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The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. Miller of Michigan). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Hoeffel) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Madam Speaker, the Iraq Watch is back tonight. We look to have an interesting discussion in store for the next hour. We have been holding these hours of debate on Iraq for the past 2 months or so, once a week, in which we gather on the floor to talk about our policies in Iraq, suggest changes, as we would recommend changes in those policies, and ask questions to try to learn for the Congress and for the American people what the administration's plans are in Iraq.

I would like to open up briefly this evening with a brief report on the appearance by Ambassador Paul Bremer before the Committee on International Relations on September 25. He came before the committee to justify the administration's request for \$87 billion of military occupation and reconstruction dollars in Iraq.

I asked the Ambassador, who I think is a fine public servant who is doing the best he can, a career diplomat, one of America's finest, but I believe his political masters are making it difficult for him to give us the information which I believe Congress is entitled to. I asked the Ambassador when we would get timetables and information and when would the President level with the American people about plans to internationalize the security challenges and the reconstruction challenges in Iraq, when we would get timetables and plans for giving the Iraqi government back to the Iraqis, and when would we get an exit strategy; when would the administration tell us when they believed we could bring our troops home and what standards we would want to achieve in Iraq before making that decision, and how would we know if we were succeeding or failing with those goals.

The Ambassador could not answer those questions. He said in his opening statement, "We have a definite plan with milestone and dates," and I asked him about that. First off, he was only talking about how to spend the \$87 billion. But, secondly, that definite plan with milestone and dates that he referred to in his opening statement is not yet available for Congress. He may have the milestones and dates, the administration may know what the milestones and dates are, but he could not tell the Committee on International Relations, or any other committee in Congress, what those milestones and dates are. So it was not really a successful explanation to our committee about what is coming down the pike and what the administration plans in Iraq.

He did say with some pride that 61 countries have pledged their support for reconstruction in Iraq. I asked him how much that pledge amount totaled, and he said \$1.5 billion. Now \$1.5 billion is a lot of money, but from 61 countries it is not much of a contribution. If we compare it to what we have spent and will spend in Iraq, it is less than 1 percent of what America is spending on the military occupation and on the reconstruction. And if we only add up what America is spending on reconstruction, what we have already spent and what the President is asking, this \$1.5 billion from 61 countries is only about 5 percent of what we will spend and have spent on reconstruction.

Clearly the administration has not received from the international community anything close to what we ought to get in terms of their financial support for reconstruction and for what we are trying to do in the name of freedom and liberty in Iraq.

I would suggest that the heavy-handed diplomacy, the arrogance, the unilateral approach of this administration has resulted in our allies and international organizations not yet stepping up to the plate.

I would simply say that I believe that the \$87 billion needs to be handled separately by the Congress; and I would suggest that while we need to grant that money for the support of our troops in the field, that the part of that request, some \$21 billion that is designed for reconstruction costs in Iraq, should be handled differently. I believe we ought to provide those dollars as loans to Iraq and not as outright grants to be repaid by Iraqi oil revenue. Everyone believes within 2 or 3 years the Iraqi oil industry will be generating at least \$2 billion a year in revenue, hopefully within a few years up to \$3 billion to \$5 billion in revenue. And Iraq has the ability to repay loans, and I believe our

reconstruction aid should be in the form of loans. Some have said that this would only put Iraq further in debt, and international organizations and our allies have already lent \$200 billion to Iraq when Saddam Hussein was in power and they would not take kindly to us creating more debt.

Well, if we give this money as loans, it is my view that we should be the first in line for repayment. If the French and Germans and Russians do not like that and feel they have a higher claim on repayment of the money they loaned to Saddam Hussein, let them find Saddam Hussein and ask him for the money. We are the ones that pushed him out of office and have made that investment. I believe we should not put our country deeper into debt, and it should be loans, not grants.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt), a senior member of the Committee on International Relations.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time, and I think it is ironic when I hear representatives of the administration say we do not want to load down the Iraqi people with debt. Well, I wish that they would share the same concern for the American people because recent reports in the media indicate that here in the United States poverty has increased dramatically. More than 1 million Americans, an additional 1 million Americans are now below the poverty line. That is a historical first, the median income, the median household income, that is halfway if you count all of the households in the United States, right at the 50 percent mark, the median income for an American family has gone down for 2 consecutive years. Ironically, there has been a significant increase in the number of millionaires. That went up some 14 percent. Of course, they have benefited from the recent series of tax cuts put forth by the President and enacted by this Republican Congress.

