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## *House of Representatives*

### **Iraq Watch The Shocking Abuse of Prisoners May 5, 2004**

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

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, we are back here this evening for another installment of our weekly Iraq Watch. Tonight I am joined initially by the gentleman from the State of Washington (Mr. Inslee); and I expect, as the hour proceeds, other members of Iraq Watch will join us for our weekly discussion.

The revelations of the past several days concerning abuses of detainees or prisoners under the auspices of American military have shocked and appalled the world. And as many have indicated, including the President, Secretary Powell, and Secretary Rumsfeld, this is unacceptable, unconscionable, and un-American. It is an embarrassment to our country, to our military; and it is my understanding that a variety of congressional committees intend to address this particular issue.

But what concerns me is something that is fundamental to what we have been talking about these past months about our policy in Iraq and the Middle East in the war on terror, and that is credibility, competence, and the willingness of this White House, this administration, to consult with Congress. I think that there is a growing realization that this President, this Vice President, and this administration have failed on all accounts.

There was a report today in the media which quoted President Bush regarding these appalling revelations. And I would like to read to my friend and to the Speaker and to those who might be viewing us this evening as we have our weekly conversation excerpts from those reports in the international as well as the American media:

``The first time I saw or heard about pictures was on TV,' the President," referring to President Bush, ``said, leaving open the question of when he first learned about the

substance of the allegations that prompted an initial investigation in January of this year. But General Peter Pace, Deputy Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said that 'Everyone was kept apprised orally of the ongoing investigation.' Asked whether Bush and General Richard Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, his direct supervisor, were well aware of the situation, General Pace responded, 'Yes.' Myers, the country's top general, raised eyebrows over the weekend when he said that he had not read a report completed in early March that documented the widespread abuses in Abu Ghraib. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld had also not read the report that was completed in March by this Monday," by this past Monday, ``5 days after the damning photographs were first shown on the CBS television program 60 minutes, a spokesman said."

I find that absolutely incredible. The Secretary of Defense had not read the report until this past Monday, and the report was completed in March. What is going on? One can only describe this as ineptitude of the highest order.

Let me continue: ``Congressional leaders have bitterly complained that they were kept out of the loop and were particularly incensed after the Pentagon reported Tuesday the deaths of 25 prisoners in Iraq and Afghanistan including at least two confirmed homicides. The Congress has not been notified of the murders that took place. `There have been no reports of these abuses,' Republican Senator John McCain, himself a prisoner during the Vietnam War, told ABC television on Wednesday."

From the Cox News Services, Senator McCain went on: ``The Congress should have been notified of this situation a long time ago. It's a neglect of the responsibilities that Secretary Rumsfeld and the civilian leaders of the Pentagon have to keep the Congress informed of an issue of this magnitude."

I agree with Senator McCain. Even the majority leader of this House, this body, who certainly has taken the most hawkish position possible when it comes to the issue of Iraq and Afghanistan had this to say: ``We are being briefed all the time. If we are going to be a part and a partner in this war on terror, then we are to be completely briefed, not just briefed on those things they want us to hear." Of course, the majority leader of this body is the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DeLay).

I see the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee), and he has a look in his face that he wants to make a comment.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, it is difficult, while our proud men and women are serving in the field in Iraq, to tell some very unfortunate truths about the failure of the executive branch of this government to live up to their service in Iraq. It is difficult to say the truth, which is there has been gross incompetence, deception, manipulation of the truth, failure to recognize reality in Iraq which has got us in such an unholy mess by the executive branch of the Federal Government. That is not pleasant to say given what our troops face in Iraq tonight. But it is necessary to say it.

And the reason it brought hope to me when I was visiting a family that lost a son and a husband in Iraq while serving in an incident where he earned the Bronze Star posthumously, a man who will not be coming home to his children, when I talked to his widow, the one thing she impressed upon me that she wanted me to do is to not fail to blow the whistle on executive branch incompetence which has created such problems in Iraq or at least not responded to them the way they should. And this body, the people's House, has an obligation to blow the whistle on these multiple failures, and they are multiple. And tonight I think we are going to talk about 10 failures of the executive branch of the government, which has been responsible in part for some of the difficulties that we face in Iraq.

