Mr. President, I congratulate the Senator from Texas,

Senator Hutchison, for her tremendous effort in organizing Members to

come to the floor to tell the other side of story in Iraq.

It started with a series of e-mails that I received from different

people, from constituents to folks who weren't constituents, who

complained to me--these are soldiers in-country--that they were

becoming frustrated because every day they would be out there on the

frontlines in-country, serving, sacrificing for our country and

accomplishing great deeds and then would have to turn on CNN and other

news shows and read the clips from the American newspapers and see a

war being described which they were not seeing. They were not seeing

the war as being an IED every day but seeing, every day, hundreds of

thousands of Iraqis working with our American military forces to make

Iraq a more stable and safe place.

I, along with Senator Hutchison and my colleagues, have decided it is

time to start going around the mainstream media and telling the other

side of the story.

I came from a press conference downstairs where I had four civilian

independent military bloggers. These are people who have been in-

country--one is going to be in-country in the next couple of weeks, one

who is the wife of someone who is heading to Iraq--talking about the

military blog, talking about all of the information that is now

populating the Internet, of people who are actually there in-country,

telling their stories, people who are making a difference every single

day in the lives of Iraqis.

One such person is Captain Jim Bentzley, who is from suburban

Philadelphia, who wrote to me a month and a half ago. He said:

Corporal Mindo Estrella, from Erie, PA said:

Corporal Estrella reenlisted. in the Marine Corps this past October,

shortly after his battalion arrived: in Iraq. He said:

He reenlisted last month. He said he likes what he does. He feels he

is making a difference in transforming the country of Iraq.

LCpl Dan Williams said the same thing. He arrived in mid-March and

has worked in-country, in Fallujah, to identify lots of insurgents and

is working with the people now. He says he is getting the intelligence

from the people in the community, where originally they were hesitant

to work with them. Now most of the intelligence they are gathering is

from Iraqi civilians who realize that it is now in their best interests

for their country that they want to fight for to cooperate not with the

American military but also with the Iraqi military in rooting out

insurgents in their country.

We are making tremendous, positive steps.

I am going to be working, over the next several months, to make sure

that the stories of the people who are on the frontline, who are

fighting the war in the trenches, have their stories told to the

American public and not people sitting in editorial rooms in New York

City trying to spin what is going on in the mainstream of Iraq.

For example, news comes that America has suffered the loss of 2,048

brave servicemen and women in Operation Iraqi Freedom. The loss of any

soldier in the cause of freedom grieves us all; especially the parents,

wives, husbands and children of each deceased loved one. As elected

officials, we don't know these soldiers as numbers, but as people, with

hopes and dreams, family and friends. Knowing them as we do, it is hard

to imagine the loss of any of them.

As great as the loss is, it can only compound a family's sadness to

hear some say that the loss of their loved one was neither for the

protection of America or the freedom of man. Yet we hear it regularly.

Critics say Iraq posed no threat, as there was no link in Iraq to the

war on terror. Or that securing freedom in the Middle East is

impossible or isn't worth one American life.

To those who have lost their loved ones, don't believe these critics.

Don't let those poisoned words take root in your heart.

As you hear of the 2,048th soldier lost, there is another number that

demonstrates the protection of Americans here, and the preservation of

freedom around the world. And that number, as best we can ascertain,

stood at 450 last month.

Over 450 suicide bombers have attacked in Iraq. That is over 450

suicide bombers who did not strike at America's homeland, did not

strike at our embassies, our ships, our civilians around the globe. It

is your sons and daughters who have protected America from these 450

plus suicide bombers.

The suicide bomber represents that greatest threat to America, to

democracies, to civilized society, and to peace. Stopping suicide

bombers from attacking America and our allies is the foremost goal of

the War on Terror. Without terrorists, planes, trains, boats, cars, and

buses are moving gifts to society. Add a single terrorist, and they are

transformed into weapons of mass death and destruction.

With one suicide bomber, a stolen van filled with explosives cost the

U.S. Embassy in Beirut 63 lives, including 17 Americans. With one

suicide bomber, a delivery truck took out the Marine Barracks in

Beirut, costing the lives of 241 U.S. Marines. With just two suicide

bombers, a small boat hit the U.S.S. Cole, killing 17 sailors. With

just four suicide bombers, the London subway and buses became the final

destination for 52 civilians. With just 19 suicide bombers, four

airliners made for one of America's darkest days by killing nearly

3,000 innocent people.

The suicide bomber is the foremost weapon of terrorism today. So how

can anyone say that 450 ex-suicide bombers in Iraq has not protected

American lives?

Critics of this war insist that it is America's presence in Iraq that

has created the 450 plus suicide bombers in Iraq. Did America's

presence in Iraq cause the attack on the World Trade Center in 1993?

Did our presence in Iraq compel terrorist to attack us on 9/11? The

answer is no. It was our existence in the world that compelled the

terrorists to attack us, time and again. These suicide bombers existed

and attacked America before, on, and after 9/11, and well before

Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Frankly, I am stunned that after 9/11 that anyone in a position of

power would assume the peaceful intentions of one suicide bomber, much

less each and every one of the 450 ex-suicide bombers in Iraq.

So I believe that 450 fewer suicide bombers does make America safer,

and our brave men and women in uniform serving in Iraq have protected

America from these cowards.

On the Marine Corps website is a story about Lance Corporal Dan

Williams, a 22-year-old intelligence analyst from Murrysville, PA with

the 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment currently conducting security

and stability operations in and around Fallujah. Part of Lance Corporal

Williams' mission is to piece together fragments of data on terrorist

identities, connections, and locations. This information is used to

determine where and when to apprehend these individuals, and what type

of threat they may face upon arrival. Since his unit arrived in Iraq in

mid-March 2005, Lance Corporal Williams and his fellow Marines have

helped to apprehend dozens of insurgent supporters and to unearth

several weapons caches in the area.

As for this fight for freedom, we now have a democratically-elected

constitution in place in Iraq. Will freedom and democracy take root and

flourish in Iraq?

We cannot say right now. But, when we laid to rest the 1,500 American

soldiers that perished on D-Day in the grave at Normandy, no one could

say whether freedom would take in post-Nazi Germany. When we laid to

rest those 6,891 fallen soldiers at Iwo Jima, no one could say that

militaristic Japan would become a democratic nation. None of those tens

of thousands who fought and died in the hot chapter of the Cold War

knew that freedom would ever arise behind the Iron Curtain, much less

survive. And even here in America, as we buried the 4,435 lost in total

at Concord, Lexington, Bunker Hill, Trenton, Princeton, Bennington,

Cowpens, and Yorktown, no one could say for certain that a government

of, for, and by the people would take. But it did.

Each of those who died in all these battles never knew if freedom and

liberty would result from their sacrifice. Rather, they died for the

hope and dream that it might exist and flourish, both here and

elsewhere for our fellow man.

It is so unfortunate that so often critics of this war fail to tell

the stories of success coming out of Iraq; the stories which prove that

our U.S. service members are working with the

Iraqis to help them to sustain this newfound freedom by helping the

strengthen their armies.

The stories of success from our soldiers and sailors in Iraq need to

be told. Our soldiers need to know that their bravery and hard work in

Iraq is not in vain.

This new chance for freedom in this part of the world is due entirely

to the sacrifice of our soldiers and sailors, and their families.

I say to our servicemen and women and your families--Our nation owes

you our gratitude, and we honor you for bestowing the immeasurable gift

of freedom. We thank each and every one of you.