quickly to see if I could find the story, but it is not written in the BBC. I have no reason to believe that my correspondent would not tell me the truth. I believe this Congress should look into this issue.

If we are going to start a war in which we are going after a country and we say they have weapons of mass destruction, we know it, but we have not found any, and now the story comes out that we are getting ready to use them. Remember what happened in Moscow when the Chechnyan rebels took over that theater with all those people in there, and the Russian Army used a nonlethal chemical weapon to stun the people, and they had several hundred die? The question is, are we prepared to use those on civilians in Iraq or how do we keep it only on the military and not on the civilians? When gas is spread, it goes around, and people breathe it.

The United States Congress should be made aware of this. I do not go to the secret briefings because I want to be able to talk out here about what I hear in the general public. I do not think that they will tell Members in a secret briefing whether they will use it, but Congress should demand from the people in the war department and the White House as to whether or not they intend to use any kind of nonlethal chemical weapons. Are they talking about tear gas? What are they talking about? We do not want to be a part of doing the very thing that we accuse the Iraqis of.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Indiana (Ms. CARSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. CARSON of Indiana addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE WAR IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. MCINNIS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I listened to the previous speaker, and I am curious if the gentleman's preference is tear gas or bullets. I think it is a fair request that it be disclosed, what kind of gas or what kind of chemical might be used, but I think it is somewhat of an exaggeration to say the United States is going to use chemicals like those which Iraq possesses, and those are chemicals like nerve gas, ricin, and anthrax. I can assure the gentleman that the United States has no intention of using ricin, nerve gas, anthrax or those types of weapons.

I think it is entirely appropriate, if we enter into urban combat, which we have to expect is going to happen, if we have an opportunity, primarily because the civilian population is in a particular facility, if we can use tear gas instead of putting a mortar into the building, maybe we ought to use tear gas.

But for people from foreign countries to stand up and say the United States is using gas, they will be disappointed to find out the type of gas, and I do not know whether it would be used or not, but I think it would make sense to use tear gas if we can disarm and minimize our casualties towards civilians. Keep in mind the United States has done an incredible job on minimizing casualties on civilians.

It is interesting to note that the Iraqis care less about their people because they are willing to use their people as human shields than we care about their people. The United States cares enough about their people that on many occasions we will not return fire because of the Iraqi citizen that is being used as a human shield, but not on all occasions. They should not depend on that working every time. They think less of their citizens because they will use them as a shield. We think more of their citizens because we do not want citizen casualties.

I listened today to some comments from some of my colleagues, and there are two things that I want to correct. One, this is the United States against Iraq; and two, Europe is opposed to this.

In fact, if we look at Europe, Members will find that Jacques Chirac likes to pronounce that France is Europe. France is not Europe. France is a part of Europe. It is not Europe.

Jacques Chirac likes to play like he is the king of the kingdom of Europe. Europe has many different countries, and most of those countries in Europe support the United States of America. The United States of America is not acting alone in this action. The United States of America, in fact, has more allies in this action than we had during the entire first Persian Gulf War, not less, more. And on the European continent, look at the countries that are supporting the United States.

First, perhaps it is more appropriate to look at the countries that are opposing the United States. There are six, three of them being in Europe: France, Germany, and Belgium.

Now look at the countries that are supporting the United States. The British, the strongest ally we have had in a long time, the Italians, the Spanish, the Polish, the Hungarians, the Dutch. I can give Members generally the countries, Afghanistan, Albania, Australia, Colombia, the Czech Republic, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Georgia, Iceland, Japan, South Korea, Lithuania, Macedonia, Nicaragua, the Philippines, Romania. It is not just the United States. It is the United States and the British who are leading the cause, but they have lots of support throughout this world. And when Jacques Chirac speaks about Europe, he ought to be more careful.

It is such a sad case in our history that a long-time alliance and friendship with our old friends in France and Germany has been so denigrated by political leaders in Germany and France who are seizing upon popular opinion to use the United States as a vehicle to bash to continue to increase their ratings in the popularity policy. This alliance and this relationship we have had over there has gone way too many years for it to be trashed by Chancellor Schmidt in Germany and Chirac over in France, but they have done a pretty successful job of doing it.

I can tell Members in my opinion we would not be engaged in military combat today had the French and the Germans, or had the French and the Germans initially in 1992, in 1993, in 1994, in 1995, in 1996, in fact, after the Iraqis gassed 60,000 of their own people, and not with the type of gas like the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT) was talking about, tear gas and so on, gassed them with ricin. They killed 60,000. But what did the French and the Germans do? Negotiate, negotiate, negotiate. Let us have meeting, after meeting, after meeting; resolution, after resolution, after resolution. Had the French and the Germans and the country of Belgium, had they decided to get tough back in 1992 or any of those other years, we would not be where we are today.

