Mr. President, I am going to respond to my colleague from

Massachusetts. He has made a pretty vicious attack, I would say, on the

President of the United States, contending that he has not leveled with

the American people, that he has to begin telling the truth about what

is going on in Iraq. These are very serious charges, and I would like

to try to respond to them.

The Senator from Massachusetts began by a recitation of why, in his

view, ``the outlook is so bleak,'' to use his quotation, and why he

concluded that ``we're losing the war,'' another quotation from the

Senator.

I see in the Senator's remarks, and others that I have heard

recently, a steely determination to keep hopelessness alive. I do not

think that should be the policy of the United States. The President has

a much better vision about how to bring the war against militant Islam

to a conclusion.

There were no constructive alternatives, as my colleagues will

recall, from the comments of the Senator from Massachusetts. There were

no ideas about how we could do better. It was just an attack on the

President and an assertion that we are losing the war, the implications

of which were left hanging.

When he said the President has this attitude of shooting first and

asking questions later, then perhaps we need to recall that we have

already been attacked. We did not shoot first. We were attacked

viciously on 9/11 and it changed everything about our approach to the

war against militant Islam.

Secondly, when the Senator from Massachusetts accuses the President

of painting a rosy picture and then refers to the National Intelligence

Estimate that predicted some pretty dire consequences, he forgets two

things. First, President Bush has said repeatedly from the very

beginning that this would be a very long and difficult conflict. He has

never wavered from that. In fact, he has tried to inspire the American

people to continue to persevere in this war.

One does not inspire people by wringing their hands and talking about

how we are losing the war. Think about what kind of a message that

sends to the troops and to the families who are sacrificing, to a mom

who gets notice that her young son has been killed in Iraq: We are

losing the war. It is hopeless. The outlook is bleak.

Well, what are we fighting for? What kind of a message does it send

to our allies, who some people say they could convince to come into

this conflict, we are losing the war, now please come in? That is not

exactly going to persuade them to come into the conflict.

Finally, and most importantly, what kind of a message does it send to

the enemy to suggest that they are winning and we are losing? Major

political figures in this country argue that we are losing the war. It

gives confidence to the enemies. That is exactly what they want to

hear. Osama bin Laden has said we are the weak horse and he is the

strong horse. If we convey that message to him, we increase the

possibility that he will continue to think he can win and that he will

continue to engage in this fight.

We need to break his will. He is testing our will and comments such

as this are not helpful to challenging the American people to continue

to persevere in this contest.

The question is about the American will, and I do not think the

comments we heard from the Senator from Massachusetts are going to be

effective in helping to sustain that will. I rather think the approach

that Winston Churchill took in World War II accentuating the positive,

yes, but not ignoring the negative and challenging the British people

and the people of the Allies to persevere in that war is the right

approach, and that is what President Bush has tried to do.

The Senator from Massachusetts has confused a couple of issues.

First, he confuses violence in Iraq with less security at home. I do

not think we are less secure at home because there is violence in Iraq.

In fact, one of the reasons we have not been attacked at home for over

3 years is because we have taken the fight to the enemy and we have

largely been successful. We have not lost a battle in this war.

There are battles yet to be fought, and the enemy attacks us with

guerilla tactics, but we can persevere and win militarily. So I do not

think we should confuse the fact that there is violence in Iraq and

therefore conclude we are less secure at home. That is simply not true.

Secondly, the Senator from Massachusetts alleges that there was no

relationship, no connection, between the terrorists and the Saddam

Hussein regime. I want to try to debunk this myth right now, so let me

quote from the CIA, from the 9/11 Commission, and from George Tenet's

assessment since we are going to be quoting the National Intelligence

Estimate. This is what the head of the CIA, George Tenet, said:

No relationship? According to the CIA, not true.

Continuing to quote:

No relationship? No contacts? No connection? Read the intelligence

reports.

What did the 9/11 Commission say? Quoting from Thomas Kean, cochair

of the 9/11 Commission:

Let us get the facts straight. If we are going to come to the Senate

floor and charge the President of the United States with misinforming

the American people, we need not misinform them ourselves.

