Mr. Speaker, I am going to be joined by some of our

colleagues tonight as we begin our discussion in this great body, in

this great House talking about the war on terrorism and the global war

that we face.

Mr. Speaker, before I began that discussion with my colleagues, I

want to take just a few moments and address some of the statements that

the minority made during their hour that preceded this. They have

talked a lot about spending, and they have talked a good bit about

their dissatisfaction with spending.

One of the things that I would like to remind the Members of this

body and those that are watching this debate tonight is that much of

that spending takes place because of the bureaucracy that has been

built in this Congress over the past 50 years.

Now, you go back and you look at what transpired in the 1960s and the

way the bureaucracies grew, and the way programs grew. You see all

around here that this bureaucracy has been built as a monument to many

of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle. They have put their

energy into that. They have put that into growing this government here

in Washington. Many of them believe that the government here in

Washington knows better than the folks back home. I disagree with that.

I would encourage our colleagues to join with us as we work on waste,

fraud and abuse, as we work toward reducing the size of this

government. When we passed the Deficit Reduction Act that would have

made nearly 1 percent across the board cut, they chose not to cast a

vote in favor of that.

But they do enjoy coming and talking about how wonderful they feel it

would be to have a debt-free America and a balanced budget, and, yes,

that is something we would like to do, but we don't want that budget to

be balanced

by raising taxes. We want that budget to be balanced by reducing

spending. That is a big part of our focus as we continue to work.

Soon we are going to have a spring cleaning week where we are going

to talk about 150 of these different agencies that absolutely need to

go through a house cleaning. They need to reduce their size. They need

to get their priorities in order, and bureaucrats that are in these

buildings need to start responding to the citizens of this great

Nation. They should be held accountable, and we are going to press

forward on that issue.

One of my colleagues also made a comment about economic growth, and I

would invite our Members to look at the economic stats from 1995 and

the economic stats from 2005. If you compare those 2 years, what

happened in the economy in 1995 during the Clinton years and what has

happened in 2005 during the Bush years? What you are going to see is on

every single economic indicator, whether you are talking GDP,

unemployment rates, economic growth, homeownership, every single

indicator, the 2005 economy beats the 1995 economy on every single

point.

I would commend that to individuals that are watching tonight, to be

certain that they look at those facts, that they look at those

statistics and add those numbers.

It was also mentioned on the floor tonight what type of America do

you believe in? I always love it when I hear that type of comment. What

type of America do you believe in? I think the colleagues that join me

here tonight would join me in saying we believe in an America that is

strong. We believe in an America that is free. We believe in an America

that is compassionate and caring and wants the best, the very best, for

all of our citizens. We believe in an America where children can dream

big dreams, where they can grow up happy and free and educated and

watch those dreams become reality, where they can take hold of their

best efforts and say you know what, we are going to make this even

better.

We are going to make it better. We really believe in an America that

is focused on hope and not focused on fear. We believe in an America

that is strong on individual freedom that understands the importance of

freedom for being able to freely live, to freely think, to freely work.

We know that that requires that we have a secure homeland, and that is

why this majority has been focused on our security agenda, being

certain that we look at the moral security of this great Nation, the

retirement security, the economic security and, of course, the national

security of this wonderful free land that is a beacon of democracy to

every single nation on the face of the earth.

You know, when you talk about what kind of America you believe in, I

love it sometimes when we are visiting with our troops in war-torn

areas, and you meet somebody, and they walk up to you, and they say,

you are an American. You are an American? You are an American.

There is a certain awe that comes out of their mouth when they look

at us and they know we are what they would like to be. We have got

something they want. That is something that we have got that they want,

that other nations want, is freedom. It is the chance to do and to be

and to have your children do and be all that they would hope to be.

