I thank the gentleman from Iowa. I just want to touch

on some points regarding strategic basis of the surge and some of the

goals, some of what we've heard today. Your indulgence. Just touch upon

some of the general themes that our Nation faces in the war for

freedom.

Mistakes in the past in Iraq have been rectified under the Petraeus

plan. As I have said and many here have said on our side of the aisle,

in the early days of the problems of reconstruction, we believed that

you could not impose democracy from above in a top-down approach, but

you could unleash liberty so that it could rise up, much as the

American Revolution did, to take its own shape as the Iraqi people were

emancipated from the shackles of Saddam's oppression.

What General Petraeus is doing, in conjunction with Ambassador

Crocker, is they are going into the towns, they're going into the

tribes, they are going into the bedrock of the population of Iraq, and

with the surge, providing the security to protect these individuals in

these towns from the collective and systematic terror of the enemy, so

that average Iraqis can make the local political shift to liberty and

away from the insurgency. This is being done not simply through the

utilization of military force. In fact, the success on the ground in

the local levels and in the provinces and in our cooperation with the

tribes is built upon and hastened by this political shift among the

population.

In any counterinsurgency operation, the critical element is to

separate the population from the insurgency. This can be reasoned, if

we look back at some of the statements of the grand guerilla warrior,

Chairman Mao. When asked about how his guerilla operations and

insurgencies against the nationalist Chinese would work, he said, our

people will be as the fishes amongst the water of the people. What you

have to do is separate the fish from the water. This is why the

critical testimony I believe we heard today was that every single

Iraqi, everyone in Anbar Province and elsewhere where we are seeing

progress is being given the ability to make the free, conscious

decision to reach for their liberty. They are not being terrorized

because of the valor of our troops and the plan and the reconstruction

efforts that are flowing into these areas that show they have a

transactional benefit in this transformational change. And this is

hastening the local political shift which I believe undergirds our

chances for victory in Iraq. This is also what undergirds the good news

that we had today, at least the welcome news that, because of the local

shift amongst the population and the improved security that is

concomitant to it, General Petraeus has proposed a reduction of 4,000

troops by the end of the year and a reduction of 40,000 troops by July.

Even if our Nation is so divided that we cannot unite in the cause of

victory in Iraq, at least let us unite with the welcome news that 4,000

now and 40,000 of our fellow Americans citizens are going to be

returning from harm's way to their loved ones.

To have individuals derive this as a token gesture is to accuse

General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker of what the accusers themselves

are doing, which is to play politics with the lives of our troops. We

have seen, despite all evidence, despite what the military's assessment

has been, repeated calls for the immediate withdrawal of the United

States forces from Iraq. This would be irresponsible not only to our

troops in the field but to the people of the region, especially the

Iraqis themselves, who would be slaughtered.

When one decides to engage in a strategic withdrawal in the face of

enemy, military experts generally concur that this is one of the most

dangerous maneuvers forces in the field can attempt because your

numbers are getting smaller as the enemy is becoming emboldened and

encroaching ever closer to you. The wholesale withdrawal on a date

certain, which is an arbitrary dictate from politicians in Washington,

for those who believe that this is a proper course of action, I ask

them to check into how the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan went, and

they might reach another decision.

Further, to call this a token gesture not only belittles the

sacrifices that our troops have made to reduce the security problems in

these areas and to help get this local political shift, it also

diminishes and belittles in a callous way the true joy these troops'

families are going to feel when their loved ones come back.

To me that is something that is not a token. That is something that

relieves the painful anxiety of every waking minute these families

spend wondering if their loved one will come home. I highly doubt that

the military mothers in my district or throughout America are ever

going to consider any troop coming home from accomplishing their

mission as being a token gesture.

Be that as it may, it is also critical that we understand, in this

period of time, that ours is the latest generation duty bound to defend

freedom in its hour of maximum danger. Thus we must ever remember,

through this crucible of liberty, our course is tough but our cause is

just.

The enemy is the sire of tyranny; we are the children of liberty. By

heinously invading our Nation on September 11, 2001, and killing 3,000

innocent American souls, the enemy announced we cannot co-exist. In

consequence, it is clear a world condensed by an Internet cannot endure

half slave and half free. Yes, many times in the life of our free

Republic, we have been called upon to face danger and to defeat it, and

we have always done this and secured it by advancing a simple elemental

truth that has served us well: to ensure our own liberty, we must

ensure liberty to the enslaved.

Thus in this trying time, it is imperative that we demonstrate that

our devotion to liberty transcends their obsession with death. And

united amongst ourselves and other free people, with prudence, we can,

we must, and we will, for the sake of our children and the generations

of Americans yet unnamed, we will win and we will walk our path, and we

will widen the cause of human freedom.

I thank you for allowing me the chance to address you.

Thank you. The gentleman from New Mexico, the good

doctor from Texas and other speakers have touched upon a fundamental

point. I wish to stress what General Petraeus said in terms of what an

American victory would look like and then ask a question of those who

would support an immediate withdrawal.

In his own letter to the troops, General Petraeus said that what we

need is for the Iraqis to become solely responsible for their own

security. That means a very small footprint, if at all, of the United

States in Iraq militarily. Secondly, it will depend upon the local

reconstruction, reconciliation, and security of the average Iraqi which

will then drive the national reconciliation. Between those two pillars

of local reconciliation and security will come a stable and free Iraq

that no longer creates terrorists, but captures them instead.

But as we are the children of liberty, as we are a Nation that

proudly proclaims it is conceived in liberty, that since every human

being has an unalienable, God-given right to breathe free, to have the

right to pursue life, liberty and happiness, I ask my fellow Americans

who support the immediate withdrawal this: If we betray our fundamental

commitment to liberty to the people of Iraq and watch them be

slaughtered in the sands, what will we ever be able to offer them again

to turn them from the enemy and towards us? If we betray our own

profession of the desire to liberate them, to let them share in their

God-given rights the same way we have, we will be ideologically

disarmed in the war for freedom.

I assure you we will rue the day that we betrayed not only them but

the inherited legacy that we have received from the greatest

generations of Americans who preceded us and allowed us to live in the

majestic America that we know today.