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Iraq Watch Those Who Tell The Truth Get Punished May 12, 2004

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. Chocola). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee) is recognized until midnight.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I tonight have come to the floor in a continued series of discussions that we have styled as the Iraq Watch. We, unfortunately, have had to be involved in this now for several months. We do so because we believe very strongly that this situation in Iraq is of such high challenge that the U.S. Congress owes an obligation to be involved in the tough decisionmaking and not just punt to the executive branch of the United States Government. We believe that there are some serious issues that need discussing, and we intend to do so tonight.

But before we get to some of the controversial issues that need discussion, I think it is important to note the unanimity that this country has and the total bipartisanship we have in three or four very central elements in this challenge pertaining to Iraq, and I want to list four of those.

First, all of us are dismayed and appalled at the savagery of the United States contractor who was executed in a horrendous act that Americans are seeing and hearing about on their television screens tonight. I think it is important for us to recognize the sense of outrage that we need to maintain as a healthy sense, and not to give it up and say it is another act of violence. We need to retain our sense of outrage at their behavior.

Second, we have a bipartisan consensus in this country that we are dismayed and disturbed by the occurrences in our prisoner of war camps. Today, as Members of Congress, we join in a bipartisan way, unfortunately, to review the incredibly disturbing

still pictures and videotapes which still have not been released of some of the things that went on in the prison camps.

There is a bipartisan recognition that those actions damaged our potential success in Iraq and that we in a bipartisan way want to find a way to make sure that never happens again because we have too many challenges already in Iraq to add to those challenges by self-inflicted wounds. Third, we have a national consensus that extends our feeling of loss to many of the innocent Iraqis who have found themselves in harm's way as a result of this action. Fourth, and perhaps this is the most important for us to reiterate, in any discussion of Iraq, there is absolute unanimity across this country in expressing pride and respect for the heroism and the professionalism of our troops in the field in Iraq. No matter what we say tonight about the civilian leadership who unfortunately we believe have made some very grievous errors to our soldiers' disadvantage, it is very important to realize there is total consensus in this country and in the House of Representatives respecting the dedication of our troops, notwithstanding the difficulty in the command and control structure that happened in these prisons. Those are four points of consensus and unanimity that we have in this country that we intend to make sure we note.

With that, I would like to turn to some of the challenging things that we need to talk about tonight, if I may, if the gentlemen will give me a few moments. The unfortunate truth is, however, that the professionalism of our soldiers in the field, hundreds of thousands of whom are serving with distinction, has not been matched by some of the civilian decisionmakers pertaining to the Iraqi operation. There, unfortunately, have been a series of substantial errors which have posed challenges to us that now we have to dig ourselves out of. I want to mention 10 of those very quickly in summary form to set the framework for our discussion tonight. There are 10 serious mistakes, errors, of judgment and negligence that have been made by our civilian authorities in the executive branch of this government which are now putting us in a very, very deep hole, of what was already a challenging position. I will quickly summarize those 10 that we will discuss tonight.

First, the United States Government told the American people in unequivocal terms that there was, and I think I quote from the chief executive, no doubt but that Iraq possessed and was deploying some of the most lethal weapons systems devised by man before this war. That statement unfortunately has proved to be false. It is one that we should think seriously about as we move forward in Iraq.

Second, the executive branch and the civilian authorities of our Nation told the American people in unequivocal terms that there was a clear, convincing and cogent connection between Iraq and the heinous attack on our Nation of September 11. That assertion after months and over a year of digging has not turned out one solitary shred of evidence to substantiate that assertion; and as far as we know tonight, that assertion was false. Why is it important to recognize the falsity of those two assertions preceding this war? It is important to understand both the Iraqis' response and the world's response and now our difficulty in obtaining assistance for our troops in the field because the war started on two basic falsehoods, and this is a recognition that we have to have as we form a strategy to have success in Iraq.

The third issue. We were told in very clear terms and this Congress was told in many briefings that we would be welcomed as liberators, we would be welcomed with rose petals at our feet. The savagery that our men and women who are serving in Iraq have seen was hardly a sense of liberation. Why is this important? It is important because it explains some other failures by the civilian leadership in our Nation.