That is why the majority is going to take this entire week and we are

going to have a discussion with the American people. We are going to

bring forth our hopes. We are going to bring forth our thoughts of what

is happening in this war on terrorism. We are going to talk about the

progress we have made. We are also going to talk about the areas where

we want to improve.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to talk about the big picture. We are going

to hold a debate on the Republican and the Democrat approaches to

winning the war on terror. We are going to compare, and we are going to

contrast the different philosophies that each party has toward the war

on terrorism. Our military's elimination of al-Qaeda's top leader in

Iraq is an auspicious start to this debate. That success should make it

clear that winning takes patience, and it takes perseverance. But

things that are worth fighting for and things that are worth working

for are items that are worth waiting for because we don't live in a

world of instant gratification where everything is decided within 30

minutes. Some things take time to do them right.

History has taught us, history has taught us that it is important

that when we look at democracy, when we look at working with other

Nations that we get this right. It also takes excellent work by our

military and our intelligence folks, and God bless them all. God bless

them all.

I am especially grateful for our troops from Fort Campbell from the

101st who are in Iraq now and are certainly working diligently on this

effort. Many of our National Guardsmen are there, and they are working

as well.

I am very grateful to them and to their families.

Last week, we got to see part of the big picture in the war on

terrorism more quickly with Zarqawi's death, with the destruction of a

major leader in the global terrorist network. The big picture is the

U.S. chasing these people down and eliminating them.

It is helping free nations, Mr. Speaker, free nations develop and

throw off the shackles of terrorism in the Middle East. This, Mr.

Speaker, will be our topic and our discussion for the week.

At this time, I would like to yield to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr.

King) who is so focused on protecting this great Nation and our

Nation's security.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Iowa, and I

am so appreciative that he mentioned that this is not a sometime enemy

that we are dealing with. This is an enemy, as he said, that is

amorphous. They are located everywhere. Terrorist cells are around the

globe, but it is an enemy with an agenda. Their agenda is to end

freedom as we know it, and they work at it 24/7. They are an enemy to

freedom, and we do know that the Iraqi people are grasping at their

chance for freedom.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I think it is really quite important to note

that a development that got swamped by the Zarqawi news, but a

development that I certainly believe is very critical to our long-term

security goals, was that the Iraqi Government's confirmation of its top

three security chiefs was last week. You had Sunnis and Shiites

standing together as the security chiefs for this nation.

What an enormous step in the right direction, and we have now had

tremendously successful elections in Iraq. We have a unified

government. We now have 275,000 Iraqi security forces that are in

place.

So we do know that we are seeing progress in the right direction.

There are no guarantees, but it is steps in the right direction.

At this time, I want to yield to the gentleman from Texas, Mr.

Carter, who has Fort Hood in his district. Judge Carter has worked so

diligently with our men and women in uniform, and I thank him for

coming to talk a little bit about the big picture, about the global war

on terror, and why it is imperative that we persevere. And I yield to

the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate so much how well the

gentleman represents his constituents at Fort Hood, and I know he is so

very proud of them and the work that they do.

I, likewise, am so very proud of my men and women at Fort Campbell,

men and women of the 101st, there in Montgomery County, Tennessee.

How appropriate that the gentleman from Texas referred to them as

heroes, because indeed they are. And as they work to gather in the

trust and confidence of the Iraqi people, the trust of a little girl

who brings the rose from her garden to one of our military men and

women, the trust of an Iraqi citizen who takes the key out of a lock of

one of Saddam Hussein's former jails and hands it to an American

soldier and says, ``Thank you, thank you for my chance at freedom.''

Mr. Speaker, those are the stories that we are hearing day in and day

out. They are coming to us from our men and women in uniform who do

understand the big picture, who do understand that we have an enemy

that would like to change our way of life.

It is imperative that we communicate that message that we are not

going to stand for that. We are not going to stand still and let that

happen. You know, I think it is really quite interesting that sometimes

the liberal elites try to couch this debate about Iraq as to whether it

was wrong or whether it was right to go in and free millions of people

from Saddam Hussein, whether it was worth it. Many of the leftists

think it was not worth it. They would like to just sit down and talk

about this. I believe we should put that question aside for a moment

because it really does simplify the question of our involvement in

Iraq. It oversimplifies it. The question ignores the relevance of Iraq

to America's national security framework.

You know, as the gentleman from Texas said, our daily lives, how we

go about them, when we are made more unsafe, when our national security

is made unsafe by the existence of a hostile and isolated Middle East

ruled by murderous thugs and their terrorist supporters, then we have

to do something about that. That is a fact. I challenge anybody to come

in and argue with that.