But debt, the deficit, is breaking all historical records. This year it will exceed \$500 billion, and we are not talking about this particular supplemental, this so-called war supplemental. So when we talk about debt, let us remember the American people because we are going to have to answer to those people when they ask us who pays the bill. Well, it is you folks and your children and grandchildren, and possibly your great grandchildren because while we were projecting a \$5.6 trillion surplus, we are now looking at a \$3.3 trillion public debt.

Let me tell you what the cost of that \$87 billion will do to the communities that the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Meehan) and I both represent. The \$87 billion in additional war spending will cost Massachusetts taxpayers \$2.6 billion. If that money were spent on other priorities in our home State, it could pay for \$334 million for school construction resulting in over 8,000 new jobs; almost 1,900 new affordable housing units creating 4,500 jobs; \$445 million for local and State roads and bridges, creating 10,000 new jobs; and 9,300 new firefighters; and health care coverage for 150,000 people in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts who are not currently receiving it. That is what it means to our home State, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Strickland).

Mr. STRICKLAND. Madam Speaker, I just want to elaborate on what the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt) has said. He talked about the increase in poverty. In the New York Times today, "Big Increase Seen in People Lacking Health Insurance, Largest Rise in a Decade." The number of people without health insurance shot up last year by 2.4 million, the largest increase in a decade, raising the total to 43.6 million Americans without health insurance.

We have a crisis in this country. Unemployment, health care, prescription drug coverage, an exploding deficit, an ever-increasing debt, we are not building our roads, our bridges, our water and sewer systems, our schools, our VA hospitals, our medical clinics; and yet the President seems so determined to take resources from the American taxpayer and send them to Iraq. And I will tell Members something else which concerns me, and that is the possibility of profiteering off this war. I think we will talk about some of the contracts that have been let a little later tonight, but it troubles me that some people are getting rich off this war. We have young soldiers over there without protective armor. About 40,000 are without the best protection we can provide.

Madam Speaker, when they get wounded and come back to Walter Reed Hospital or the Bethesda Naval Hospital and they spend a week or 2 weeks or a month there, when they leave, they are presented with a bill totaling \$8.10 a day for the food they have consumed. What has become of us. We have gotten our priorities really confused. That is why I am glad we are talking about this. The American people need to know and I look forward to the gentleman's further elaboration on what is happening to the money we have already appropriated.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Madam Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, we talked earlier about the support that France and Russia and Germany provided Saddam Hussein. That particular chart represents the support that previous Republican administrations provided to Saddam Hussein from 1982 to 1990. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comments of the gentleman, and we look forward to hearing more about the chart. We will now turn to the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. Abercrombie).

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Madam Speaker, what we have attempted to do over these weeks is to bring the hammer of truth down on the anvil of inquiry, and that is the object of these discussions. People have sometimes asked me, and I know they have asked other Members, why is it that we have these sessions late at night during what is called Special Orders. And because we are used to it, we may take it for granted that

everyone knows what that is. The people who may be perusing through the various channels on their television set may come upon C-SPAN, and they see the regular order of business is concluded for the day, and now we are in Special Orders.

What that means is in this people's House, membership of which is restricted, restricted to those who have been elected, not appointed, elected by their constituents across this country, the faith and trust of their constituents have put all of us on this floor.

We are here under Special Orders because this is our opportunity to speak to our colleagues and to the Nation about those matters which we consider most important and which we may not have had the opportunity during the regular course of business to discuss at length or in-depth. Unfortunately, as I have mentioned over and over again, we are dependent on the people of this country, on the people of our Nation, to pay attention to what may be said here, not because we necessarily know more than others, but because we have been privileged to occupy these positions and accept this responsibility and meet the obligations of carrying forward an inquiry for the Nation at large, so that we can determine what the best course of action is. Over and over, we reach out to the country here on this most important of issues, our Iraq Watch, because the media, and you see my arm reaching back to those who cannot see it, the galleries are here for a free press to join us, to observe us and they are never here. They are never here because they are occupied with those matters which they consider most important. They are chasing after a circus out in California, they are trying to determine whether or not they can start a fight, a verbal fight, some verbal fisticuffs between politicians, they are preoccupied with process and politics is entertainment. But that is not what our charge is, and that is why we are here at 11 o'clock at night on the east coast, not because we have nothing else to do in terms of our responsibilities and our commitment, but meeting our most important responsibility, which is to reach out to the citizens of this country to let them know that their Members here in the People's House are focusing in on those items not just of interest, but of most immediate concern to their welfare and to the welfare of peace throughout the world. And so we meet here tonight, and we meet here every week, determined to bring forward from our inquiry not just a measure of truth, but hopefully a sense of insight and to bring forward the facts, as best we know them, to let people draw their judgments.