And the first one I would like to mention is the one that leads in part to some of the problems we face with handling prisoners of war. The public is well aware of what happened here. I heard a conservative commentator yesterday just describe this as the soldiers just having a good time, just blowing off steam. It is that kind of attitude that apparently permeated our command and control structure in our prisoner of war camps, and that kind of attitude has the potential to inflame the Arab world and create more enemies of the war we are fighting against al Qaeda right now. It is a gross mistake.

It is a failure of a command and control structure.

One of the problems this Congress needs to get right to the bottom of is this scandal regarding private contractors in Iraq. We have heard of multiple scandals involving overpayments to the Halliburton Corporation, multiple scandals involving mispayments and overpayments for oil to these corporations, many of whom are great political donors, I might add, in the United States political system.

But there is another one we need to get at, and that is why we have private contractors doing interrogation of prisoners of war in Iraq, who are outside the command and control structure, who are not subject to military discipline, and who apparently were instrumental in this debacle in our prisoner of war system. There is an error and failure that we need to get to the bottom of.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I do not know if my friend was aware, but the second largest army in Iraq today is not the army of the United Kingdom, but it is this army of private contractors. Let us call them what they really are, they are mercenaries.

I dare say, to privatize a war without the command and control of American generals and American officers is a very, very dangerous precedent that is being established.

I think what we are seeing here tonight, what we are talking about tonight, rather, is an example of where it can lead. We all have to acknowledge and remember that the entire world is now viewing, not just simply the photographs, but the realities of the war on the ground and the fact that the United States of America is privatizing its military,

privatizing its war, delegating to those who are not necessarily responsible and accountable to American military command absolutely significant duties.

Mr. INSLEE. If the gentleman will yield further, this is starting to permeate our whole system. We are finding that contractors are going to leave when the temperature gets too hot. We have got these private contractors doing interrogation and involved in this scandal in our prisoner of war camp.

Let me suggest this is part and parcel of the second failure. The first problem we talked about is a failure of command and control. But the second failure of this executive branch is the failure to be honest with the American people as to what this war is costing and their desire to fight a war on the cheap. While our people are losing their lives in Iraq, this administration refuses to be honest with the American people about the real cost of this war.

Let me suggest two reasons that I know that is true. Number one, instead of having a military system that is capable of fighting this war and putting the troops on the ground that were really needed, they tried to do it with these private contractors, many of whom are, again, engaged in the political process in this system and are political allies of those making executive decisions about this war. Number one.

Number two, as of this moment, in the middle of this war, while our soldiers, men and women are putting their lives on the line, this President has not shown how to pay for this war, and today I am told now proposed another \$25 billion of deficit spending to pay for this war.

If our soldiers can put their lives on the line, this executive branch ought to say what this war is really going to cost us and how long we are going to be there and how we are going to pay for this war. And just adding it open to the backs of our children just will not wash. Maybe that is the politically expedient thing to do. Maybe when you start a war based on false information, and we now learned it is false, maybe you want to kind of sweep it under the rug, how many billions of dollars it is going to cost the American taxpayers. But it is the wrong thing to do, like it is the wrong thing to do to fight this war on the cheap, to have contractors in there instead of folks in your command and control system. We need to get to the bottom of that failure number two.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, I think it is appropriate that we speak about the contractors and their roles, this private army, these mercenaries. It is also important again to go back to what I spoke to earlier, the incompetence and the ineptitude that is so rank and so disturbing.

It is as if nobody knows what is happening. The President of the United States is seeing this on TV. The Secretary of Defense has not read the report until this week, and the report was completed in March. If that is the case, if that is the fact, and we do not know that, I cannot understand what is going on in terms of this administration and its efforts.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. If the gentleman would yield, I think that in the context gentleman has just enunciated, that the notification to the Congress this afternoon of

the \$25 billion request is in order for examination. It is characterized as a ``supplemental package." There is nothing supplemental about this. This is an ongoing cost, an expense.

What is being outlined here in terms of what private contractors are doing, the package that has been put forward by the White House says it is for military operations in Iraq and the war on terrorism.