The truth of this fact is written in the blood of Americans and the

citizens of dozens of other free nations, the people who have been

murdered by terrorists, spawned in the Middle East over the past 40

years. Whether anyone believes we should be in Iraq for the sake of

freeing an oppressed people is something we could haggle about all

night, but it is not the point of our mission there. We should be in

Afghanistan, Iraq and in the Middle East actively working to put an end

once and for all to the systems of government that have promoted and

celebrated brutal attacks on America, on Europe, and in countries

across Africa.

If we do not, we are going to suffer again and again. We are in Iraq,

we are in Afghanistan because President Bush and the American people

decided on

September 11, 2001, that enough was enough. Could we have stayed out?

Of course. Could we have continued responding to terrorism as a case of

civil disobedience? Of course.

We could have decided to simply contain this region and hope to

contain the terrorism that grew there, but that did not get to the root

of the problem. And the price of that policy would have continued to be

periodic September 11s. That would be the price. This country had to

decide whether we were willing to pay this steep price of letting the

Middle East continue for another 30 years as it had for the past 30

years.

We have had a real champion of freedom join us in the U.S. House of

Representatives this year, another judge from the great State of Texas;

and at this time I want to yield to Judge Poe from the great State of

Texas.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas. I

thank him for mentioning that our men and women in uniform are

volunteers and they have chosen to fight.

I, like him, have spent time with these men and women and their

families and on Memorial Day talked with the aunt of a young man who

came to one of the memorial services. And after I spoke, she came up

and with her broken heart she said, Mrs. Blackburn, you're so right, he

was there because he wanted to be there and you're so right. He knows,

he knew that we were winning, that we are winning the war on terror.

And yes indeed, he understood the mission. Our families, our military

families know this, Mr. Speaker, and they know that this Nation has

decided not to play hostage, not to be held hostage. Our men and women

in uniform are paying the price to fight this war so that we are not

having to fight it on the streets of Washington, D.C., or Memphis or

Nashville or L.A. or anywhere else in this country. We have made a

choice not to be bullied and not to live with the gun pointed at our

head. And I give credit to our President. And, Mr. Speaker, I credit

the American people for making a tough decision. War is never easy. War

is never, ever easy, but we have to remember the big picture in this

and that picture is we have to have a democratic ally in the Middle

East. This is about freedom and free people. It is about expanded

democracy and education. It is about rooting out terrorists and

disrupting their networks and their way of working and their beliefs so

that they don't import it and place it on us. It is about slowing them

down and eventually making it impossible for them to work.

Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of talk about whether we are winning or

not. And we are winning. But this is not easy. There are going to be a

lot of dark days ahead. This is not an easy fight. It is not easy for

us. It is not easy for our military men and women and their families.

It is not easy for the Iraqi people. And there is a tremendous amount

of frustration when they take a couple of steps forward and then a few

steps back and a couple of steps forward and another step back. And

just as in the past 3 years we have had some victories to celebrate, we

have also had some very tough times. But we come to the point of

saying, is it a necessary action? And yes, indeed, Mr. Speaker, it is a

necessary action. The defense of freedom is a necessary action for our

great Nation. It was the only decision that put America on the

offensive when it came to the war on terrorism and our national

security because freedom is worth fighting for.

As I close the hour this evening and begin this week's debate, I want

to focus where I began in talking about the big picture. Ronald Reagan

often said, we could bet on hope or we could bet on fear. You can bet

on hope or you can bet on fear. He chose to bet on hope. And, Mr.

Speaker, I know why. And I know why the American people choose to bet

on hope. It is that hope, that desire that lives in our heart for a

better tomorrow.

I love quoting Margaret Thatcher and her comment when she talks about

America. She would say it is more than a superpower, more than a great

Nation. America is an idea. America is an idea. What a great idea it

is. It is the idea of freedom. It is the idea of opportunity. It is the

idea of hope. And this week we look forward to talking about hope for

our future, hope for the future of our children, hope for the future of

the Nation of Iraq.