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Iraq Watch An Independent Investigation into Intelligence Failures July 14, 2003

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

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, for 5 or 6 weeks, a number of us have been coming to the floor to discuss our Nation's involvement and our role in Iraq. We have at least four times come here, four of us, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt), the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. Emanuel), and the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. Abercrombie), and have had a discussion and a lively give and take about Iraq, about what is going right over there, what is going wrong, trying to seek the truth, trying to suggest policy changes, trying to have a full discussion and report to the people of this country. And we have decided to do this every week, every week that the House is in session as long as our country is involved in Iraq.

We are going to call ourselves the Iraq Watch because we think that there are important public policy matters that the American people need to be aware of, that Congress needs to focus on, we need to ask questions about, seek information about, to clarify, to seek policy changes, to make some changes and fundamentally to report to the people of this country on what we know and what we think we all ought to know about what has happened in Iraq.

Now, of the four I named, two of us voted in favor of the military authority sought by the President and two of us voted "no" to exercise that authority. But we all were sold, as was the entire Congress and the American people, with great certainty by the administration and by the President that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction last fall when the vote was approaching and that he was trying to develop more. The certainty was expressed in public. The certainty was expressed in private.

I have, along with a number of Members of Congress, attended a briefing at the White House, one of a series of briefings. In my case, we were briefed by Condoleezza Rice, the

National Security Advisor, and George Tenet, the director of the CIA. We were told with certainty that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction and was trying to develop more.

Now, there is no question that in the past Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. That has been proven. He used them. He used weapons of mass destruction against his own people. He used them against the Kurds. And he used them against innocent civilians in Iraq. He used them in murderous ways. That is beyond question. But what we were told is that he had them in the fall of 2002, that he was developing more, and that he was an impediment to the peace in the Middle East and to our Nation's security and because of that imminent threat, we needed to exercise preemptive military power to disarm Saddam Hussein.

I voted for it. I would do so again being told the same information as we were told then. I imagine that some of my colleagues who voted "no" would vote "no" again. But the question is we are discovering that things may not have been just what we thought they were. We certainly have won a great military victory. Our armed services, our young men and women in uniform performed admirably and with great courage in Iraq. But we have got two questions, this group has two questions: Fundamentally, is our military mission complete and are we winning the peace in Iraq? And I would submit before I yield to my colleagues that the military mission is not complete and cannot be complete as long as there has not been an accounting of the weapons of mass destruction, where are they and who controls them, and what went wrong regarding our intelligence, how was our intelligence collected, and how was it used by the White House and by the political leadership, and are we doing the right things from a policy standpoint to win the peace.

And I suggest that this group of four and many of our colleagues have a lot of questions about this. I know those questions are shared by the American people; I hope we can give voice to these questions in this Iraq Watch. I hope we can come up with some answers or seek those answers from the administration, and I hope we can report back on a regular basis once a week to the American people.

I yield now to my colleague, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. Emanuel).

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Hoeffel) for organizing this. It is interesting that you noted we were militarily successful, and I think everybody takes pride in what our men and women in uniform did in pursuing the mission that they were on.

What I think is unfortunate is that they went into that mission without a plan for the occupation and without a sense of how to seek and secure that peace once the war was over. And that is something that the civilian leaders, that is the type of leadership that the civilian leaders needed to provide and did not.

Let me give you an example of that point. After the war and hostilities ceased in both Bosnia and Kosovo, not a single American soldier was killed in action after the hostility

ceased. Why? Because in both cases we had a plan for the occupation, and we had allies, two things missing in this endeavor.

As recently as May, when the Defense Department said we could have won the war and secured peace with 50,000 troops, we now have 150,000 troops. Today there was an announcement that there would be postponement of any troops going home. So no family member knows an exact date as far as the eye can see on the horizon, and there may even be a further call-up for further troops.

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

Mr. HOEFFEL. I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, as my colleague put it also today, India has made a decision through its democratic process that it will not send troops unless there is a United Nations resolution. What I am very, very concerned about is, are we going to end up in Iraq with a vast majority of troops assigned there to ensure security and stability as Americans?