Now, I realize, and I think the gentleman would agree, that this has to be paid for. We cannot leave our troops out there without their proper equipment, many of the things that speakers in Iraq Watch have brought up before on this. But would the gentleman agree then, before this \$25 billion is voted on, we need to find out where this money is going, who is going to get the money, what are the operations that are envisioned?

Mr. DELAHUNT. What the gentleman is saying is that we need at this point in time a bona fide consultation, unlike what we have had to date. And this is not a partisan attack on the administration. This was the opinion of Republicans who supported the war dating back to January of 2003 in a column by Robert Novak of the Sun Times in Chicago. Let me quote again some excerpts that I think are very revealing about the attitude of this White House and this administration towards this institution and towards a shroud of secrecy that has been unparalleled in our history.

``Republican Senators gathering last Wednesday for their first session retreat should have been happy, blessed with a regained majority and a popular President. They were not. Instead, they complained bitterly of arrogance by the Bush administration, especially the Pentagon, in treatment of Congress all along the road to war. It informed the White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card that there were grievances from President Bush's Senate base; that it is ignored and insulted by the administration, particularly by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld in preparing for the war against Iraq. Recitals of complaints began with Senator JOHN WARNER, a pillar of the Senate GOP establishment. WARNER had his colleagues' attention when he addressed Card. `I will not tolerate,' he boomed, `a continuation of what has been going on over the last 2 years.' He cited cavalier treatment that denies information even to the venerable top Senate Republican on Armed Services.

``Next up was Senator PAT ROBERTS, a former Marine officer who has spent the last 40 years on Capitol Hill. ROBERTS, a plain-spoken midwesterner from Kansas, is the new Senate Intelligence Committee Chair. He told Andrew Card to mark him down agreeing with everything WARNER just said. Senator KIT BOND of Missouri got up next and repeated similar concerns."

So this is not a partisan attack on the President. This is a bipartisan concern that this administration act competently and consult with Congress. These issues are too serious.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. If the gentleman will yield further, last evening I had an opportunity to speak in a special order, and I indicated then and I indicate again tonight in the wake of the gentleman's suggestion that the President was ill-served by those in authority who failed to inform him fully as to what all the conditions and circumstances were.

There is no excuse for the leadership in the Department of Defense not informing the President of the United States as to what he might be facing with respect to the outcome that was here. I pointed out last night that this situation did not just develop with CBS on 60 Minutes II within the last 7 days. A report by the Provost Marshal of the United States Army, Major General Donald Ryder, in November of 2003, was in the hands of General Sanchez and in the hands of the Department of Defense and the Secretary in the fall of last year.

In the wake of that, I have here and am displaying to my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, Article 15-6, investigation of the 800th Military Police Brigade. This was the report that was requested on January 19, 2004, subsequent to the Provost Marshal's investigation and report, which indicated severe difficulties, tensions between military intelligence-gathering and proper prison conduct by those in charge of the prisons, indicating that there were training problems, operational problems that needed to be addressed. And so on January 19, Lieutenant General Sanchez, Lieutenant General Sanchez, the commander of the Combined Joint Task Force 7, requested that the U.S. Central Command appoint an investigating officer, and that investigating officer, of course, was General Taguba. His report responded to the admonitions of Lieutenant General Sanchez that an investigation of detention and internment operations be undertaken, starting from November of 2003. November of 2003 is when the report went in, indicating that there had to be steps taken to address these questions.

Let me quote from the opening paragraph. ``Lieutenant General Sanchez cited recent reports of detainee abuse, escapes from confinement facilities, and accountability lapses, which indicated systemic problems within the brigade and suggested a lack of clear standards, proficiency, and leadership."

Fifty-three pages later, and if the gentleman will grant now, I will not cite over and over again what is taking place in here, but one shocking event after another.

This 53-page report, and this comes from CQ Today, Congressional Quarterly Today by Neil Soros from the CQ staff, and he quotes, ``The 53-page report drafted by Army General Antonio Taguba, and based on an investigation into the abuse allegations," that is this report that I hold in my hand, ``that began in January was finished in April. The report was detailed in this week's New Yorker magazine. At a Pentagon news conference today, Secretary Rumsfeld defended the time it takes to release such information."

Now, this information was available from November of last year.