I note that my colleague says the United States started this war. This war was started back in 1991 when Iraq continually defied the world's demand that he disarm those weapons of mass destruction.

There is not a country in the world, including the French, by the way, including Germany, there is not a nation in the world that denies that Saddam Hussein has these weapons or denies that he is a wicked guy. But there are a lot of them that want to do everything they can to get rid of Saddam Hussein except fight him. That is where the French fall in place.

I think it is important for our population to understand, I think it is very important that there are lots of other reasons that Jacques Chirac and Chancellor Schmidt over in Germany are taking on this anti-U.S. attitude and feeding the frenzy to hate America.

Once this gets resolved, take a look at how many contracts the French have with the Iraqis, business contracts. Mr. Speaker, do you know who approved the building of a nuclear plant in Iraq years ago, and the building of a nuclear plant that was justified because they needed it for energy in the country that has the second largest oil reserves in the world? Jacques Chirac approved it when he was prime minister.

Take a look at the history that we have connected with this, and we will find out how inherent these conflicts are. How interesting that Jacques Chirac and Chancellor Schmidt are now saying we ought to be the ones that let our contractors go in and rebuild Iraq after this conflict is over. Their decision has a lot less to do with true disagreements of substance with the United States and a whole lot more to do with business agreements and business contracts and oil.

Let me say something about the oil situation. Many people talk about this is all about oil. It is about oil, but it is not about oil for the United States of America. If it was about oil for the United States or the British, the easiest thing for us to do, and we could do it in 24 hours, is to lift the sanctions, take off the economic sanctions.

I will tell what oil it is about. It is about oil for the French. The French have below-market, large contracts for oil resources from Iraq. That is what it is. If we want to talk about oil, we had better look at the French.

I happen to think that once we are successful in taking out this regime and we are rebuilding Iraq, and the oil that is for the people of Iraq and owned by the people of Iraq, I think the first thing we ought to do is make sure that oil is being sold at the market price, and I think we ought to call up Jacques Chirac and say you have been getting a sweetheart deal for a long time. Guess what? You care about the Iraqi people, we care about the Iraqi people, no more sweetheart deals. The French are going to pay the true value for their oil so we are assured that the people of Iraq get the true value for their oil, and it is given to the people of Iraq. That is how we ought to approach this.

The same thing with Germany, by the way.

Mr. NORWOOD. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MCINNIS. I yield to the gentleman from Georgia.

RECOGNITION OF THE 173RD AIRBORNE BRIGADE

Mr. NORWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I would like to associate myself with the remarks of the gentleman from Colorado.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday over the northern Iraq city of Bashur, in the deepest, darkest time of the night, the unmistakable and ominous rumblings of C–17 transport planes could be heard overhead. They came in low, delivering roughly 1,000 paratroopers from the U.S. Army's 173rd Airborne Brigade, known affectionately as Sky Soldiers.

□ 1445

They were there to support the U.S.-led coalition of nations to liberate the Iraqi people and end Saddam Hussein's reign of terror.

Their immediate mission was to secure a snow-covered airfield near Bashur that could be used to bring in additional support and supplies. Within hours of their successful landing in the still of the night, by the way, one of the largest of its kind since World War II, the 173rd Airborne Brigade, the Sky Soldiers, under the command of Colonel William Mayfield, had accomplished their mission.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of all of our men and women fighting for freedom around the clock today in Iraq, but there is no question I do feel a special kinship and bond with the Sky Soldiers and a keen sense of pride in their contributions during this ongoing military campaign. I feel this way, Mr. Speaker, because I too served with the 173rd Brigade during the Vietnam War.

Since it was originally constituted in 1917 as an infantry brigade and an element of the 87th Division, the 173rd Airborne Brigade has compiled a proud history of wartime accomplishment and distinction. During World War II, the Headquarters Company of the 173rd Infantry Brigade fought in three European campaigns as the 87th Reconnaissance Troop. The troop reverted to Reserve status after war, but in 1963 it was allotted to the Army and activated on Okinawa as the 173rd Airborne Brigade under the command of Brigadier General Ellis Williamson. While training extensively to make mass parachute jumps, the brigade earned the nickname of Sky Soldiers. The brigade was deployed to Vietnam in 1965 and became the first major ground combat unit of the U.S. Army to serve there. At its height in Vietnam, the 173rd had roughly 3,000 soldiers assigned.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, the 173rd has a proud and distinguished wartime record. During its more than 6 years of continuous combat in Vietnam, the brigade earned 14 campaign streamers and four unit citations. At the same time, individual Sky Soldiers received 13 Medals of Honor, 32 Distinguished Service Crosses, 1,736 Silver Stars and over 6,000 Purple Hearts. Here in Washington on the Vietnam Memorial Wall, there are over 1,790 Sky Soldier names listed, a lasting reminder of the contribution made to our Nation by the 173rd during the Vietnam War. Today, the 173rd Airborne Brigade is based in Italy where it serves as the European Command's only conventional airborne strategic response force for the European theater.