And so the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt) has here this evening a chart. Maybe we cannot all see it on the television screen, so he is going to explicate for us what is on that chart, and what it means. The reason that we are doing it is because we have a deep and abiding desire to share with the entire citizenry of the country our profound concern that we are moving in the wrong direction. The fact is that there is no higher degree of patriotism, especially when you think your country is moving in the wrong direction and the price of that moving in the wrong direction is the blood and grievous wounding of our young people. We have to speak out under those circumstances, and that is why we are here this evening. I am particularly pleased to be joined as the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt) indicated by his colleague, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Meehan), and a former president of the Connecticut State Senate and now the ranking member, the senior Democrat on our Committee on House Administration, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. Larson), joining with us tonight. They are here, I think, at this stage to back up the issue, the issue at hand which is can we put forward a policy and analyze the circumstances under which these policies are presently being put forward by the administration, can we put forward an analysis and analyze these policies in such a manner as to give some direction that will see that this comes to an early end?

Mr. HOEFFEL. I thank the gentleman for his eloquent comments. I am happy to recognize the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Meehan).

Mr. MEEHAN. I compliment my colleague the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Hoeffel) for his leadership and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt) and the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. Abercrombie). We were at a House Armed Services Committee meeting tonight and the press was not there, either. We were

looking to mark up House Resolution 364, which is a resolution of inquiry that I know that the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt) is familiar with, introduced and cosponsored by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. Wexler) and many of us cosponsored that, including myself, that would ask the President to send to the House of Representatives a report prepared by the Joint Chiefs of Staff that has been widely reported in the press entitled Operation Iraqi Freedom, Strategic Lessons Learned. These are documents about the reconstruction and security of postwar Iraq. This report was compiled by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff with interviews from senior U.S. military officials, including Army General Tommy Franks, that outlines the deficiency in the Bush administration's postwar planning for Iraq.

According to a Washington Times article that appeared a few weeks ago, this report includes a scathing analysis of the Bush administration's lack of planning for postwar Iraq. No matter which side people were on at the resolution that was voted on a year ago, all of us, I

think, said that the challenge was not necessarily in the military mission in Iraq that all of us as members of the Committee on Armed Services knew could be completed because we had prepared for it for 10 years, the question was whether or not we were prepared for the postwar Iraq. I think the evidence is overwhelmingly, in fact even the Bush administration has acknowledged that the stabilization and reconstruction of Iraq is turning out to be a disaster.

Nobody can seriously doubt that the world is a better place without Saddam Hussein in power. But I think the evidence is clear that if we are not careful, and if we do not ask questions, if we do not have inquiries, we risk turning Iraq into a breeding ground for terrorism. According to the Washington Times report, prepared by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, this is a comprehensive analysis of the Bush administration's postwar strategy. Everyone on this floor today knows that this administration botched the planning for how to deal with postwar Iraq.

The only question we face now is, how can we fix it before more damage is done? There is good reason to think that this report, if made public, would help us to do that, because it looks at the planning for the war and its aftermath through interviews with senior military officials. The report is in final form. According to the Washington Times, it was stamped that it is a final draft. I cannot understand why we would not get a copy, why the Committee on Armed Services would not get a copy, before we decide how to handle the Bush administration's request for yet another \$87 billion to secure and rebuild Iraq. With everything we know now about the absence of intelligence on weapons of mass destruction and the failure to plan for a significant resistance, I do not think the Bush administration is in any position now to ask us to trust them to give us the information that we need. All of us on the Committee on Armed Services have a responsibility to the Republic, to the Constitution, to get to the bottom of the Bush administration's planning on Iraq and what went wrong.

As the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. Abercrombie) would attest to, more than 6 months have gone by since the Joint Chiefs of Staff initiated this report. Three months have gone by since the draft was handed over to the Department of Defense stamped final draft. And it has been 1 month since the Washington Times has reported this. I do not see any reason why the Pentagon should not be able to give the Congress of the United States this report. We need it now, before we make any decisions about another \$87 billion as we are cutting back, this administration, cutting back on health care for Americans, cutting back on veterans' services, \$1.8 billion to make sure that we meet our commitment to veterans across this country, cutting back on Head Start and other programs. We ought to know what this report says before we move further.

