Mr. Speaker, I spent most of my life in a competitive

environment and, during that time, I tried to understand why some

organizations are successful and why some fail and some win and some

lose. It seems to me that in a competitive endeavor that three

principles were critical.

Number one, unity of purpose; everyone having a common goal and

pulling together. Number 2, the willingness to pay a greater price than

the opposition; to sacrifice, to suffer, if necessary. And number 3,

having confidence in a successful outcome to believe in the

organization.

I believe that these principles are generally time-tested and proven.

It seems to me that some of these principles might apply to our

struggle in Iraq.

Recently I have heard some comments that the war is unwinnable. This

is troubling, because it seems to me that words matter. Such statements

are often self-fulfilling prophecies, because if you think you cannot,

if you say you cannot, you probably cannot.

So what if a football coach or a coach of any kind told his team that

they probably could not win? They probably would not win. What if

Washington told his troops at Valley Forge that they could not win? It

probably would have made a big difference in the final outcome. What if

Lincoln had said after Antietam, where 26,000 casualties occurred in

one day, the bloodiest single day in our history, if he had said, it is

over, we cannot win? What if MacArthur had said this: Instead of saying

he was going to return, what if he had said he was going to quit and go

home? Or what if Eisenhower had said during the Battle of the Bulge

that he could not be successful either?

Recently a Member of Congress came up to me and asked me this. He

said, what is the exit strategy? I guess the way the question was

phrased, it was how do we get out of this and somehow save face? How do

we gracefully depart? I guess I did not have a good answer for him. As

a matter of fact, I was puzzled because I had not really thought of

that kind of an exit. I thought the exit strategy was to win. I did not

know we had another exit strategy. The exit strategy, as I understand,

was to displace the Taliban in Afghanistan, Saddam Hussein in Iraq, set

up a representative government in both countries, train and equip each

country's police and military to provide stability, and then leave. The

rest of it, I believe, is up to the Afghan and Iraqi people. Much of

this has been done already. It is certainly not completed, and

certainly it is a difficult conflict and there is a lot yet to be done.

When I was in the Middle East not long ago, a young Reserve captain

had been in Iraq for a nearly a year, and he said this: It is important

that the American people not lose patience. I believe that is very

true. He said this: He said, it is better to fight al Qaeda here in the

Middle East than it is at home. He was proud of what he had

accomplished over there militarily, in terms of the infrastructure, the

water, the electricity, oil production, hospitals, schools, children

being vaccinated, provisional governments being established.

So if we declare defeat, and if we say we cannot win, and if we say

we have to pull out, it will do this: number one, we will dishonor the

750-plus soldiers who have died already, and their families.

Number two, we will sentence thousands of Iraqis who have helped in

the reconstruction to death. They will not have much chance, and this

is the one thing they are most fearful of.

Number three, we will have shown terrorists everywhere around the

world that we lack the will, we lack the courage to see this through.

In other words, we will put a huge bulls-eye on our back.

So we all say on this floor time after time we support our troops;

but, and I would say this, telling them that the war is unwinnable,

engaging in partisan wrangling is not supporting our troops. It is

critical that Members of this body stand united, stand committed and

stay the course.