Mr. Speaker, the 173rd was heard from last night and, make no mistake about it, they will be heard from again. With the U.S. Army's Sky Soldiers on the ground and on the job in northern Iraq, our military campaign to end Saddam Hussein's torturous regime is one step closer to victory. Finally, Mr. Speaker, until that victory is securely in hand and this campaign has ended, let us keep the Sky Soldiers and all of our brave military men and women defending freedom in our thoughts and prayers. All the way to the Herd and God bless.

I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's comments.

I had said in my earlier comments that preceded those comments about the French and the Germans, I wanted to move from that and talk a little about some of the people out of Hollywood, for example, some of the protesters who in my opinion are spending more time supporting Saddam Hussein than they are the President of our own country. I want to talk about casualties, and I want to just read some letters that I have gotten in the last few days from parents of some of our brave men and women that are over there.

Keep in mind that when we talk about the military forces, we should remember that the military forces that are making this happen, that are protecting this country, that are providing the United States of America with the security and frankly with our liberty and as the former Senator Thompson said today, it is the brave soldier who has allowed us, it is the brave who have allowed us to be a country of the free. What I want to point out is throughout this country, today, in the United States there are lots of military people involved in planning, lots of people involved in logistics. In fact, last night just visiting with one of my colleagues, I said, look, somewhere out there in the logistical divisions of our armed services, somebody has got to figure out how to transport 350,000 tubes of toothpaste every 2 weeks, acquire them, package them, ship them and distribute them so all of our service people have toothpaste to use when they want to brush their teeth. There is lots that has to go into the supply line.

That leads me into my next comment. Remember, we have only been engaged in this conflict for 7 days. One week. I know there were some people that thought that Iraq was just going to willy-nilly lay down and that Saddam Hussein was going to walk off the scene and that our tanks were going to drive in as fast as they could to the city hall in downtown Baghdad and have coffee. Those people were so optimistic they were unrealistic. We are 7 days into this now, and all of a sudden I note that some of the national media is looking at the most wild, optimistic reports and since obviously we are not driving into downtown Baghdad to the city hall down there, they are saying, what is happening to the United States? Are we faltering? Is the war plan not working?

You talk about a misconception. You talk about a diversion to what is really occurring over there. The other thing that we have got to be very careful about are the casualties. Good God, we all know how horrible a casualty is; and we have a lot of people, primarily young men and women serving for our country, and they are on the front line and they are engaged in combat. This war and every war is nasty. As Tony Blair said this morning in his press conference, it is a nasty and bloody business. And that is exactly what it is.

But we have become conditioned almost in our society that we can engage in a conflict with minimal or zero casualties. I believe in Kosovo, it was all

taken from the air at many, many tens of thousands of feet; and I think the only casualties we had were accidents. Somehow some parts of the American population are believing that you can engage like this, for the right reasons, by the way, but engage in something like this without casualties. I pulled this article out of The New York Times Today by Todd Purdum. Todd put out of some of the statistics. He talks about the calculus of casualties. The Battle of the Bulge in World War II, 19,000 Americans, 19,000 casualties in the Battle of the Bulge. On one single day, September 17, 1862, at least 3,650 Confederate and Union soldiers died on the field. 3,650 in one day. At the height of the Vietnam War, roughly 200 Americans a week were killed.

He says:

''Modest as the latest losses are by historical standards of combat,'' speaking of the first Persian Gulf war, the battle with Kosovo and where we are engaged right now, ''modest as the latest losses are by historical standards of combat, they have already prompted sharp shifts in public perceptions about how well the campaign against Saddam Hussein is going, though they have not, according to polls so far, reduced overall support for the war.

''But as coalition forces face unexpected complexities on their march to Baghdad, the administration faces the political challenge of preparing a public lulled by the relatively low losses in Afghanistan and the first Persian Gulf war for a conflict that could be costlier than some optimists predicted.''

That is the point. We cannot assume a self-defeatist attitude because we take some casualties. Imagine if we did not take those casualties today, what kind of casualties we would be passing on to the next generation, because this generation shirked its responsibility, walked away from its responsibility and did not stand up with our allies, which as I mentioned earlier are larger in number than the allies we had in the first Persian Gulf war.

Imagine what the casualties would be 10 years from now if we just pass this problem on to the next generation. Iraq would have been, and we are not going to let it happen obviously, but it would have been if we had not taken this action, in 3 years, in my opinion, and I know quite a bit on both countries, in 3 years in my opinion, Iraq would have been another North Korea. How are you going to deal with North Korea? If you think we have a problem dealing with one North Korea, you ought to try dealing with two North Koreas. Thank goodness we have got the gumption, thank goodness we have the persistence, thank goodness we have the resources and the military might and, frankly, the moral belief that this is just and we know it is just, thank goodness we have the ability to go in there and do this and stop this evil thing.

