Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate the privilege

and the honor to address you and address the House of Representatives

and the American people who are viewing these proceedings that take

place in these Chambers continually as we deliberate and debate.

I came here to take up another subject matter, but as I listened to

the gentleman from Tennessee, he raised a number of points that I am

compelled to respond to. I will just say I am glad I have a more

optimistic viewpoint about the history of this country, about the

current events, about the most recent current events and especially

about the last 3 1/2 years within Iraq. Further and longer ago than

that, our operations within Afghanistan, about how this Nation has

conducted its foreign policy, about how the Commander in Chief has made

his decisions on foreign policy, and the direction for the future.

I would just back up to this. I would say that the gentleman from

Tennessee, when he states that we are the greatest Nation, I do agree

with him. We are the greatest Nation. We are the unchallenged greatest

Nation in the history of the world. Often folks on the other side of

the aisle disagree with that statement, so I am very refreshed to hear

someone on that side of the aisle say we are a great Nation. In fact, I

look forward to us becoming an even greater Nation going into the

future, and we can't do that if we are going to wallow in guilt and

self-pity and pessimism. We have a positive track record. Did we think

we could go to war and not face adversity?

Some of the criticism is that Vice President Cheney and Secretary

Rumsfeld and others said we would be greeted as liberators, according

to the gentleman. He contends we were not.

I was one of the first Members of Congress to arrive in Iraq after

Iraq was liberated, and I recall and I have videotape of traveling down

through a Sunni section of Baghdad, where we would be the most hated,

according to national news media and the minority party; people that

you would think would be throwing grenades and shooting at you, and

perhaps throwing stones and making all kinds of vile gestures at

American conquerors. In fact, we were liberators. As we rode down

through on that convoy on those narrow streets in Baghdad several

months after the liberation of Iraq, I looked out the window at

military-age Iraqi men, and they looked into the window of my vehicle

at me. I couldn't discern what they were thinking. They didn't know who

I was. They just knew it was not your normal transportation going

through there.

So I did like we do in Iowa. We meet them on the road. We are

uncomfortable with silence and without acknowledging someone we see, so

I began to wave to these military-age Iraqi men, men between the ages

of 16 years up to 45, standing along the sides of the street in groups

of two to three, groups up to 18, and they may be 10 to 15 feet away

from my vehicle. The instant I did that, they waved back at me. They

waved back and smiled with a gleeful smile and gave me thumbs up.

Here is an American in Iraq, a Representative, and just by the fact

of the identification of being an American was all they needed, not

necessarily a Representative of Congress, there to be part of that

city, to see that country that now was for the first time liberated in

the history of the world.

No, we were greeted as liberators. We were greeted as liberators in a

country that had not been liberated in their history. Of course, there

have been difficulties since that period of time. It is odd to me that

the gentleman from Tennessee takes issue with the decisions and

strategy that were made. In closing, he said he trusts our military

experts, not our civilian experts. The experts who put together the

strategy to liberate Iraq were essentially the same people that put

together the military planning and operational strategy to liberate

Afghanistan.

And the criticism of the Iraq operation is essentially the same

criticism that we heard of the Afghanistan operation. The difference is

that in Afghanistan it was over so quickly and over so successfully,

and people there went to the polls and voted and elected themselves new

leaders and directed their national destiny and live in freedom for the

first time on that spot of the globe for the first time ever in their

history. That all took place in Afghanistan, even though the debate

over here on this side of the aisle, the debate on the part of the

liberal pundits, was it's another Vietnam. You will never succeed in

Afghanistan. No Nation has ever been able to go in and invade and

occupy Afghanistan and get out of there with their military intact.

That is a hostile area that can never be occupied and conquered, and

history has proven that. That is the statement with Afghanistan over

and over and over again. Afghanistan, another Vietnam.

But, you know, military success, political success and economic

success has a tendency to muzzle the critics. And the critics have been

flat muzzled on Afghanistan. And yet they draw the same criticism

towards Iraq. Afghanistan, 25 million people, liberated. Hostile

terrain, couldn't be invaded. We didn't invade them, we liberated them.

