You're starting us off on a bad note.

It's good to be here this evening and to engage in conversation and

dialogue certainly on the situation that we are in today in Iraq, and

certainly in this country.

I want to deviate just a little bit and talk a little bit about my

study hall period. Folks say that Members of Congress had recess. When

I was in school and we had recess, we played most of the time; but I

can assure you for the last several weeks of the month of August I did

a lot of traveling in the district I represent, listening to a lot of

people, the chamber of commerce, business people, individuals on the

street, country stores, wherever I might have been, restaurants, coffee

shops. We talked about a lot of things. People are worried about the

war in Iraq. People are worried about the war in Iraq to the point

where we know we can't lose there or we can't allow this nation to go

into anarchy, but how do we prevent that from happening?

And as I listened to those debates and those dialogs, I realized that

people were seriously concerned about what we're doing and how we're

engaged. I hear people talking about whether we should have gone or

not. That's legitimate, and I think historians, probably political

scientists over the next several years, next decades and next centuries

will obviously gauge that and will judge that. We can talk about

whether the war was prosecuted right or not; and, quite frankly, I

think there are some questions there as to whether or not this

administration, Mr. Speaker, and whether this White House, Mr. Speaker,

has engaged the way that would bring about a quicker resolution to

where it would win much quicker in Iraq.

But when I went home on Sunday, I drove back down through the

Shenandoah Valley, down Highway 81, hit Interstate 40, went across the

Cumberland Plateau, and I realized what a beautiful Nation we have.

When you look at those hills along the Blue Ridge down through the

Shenandoah Valley and then the Cumberland Plateau near the Cumberland

Gap and realize the beauty of this vast Nation that we have and the

people who live here.

I had an opportunity, my first day off, to spend about 7 hours

fishing at a great warrior's old mill, Sergeant Alvin C. York, in

Palmyra where I live.

Mr. Ross, I had an opportunity with

my oldest daughter and two of my grandchildren to go fishing. We were

going to spend probably a couple hours there. We wound up spending over

7 hours. The last day that I spent in my district, I did the same

thing, not intentionally. My middle daughter called and came up on

Sunday, and I spent, as I did my first Monday home, my last Monday home

I spent fishing in the rivers there below Sergeant York's home in the

mill pond. Now, Sergeant York was a great American hero. But we have

had other great American heroes, as well, Eisenhower being one of them.

I want to mention something about Eisenhower in just a moment. But

first of all, I want to talk about what someone that America respects

greatly said a few years ago. Clark Clifford and Richard Holbrooke

wrote a book in 1991 called ``Counsel to the President.'' After Winston

Churchill had made his ``Iron Curtain'' speech in Fulton, Missouri,

they were traveling back on the train from Missouri. President Truman

and many of his staff members had already retired for the evening. The

three people who were basically sitting in the room at that time were

Charles Ross, who was the press secretary for Truman, and Clark

Clifford and Churchill. They talked about how our lives are influenced

strictly by the accident of our birth.

What Churchill said, and I am quoting him as quoted in the book, ``If

I were to be born again, I would wish to be born in the United States.

Your country is the future of the world. You have natural resources,

the spirit, the youth, the determination, which will steadily increase

your global influence.'' He was correct in making that assessment over

60 years ago as he made this speech. He was correct then. And we are

correct today to say that America's presence in the world today is

recognized.

But why has it changed? Why would a great Brit, who is considered the

Brit's Britishman, say, ``If I were to be born again, I would love to

have been born an American''? How many people in the world today would

say that? I would say that because when God put my soul in the body of

a woman who lived in America, it was a great blessing for me just to be

born in this country. We have got to regain and recapture throughout

the world that spirit that folks from nations abroad have seen in this

country, and I think we can recover it, to where we are looked upon, as

Ronald Reagan said, as that shining light of freedom that folks can

look at and aspire to.

We need an Eisenhower moment in Iraq. It has been said that after

Eisenhower was elected President in 1952 that as he was ordered up he

asked, as a general, from the military people in the field, the Army,

if he could be able to have a few small planes that he would fly over

South Korea and in parts of North Korea. It is also said, and his

memoirs pretty much confirmed this, that after they landed he was

silent for a few moments. And he basically said, We cannot win this war

the way that we are fighting it, but we can't afford to lose it,

either. We cannot win this war the way we are fighting it. He knew we

would have to engage in a much greater, larger war that would include

perhaps even China, which would have stretched America's resources and

I think America's fiber to the breaking point.

Eisenhower understood that we were in a war that we should not have

been in. Now some will question what I am saying. But that was

Eisenhower's comments. It is a war that we are not ready to win. It is

a war that we can lose, and we can't afford to lose. In his first 6 or

8 months of his Presidency, he brought about a resolution of a cease-

fire in Korea. Did we stay there? Sure, we have been. Will we stay in

Iraq? Sure we will. Every resolution that we passed on this floor that

calls for a date certain authorizes this administration and authorizes

the Defense Department to keep adequate personnel in the field and

military presence in the field to help protect the resources, the

assets of this country and protect our friends in the area and to help

train the troops and the soldiers of the armies, the policemen, and the

civilians of Iraq. We will be there several years from now, just as we

were in South Korea, as we were in Western Europe. It is how we stay

that makes the difference. It is how we stay that will make the

difference.

The way we are there now I don't believe is the way we ought to be.