Quoting further from the 9/11 Commission report:

That is from page 61 of the report. From page 66:

From page 66:

That is the critical distinction. We have to be careful of our

language, especially when we are accusing the President of the United

States of misleading the American people. Our language matters. The

President never alleged an operational link or that Saddam Hussein

helped to plan the 9/11 attack on the United States, but there is

plenty of evidence of connections between bin Laden, al-Qaida, other

terrorists and Iraq and Saddam Hussein.

The Intelligence Committee report in July of this year reported:

They go on to quote the letter from George Tenet that I quoted

before.

This is exactly what Senator McCain talked about a few weeks ago,

what the President has talked about, what the Vice President has talked

about, our concern of this relationship that would some day, if we did

not act against Iraq, blossom into fullblooded support, full-blown

support from Iraq to al-Qaida.

Finally:

I ask unanimous consent that a New York Times article of June 25,

2004, which further makes this point, be printed in the Record.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in

the Record, as follows:

I note, concluding with this point, that Abdul Yasim and Abu

Nidal were harbored in Iraq. The Taliban did not directly involve

itself in 9/11 or have weapons of mass destruction either, but it

harbored people like this and that is one reason we went after the

Taliban and Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq.

With regard to the connections between Iraq and al-Qaida, the case is

very clear that they were there and the President stands correct, and I

hope the Senator from Massachusetts would stand corrected.

Finally, as to the suggestion that Iraq was a diversion from

succeeding in Afghanistan, that we have not finished the job there, we

were very successful in defeating the Taliban and killing a lot of al-

Qaida and capturing a lot of al-Qaida in Afghanistan, and in

establishing a regime there which will be holding elections. Karzai

made it very clear when he came to this country and expressed his

appreciation, just as did Prime Minister Allawi of Iraq, to American

forces for helping to provide the Afghanis with enough freedom to

control their own future. I think there is confusion that the only al-

Qaida are on the border between Afghan and Pakistan, and since we have

not captured every single one of them, including Osama bin Laden,

therefore our activities in Iraq are responsible for this fact. There

has been no evidence of that. As a matter of fact, our military

commanders make the point it is not true, that Iraq was not a diversion

from anything we had to do in Afghanistan where we were very effective

and successful.

To those who convey this sense of panic, that all is going bad, the

opposite of that is not those of us who support the President's policy

saying everything is rosy. I do not know that anybody has ever used

that phrase. If they have, I would like to see it. The President has

said repeatedly that this is a long and difficult war and it is going

to require a great deal of perseverance and commitment by the American

people. But as contrasted by those who create the sense of panic, the

President has a vision and the President's commanders have a strategy.

When I saw General Abizaid on television last Sunday, he didn't paint a

rosy picture. He painted a very realistic assessment. But he also

portrayed a calm confidence that if we can persevere we can prevail.

That is what he asked of the American people, to allow the military

commanders as well as the Commander in Chief to carry out the vision to

defeat the militant Islamic terrorists wherever they are. As I said,

they are not only in Afghanistan; they are all over the world including

primarily in the Middle East. That is why this war has many fronts. It

is not just Afghanistan. We fought simultaneously to try to gain

support from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, the Libyan regime, and from Syria.

We did what we did in Afghanistan. We have done what we have done in

Iraq. There are still some places to go, but we have also been in Yemen

and Sudan, and so on.

The bottom line here is you can't isolate one place in the world and

say we have to do that first and win every possible goal there before

we can do anything else anywhere else. The President has made it clear

that by going to one of the chief sources of terrorism, namely Iraq, we

can help to win this war.

The fact that there was such a connection between the terrorists--

between al-Qaida and the Iraqi regime--is I think validated by the fact

that they have been able to so successfully continue to attack

Americans and American forces in Iraq.

Let's consider that the military commanders just might know what they

are talking about, No. 1. No. 2, it does no good to wring our hands and

paint a picture of panic. Realistic assessments, absolutely; truth to

the American people, absolutely; but leadership that presents a vision

and a strategy for winning the wider war on terrorism, that is what the

President has provided. That is why I am very proud to support

President Bush's efforts in this regard. 3