We worked with the Northern Alliance and we worked with the people in

Afghanistan and gave them an opportunity at freedom.

Their struggles are going on yet today. In fact, there has been a

reignition of some of the opposition there. But we are not hearing

criticism. We are not hearing the other side of the aisle say we never

should have gone there because we knew that al Qaeda was operating in

Afghanistan. We knew we needed to go in and knock out the Taliban. We

knew that was a base of operations for terrorists who were sending

people to come to this country to kill us because they believe that

their path to salvation is killing people not like them, and we are one

of their preferred targets.

So all of this criticism of Afghanistan, 25 million people, mountains

and difficult terrain and difficult transportation routes, has been

muted by the resounding success in Afghanistan. And the same people

gave the same advice on a country with the same population and

different terrain, easier terrain but a different location, and

different people, different countries surrounding Iraq, and we ended up

with being greeted as liberators. And in the aftermath of the greetings

as liberators, there was an insurgency that rose up; an insurgency that

was founded and supported by a lot of cash dollars, billions in cash

dollars that were spirited out of Iraq, American dollars out of the

banks of Iraq by Saddam Hussein, his regime, into other countries where

that money was used again to pay for terrorists to come back into Iraq

and blow themselves up. To detonate and build, and make and set and

detonate improvised explosive devices.

Seldom do we see them come out of the shadows and attack our military

troops straight up front. But the insurgency, what I call a terrorist-

organized operation, as it grew in Iraq, then so did the criticism

grow. While this is going on, the lust for power for the White House,

the people on the other side of the aisle are willing to put our

military men and women at risk so they can achieve their political

gain, which would be to win back the White House and seek to take over

the majority in the House of Representatives and

convince the American people that they know what's best.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not hearing a positive agenda. I am hearing

this agenda that says pull out. Pull out to the horizon. Sit and wait

until there is a problem and then move in. Somehow this same message

that keeps coming from the ranking member of the Armed Services

Committee would be one, conflicting with the same message that comes

out of sometimes the same mouths that, well, we will pull out to the

horizon in a country we should have more troops in, or maybe should

have had more troops in, and never mind that we are up now to 267,000

Iraqis in uniform defending Iraqis that are trained, uniformed,

equipped, and in these operations and initiating operations as we speak

today in that country over there and performing very well.

For the first time Iraq does have a sovereign government that

represents a sovereign people and a Nation where they can begin now to

build their future. They have a Prime Minister who has named a full

Cabinet. And this Cabinet can now resolve many of the sectarian

differences that are there within Iraq itself and move them forward

since now they have a Secretary of Defense and a Secretary of the

Interior, a strong Prime Minister with some vision that has taken a

role to lead. It takes time to put these pieces in place, and we have

to let the Iraqi people make these decisions and do that, and it is

taking place.

So this criticism, why is it brought up now? Why do I hear the

question, why did the National Guard have to scrounge around for metal

to weld or bolt onto their equipment to protect them from IEDs?

This issue raised by the gentleman from Tennessee, Secretary of

Defense Rumsfeld said, appropriately and accurately, you go to war with

the Army that you have. And it implies you go to war with the equipment

that you have, and then when the unforeseen happens, and it was

unforeseen that Humvees would be used as military vehicles in that kind

of a combat environment. No war in the past had seen improvised

explosive devices. No war in the past had seen suicide bombers that

would run into a crowd of soldiers and blow themselves up or a crowd of

women or children, school children. No war had seen terrorists or the

likes of Zarqawi. But yet, even though no one had ever seen these

circumstances before, somehow the people on the other side of the aisle

believe the President, the Secretary of Defense and these civilian

leaders that are labeled to be so wrong, should have been able to

anticipate something that had never happened before, that there is no

pattern for and no indication for, and they want to claim that they

were right, but I don't think any one of them are on record predicting

we ought to watch out for improvised explosive devices and I don't

think any one of them were on the record saying we are going to have

suicide bombers in Iraq. And I don't think any one of them are on

record saying that these suicide bombers were going to come from any

place other than Iraq, coming in from all over the Arab world, places

like Jordan or Egypt or Saudi Arabia or Afghanistan or Pakistan. All

those countries have supplied suicide bombers to come into Iraq that

detonated themselves because they have been trained in those countries

to give up their lives in the idea that somehow their path to salvation

is in seeking to kill those who are not like them, and that means us.