It truly is a difference between good and evil. Some people say, you sound like you are preaching from a pulpit. If they knew me very well, they know they would never let me on the pulpit. But first of all let me say to you that it is truly evil we are trying to overcome and there will be casualties. I do not speak lightly of these casualties. I just read about a family whose daughter is missing. She was ambushed. She was a cook, a clerical, the convoy took the wrong turn and drove right into enemy hands. She is missing and that family is going through hell. Every family that suffers a casualty until they find out, one, that their son or daughter is going to make it; or, two, the death of a child, the horror of being in your house and looking out your picture window and seeing a military officer with a chaplain standing there waiting for you to answer your door. This is heavy, heavy stuff. Our President knows it is heavy stuff. The administration knows it.

Look at what we have got. We have got Colin Powell. He has been on that battlefield. He knows what we are talking about when we talk about heavy weight and casualties. DICK CHENEY, a former Secretary of Defense during the first Persian Gulf war. Condoleezza Rice. Take a look at these people. We know the heavy weight, but we must be prepared as a Nation not to let ourselves when we have 27 casualties, we may have 27 or 29 casualties to this point, that all of a sudden we say, My gosh, things aren't going well. We are not going to be able to accomplish this without casualties. But I can tell you the casualties we take as a result of getting rid of this regime will be a fraction of the casualties we as a Nation, we as the United States and our allies would take if we allowed Saddam Hussein down the route he was traveling for the development of his weapons of mass destruction and his propensity to pass those weapons on to terrorists and so on.

I want to just take a couple of moments and read some letters. First I want to read one of my favorite letters. I have noted that many of our international experts whose primary way of making a living are Hollywood actors have all of a sudden rediscovered their expertise in foreign affairs. It is very interesting to put a comparison. For example, Martin Sheen, whom I think got out of high school, to the best of my knowledge has never taken 1 hour of credit in foreign affairs, to the best of my knowledge outside of a good place to make a film has no knowledge of international politics or geopolitical politics is making all the comments that he is commenting. Take his resume and compare it next to Colin Powell. Tell me who knows more about foreign affairs. Yet Martin Sheen and some of his cohorts out there in Hollywood, in Tinseltown out there, are making these opinions. I saw a letter, very interesting, from Charlie Daniels. I thought I would read the letter. It is serious. It is an open letter to the Hollywood bunch. I am quoting Charlie Daniels:

''Okay, let's say just for a moment you bunch of pampered, overpaid, unrealistic children had your way and the USA did not go into Iraq.

''Let's say that you really get your way and we destroy all of our nuclear weapons, stick daisies in our gun barrels and sit around with some white wine and cheese and pat ourselves on the back, so proud of what we have done for world peace.

''Let's say that we cut the military budget to just enough to keep the National Guard on hand to help out with floods and fires.

''Let's say that we close down our military bases all over the world and bring our troops home, increase foreign aid, and drop all trade sanctions against everybody.

''I suppose that in your fantasy world, this would create a utopian world where everybody would live in peace. After all, the great monster, the United States of America, the cause of all of the world's trouble, would have disbanded its horrible military and certainly all of the other countries of the world would follow suit.

''After all, they only arm themselves to defend their country from the mean USA.

''Why, you bunch of pitiful, hypocritical, idiotic spoiled mugwumps. Get your head out of the sand and smell the Trade Towers burning.

''Do you think that a trip to Iraq by Sean Penn did anything but encourage a wanton murderer to think that the people of the USA didn't have the nerve or guts to fight him?

''Barbara Streisand's fanatical and hateful rantings about George Bush makes about as much sense as Michael Jackson hanging a baby over a railing.

''You people need to get out of Hollywood once in a while and get into the real world. You'd be surprised at the hostility you would find out here.

''Stop in at a truck stop and tell an overworked long-distance trucker that you don't think Saddam Hussein is doing anything wrong.

''Tell a farmer with a couple of sons in the United States military that you think the United States has no right to defend itself.

''Go down to Baxley, Georgia, and hold an antiwar rally and see what the folks down there think about you.

''You people are some of the most disgusting examples of a waste of protoplasm I've ever had the displeasure to hear about.

''Sean Penn, you are a traitor to the United States of America. You gave aid and comfort to the enemy. How many American lives will your little fact-finding trip to Iraq cost? You encourage Saddam Hussein to think that we didn't have the stomach for war.

□ 1500

''You people protect one of the most evil men on the face of this Earth, and won't lift a finger to save the life of an unborn baby. Freedom of choice, you say?