We have heard from the Secretary of Defense, Mr. Rumsfeld, that there will be additional foreign troops sent to Iraq, but when we ask the question where are these troops coming from, what are their numbers, we are met with silence basically. Again, there are reports coming from military sources that indicate that if the situation continues to deteriorate in Iraq we very well might need double, double, the number of troops to ensure again stability and security for the Iraqi people.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to note that on the occupation, not only are our troops there, 150,000 U.S. troops now, permanently stationed there, and as my colleague noted that there are other countries who will not, like India, participate without the U.N. There is nothing that has occurred in the postwar Iraq that was not predictable or foreseen pre the war. And I think that although there is a great argument about 16 words that were legitimately said in the well of this Chamber, the people's House, and it is a legitimate question, I think one of the greatest travesties, and I would hope that we would have an inquiry in either the House or the other Chamber, any investigation, on how we went to war without an exit strategy.

There has been a bipartisan agreement for a long time that we never will send American troops, at least post-Vietnam, we would never send American troops into combat without knowing how to exit. We have no plan for the peace and we have no plan to secure the exit of our American men and women.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I can assure the gentleman, as the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt) can, that there was no lack of trying to get that exit strategy from the administration last fall. I wrote letters to the President. I know the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt) participated in similar efforts. He and I

serve on the Committee on International Relations. There was great efforts at hearings as well as individual letters written to the administration seeking information.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, if I may ask then, the gentleman sought pre the war, when there was still the debate in this country going on, if we are there, we win, how are we coming home. That question was attempted to seek an answer?

Mr. HOEFFEL. Yes.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And there were never any answers to those questions.

Mr. HOEFFEL. The gentleman is correct, there were not answers. And there were many more questions, certainly in my letter? How much will it cost? How many troops will it take? How many allies will go in with us? How many allies will stay with us in the post-conflict exercise?

The military victory was never in doubt. No one doubted that, but the question was what kind of risk were we assuming, would we have friends to help us, to absorb some of the cost and to take on some of the responsibility so that the United States would not alone be the subject of frustration and anger after the fact, which is exactly what is happening.

Thirty American soldiers have been assassinated, attacked, ambushed and assassinated since the President declared military victory. About 75 altogether have died, but 30 have been killed directly.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would continue to yield for a second, according to the Associated Press today, I think as well both killed and died in a humvee accident, there has been 84 deaths in 79 days since the President landed on the Lincoln aircraft carrier. Eighty-four Americans have died, 30 plus through assassination, others through humvees turning over, other accidents, but 84 Americans are not coming home to their loved ones, to see their children. There is no doubt.

I think that that, to me, one of the great travesties here is that there is not a plan for the occupation. There is not a plan for the exit strategy.

And last week we learned now finally after, I do not know why we have to browbeat this answer, but we have spent and are planning on spending \$1 billion a week.

Mr. DELAHUNT. As far as the eye can see.

Mr. EMANUEL. That is right, a minimum of 4 years. That is \$50 billion a year if my math works, and I still I think I am pretty good at it. That comes to \$200 billion on the occupation side of Iraq. We spend \$12 billion, \$12 billion on just college assistance at the Federal level, \$12 billion versus \$200 billion. Two billion dollars would give health

insurance to every uninsured American and guarantee a bare minimum for the other, not just the 42 million but those who are actually being cut from the rolls.

There is much that we can do here at home for that same cost, not that we are not for the reconstruction of Iraq. Now that we have won the war, I think we all believe that it is pretty essential to invest in Iraq's future, but, remember, this is the very time that we are going to invest. This is \$50 billion we are going to spend now on Iraq this year for the occupation.

Our colleagues and a number of them have a rebuild America account for \$50 billion to be roads, bridges, economic development, investment in infrastructure to move people and goods and services. We will not find the money for that. Yet we are going to do more deficit financing and burden our country with debt to build \$50 billion worth of occupation resources for Iraq.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to note that those estimates, and my colleague just used them of \$50 billion, are based on what we know today. The reality is, back in April, Secretary Rumsfeld recently acknowledged that the amount of dollars necessary, simply for the military presence, put aside the cost of reconstruction, that estimate has doubled from some \$2 billion to \$4 billion a month. I dare say that I would not be surprised if 6 months from now we find that that \$4 billion estimate has mushroomed to a significantly higher amount.

I think we also owe a debt to the recently retired General of the Army, General Shinseki, who when he mentioned that at least 200,000 troops was necessary to ensure peace and stability in Iraq, that estimate by the General was dismissed, in fact derided, by Secretary Rumsfeld, who mentioned a figure of 125,000. This is beginning to remind me of those CBO estimates, about surplus, of trillions of dollars of surpluses on an annual basis that have turned into deficits as far as the eye can see.