It explains the fourth failure, the failure to have adequate troops on the ground at the time the Iraqi Army collapsed. We had multiple truth-tellers who told the truth to the executive branch, what was needed in Iraq; and they have all been fired. General Shinseki told the President of the United States and the Secretary of Defense that we would need several hundred thousand troops on the ground to prevent Iraq becoming an infested place of looting and anarchy the day after the Iraqi Army collapsed. He was ignored and then fired.

General Zinni essentially said the same thing. He was ignored, then he was fired. We have seen this as a consistent pattern of truth-tellers about Iraq. When Joe Wilson blew the whistle on the falsehood we heard from that Speaker's rostrum during the State of the Union, his wife had her job diminished by secretly outing her as a member of the CIA. The sad fact is advice given to the civilian authority has not been followed.

The fifth error. We knew that to bring democracy to Iraq, we need to bring democracy to Iraq. The way to bring democracy to Iraq is to have elections. The first proconsul we had, Jay Garner, said, let's have early

elections; we might get the Iraqis to buy into this system. He was fired. He was let go. The successful example in southern provinces of Iraq which has had successful elections is now not being followed, and we have no idea from the plan from the administration when that may occur. We need elections in Iraq.

The next error. We have failed wholly to build an international assistance for our troops. This needs to be an international responsibility. American taxpayers should not be the only ones footing the bill in Iraq. In fact, the rest of the world footed the bill for the first Persian Gulf War under the first President Bush. Now the American taxpayer is paying this almost lock, stock and barrel both in blood and in treasure.

The next error. We consciously sent, and when I say ``we," I mean the executive branch in the United States, consciously sent American men and women into battle without armor. We knew we were sending people into the warren's den of RPGs, rocket-propelled grenades, improvised explosive devices; and we sent them in these little thin-skinned Humvees to drive around for a year and a half, and we have had over 700 lost Americans, many of whom because we did not have adequate armor in the field. Now, yesterday, when we went through the streets of Baghdad, we went in armored personnel carriers and we did not lose anyone, which are impervious to rocket-propelled grenades and a lot of IEDs. We ignored the clear advice that we needed a stronger, more well-armored force in Iraq, and we lost sons and daughters because of it. I will say a good thing for this

administration, they are now finally beginning to rush to this battlefield as fast as they can the armor we need.

The next error we had, I think it is number seven, we did not even have body armor for these people. We did not have flak jackets.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Will my friend yield?

Mr. INSLEE. Briefly. Then I need to complete my two more.

Mr. STRICKLAND. May I, with kindness, challenge a statement my friend just made. My friend from Washington said the administration is rushing as quickly as they can to provide the armament our soldiers need. I think that is not the case. The only company that produces up-armored Humvees that the Pentagon does business with is an Ohio company from my State of Ohio. That company is located in Fairfield, Ohio. They are capable of producing up-armored Humvees at the number of about 500 per month. The Pentagon, although we desperately need them, is only buying about 300 a month. So even in this case, where they should be protecting our soldiers as quickly as possible, they are not doing what they could and should be doing and they are not doing it, certainly, as rapidly as possible.

So when it came to the body armor, and the President has actually accused his opponent for the Presidency, the Democratic nominee, of voting against body armor for our troops, I think they are talking about that \$87 billion supplemental, the fact is that at the beginning of the war in Iraq, when our soldiers first went into that country, many of them went in without body armor to protect them. That was many months before we voted on that supplemental. Many months. It was the President, it was Mr. Rumsfeld, it was this administration, this Pentagon that sent our soldiers into harm's way without adequate body armor. It took them an entire year from March when the war started until March the following year before all of our soldiers were outfitted with this body armor. Even tonight as we sit here and stand here in the safety of this House Chamber, there are soldiers in Iraq who are driving around in Humvees that are not adequately armored, and this Pentagon is not solving that problem as quickly as they can. I thank my friend for yielding.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for the calculated and exact improvement of my discussion.

Mr. STRICKLAND. It is a matter of life and death.

Mr. INSLEE. It is. And, Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for leading on this issue about this flak jacket failure.