''Well, I'm going to exercise some freedom of choice of my own. If I see any of your names on a marquee, I'm going to boycott the movie. I will completely stop going to the movies if I have to. In most cases it certainly wouldn't be much of a loss.

''You scoff at our military whose boots you're not even worthy to shine. They go to battle and risk their lives so ingrates like you can live in luxury. The day of reckoning is coming when you will be faced with the undeniable truth,'' the undeniable truth, ''that the war against Saddam Hussein is the war on terrorism.

''America is in imminent danger. You're either for her or against her. There is no middle ground. I think we all know where you stand. What do you think? God bless America, Charlie Daniels.''

I know that is a strongly-worded letter, but there are a lot of people in America who believe in the price that Americans generation after generation have paid so that many of our friends throughout the world can exercise freedom and can enjoy security away from the type of people like Adolph Hitler who were, by the way, as a result of the last century where our Nation went on to European soils, at least twice on to European soils and have thousands and thousands of American men, primarily men by then, although we may have had some women in the nurse corps, but today it would be thousands and thousands of young men and women.

Thousands of men back there in that time period, their bodies are buried on European soils, not because United States had a dog in the fight, but because the United States had a friend in the fight. The United States had a principle in the fight. The United States believes that countries have a right, have a right, to be liberated with freedom, have a right for liberty, have a right to justice. It is the United States of America that has led this world, generation after generation after generation, in striving for equal rights, for rights of people, for the common person, for the American dream, for the ability to travel as we wish, for the ability to go to schools as we wish. It is the United States of America which exports the largest product, the most desired product in the world; and it is the United States of America which is the leading exporter of that product. And what is that product? That product is freedom. It is freedom. And that is what this country is about.

The force we have today, we are not in a draft. Some young man asked me the other day in the office, he said, Sir, are we going to get a draft? I said, A draft would be a huge mistake for this country. The reason why we have a force where everybody in our military now is there because they wanted to be there. Our morale is sky high in the military. It does not help to hear Sean Penn or Martin Sheen out there yapping away. It does not help to see the banner in San Francisco that I saw on TV, the banner in San Francisco last week that said ''Be loyal to our troops, have them shoot their officers.'' That does not help the morale of our forces, but fortunately our young men and women who are amazingly mature at their age see beyond that. They want to be there. They want to fight for this country.

In that light I just want to read a couple of letters. I am going to read them verbatim. I usually do not like to read, but I do not have this letter in memory. But listen to it: ''Dear Mom, it's really your decision to march if you want to or not. You are the one who has to decide if what we are doing here is right or not. My opinion is not yours.

''I do, however, have things I would like for you and Grandma and everybody else at home to know. I am a United States soldier. I was sworn to defend my country against all enemies, foreign and domestic. People may not agree with the things we are ordered to do. I would like to address those people by telling them that terrorism is not only a threat to us as Americans but to many other innocent people in the world.

''What type of country would we be if we didn't defend the rights and the freedoms of others, not because they're Americans but how about just because they're human?

''We live in a country where people feel secure with their daily lives. They do business like usual and don't worry about the thought of terrorism actually happening to them. The people of 9–11 thought the same thing. We now know that it can happen to anyone at any time. Yet as Americans we're afraid of losing our soldiers to defend our security. I can only speak for myself when I say that my life is an easy expense to ensure that my family and friends can live in peace.

''I strongly believe in what we are doing and wish you were here to see for yourselves the honor and privilege that American soldiers aboard this ship are feeling, knowing that we are going to be a part of something so strong and so meaningful to the safety of our loved ones. Then you would know what this potential war is about.

''We will stand tall in front of terrorism and we will defeat it. We as soldiers are not afraid of what may happen. We are only afraid of Americans not being able to understand why we are here.'' And let me repeat that. This is from a soldier, and, by the way, this soldier, I would guess, is somewhere between 18 and 22 years old. Let me repeat this: ''We are only afraid of Americans not being able to understand why we are here. I ask for your courage as Americans to be strong for us.'' This is a message from the battlefield coming back to us. ''I ask for your courage as Americans to be strong for us. I ask for your understanding in what we believe is right. I ask for your support in all that we are sworn to do: defend our country and the life of all.''

''We will succeed in our task and will end the threat of terrorism in our backyard. We will also end the threat of terrorism in our neighbor's backyard. We have to remind ourselves of what this country stands for: life, liberty, and justice for all. In order to maintain those rights, we have to stop the threat of terrorism.''

''I am proud to be here. I will be coming home but not until I know that it's going to be safe for all Americans and for everyone I love. My family is first. My country is where they live. I will defend it.'' Signed by a soldier, 18 to 22. And, by the way, when he says ''potential war,'' he is now engaged in combat on the front line in Iraq.