So, again, the number of troops and the estimate of just the cost of sustaining a military presence there is \$4 billion.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, as my colleague knows, as I think all my colleagues know, as they obviously tried to get answers to how we were going to secure the country, how many allies we are going to have, what was our exit strategy, and it was like pulling teeth to get that. We tried to get answers to the questions how much would it cost, how many troops. Anybody that spoke in the hundreds of thousands were forced out.

Now we are trying to get answers for who put a statement in the President's State of the Union, and we are now ended up blaming the Italians it looks like. First, it was the British. The British blamed the Italians. The Italians say they do not know where the document came from.

The director of the CIA, all the men and women in Virginia have done a wonderful job dedicating their lives to trying to assess information and give our civilian leaders the best intelligence and estimates they have, and every time we try to get information it is pulling teeth.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, we know exactly whose fault it was. It is George Tenet. That is what Condoleeza Rice is saying. That is what the Vice President is saying. Everybody's quite willing to blame George Tenet for that information being in the State of the Union that should not have been there. Does anybody in this House or watching throughout America believe that George Tenet alone is responsible?

Mr. EMANUEL. Single-handedly.

Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, I have written a few or participated in a few of the processes of writing a State of the Union.

In October, this line about gathering uranium from Niger was edited out of the President's speech. The way it works in the White House is that speech is sent around to the NSE team. So State looks at it, Defense looks at it, CIA looks at it, FBI I am sure gets a little clearance through Justice, probably not the FBI, and they check the assignment. There is an editing. The national security staff underneath Condoleeza Rice has to run that process. So the same people that were working on the October speech that dismissed this assessment of Niger was the same group working on the State of the Union.

How one person is responsible, that what was a team effort in October but has become a single person failure in January, only 3 months later, when nothing changed, as we would say back in Chicago, that dog just will not hunt.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Do they really say that in Chicago?

Mr. EMANUEL. Periodically, on the northwest side, we have a couple of dogs that hunt.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, can I just add to that?

I was interested in the comments that were made by representatives of the administration during the course of the past 3 or 4 days, including the statement obviously by the director of Central Intelligence.

Unfortunately, as my colleague points out, the statements themselves I think create more confusion. There is more ambiguity and less clarity now as to what happened. So while it might be that George Tenet, the director of Central Intelligence, ought to have made a comment about the inclusion of the accusation relative to the West Africa country of Niger, I guess the question is, who put those words in there to begin with? Who put it in there?

I will tell my colleagues what I find. I think the only reasonable conclusion that can be drawn is that we have different agencies or individuals within the agencies that have access to information, that we are not communicating with each other. And that should really profoundly disturb all of us in the aftermath of the tragedy of September 11 because we should have learned from the attack on the United States on September 11 that cooperation and coordination are essential.

For example, the gentleman from Illinois references the President made a speech on October 7 in Cincinnati. There was a reference to the purchase of highly enriched uranium from Niger. During the course of the review of that particular speech, the CIA correctly warned the President not to use that intelligence in that particular speech. Maybe he forgot about that particular process. Maybe he was unaware of it.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, what I want to try to do is try to demystify this process. It was not like the CIA got the speech and itself edited it out. This is a coordinated process. National security does it, its team. There is a domestic team. There is an economic team. So when the CIA probably said, no, you cannot use this, everybody's eyes in State, Defense, NSE, everybody's eyes saw that it was not valid. That is the same team that edits and previews and reviews the President's speech in January. So everybody who was participatory in the October speech was the same body sitting in the room participating in the State of the Union speech.

I think again people this weekend, for whom George Tenet seems to be wearing the laundry, or they are throwing him under the truck, remember, this was not good enough 2 weeks later for the Secretary of State who said, and I am quoting, "This is crap, I am not going to use this." The Secretary of State threw it out.

We had George Tenet sitting behind them at the U.N. 2 weeks after the State of the Union. They knew it was not good then. If it was not good enough for the Secretary of State 2 weeks after the State of the Union, it was not good enough for the President in October, but somehow it has become good enough for the President at the State of the Union, a speech on the doorstep of a war where the world was hanging on every word.

Mr. DELAHUNT. It is as if the right hand did not know what the left hand was doing. It is as if nobody is in charge. That is the only reasonable conclusion that one can infer from this murky explanation, this passing almost a legalistic argument.

Mr. EMANUEL. Remember, the same people that wrote that speech were participating in crafting this policy, and they have now set out a course of \$1 billion a week of occupation, \$50 billion a year of U.S. taxpayer money for the occupation and reconstruction of Iraq. Yet when we talk this week about increasing funding for Head Start, we are told no money. Last week when we voted and there was a 6-year freeze put on Pell Grants, college assistance for people trying to open up the doors for higher education for themselves, we are told there are no resources. Yet we will be asked later on to commit resources to the occupation and reconstruction of Iraq to the tune of \$50

billion. Yet here at home, we will be told there are no resources for health care or infrastructure.