Quote: "I recognize the appetite of people for instant information and instant conclusions," he said. That is to say Secretary Rumsfeld. "These things are complicated. They take some time. It required interviewing people back in the States who had already left Iraq that required discussions with people. They are proceeding in a very systematic and appropriate way, and to the extent I conclude at any time there is some slice of it that has not been investigated, has not been looked at properly, you can be sure I will undertake such an investigation."

Clearly, the Secretary of Defense is dissembling and somehow thinks that everybody in this country can be fooled as to what his responsibility is. The Secretary of Defense has known, at least since November of last year, what was going on and did not even inform the President of the United States, because the Secretary of Defense, as I said last night, apparently has assumed that he is the chief operating officer of this country and that he does not need to inform the Congress, he does not only not need to inform the Congress, but does not even need to inform the President of the United States.

I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say that I think the Secretary of Defense, Secretary Rumsfeld, should resign. He was quoted in the paper today responding to a question as to why he had not asked to see the pictures, and he indicated that he had asked, but they were not available.

Now, if the Secretary of Defense of this country cannot acquire pictures that he asks for, is it any wonder that we have troops in Iraq tonight who are driving around in unarmored vehicles? Is it any wonder that we had troops in Iraq for an entire year without protective body armor? If the Secretary of Defense cannot get pictures that he requests, my God, what are we facing over there? It just is indescribable.

I yield to my friend, the gentleman from Washington State.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, if it was one failure, wars are tough, some things go wrong; and if it was one failure, maybe we would be in the excusing mode. But it is interesting. Of all of the failures that have happened in Iraq from day one, not one single person has lost their job, except maybe recently in this POW camp situation.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would just yield on that point, yes, somebody has lost their job: the people who published the pictures of the coffins coming home.

Mr. INSLEE. Who is my constituent, by the way, and we will talk about that in a few minutes. But let me suggest that there is not one failure, there are 10 failures. And before the night is out, I want to list the 10 failures of this executive branch which are significant which have gotten us into this mess.

Failure number 1. They told us and the world that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. The President of the United States said on August 26, 2002, "Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction." That statement was false.

Number 2. They told us they had clear and convincing evidence of the connection between Saddam Hussein and the attack of September 11 and al Qaeda. No matter how many times that is said, that statement is false. We have now seen the intelligence briefing. There was no such evidence. That statement was false.

Third: they told the American people that we would be greeted as liberators, rose petals strewn at our feet, happy convocations of democracy-seeking Iraqis greeting our personnel carriers. As a result of that failure, Americans died, because they refused to send armor that would have protected our soldiers from these improvised explosive devices along our roadways, and they sent them with thin skin, sheet metal Humvees not as thick as your washing machine that did not protect our soldiers.

Now, why did they make that such fundamental error? Why did they not send our armored personnel carriers that we have 11,000 of them sitting in warehouses around this country, why did they not send those? Well, there is a reason. It is because they were so, and I have no other word to put it but arrogant, to believe that their wisdom would be accepted by the entire Mideast when they came into Iraq, and they were wrong, and our people died.

Issue number 4: they ignored clear evidence that we needed more troops on the ground after the collapse of the Iraqi Army. General Shinseki, General Zinni, many people told them, when the Iraqi Army collapses, there is going to be massive looting and chaos and you are going to need hundreds of thousands of troops to protect us and the Iraqis, and they ignored it. Why? Because of arrogance.

Issue number 5: they refused to say we needed the U.N. Now the President is now saying we needed the U.N., now. Well, it is a little late now when the rest of the world is refusing to become involved.

Number 6: they refused to have elections. I am told Jay Garner, the first provost they had, suggested they needed elections. That is kind of what democracy is about. Now, proposedly, the President is going to turn over sovereignty on June 30. What a joke. The only thing these people are going to control in Iraq after we hand-pick these people are who gets library cards. Every single thing else is going to be run by us, and Iraq knows it. I will go quickly.

Number 7: No command and control and adequate training in handling these POWs with a massive black eye to the United States of America. When we have tens of thousands of people doing a great job in Iraq, our reputation has been soiled.

Number 8: no armor. We talked about that.



Number 9: no plan to pay for Iraq. We have over \$130 billion of payment of Iraqi expenses, and this President has not suggested one single dollar except deficit spending to pay for this war.