The civilian leadership that led us into Iraq is the same civilian

leadership that led us into Afghanistan. The military leadership that

led us into Afghanistan is the same military leadership that led us

into Iraq. If we are going to be critical of the judgment, the

decisions and the tactics that were used in Iraq, and the people that

made the decisions, then let's hear it from the other side. Let's hear

their criticism for the same people, for the same decisions, for

similar tactics that were utilized in Afghanistan. And the reason we

don't hear that is because of the distinction between the easy results

as opposed to a distinction between a philosophical or a judgment

disagreement.

This is Monday morning quarterbacking, Mr. Speaker, and nothing else,

and it is done for political opportunism and no other reason. And while

we hear that, however much is said about supporting our military, that

language, that talk, Mr. Speaker, undermines our military, weakens

their ability to be effective, and they have got to try all the harder.

They have got to bolster their spirit all the harder, and they do. And

I go over there and I meet them and visit them, and their spirit is

strong and their morale is strong. And they did pick up metal and bolt

and weld it onto their machines because that is what Americans do. We

make do with what we have and we go scrounge and find what we need and

we get things in the pipeline as fast as we can to get things up-

armored and we did. And today, and for a long time in Iraq there hasn't

been any equipment leave the wire that is not fully armored. And it has

been a long, long time since anybody left the wire without a

bulletproof vest and the right kind of equipment to protect them from

the flying bullets and shrapnel that takes place over there. And our

medics and our medical corps, all of the people that are taking care of

our wounded are doing a better job, far better job than ever in the

history of the world and warfare. They have transferred, the last time

I checked this number, and it is a little bit dated now, Mr. Speaker,

but the last number that I had as I stood as we loaded a C-17 with

wounded out of Landstuhl Hospital there in Germany to come over here to

land at Andrews Air Force Base, and some of those wounded soldiers

would go to Walter Reed, some would go to Bethesda. But as I stood

there and lent a small hand in helping load some of those wounded as

that plane was loaded, one of the officers there told me that they had

transferred 36,000 sick and wounded, those that needed medical care out

of that theater in Iraq from Iraq to Ramstein Air Force Base and from

Ramstein over to Landstuhl hospital, from there back to the United

States. And in those transfers, 36,000 transfers, and some of those

people would have been transferred, I think, counted twice, however

that worked out, they lost one, one soldier en route. And that one that

they lost was due to cardiac arrest that was they believe unrelated to

the injuries. It is an astonishing accomplishment. It is something that

I can't imagine how one could even dream to have that kind of success.

And they are, they are dedicated.

The statement that our Republican leadership must feel insecure or

wouldn't bring up this bill and not allow amendments, why would any

leadership that was insecure bring up this bill, this resolution that

supports and defends our efforts in Iraq? Why would they bring it up at

all if they felt insecure, Mr. Speaker? I will tell you that we are

very secure in this, very confident in this. The difference is we are

not getting this message out to the people. This debate is so the

American people can hear the truth about what is going on in this

global war on terror, and in particular, the battlefield of Iraq. That

is the mission that we are on here tomorrow, to uncover and speak

truthfully and illuminate the good things that are happening, the

progress that is being made. And I intend to engage in that debate and

help with that cause and lend a hand, because every voice that stands

on the side of our military is a voice that accelerates the end of the

war and every voice that undermines or degrades or is detrimental

towards the effort and erodes the credibility of our Commander in

Chief, our Secretary of Defense, our General, our Chairman of the Joint

Chiefs of Staff Peter Pace, all of our officers, any voice that weakens

their credibility delays a successful end to this war. And delaying a

successful end to this war doesn't just put our troops at risk, Mr.