The gentleman may say that the right hand did not know what the left hand was doing; I wonder if anybody knows what they are planning in Iraq and what they are planning here at home when it comes to our own economic development. The American people from World War II forward have been tremendously generous around the world, and yet they cannot continue to be asked to be that generous when their own needs and hopes and dreams for their own children are being denied, whether that is in the area of health care, investment in our environment, or our own economic development.

I yield to the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. Abercrombie).

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. Emanuel) have asked some questions not just for rhetorical effect, but which throw some light on some very interesting aspects of this whole dilemma, which the Secretary of Defense says is over with, which the National Security Adviser says we have to move on from. I am asking why. Who committed these forgeries? I keep hearing about it. I keep asking the questions. We cannot get anybody in front of us to answer the questions. Who committed these forgeries? The word "forgery," the phrase is used all the time; but there does not seem to be the slightest inclination to find out what was at stake. Did they appear by spontaneous combustion? Was this an immaculate conception of forgery? I do not think so. There were reasons for it.

Now we see the aspect of the Sunday talk shows. They are very interesting these days. Turn off the sound and watch the eyes and the expressions of the people who are speaking. Just watch that. Get the body language down, and Members will see the tension that is there because they do not want to answer the question who benefited from having this kind of an observation in that speech by the President. It has nothing to do with 16 words or a single sentence. It has everything to do with the reasons behind that being recommended to the President.

This is not an accusation against the President. We are not going to determine that down here tonight as to what the President did or did not do with respect to that speech. The President is having a difficult enough time as it is other than to say it was somebody else's fault. That is something that we can take up with the President when it comes to election time, but that is not the issue here.

The issue here is who and what was behind the insistence that that sentence and that that observation go into that speech. I think the answer is out there. I think what is involved in that answer has to do with who benefited from it.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I think it is absolutely essential that the American people receive the answers to that question and to all the other questions that have been offered. Earlier this evening the gentleman from the other side of the aisle mentioned the talk shows and the statements that are being made have a political context to them.

We have been here, as the gentleman well knows, for 5 weeks posing these questions. This is not motivated by Democratic intent to secure political advantage. If we did not do this, we would be abrogating our responsibility within our system to find the truth. It is about a search for the truth, and I dare say it is now time for the President of the United States and Congress to come together to create an independent commission, not one that has partisan overtones, but one, for example, that served this country well under the leadership of two former Senators, a Republican from New Hampshire, Warren Rudman, and a Democratic from Colorado, Gary Hart, who I think made an extraordinary contribution by a year's worth of hearings, even more, which ended up with a product that tragically predicted what occurred on September 11. We need that because I do not want to hear on this floor accusations about partisanship. This is about the future of America. That is what this is about. This ought not be about politics. Let us depoliticize that now and let the Republican and the Democratic leadership with the White House create an independent commission to reveal to the American people the truth.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I agree with the gentleman; and before we go any further, we have been joined by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee), and

I yield to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee).

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly concur with the suggestion by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt) that we need a bipartisan, independent investigation of this. The reason that I have joined this effort tonight, and I have delayed doing so for a few weeks in the hopes that the administration would be more forthcoming about this intelligence failure, but what inspired me to come here tonight are the comments of Condoleezza Rice and Mr. Rumsfeld who said this is the end of the story; we can forget about these issues.

I am here to say this is not the end of the story; this is maybe the end of the beginning of the story. The type of questions that Americans are asking tonight as to how a fraudulent, forged document got into the address of the leader of the free world to the people of this country and to the world and to the House of Representatives, how that happened is just one of the questions. I know many of us have been hearing a lot of talk and dialogue about how that happened. And it was as predictable as rain in Seattle that George Tenet was going to get thrown overboard by this administration at some point. It is amazing it took so long.

The point I want to make tonight is that I do not think we should get seized on whether this was 16 words or 16,000 words. The fact of the matter is that there is a whole boatload of other questions that this independent Republican and Democratic commission needs answered, and I want to pose just a couple.

The first question this commission needs to answer is why was the President successful in convincing over 50 percent of the Americans that Saddam Hussein was behind the

attack on September 11 and was in cahoots with al Qaeda when in fact the intelligence had enormous amounts of information that that was not true?