Number 10, and this is the one maybe that is the most no-brainer to me I can think of. They sent 130,000 troops into Iraq without body armor, knowing that you are sending them into the war and into the dens of modern combat without modern flap jackets. That is 10, and that is enough.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, I wrote Secretary Rumsfeld about the body armor issue months ago and he wrote me back and he said all of our troops will be protected with this body armor by November.

A day later I get a letter from General Myers, and he says it will be December. Before we leave here for the holidays, they had a briefing at the Pentagon; they said it is going to be January. Do you realize it was March of this year, one full year after the beginning of this war, before the Pentagon was willing to say that all of our troops had been equipped? And now they are over there without uparmored Humvees, and they are driving over these roadway explosives. They are getting their arms and legs blown off. They are losing their lives, and we are not correcting that problem as quickly as we are capable of correcting it.

How do I know that? Because the only company the Pentagon has a contract with to provide these uparmored Humvees is an Ohio company located in Fairfield, Ohio. They are capable of producing in November of this year, by November of this year, 500 of these uparmored Humvees per month. How many is the Pentagon willing to buy? Only 300 per month. That means that we are not addressing this problem as quickly as it is possible to address it.

How can the President, how can the Secretary of Defense, how can Paul Wolfowitz look the American citizen, the American family, the American soldier in the eye and explain to them why we are not doing everything as quickly as possible to protect our soldiers?

One more thing before I yield, Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz, who I believe and I think most people believe was largely responsible for helping formulate this policy of going into Iraq as we did, was asked a few days ago how many American soldiers had been killed. And he indicated that it was something over 500. And at that time we had lost well over 700 American soldiers. To think that the Deputy Secretary of Defense was not paying attention to the number of American deaths is almost unthinkable, almost unthinkable.

I have got 8th and 9th grade students who come to Washington, D.C. from my district, to visit me in Washington, D.C., who are better informed about the price this country is paying in terms of deaths and the injuries of our soldiers than apparently is the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Paul Wolfowitz. He should be ashamed of himself.

I cannot fathom that one in his high position would not on a daily basis take note of the number of American soldiers who have lost their lives in this conflict.

Mr. INSLEE. I just want to offer a brief suggestion why that is. How could the Assistant Secretary of Defense not know our casualties? How could you possibly explain that? Well, there is an explanation.

This administration has got us into a war and is pursuing a war based on wishful thinking rather than hard reality. Now, wishful thinking is fine in Hollywood. It makes some great dramas, but it is a lousy way to win a war; and it costs people's lives, and that is what is happening tonight. They have wishful thinking: if we just stay the course, the Iraqis will accept the government we are trying to force down their throats. It is wishful thinking that the ID are going to stop and the Humvees are going to stop the attacks on our soldiers. It is wishful thinking that somehow we will find \$150 billion a year to pay for this war.

They refuse to recognize the hard cold reality that our soldiers are facing every day in Iraq. It is morally, ethically, and democratically wrong; and that is why we are here tonight.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Just to pick up on the point by my friend, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Strickland), it is beyond the incompetence and the ineptitude that seems to characterize the civilian leadership of the Department of Defense. That can only be called callousness, and it is rank and raw. And maybe he ought to join us as we attend the funerals of those who have died in the service of this country. I have already attended two, two funerals. A young man in Quincy and just recently a young man in Plymouth. This Saturday I am attending another funeral. And just maybe if Under Secretary Wolfowitz was at that funeral with me, he might know the number of Americans that have died in this war. But maybe it is just simply ineptitude.

We were talking earlier about these contractors, these mercenaries, these Hessians, if you will. A report exists that has targeted two individuals who worked for contractors. Now, I am not going to reach a conclusion, because everyone deserves due process, everyone deserves the implementation of the rule of law as we know it in our democracy; but they have not even received notice. Just imagine that. They have heard nothing from the Pentagon.

It is in a report and there has been no communication to these private companies. Yesterday in the New York Times the lead contractors implicated in prison abuse remain on the job. They are still there. More than 2 months after a classified Army report found that the two contract workers were implicated in the abuse of Iraqis at a prison outside of Baghdad, the companies that employ them say they have heard nothing from the Pentagon and that they have not removed any employees from Iraq.