I was disappointed at what the Committee on Armed Services did tonight because we reported that bill out with an ought-not-to-pass the bill. I do not know why the American people do not have a right to know what is in this report that the Joint Chiefs of Staff have put together. But instead there is more stonewalling, we do not want to tell the truth, we do not want to let it out, we want to keep it secret. If there is anything that all of us

Members of Congress have come to understand it is we have a responsibility to make sure that this administration hides behind the truth no longer.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Now that everyone understands what the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Meehan) was referring to in terms of what is called an adverse reaction, an adverse recommendation, I want to make sure that everybody understands what is going to come to the floor, and I think the Committee on International Relations had to deal with this issue the same way.

What is coming out of the Committee on Armed Services and what is coming out of the Committee on International Relations, if I understand correctly, is the recommendation to all the Members when it comes to the floor to vote down, vote down a request for information that is vital to our understanding the direction that we should take with respect to Iraq and the post-war activities therein.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Just trust us. That is what the administration is saying. Just trust us.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Madam Speaker, more than that, there is going to be a recommendation to vote down. That is the recommendation. To me it seems that it would have been a far more straight-up approach to simply say, no, we are not going to do it and take it from there. But I know this is going to strike the American people as an awfully strange way of doing business, but I hope that the media will pay some attention, that we will be able to bring attention hopefully through Iraq Watch tonight to say tune in, listen in, pay close attention when this vote comes up in the House because for the first time in my memory, and, in fact, next year I will be 30 years in public service and I cannot ever recall an instance in which a legislative body which is bound to determine what the policy of the Nation should be or what the State should be or whatever legislative jurisdiction that it has actually is asked to turn down the opportunity to receive information that can help it make a judgment.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. Abercrombie) for his comments.

Before yielding to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. Larson), I want to compliment the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Meehan) for waging this fight with the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. Larson) in the Committee on Armed Services, and inform them that the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt) and I waged the same fight in the House Committee on International Relations with the same pathetic response and result, that it was approved with a negative recommendation to the floor.

I share the gentleman from Hawaii's (Mr. Abercrombie) outrage at that. And the Republican leadership of the committee and the rank and file on the committee took great delight in saying to the Democrats they just have to ask questions and they can get answers and come back later this afternoon. This was last Thursday, September 25, and ask Paul Bremer and they will get all the information they need about the administration's plans in Iraq. And as I said at the beginning of Iraq Watch tonight, we went back and asked Mr. Bremer questions, and we did not get answers at all. It was just more, We do not know, we have got our plans and our timetables but we will not tell you what they are, and it is a sad day for Congress when we cannot get information that we need to make a decision.

Mr. MEEHAN. Madam Speaker, there was an amendment by the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. Spratt) tonight before the Committee on Armed Services, and I know the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. Larson) can attest to this, where all we are asking is how have they spent the \$80 billion we have already sent to them. Where has this money gone? There is a controversy around the country because some leaders in this body and the other body have said the money went for this or the money went for that. Tell us what has happened to the money. They will not tell us. They do not want to tell us. The gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. Larson) was

there for that debate on that amendment. They do not want to justify the \$80 billion they have already spent. They want to pass another \$87 billion before they even justify where the first \$80 billion went.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. Larson).

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania and the gentlemen from Massachusetts and Hawaii who have been integral in organizing these nightly hearings and providing the American public with an opportunity they otherwise would not receive to hear about what is going on.

I am fortunate, aside from serving on the Committee on Armed Services, to have recently traveled to Iraq with the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Murtha), probably this body's most learned individual with regard to foreign policy and military issues, especially as they relate to intelligence. We were very disturbed this evening to find in a partisan manner that we were unable, as the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Hoeffel) has indicated, frustrated, in fact, by the fact that we can just not even get information to come forward in this body. Even more disheartening is the fact that apparently The Washington Post, CNN, the Washington Times, and others have information that the United States Congress cannot even obtain.

I am particularly concerned because of our troops that are in the field; and one would think at home that there would be an accounting, recognizing that there is a

credibility gap that exists here in this country with our own people, clearly one around the world, but with our own people and with our troops that we would be doing our very best to level with them.

Let me explain that anecdotally I was before a group of Reservists and National Guard families in Connecticut last Thursday evening as the adjutant general from Connecticut struggled to try to explain to them why their deployment has been extended. And unfortunately, the adjutant general gets about the same kind of information that Members of Congress do. And the American people are beginning to understand that this administration simply will not level with them. And whether it is the deployment of our troops, whether it is the actual costs that are involved, as the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Meehan) has pointed out, whether it is an accounting for the \$80 billion already appropriated, forget about the \$87 billion that they are asking for, and some are saying it is more than that, but not even being able to account for that in a very reasonable amendment that was put forward by the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. Spratt).

