Mr. President, a few years may have passed since I had the

pleasure of serving President Ronald Reagan, but I can still remember

the liberal naysayers attacking him for his fixed resolve in fighting

the cold war. They questioned President Reagan's reasoning, they

questioned his strategy, and they questioned America's chances of

coming away victorious in a battle to free the Soviet Union and other

countries from the grasp of communism. President Reagan rejected

communism, he rejected the Iron Curtain, and he refused to concede that

freedom could not prevail.

While the Soviet Union was extending its influence and doctrine

throughout the world, President Reagan had a different idea for the

course of history. He knew that the enemy must be defeated, not

tolerated. So in the face of severe criticism, Ronald Reagan did just

that. Of course, we now know Reagan was right in his actions to

eradicate communism. Millions were freed, and a global threat no longer

exists.

Does this kind of skepticism have a familiar ring? It should. It is

frighteningly similar to the opposition our current President is

facing. In fact, some of the faces are even the same. They were wrong

then, and they are wrong now.

As did Reagan, President Bush determined that terrorism must not be

tolerated. It must be defeated.

Since declaring a global war on terror, the United States has

succeeded in two operations against countries that harbored known

terrorists. We have captured a brutal dictator in Saddam Hussein,

immobilized Osama bin Laden, destroyed al-Qaida's base, and Iraq now

has a constitution built on democratic principles. We are also seeing

positive signs from known sponsors of terrorists.

After years of successfully hiding from United Nations inspectors,

Libya has now relinquished its nuclear weapons program. Libya, as well

as other rogue terrorist regimes, knows this President means business.

Does this sound like a record that deserves criticism and skepticism?

Since liberating Iraq, the coalition forces have made tremendous

progress, but insurgents remain who do not wish to embrace freedom but

instead choose violence and terror. Coalition forces are presently

seeking cleric al-Sadr. He is an individual who has a lot in common

with Saddam Hussein. Much like Saddam, he is inciting criminals and

loyalists of the old regime to take up arms against peace and freedom.

Much like Saddam, he is hiding somewhere while others fight his

battle--this time in a mosque, not a hole. And much like Saddam, he and

other rogue supporters will be brought to justice by our forces.

We are blessed with brilliant and hard-working men and women, under

Paul Bremer's leadership, who have sacrificed their way of life in the

United States to aid the Iraqi people in the transition to democracy.

Our men and women in uniform have done and are doing a phenomenal job

of bringing stability to nations previously under the reign of terror.

Sadly, there are casualties still occurring abroad, and it is

heartbreaking.

I have personally visited with our men and women in uniform, as well

as their families, and have seen firsthand their unwavering commitment.

They underscored how strongly they felt about their mission and the

need to see it through to completion. Just this week, President Bush

was in my home State of North Carolina where he met privately with the

family of 26-year-old Army Specialist Christopher Hill. Christopher was

killed in Iraq when his vehicle fell victim to a roadside bomb and

exploded.

During the tear-filled meeting, an emotional President Bush spent

time with Christopher's young widow, Cheryl Hill, and her 14-month-old

daughter. Cheryl Hill was unyielding in her support of President Bush

as our Commander in Chief. Amidst her prayers for her family, Cheryl

told the President she not only supports him 100 percent, she prays for

him as well.

I conclude with a story that pulled at my heartstrings this week. A

soldier in Iraq was gravely injured when his vehicle was hit by a

rocket-propelled grenade while on patrol. His driver and gunner were

killed. He suffered extensive burns on his legs, back, and face and

permanent nerve damage to his left leg.

After undergoing rehabilitation and several skin grafts in Germany,

he told his commander to send him back to Iraq or he would not

reenlist. He went through tests to ensure he was still mission capable

and was ultimately sent back to Iraq to resume his post. When this

seriously injured soldier was asked why he returned to Iraq after that

kind of ordeal, he simply responded, ``The job is not done.''

Simple words, but how powerful and how poignant. Our job is not done,

but I know we have men and women capable of completing it. May God

bless each and every one of them and may God continue to bless those

who yearn for freedom around the world.