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THE WAR IN IRAQ

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I do. And I have come here based on some conversations I have had in the last couple of weeks with the father of a soldier who was killed in Iraq, the wife of a soldier who was killed in Iraq from the State of Washington. I met about a week and a half ago with a soldier with a shattered leg over in Walter Reed, actually two soldiers with shattered legs; and that is one of the great, unfortunately, hidden tragedies of this war the number of terrible injuries that have come out of it. That has been kind of hidden, and I think it is unfortunate that folks do not understand how terrible these young men are being injured. In part because of our tremendous medical care, we have saved people that never would have lived in previous wars, but they come away with some terrible injuries.

But the reason I came here tonight is just to say that the U.S. Congress owes it to these men and women in uniform who are serving proudly tonight to not ignore them and not give up trying to help resolve this mess, and that silence is not an option for the U.S. Congress. We took a vote but that was only the start of our obligation to these people who are serving in Iraq tonight. And I just have two messages that I hope the administration would listen to to try to get out of this mess.

One is to finally develop a meaningful plan, to develop a recognizable, credible Iraqi government so that the Iraqi people could have some credibility in the government, so that hopefully at some point we can bring our men and women home; and they are still on the wrong path failing in that fundamental obligation. Our mission is doomed there until this administration has a workable plan to develop a credible government in Iraq. They have failed in that fundamental mission, in a stumbling, bumbling mechanism.

I will state, we stood in a meeting room about a hundred yards from here very shortly before the war started and said, Where is your plan for postwar Iraq? Where is your plan for establishing a credible government in Iraq so that we can bring our troops home?

Do you know what their answer was? We are starting to think about that. And that is not too much of a paraphrase of what they told us. And now they still are making a fundamental mistake of thinking that we can establish a government by our order as to who will be the governing authority without the involvement of the international community.

We still need to get international folks of other countries involved in there to help develop a credible government. And until we do that, we are not going to win the hearts and minds of the people no matter how many thousand-pound bombs we drop.

Mr. INSLEE. If I may inquire, basically what we have is it sounds like the only international support the administration has had to try to help establish a new Iraqi government is a fellow from London, Mr. Chalabi, and that is not what we think we need when it comes to international support to try and establish a government. Because we know that ultimately to bring our men and women home, we are going to have to be in a position where there is a secure government that has some degree of trust to the Iraqi people. And the one thing we know is a decision, a unilateral decision by the United States to decide who that is not working at the moment. We believe and have been arguing now since the beginning of hostilities that involving the international community to help establish a definition who is going to be at the table when the constitution is adopted, when the elections are set up, are going to help get the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people which ultimately we need to succeed in this mission.

So we are here again tonight urging the administration to learn from past problems and indeed mistakes. One of those mistakes has been acting with such unilateralism, and unilateralism to date has resulted in folks allegedly running Iraq with no security and no credibility. So we will continue to beat that drum, and we hope at some point the administration will learn from these past errors.

I want to mention another thing, too, that I hope that Congress does not lose sight of its responsibility to the men and women in Iraq tonight. Those men and women deserve to know why Americans did not get the straight scoop before this war started, and we just began just the baby step for Congress to start to get to the root of why Americans were told things that were not true before this war started. We owe this to the people in the field right now in Iraq, and we are going to call on the administration to stop stonewalling on that investigation.

We have been trying to get multiple documents. We are not getting that, and it is interesting to me, when a true patriot, Joe Wilson, who was an ambassador, who was called a hero by the first President Bush for serving as the last counselor in Iraq, who stood up to Saddam Hussein and maybe saved hundreds of Americans before the first Persian Gulf War, when he helped blow the whistle and indicate there had been a mistake in the State of the Union address that came from that podium out to the American people, when he helped demonstrate that there had been a mistake made by the President as to what he said when he said that there was this uranium in Africa, what did the administration do? Instead of thanking Mr. Wilson for helping correct a mistake that the President had made on a pivotal issue and on which they had hung the hat to start this war, instead somebody in the administration, and we better darn well find out who blew the cover on Mr. Wilson's wife as a CIA agent, and that is the type of attitude to date this administration has in getting to the bottom of why we did not get the truth before this war started.