Thank you, Mr. King. I appreciate the work that you're

doing on this issue on the eve of 9/11.

It behooves us all to remember exactly what happened. It behooves us

all to remember the loss of that 1 day, and like my friend from Georgia

says, over $2 trillion in loss from America's asset base that day, and

even worse, the 3,000 lives that were lost.

I went to Iraq on Thursday evening. We left after votes on Thursday,

flew all night long, and ended up in Iraq on Saturday and Sunday. And

we spent the night in Baghdad on Saturday night and Sunday visiting

with the troops and visiting with Iraqis.

I was struck by the cautious optimism that General Petraeus related

to us today, a very cautious optimism that the trend lines are

favorable, that we're seeing some lessening of violence, and that's the

sort of things that I found there from the troops in the country. I

wanted to visit with our soldiers one on one. I had the opportunity to

ride into Baghdad with troops who were going for the first time. I sat

across from a Captain Serrano from Chicago and was able to talk to her

about the 2-year-old daughter that waits at home for her. Her husband,

who is engaged in going through sheriff's training to hopefully work

for the sheriff's department there. And we're asking the sacrifice of

young men and women daily to be there and stand in the gap to stand

between the terrorists and ourselves.

I have one of my friends who says, I hear America is at war. He said,

America is not at war, America is at the mall, our military is at war.

I think if we've made a mistake since 9/11, it's in failing to accept

our responsibility individually, every single one of us, our

responsibility to be engaged in this problem, because we are literally

fighting for the future of freedom throughout the world. The terrorists

who hate us hate our way of life. They hate our freedoms. They hate the

films that come out from the West. They think they're corrupting their

young people. They think that our society is decadent and that we're

corrupting their cultures, so they simply want to annihilate us. That's

the difference between a democracy or a republic and the tyrannical

states of radical jihad that say that we will annihilate the West and

we will annihilate America and Americans.

I remember, on this eve of 9/11, President Bush's three goals. It was

very simple. He said, first of all, if you harbor a terrorist, you are

a terrorist. But then he said we're going to do three things: We're

going to uproot the terrorist training camps that exist throughout the

Arab world. We're going to stop the training and the production of new

radicals. The second thing he said is we're going to stop the funds

that flow from supposedly legitimate compassionate organizations when

actually they're funding terrorists. So we're going to uproot the

training camps, we're going to stop the funding of terrorists, and

finally, we're going to take the fight to the terrorists.

Now, there are many on the left who say that Iraq is not about the

terrorists. The terrorists are coming in from Syria, they're coming in

from around the world, they're coming in from Iran. This is the site

where we are fighting terrorists. Now, maybe it began that way, maybe

it didn't begin that way, but it's the way it is now. And if we walk

away from that country, the general consensus is that Iraq will fall

within days to the terrorists, to the terrorist state of Iran.

After Iraq falls, we're going to see difficulties in Egypt and

Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Qatar. And pretty soon you can see

that every one of our friends in the Arab world is at risk. And there

are people who ask me, well, how could those countries fall? Just

remember back to 1979 when the shah of Iran was making great progress

in westernizing that country, and in a matter of days was thrown from

power, his whole government collapsed. We stood by, President Jimmy

Carter stood by and did not lift a finger for our friends. And that's

exactly how the falls will occur at this state.

The difference is that now we import over 60 percent of our oil, and

most of it comes from the Middle East. If those countries fall, the

terrorists have said they're going to cut the supply of oil off to the

world. They will plunge the world economy into chaos. And that's how

they're going to create the economic destruction of the United States

and of the West.

I went to Israel earlier this year. They said if you leave Iraq, you

will allow us to fall, because they saw the same scenario that I'm

repeating, that all of our friends in the Middle East will fall, and

then ultimately Israel says ``we will fall.'' Now, my personal belief

is that Israel is our first line of defense against terrorists. They've

been fighting since their inception against radical jihads in the

Middle East. They are our first line of defense, and if they fall, what

calamity and what terrors await for us in this country? There are many

who say that it's just a fabrication, that it's not true, and yet we

see the signs all around us.

As I visited with our troops in Iraq over this past weekend, I

conveyed one message, that we thank you. We thank you for your service

and we thank you for your sacrifice. We thank you for serving your

country honorably, and we thank you for serving your country well. As

the gentleman from Iowa mentioned, this is one of the messages of

General Petraeus, that this may be the best military the United States

has ever had.

I do not believe the terrorists can win. I do believe that there are

those in this Congress and those in this country who can cause this

magnificent military to fail. And if they fail, I don't know where the

hope for humanity comes. I don't see any other country in the world

willing to fight for freedom and to fight to resist the radical jihad

that threatens us all; to fight to resist and to fight to retaliate

from circumstances like 9/11/01.

So that's what we're doing today is remembering those events 6 years

ago, remembering what our responses were and what our anger was on that

evening as we contemplated the events of the day. Both sides, Democrat

or Republican, in those days were of the same mind, that we need to get

to the terrorists before they get to us. I'm not sure where we came off

of the rails and where we've lost so much consensus. It's not good for

the United States and it's not good for the world because we're still

in a very difficult circumstance fighting a very difficult battle, one

that General Petraeus today said is going to be awfully hard.

It's going to be a long struggle, and it's a struggle that will be up

and down. He believes our young military men and women are sufficient

to the task. I do also. So I would yield back to the gentleman from

Iowa by saying thanks to our troops. I hope that we all keep them in

our thoughts and prayers.

God bless you to the troops, and God bless America. I thank the

gentleman from Iowa.