Mr. Speaker, as I said a number of times in the

past, it remains a tremendous honor to step here on the floor of the

United States House of Representatives and address you about how this

dialogue that we have across America is a great big national

conversation, 300 million people, many of them talking about the very

subject matter that my colleagues in the previous hour have discussed,

and that being the issue of the global war on terror.

Particularly, because of the hearing today, the joint hearing between

the Armed Services Committee, and it used to be the International

Relations Committee, and now it's the Foreign Affairs Committee, many

of our colleagues in the room of the 435 Members of Congress, over 100

in the room and many others were watching television in offices and in

gatherings around this Hill. There was a national conversation going on

and taking place here.

As we move forward with our discussion, one of the things that

happens is, as talking members of the 300 million people of America

carry on their conversation, a consensus forms. As a consensus forms,

it works that the constituents across the country call up and write

letters and send e-mails to and stop in and see their Members of

Congress and their staff.

As that goes on, if the American people are informed, if they are

informed honestly and objectively, if they can get there, they can get

their eyes and their hands and their ears on the facts, the American

people often come to an appropriate and proper conclusion.

But it happens to be a fact that nearly every week that we have been

in session in this 110th Congress, now into September, having gaveled

in here in January, nearly every week, there has been at least one bill

on the floor, that was a bill, I believe, sought to undermine our

efforts in this global war on terror.

Except for last week, there wasn't one. Yet, the commitment that was

made on the part of the request to Congress, and on the part of our

military and the President, was to deliver a report here to Congress by

September 15, on or before September 15, that would be an objective

update on the operations in Iraq, which I will stipulate again is the

most centralized, the most contested battleground in this global war on

terror.

We all knew this report was coming, and today we received that

report. That report was delivered here to Congress in written form and

verbally by General Petraeus and by Ambassador Ryan Crocker.

Well, it's interesting that when the date of this report became

something that was published and people were aware of, that's when the

debate began.

We started to see an intensity of the different amendments and the

resolutions that came before Congress. There are no resolution to

unfund the war and call our troops home, but resolutions to try to do

that without having to admit that that was the effort. As each one of

those resolutions came up, by my view, each one of them one way or

another failed with the American people. The argument was continuing.

The debate was continuing.

The people that were invested in, let me say, cut-and-run policy and

tactics in Iraq, those people thought that they were going to win this

argument with the American people, before General Petraeus brought his

report before Congress. That's why those resolutions came to this floor

every week, in my view, and that's why the media was delivered, message

after message, that there was a failed effort in Iraq.

That's also why I and many of my colleagues went to Iraq during that

period of time. I made my fifth trip over there on the last weekend of

July with a number of my colleagues in codel Burgess. On that fifth

trip, it's hard to say, even when you go back to the same place, what

was different. Because you will see sometimes different people, and you

get a bit different report.

But one thing you do is get briefings, internal briefings, classified

briefings, from our top officers that we have and compare the

information that comes from General Petraeus and General Odierno and

Ambassador Crocker and Admiral Fallon. Those people that are at the

front of this that are in the lead that are calling the shots from the

highest levels, all the way down through the ranks, when you walk into

a mess hall and simply say is there anyone here from Iowa, pretty soon

you have a table full, know their hometowns and know some of the people

that they are related to and know that there is an instant contact

there. We compare notes Iowan-to-Iowan and then compare those notes

with the briefings that we receive from our top officers.

Close the door and have an intense, classified discussion with

General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, then come back here to this

Congress and listen to the debate and watch the effort here on the

other side of the aisle, the effort that I believe was invested in

defeat. I will say even a significant number are still invested in

defeat.

But, yet, they thought they could win the debate and convince the

American people that the cause was lost in Iraq. They thought they

could win the debate before General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker

delivered their report to this Congress that it would be a moot point.

Whatever it was that General Petraeus might offer today, they wanted to

have the American people convinced. A majority number of Members of

Congress were convinced that it was a lost and failed effort in Iraq.

