Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank my

friend from Texas for yielding and thank you for giving me the

opportunity to visit Iraq.

Being from Tennessee, the Volunteer State, I volunteered to visit the

men and women in uniform in Iraq. I wasn't disappointed. Our troops are

well trained, well motivated, and successful.

After the fall of Saddam, the Iraqi people had a choice to make. They

have lived for decades under totalitarian rule. Over the past 4 years,

they've been divided and, quite frankly, confused about who their

friends and allies really are. Is it the radical extremists such as al

Qaeda or is it us?

During my visit to Iraq, I visited Ramadi, which until a few months

ago was a killing field. For the past 4 years, the people of Ramadi

were caught in a decision-making battle of which group, us or the

extremists, offered them the best chance for a normal and free future.

The insurgent extremist chose to win the local people over with the

use of force, force against their American troops and against any local

who did not support their radical agenda. Our troops, on the other

hand, have reached out in friendship and support.

The local people, seeing the difference, have chosen to have their

lives returned to normal and live in freedom. Therefore, Ramadi has

gone from a city of death and destruction to one of

rebuilding and hope. I was able to see it firsthand during my visit in

July.

As I walked throughout the busy city market, it was very uplifting to

see the local people interacting with our American troops in a very

positive way. Now that the surge is under way, our troops are actually

living in the city as trusted friends and allies. We're working with

the local mayor and his directors to rebuild and totally rejuvenate the

city. The city of Ramadi is located in al Anbar, a city that Chris just

mentioned moments ago as being a lost hope at the end of the year.

Of course, these relationships take time to develop, but the time and

effort are worth it. Helping the Iraqi people secure their freedom

helps us to defeat global extremists and, therefore, secure our own

freedoms for generations to come.

We have to be successful as well. Ronald Reagan once said, ``We win,

they lose.'' If we choose not to succeed, that statement will be just

the opposite: we lose, they win.

You may ask, who are they and why does it matter to me anyway? They

are not the Iraqi people. I had the opportunity to meet with some of

them during my visit. The Iraqi people are really no different than any

of us. They want to live in a secure and safe country, have a job to go

to in the mornings, be able to clothe and feed their families, walk

across the street without fear of being shot or blown up, find

reasonable health care, and to worship freely. These are the same

things that any American mother and father would want for their

children.

So who are our enemy in Iraq and other parts of the world? They're

radical extremists who are willing to kill innocent men, women and even

children to spread their ideology of hate.

We, the American people, have been lulled into believing that this is

the President's war on the Iraqi people. Nothing could be further from

the truth. The Iraqi people and the Iraqi Government see us as

liberators from an oppressive regime, but they are just now learning

how to live as a free people. Our common enemy do not want them to live

free and productive lives. That would go against their ideology of

hate, an ideology that they want to spread around the world, perhaps to

a neighborhood near you.

We cannot let that happen. We either win and they lose, or they win

and we lose. That is too big a price to pay. This Congress owes it to

everyone involved to succeed, from the Iraqi people to our brave men

and women in uniform who are serving on the frontlines of battle, to

the American people. We cannot afford to lose. The price is too high

and the cost is too much. Freedom isn't free. It has to be earned. It

has to be cherished.

We're in a fight for the generations that will come after us. This

battle isn't about a small hot desert land somewhere in the Middle East

that most Americans will never visit or even easily find on a globe.

This battle is about our future and that of our children and

grandchildren.

We want the same things for our children that Iraqi mothers and

fathers do for their children. We want to live in a secure and safe

country, to have a job to go to in the mornings, be able to clothe and

feed our families, walk across the street without having the fear of

being blown up or shot, find reasonable health care and to worship

freely. But our enemy, the radical extremists, want to deny us and our

future generations those freedoms. They have proved it time and time

again: for instance, the Iranian hostage crisis in 1979 where 52

Americans were held for 444 days, or the bombing of the Marine Corps

barracks in Beirut where 241 marines lost their lives in 1983, or the

first bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993, or the attack on the

USS Cole claiming the lives of 17 sailors, or the deadly attack on

September 11, where almost 3,000 Americans died.

We can either choose to fight and win the battle now or choose to

lose the battle now and leave it for our children to fight.

A sentiment relayed to me by a general in Iraq was very simple, and

it drove this point home. Our men and women in uniform are not fighting

only for the 8-year-old Iraqi child and their security but also for the

8-year-old American child and for their current and future security and

freedom. We do not want them to grow up to have to fight this battle

that we chose not to finish.

As I mentioned, our enemy has proven they're dedicated and willing to

shed American blood on American soil. Do we really want to tie our

hands to the point that we encourage failure over success in Iraq in

this global war on terror? Do we really want to live in an America

where our future generations have to fear going to the park, going to

the mall, going to school or to work? I don't think so and I sure hope

not.

The choice is ours today. The American people, when provided with the

facts, will choose freedom and security every time. I say, we win, they

lose. The cost to the American family is just too great to allow any

other outcome.

May God bless America and keep her strong and secure for generations

to come.