Madam President, it has been another interesting week in

the public debate on Iraq. Yesterday, a joint session of Congress was

convened to hear the address of the Interim Prime Minister of Iraq,

Iyad Allawi.

I have heard many foreign leaders address joint sessions, and I have

found many of those addresses compelling, powerful, historic. Last year

we heard the Prime Minister of Great Britain, Tony Blair, give a

riveting speech, where a leader of a famous center-left democratic

party forcefully supported our President and his administration on a

question that has always been best served when the parties join

together: the question of war and security.

We all remember the speech Prime Minister Blair gave, and the

rationale he reiterated for joining his nation's forces to the cause of

the coalition's liberation of Iraq. Prime Minister Blair and I come

from two different political traditions, and we represent two different

political philosophies, but I respect him and I admire him. His speech

was one of the best speeches I have heard given in a joint session.

But yesterday's speech by Interim Prime Minister Allawi was truly one

of the most historic speeches by a foreign leader before this Congress.

Prime Minister Allawi was direct in his gratitude for the U.S.

contribution and sacrifice to liberate his country from tyranny. He was

compelling in his declaration that the Iraqi people are determined to

move forward in assuming their security and in conducting free and fair

elections. And he committed his Government's partnership to fighting

terrorism in that region and throughout the world. The House Chamber

was fully packed by my colleagues from both parties. The Prime Minister

received much applause and, to the best that I could see, that applause

came from all of us. I am happy to recognize this because Prime

Minister Allawi is not the Republican's ally in Iraq, he is America's

ally in Iraq.

As we know from his biographies in the press, the Prime Minister has

worked with American administrations before this one, including a

Democratic administration. He is not beholden to Democrats or

Republicans. He is beholden to the cause of an Iraq that is free from

terror and tyranny. And he has the scars to prove that.

This is why I was so appalled to hear some of the criticisms of Prime

Minister Allawi that emanated from the other side yesterday. None was

so appalling as this statement, quoted in today's Los Angeles Times, by

Joe Lockhart, a senior adviser to the Kerry campaign:

Now, what a thought to put out. What a condemnation of a man who

risks his life every day for freedom in Iraq and freedom throughout the

whole Middle East and freedom throughout the world.

``The last thing you want to be seen as is a puppet of the United

States,'' said Mr. Lockhart who, last I checked, was not known for his

foreign policy expertise. He continued:

Now, Madam President, this quote will be read in Iraq today. The

reason it can be read in Iraq today is because today Iraq has freedom

of the press.

The reason there is freedom of the press today is because a brutal

totalitarian dictatorship was deposed by a U.S.-led coalition. The

reason there is freedom of the press today is because the United States

has sacrificed over 1,000 of our young men and women to free a country

from a dictator who tortured his people, gassed his subjects, invaded

his neighbors, associated with terrorists and al-Qaida, built and hid

weapons of mass destruction, repeatedly violated international law

requiring him to reveal the whereabouts of those weapons of mass

destruction, never allowed international inspectors to confirm the

destruction of those weapons, and never--never--ceased his virulent and

hostile rhetoric against the United States, and who caused the death of

at least 300,000 of his own fellow countrymen who now or did lay in

mass graves.

Madam President, you know what is underneath the shirt of Prime

Minister Allawi? Scars from an ax attack by Saddam's henchmen. And do

you know what is underneath those scars? A brave and patriotic Iraqi

heart, beholden to no one but the cause of a free Iraq.

The Democratic spokesman's statement was a calumny, pure and simple.

It was a cheap and pathetic shot from a man whose only combat

experience is bullet points in 10-point font. It was a cheap jab to a

man who barely survived an ax attack ordered by a tyrant we have

deposed, and who has been four times--four times--targeted by the

terrorists and gangsters who kill our troops and the Iraqi people and

who would kill us if they could.

But let me be plain. The statement was worse than a calumny. It was a

deliberate attempt to undermine our mission in Iraq. And I am sick and

tired of some suggestions I have heard in the press recently that we

cannot speak plainly about these matters.

Prime Minister Allawi is as legitimate a politician as anyone in Iraq

today. He has fought for the cause since before Joe Lockhart chose the

pencil as his weapon of choice. He can list more fallen, tortured,

vanished comrades than Joe Lockhart can list maitre d's. He is the

Iraqi Interim Prime Minister because he was chosen last June by the

Iraqi Governing Council--Iraqis, if you will--to lead his own country.

He is the man we are relying on to lead us to elections in January,

which is a key aspect of our policy in Iraq.

We are not there but to liberate these people. And we have done so,

so far. And I am getting sick and tired of some who have found fault

with this in the most discouraging of ways. I think some of those

comments undermine our young men and women over there. How would you

like your sons or daughters over there to have to read this drivel that

not only has been said by Mr. Lockhart but others who have continually

maligned this war, continually maligned our cause, continually maligned

our leaders, and, by implication, our efforts in this war?

When a Democratic spokesman publicly says Prime Minister Allawi is a

puppet, which Prime Minister Allawi clearly is not, and he says so in a

way that Iraqis under fire from terrorists and gangsters can read,

there is no way we can conclude that this is not undermining the

Interim Prime Minister.