Tommy Franks in front of our committee made a very telling point that the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. Abercrombie) observed. We queried him about whether or not these policies, some of the very issues contained in this report, the policies of preemption and unilateralism, whether they are working; and to be quite frank and honest, he said, look, these are issues that are above my pay grade. But I will say this: there is a big difference between those who wave the flag and those who salute the flag. Those who salute the flag, the men and women of our armed services have performed extraordinarily for this Nation. They deserve such a debt of gratitude to us; we all should drop to our knees nightly and thank them and praise them for their effort. But those who are waving the flag over here, the neoconservative preemptive unilateralist movement that has given this Nation a hard right turn away from the policies of deterrence, diplomacy, and containment and towards the policies of preemption and unilateralism are taking the country in the wrong direction. All we are doing is asking for information and data that this country and this body needs in order to make an informed decision.

That is why I am so proud of our colleagues who have come here nightly to make sure that the American public at least know that this is not a Congress that is sleeping. It is just a Congress that has been muffled by virtue of the fact that we are in the minority.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. Larson) for his comments and eloquence, and I want to thank the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. Larson) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Meehan) for joining us in the Iraq Watch tonight from the Committee on Armed Services. They have reinforced us, and we are glad that they are here.

Before going to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt), I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. Jackson-Lee), who has been waiting very patiently, her second appearance I think with Iraq Watch and we welcome her back.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman for his leadership on this issue, and I think it is important to note that a singular theme that is appearing amongst all of our Members, members of the Committee on Armed Services, and members of the Committee on International Relations is that we are united in our respect and support for those troops that are on the frontlines in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

I bring a different perspective as a member of the Select Committee on Homeland Security that some of my colleagues are also members of to really ask the question to the American people and to explain why we all are on the floor because we do have an obligation, we have taken an oath of office, and that is to the American people and as well our responsibility internationally; and I have been asked by even my constituents and I have asked them rhetorically do they feel safer today than they felt before 9/11, the tragic incident, and do they feel that this war has placed America in a safer position.

I hope that as they listen to our debate and our inquiries that we are making and the resolutions that were passed, though unfavorably out of the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on International Relations, they are really asking the question: are we better placed because of the war in Iraq. I would simply give a resounding "no."

So one of the requests that I am going to ask of all of my colleagues is that we go home to our districts and hold forums or town hall meetings on this very question. Because I think the American people, the American public have been belt-tightening, they have to keep budgets, they know they can only spend their certain amount. They take their certain amount in by salaries and then they spend a certain amount out. I think they will understand that what we are doing in this debate on the \$87 billion is putting conditions on the expending of these dollars. We are putting conditions on it, primarily because we respect the American people and their pocketbook.

We already know this administration has given a reckless tax cut to the 1 percent rich, and most of the American people have not experienced it. So we are suffering on the domestic end because there are Americans who are suffering with Social Security and lack of Medicare prescription drug benefits and lack of Medicaid, and lack of resources to their schools. There are students who are telling me that they are not getting Pell grants.

What I want to see happen in this body is that I cannot vote, and I believe that the Members of this Congress are reasonable to ask for certain conditions, on the expenditure of the \$87 billion. I am going to be putting in a resolution, a sense of Congress resolution to ask a simple question: would you simply bifurcate the vote, give us the expenditures or the requests as relates to the security and safety of our troops, whether it be equipment or whether it be bullet proof vests, whether it be Hummers, whatever it might be, give us that amount and let us all come running to the floor to support that. Then, let us respond to the request by the Committee on International Relations and the Committee on Armed Services on a detailed report of data that we have not been able to receive on the strategies that are taking place in Iraq.

I, for one, would like to have the following, if I might share this with my colleagues, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Hoeffel) in particular. First of all, I said I want the separate vote, and I think that is fair, so we can understand what the \$20 billion plus will be and, I think the administration should present the case, what will be the next request? When will we have the next request of \$75 billion or more? I say this on the backdrop because I know my good friend, the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. Abercrombie) was here and that was during the Gulf War which was a war when we went in to liberate Kuwait because Iraq had invaded Kuwait. But if we look at it militarily or scientifically, the interesting point about that, I thought that was the greatest effort of coalition maybe since World War II, when we had a coalition that ranged across the spectrum, across the regions of the world from as far south as South America and we spent \$62 billion on that war. The United States spent \$7.5 billion, \$7.5 billion and with no debt on that, but we did what we needed to do and we did it with a coalition.

