

Baghdad are followers of the same murderous ideology that took the lives of our citizens in New York, in Washington, and Pennsylvania. There is only one course of action against them, to defeat them abroad before they attack us at home. The commander in charge of coalition operations in Iraq, who is also senior commander at this base, General John Vines, put it well the other day. He said, "We either deal with terrorism and this extremism abroad, or we deal with it when it comes to us."

Our mission in Iraq is clear. We're hunting down the terrorists. We're helping Iraqis build a free nation that is an ally in the war on terror. We're advancing freedom in the broader Middle East. We are removing a source of violence and instability and laying the foundation of peace for our children and our grandchildren.

The work in Iraq is difficult, and it is dangerous. Like most Americans, I see the images of violence and bloodshed. Every picture is horrifying, and the suffering is real. Amid all this violence, I know Americans ask the question: Is the sacrifice worth it? It is worth it, and it is vital to the future security of our country. And tonight I will explain the reasons why.

Some of the violence you see in Iraq is being carried out by ruthless killers who are converging on Iraq to fight the advance of peace and freedom. Our military reports that we've killed or captured hundreds of foreign fighters in Iraq who have come from Saudi Arabia and Syria, Iran, Egypt, Sudan, Yemen, Libya, and others. They are making common cause with criminal elements, Iraqi insurgents, and remnants of Saddam Hussein's regime who want to restore the old order. They fight because they know that the survival of their hateful ideology is at stake. They know that as freedom takes root in Iraq, it will inspire millions across the Middle East to claim their liberty as well. And when the Middle East grows in democracy and prosperity and hope, the terrorists will lose their sponsors, lose their recruits, and lose their hopes for

turning that region into a base for attacks on America and our allies around the world.

Some wonder whether Iraq is a central front in the war on terror. Among the terrorists, there is no debate. Hear the words of Usama bin Laden: "This third world war is raging" in Iraq. "The whole world is watching this war." He says it will end in "victory and glory, or misery and humiliation."

The terrorists know that the outcome will leave them emboldened or defeated. So they are waging a campaign of murder and destruction. And there is no limit to the innocent lives they are willing to take.

We see the nature of the enemy in terrorists who exploded car bombs along a busy shopping street in Baghdad, including one outside a mosque. We see the nature of the enemy in terrorists who sent a suicide bomber to a teaching hospital in Mosul. We see the nature of the enemy in terrorists who behead civilian hostages and broadcast their atrocities for the world to see.

These are savage acts of violence, but they have not brought the terrorists any closer to achieving their strategic objectives. The terrorists, both foreign and Iraqi, failed to stop the transfer of sovereignty. They failed to break our coalition and force a mass withdrawal by our allies. They failed to incite an Iraqi civil war. They failed to prevent free elections. They failed to stop the formation of a democratic Iraqi Government that represents all of Iraq's diverse population. And they failed to stop Iraqis from signing up in large number with the police forces and the army to defend their new democracy.

The lesson of this experience is clear: The terrorists can kill the innocent, but they cannot stop the advance of freedom. The only way our enemies can succeed is if we forget the lessons of September the 11th, if we abandon the Iraqi people to men like Zarqawi, and if we yield the future of the Middle East to men like bin