When the Interim Prime Minister is undermined, our political ally in

Iraq is undermined. And when our political ally in Iraq is undermined,

the work of

our soldiers--whose mission is to create the security to support our

political strategy--is undermined. Their work is undermined.

Recently, there has been some tut-tatting in some of the press and

the antiwar movement that such declarations as I have just made are

beyond proper discourse.

Let me be clear: A state of war should give no cause for inhibiting

free speech in a democratic society, and I would tolerate no

restriction of free speech here or anywhere in the country.

After all, Michael Moore is free to denounce every manifestation of

American foreign policy; is he not? And we are upholding his right to

do so, as ridiculous and inane and asinine as his comments are. His

antiwar work includes Serbian propaganda clips in defense of genocide

in ``Bowling for Columbine'' to nice pictures of playful Iraqis

peacefully flying kites in the halcyon days of Saddam Hussein, which is

in his latest virulently anti-Bush creed, and, of course, cheered on by

some of our colleagues on the other side. The man is not an idiot, but

he acts like an idiot, and he is undermining our young men and women

over there.

But likewise, honest policy debates--and the comments on the role

rhetoric plays--should also not be restricted.

When a Democratic spokesman calls Prime Minister Allawi a

puppet, that is not a suggestion as to what the Prime Minister could

better do in his difficult job. That is a statement that undermines the

Prime Minister, our ally in a war against terror and tyranny. And when

you undermine our principal ally in a war against terror and tyranny,

you are undermining our cause.

Madam President, I buried my brother-in-law at Arlington Cemetery

last week. I spoke of him on the Senate floor yesterday. He was a tough

sergeant in the Marines. He had that unique pride that I have come to

so admire in the Marines. His modesty over his sacrifices for his

country was surpassed only by his love of his country. He was a true

hero. He fought in Korea and Vietnam, and he bore the wounds of Vietnam

through his life. Agent orange exposure killed him. And to his dying

day, he thought the cause he fought for in Vietnam was just.

Last May, the Democratic nominee in this fall's Presidential campaign

was quoted as saying that President Bush ``didn't learn the lessons of

our generation in Vietnam.'' I find this remark staggeringly ironic.

Let me say this, Madam President. I honor the service of all who

fought bravely and honorably in Vietnam--everyone, without exception.

But there are two different interpretations of our Vietnam policy.

The antiwar movement's view on our Vietnam policy concluded that the

use of American power was immoral and not to be trusted. Today, that

world view is still very strong, overseas and here among the American

left.

It has not changed much, except that, today, the left, which still

distrusts the use of American power, believes that that power must be

checked by the international community. That view holds that American

power is illegitimate without the sanction of other powers, including

the United Nations.

There is another view on Vietnam policy that my late brother-in-law

held. And that view is that the sacrifices of those who fought nobly

and bravely in Vietnam are to be forever honored. That view--my view--

is that the American military won that war. When President Nixon signed

the Paris Peace Treaty in early 1973, U.S. forces fighting with South

Vietnam had secured South Vietnam. The war was lost when the north

violated that peace treaty and a Democratic Congress failed to provide

the arms and funds to help an ally defend itself from an invasion

supported by the Soviets and the Chinese.

We made many policy mistakes in Vietnam, and the enslavement of the

south to communism was a sad conclusion whose responsibility must never

be borne by those who fought, but by those who failed to hold the

course.

Do you know what one of the earliest policy mistakes we made was? It

was when, under the Kennedy administration, the decision was made to

stop supporting the Diem administration in South Vietnam. When that

happened, the south lost a leading figure, a political leader. Diem was

no democrat, but he was our political ally. We dealt ourselves a

serious political blow when we failed to support Diem. He was

assassinated, and our political goals were undermined.

I am not going to stand by and be silent when our ally, Prime

Minister Allawi, is undermined by rhetoric from a top spokesman of the

other party. Because some people need to understand that rhetoric has

consequences.

Let debate rage, I say. Let the anti-war movement have its say, and

let Michael Moore collect his fees on college campuses. But I believe

that, in a time of war, we need to hold ourselves to higher standards

of intellectual content, honesty and clarity.

Recently we have heard a lot about a CIA analysis from earlier this

summer. Am I the only one to notice that the people who have been

declaring that CIA analyses are unreliable are treating this latest

analysis as holy writ? That the people who have taken the good work of

Chairman Roberts and our committee--which did a stark and honest review

of the failings of pre-war intelligence--and concluded that the CIA

cannot be trusted are now asking us to conclude, based on an analysis

no one has read, that the President is lying?

A CIA analysis is just that: analysis. It is more than guesswork, but

it is a lot less than prediction. Yes, the situation could go bad in

Iraq--very bad.

But at no time in American history has an administration conducting a

war concluded during a dark hour that success was no longer attainable.

That is not leadership. To focus on the course to success is not lying.

It is leadership. To focus on the darkness of the hour is not.

The situation in Iraq is difficult, but it will not go bad, because

we will not accept failure as an outcome. Failure would endanger our

security, and this administration will not allow that.

We are in a charged political season. The American public will choose

who they believe will best ensure their security. I would ask all who

opine to remember that, while we are in a political season, we are in a

war. Let us criticize as best we can, but let us do just that: as best

as we can. That standard, is far above the rhetoric of defeat, despair

and, in the case of calling Prime Minister Allawi a puppet, self-

defeating delusion.