So I am asking for a separate vote, I am asking for a direct exit strategy as a condition, and I am asking to find out what is the plan for postwar Iraq. I would like to see a resolution to the United Nations that would include the number of allies, the troops, and the amount of monies that would be expended. I believe still, a lot of people said to me, well this is bygones be bygones. We are in Iraq because of the administration; specifically, Secretary Rumsfeld. Because I am not indicting my colleagues; this is the separate branch of government that provides oversight and receives its information from the administration and does it in a way that each of us have to rely upon the truth and the integrity of each body of government. We were presented evidence that there were weapons of mass destruction and there was a need for a preemptive attack against Iraq. I cannot let that be bygones.

I think if we present this in the way that the American people understand; maybe in the way they raise their children. Maybe a child has done a bad act. The parent does not just say they did a bad act. If they are parenting that child, they bring them in and they say, can you explain, Johnny, why did you have to do this? Why did you think this was the right way to go? So that in the parent's discipline of that child, you can do it in a way that is instructive and it does not happen again. They came, the administration came to this Congress and indicated to us that there were weapons of mass destruction pointed toward the United States.

Let me share with my colleagues the claims of Vice President Cheney who indicated in Meet The Press, whenever he was talking, that Iraq was reconstituting its nuclear arms program, and we continued to hear this over and over again. Well, my friends, let me just say this. We have David Kay returning back from a long period of time in Iraq. He has 1,400 weapons experts and he reports to George Tenet. And the basic draft is going to suggest that the report by the Americans leading the hunt for banned weapons in Iraq says, his team has not found any of the unconventional weapons cited by the Bush administration as a principal reason for going to war, Federal officials acknowledge the findings and acknowledged today. That is in a New York Times report.

Let me just say this as well. The team who spoke said that Mr. Kay's team had not found illicit weapons. They may have found precursors, but they found no illicit weapons.

So I believe we have a 2-pronged responsibility. One, to condition the request for the \$87 billion, as my colleagues and friends have been doing; explaining to the American people by going, spreading out across this Nation, I want Republicans and Democrats to do it, because I want them to know that there are people in all districts who are concerned about Reservists who have no time certain to come home, troops who have no time certain to come home, and a report that says that by March 2004, we will not have enough troops continue this if we do not get allies.

Let me just simply close this portion by saying this: we need friends. We need a United Nations resolution that says these allies are joining us with troops and with money. Because it is clear that we only have 20,000 troops from other countries in Iraq right now. Those are the coalition of the willing, allegedly, and we thank them for their efforts, but it is 20,000 very small countries, including Britain. And what we are hearing is there are not too many favorable fans, allies trying to join us. I think the administration owes the United States military, the United States Congress, and the American people a commitment that they will have new, fresh allies coming in to help maintain the peace, provide troops and money. I believe that it is extremely important, and I join my colleagues in saying this, that we condition any expenditures, and it is a shame on our friends who do not see that this is the responsibility of this Congress to stand up on behalf of the American people. I hope we will do this, and I hope we will go out and listen to our constituents as well.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. MEEHAN. Madam Speaker, we have a simultaneous war on Afghanistan and Iraq, and I will be brief, but I had to call a family today in my district. Evan O'Neill, a 19 year old, great kid, was killed in Afghanistan, and I had to talk to his father, Mike. His mother, Barbara is a nurse. His father is a firefighter in Andover, Massachusetts. A Vietnam war veteran, he was injured himself.

I think this has nothing to do with partisan politics, but we have to think about the uprising in Afghanistan of the Taliban and al Qaeda, and consider the fact that while we have the Taliban on the run and while we have certainly put a dent into al Qaeda, there are many in this chamber who have asked the question whether or not we could conduct 2 simultaneous wars. And I just want to take a moment to reflect on Evan O'Neill and his heroic fight for our country in tracking down the Taliban in al Qaeda. He gave the ultimate sacrifice today: his life.

The point I want to make is, and my colleagues recognize this, what we are talking about on this floor is serious business. It is about life and death, and the decisions that we make and this administration make about war and peace is about dollars, it is about investment, but it is also about human life. And I, for one Member of Congress, am tired of having to talk to families who have lost loved ones.

On September 11 I had 31 of them from my district. We have to think about these issues. One of the reasons why inquiry is important, discussion is important is because this is serious business, and it is about life and death. And we owe constituents the responsibility of having an honest, intelligent, nonpartisan discussion about the issues that affect our country.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Meehan) for putting a human face on what we are discussing. I am happy to yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. Jackson-Lee).

