Let me thank the gentleman from Connecticut for taking

this special order and let me acknowledge your great leadership as a

leader in the Democratic Caucus. Let me also commend Barbara Lee and

Lynn Woolsey for their leadership as cochairs of the Progressive Caucus

where they have continually talked about progressive issues in this

country and, in particular, the question of Iraq; and to commend

Congresswoman Woolsey for her record of maybe 100 days consecutively

speaking out against the war, day in and day out.

Five years ago, on September 11, we had a tremendous amount of

sympathy around the world. Everyone was with us. People throughout the

world said this was a dastardly act. Seven hundred persons from my

State perished. Flight 93 that left Newark Airport, including Ms. Wanda

Green, a delightful African American woman, a flight attendant who

traded with a friend who asked her if she could take her duty because

of a conflict and she would switch and take Ms. Green's original duty

which was not on 9/11. Ms. Green passed away on that infamous Flight

93. I met with her two children at the church in Linden where she

lived. They are college-age students. Ms. Green was a divorcee and was

the one taking care of the family.

So this is very personal with all of us. From my house as I moved out

to the corner and looked over, the World Trade Centers were both

visible, the twin towers were very visible. I could see them very

clearly. So it is very personal to us, all Americans, but especially to

those of us who were so constantly involved in that area.

When the President decided, though, to make Saddam Hussein a person

that he felt should be dealt with and connected him to 9/11, it was

actually criminal. Osama bin Laden, as we know, was in Afghanistan. We

had a limited number of troops there. But just think of what position

we would have been in today if our troops were sent to Afghanistan in

the numbers that we have sent to Iraq. By this time I am sure Osama bin

Laden would be behind bars or not alive at all.

We could still have Iraq contained with the no-fly zone because they

could not come in or go out. We had Predators watching. We knew where

Saddam Hussein had lunch every day. It was bombed one day, but he left

a few minutes early. They were going nowhere in Iraq.

Osama bin Laden, in fact, talked as badly about Saddam Hussein as he

did about the United States' leaders. But what did we do? Hans Blitz

and the inspectors were given full range of the country. And when that

announcement was made by the Government of Iraq, President Bush said,

Get out in 48 hours.

Why would you do that? They knew that they didn't have weapons of

mass destruction in Iraq. The bluff was over. So Saddam Hussein decided

to let them go anywhere because I don't have them. And, therefore, they

will see that the bluff is over. No, the President ordered the strikes.

I will conclude because there are other Members here and I could go

on and on and on. However, I was the one who controlled the 2-day

debate where we debated giving the President the authority to having an

attack on Iraq, a preemptive strike. I was convinced we should not

choose war, we should choose diplomacy. Just think, Afghanistan would

have been settled and we could have contained Saddam Hussein, but it

was decided that we should go to war. Mission accomplished.

We are losing lives every day. It was wrong. We need to come up with

a sane plan to conclude this civil war that is in Iraq and move on to

making our country a safer place.