Mr. President, I have to respond to my colleague from

Illinois, who suggested that somehow the Iraqis are not standing up and

fighting for the freedom of their country and the comment, ``How much

longer do we have to wait?''

Ask the Iraqi families of the men who were beheaded--30 of them most

recently--whether they are waiting for the Iraqis to step forward and

sacrifice for their country. Ask the Iraqis who are in the military who

are dying today, sacrificing for the freedom of their country, whether

they are waiting. The people of Iraq are stepping forward and fighting

for their country. We are helping them do that. It is the clear

intention of our policy in Iraq to hand over the responsibility, and it

is happening.

I find it almost remarkable that here now, 3 years into this

conflict, where we are trying to transform an entire society, that the

level of patience for this very difficult process, given all the

progress made and all the elections that have been held and the

Constitution drafted--I think in all but four of the provinces, there

is very little terrorist activity, or insurgent activity, or whatever

you want to call it. There is a concentration in a few provinces where

there are problems.

But I met with people from Mosul yesterday--elected officials--who

came here and talked about the dramatic improvements that are going on

in that area, and the lack of any kind of al-Qaida operations and

terrorist operations in that area, saying that life is dramatically

advancing. We don't hear talk about that. We hear talk about the

problem spots, and that is legitimate. But the idea that the Iraqis are

not fighting for their country, that they are not stepping forward--as

we see day in and day out that they are conducting missions and they

are eliminating the terrorist threat in Iraq--I think it is almost

incredible. I don't know how you can read the news and suggest that the

Iraqis are not stepping forward to defend their country and fight for

their freedom.

Also, coming back to the issue of patience, I thank God sometimes

that some of the elected officials who are here today were not around

in 1777, 1778, and 1779. We would still be singing ``God save the

queen,'' not ``hail to the chief.'' It took us 11 years to put a

democracy together, in circumstances that I suggest were far less

difficult, in a neighborhood that was far less problematic than the

neighborhood Iraq happens to be situated in. So the idea that we have

lost our patience in a

struggle against Islamic fascism, which is a real present danger to the

future of the United States of America, to me, is almost

unconscionable.

This is a struggle we are engaged in. This is a struggle for our

time. It is one that I believe history will look back upon and suggest

that we met the threat that would have fundamentally changed the future

of the world, and we met it before it did so. We met it with strength,

with determination, and we overcame the doubters, overcame those who

would have rather cut and run. I am not for cutting and running when it

comes to the future security of this country. I have patience because

things that are difficult and meaningful take time. We have to give

that time.

I suggest there are some things that we are finding out now. Another

effort I have been working on in Iraq is the intelligence information

we have been able to gather from the former regimes in Iraq and

Afghanistan. This has been a project that Congressman Peter Hoekstra,

chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, has been working on--and

I have worked with him--to make sure these 48,000 boxes, containing

roughly 2 million documents, are released to the American public and

the world to determine what was the intelligence assessment and the

activity level and, in particular, in Iraq with Saddam, and with his

interaction with elements of al-Qaida or other terrorist organizations.

What we are finding is that some of the statements that have been

made on the floor and statements that were made just as recently as

March 19, 2006 by my colleague from Pennsylvania, Congressman Jack

Murtha, who said:

Yet if we look at some of the documents that are being released by

Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte--and, again, only a

few hundred of the millions of documents have been released. As a

caveat, while Congressman Hoekstra and I are excited about the fact

that DNI decided to release these documents, the pace of the release

is, let us say, unsatisfactory to this point.

We have, with the blogosphere, the Internet, the opportunity to put

these documents out there and have almost instantaneously translated

postings about what these documents contain.

During the time the Director of National Intelligence Negroponte has

had these documents--this is 3 years ago--less than 2 percent of the

documents have been translated. At this pace, my grandchildren may know

what is in these documents.

We need to get these documents out. Mr. President, 600 over a little

over a 2-week period is almost the same pace as translating with the

people they had over in DNI Negroponte's shop. We need to get these

documents out quicker. Why? Because if we look at what is in these

documents, there is important information in understanding the

connection between Iraq and terrorist organizations and the threat we

were facing, the potential threat we had talked about, which is the

coordination between a country that had used chemical and biological

weapons, was thought universally to have chemical and biological

weapons, and terrorists who have expressed a direct desire to use those

weapons and get access to them.

If we look at a report that was issued by the Pentagon Joint Forces

Command translating and analyzing some of these documents, called the

``Iraqi Perspectives,'' on page 54, they write: Beginning in 1994, the

Fedayeen Saddam opened its own paramilitary training camps for

volunteers--this is 9 years, by the way, before the Iraq war--

graduating more than 7,200 ``good men racing full with courage and

enthusiasm'' in the first year.

Mr. President, 7,200 in the first year, 1994.

Beginning in 1998, these camps began hosting ``Arab volunteers from

Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, `the Gulf,' and Syria.'' Volunteers. I wonder

why they would be volunteering to help Saddam. It is not clear, it

says, from the available evidence where are all these non-Iraqi

volunteers who were ``sacrificing for the cause'' went to ply their

newfound skills. Before the summer of 2002, most volunteers went home

upon the completion of training. They didn't stay in Iraq. They came

for training from countries in the gulf regions, and they went home.

Odd that they would be fighting for the cause which would, in that

case, be Saddam, if they went home.

Before the summer of 2002, as I said, most volunteers went home upon

completion of the training, but these camps were humming with frenzied

activity in the months immediately prior to the war.

As late as January 2003, the volunteers participated in a special

training event called the Heroes Attack.

Stephen Hayes, who deserves a tremendous amount of credit for his

reporting on these documents in the Weekly Standard, has brought this

issue to the forefront and has awakened Members of Congress, myself

included, to the importance of discovering the content of these

documents as well as some of the information contained in these

documents.

He reminds us of the special significance of that training in 1998:

What we have here is, again, information that I believe is vitally

important for the American public to see. I encourage Director of

National Intelligence John Negroponte to step up the pace. Congressman

Hoekstra and I have introduced legislation which would require just

that: it would require the release of these documents and provides a

way to do so.

We introduced this legislation prior to the decision to release these

documents, but, again, I just make the point that the pace with which

these documents are being released is inadequate. We need to continue

to step that up, allow this information to get out for people to see,

pro and con--all the information that is available to us. These are old

documents. They are at least 3 years old; in some cases much more than

that. The classified nature is specious, at best. We want to protect

names, obviously, if there are reasons to protect certain names because

of potential fallout from having their names released. If there are

recipes for chemical weapons, fine. But the bottom line is most of this

information should be released, can be released, and is not being

released.

I assure my colleagues--and I think I can speak for Congressman

Hoekstra in this regard--we will stay on this issue, and we will make

sure all of this information is made available to the American public

so we have a better understanding of what the situation was in Iraq

prior to the war.