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## *House of Representatives*

### **Iraq Watch Mistakes in Administration's Iraq Policy April 28, 2004**

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. Carter). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I have come tonight to discuss the challenge for America in the Iraq war. Some may know that a group of my colleagues and myself have been discussing this challenge now for several months on the floor of the House, once a week. We style this the Iraq Watch. The reason we come to the floor, sometimes as late as midnight, is that this really is a challenge and it demands that Congress be involved and not sit on the sidelines of this issue. This issue is too important, it is too deadly, it is too contentious for Members of Congress to simply take a pass and have responsibility only rest in the executive branch, the President's branch of the United States Government. So we have come once a week to talk about how to pursue a meaningful, commonsense, successful policy in Iraq. Hopefully I will be joined by some colleagues a little later in the evening.

I would like to start by just giving a background about why this is so important and why it is so important for Members of Congress to address the Iraq issue and not walk away from it. The answer is simply an example many Members of Congress have had, that I have had, of visiting a few weeks ago with a family in Bremerton, Washington, who the father and the husband was serving in Iraq proudly as a sergeant in the United States Army a few months ago. He was involved in a sweep mission near the Tigris River. A boat overturned, he went to aid, to try to save an Iraqi who was serving in forces with the U.S. Army. Unfortunately, he drowned while doing his duty. Like so many others in Iraq, a hero.

We now have lost since the war began 725 Americans, since the capture of Saddam Hussein 264 Americans, since May 31, 2003, and the President declared that the mission

was accomplished, 585 Americans. We have had, total wounded, 4,151 Americans, many with very, very severe injuries, many which I have visited in Walter Reed and Bethesda.

Our losses demand that the U.S. Government pursue a policy that is not based on half truths but all the truth, not on partial planning but full planning, not on a policy based just on wishes and dreams and hopes and even faith but based on meaningful plans, strategic decisions that are based on the hard realities in Iraq.

Unfortunately, the truth is, and it is hard to say, that our policy in Iraq has not fit the extent of the heroism put forth by our proud men and women in Iraq who have served with great valor and distinction in extremely trying circumstances.

Their valor, their professionalism, their integrity has not been matched by the Federal Government's decision-making. We are going to discuss tonight in several ways why that professionalism in Iraq has not been matched by professionalism and wisdom here in Washington, D.C.

I want to talk about several of those mistakes which have cost us grievously. By the way, I want to say one thing up front: these people say, well, this is not the 50,000 people we lost in Vietnam. Try telling that to the family that I visited and the two kids whose dad will never come home. One American life lost due to incompetence, neglect, exaggeration, deceit, failure to plan is too many; and that is what has happened in Iraq.

So, if I may, let me address some of the mistakes that our country has suffered in Iraq due to failures of this nature.

Number one, this administration sent into combat, into mortal combat, into the lion's den our soldiers and sailors with inadequate security protection for themselves. Today as we speak, almost 1 year after the President of the United States declared that the mission was accomplished, we still do not have armored Humvees in an adequate number in Iraq to protect our sons and daughters and husbands and wives. That is inexcusable.

It is inexcusable, because we obviously were going to be involved in urban combat going into Iraq. We obviously were going to take RPG, rocket-propelled grenades, AK-47s, which can penetrate this tiny little thin skin of sheet metal on a Humvee; and we did not, the people who were vested in the executive power of the United States Government, did not do adequate planning to protect our soldiers and sailors from an obvious threat in the dens and warrens of Baghdad, Fallujah, Basra. Today they are still not on.

Why did that happen? You know of the travail and travesty, that we sent our soldiers over there without flak vests either. We are now told that finally after a year that has been remedied. By why would the executive branch of this government send our soldiers and Marines into dangerous urban combat without armor to protect them? Why would they do that?

Well, it is because of mistake number two. Mistake number two was the one where the executive over and over and over again told us in the Congress, told Americans, and apparently believed, for reasons that stretch my powers of imagination, that we would be met with nothing but rose petals and champagne and the welcome mat from grateful Iraqis for occupying their country, and that this country, if you can call it that, which is a collection of tribes thrown together after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, would come together in this joyous reunion of brotherhood and sisterhood and welcome us with nothing but open arms, an occupying army from a Western nation, the greatest Western nation and the greatest democracy that has ever lived, but one that is totally foreign to Iraq.