Speaker. It costs their lives. So I am proud of the work that is being

done. I am proud of the character of the people that are serving there.

I stand with them every step of the way. I have never met a more

honorable people. And I believe in the history of America, in the

history of the world, there has never been a better military go off to

war than this current crop that we have. Our Army, Navy, Air Force and

Marines, our Reserve personnel, and our National Guard personnel. And I

don't say that to disparage the efforts of any previous war or any

previous engagements or

any previous peace time service. But I will just, I say it to build on

the honorable record that was built in all of those previous conflicts.

And I say this because we have, first of all, an all volunteer

military. There is no one over there in that theater that was drafted

to go to this war. They all volunteered. And, in fact, everyone that is

over there now has re-upped in this same climate of this war. So it

wasn't that they happened to be a National Guard soldier that thought

they would just train 1 weekend a month and get their 6-week active

duty in and pretty much take life easy and cash the check. Those people

had a chance to drop out. But they are re-upping in greater numbers

than we ever anticipated. That is not a demoralized military. That is a

high morale military that is reupping on these tasks, because they

believe in this mission, as I believe in their mission. And we have an

all volunteer military, and they are getting the best training there is

in the world, build upon the culture of efficiency and proud combat,

and we add to that the equipment that they have, the modern technology

that they have, which eclipses that of anybody anywhere in the world

today, let alone in the previous half a decade or more. They have the

best equipment, the best training, the best personnel, they are all

volunteers. And our active duty personnel are supplemented by our

reserve troops and our National Guard troops. And those people bring

with them the skills of their professional lives to supplement the

skills of the training of their military lives, and that is a great

combination for a highly technical military that we have today, and

that is how we could have the technical ability to put a laser on a

safe house.

Now there is an oxymoron. I bet you that is what Zarqawi is saying in

the next life. It is really an oxymoron. There I thought I was in a

safe house. Well, it wasn't such a safe house for those people. But to

lay a cross-hairs of a laser beam on a, quote, safe house, Mr. Speaker,

and seconds later have that safe house just simply detonated by a 500-

pound bomb, and then to be sure, just drop a second 500-pound bomb in

there.

It puts me in mind of something that Rush Limbaugh said before Desert

Storm back in 1991. He said, Mr. Saddam Hussein, I have got some good

news and some bad news for you. Now, here's the bad news. Or actually,

no, I tell you, here's the good news. He said we have a weapon, at the

time he was talking about cruise missiles rather than J-DAMs. We have a

weapon, and the bad news is, let's see. I am going to get this right.

The good news is for us, we can take this weapon and we can fire it

from wherever we choose into the country we choose, and we can fire it

into the city within the country, and we can put it in the block within

the city, and we can put it within the building within the block, and

we can put it through the window of the building within the block

within the city within the country that we choose and you know, the

good news for you is we just shot off a half a dozen of those missiles

and every one of them missed its target. The bad news is the most any

of them missed by was an inch and a half, Mr. Saddam Hussein. And that

was the way Desert Storm was. And we are more accurate today with the

weapons that we have. And it saves lives. And it brings the close of

this war closer, and it convinces the enemy that they cannot win, and

in fact, that they have lost and it is a matter of time, until they

resolve to accept the reality.

That is the object of war, after all, Mr. Speaker. And von Klauswitz

wrote a book on war. And in that he said, the object of war is to

destroy the enemy's will and ability to conduct war. Destroy their will

and their ability. You could be sitting there with ranks of tanks and

all kinds of missiles and Air Force and Navy, and AK-47s, you can have

all of this equipment. You can have an Army with 2 million people, all

trained and ready. But if you don't have the will to conduct the war,

all of the ability doesn't count because you can't unleash, you can't

mobilize that effort. So Klauswitz saw, if you destroyed some of the

ability, destroy some tanks, destroy some missiles, destroy some Air

Force, take away the ability to provide fuel and food, that would

destroy some of the ability, but also would deplete the will. If you

could destroy the will to conduct the war, you have destroyed the

ability to conduct the war. That was the philosophy of Klauswitz. And

for years, since 1832, that has been the definition of war. Object of

war, destroy the enemy's will and ability to conduct war.

