Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Tennessee

for allowing me to make some comments on the war in Iraq and

Afghanistan.

Tennessee is named the Volunteer State. It was some of those

Tennesseeans who volunteered to help my State, Texas, become a free and

independent nation back in 1836, another example that to be free it

always costs something. We called upon those volunteers to make a

difference in freedom, noting that every person serving in Iraq and

Afghanistan is a volunteer. Many of them are on their second and third

tours of duty, volunteered because they understand the importance of

what they do.

We just recently learned that the United States Army has met not only

its enlistment goals but more enlistments than they had predicted

because many Americans, the young of our Nation, understand the

importance of what is going on. They know there is a war going on out

there, and it is a war against terrorists. It is a war the terrorists

started, and terrorism is not something we desire; but it is certainly

something we must destroy.

We cannot negotiate with terrorists. We cannot sit down at a

conference table and say come let us reason together. It is not going

to work because you see, terrorists are determined to kill people, not

just soldiers, not just sailors or marines, but all people, any people

that get in their way. And that includes their own people. That

includes military and nonmilitary. It includes civilians, the old, the

elderly, women, children. It includes people in hospitals recovering

from sickness. Anybody they think will cause terror in the hearts and

souls of the world they murder, and they kill throughout the world.

That is the way terrorists operate, and the idea that we can even

negotiate with them is almost as absurd as the idea that we can appease

those individuals.

Appeasement comes up every time some nation, like our Nation, has to

go to war to fight for our freedoms and liberties. It came up in World

War II, and appeasement was talked about even in Washington, D.C.,

appease the Germans, appease the Japanese, give in, try to ignore. Of

course, we saw what happens. Appeasement never works with terrorists

because they are determined to become more criminal-like in their

activity and promote their desires no matter what it takes.

I, like you and many Members of the House, have been to Iraq. I have

seen the Iraqi people. I have seen our military and was fortunate to be

there last year and when the Iraqi people had their first free

elections in the history of their nation. It was quite the honor to be

one of two Members of Congress to see that event.

Of course, the skeptics and critics say, as the gentlewoman from

Tennessee says, the northeastern elites, they said the Iraqis do not

understand freedom or democracy, it will never work; and every election

starting with that first election and every subsequent election after

that proved that Iraqis want freedom. They have tasted it, and they do

not want to let it go. And they are fighting for it just as much as our

troops are fighting for it.

Of course, I visited with our troops. They all say that we are

winning the war on terror. And we are winning the war on terror. One

thing that an Iraqi woman said to me at the voting booth, she had cast

her ballot, had that purple stain on her finger, proudly walking down

the street defiant of the terrorists because they said if you vote, the

terrorists will kill you, and of course they did kill 57 Iraqis that

voted that day. Anyway, she came up to me, she had tears in her eyes. I

had an interpreter with me and she said to the interpreter and he told

me, she said, We Iraqis are grateful to America for giving their youth

to us.

What she was saying was she was aware, as the Iraqis are, that

Americans die so other people can live and live free.

You know, 2,400-plus Americans have died in this war. Eight of those

who have died are from my congressional district down in southeast

Texas. I have talked to the families of those marines and sailors and

airmen and soldiers that have been killed. Those families grieve in

their own way, but they say to a family that they were proud of their

son and they will be proud of America if America stays the course and

finishes the job that their kids started in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Finish the war, win the war, Mr. Poe, win the war. I heard that so many

times. Win the war that my son died in.

And I say to those families and other families that this country will

win that war on terror. As has been said here on the House floor, it is

going to be a long war. It is not an easy war. It is an unconventional

war because we fight by the rules of engagement, the United States. We

go after the terrorists. The terrorists, unlike any other war in world

history, are determined to kill anybody in their way, including the

innocent.

But we will not let those that have died and those that will die, die

for nothing because they are dying for something. They are dying for

two things. They are dying for the welfare of the United States of

America. It is in our best interest to take the fight to the enemy, and

we are doing that. We are going to track them down wherever they show

up in the world, and we are going to eliminate them. They are beginning

to believe us that we will track them down. And we also are fighting

this war because of that word freedom.

It is important that Iraq and Afghanistan be free nations. They have

never tasted freedom. They have tasted it now; and as I said, they do

not want to let go of it. President Kennedy said it better than I can.

He said, you know, this country will bear any burden. We will pay any

price. We will support any friend, we will oppose any foe to preserve

liberty.

That is our mission statement given by President Kennedy over 40

years ago, and that is what our troops are doing.

Freedom has always cost. It always will. Good things have cost. It

cost us 7 years of hard war against the British. After we gained our

independence, gained our freedom, the British did not believe it, and

they attacked us again in the War of 1812. They burned this building

down, and they burned the White House. They burned every building in

Washington, D.C. except for two because they were trying to make sure

that America was not a free Nation. So we had to fight them again.

Freedom has cost this country, and it has cost other countries; and

Iraq is one of them. We do not get freedom by sitting down at a

conference table and saying, let us reason together so we can be a free

people.

There is no substitute for victory. It is the only path to freedom,

and I hope that folks in this Nation understand the great job our

troops are doing and are as committed as they are to winning the war.

Down in southeast Texas, I have the distinction of having the Port of

Beaumont. It is the number one military deployment port of cargo going

to Iraq. It comes from Fort Hood and Fort Bliss, and it is the place

where our troops come home. Most of the troops coming back to my area

are National Guard troops. You see, down in southeast Texas when the

National Guard comes home, we have parades for them. Schools and

businesses close, and everybody turns out on Main Street waving the

American flag. We are proud of what our troops are doing. We

understand, as most Americans understand, they are doing a good job and

they are putting their lives on the line for that simple word that

people since the beginning of the world have wanted, and that is

freedom.

So this country I do not think is ever going to flinch and it is

never going to

flee and we certainly are never going to fear because we will never

fail the war against terrorism, and I hope we will be successful.

I appreciate the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. Blackburn) allowing

me to make these comments. I hope we will continue the dialogue and the

perseverance to be successful and to spread the word not only in

America but to those terrorists who live throughout the world that they

can run, but they can certainly never hide because the American

fighting man is going to track them down.