This was wishful thinking at its highest. It was the arrogance at its highest of those that did not have a clue what was going on in the culture and sent our boys and daughters into this combat without this protection; and, as a result, we have lost now hundreds of our finest people in this country.

Now, thankfully, finally, the executive has admitted its mistake and they are trying to remedy this issue, and they have now issued these contracts trying to put these retrofitted armor plates on our Humvees. But it is an example of what happens when an executive makes a war-power decision based on arrogance. People die. And that is what has happened in Iraq, and it is what happens when you make a decision based on not understanding the nature of the threat.

So let me go to mistake number three that still exists today. Now, today we had the pleasure of talking to Dr. Condoleezza Rice, who finally came and briefed the Democratic Caucus. We think the briefings should be bipartisan, because this is a bipartisan challenge and there are no Democrats or Republicans in Iraq. There are only Americans.

Mr. DELAHUNT. If I can interrupt my friend, how many briefings has Dr. Rice volunteered up to this point in time to come in and to consult and to engage in a discourse and a dialogue with Members of Congress?

Mr. INSLEE. I could be mistaken, but I do not recall any. The way this one happened is she agreed to brief the Republican colleagues, and only later as an afterthought, at our request, apparently, offered to brief the Democratic colleagues. We have suggested that we have bipartisan briefings, because we are in this pickle together, and we have suggested this.

Mr. DELAHUNT. What you are saying is that the President's National Security Adviser, who is responsible for coordinating American foreign policy, particularly in times of crisis like obviously we find ourselves currently in, has not on a single occasion briefed Democratic Members of the House of Representatives, at least to your knowledge?

Mr. INSLEE. That is correct. It is a failure, because we need to be a team in this regard.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I think what is particularly interesting, when we talk about consultation, and those that are listening to us this evening, members of our group that we call the Iraq Watch, ought to be aware that this is a complaint that not only comes from the Democratic side of the aisle, but also from Republicans.

I remember noting a particular quote by Senator Hagel who serves on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in describing his perception of the consultative process during the course of the debate leading up to the war as one which he felt that the White House considered Congress as a nuisance.

Hopefully, hopefully, that attitude will not occur, and conceivably we could have some discourse and dialogue with key members of the administration such as Dr. Rice on a regular basis.

I think in all fairness, however, I should note, and those who are listening to us this evening, that on a regular basis, the Secretary of Defense, Mr. Rumsfeld, has volunteered to come before Members of Congress and provide briefings. But I have been particularly disappointed with Dr. Rice, who, up until this point in time, has not in any way engaged in a conversation with Members of Congress.

Mr. INSLEE. And we would hope in the future when we do have these consultations that we do this in a bipartisan manner, because we have to all have the information, Democrat and Republican alike, so we can try to fashion the proper response.

Let me go to the third mistake, if I can, we were talking about. I must say after briefings today by Dr. Rice and listening to the administration and listening to the press information, this is an error that I will next address that still exists in this administration, and that is the error that they have a strategic initiative that is based on the wishful hopes that there is just a few finite number of individuals in Iraq, and that if they are eliminated, this problem is going to be solved.

This administration still looks at Iraq as sort of this virginal, potential flower Garden of Eden of democracy that just happens to have the Corleone family in it, and if they can just get rid of the Corleone family, everything is going to be hunky-dory.

Listening to Dr. Rice's briefing today, I was astounded to hear that things were going so swimmingly in Iraq, that if we just eliminate a few more people in Fallujah and maybe a couple in Basra and three in Baghdad, things were going to be okay.

That is the most wildly out-of-touch viewpoint about the challenge that we have in Iraq and dooms our policy in Iraq to failure.

If you think about the administration's theory, their plan, if you can call it that, their view is, well, when we get Uday, things are going to be okay. We got Uday, and things were not okay. If we get Saddam, things are going to be okay. Well, we got Saddam, and

we have lost 264 Americans since then. Now, if we just get a few people in Fallujah, things are going to be okay.

Well, unfortunately, that is not the situation, because one of the most prescient things said was stated by Mr. Paul Bremer when he said on January 1, and, I am sorry my quote does not have which year, but it holds for any year, he said, ``As long as we are here, we are the occupying power." It is a very ugly word, but it is true: ``As long as we are here."

Unfortunately, Mr. Bremer was correct, and that is why this administration is wrong not to equip our Army in a way that will make it prepared for that type of conflict as long as we are there and to develop a strategic effort to recognize that we will be seen as an occupying power by a significant portion of that population as long as we are there.

