Mr. President, I come to the floor today with many mixed

emotions and with a firm conviction. Foremost among these emotions is a

deep sympathy for the families who have lost loved ones during the

recent surge of violence in Iraq. I believe there were 32 deaths of our

servicemen in the last 96 hours. We lost one brave marine over the

weekend who is from Minnesota. My thoughts and prayers are with his

family and with others.

America will forever be in the debt of the brave men and women who

volunteered. Every man and woman in uniform in Iraq and Afghanistan is

a volunteer. Many have made the ultimate sacrifice. It is with a heavy

heart I reflect on that. But my prayers are with them and my thoughts

are with them. My admiration is with them, and the thanks of every

Minnesotan and every American is with them for their sacrifice and

their courage.

I am of the Jewish faith. We just celebrated the Passover tradition,

celebration and commemoration of Israel's deliverance from Egypt and

from slavery almost 6,000 years ago. One of the things about that

holiday is in that service we have a dinner which is a ritual dinner,

and we celebrate. We thank God for deliverance. But in that service we

also talk about not only ourselves; it is not enough that God delivered

us from slavery, but we need to exert ourselves in the deliverance of

others. I think that is more than a Jewish tradition. It is more than

an American President. Our President reminded us it is a universal

principle; that freedom is not America's gift to the world, but it is

God's gift.

This is also a solemn time to remember the genocide in Rwanda 10

years ago when we as a Nation stood by and over 1 million people were

slaughtered.

This is the anniversary of the fall of Baghdad for which the whole

civilized world should rejoice. It has been a year without new mass

graves being filled. A half million Iraqis were slaughtered by Saddam

Hussein, by the brutal tyrant. It has been a year in which the torture

chambers and the rape rooms are now silent. It has been a year when the

wealth of Iraq, a nation with millions of poor people, has not been

plundered to sustain the obscene decadence

of a sadistic dictator and his maniacal sons. It has been a year that

kids returned to school and teachers actually got paid, hospitals

reopened, and food and water restored. It has been a year in which

clear intent to threaten the region and the world has been stopped.

The violence in the last several days has been grievous, but it only

stands to confirm the truth of what America has been committed to for

the last 3 years: the choice of this state for the uprising in terms

that we were battling the remnants of a regime we went there to

destroy.

The attacks in Spain a short time ago confirm our conviction that

Iraq is a battle in the global war on terror. Why else would terrorists

target Spain, except to undermine our coalition?

Let us never forget that terrorism at its heart, at its evil heart,

is a psychological war. It endeavors to break the spirit and the

resolve of those it attacks by creating a lose-lose situation. It uses

deadly force. By using deadly force it creates a dilemma for its enemy.

To not respond validates those attacks. To respond in kind, they

believe, will create further unrest and cause for the next round of

attacks. Our resolve is what they are attacking. We must show them no

hint of resignation.

I must say, I felt a great sense of remorse over comments made

yesterday by Members of this body who raised the specter of Vietnam. I

will be direct: To raise the specter of Vietnam as 10 families learn of

the deaths of young sons is regrettable. To attribute a political

motive to the President's June 30 deadline to return control of Iraq is

extreme. I know the target audience of these comments, but its

unintended witnesses are those we fight against today in the global war

on terror.

Am I the only person struck by the absurd irony of the last week's

national debate? On the one hand, the President is being roundly

criticized by those claiming he failed to act aggressively prior to

September 11 and used only diplomatic efforts to combat terrorism. And,

in almost the same breath, he is criticized for being far too

aggressive after September 11 and not relying upon diplomacy enough. So

he was supposed to be tougher on terror before the attack and easier

afterwards? It is hypocrisy.

We have an all-sports radio station in the Twin Cities that pokes fun

at itself by saying it is ``the home of the best second-guessing.'' I

don't think it can match this town of late. It is intellectually

dishonest to look backwards with all the facts and judge the decisions

that were made with almost none of the facts, or the facts that existed

hidden in the normal cloud of endless speculation of what might happen.

To compare perfect hindsight with imperfect foresight is unfair. The

American people understand that.

I have heard the story about a woman who wrote many letters of advice

to President Lincoln during the Civil War, giving him direction she

received in a prayer of who to attack and who to defend, which general

to keep and which to fire. Lincoln replied something to the effect:

Don't you find it curious that the Almighty gave you all the

answers and gave me the job?

It is easy to second-guess. It is easy to criticize, particularly in

a political season. But to lead is something altogether different. The

leader must live in the real world of the price that might be paid for

the goal that has been set. Our young men and women are on the line

today defending freedom, fighting terror. We are having discussion and

debate about an April 30 deadline. One can raise questions about the

plan. We should discuss that. But to call it arbitrary and unilateral,

knowing there is an expectation of the Iraqis that we need to turn over

political power--not leave, not cut and run. We are still in Germany 50

years later, in Kosovo, in South Korea, not to cut and run--hand over,

get rid of the specter of occupation, which is what the international

community wants. Yet there are those today who will criticize that

second-guessing because you need something to second-guess. It should

not work that way.

America awakened on September 11 to a harsh reality. After a decade

of talking tough, diplomatic efforts, occasionally sending a cruise

missile to blow up a factory, or camp in the desert and hoping

terrorism would go away, we were brutally attacked. Our good will, our

love of peace, and our broad oceans did not protect us. As much as some

may want to return to the illusory sense of security we had before

September 11, we cannot. Giving people false hope is the antithesis of

leadership.

The prior judgment of those who attacked us was that America was

weak, that we were corrupt, that we were divisible. The destruction of

the Taliban in Afghanistan was lesson No. 1. They were wrong. The

invasion of Iraq and the fall of Baghdad was lesson No. 2. The attempt

to secure peace in Iraq is lesson No. 3.

The terrorists are making up their minds what we are made of. They

tested the Spanish. They tested the British. They will test the

Russians, the Poles, the Italians and every other nation that has been

participating in the coalition and the multilateral effort to put Iraq

back on its feet. No doubt they will test us. We will meet that test.

We will show resolve. We will not cut and run. Terrorism will be

defeated. Freedom will prevail.

I yield the floor.