For one of the employees, the Army report recommended termination of employment and revocation of a security clearance. For the other, it urged an official reprimand, whatever that means, and review of his security clearance. Military spokesmen in Washington and Baghdad said Monday evening they had no information on whether the workers were still on the job or why the report had not been conveyed to the companies. One of the principles in the company noted with apparent irritation that the military still had not provided the company with a copy of the report completed February 22.

What is going on with the civilian leadership under the direction of this Secretary?

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you who has been notified. I can tell you who has been held responsible.

The New York Times, perhaps the same article, indicated yesterday, the senior American commander in Iraq has ordered the first punishments in the abuse of prisoners by American soldiers there, issuing severe reprimand to six who served in supervisory positions and milder levels of admonishment to a seventh. Those in supervisory positions received a reprimand or a letter of admonishment. However, six subordinates accused of carrying out the abuse already face criminal charges.

Mr. DELAHUNT. It just gets worse.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. A moment longer.

"`They did not know or participate in any crimes,' a senior American officer in Baghdad said of the officers who received the reprimand." Who determined that they did not know or participate in any crimes? A senior American officer unnamed says in Baghdad, but they know that the six subordinates, the poor grunts on the ground, they know that they have got to face criminal charges. In addition, issued the reprimand. Their responsibility is to set the standards in the organization. They should have known, but they did not. So they just get a reprimand.

They are the ones setting the standards in the organization by the administration of senior officers in Baghdad. We already know what is happening. The grunts on the ground are taking the fall. That is what is happening. That is the reality. And the officers are running and hiding, and they are being allowed to do it despite the fact that we know that reports existed as far back as last November pointing out what the difficulties and challenges were.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, the chief executive of one of the civilian contractors said in an interview this past Monday, just stop and pause and think of that, this past Monday, said we have not received any information or direction from the client regarding our work in-country. No charge, no communications, no citations, no calls to appear at the Pentagon.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, if my friend would yield, I dare to say that this smells like a cover-up, and I think Secretary Rumsfeld has to assume responsibility. He is the Secretary of Defense of this Nation, and when he was asked, have you asked, Mr. Secretary, to see all of these pictures depicting this abuse, and he indicates, as was reported in the paper, well, I was told they were not available, I mean, talk about someone trying to shirk responsibility. It is almost laughable. He is the Secretary of Defense.

Then General Myers, I saw him interviewed just a couple of days ago, and he had indicated that he had not even read this outrageous report. He had not read it, and so it seems to me, rather than the grunts on the ground, that someone like General Myers and Secretary Rumsfeld should step up, assume responsibility, admit their failure of leadership and have the good graces to submit their resignations to the President of the United States, and if he is not willing to do it, I would hope the President would ask for it.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. If the gentleman would yield on that point, would the gentleman from Massachusetts kindly read back to us the last sentence that he just read from that report with respect to the client. I believe there was a sentence that the contractors were making reference to who their client was. Could the gentleman read that sentence.

Mr. DELAHUNT. That is exactly the word. I will look through. We have not received any information or direction from the client.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. The client.

Mr. DELAHUNT. The client is the American taxpayer. That is who the client is, the American people.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. If the gentleman will yield back, yes, the client that is referred to presumably is the Department of Defense.

I have before me a letter that was received by the ranking member of the Committee on Armed Services, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. Skelton) yesterday on May 4, from the Secretary of Defense, Mr. Rumsfeld, where he states with respect to private security companies, known as PSCs, private security companies, where he states, It is my understanding that most of the PSCs doing business in Iraq do not work directly for the U.S. government.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Who do they work for?

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. I am about to tell you. I am about to tell you.

They work under subcontracts to prime contractors to provide for the protection of their employees. They are apparently just manifesting themselves like spontaneous combustion or immaculate conceptions in Iraq.

Many PSCs, and I am quoting the Secretary of Defense here, many PSCs are hired by other entities such as Iraqi companies or private foreign companies seeking business opportunities in Iraq.

We are in the middle of a war zone and the Secretary of Defense says, well, 10- or 20,000 people over here with guns and going anyplace they please and causing anything to happen that they want, what does it have to do with me and my 135,000 people?