This administration's theory is if we just eliminate a few more people, we will no longer be seen as an occupying power, but rather as the liberators that we wish to be. It is a policy based on a falsehood which is based on mistake number four.

Mistake number four is that there is one principal rule of warfare, that you should not start a war based on falsehood. Unfortunately, that is what this executive branch of the United States Government did. If I can spend just a few minutes, and then I will yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt) in that regard. That is a significant thing to say, but it is, unfortunately, the sad truth.

On March 17, 2003, the President of the United States, George Bush, said, ``Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised."

That statement was false, and that statement formed the entire foundation of the war that this President initiated, and it was false. But, unfortunately, it was not the only falsehood that we heard.

On March 16, 2003, the day before, the Vice President of the United States, DICK CHENEY said, ``And we believe he has in fact reconstituted nuclear weapons." That statement was false, and it was an underlying principle of this executive starting this war.

On March 23, a week later, 2003, Kenneth Adelman, the Defense Policy Board member of the executive branch of the government said, ``I have no doubt we are going to find big stores of weapons of mass destruction." That statement was false.

Now, this administration I think somewhere in the year 2050 will still be saying, ``It is out there in the turkey fields somewhere. We know it is there."

It is now over a year after we have had control of Iraq and have not found a single weapon system that this administration started a war that cost hundreds of Americans' lives over. Not one. Not an ounce. Not a gear. Not a paper. Nothing. This is while our soldiers and sailors have paid the ultimate tribute at the behest of the Federal Government.

On March 30, 2003, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld said, "We know where they are," referring to weapons of mass destruction. "They are in the area around Tikrit and Baghdad, and east, west, south and north somewhat."

That statement was false. Unfortunately, these statements were false even given the intelligence we had then. We have subsequent to the initiation of this war had access, and obviously we will not disclose any secure information tonight, but in the public realm, it is clear that our intelligence indicated there was lots of doubt, at a minimum, what the situation was in Iraq.

These airplanes that the President told us had been built by Saddam to fly over the Atlantic and spray germ warfare over Baltimore and Washington, D.C., which is a terrifying prospect, and one if it was true we ought to be concerned about, there was only one problem: the United States Air Force before the war started, according to published accounts, stated that that is not the reason these balsa wood, duct tape affairs were put together.

They were put together, they tried to come up with something they could take Polaroid pictures of the enemy. They were not meant for spraying germ warfare, and our own intelligence indicated that. But that is not what the President told us. It was something else.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, what I find particularly disturbing, and I think that the American people have reached, by a vast majority, the conclusion that many of us reached during the course of the debate on whether Congress should authorize the executive to attack Iraq militarily, and that is the case was never made, never made in terms of the existence of weapons of mass destruction. Neither was the case ever made in terms of a relationship or linkage between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein, particularly as focused on September 11. There was no involvement by the Iraqi regime on September 11, and there never had been a significant relationship between al Qaeda and the Saddam Hussein regime in Baghdad.

But what I find even more disturbing is that reluctance of the administration to let go of this myth. It is as if they so intensely embrace this belief that they are incapable from detaching themselves from that belief and accept reality.

What I thought was particularly striking is that after the so-called major combat phase of the Iraq war, as it was announced by the President, and the inability of the existing forces to discover weapons of mass destruction, he created the so-called Survey Group, the Iraq Survey Group headed by a former U.N. inspector who was described as hawkish in his views in terms of whether there should have been or whether the United States was correct in invading Iraq. His name was David Kay. I am sure many of us remember the name, many of those watching here tonight remember David Kay. He appeared on a number of television programs, wrote opinion pieces in major media outlets, and he was selected by the President to head the effort.

Well, last October he returned to Washington, consulted with Congress, consulted with Secretary Rumsfeld and reported that he was wrong. In fact, he testified before a Senate committee and made that statement which ended up in Newsweek that I believed was refreshing, because it reflected a candor and an honesty that has been lacking. And he stated passionately that we were all wrong. We were all wrong. Yet, as the gentleman from Washington indicated, the President, and particularly the Vice President will not let go, wants to create a reality that is simply inaccurate, that is false.

Recently, David Kay stated that the U.S. is in grave danger of destroying its credibility at home and abroad if we do not own up to the mistakes that we made. We are a proud people. We are a democracy, and in a democracy, to move forward we have an opportunity to speak the truth, to acknowledge mistakes, and to learn from those mistakes. As I said earlier, the Vice President on more than one occasion has been, I do not want to say overruled, that is not the right word, but after making a statement the President himself has indicated that the statement was not accurate.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DELAHUNT. I yield to my friend, the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. Abercrombie).