Why did the President of the United States in urging America to start a preemptive war not level with the American people to tell the American people all of the intelligence, not just the selective intelligence? And let me just mention one fact. As reported in The New York Times on June 9, 2003, two of the highest-ranking leaders of al Qaeda in American custody have told the CIA in separate interrogations that the terrorist organization did not work jointly with the Iraqi government of Saddam Hussein according to several intelligence officials. Abu Zubaydah, a Qaeda planner and recruiter until his capture in March 2002, told questioners last year before the war that the idea of working with Mr. Hussein's government had been discussed among Qaeda leaders, but had been rejected. The same statement came from Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who insisted that the group did not work with Mr. Hussein.

Do Members recall President Bush telling the American people that the two highest operatives in our custody in Guantanamo Bay had told our intelligence services that they had nothing to do with Saddam Hussein? I do not remember that information being disclosed to the American people, nor do I remember the President quoting Greg Fieldman, a former State Department intelligence official, who said, "There was no significant pattern of cooperation between Iraq and the al Qaeda terrorist operations." Intelligence agencies agreed on a "lack of meaningful connection to al Qaeda" and said so to the White House and Congress. I do not recall the President sharing that intelligence information with the United States or the world.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I do not know if the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee) is familiar with the report that was printed last week in The New York Times that a senior intelligence agent, Iraqi intelligence agent by the name of Ahmed Al-Ani was arrested. I imagine the gentleman does remember, however, that some suggested he had met in Prague and the Czech Republic with Mohammed Atta, who was the ring leader in the attack on the United States back on 9/11. That appeared in the media and administration officials said that that evidence held up. That alleged meeting occurred in April 2001, 5 months before 9/11.

Since then, most intelligence agencies, both American and allies, have cast doubt on the credibility of that purported meeting; but it was used by administration officials to argue there was an alliance of some sort between Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein. And of course we all know that the rationale for the attack on Iraq was based on two premises: Saddam Hussein had in his possession weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons or close to achieving the development or the possession of nuclear weapons, and that he could provide and was purportedly inclined to use terrorist organizations such as al Qaeda for the use of those weapons against the United States.

So that theory, as the gentleman suggests, was crucial, that fact of the alleged meeting was crucial to that particular theory. But again, there is serious doubt as to whether that meeting occurred.

It is interesting to note that both the FBI and the CIA investigated and could find no evidence whatsoever that at the pertinent times did Mr. Atta leave the United States to go to the Czech Republic for that meeting. However, it did serve the purpose of creating a sense of urgency that quick action had to be taken against Iraq.

Mr. EMANUEL. If the gentleman would yield, I would say there is a very legitimate need to look into and acquire through the rearview mirror how did we get to this point, what were the justifications; and I too want to add my voice, although there has been a lot of controversy over the weekend about how did the sentence get into the President's speech. It is very important that we not lose sight, now that we are there, how was it that we had no plan for this occupation.

Time Magazine reports that NATO allies, important allies who have been with us in Afghanistan and other missions in Bosnia and Kosovo, will not join us in Iraq. They do not see a U.N. legitimacy for the effort or plan for the occupation. There are important countries who have traditionally been shoulder to shoulder with America, were in Gulf War I, were in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, every U.S. mission to free the world of a tyrant of some nature, have decided not to join this effort and will not postwar join this effort.

So as we look back, I think it is important to look forward. Again, I would remind my colleagues that in our plan for the reconstruction of Iraq we cite 20,000 units of housing for Iraq, yet the President's budget has 5,000 units of housing for America.

The President's reconstruction of Iraq calls for 13 million Iraqis, half the Iraqi population, to get universal health care. Yet 42 million Americans work full time with no health care and no plan for health care by this administration.

There are 4 million Iraqi children who will be provided early childhood education. This week on the House floor we will debate the Head Start bill. 58,000 children in America will be cut from Head Start. 1.2 million will never be given the opportunity who are eligible for Head Start to go to Head Start.

12,500 schools in Iraq are planned for reconstruction and rebuilding with all books and supplies. Yet here in the United States, teachers must take out of their own salary the wages to pay for books and supplies. We have to give them a tax credit to reimburse them what should be provided by the school authority.

The Umm Qasr port in Iraq is built from start to finish, from top to bottom; yet the Corps of Engineers is being cut by 10 percent here in the United States.

