all the same kind of class envy jealousy,

the hatred that comes from the idea that if somehow other people were

not industrious and did not earn a profit, somehow those resources of

the world are finite and they will flow at random to other folks who do

not quite try so hard or have the technology or have not developed the

education. But this spirit of entrepreneurship and free enterprise will

establish itself in a strong way in Afghanistan and in Iraq.

In fact, I gave a speech to the Baghdad Chamber of Commerce. I did

not know they had a Chamber of Commerce. We pulled into Baghdad at the

al Rashid Hotel, and they asked me if I would give a speech to them. So

I said yes I would.

It was about 3:00 in the afternoon. Walked in there, and they were

getting ready to introduce me, and I said introduce me to the

interpreter first. That is going to be really helpful. And they said,

no, we do not have an interpreter. You do not need an interpreter, Mr.

Congressman, because they all speak English here at the Baghdad Chamber

of Commerce. About 56 to 58 of them sitting at the dinner tables.

So I gave them a little speech, and you could tell they understood

English. They laughed at the right time, and they smiled at the right

time, and they clapped at a time that I thought was appropriate anyway.

I was quite encouraged at the level of interest in developing a culture

of free enterprise in Iraq.

When that speech was over, I needed to get on to the next meeting,

but it was an instantaneous cluster, huddle like, actually. They had to

eventually just pull me out of this huddle. We were passing back and

forth business cards and writing notes and trying to find a way to

connect with the inspiration of free enterprise that is embodied in

almost every American that walks the streets of Baghdad or Iraq. They

look to us to be leaders in a lot of ways, not just military but on

free enterprise capitalism perspective, and as they continue to develop

that their economy will grow.

It takes a level of integrity and morality to have a functioning free

enterprise system. It works on trust is why. As that trust gets built

and established in the culture in Iraq, it is going to be a stronger

and stronger economy. As the free enterprise economy flows out in

Baghdad and the other cities in Iraq and connects itself with the new

thing that will come, that will be available for the Iraqis after

December 15, when they are a truly sovereign nation in control of all

of their own assets, then they will be able to sit down and negotiate

or have competitive bids for the development of the oil resources in

Iraq.

They must have that. They must have outside capital, foreign capital

and foreign technology and foreign know-how, and a lot of it should be

and hopefully is American technology capital know-how to pour into

Iraq, to go out and punch in hundreds of new oil wells and new

pipelines and distribution systems and refineries so that that oil can

pour out of that country and the money can pour in.

Another allegation that comes from the other side of the aisle, Mr.

Speaker, is that somehow we did this all for oil. But oil is something

that you can purchase on the open market around the world. We did not

go in there to steal anybody's oil. We went in there to protect that

oil for the Iraqis.

It is absolutely clear that the oil resources of Iraq belong to the

people of Iraq, and we protected that, preserved that, and we are

keeping our pledge with the Iraqi people. They will develop the oil

resources with foreign capital and, when that happens, then the cash

will flow into the economy and it will multiply itself over and over

again. And Iraq becomes the lodestar Arab nation that brings freedom to

that part of the world.

Like, as the European, the eastern European nations saw, an echo of

freedom go across eastern Europe when the wall went down on November 9,

1989, I believe we will see an echo of freedom go through the Arab

world, probably not as dramatically, probably not as quickly, probably

not as bloodlessly. But I believe we will see a free Arab people some

time within the next generation.

At that point, the habitat that breeds terrorists will disappear. It

will not be the culture that can create that kind of a thing. And I

mean that two ways. But the culture of freedom does not produce a

culture of terror. In fact, free people never go to war against other

free people. This country has never gone to war against another

democracy, another group of people that had an opportunity to go to the

polls and select their leaders and their national destiny. That is

another known fact that does not seem to get out on the other side of

the aisle, Mr. Speaker.

So I am optimistic about the solutions there. I applaud the

President's vision and having the courage to step in and take the

initiative to free 50 million people, 50 million Arab people, to give

them an opportunity. And those people will be our allies, by the way,

for a long, long time to come in a part of the world where it is pretty

important to have those kind of allies.

