Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his continued

leadership.

It is not just General Petraeus that moveon.org attacks. One of the

distinguished, I think very reasonable members of the Democratic Caucus

here in the house, Brian Baird of Washington State, also has been

protested by moveon.org in his office since he returned from Iraq in

August and basically told what he saw. He came back and just said, this

is what I saw: There is progress, and we shouldn't leave precipitously

because there will be major consequences.

He told the truth. He is an honorable guy. He serves here in the

House. I respect him. He is a Democrat, and moveon sends hundreds of

people to protest at his office. It is a political agenda, and it is

unfortunate.

I grew up a Democrat. The first half of my life I was a Democrat; the

second half I was a Republican. I don't think either party has an

exclusive on integrity or ideas, but I think this is so far over the

top.

There used to be things that we did in this country as Americans, not

as Democrats and Republicans. This should not be about winning the next

election or the last election. Wars should not divide us along Democrat

and Republican lines, and everything should not be seen through that

prism, and moveon.org is shameless to do this. It is shameless, this

advertisement in The New York Times, and, as the gentleman from Georgia

said, everyone in this body should condemn

what they are doing to try to win elections over our men and women in

uniform in Iraq.

My nephew is serving there in Iraq right now. I hate it that he would

turn around and see this in a full page ad in a major newspaper against

the most equipped leader to lead our forces in Iraq that our country

has to offer, period, is who this is.

For them to slander him in this way for political gain is un-

American. What they have done is un-American. They have the right under

the Constitution to say it, and we have the right as Americans to

reject it, and everybody in this House should do that.

Three main things, while I have an opportunity to speak tonight.

The mission is just. We lose sight of that sometimes, that our men

and women in uniform are doing and carrying out what is right for our

country at this very volatile time in world history.

It is also easy to forget that over half the Democrats in the United

States Senate and almost half the Democrats in the U.S. House of

Representatives voted to remove Saddam Hussein by force. And others

will come and say, oh, George Bush sold us a bunch of bad information.

Listen, if there was any bad information, everyone had the same

information, and many of us voted, from both sides of the aisle, to

remove Saddam Hussein by force. It is just very convenient now to say,

oh, that was them and not me.

It is hard to take responsibility for your actions. It is hard to

stand before the American people and say we need to work through this

together. We need to stand behind our troops until they prevail, until

we have victory and not retreat in Iraq, instead of saying this is all

about them. It used to be in this country about us. We did things like

this together, and we didn't retreat so the world would see us walk

away from our commitments. This mission is just, number one.

Number two, the military has been extraordinary. They have been

great. You heard General Petraeus say that today. What the Marines have

done in Anbar, the progress that has been made there, it wasn't even

hardly covered by the GAO report. They didn't even talk about the

extraordinary success, civilian casualties way down, 80 percent success

in the Anbar Province.

The moderates are even siding up with us and saying ``We don't like

al Qaeda. They are cutting off our people's fingers. They are killing

our children. We want to fight with the Americans against these

insurgents.''

That is not the way it was before we strengthened our forces and had

this success in Anbar. The military is performing in an extraordinary

way and the tribal governments are now siding with us. That is progress

by any definition.

The military is succeeding in Iraq. You may not want to hear it,

because, as one of your distinguished leaders said, you are in trouble

politically if we succeed as a Nation in Iraq. That is what he said. I

hated that he said it. That is terrible. That is an indictment on

politics in America. We all win if we beat these terrorists in Iraq.

Everyone in this country wins. The military is succeeding.

Number three, the political progress in Iraq is not happening. That

is true. We need to be honest about it. I wish personally we could get

rid of the Maliki government because I think it is deplorable. But we

promoted free elections and that is what we got, and we can't very well

turn around now and say, oh, we didn't like who you elected. Get rid of

him. They have got to do that. That is the tough work of freedom. They

have got to do that. I hope they do. But that is up to them.

Politically, we are not succeeding the way we need to succeed in Iraq,

and all of us in this House have an obligation to come together and see

that through to completion.

Let me just close with this: I have worked for 13 years in a

bipartisan way. I have scars on my back to prove it. I have made people

on my side of the aisle livid with some of the positions that I have

taken working with the other side. But I will not----

You didn't have to say ``amen.''

But I will not cooperate with anyone for our soldiers, sailors,

airmen and marines to walk away in defeat or to leave prematurely

before we can hold our head up and say ``America has succeeded with

this just mission in Iraq.''

I don't want to stay for 5 years or 10 years. I think it is a matter

of months before we can see real, live redeployments. But the military

leaders need to do that. It doesn't need to happen on the floor of the

U.S. House of Representatives. We can't micromanage this war, and we

sure as heck shouldn't be sending signals that we are going to pull

them out, because that is the worst thing we can do for the long-term

interests of our country.

The Middle East is in chaos. The Wall Street Journal said it well

last week. The worst religious and political pathology in the history

of the world is in the Middle East, and now you add to that nuclear

weapons, terrorism, IEDs and control of the world's oil supplies, there

is a lot at stake.

This is not Vietnam. Nothing like it. Nothing like it. It is a whole

lot worse, the stakes of losing in Iraq. I believe that deep in my

soul, and I am going to continue to say that on the floor of this

House. We need to stand together as a Nation and stand together behind

our men and women in uniform until we can leave in victory and drive

back this terrorist threat at this point we are fighting in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for the time.