I want to read another letter. Some people would say this is a war against the Muslims or the religion of Islam, this is a war against the Arabs. Keep in mind that there are several Arab countries who hate Saddam Hussein. There are several Arab countries who are assisting our efforts. Take a look at Saudi Arabia. Take a look at Turkey. Turkey, by the way, the only democracy. They are not giving us the help we had hoped, but the fact is they are still in there helping us. It is the only democracy in the Arab world. This is not a conflict about religion. This is not a conflict about America's like or dislike or approval or disapproval of Islam, not at all.

And I want to read a letter from some American Muslims: ''Dear Scott, Malik and I want you to know we support the President in our war on Iraq. As American Muslims, we feel strongly that we cannot allow dictators around the world to risk our freedom. If there is anything we can do, please let us know. We hope and pray for the safety and return home of all our soldiers. May they all return home soon. Sincerely, Simi.''

I have another letter, and I do not want to bog us down with these letters, but the message I am trying to relay here is the United States of America is on a mission which is just. The United States of America is on a mission that is not going to be finished in 2 or 3 days. It is not going to be finished in day 7. We are 1 week into this. This is going to be a tough battle. Saddam Hussein has got people in his regime. We did not say we are going to come in and take territory and let his regime continue to rule that country. We have said to that regime, We will replace you. You are out of town. You are out of Dodge. You are done. No more of your regime. They have got nothing to lose but to fight for all the corruption, all the weapons that they have, to fight to the very last person that receives the fruits of that regime.

But the people receiving the fruits of that regime are small when we compare it to the people of Iraq that have received the wrath of that regime. The women that have been raped at such young ages, the starvation, the lack of health care, the gassing of their own citizens. Keep in mind years ago in the

United States of America at Kent State University, remember that, the protest of the Vietnam War, our National Guard shot four American citizens. I think we killed four American citizens in a riot. This country went crazy, and I will bet if we look back at Martin Sheen, who was probably a little younger there, but I will bet Martin Sheen was leading the protest. How could a country kill its own citizens? How could this possibly happen? And yet today many of these very people, Sean Penn, Martin Sheen, those kinds of people, turn a blind eye towards Saddam Hussein, who in one incident alone gassed 60,000 people; and if any of the Members want to question that, I would be happy to supply them with the picture of the mother and the daughter and I want them to take a look at their faces. They are not the face of a deceased person. They are the face of a person that died a horrible death, and this man is responsible for it. This man has killed more Muslims than any other man in the history of the world.

And we have our friends, the French and the Germans, who continually through denial after denial after denial through resolution after resolution after resolution just turn a blind eye. It is like ignoring cancer. If I ignore it long enough, it will go away. It will not get worse. I want to pretend it is not there. I do not want to hear the news they have to tell me. I do not want to go through what it is going to take to fight it. I just want it to go away. Cancer is not going to let us; neither will Saddam Hussein.

Thank goodness there are people like the United States and the United Kingdom and the Spanish and the Italians and the Polish and the Hungarians and the Netherlands and the Australians and the Turks and that list goes on to about 45. Thank goodness there are 45 nations in this country willing to stand up to tyranny. Thank goodness those young soldiers right now being shot at, right now while we are talking, right now worrying about whether or not they will be alive in 5 minutes, thank goodness they have the confidence to know that this administration and the majority of the people in this country, 75 percent of the people in this country, are saying to those brave young men and women we are doing what is just, keep up the good fight, we are praying for them and we want them to come home as soon as they can come home and as soon as that mission is completed.

And I will tell the Members something. Our resilience will be tested every day of this war. There is a reason that the Arab television network broadcast those American and yesterday those two British soldiers, their dead bodies. There is a reason they broadcast that, because they think they can psych out the American population and the British population by showing a few body bags. They think they can weaken our stomach, and I will say nobody can look at those pictures without a weakening of the stomach. It does weaken our stomach. It is horrifying. But if they think for one moment that that is going to weaken our resolve, do not let it happen. In fact, I can tell the Members for the young military men and women over there, it did not weaken their resolve, it strengthened their resolve. It has strengthened that resolve, and that is why having a volunteer force, by the way, I mean those people want to be there, and watch what happens when these people come home. They are not going to be ashamed of the United States of America and the country that they have fought for and been wounded for and the families who lose their loved ones over there. They are not going to be ashamed of this country. They are going to be proud, and they are going to be proud of our President.

Think of the pressure that this President is under. What other President in recent history has gone through what this President has: 9–11, the war on Afghanistan. On some Saturday morning when he is getting up like the rest of us, they call him on the phone and say guess what, the shuttle is missing. We do not know where the shuttle is. They lose the shuttle. Or by the way, Mr. President, we had better take a look at what is happening in Jerusalem. We just had another suicide bomber. By the way, Mr. President, take a look at the economy. For two quarters before you took office, this thing was going bad. It is really in tough shape right now.