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Will the gentleman be interested to know that the Wall Street Journal on the 23rd of this month made a report, and I quote: ``Before the war, United States companies used French units or French go-betweens to sell goods to Iraq. Since the war, French firms are using U.S. operations to bid for contracts in Iraq, though it is unclear whether they will succeed."

The Journal added, ``Between 1998 and 2002, United Nations documents show \$397 million in sales to Iraq by French units of U.S. companies. The sales coincided with the period when the Clinton and Bush administrations were increasing pressure on Mr. Hussein, and the practice extended well beyond early 2002, when Mr. Bush included Iraq in his so-called Axis of Evil.

Halliburton did tens of millions of dollars of business with Iraq in the late 1990s when it was still led by Vice President Cheney. Much of that business was done through French units. Mr. Cheney said during the 2000 election campaign that Halliburton had a policy against trading with Iraq. The Halliburton contracts mentioned in the United Nations documents involved units and joint ventures that came with the purchase of Dresser, Incorporated in 1998.

Will the gentleman recall that during the Watergate investigation, that Woodward and Bernstein, when they were following through on various contacts and leads, that they had reported that it was not always that people were lying to them, it was that they were not telling the truth. Unless you knew the exact question to ask ahead of time, that is to say unless you knew the information and the answers to your questions ahead of time, you

might actually ask a question in which the other party could avoid telling you the truth while not absolutely lying to you.

It may well have been, as Mr. Cheney said, that Halliburton had a policy against trading with Iraq, but apparently it did not mean that units or subunits of Halliburton located in other nations could do the trading for them, thus benefiting and profiting the Halliburton company while Mr. Cheney was in charge of it. This is the caliber of the Vice President's ability to have any kind of veracity when it comes to statements about weapons of mass destruction or anything else having to do with whether or not he or his company profited from trading with Iraq.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Well, we do know this: we do know that Halliburton, according to a CBS report, established a subsidiary with an office in the Cayman Islands, and when an investigative team from CBS went to the office in the Cayman Islands, do my colleagues know what they found? They found a small office without a single person in the office. That obviously caused more interest.

Further investigation revealed that this particular subsidiary of Halliburton in fact had an office in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. That particular subsidiary was dealing with another member of the so-called Axis of Evil club: Iran. They were supplying the services and the products necessary for Iran to upgrade its oil industry.

So the conflict, if you will, at least as I see it, and some would suggest that it is illegal, that it is a subterfuge that there are on the books of the United States Criminal Code laws that would prohibit American corporations such as Halliburton from dealing with rogue nations. My memory is that the title of the particular legislative provisions is called Trading With the Enemy Act. We had sanctions, and yet we have Halliburton, a subsidiary of Halliburton trading with Iran; Iran who, clearly, if we examine the reports of our own Department of State, to a far greater magnitude than anything that Saddam Hussein had done in Iraq as far as encouraging terrorists, terrorist organizations, that if there was a nation on the planet that sponsored terrorism and terrorist organizations, it was in Iran and, at the same time, Halliburton was supporting them in terms of the key component of their economy.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, the gentleman has brought up a point with Iran which, unlike Iraq, is developing a nuclear program and is a potential threat on a nuclear basis. When I was in Israel a couple of years ago talking to the Israeli defense force, they were concerned, and rightfully so, I think, about the nuclear capabilities of Iran, not Iraq. But the pickle we are now in, we are in a situation now where we have difficulty dealing with Iran because they have the potential to inflame the Shiite allies they have in Iraq to get them whipped up, if you will, and foment violence. Now we are in a more difficult position in Iran.

But I would like to return if I can for just a minute to another economic issue, since the gentleman brought up economics.



There is a fourth mistake this administration has made which has severely hampered our effort, and that is this administration has not leveled with the American people about what the Iraq war costs, and this costs us a giant deficit because the President will not come forth and tell the truth about what this is costing the American taxpayer. How do I know that? It is real simple.

The President of the United States sent us a budget, and in the budget it is hundreds of pages thick, thousands of numbers, thousands of numbers, all kinds of numbers. But there is one number that he did not have the willingness to put in his budget so Americans could see what it was going to be. That was the cost of the Iraq war.