So as we rebuild Iraq, we reconstruct Iraq, America is in the process of its own deconstruction. If we do not have an economic plan for America that is beyond what has been provided and we do not have a plan for Iraq's reconstruction that includes our allies,

I would remind my colleagues that in both Bosnia and Kosovo, we had a plan for the occupation and we had allies. The two things that are missing today, a plan and allies.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. The gentleman's analysis brings forward again the question then: Who benefits from this reconstruction in Iraq? While we cannot have schools built in this country, while we cannot have hospitals paid for, when we cannot get health care for our people, who benefits? Who is getting the contracts for this? Who is getting the no-bid contracts? Where is the money coming from? Supposedly from the oil revenues. Oil revenues then will be passing right out of Iraq and down to Texas, to Haliburton Company, to some of the other construction companies that are benefiting from hundreds of millions of dollars that are now being allocated into their pockets directly for this reconstruction, not in the United States but in Iraq.

Mr. EMANUEL. My colleague asks who is benefiting. I do not have the answer to that, but I do have the answer for who is paying. That is the United States taxpayer.

Again, I want to remind our colleagues, for 60 years the American people have showed their unbelievable generosity. Every time they have been called upon to serve or to contribute, they have done it. Yet this is the one time in history that while we deny American people the access to education, health care and improved investment in their environment and economic development, we are asking them to call forth in a tremendous effort not seen since World War II to make an investment in another country's economic future when we have told them to shorten the horizons for their own children, to shorten their own homes and dreams for what they can provide their family. Yet we are calling upon them to once again show their generosity to Iraq that talks about a health care plan, an economic development plan, an education plan for Iraq and yet those same agenda items that we talk about here at home, we do not have.

As we know, a number of my colleagues have signed on, I have my own bill called the American Parity Act that says whatever we invest in Iraq, whatever goal we set in Iraq, we have to set here at home equally. Whether that comes from half the population getting health care, half the schools being reconstructed and modernized, teachers being paid, 4 million kids in early childhood education, reconstruction of a port for economic development purposes, we have got to do that agenda item here at home. Otherwise, the generosity of the American people showed over the last 60 years will come short and rightfully so.

Mr. HOEFFEL. I thank the gentleman from Illinois for pointing out the inconsistency of our admirable generosity to those overseas and our moral obligation to help rebuild a nation, a country that we had to use military power against but our failure to live up to that same moral obligation to our own citizens.

Let me ask my colleagues to respond to what we would like to see happen in Iraq. There are 8 or 10 or 15 things perhaps that we might recommend. I would suggest one, and perhaps my colleagues can make further comment.

I think we need to start with a full explanation by the President of his vision for what is happening, for the costs that he believes will be necessary to complete the reconstruction, the timetable for that, the number of U.S. military forces that would be needed.

The President needs to come clean. He has a growing credibility gap in my view because of the use and possible misuse of the intelligence leading up to the war, the statements made with such certainty that we are now learning the White House was being advised by intelligence agencies that things were not so certain at all and by the fact, as we have commented earlier tonight, that since the President, as our colleague from Illinois says, flew onto that aircraft carrier and declared victory, that 30 American soldiers have been assassinated and 84, as the gentleman points out, have died in some fashion since military victory has been declared. We need to know what the President thinks. We need to know what he believes will be necessary. He has got to tell the American people what is coming. That would be my suggestion for just a fundamental need.

Mr. EMANUEL. I want to say one thing before I have to go, and our colleague from Massachusetts noted this. That is not a different question than the Republican Senator, RICHARD LUGAR, had asked, the head of the Foreign Relations Committee. This again, I think it is important, we have people with different views on the war, but these are questions not from Democrats and

Republicans, these are questions as God-loving and people who love their country who want to see America in front of the world stand tall are expecting. So the question you asked again is not a Democrat trying to get partisan political gain, it is a question that the Republican Senator, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, asked, questions that another Senator, Republican from Nebraska, equally asked. This is not inquiry for political gain. We all now, regardless of party, are vested in our success and bringing as many of our men and women home as we can safely as soon as possible.

So your question I would also like to note so nobody who may tune in and turn on the television right now and think we are trying to get partisan or political advantage, note that these are similar questions that Republicans have asked, people of all stripes, from all backgrounds and all economic incomes and regardless of their political affiliations saying we need to get level here. Where is it we are going? How are we getting there? Whether it is an inquiry to what happened in the past but also an inquiry into the future. These are not Democratic questions. These are questions that people who love their country think need to be answered.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Again in furtherance of what the gentleman from Illinois has indicated and others here this evening, these are the same questions that many of us asked of President Clinton. This is not something that has suddenly sprung into being. And they were asked in a bipartisan basis, too.