Just for a moment, Congress Meehan, I want to join you in that. I had sitting next to me at a weekend event Saturday a father who had lost his 19-year-old. He was sitting next to one of our well-known POWs who suffered, Shoshanna Johnson. He got a chance to sit next to her. He happened to be a constituent of the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. Jones). And without the details of it, he just simply wanted to sit next to someone who had returned. His son did not. She happened to have known his son and was able to share with him some of those, unfortunately, last hours of his life. The parent was just grappling to have some connection to that young boy who no longer lives, who had a future.

I am disturbed by commentators, media, administrations saying it has been 200. No, this is not Vietnam. We lost, as I understand it, 50,000. But what we are trying to do on behalf of the American people is to not have this be a Vietnam. In Afghanistan we hear that the Taliban is reorganizing and coming back.

So that young man's life was not in vain, we have got to be able to ask the hard questions of this administration: What are you doing in Afghanistan to make sure that we have a victory and what are you doing in Iraq? Because fathers and mothers and relatives are coming and sitting next to people and going to churches and synagogues and parishes to try to find comfort about their deceased loved ones. We should not diminish what it means to lose a child.

That is why this discussion is so vital, and that is why I think it is imperative that we have answers from the administration to pay tribute to those who have given the ultimate sacrifice.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Madam Speaker, I want to thank our colleague, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. Jackson-Lee), particularly for her enumeration of conditions that you want to see the administration provide before we vote for the requested money; and I think that is a fundamental theme that we have to provide for.

Mr. STRICKLAND. I know my colleague from Washington (Mr. Inslee) has been waiting patiently and would like to speak. Can I just have 30 seconds? Then I will hear what my good friend and colleague has to say.

Mr. HOEFFEL. If the gentleman from Washington does not mind, I will yield the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Strickland).

Mr. STRICKLAND. What we just heard about this being serious business is absolutely true. I was watching TV not many days ago, and William Crystal, who is one of those who beat the war drums leading up to this war, said something. I was so stunned by what he said and I took a pencil and I wrote it down because I was so offended by it. He said, "This is our war and we have just got to suck it up, spend some money, and take some casualties."

I thought to myself, it is easy for him to sit in the safety of that TV studio and talk like that. But what about the moms and dads who this very night who are crying themselves to sleep, worrying about their sons and daughters who may be in harm's way?

This is serious business. That is why we are here, and that is why I am looking forward to hearing what my good friend and colleague, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee), has to say to us.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee), a regular participant in Iraq Watch.

Mr. INSLEE. I went home to the Seattle area this weekend and got a real earful from my constituents who in the words of this one veteran I talked to said, "You know, I know war is hell, but it is double hell if you do not plan on what you are going to do in it and after it." And I got an earful from my constituents who were concerned that this administration, in at least Federal employee respects, has not done adequate planning on how we are going to move forward in Iraq.

I want to talk about those three. First, I met with a group of reservist families and active duty families who tonight are worried about their sons and their husbands and their wives in Iraq. They live with this 24 hours a day worrying about if they are going to get that phone call, and they told me that they were offended at the lack of planning that has gone into the deployments that their families have been involved with, post-war. They told

me that they were told they would be home in 4 months, then 6 months, that they would be 8 months in country and 12 months overall; and now they have changed the rule that they have to be 12 months in Iraq, in country, past the time of retirement of some reservists.

They told me that they believe this is because there essentially was a gross misunderstanding, understanding of what was going to happen in Iraq, where we were told we would be welcomed with rose petals and kisses and parades. As a result of that, those mothers and sisters and brothers and wives and husbands tonight are worrying about their family members getting home; and they want some answers about how we are going to take care of reserves.

Let me tell you one thing that this administration needs to work with us on: How are we going to increase the incentive for these families to deal with these incredibly long deployments? That is why this administration made a mistake putting millions of dollars into this \$87 billion to establish a zip code in Iraq but not a dime to improve the health care for our reservists, and we are going to make an effort on this floor to improve that situation because that is where our priority needs to be.

Second issue where they are seriously deficient is they are asking us to spend \$87 billion in the hopes of establishing a democracy in Iraq. But have you seen the plan for establishing democracy in Iraq, about how a constitution is going to be developed? Who is going to vote on it? How we are going to get this together? I will tell you what I saw. This weekend's report out of Iraq was that there is a deadlock between the Shias and the Sunnis and the Kurds about how to go forward; and they are making zero progress, unfortunately.

This administration has not shown us a plan to get from here to there, to have a meaningful constitution with real democracy in Iraq; and we have asked for it now for over 8 months. Show us the plan for getting democracy in Iraq. And they want to send \$87 billion without a plan. It is a problem.