□ 1515

Oh, by the way, Mr. President, our good friends, the French, of whom we have time after time after time gone to their assistance, you know, the French have a way of starting a fight and then they back out of it and we are the ones that have to go in there.

And the Germans, Mr. President, they not only are not going to help us, they actively hired lobbyists. They hired lobbyists and got the equivalent of our State Department to travel around the world to lobby other countries to oppose the United States of America.

I will tell you, this President has stood up well. He is a strong leader, and he has got the confidence of the United States Congress, he has the competence of the American people, and he will succeed in his leadership of this mission.

I want to read another letter. This is from parents. They sent it out. They write: ''Please feel free to read this.'' This is a Mr. and Mrs. Corey.

Land of the free because of the brave. Land of the free, because of the brave. Please support our troops.

We are the proud parents of two United States Marines. We will not bother discussing our political views, one party versus another. What we will say is that we do not want our sons nor any of our sons and daughters and husbands and wives or grandchildren in our extended military family to die in vain.

Like most, we pray for peace, but we are sick, literally sick. Why? Because we lived through the Vietnam era and we saw firsthand how our veterans were treated. We are so afraid that it is beginning to happen again. We are not alone. Nor are we the only ones who believe with all of our heart that the key to winning any war on terrorism will depend on how we are here at home and how emotionally we support our troops, regardless of our politics.

Vietnam proved how we defeated ourselves by the way we divided our own Nation and treated our troops. We never lost a battle in Vietnam; we lost the battle on the political front. We are beginning to lose again, and the bullets have yet to fly.

Our sons did not choose to become a United States Marine to kill people. They had dreams of a career, of travel and of protecting us from the terror of 9/11 from happening again. Both sons are the best sons a parent could ever hope for. The thought of someone throwing animal feces at our military when they finally return home, hearing nothing but negative media about how Americans hate them and the war, the thought of what it would do to our servicemen and women's spirit, scare the military families to the point of sleepless nights.

The media, stronger than the White House itself, can change that fear, help keep it from being a reality. Everyone is quick to show the war protestors out marching. What has been done to show those who support our forces? We are not marching on the streets, we are not chanting and screaming clever chants. We are not holding up signs. We are not throwing blame or calling names.

No, we are at home, boxing care packages to our service people. We put yellow ribbons on our doors, trees, car antennas, blue star flags on our windows. We pray 100 times a day, and we light a candle every day. We are sending birthday cards, thank you letters, notes of cheer, to the members in the service whom we have never met, nor may ever, because they are our extended family in the service. They need to know, amidst all the bad publicity, there are those of us who are grateful for their choice and sacrifice for us to live in the land of the free, because of the brave.

You have never read about us in the headlines. So what can be done? What can a community do? The answer is simple. Our community, including our schools, could begin by starting patriotic projects such as write a letter, send a card of encouragement, a mere thank you. In our son's shop alone there are five lonely marines who have no family back home to encourage and send support.

Regardless of how one feels politically, our service people need our support emotionally; not ticker tape parades, but support for the job they do.

A San Diego columnist quoted a marine as saying, ''comes with a job description of taking a bullet for a mere $14,000 a year.''

Our service people do not make the policy, they follow orders. They chose to join for their own reasons. They all share one common belief, and I want to repeat this, they all share one common belief, and that is that you and I are worth dying for.

Think of that. ''They all share one common belief, and that is that you and I are worth dying for.''

The American people need to be reminded of that. It is not a matter of free speech or our President or who is right or who is wrong. It is a matter of starting a better pattern for the future return of our loved ones when they come home, throwing flower petals versus stones, of saying ''thank you'' instead of ''go to hell.''

We hope we can count on you to take up the cause. If you would like to show your support to our troops by sending letters, cards and care packages, it would be most appreciated. May you know you have no need to worry, for our service members have your back covered. Sleep well.

I want to repeat that. ''May you know,'' may you know, ''that you,'' you, ''have no need to worry, because our service members,'' our men in the military forces, ''have your back covered.''

These are the kind of letters that, in my opinion, express what is so, so fundamentally important about this country. This Nation truly is the lead country in the world, closely followed by many of our allies like the British, as a country that believes in freedom but understands that freedom requires sacrifice, freedom requires a price.

Look at what that says for a Nation like ours, when we have young people, voluntarily, voluntarily join our armed forces to make sure that the people that are not on the front line but that are home will get to enjoy security, liberty, justice for all, freedom.