Can my colleagues believe it? The President of the United States purports to have us adopt a budget, but he leaves out the cost of the Iraq war. How could one possibly, with a straight face, leave out something that this year is going to cost us at least \$100 billion and next year probably half to three-quarters of that at least, if not more. How with a straight face could he do that, unless he really did not want the American people to know how costly this endeavor is?

This President needs to shoot straight with the American people and tell them what it is going to cost, which is hundreds of millions of dollars coming out of their April 15 taxes. And if it is worth doing, he needs to say so. But this duplicitous thing of trying to fight a war on the cheap is wrong.

Winston Churchill said, "All I have to offer you is blood, sweat, toil, and tears." This President said, don't worry, be happy. That is not the situation we are in today, and the President needs to belly up to the bar and show us how he intends to pay for this instead of ballooning the deficit, which is what he is doing, and putting the cost of the Iraq war, which is going to go on for years and years on the backs of our children, with a \$500 billion deficit that he thinks Americans are not smart enough to figure out. Well, I think he is wrong.

Mr. INSLEE. I think they know, especially with the deficit, the cost of this war; and he is not willing to talk about his tax cuts to pay for it because he doesn't want anybody to make a sacrifice in this war except the soldiers, sailors, Marines, and Air Force who put their lives on the line. They put their lives on the line, George Bush ought to put his tax cuts on the line. They know what sacrifice is. And, yet, this President won't shoot straight with the American people to show how to pay for this war.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield for a moment. I do not want the audience or whoever may be watching us have this conversation tonight to perceive this simply to be a one-sided partisan attack on the White House because that would be a distorted view of our purpose and our intent.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Would the gentleman yield on that point? I just read something from the Wall Street Journal, an investigative report of the Wall Street Journal. I hardly

think that the Wall Street Journal can be called a tool of the Democratic Party.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I concur with that, but let me read something from The Washington Post of last week.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Would the gentleman yield again? The Washington Post, which has editorially supported the war in Iraq.

Mr. DELAHUNT. That is accurate.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Let us just keep right on with what we are doing here. We are analyzing the situation in which American troops are in harm's way and any accusation that this has anything to do with Republicans or Democrats is not only entirely beside the point, but undermines the dialogue and discussion that has to take place when we are in a situation of war.

As the gentleman well knows, this Member has disagreed publicly and privately with the President of the United States when it was Bill Clinton and it was a Democrat. This gentleman, I can tell you, has never taken a position on the basis of who was President of the United States, but rather what the position of the United States should be in the consul of world powers in terms of the peace and welfare of the planet and the United States' role in it. Whether it is a Democratic President or a Republican President, we have to be accountable.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I think we have to acknowledge that there are Republican Members of this House and the other body that say it like it is, that speak the truth, that are not hesitant to take on a President of their own party.

Let me just read to you a statement that was attributed to the vice chair of the House Committee on Armed Services on which you serve, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Weldon), a Republican, from Pennsylvania. He charged that ``the President is playing political games by postponing further funding requests until after the election to try to avoid reopening debate on the war's cost and future. WELDON described the administration's current defense budget request as outrageous and immoral and said that at least \$10 billion is needed for Iraqi operations over the next 5 months." There needs to be a supplemental whether it is a Presidential election year or not.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Would the gentleman yield? I serve as the ranking member on the subcommittee of the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Weldon). And I can tell my colleague that back in the time of President Clinton's administration when the Kosovo and Bosnia issues were there, I was privileged to go with the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Weldon) and other Members in a joint Democratic and Republican congressional delegation to the area because of disagreements we had in the way we were conducting both our foreign policy and military operations there.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Weldon), I believe, is also a supporter of the fact that we went to war with Iraq. So his admonitions here are based on his perceptions, I am certain, serving as his ranking member and counting myself as among his good and personal friends in this body. I have deep affection and respect for him both personally and as a colleague in this body.

If he is making these statements, he is making them because he believes as a supporter of this war effort that this is, in fact, in the interest of the troops and the interest of the Nation.

So this is something that is not partisan in nature. This is something that has to be addressed by all of us as our responsibility of one of 435 people in this body representing the interests of this Nation.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Let me note that the Senate chair of the foreign relations committee, who we all know and respect, Senator Lugar, along with the ranking member, Senator Biden, urged the administration to be more forthcoming about its strategy for returning Iraq to the control of its people. And, again, this is from an article last Wednesday from The Washington Post: "The Bush administration has sometimes failed in the past to communicate its Iraq plans and cost estimates to Congress and the American people, LUGAR said, and must recognize that its domestic credibility on Iraq will have a great impact on its efforts to succeed."