Steve King's definition comes like this. A war is never over till the

losing side realizes they have lost. You have to convince them that

they have lost. That is all you have to do. And if you can simply send

them a letter or go down here on the floor and give a speech, put it in

the Congressional Record and they would read that and say oh, boy, I

guess we can't win against these people. I am going to surrender. Maybe

Ahmadinejad would just come to that conclusion, because you know we are

not going to give up on that. We are not going to let that man have his

nuclear ability. But if we could just simply send a letter and convince

them that they will lose the war, then they wouldn't engage in the war,

but seldom will they give up quite so easy. And so that means that we

have to turn up the pressure, turn up the diplomatic pressure and then

maybe do some economic sanctions and then maybe do a blockade and then

if things get bad enough, maybe we have to run a little operation in

there. But at some point, this deterrent effect that says you are going

to have to take us seriously, we will not blink, we are resolved to

impose this war, this position of peace on this country, at some point

the losing side, in despair, sometimes, but without having hope of

coming out of it with any other solution, throws up their hands or as

we say in a chess game, tips over their king and says I have lost. I

surrender. I am willing to accept the consequences. I gave it my best,

but the price is too great. I no longer have the will to conduct war.

That is what we are seeking to do in Iraq. That is what we are

seeking to do globally in this global war on terror. And we are a good

long ways down that path, and we would be much further down that path

and perhaps the battlefield of Iraq would be concluded if the naysayers

and the detractors from that side of the aisle hadn't first sent their

emissaries over there to surrender before we ever went into Iraq. And

we have relentlessly been trying to convince the enemy that we will

lose and they will win since that period of time. We will hear some of

this debate tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to that and we

will knock those arguments down in this chamber. And the American

people will understand who supports the military, who doesn't, who

supports the Commander in Chief, and who doesn't.

And I would lay another principle out here that is not a negotiable

principle, to say you are for the troops and against their mission.

You cannot separate those two. If you are for the troops, you have to

ask them will you put your life on the line for the freedom of the

people in this country, this great country? And the gentleman from

Tennessee and I agree on that. This great country, the United States of

America. But you cannot ask someone to put their life on the line for

your freedom and tell them ``but you are on the wrong mission.'' You

have got to support the mission. You have got to support the troops.

And if you separate those two, if you say I am against your mission, it

is the wrong mission, you never should have gone, you should not be

there, you ought to get out and come home, but if something happens to

you, you lost your life and it has been a worthless cause, that is what

they are saying over on this side of the aisle. One and the same. You

support the mission; you support the troops. You cannot support the

troops and not the mission. These things are bound together, and they

are bound together because we asked them to risk their lives on a

mission that we believe in and we have endorsed that mission.

And so the other morning not that long ago, al-Zarqawi went to meet

his maker because of some really good targeting, some good

intelligence, some cooperation from some other entities over there,

some good work with the coalition forces, good work with the special

task force that had been shadowing him and following him for a long

time and gathering in all the intelligence and the intelligence tips

from

400 a month a year ago to 4,000 a month today. They picked up enough

information to track al-Zarqawi and put those bombs right down in on

that thing that he thought was a safe house, that we call a safe house,

that was not so safe for al-Zarqawi. But you know, blowing up that

house made this world a lot safer for the rest of us; so I will call it

a safe house by that standard.

And I am pleased and extraordinarily grateful that our military are

there doing the job they do with the professionalism that they have,

Mr. Speaker. And I am looking forward to this debate tomorrow. It will

not go long enough and it will not make enough points to satisfy me. I

think we need to do this over an extended period of time. And I will be

here to join in that debate.