Well, enough information came out from that part of the world; enough

Members went over and saw for themselves. Enough Members like myself

went into al Anbar province that, according to General Petraeus today,

was politically lost a year ago. It was a hopeless case a year ago.

As I was there the last of July, every single tribal area in al Anbar

province, and I would remind the body, that that is one-third, Anbar

province is one third of the geographical area of Iraq. It represented

over half the deaths and violence of Iraq. It was the center of al

Qaeda in Iraq. Ramadi was the center of death for the country.

Still, every single tribal area in the entire province of that one-

third of Iraq was, a year ago, controlled by al Qaeda. Hamas was

preaching an anti-U.S., anti-coalition, anti-Iraqi defense force

message.

But as I match the maps, as the tribal zones change and the sheikhs,

the tribal leaders, got together, the they made a commitment to come

together to kill al Qaeda with coalition forces and with Iraqi defense

forces. Every single tribal zone, every sheikh in all of al Anbar

province came over to the coalition side, to the side of freedom, and

to the side of a free Iraqi people.

When that happened, there was a dramatic sea change in al Anbar

province. If you looked at the map of the tribal zones, it was already

a year ago painted red because that was al Qaeda. Today, every tribal

zone in al Anbar province is green, meaning they are on our side now,

they are with us. They said they want to come kill al Qaeda with us.

That was their message.

When you see that kind of briefing, and you hear the briefing that

came from General Petraeus today, but some of this information came out

piece by piece, week by week, as there was an effort to undermine our

effort in Iraq, came to a head today. Those who were invested in defeat

had to make a case today that there was something weak about this

military effort, something weak about the security effort, that there

was something disingenuous about the delivery, about the report that

was delivered today.

What I saw today was truly two highly intelligent people with worlds

of experience in the Middle East, Ambassador Crocker and General

Petraeus.

As I saw them with their delivery and their presentation and the

facts that they laid out carefully, completely, objectively, with

caution about those parts that aren't going so well, brought out before

we heard the good news about the parts that are going well, this was a

stellar report that the American people can take to the bank. We don't

have all the problems solved in Iraq. There is a ways to go, and maybe

a long ways to go. It's not going to be easy, but it looks far better

today than the news media has characterized it to be.

So there is much to be said about this momentous day today, this

watershed day today, the records that were accumulated from General

Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker. As I watched my colleagues listen to

that delivery and ask their questions and probe, I can only reflect

that the people that came out of this thing with their integrity intact

were the ones delivering the report. The ones who were their critics

were silenced in the end. That's the conclusion that I think an

objective media will be reporting tomorrow.

But at this point, I recognize the gentleman from Tennessee, Mr. Zach

Wamp.

I thank the gentleman from Tennessee for his

delivery. And I reflect that General Petraeus' last part of his

prepared testimony said, in closing, it remains an enormous privilege

to soldier again in Iraq with America's new Greatest Generation. Our

country's men and women in uniform have done a magnificent job in the

most complex and challenging environment imaginable. All Americans

should be very proud of their sons and daughters serving in Iraq today.

He also said that he believes that this is perhaps the most

professional military to ever take to the field. And I recall a

discussion that we had in Baghdad just about 5 or 6 weeks ago, and the

statement was made that this is not only the most professional but the

best military that's ever been put into the field, that's ever gone to

war.

And one of the remarks they made, in addition to well-trained and

brave and dedicated and well-equipped and patriotic and all of those

adjectives that we use, one of the other ones was and the most

perceptive. The most perceptive.

And that caught me off guard, Mr. Speaker. I didn't expect that. But

I understood what that meant; to have the perception to know the

difference on when to shoot and when not to shoot, when to be the

ambassador and when to be the soldier. That's one of the hardest

things, and sometimes a decision has to be made in a split second. And

that's what they meant by the

most perceptive military to be sent off to war.

And again, much was said today, much will be said about today. But at

this point, I'd be happy to yield as much time as he may consume to the

chairman of the Policy Committee from Michigan, Mr. Thaddeus McCotter.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Michigan,

the chairman of the Policy Committee, for the insights he has shared

with us tonight.