The CPA, the Coalition Provisional Authority, has established a PSC working group to provide a forum, a forum, a discussion group, in which PSCs exchange information, and approximately 50 PSCs are actively involved in this group. He has a list of 60 that is attached to this. Apparently 10 of them do not even bother to show up at the forum. God knows what kind of rules they are operating under.

The Secretary goes on to say, The Department of Defense is drafting uniform guidance regarding PSCs employed in Iraq under contracts using U.S. appropriations, which means as of May 4, 2004, there is no uniform guidance from the Department of Defense regarding the utilization of private contractors being paid from U.S. appropriations.

This is dereliction of duty. How is it possible for the Secretary of Defense to tell the American people and tell the American Congress that he has no rules whatsoever and is in the process of forming what he calls uniform guidance, whatever the hell that is? That is what the Secretary of Defense has done. He has undermined completely the policies of this country, has failed his President, failed this Congress and failed his duty.

Mr. DELAHUNT. As my colleague knows, at least it has been reported in the paper, that the Secretary will appear before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee or some other committee of the United States Senate to respond to the concerns that Republicans and Democrats and everybody has articulated over the last several days.

I would hope that one additional question might be asked of this Secretary who stands here next to the President of Uzbekistan, who is a tyrant, a despot and a dictator, who some day will rival Saddam Hussein as a gross violator and threat to regional stability, but is now part of the coalition of the willing, but I digress.

From the book which was offered regarding the experiences of the former Secretary of Treasury Paul O'Neill, there is related an anecdote, and I think it needs an answer because I do not want to make an accusation, but this anecdote occurred on February of 2001, months before our national tragedy of September 11, but the preparations were underway to do something about Iraq, to do something about Iraq.

On page 96, let me read, Beneath the surface was a battle, O'Neill, that seemed brewing since the National Security Council meeting on January 30. Remember, the President had been in office for a week. It was Powell and his moderates at the State Department versus hard-liners like Rumsfeld, Cheney and Wolfowitz, who were already planning the next war in Iraq in the shape of a post-Saddam country. Documents were being prepared by

the Defense Intelligence Agency, Rumsfeld's intelligence arm, mapping Iraqi oil fields and exploration areas enlisting companies that might be interested in leveraging the precious asset. This is less than a month after President Bush was inaugurated.

One document entitled Foreign Suitors for Iraqi Oil Field Contracts lists companies from 30 countries, their specialty, bidding histories and, in some cases, their particular areas of history. He expressed the desire to dissuade countries from engaging in asymmetrical challenges to the United States, as Rumsfeld said in his January articulation, of the demonstrative value of a pre-emptive attack.

I would like to have a response to that particular page. What was the memory of Secretary Donald Rumsfeld? Why was he preparing at that point, cutting up the pie, if you will, allocating oil contracts months before 9/11?

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I yield to the gentleman from Washington.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to say what is happening in Iraq due to the deception and falsehood by this administration is not only a threat to our soldiers, it is a threat to democracy itself. There is no greater violation of the democratic principle than an administration that does not tell the truth to the American people, and we are not getting the truth. We know we did not get the truth about WMD or a connection to 9/11, but now we find it was months and months before we got to the truth because somebody leaked pictures about this scandalous situation in our POW camps.

This is a direct threat to the democratic principle. If you want to know how bad things are going to go, when the government does not tell the truth to the American people, I want to quote something I read today. I was with the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Strickland) at the Library of Congress this evening, and they have an exhibit about Winston Churchill. On page 42 of this pamphlet, it has a picture of Winston Churchill and Lawrence of Arabia taken in 1921 at the Cairo Conference. It says, "During this meeting, Churchill helped establish the government ethnic composition and political boundaries of Iraq and other portions of the Middle East."

When the British did that, they told their people they would be there for a year or two and they would help bring democracy to Iraq. Lawrence of Arabia told them they were crazy because they did not understand the ethnic composition of that part of the world.

Do Members know the year they left Iraq after getting in in 1922, the British Empire, 1953; 31 years. What is 31 years, that is 2035 if we have a similar misunderstanding as to what is going on in Iraq.

The sad situation is this administration has demonstrated repeated failures to understand the challenges we have in Iraq. I want to offer one idea. We have offered a lot of criticism and we have called for accountability of people which is a democratic principle. We have

called for accountability of people in this administration who should be removed because of their repeated failures, misjudgment and deception.

