I thank the gentleman, my good friend from Texas.

It is indeed an honor to be a part of this special leadership hour to

share a little time with my colleagues, of course, Judge Carter leading

the hour; Chris Shays, the gentleman from Connecticut, 18 trips to the

Middle East, to some extent in harm's way.

I saw a couple of years ago, maybe it was 3 years ago, just happened

to be channel surfing, watching C-SPAN. I guess I am an insomniac.

There was Chris Shays having a town hall meeting talking to his

constituents from Connecticut and taking some tough, the tough

questions about this situation in the Middle East and why it was

important and why he supported it. He outlined tonight the fact that he

doesn't look at these things through rose-colored glasses. He

understands that mistakes were made. We all do, but the mission is the

mission.

He went on and talked about this surge and why it's so important that

every Member on both sides of the aisle give it a chance to work. Judge

Carter said the same thing, pointed out that this surge of 30,000

troops wasn't even complete until the beginning of July. Yet, many of

our colleagues, unfortunately, it seemed like most of them on the other

side of the aisle, wanted to declare that the new way forward was a

failure before it even started, before it had even begun.

I remember back when I first came, I had the honor to come to this

body with some of my colleagues that are here tonight on the floor, and

people saying, well, you know, this mistake, the big mistake is we

didn't put enough troops on the ground. I guess that's what General

Shinseki had recommended. My Democrat colleagues kept pounding away,

well, we didn't have enough troops.

Then when the President, based really on the report of the Iraq Study

Group, two of the most distinguished public servants in the Federal

Government that any of us know, James Baker, Lee Hamilton, a Republican

and a Democrat, came and said, you know, we need a surge of troops,

that's exactly what the President did. And then my colleagues on the

Democrat side of the aisle, most of them, not all, said, too little,

too late.

How do you satisfy some folks? I listened very carefully, of course,

to my good friend and colleague, a freshman, but he seemed so much more

experienced, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. David Davis), talking

about if we lose, they win. He is absolutely right. That just is so

simple but yet so profound, and I really compliment the gentleman from

Tennessee making his first trip and having that insight, that wisdom we

all pray for. That's what we need for us to win.

Indeed, this is tough; it's not easy. But I heard some of my

colleagues on the other side of the aisle during the 5-minute remarks

tonight, I heard the gentlelady from California say it was

unconscionable that the President is playing politics with the war in

Iraq;

yet she, as a cofounder of the Out of Iraq Caucus, and many of her

colleagues voted in favor before the August recess of every one of

these, let's see if we can tie General Petraeus' hands behind his back.

So, surely they don't want us to do poorly in Iraq. Surely not. I

don't suggest that. But I just remind them that this Commander in

Chief, I may not agree with him on every single thing. I think the

issue of stem cell research is something I support him on. Some of my

colleagues on this side of the aisle do not. His thoughts about a

comprehensive immigration reform that includes what I think is amnesty,

I don't support him on. Some of my colleagues on this side of the aisle

do. But I can I think in the final analysis, this President, it may

take 25 years, it may take 50 years, but I believe people will look

back and say thank God that this man was in this place at this time

after 9/11 and had the courage to stand up to finally say, you know,

double-dog daring and triple-dog daring doesn't work.

Mr. Davis talked about the marine barracks and the USS Cole and the

hostages in Iran for the 400 and something days, the 52 hostages. This

President, this Commander in Chief had the courage to stand strong.

Now, my colleague just mentioned I had gotten back from Iraq, my

fourth trip. I will probably never catch Mr. Shays. But each and every

trip, honestly, I think I learn more and more. I want my colleagues to

understand that. These trips, I hope the American people will listen.

These trips are bipartisan. We go and, you know, we hear the facts. And

the old saying, you are entitled to your own opinion, but you are not

entitled to your own facts.

But I feel very strongly that General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker

are going to come back and come to us as required by law, which we

insisted on September 15, at least by that date, maybe a little bit

before that date, and give us an accurate, fair, balanced report.

They are not going to try to paint this picture too bright. They are

going to be accurate. I have said all along, we need to wait for that

report before we all try to become 535 commanders in chief, many of us,

including myself, who are not even veterans.

So I was very encouraged, I said to my colleague, Representative

Carter, on my trip, I think the troops are strong, absolutely. As

Representative Shays said, they get weary, the families get weary. The

American public is a little impatient. I understand that. War fatigue

does set in. But this is not the time to give up. This is the time to

be tough, stand strong and give victory a chance, because Mr. Davis

said, if we don't, they win. The consequences of that are unfathomable.

As I conclude my remarks, I also want to say to a group of marines

from my district, NAS Atlanta, deployed this morning, some of them for

the third time. This is the ``Red Dogs'' HMLA-773, a squadron of 255

marines. They are helicopter guys, Mr. Speaker, and they are light

attack helicopters. They are going to be in a situation there at the al

Assad Air Base. The President just made the trip over Labor Day weekend

to meet with the troops. That's where they are going.

I saw them with their families, with their wives, with their little

infant children. In one case, a little baby 2 weeks old was there in

his mother's arms. There were cousins, there were aunts, there were

uncles, and there were brothers and sisters and grandparents. It

humbled me to stand among these heroes as I talked with them and told

them how much, how deeply I think Members on both sides of the aisle

appreciate their dedicated service to this country.

I wish them Godspeed and hope they will come back safe and sound to

their loved ones.

But not one of them wavered, even though this may have been their

second or third deployment. They are still strong, and that's the same

thing that I saw when I went to Iraq on this recent trip.

God bless them. Let's hang in there for a little while longer. Then

we are going to hear from General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker on

September 15, and it will be an encouraging bit of news.