Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia so

very much. I appreciate his diligence on the issue.

Mr. Speaker, as we have been through this issue and with our troops,

I have got a letter with me tonight that I received from one of our men

and women that is in Baghdad who is thanking me for the support and

thanking so many Members of the House for their support in standing

with them and their families and supporting our troops. I think it is

so interesting how they have viewed this and kind of the filter they

view this issue of our troop funding from.

As I read that letter and as I have been home over the weekend and

talked to so many of my National Guard families, talked to so many of

the military families that call Tennessee's Seventh District home, one

of the things that has been mentioned repeatedly is, ``Marsha, I hope

that people in Washington look at this debate and that they take a

little bit of a historical view to this and focus on what should be

some lessons learned.'' Because there are lots of lessons learned, or

should be lots of lessons learned in this, Mr. Speaker.

One of the ones that was highlighted for me by one of my constituents

is that we have to realize when you go back and you look at the decade

of the nineties and look at the view that then President Clinton took

of the military, saying, well, the wall has come down. Well, we have

survived these threats. Well, let's reduce funding to the military.

Well, let's reduce funding on intelligence. Let's put it into domestic

programs, social service programs.

Then the unintended consequence, I am sure he would say, is when you

look at what happens when you have to go back through that rebuilding

process. When you hear from those in our intelligence agencies and in

the FBI and the CIA that say, my goodness, it takes 5 years for us to

develop an asset in these countries. When you hear from our men and

women in uniform about the importance of maintenance, maintenance on

those posts, maintenance on that equipment, R&D and how that should

have been continued. When they point to equipment and artillery that

didn't get developed. We have to look at that as a lesson learned and

realize, yes, indeed, you do get peace through strength, and you

maintain it by being certain that you are ever-vigilant and that you

are always making certain we fulfill the constitutional duty to provide

for the common defense.

There are lessons learned, and I hope that this body does take it

seriously, and I hope that our friends across the aisle will join us

and say let's be fair to our military, to those families and to those

troops, because for the debate that has taken place, for the rhetoric

that has been spewed, for some of the statements that have been made,

there are many of them that can look at this and say they are not being

fair to us and they are not being fair to the job that we would do.

Yes, and I appreciate the gentleman yielding. Yes,

indeed, we hear this regularly, not only from our Guardsmen, but we

also hear it from those that are on active duty, that are moving

forward and readying for another deployment. They talk about how they

work to make ends meet, and they talk about how deeply it hurt the

ongoing progress of developing different equipment and protocols as

funding was cut through the nineties.

I think another thing that we have to remember, and this has been

highlighted by a couple of my constituents who are so wonderful and

love keeping up with the issue, is we have to remember on September 11,

2001, we were not under a George Bush budget. We were still under the

last Clinton budget. The focus was shifting for that budget that was

going into place on the first of October in 2001.

Actually, Mr. Speaker, I think everybody realizes that prior to

September 11, this Nation had responded to acts of terrorism as civil

disobedience. September 11, all of that changed and we called it what

it is, and that is a war. Because no one can deny, and I do think it is

foolhardy to stand and say, oh, there is no such thing as a global war

on terror. Everybody knows there is, because they know we have a very

dedicated, very focused enemy. You can listen to their own words. They

want to annihilate us and end our way of life.

I think it would not be wise for us to let that go unattended. We are

right to respond with diligence and tenacity and focus to make certain

that we defeat the radical Islamic jihadists who want to tear our

Nation and our communities apart by the very fabric that holds them

together.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, indeed, we see that. The message that it sends, actions

do speak louder than words. We heard that as children growing up,

``your actions are going to say more about your intent than the words

that you speak.'' And we know that.

The message that it is sending by the actions is one that does not

serve us well, in my opinion. It is one that causes our intent to be

called into question, because we know what the enemy would do with us

if they were given the chance. We have to realize that we have to be

vigilant and we cannot let down our guard, not for a minute, not for an

hour, not for a day. We have to continue to work to defeat this enemy.

So many of my constituents have called about the bill. I brought a

copy of the bill today to the floor with me, and here it is. It is I

think 93 pages when we printed the whole thing out. It is not that

difficult to read. I can even read parts of it without my reading

glasses, the print is big enough, and I like that. It makes it a little

bit easier to focus on.

For constituents who are watching tonight and want to follow along

through the debate with us, I would encourage them, go to

thomas.loc.gov. That is all you have to enter in your search engine.

When you get in thomas.loc.gov to query the site, enter ``H.R. 1591.''

That is the number on this bill. I do encourage individuals to go in

and pull this down so they can see what is contained in here.

Now some of the comments that I have had, and you mentioned this

earlier, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, the Democrat

majority, ran railing against pork spending. From so many of our

families I have heard: How in the world could they have drafted a bill

that had money for all of these different interests? It sounds like a

grocery list when you talk about beef and cheese and dairy products and

spinach and shrimp. And when you look at the intent or what we have

come to believe that they want to do, which was not put it through

PAYGO rules, not put it through regular order, but slide it in here

because they felt this was something Members couldn't refuse to vote

for.

How unfair to our troops and our military families, to put this on

their back and saddle them with this $24 billion worth of pork barrel

spending. It is not what they said they were going to do; and quite

frankly, I don't think that is the kind of change that the American

people wanted to see.

That is right. It is so unfortunate. What we need is

a clean bill that allows a good debate over how we are moving forward

in Iraq.

I think it has been striking to see the Senate confirm and give a

vote of support for General David Petraeus who is commanding our

efforts in Iraq, a very scholarly general. He truly is a leader for our

men and women and for the Iraqis. He has great respect from them.

But then to turnaround and say we are going to second guess or Monday

morning quarterback your decisions and we are not going to give the

funding and we are not going to give it in a timely manner. As the

gentleman from Georgia was so eloquently stating earlier, there comes a

time when you have to look at it and talk about what their intent is,

and if they even trust the troops, if they even trust the commanders in

the field to have the flexibility that they need to respond.

Certainly today we have seen and have noted the demise of al-Masri

who is the head of al-Qaeda in Iraq. Now I know that it is probably a

subject that the majority doesn't want to talk about, that al-Masri was

killed in Iraq, had been found there and had been working there. So it

leads one to ask the question: What was he doing in Iraq? Why was he in

Iraq? And why was it that he met his death in Iraq?

Well, the answer to that question is he was there because he and the

other terrorists and the other terrorist groups all tell us the central

front of the global war on terror is in Iraq. This is where they are

fighting it.

One of the things that is so disappointing to me,

having as many veterans and as many military families and members of

the military as I have in my district, one of the things that is

disappointing to me is they may want to do this over and over and over

and delay the funding that gets to those troops.

One of the things that it always brings to mind, if you don't want to

get the money to them and you don't want to get it to them in a timely

manner, and you want to push benchmarks on our troops, then you have to

be able to answer some questions. You've got to answer the question:

What is going to happen if we leave?

What is going to happen if we leave Iraq? What are

the Iraqi people going to do if we leave Iraq? What is going to happen

in the Middle East?

Somebody asked me earlier today, asked me, how many more people have

to die? I said that is the question to ask the terrorists: How many

more people have to die?

But what we do know is that we cannot let down our guard. We do have

to continue to fight. We have to realize terror and the war on terror

is a new enemy. They do not have a headquarters. They do not show

allegiance to a country. They do not wear a uniform. They are an

illusive enemy.

Right now they are saying the central battle front is Iraq. September

11, 2001, we know where that central battle front was.

We know. And what we have to do is be certain that we

meet our obligation to our men and women in uniform and that we send a

message to every terrorist that is breathing on the face of the earth

that we will not stop.