Mr. INSLEE. Would the gentleman yield? He said something that really triggered a thought, and it is disappointing. He said, "The administration needs to be more forthright to tell us its plan." Well, I have some really bad news for the American people tonight: there was not a plan for the security of Iraq the week before the invasion, there was not a plan for the security of Iraq the week after the invasion, there was not a plan for the security of Iraq when the President declared the mission accomplished in May, 2003, and there is not a plan for the security of Iraq tonight that has a good chance of success.

Now, why do I say that? And this is very, very frustrating to me. Because 7 days before the invasion of Iraq, we, on a bipartisan basis in several meetings, begged the administration to show us the plan for the security of Iraq after the Iraqi Army folded, which we knew was going to happen at some point. And the administration officials essentially said a week before the invasion, we are giving serious thought to that.

Well, I just do not think that is good enough. And that is one of the reasons Iraq exploded into looting because the President did not listen to General Shinseki when he told him, and this is the fifth mistake, that we need hundreds of thousands of boots on the ground to prevent Iraq from going up in flames after the Iraqi Army collapses.

And our soldiers today, tonight in Fallujah are paying the price for that mistake, that we did not have enough boots on the ground the day after the Iraqi Army collapsed. And we continue to suffer as a result of that.

Now, why did that happen? Again, the deadliest kind of plans in warfare are those based on wishful thinking. And this plan, if you could call it that, from day one has been based on fallacious, false, wishful thinking. It is wishful thinking about the amount of troops we are going to have to have, it was wishful thinking about what type of armor we are going to have to have, it was wishful thinking about how much it was going to cost, it was wishful thinking about whether we would find the weapons of mass destruction, it was wishful thinking that once we got rid of Saddam Hussein there would no longer be an ally of al Qaeda.

Al Qaeda is in Iraq. They are in there now, al Qaeda is in Iraq big time now. They may not have been there before the war; but, by gum, we made it a great place for them to do business today, and they are there.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Can I use another word? My colleague said ``wishful thinking." Let me be very clear. What we are talking about here is competence or incompetence, and we are not talking about the military who, clearly, have performed professionally, heroically, and deserve our praise and deserve our support. But what we are talking about is the civilian leadership at the Pentagon and this administration and this Presidency.

Let me just for one minute, if I can, here we are now talking about whether there should be a supplemental budget. And recently a colleague of ours, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. Edwards), visited Iraq and returned in the latter part of March and had private conversations with the generals in charge of the post-combat phase, if you will, according to the President. And they informed him that if there was not a supplemental, there would be serious problems confronting the American military.

Again, in a recent story, a recent report, dated April 21, so that is last Wednesday, this is what is happening. Let us be very clear, we have heard again and again colleagues stand up and talk about the inadequate protection being provided to American troops, whether it be vests, whether it be unarmored Humvees. So to make it up, here is what is happening. According to this report, the military is scrambling to fill its needs. The Pentagon last week diverted 120 armored Humvees purchased by the Israeli defense forces to Iraq. Yesterday, the Army announced a \$110 million contract for still more armored Humvees. This is incompetence. That is what this is about. It is not just about credibility; it is about incompetence.

An unreal expectation that the numbers of troops that would be necessary in May of 2003 and 3 months thereafter would be 30,000. And, yet, the Under Secretary of Defense, Mr. Wolfowitz, in a very derisive way when asked about the estimate that was given to the Senate by General Shinseki of 200,000 troops, said it was wildly off the mark. Well, Mr. Wolfowitz, now you are scrambling, and now we have American military personnel at risk.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. If the gentleman would yield, both he and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee) have made the point over the last several minutes that a lack of planning, a lack of clear-sighted planning has brought us to the present path.

I would like to cite an article in The Washington Post for summary purposes made just yesterday. At the confirmation hearing before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, where Mr. John Negroponte, Mr. Bush's nominee to be ambassador to Iraq, was being questioned, the summary in the story by Walter Pincus and Colum Lynch is as follows: "Panel members expressed confidence in Negroponte while voicing skepticism that the United States had a clear enough strategy in place for Iraq."