We can no longer be the army for Iraq. We can no longer be the

policemen in the streets, on the beat, providing security for the folks

in Iraq. The Brits just pulled out. This great British leader named

Winston Churchill, his country just pulled their troops out of Basra.

Are we going to have a surge in Basra with American troops?

Mr. Speaker, let's ask the President that. Is that our intention now,

that we will have a surge and resupply the troops there? Because it

seems in southern Iraq obviously there is a lot of turmoil, a lot of

killings, basically a civil war between the Shias, now some folks say

are happening. In northern Iraq where the Kurds are, we are not there

operating as the army or the policemen on the beat. In northern Iraq

where the Kurds are, they are providing their own autonomy.

It is my opinion that the longer we stay in Iraq, the worse we will

be. We need an Eisenhower moment in Iraq, not a General Custer moment,

not a charge into the Little Big Horn to where we get destroyed. It is

time that we reassess our situation in Iraq to a war that we win in

Iraq.

I am saddened as I watch TV. I am seeing Iraq being sold by TV

commercials as if we are selling an automobile to the American public.

That saddens me when I see some of our wonderful soldiers, and I

applaud them, who are saying, We cannot cut and run. I agree with them.

We can't cut and run. But we don't need to be selling this war on TV

commercials as the right thing to do.

The thing that we have not done, in my opinion, is that we have

allowed Afghanistan to be left pretty much as an island to themselves.

Oh, we are there. But just think what we could have done if we had

spent the time and resources and kept the number of troops in

Afghanistan that we moved to Iraq.

It is my belief that Karzai would have probably been, and still may

be, someone that we may call their George Washington. We now see

troubles in Pakistan. We are now seeing countries in Central Asia after

the dominance of the Soviet Union for many years, many are floundering

around trying to figure which is the best route to go. Each feels, I

believe, that democracy is the best route to take. Many are struggling

with their democracies in Central Asia. Just think of what we could

have done in Afghanistan if, in fact, we had stayed there, helped build

that country to take out those that would do harm to them, to destroy

Afghanistan. We could have helped build a democracy that I believe

would have been infectious, and an epidemic of democratic nations would

have been springing up all over to continue to bloom and to progress in

Central Asia.

It would have been infectious, in my opinion, in the Middle East, as

well, and we would have seen I think the tumbling of the strongman-type

governments. In every one of those countries surrounding Iraq, there is

a strong person who runs those countries. If we had stayed and

continued in Afghanistan, we would have seen, in my opinion, a much

different Middle East than we see today and a much different Central

Asia.

One of the real problems we have today is I think even Pakistan would

have seen the success in Afghanistan and might have wanted to move

further in that direction. In fact, the Taliban-type warriors and al

Qaeda led by Osama bin Laden did attack us. I keep hearing these folks

from the side saying, If we don't fight them there, we will fight them

here. What do you think happened on September 11? They were here. And

we have forgotten who attacked us. It wasn't Iraq. It was Osama bin

Laden and the al Qaeda network. They are now, in some folks' opinion,

in the areas of Waziristan and Pakistan. If, in fact, we allow, or if,

in fact, Pakistan were to fall, guess who gets the nuclear weapons?

So our foreign policy, in my opinion, needs to be revisited. All of

us need to start being American Democrats and American Republicans, not

right-wingers and left-wingers. It looks like we have chosen up sides

here and we have started to listen to the talk shows on one side or we

look at the liberal communications on the other side, and all of a

sudden that is what drives us in this country. It is time we start

being Americans again, American Democrats and American Republicans, and

look at our failures. Eisenhower understood it. George Custer found it

out. We don't need a Custer move. We don't need to have advertisements

telling us we need to have a war in TV commercials.

We need honesty, Mr. President. We need honesty. My request to you is

that you have an Eisenhower moment, one of honesty. Let's get on with

making sure we rebuild that area, put our troops out of the kill zone

and stop requiring them to be the soldiers. Because if in Basra and

southern Iraq and northern Iraq our troops are not there, and the only

place where it seems the most violent actions that take place is where

our troops are, that should tell us something.

We need to be sure that we keep enough troops to keep Syria or Iran,

or quite frankly even our friend called Turkey, from invading Iraq for

their own beneficial gain and let Iraq work its problems out. It is

time. We have given them a government. They have accepted their

government. They have elected their government. It is time for them to

start leading and taking on the responsibility. I call upon this

President, this administration, and this Congress to work together to

make that happen.

We have built and helped build in South Korea over a period of 30-40

years one of the strongest democracies in the Asian-Pacific rim and

Asia, the strongest economy called South Korea. It took a long time. It

will take a long time to resolve the differences in the Middle East. It

will take a long time to resolve the differences in Iraq. But we cannot

do it the way we are doing it today.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things we

really need to make sure of is that the American public as they watch

this Blue Dog Coalition group here talk tonight, every one of us to the

``T'' comes from rural areas basically. We love America, we love our

troops, we visit them.

I have been to Iraq five times and Afghanistan twice. I went for a

reason, to tell our troops thank troops thank you, we love you, we

appreciate you. We pray that an umbrella of safety will be put over our

troops. We work for those back home to be sure that their families are

recognized and that our communities uphold them and undergird them.

I don't want anybody to have a misinterpretation of what we are

saying here tonight. This is about America, and it is not about TV ads

that try to justify a war going on in Iraq. I am ashamed those things

are on TV. We support our troops, and we will continue to do that.