As I listened to some of the other laments that were here earlier

this evening, the discussion about the Budget Reconciliation Act, the

people who are critical of that, of the Deficit Reduction Act that we

brought some $53 billion to come out of the proposed spending up until

the year 2010, not enough, but a start. A half of 1 percent of our

budget is all that amounts to, Mr. Speaker. I do not think it is very

hard to step up and do a very small half of 1 percent trim, given the

kind of spending that we have had.

But the other side of the aisle does not offer $1 in fiscally

responsible cuts,

not one; and they do not offer one vote to support our fiscal

responsibility, not one. Additionally, they demagogue the very things

we have done that are responsible.

The statement was made over here earlier tonight that we have cut $40

billion from the student loans and that somehow it is going to come out

of the students, their loans and their aid. Not. Not $40 billion from

the student loans. The students are not going to notice any difference

unless there is more cash available, not less, because we have made

administrative changes, changes that affect the interest rates and the

fees that are being charged by the lenders. This is not going to affect

the students. This is reform. That is efficiency in government and

efficiency in business.

But you know the demagoguery again. If I was as pessimistic as this

and if I had this philosophy, this argument that everything is wrong

and you cannot trust your leadership night after night after night, I

think I would swim to Cuba and try to find a place where I would be

happy. That would be my advice to the people that are here every night

tearing down the optimism of America, undermining the truth that is

America and making it difficult for us to move forward into this bold

and brave future that we need to.

And, by the way, they have no confidence in our economy. I would go

down through the whole list of economic indicators. We have had the

longest period of consistent growth over 3 percent for 10 consecutive

quarters. That is the longest since for the last two decades to have

that kind of growth. Unemployment is down to 5.0 percent, when 5.6 is

considered to be a pretty good position to be in. It has been

ratcheting down. This economy has been creating more and more jobs.

Nearly every economic indicator is stronger and stronger and stronger.

That in the face of the negatives, that in the face of Hurricane

Katrina. This in 10 consecutive quarters of growth over 3 percent is

after we got hit by September 11 and the attack on our financial

markets. It is after some of the business circumstances that were

brought up short by this Congress, and I am pleased that they were, hit

the markets as well. After people lost confidence in the markets,

September 11 came and destroyed the financial industry. We still came

back and recovered with 10 consecutive quarters of growth over 3

percent, Mr. Speaker.

So this is a strong and robust economy, and it is a credit to the

Bush tax cuts, those tax cuts that we need to make permanent, the extra

resources, the billions of dollars that we have in our Treasury today

because we had the courage to cut taxes so our economy could grow and

create jobs. That is the kind of vision that is sorely lacking on the

other side. They are good at criticizing, but I am waiting for a

positive agenda, Mr. Speaker.

This idea that American soldiers should be, go off and fight without

support for their mission has got to come back to the people who

believe somehow they can support our soldiers but not support the

mission, Mr. Speaker. So I just tell you that I am optimistic about the

future of America. I know our economy is strong. I am optimistic about

the future of our economy.

I am watching a confirmation process begin over in the United States

Senate for Judge Alito. I think he will be the individual that comes to

the Supreme Court and begins a constitutional restoration process. I am

looking forward to that. We must restore this Constitution. It has been

eroded over the last 30 to 40 years with activist judges.

The Kilo decision was the last straw for me and a lot of us. I agreed

with the liberals on that. I will say that the gentleman from

Massachusetts and I, whom we most generally disagree, he and I agreed

and spoke essentially back to back here on the floor in opposing the

Kilo decision. That is Mr. Frank from Massachusetts. When he and I

agree on a constitutional issue I am going to say and oppose the

Supreme Court, chances are the text of the Constitution ought to be

respected.

We will get back to that, Mr. Speaker, with this confirmation of

Judge Alito. The corner needs to be turned. The American people need to

be informed on how positive things are over in Iraq and that our

economy is strong and we are going to move forward in a bold future

with a bold agenda.

We need to pass this reconciliation act so that we can offset the

costs of Hurricane Katrina. I will do more. We need to drill for oil in

ANWR. We need to drill for natural gas and oil on our Outer Continental

Shelf and hand this future over to our children and grandchildren with

oil supplies, good tax programs, a national security program, a whole

package. So, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your indulgence tonight and the

privilege to speak to this House.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.