Let me be a little more specific, specific in the words of Mr. Negroponte with respect to his assuming the ambassadorship in Iraq and planning for what is going to happen to our troops and what is going to happen to Iraq in terms of its sovereignty: Under questioning by Senator Hagel, Republican of Nebraska, when asked what would happen if there was disagreement between Iraqi authorities and the United States military over how to handle a situation similar to the unrest in Fallujah, that would require, "a real dialogue between our military commanders, the new Iraqi government, and, I think, the United States mission as well," Negroponte said. Think about that. Can you imagine a combat situation such as is faced right now in Fallujah. It has nothing to do with the competence or incompetence of the United States military; it has everything to do with the competence or incompetence of the political policies that put the military in that situation.

We are now faced with circumstances in which military action becomes the political policy, that in order to support the political policy, you have to support military action, whatever it might be.

Going on, in the end, however, Negroponte said, "The U.S. military is going to have the freedom to act in their self-defense, and they are going to be free to operate in Iraq as they best see fit." Operate in their self-defense.

Mr. Negroponte, perhaps unconsciously, recognizes we are not on the offense.

We are not accomplishing any mission. What we are saying is, what I have said on this floor, that on June 30, the United States military is going to set adrift in a desert sea of political anarchy where our military action will be self-defense. Is that what we are sentencing the United States military to? A daily round of defending itself? For what? Under what circumstances can we justify the continued presence of the United States military if their sole military purpose according to the ambassador nominee to Iraq is to defend themselves?

Continuing, what is more, he said, Iraqi military forces "will come under the unified command of a U.S.-led multinational force. Negroponte emphasized the interim government will not need law-making authority because it will just have two prime functions: running 25 government ministries and preparing for next year's election of a transitional national assembly. Among the most sensitive aspect of the U.S. transition plan has been what has been called the transitional administration law devised by the United States and its appointed Iraq governing council."

At the White House yesterday, Mr. Scott McClellan, the press secretary, told reporters, and I am quoting from the article ``that an annex to the transitional law is being written that will limit the interim government's power."

Mr. DELAHUNT. I am sure the Iraqi people will welcome that.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. ``Iraqis have made it clear they want limits on the authority of the interim government," Mr. McClellan said.

We are in a situation where presumably authority is being transferred the 30th of June to an interim Iraqi government when we are writing an annex, which is a fancy word for saying we are writing an addendum, we are adding another codicil, another provision of this transitional law.

Mr. DELAHUNT. A secret agreement.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. They are still writing it. Because, as Mr. Negroponte said in responding to a question about the annex by Senator Dodd, a Democrat of Connecticut, Mr. Negroponte said he had not been briefed on it. ``I am just not at the moment clued in as to the discussion about the annex."

This is the gentleman who by June 30 is supposed to take over in Iraq. It cannot be more clear the stumbling and the bumbling that has taken place to this point.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And the incompetence.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. And the incompetence that has taken place up to this point is to continue.

How is it possible that the ambassador designee says, I am not clued in, even on the most fundamental addition to the transitional authority law that will set the circumstances and boundaries for how the United States military, let alone its diplomatic function, is to take place in a presumably sovereign Iraq?

Mr. INSLEE. I do not think the Iraqi new ``sovereign," whatever they are, should feel badly because our Secretary of State did not find out about the war until the ambassador of Saudi Arabia did first.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Prince Bandar.

Mr. INSLEE. Prince Bandar, who learned about it before our Secretary of State. So the fact that we told the Saudis, the President of the United States shared with the Saudi Government, a foreign government, our war plan, that the war was going to start before he told the Secretary of State, the Iraqis should not feel too bad if we do not clue them to who the next government will be that we choose.

Let us be honest about this. This is what we are asking and suggesting to the President in a very, very difficult situation. And I do not envy that position of dealing with Iraq as President of the United States. But the first order of business ought to be truth. And this operation from day one has been built on the shifting sands of deception, exaggeration, failure, and simply not shooting straight.

Now he needs to be straight with the world and the Iraqis. What happens on June 30 is not going to be a sovereign government. And the reason it is not going to be a sovereign government is because the only force capable of doing anything in Iraq is the United States military. And he is fooling himself if he thinks that is going to fool the American people or the Iraqi people or the world. And we need to be straight about this that this is a multi-year situation the mess we are about.

Mr. DELAHUNT. We have already had the evidence of that. It has been demonstrated very, very clearly.

I remember the Secretary of Defense speaking to the fact that there was some 70,000 Iraqi security forces. Well, the truth is that there were about 3,000 of them that had actually received some 2 weeks of training. That is not being honest and forthcoming with the Congress of the United States and the American people.