And we get those insights on a fairly regular basis here, and it is

quite interesting to track the intellect of Mr. McCotter and causes me

to reflect upon the constitutional limitations that this Congress has,

Mr. Speaker. And in spite of the bill after bill, resolution after

resolution, and policy piece after policy piece that have been brought

forward here by almost an average of one a week the entire 110th

Congress, there are only just a few things that we have the

constitutional authority to do when it comes to war, Mr. Speaker. And

the first thing that Congress can do is raise an army and a navy, and

that is constitutional, and by implication, an air force. It's clearly

a constitutional responsibility of the Congress. And the second thing

we can do is we can declare war, and that is constitutional

responsibility also that is clearly defined in our Constitution. And

the third thing we can do is fund the war.

But there is no provision in this Constitution for micromanaging the

war. That goes outside the bounds of our constitutional authority. The

management of the war and, in fact, the micromanagement of the war lies

within the authority, the constitutionally invested authority, of the

Commander in Chief. That is why that is drafted in the Constitution in

that fashion. It gives the authority to the Commander in Chief because

our Founders went through a difficult Revolutionary War period. They

were the Continental Congress. They were essentially a confederacy that

had gathered together because of a common cause. And the Continental

Congress raised the Continental Army, and the Continental Army was an

army that was driven by consensus. And they understood the difficulties

in fighting a war if you had

to reach a consensus before you could move forward and make a decision.

They knew you had to have a Commander in Chief, a Commander in Chief

who could evaluate all the information, gather his officers around him,

gather the information, and then make a definitive directive to be able

to give an order to take bold action with intelligence, with military

action, both offensively and defensively. They understood that. They

learned some bitter lessons during the Revolutionary War. You can't

fight a war by consensus. You have got to have a Commander in Chief at

the top. That's why the Constitution is drafted in the fashion it is,

and that's why the Constitution prohibits us from micromanaging a war.

And yet the effort continues, an effort by this Congress, to

micromanage this war that's going on. I recall the Speaker and the

chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee sitting over there in Syria

negotiating with a person whom we have declared to be a state sponsor

of terrorism, and the chairman of that committee announced we have a

new Democrat foreign policy. Well, I would like to think that when you

pledge an oath to uphold this Constitution, you also are obligated to

read it and understand it. And in that are the limitations that say to

us, Congress, you can raise an army and a navy and by implication an

air force and you can declare war and you can fund them, but you can't

micromanage that war and you can't conduct foreign policy. Both of

those things are forbidden by the Constitution. They are vested in the

Commander in Chief, our chief executive officer, because we have got to

speak with one voice and we have got to fight with one effort. It can't

be a divided effort, and it can't be an effort to undermine our

military.

I would be happy to yield to the fast-thinking, slow-talking

gentleman from Georgia (Mr. Gingrey).

I thank the gentleman from Michigan. He poses a

question that is a difficult one for those who want to withdraw from

this operation, the simple cut-and-run version, to answer. It is left

for those to answer, Mr. Speaker.

I would point out also that yesterday I did a memorial dedication at

Charter Oak, Iowa, for all of the military personnel that have come

from that area since the beginning of the conflicts, since that area

was settled. It starts with the Mexican-American War, goes to the Civil

War and on up to today.

They placed out in the field there by the memorial 4,200 flags

representing the lives of the Americans that have been sacrificed in

this global war on terror in this quest for freedom. It also represents

50 million people that live free today that didn't at the beginning of

this global war on terror.

I looked back at the dedication and the sacrifice of all of them, and

I added to that dedication another sacrifice, a sacrifice that we hear

very little of, and that is those over-5,000 Americans who gave their

lives during a time of peace during the period between Desert Storm and

the beginning of this global war on terror, 510 a year, Mr. Speaker.

I thank you for being recognized. I thank all the speakers here

tonight that have spoken up for freedom.