There is only one way we are going to get out of Iraq, and that is allow the Iraqi people to seize their own destiny, and that destiny may not be perfect according to what the Oval Office wants it to be, but this President has to recognize he cannot run Iraq from the Oval Office. The Iraqi people are going to have to fashion their own destiny.

That is why I believe we should call for early elections this summer if possible, as was done in the town of Tar and the village of Shatra, a town of 250,000. They have had elections. They have done it using their ration cards. In these towns, they have already had elections. You bring in your ration card, you stamp it when there is a vote, and you pick who you think should be in charge of your destiny.

The Iraqis need to get involved in their country's future. Right now they are dependent on us for everything. They are dependent on us to do all of the dying and spending. We need Iraqis to grasp their own destiny, and the best way to do it is through elections. Those elections may not be as good as the one in Florida in 2000, but it would be a lot better than us picking the people that we are going to shove down the Iraqi's throats in this bizarre situation.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, it was just about a year ago, just about this time that the first congressional delegation under the leadership of the gentleman from California (Mr. Hunter) went into Baghdad from the Baghdad Airport up Kirkuk, the first opportunity that Members of Congress had to actually meet face to face in Baghdad itself with General Garner and Ambassador Bremer. We got into Baghdad the same day, or within 24 hours or so of the time Ambassador Bremer was replacing or complementing the service of General Garner.

I can tell the gentleman because I believe it was the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee) who mentioned that General Garner had some ideas about what needed to be done vis-à-vis reconstruction. I can affirm to the gentleman based on his suggestion which he just made about elections that General Garner felt very strongly at that time that councils of one kind and another should be allowed to be set up, that we could go to the Iraqi people and trust that they would put these together with a minimum of structure, if you will, from the United States. That is to say we could help provide the logistical capacity to help conduct the elections, but he felt they should move forward expeditiously.

And I can tell you his suggestions were made in a context in which he was shoved laterally just about as fast as he could go. I think we are going to find General Garner, who was kind of dismissed as someone who did not quite understand what was going on, from the point of view of history will be shown as having a clear idea of what needed to be done.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, the history of this administration is anyone who questions is shoved aside. General Shinseki said we would need hundreds of thousands of troops. He was literally ridiculed by the Secretary of Defense and others.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. He was rebuked publicly.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Absolutely, because you do not question these folks. They seem to know everything.

What we are finding out is that their understanding is so immature that they are almost child-like in their fantasies. It is almost like a make-believe. They want the world to be a certain way, and so they just assume it is; and then who pays the price? The American people pay the price, the families of our soldiers and the soldiers pay the price.

If I can say something about the need to come up with a plan as the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee) and the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. Abercrombie) have suggested. The papers reported today that the troop levels that we are going to have in Iraq will stay at about 135,000 throughout 2005. I submit that is just the beginning. It is going to be 2005, 2006, 2007, we know not when this is going to come to an end.

This is my prediction. My prediction is this: If we do not change our policies, if we do not come up with a plan to extricate ourselves honorably from that situation, we are going to find ourselves facing the strong possibility of a military draft and the moms and dads in this country who may feel very detached from this war right now because they have a 13 or 14 or 15-year-old son or daughter, and they do not think it is going to touch them, we cannot sustain our military needs around the world and continue to do what we are doing in Iraq without the possibility, I think the strong possibility of a military draft.

If we have a military draft, I do not think we will have those exemptions that we had when I and Vice President Cheney were draft age. I think every person of draft age will be subjected to it. I hold that out not as a threat, but I think it is realistic. We have National Guard persons and Reservists over there, and they are being extended beyond the normal time of service. We cannot continue this for years and years and years into the future.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, the indication today was from the Department of Defense that Reservists and National Guard can look forward to 16,000 more being called up in the next year to supplement those already in service.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, meanwhile, what is happening in terms of the war on terror. We are talking about Iraq, and yet all over the world, murky, small, nebulous cells of fundamental Islamics who hate America are being spawned.

Mr. Speaker, maybe tomorrow if we have some time we will come back and do a wrap-up. Again, I thank my colleagues for this installment of Iraq watch.