My colleagues will remember that some of us, Republicans and Democrats alike, had these same questions for President Clinton with respect to Kosovo, with respect to the

activities that took place in the Balkans. We had these same questions of ourselves as to what was expected of us. I think that as a result, what the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Hoeffel) has indicated is perhaps a start for us in terms of the questions that need to be asked, I think, needs a bit of reiteration.

I find it very strange that when President Carter was in office, people in the media, particularly Nightline, would come on every evening, day 292 of the hostages and the number of hostages that were still in Iran, on day 292, three, four, five, 300, whatever it was. Yet we go now to casualties, deaths, we are not talking about those that are maimed, and this casual dismissal by some of the, I am sorry to say, some of the highest officials in the administration now of, well, this is all over, intelligence changes from day to day. You never know what it is from day to day, this almost sarcastic dismissal of these questions.

There are young people out at Walter Reed right now who may not have been killed, a casualty in that sense, but they are surely there as casualties, with loss of limbs and a lifetime in front of them of having to deal with the pain and suffering of grievous wounds. Perhaps Nightline might take up this idea. It is day, what number, since the President said that the war was over.

This is not something that we said. This is not something that other people said. This is something the President declared, and some of us have been challenged on our patriotism and challenged on our support for troops because we are not sufficiently quiet, because we do not acknowledge that the so-called ending of the war really ended.

It does not end when somebody dies. It does not end when somebody is grievously wounded. It does not end when a parent or loved one has to try and understand and we have to explain when we go home why the war is over but the killing goes on and the maiming goes on.

So I think we are going to need to have some accounting as to how many days past the end of the war the killing and the maiming goes on and what those numbers are. Because those numbers are real. They are not philosophical abstractions. They are not merely the recitation of numbers from an Office of Management and Budget or a Congressional Budget Office, some entity, some institution that has no reality to the mothers and fathers and the loved ones of those who have to bear the brunt of the policies that we in the government of the United States are bringing forward to the people of the United States as being in the strategic interests of this Nation.

So I think that the questions that are being asked are not just questions about the past and how something happened but to try and understand what took place in the past so that we do not continue to make the same mistakes and the same observations that lead to this kind of grievous result.

Mr. DELAHUNT. The gentleman indicated that some, and very few, have questioned the patriotism of those who ask the questions that are being posed here tonight. It is my

feeling and my position that it would be a failure, it would be unpatriotic not to pose these questions. And as others have indicated, this is not about partisanship. None of us here tonight and in the course of the past 4 or 5 weeks have indulged in partisan sniping. But I do believe that the President is at a particular moment in terms of his administration that he should intervene and stop the sniping that is occurring within the administration, among individuals and agencies.

I mentioned earlier that a senior Iraqi intelligence agent who was arrested last week, who purportedly had that information meeting with Mohammad Atta, in that same report in the New York Times there was an attack on the CIA by Mr. Richard Perle who currently serves on the Pentagon's Defense Policy Board. I know the gentleman from Hawaii is aware that he resigned as chairman of the board because of potential conflict of interest concerns that he had since many of his private business clients stood to profit from contracts dealing with the reconstruction of Iraq.

It should be noted that Mr. Perle is considered a leader among the so-called neo-conservative bloc in the administration. He also has close ties with certain Iraqi exiles, such as Ahmed Chalabi. And it is true, and this should be stated very clearly, he advocated in an article that he wrote for the New York Times shortly after September 11 that the U.S. must strike at Saddam Hussein. So he is clearly predisposed towards the policy that was effected by this administration. My understanding is he was one of the most significant proponents of the war in Iraq.

Now, however, with the capture of this individual, Al-Ani, he fears that if the CIA conducts the interrogation that they will play down evidence that the alleged meeting with Mohammad Atta ever occurred. With all due respect to Mr. Perle, that is a very serious charge that impugns the integrity of men and women in the CIA that risk their life in behalf of their country every day of the year.

Of course, the CIA properly responded in my opinion that they need to be presented with something other than the opinions of Mr. Perle and his suspicions; and they claim, and I have to agree, that he sounds to be more predisposed to a certain conclusion than anyone they are familiar with.

This quote that I read was he is just shopping for an interrogator who will cook the books to his liking. We cannot have that sniping going on. It is time for the President to take charge and to intervene, be forthcoming, reveal all of the information. Presumably the interview with Mr. Al-Ani has occurred already. Let the American people know. Maybe he did have a meeting with Mohammed Atta; maybe he did not. But it is time to let the American people know.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I want to answer the gentleman from Pennsylvania's (Mr. Hoeffel) original question about what we should do in Iraq now, with two points.

