Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding. I thank him

for the remarks that he has already made.

Actually, it is not usually my practice to come before this House and

defend the New York Times. But it was actually an advertisement, a

full-page advertisement taken out in the New York Times by the ultra-

leftist group, moveon.org. I have a copy of it right here.

Mr. Speaker, it is by George Soros and moveon.org. It says: ``General

Petraeus or general betray us? Cooking the books for the White House.''

I was astonished to see even moveon.org attack the messenger as they

did today and attack the credibility and integrity and, if you please,

the patriotism of this great servant who has served so many years in

the military and who was confirmed unanimously in the United States

Senate. It was and is an insult. It shows the level to which the

opponents of this surge and those who would legislate defeat in Iraq

would go.

I was glad to see Ranking Member Duncan Hunter and Ranking Member

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen take this group to task during the hearing and to

call on members of the committee at the hearing today to disassociate

themselves, whether they agree with our policy in Iraq or not, to

disassociate themselves from this type of smear tactic that we saw

coming from moveon.org in the New York Times in the form of this full-

page ad.

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I was disappointed that more Members on both

sides of the aisle didn't rise and denounce this scurrilous attack on

the integrity of one of our great public servants.

Amen.

I appreciate my friend yielding, and I have also been in

need of a poster before and not been able to find it. If the gentleman

would put that quote from General Petraeus back up, I will refer to it

while he looks for the other quote from the ambassador.

To emphasize this point again, coalition and Iraqi security forces

have made progress toward achieving sustainable security. Now, that is

the testimony of this well-respected general that we have entrusted

with this very important mission.

And it disturbs me, Mr. Speaker, that often the message of the

accomplishments doesn't get through to the American people. We hear

only about benchmarks not quite being met or expectations not quite

being realized. For example, people point to the fact that an oil law

has not yet been enacted by the leadership in Iraq and submitted to the

Iraqi Parliament.

As a matter of fact, as the testimony indicated today, oil revenues

in Iraq are up and the revenues are in fact being distributed out to

the local governments and the provinces. Now, this is in the absence of

a final piece of legislation enacted by the parliament. But the fact

remains that under this interim procedure that they have now, the oil

revenues are there. Iraq is exporting oil for the first time in quite

some time, and the oil revenues are being distributed out where they

can benefit the people. That may not be a benchmark of legislation, but

it is a real accomplishment; and it is the sort of thing that General

Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker were talking about.

Also, there has been much made of the fact that there has been no

reconciliation statute enacted into law over there. But as was pointed

out today in the testimony, former members of the Iraqi Army, former

Baathists, if you please, are now being accepted into the government

and being given pensions from the government and many of them are being

accepted back into the security forces there in Iraq.

Now, a law hasn't been passed, but in my opinion that is de facto

reconciliation and de facto amnesty for these people who were formerly

in Saddam's Iraqi Army. By the thousands, these people are being

integrated back into the mainstream of Iraqi security forces.

Also in the Anbar province, it is well known at least in this capital

city that the sectarian leaders all across that province have turned on

al Qaeda. They were in league with them a year ago. They have now

turned on them, and they are helping the United States and coalition

forces because they realize that their future does not lie with this

destructive, violent al Qaeda force, but with the forces that would

bring freedom and liberty and self-determination to more Iraqis.

Sectarian violence is down, as Senator Lieberman and Senator McCain

pointed out in their op-ed in the Wall Street Journal today, and I

would commend that to our colleagues. There is an excellent bipartisan

piece about that. Sectarian violence is down all over the country, down

70 percent in Baghdad alone. So there are real accomplishments there.

Certainly, as the general said, innumerable challenges lie ahead. The

assessment is optimistic, but it is sober

and this is no rosy scenario; but there is much reason to be

optimistic.

Let me just say this about the feeling of the American people: I know

that they are frustrated about this. This war has gone on longer than

expected, and they have been conflicted about it. But I believe after

being home for much of August and talking to my constituents, I think

the American people do want us to succeed in Iraq. They realize that

failure there, that withdrawal there, that leaving too early would

leave a huge void that probably al Qaeda would fill and probably our

detractors in Iran would fill, and they know that would be a disaster.

They want success, and I think these two gentlemen who testified before

us give us a good opportunity for success.

A few moments ago we gathered on the east steps of the House of

Representatives, and we commemorated the sixth anniversary of the

terrorist attacks on 9/11. Two other speakers on the floor today were

not Members of the House of Representatives at that time. I was, and I

shall never forget the resolve and the determination of the Congress,

both ends of this building, both sides of the aisle, on that day to

defeat these terrorists.

The al Qaeda terrorist network that we are fighting in Iraq today is

the very same network that brought down those two buildings in New

York. They are the very same network that sent a plane crashing into

the Pentagon. And they are the very same al Qaeda that had a plane

headed toward Washington, DC, which undoubtedly was headed towards the

Capitol Building.

We are still fighting al Qaeda, and I appreciate people like

Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus who are fighting that war as

capably as they know how. Al Qaeda must be defeated, Mr. Speaker. And

our best opportunity, our greatest chance to defeat al Qaeda today is

to be successful in Iraq. That's what I would urge my colleagues to

support, and I believe that is what the American people want us to do.

I thank my friend for calling this Special Order.

If the gentleman will just yield on that, I'm glad that

both of my colleagues have pointed this out, Mr. Speaker.

In just the short time that we've been hearing quotes from this Jones

report, which I very much appreciated, I don't know how many times the

gentleman from Minnesota read the word ``progress,'' progress in this

respect, progress in other respects, challenges of course, but

progress, progress, progress, the word ``success,'' the words

``pleasantly surprised.''

So it would certainly be inaccurate to say that the Jones report was

totally negative and that the Petraeus report was somehow far

different. So I very much appreciate the gentleman pointing that out,

and I simply wanted to underscore the very optimistic words that the

general had in his testimony.