Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me

before he yields to the gentleman from New Mexico, because as I join

this hour Special Order and I am hearing from my colleagues, some of

the brightest minds and best speakers on our side of the aisle, I don't

think I could stand to go behind all four of them. So I am happy to

have the opportunity. But it's awfully tough following my colleagues of

the likes of the chairman of the Policy Committee and part of our

leadership.

But I wanted quickly, Mr. Speaker, to again pay tribute to General

Petraeus and also Ambassador Ryan Crocker. I just want to point out, in

regard to Ambassador Crocker, I was reading his bio before they

testified before our two committees today, the 6\1/2\- to 7-hour

testimony, physically an ordeal, but Ambassador Ryan Crocker, I think a

lot of people, Mr. Speaker, don't know his bio, and I don't have time

to read it all. But suffice to say that in September 2004 President

Bush conferred on Ambassador Ryan Crocker the personal rank of career

ambassador, career ambassador, the highest rank in the foreign service.

This is the character of the man and the men that presented this report

to us today.

And, basically, we cut right to the chase, and what they said is, now

is not the time to quit, and give victory a chance. You can slice it

and dice it any way you want to, but that is basically what they said

to the 111 members of those two committees, the House Armed Services

Committee, the House Committee on Foreign Relations.

And so I just want to make three points, though, Mr. Speaker, that I

have thought about and that I have heard in the last couple of weeks on

reasons that I have heard Members give for wanting to give up and not

give victory a chance.

One of them was this business of, well, you know, it has been too

great a strain and stress on our forces. We don't have enough troops

back home. What if some other conflagration, war, would break out

somewhere in the world in the next year, 2 years, 5 years? We don't

have enough troops. We need to bring them home.

Well, Mr. Speaker, retired General Jack Keane, the Vice Chairman of

the United States Army, Vice Chief of Staff, spoke to us last week as

well, and he also spoke on Saturday morning on Washington Journal. I

hope some of my colleagues saw that. But what General Keane said, and I

agree with him so much, is, You mean to tell me that you want to accept

defeat? You want to lose the war, a war of this magnitude, as the

gentleman from Tennessee pointed out, and what all is at stake in

regard to the Middle East in this global war on terror? You want to

give up that war so that you can bring the troops home and then restock

and get ready for the next potential conflict and that's a good trade-

off? I don't think so.

And I want to say another thing, Mr. Speaker, that I have heard a lot

of people say: We can't afford this war. We cannot afford to spend $750

billion, almost $1 trillion and counting, on this war because we need

to rebuild our infrastructure in our country. We need to shore up our

bridges. Obviously, that was in the news because of the tragic

occurrence in Minnesota. Or we need more money for Head Start, or we

need more money for K-12 education, or we need more Pell Grants, or we

need to have more money for the food stamp program and the farm bill or

whatever you can come up with.

Let me tell my colleagues, if you don't spend the money to protect

the American people, what good do all these other things do us when you

see what can happen and did 6 years ago today on 9/11 when over 3,000

were killed and the economic blow to this country was over $2 trillion?

You talk about destroying some infrastructure. That's what it's all

about when you let your guard down and you don't stand up and be secure

in this country.

And last but not least, I have heard many say, well, you know, our

troops are coming home injured and many of them are suffering from

post-traumatic stress disorder or syndrome. That's where you wake up at

night, having nightmares, and maybe for the rest of your life you can't

get over the mental trauma that you have gone through in a time of

difficult war.

Well, let me tell you something my colleagues, as a physician Member

of this body. You talk about post-traumatic stress syndrome. You think

a lot of them are coming back with that now? You think that that is a

tragedy? Well, you just wait and see the numbers that come back with

mental illness and post-traumatic stress syndrome and nightmares and a

life of anxiety when they have to come back knowing that their comrades

in arms have died in vain, their buddies in the foxhole have been blown

to smithereens by some improvised explosive device and they have to

come home a loser. And we are not going to let that happen, and I think

that is what General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker were telling us

today: let's give victory a chance.

With that I will say, finally, as I conclude, who wins politically?

Who cares. The American people lose if we lose in Iraq. That is what is

important. This is not about the next election; this is about giving

victory a chance.