And then we learn during their first encounter about one in every 10 of Iraq security forces actually work against U.S. troops during the recent militia violence in Iraq, and an additional 40 percent walked off the job because of intimidation, the commander of the first armored division said Wednesday, and that is Major General Martin Dempsey.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. I want to point out that that story is in the Washington Times. Again, if someone wants to think that this is a partisan situation, everyone knows the Washington Times is in favor of this war, that the Washington Times represents itself to be a conservative voice. This is a report from the Washington Times.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Well, speaking about where conservatives are, and again I think it is extremely important for us because we acknowledge that we are Democrats, but there is a growing opinion on the part of all Americans from whatever political perspective that they hold that the credibility that we see is dissipating now, as well as the competence in the planning has been a failure.

Let me read something from a highly regarded national conservative leader by the name of Clyde Prestowitz. This was a column that appeared in my hometown paper, the Boston Globe. And more and more traditional conservative voices in this country are echoing these sentiments. And this White House and this administration should listen very carefully to the traditional Republican conservatives in this country who will voice similar concerns and doubts as we do here on a once-a-week basis.

``For a moment during the spring, neoconservatives associated with the Bush administration thought they had died and gone to heaven. The quicker than expected fall

of Saddam Hussein seemed to justify their vision of a new America that would reshape world politics. The United States would use its overwhelming military power to crush tyrannical regimes, they declared, and establish American-style capitalist democracies in their place. Domestically, the neocons only question was whether the tax cuts aimed at reshaping American society would be merely big or gigantic. As time passes, however, it has become increasingly clear that this course is neither neo nor conservative and that it may lead more quickly to hell than to heaven.

``This is not the foreign policy agenda traditional conservatives like myself voted for in 2000. Concerned about growing anti-American feeling around the world, we were pleased when candidate Bush spoke of adopting a humbler attitude in foreign policy and of reducing U.S. overstretch abroad. We also anticipated that a new Bush administration would embrace long-standing conservative values such as smaller government, fiscal responsibility, tax cuts carved with a goal of balancing budgets, strong protection of individual rights, and support of healthy State and local governments."

I dare say that that is an opinion that is being echoed among conservatives of both parties. Recently, there was a similar piece, I will not take the time because I know we are getting towards the end, that appeared in the New York Times. But I would commend those that are watching us this evening to go to the April 9 edition of the New York Times and read a piece by David Kirkpatrick entitled ``Lack of Resolutions in Iraq Find Conservatives Divided."

Mr. INSLEE. We have only got a minute or two and if the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. Abercrombie) would like to finish just briefly? Let me wrap up if I can.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. I am delighted to have the gentleman wrap up.

Mr. INSLEE. I am sure the country will appreciate that.

First off, I want to make sure people understand what we have been talking about tonight has been very well documented. The Web site that is indicated before the podium here indicates where you can check out, anybody that is listening this evening can check out the factual statements that we have talked about. You will find 247 misstatements of fact by this administration about Iraq that are documented in this government Web site by the House Committee on Government Reform due to the good efforts of the gentleman from California (Mr. Waxman). Anyone can check that out.

In conclusion, let me wrap up. What we were saying tonight is a theme. We believe this is an extremely challenging situation for America in Iraq. We believe our soldiers and sailors, Air Force personnel, men and women, are doing an exemplary job in Iraq under extremely trying circumstances; and anyone who has talked to them will agree with that. But we believe it is high time for the administration, for the President of the United States, for the Vice President of the United States, for the Secretary of Defense to stop basing an Iraq policy on wishful thinking and exaggeration.



They need to adopt the policy to the number of troops based on realism rather than rose-tinted glasses. They need to adopt a policy on how much it will cost based on hard-headed fiscal reality, rather than hiding the ball from the American people. They need to adopt a policy on the armor that recognizes how severe this problem is with security in Iraq, and starting to tell the truth to the American people is a good way to start to figure out a way out of Iraq.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, it remains for us to thank you for your patience and forbearance tonight. I believe at this opportunity we can indicate to our colleagues and to those watching us and participating with us tonight on C-SPAN broadcasts, these very valuable Special Orders that the House prepares to enable Members to speak to the broader American audience and elsewhere across the country. Thank you and thank them.

At this time, pending our next session of Iraq Watch, we would move to adjourn the House.