Third issue I want to mention, I think this is very important, we need good ideas from Americans on how to go forward in Iraq. But when Ambassador Joe Wilson at the request of the CIA went to Africa as a patriotic duty and discovered that the claim that Saddam was buying uranium from Africa was patently false and reported it to the CIA, and despite the fact that the CIA told the White House it was false, and the President of the United States stood right there and told us that in fact Saddam was buying uranium from Africa even though our CIA knew that that was false, and Ambassador Joe Wilson does his patriotic duty by writing an article in the New York Times blowing the whistle on this falsehood, which the President of the United States now agrees was false and should never have been in the State of the Union address, what did this administration do? Did it write him a thank you letter for pointing out that they made a huge mistake preceding this war? Did they recommend the Congressional Medal of Honor for stepping forward when he knew he was going to get nothing but flak from people in a very contentious issue?

That is not what this administration did. This administration, we are now told, tried to punish his wife who we are told works for the CIA by blowing her cover, calling Robert Novak who printed a story identifying her as a CIA agent, to punish an American who brought the truth to this country.

That attitude has got to stop real quick. And we are appreciative that there is now, belatedly, after 2 months, apparently going to be an investigation about this potential crime. But this is not enough.

Let me mention something to you: I do not think the President has done enough on this. I heard him speak today, and I appreciate his interest in it, but his spokesperson says we do not need an internal review of this. In other words, the President is not going to demand of people that he wants to know by 5:00 tomorrow whether he or she was the person who talked to Robert Novak. He is not going to do that. And the reason is, the

President's secretary said, quote, on September 29, 2003, ``There has been nothing, absolutely nothing brought to our attention to suggest any White House involvement, and that includes the Vice President's office as well," close quote.

Well, that is very curious. Because the day before that in the Washington Post, which you can buy for 25 cents, it is an incredible deal, maybe 35 cents now in Washington, I am sure they have got it at the White House, which said, quote, yesterday, ``A senior administration official said that before Novak's call, two top White House officials called at least six Washington journalists and disclosed the identity and occupation of Wilson's wife."

That senior administration official of the Bush administration went on to say, ``Clearly it was meant purely and simply for revenge," the senior official said of the alleged leak.

The President of the United States needs to demand by 5 o'clock tomorrow that his senior people answer to him, not just the Justice Department, to him, whether they had anything to do with this to get this issue resolved. We have got problems in Iraq. We do not need this distraction, and the President needs to get to the bottom of this right now, pronto, so we do not have 2 years of investigations.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee) for bringing up this very important matter about Mr. Wilson. I assume the gentleman understands about what he was describing. The blowing of a CIA cover is a Federal offense. It is illegal. It is dangerous and wrong and morally reprehensible.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DelaHunt).

Mr. DELAHUNT. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee) for bringing this up.

I would close by saying it is absolutely obligatory for the administration to recognize and to insist, in consultation with Attorney General Ashcroft, to go forward and to appoint a special counsel, because any decision that is reached by the Department of Justice, clearly, will raise questions as to, not just its thoroughness, but whether it was done to protect certain individuals, whomever they may be, in the White House.

Sometime in the near future, if there is no action to appoint a special counsel, I know that the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Meehan), and I am sure the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. Jackson-Lee) and myself, who serve on the Committee on the Judiciary, will file a resolution expressing the sense of Congress that there ought to be a special counsel in this case.

This is not an administrative matter. This is far more serious than just a simple felony. I agree with the President's father, who uttered these words, this is President George Herbert Walker Bush, ``I have nothing but contempt and anger for those who betray the trust by exposing the names of our agents. They are, in my view, the most insidious of traitors."

This is about treason. This is not a simple misdemeanor. This is not about having the President take someone into the wood shed and admonish him or her. The American people have to understand that there are no traitors in this administration or in this White House. And that is going to be absolutely a precondition, to have an appointment of a special counsel to maintain the integrity of the Presidency, of the executive branch, and the Department of Justice.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman. I now yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. Jackson-Lee).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I say to my colleague, let me give a resounding yes. I believe that the idea of a special counsel is long overdue. And I want to add to both the gentleman's intellectual analysis, but also his passion to the American people. Outing a CIA agent can be a ripple effect to losing many, many lives of patriotic Americans who are helping secure the homeland. That is what the CIA represents. We based a war on the CIA. But it is clearly, I think, our obligation to file a sense of the Congress resolution on this matter.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. Abercrombie).

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. I think our time has concluded, but it is clear to me this evening that we perhaps are going to have to have more time. I am pleased that so many are joining us, and I hope we can take up that issue in the future.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Madam Speaker, I thank the Members here tonight. Iraq Watch will be back next week.