One, I think it is important for the President to clear the decks to restore our credibility on this issue because our ability to act in Iraq is negatively affected by this credibility

issue, and many of us believe and I believe that the best thing the President could do in that regard is to embrace a bipartisan review of the intelligence failure here. Having a respected Republican like Warren Rudman or someone else run a commission to have sort of a referee to figure out what happened here is a lot better than to have the flacks at various agencies throwing grenades at each other in the newspapers.

If we really want to find out here why forgeries ended up at the State of the Union address, why we did not get the straight scoop about the intelligence coming out of Iraq, why the President told us there was no doubt, and that was his word, no doubt that Iraq had some of the most lethal weapons ever devised by man and we cannot find a thimbleful to date of mustard gas, the best way is through an independent commission; and this is good for the administration, not just good for the people. And this is not a debate. We may find some of these weapons to date. That still may occur. This is not a debate even about the propriety of the war. Even if one thinks the war was justified about humanity and civil rights in Iraq, they have still got to join us in a bipartisan belief that truth from the American President is the most precious commodity we have in international affairs. We have all got to be joining that in a bipartisan manner; so I say clearing the decks first.

But the second issue, if I can, it is just imperative that we engage allies in this effort, in this maybe 2-, maybe 3-, maybe 4-, maybe 5-year effort to restore order and some sense of civility in Iraq, and I would encourage the administration to shuck aside its unilateral approach that unfortunately they have adopted for so long in Iraq and welcome our allies to get in there to shoulder some of this burden. Iraq is not a prize. It is not a glorious prize for the American people. It is a burden. We still have people not coming home from Iraq, and that burden ought to be shared with every nation in the civilized world rather than just Americans. And to date, unfortunately, this administration still has not been willing to embrace allies to get them in there taking sniper fire instead of our neighbors' kids, and I hope we will see it that way.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, it is time to pick up on that to end grudge diplomacy. Let us get past that. Let us move on. Let us understand that the only way we can bring stability to Iraq without breaking the bank and without putting at risk the lives of American military personnel is to bring in our traditional allies, whether they be the Germans or the French. Let us put that in the past. Otherwise, we are going to see these deficits that I referred to earlier balloon into numbers that will absolutely be a drag of incredible magnitude on the American economy.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, on that point in reference to what the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee) said and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Hoeffel) observed to kick off this discussion, as the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Hoeffel) can see, his question was so pertinent that we have not gotten much further in it, and for good reason, because it requires some explication. The problem is here, if we do not do this, is a credibility gap. What will the President be able to say about North Korea? What will he be able to say about the Philippines? What will he be able to say about Colombia? What will he be able to say further about Afghanistan?

Afghanistan seems to have disappeared; yet I know there were two attacks yesterday, one on the American base and one on U.N. personnel. I do not believe anybody was killed, but who knows? Now we are told there are more attacks in Iraq than necessarily are being reported. I suppose that gets quotidian now. If they are on the 11 o'clock news at night, they have got fires to report, they have assaults to report or basketball players or the latest boxer to embarrass himself or something of that nature. They hardly have time to fit in anymore how many people got killed today. It is almost a loss leader in the news.

And so if we do not have some answers here, if the President does not take control and stop being dismissive of these questions as merely revising history or some other sarcastic observation, he is not going to be able nor will the administration be able to convince others who may find it in their interest to join with us in other circumstances. He will not be able to find anyone who is going to be willing to take us at our word. That is why this is so serious. It is way beyond partisan. Other people will occupy these seats down here. Other people will come to occupy our place. We are here only as long as the faith and trust of the people in our constituencies are willing to put us here. No one owns a seat in this Congress. No one owns a seat at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue either. We are only as good as the credibility with our own people before we can hope to influence others.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments. I think our time is getting short. Any final comments from the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee) or the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt)?

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I will just follow the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. Abercrombie) by saying that when I first heard the President in response to attacks on U.S. soldiers in the way that he does suggest bring them on, I remember wanting to say to the President that what we should be doing, President Bush, is to bring allies on to this coalition and make it a genuine coalition of democracies to assist in terms of the reconstruction so that American taxpayers do not bear the burden almost exclusively and that American men and women who have served admirably can come home.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments. I thank the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. Abercrombie). The Iraq Watch is going to be hard at work. I thank my colleagues for being part of this. We will be back next week to ask more questions, to seek more information, and to try to better educate our colleagues in the Congress and the American people regarding the challenges of our role in Iraq.