It's a pleasure to be able to join our discussion tonight

on the subject of Iraq. I approach the subject this evening from

several perspectives; one, as a father of a marine who is now a captain

who has been in Iraq; also as someone who has visited Iraq a number of

times myself, but particularly, and more recently, as the ranking

Republican on the Oversight Committee of the Armed Services Committee.

That is a committee that we have been hearing now, for quite a number

of weeks, of witnesses, Republicans, Democrats, all kinds of different

positions and people with ideas that are supposedly experts about what

we should be doing in Iraq.

Now, one of the things that has jumped out, after having to sit

through hours and hours and hours of testimony, is a certain pattern.

Every single witness, conservative, liberal, Republican, wacko one way,

strange the other way, anybody, every single one of them, there were

two things that they always said, and that was, the first one was, if

we pull out rapidly, it will be, first of all, a huge blood bath of

Iraqis killing Iraqis. We're talking about millions of people dying,

which will, of course, all be reviewed in all the gory detail on the

media. And second of all, the region will become extremely unstable.

Both of those, regardless of who they were, political party, anything

else, those were the two common themes.

And what emerged after weeks and weeks of listening to all these

experts was, there is no gracious, easy way for us to try and tuck our

tail between our legs and quit. We're like the bear that's going

through the woods. We're more than halfway there.

The most logical, the most common sense, the most economic, the least

loss of life course for us is to proceed forward logically and win this

war. And there is even reason to believe that we can.

And the strategy is becoming more and more obvious as to how that has

to happen. The first basic principle is that our troops are doing a

very good job in Iraq. The second basic principle is that we've fallen

into this sort of belt line, beltway mentality thinking that America's

greatness all came out of Washington, DC and therefore the problems

have to be solved in Baghdad, and that's just wrong. The political

solution in Baghdad is not working properly. Where we are having

success is the very way that America was built 300 years ago, and it's

being built in local communities and local cities, local towns and

various states as they built this great Nation and the same way. That's

what's happening over in Iraq.

We are having very good success on the local level working with local

sheiks, giving them a sense that it's their country, they can shape it,

and what we need to be doing is aggressively giving those local

governments authority and limiting the Baghdad authority to certain

very specific items. We call that federalism in this country, and

that's where we need to be going. We can win this, and it is the most

inexpensive, the lowest loss of life and the very most positive results

we can expect by just using the same principles that we found that

built America. So I think that's where we need to be going.

The Democrats are wrong. You can't pass a constitutional amendment

that says everybody's going to get along with each other. Even if you

put a gun to the head of the Iraqi Baghdad Government, they couldn't do

that. They couldn't succeed in that.

They're wrong in being against the surge. The surge is proving to be

effective. It is helping us to build local governments. And they're

wrong in the sense that everything is lost and we ought to quit. That's

not true, and none of the witnesses suggested that it's wise for us to

pull out precipitously.

I thank the gentleman for yielding me some time, and I appreciate the

comments of my colleagues that understand the importance of this and

understand terrorism.