Think about it. It is so important that the time has come for people to put down their signs of protest and raise their signs with simply two words: ''Thank you.'' Thank you. It would not be too much to ask of Martin Sheen to take the tape off his mouth that he had on there yesterday. It wouldn't take too much to ask those people in San Francisco carrying a big banner that says ''support our troops, shoot their officers,'' it would not be asking too much of those people to put down their sign and replace it with a sign that simply says ''thank you.'' It would go a long, long ways.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all of you, all of you, say a prayer to whatever supreme being you believe in, say a prayer for these men and women that are standing on the front line so the rest of us can be back here and feel secure. They are there for the right reason. They are there on a mission. They will accomplish their mission. It is not going to be done in 7 days. There will be casualties. In war, you have good days and you have bad days. You have good days and you have bad days.

A weakening of our resilience, a weakening of our resilience, those of us not on the front line, those of us back in this country, that weakening will be sensed by these people. We cannot allow our resolve to weaken. We must stay strong, as we have, and we must send our prayers and our hopes to these young men and women over on that front line.

So, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, once again, I would be awful proud of Martin Sheen and Sean Penn and many of those other people, Julia Roberts, the Dixie Chicks, people like that, I would be awfully proud of them if, just for a change, they would carry that sign that said ''thank you.''

KEEP TITLE IX INTACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, in 1972, about 30,000 women played college sports. Today, that number has increased by more than 500 percent.

In 1972, about 200,000 girls played high school sports. Today, that number has increased by more than 80 percent.

Mr. Speaker, it is no coincidence that women and girls have more opportunity today than they did 30 years ago. That is not because they have more interest than they used to, and it is not because they have more ability than they used to. The increased opportunities are attributable to one law, Title IX.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is the Federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in education. It states: ''No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.''

In essence, Title IX requires schools and colleges receiving Federal funds to give women and girls equal athletic opportunities, including athletic scholarships, equipment, coaching and facilities, among other benefits.

Unfortunately, Title IX has come under assault. Those who favor changing Title IX argue, mistakenly, that it has led to the disappearance of athletic opportunities for male athletes. While both sides of the debate over Title IX athletics policies agree that they should allow for gender parity and overall fairness in sports, the real question that begs to be answered is, what constitutes fairness?

For those who wanted to alter Title IX and how it has been implemented, fairness means that male athletes should have a monopoly over opportunities and resources for their programs, regardless of how underfunded or nonexistent similar programs for female athletes may be.

For these challengers to Title IX, it is fair that, while more women than men attend college, only 42 percent of all college athletes are women. For them, it is fair that females currently receive 1.1 million fewer, 41 percent, opportunities at the high school level and 58,000 fewer, 38 percent, opportunities at the college level than do their male counterparts.

This ill-conceived notion of fairness that opponents of Title IX put forth justifies the fact that men currently receive $133 million more than women in athletic scholarships. Division I-A colleges and universities allocate on average 71 percent of their scholarship money for men's athletics, and their recruiting dollars for male athletes double those spent on female athletes.

Opponents of Title IX charge that the law takes money and opportunities away from men's athletics. What these people fail to realize is that Title IX does not deprive men of athletic resources. The real problem is that the resources that male athletes receive are distributed inequitably among men's sports.

Take these statistics, for example. Football and men's basketball consume 72 percent of the total men's athletic operating budget at Division I institutions, leaving other men's sports to compete for the remaining funds.

Sixty-eight percent of the increased expenditures for men's Division I-A sports programs from 1998 to the Year 2000 went to football alone. The increase for football exceeded the entire operating budget for women's Division I sports in 2000 by over $1.69 million.

What is more, large football and basketball programs are not as revenue producing as Title IX proponents claim. The vast majority of NCAA football and men's basketball programs spend more money than they bring in. In fact, 64 percent of Division I and II football programs do not generate enough money to pay for themselves, much less any other sports. In 1999, these programs reported annual deficits averaging $1 million for Division I-A athletics.

Now, do not get me wrong, I love football, and I graduated from the University of Kentucky, so I love basketball. I just do not believe that our little girls should be denied the opportunity to play sports so that football teams can dip from a bottomless fount of funds.

Opponents of Title IX not only feel that this gross imbalance is fair, but they oppose any efforts to salvage the progress that has been made. It bothers me deeply that opponents of Title IX say that male athletes are treated unfairly. Although 30 years of progress since Title IX have seen sports participation for males and females grow, female athletes are still not treated equitably.

I urge all of my colleagues to cosponsor House Resolution 137, expressing the sense of Congress that changes to Title IX athletic policies contradict the spirit of athletic equality and gender parity and should not be implemented and that Title IX should be kept intact.

My resolution has been signed by both Republicans and Democrats, by men and women.

□ 1530

It is receiving this wide support for one simple reason: it is the right thing to do. Most Americans know that it is the right thing to do. A Gallup poll in early January reported that seven out of 10 adults who understood the law supported keeping title IX intact and rejecting any changes. In fact, a Wall Street Journal poll from January found that 66 percent of Americans go so far as to favor cutting men's teams