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Lyndhurst, NJ – Below are excerpts of Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ9) remarks during a Lyndhurst rally for U.S. troops in Iraq.

“Reverend Clergy, Mayor Guida, Commissioners, Board of Education members, my dear friends Paul Sarlo, Paul DiGaetano, Kathy Donovan -- our County Clerk, all of the veterans organizations and our local chapters, the Boy Scouts, all the residents of Lyndhurst. Good morning.

“We have a lot to be proud of. Our young men and women in our military have done an amazing job. It is a job that is not yet completed, but a military campaign that will surely go down in world history as one of the most extraordinarily well-planned and well-executed military campaigns in the history of the world.

“As President Bush has said, and as we know, we Americans are a freedom loving, decent people -- slow to anger. But when we are threatened, with the deaths of our own citizens, and our own allies around the world, we cannot sit back and take it. We are not ever going to do that.

“The only thing stopping these people from succeeding is the bravery of our young men and women in the military and in law enforcement. And the intelligence of the American people to provide our military and our law enforcement people with the tools and the training and the resources they need to continue to be the strongest military power on the face of the earth. Again a military power, not acquired out of ego, not acquired out of a false sense of pride, but a military power to protect what we have and hold most dear, namely our freedom itself.

“Because make no mistake about it my friends, this is still an extremely hostile world that we live in. And there are evil men on this planet who would seek to take from others what is not theirs. To conquer lands that are not theirs. And to destroy people because they don't share their ideology or because they will not subjugate themselves to their political whim and their political control.

“So I am here with all of you to express my support and gratitude to all of our troops, their commanders, the Commander-in-Chief, for creating a plan and executing a plan that has, at the very least, disrupted Saddam Hussein's regime, and nearly destroyed it. We will finish the job. That job may take some time. But we have no choice. This regime posed a serious national security threat to America and Americans. We will never back down when our people are threatened.

“And also let me add this: we have liberated a people. Yes we did this for our own reasons -- to protect Americans. But we have also in the process liberated an entire people -- fifty million people. That's something that we can be proud of. It will involve a very complex set of steps that we are going to have to help them take to realize the ability to rule themselves after thirty years of being under the heel of Saddam Hussein. And believe me; coming out of that environment is not the same as walking out on a Tuesday morning on Election Day having lived in a free country your whole life. They're disoriented. They're in some chaos. They don't know what freedom is like. We are going to have to help them and it won't be easy and it will continue to be dangerous.

“Let us all pray for the continued safety and bravery of our young men and women who are overseas in harm's way. As well as those first responders, law enforcement personnel here at home in Lyndhurst and all across New Jersey and all across America, who are protecting us this very day.

“We have so much to be grateful for. Let us continue to support our troops and give them everything they need to be successful and to come back home safely. God bless them. God bless Lyndhurst. And God bless the greatest country on earth. God bless the United States of America.

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[Go back](#)