I do want to make the point, though, I think the administration has made some changes in its policy that are starting to move in the right direction, but they are a year, and we have suffered dramatically as a result of that. We welcome these changes that we are

seeing now. Now the President says now he wants the U.N. to come in and help us. But frankly it is very difficult, after we stuck our finger in the eye of the rest of the world, to encourage people. But we want to encourage the administration to move.

And I will just mention two other things, and then I will yield to my colleagues. Two other areas: One, this administration has not proposed a single plan on how to pay for this war. Every single dollar that is being spent in this war is coming out of the backs and the futures of our children of deficit spending. We have a \$500 billion deficit, and this President was not forthright enough with Americans to even put in his budget one dollar for the Iraq War, knowing that every dollar he put in the Iraq War would be additional deficit spending.

Winston Churchill said, "All I have to offer you is blood, sweat, toil, and tears." We cannot now just tell the people of America let us fight the Iraq War and then go shopping. We cannot simply have the only people sacrificing in America those in the frontlines of Iraq. This is a tough battle, and the President of the United States cannot fight it on the cheap. We need to face the difficulty in Iraq straightforward and have the tenth thing we need, and then I will yield.

We need something we have not had for 1 1/2 years now. We need a plan for success in Iraq, and we still do not have one this late in the game. And the reason I say that is tonight, as we are sitting here, supposedly we are going to have a turnover to a sovereign government in Iraq on June 30 and no one has a clue who they will be, no one has a clue what they will do, and the sad fact is the only thing this Iraq group is going to do is issue library cards because, frankly, we are running Iraq because we are the only force that is capable of doing that right now. We need a plan. We need some fresh thinking. I have some thoughts I will describe a little later.

I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt).

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Washington for his usual insightful review of the salient points.

I think we should welcome back the original founder of Iraq Watch. He has been unable to attend the last several conversations because of other business, but he is certainly welcome here tonight, and that is the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Hoeffel).

The events of the past several weeks have obviously been very disturbing in terms of what has occurred in the prison facility, Abu Ghraib. And I think every American feels a sense of profound, profound shame, and there has been much talk and much criticism.

I found a story that was reported today in the Washington Times and the headline reads "Outrage Erodes Morale of Troops." And there were comments by some of our colleagues from the other side of the aisle. One was made by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DeLay), the House majority leader, which I will not even address because the

gentleman from Texas (Mr. DeLay) has a proclivity to make statements that some describe as over the top. But the gentleman from California (Mr. Hunter), the Chairman of the House Committee on Armed Services, whom I think we all respect, the report stated that he blamed Democrats who have been harshly critical of the war effort for eroding troop morale. The quote is, "I'm concerned that a number of Members of Congress have lost their sense of balance. They think their role here is to bash the American military. It is demoralizing for the troops."

Clearly, it has never been the intention of any individual who serves in this House, be he or she Republican or Democrat, to erode morale or to bash the military. I do not think anyone in any way wishes to denigrate the commitment and the contribution and the manner with which our military overall has conducted itself. But at the same time I think that the chairman has it wrong. It is not Democrats. There are a number of Republicans, and he should be aware of that, that have criticized the so-called post-major combat phase of this adventure for some time now. One only has to watch and observe the Monday morning TV programs.

But the reality is that morale has been low among our military for some time, not because of criticism of the civilian leadership of the Pentagon, the Department of Defense, Mr. Rumsfeld, Mr. Wolfowitz, Mr. Feith, and including the Vice President of the United States, who is described in a recent book as suffering from war fever in terms of his obsession about invading Iraq. I think it is rather interesting that this poster I have here which is back in November 2003, a Newsweek cover that states "How Dick Cheney Sold the War." It is clearly true, given what we know now, that he had great influence in terms of advancing the military invasion of Iraq by the American military.

But now to go back to the morale issue, there was an interesting story, and maybe the chairman of the Committee on Armed Services is unaware of this, but it was reported last Sunday in the Washington Post, and the title is "Dissension Grows in Senior Ranks on War Strategy."

"Deep divisions are emerging at the top of the U.S. military over the course of the occupation of Iraq, with some senior officers beginning to say that the United States faces the prospect of casualty for years, without achieving its goal of establishing a free and democratic Iraq."

These are not Members of the Democratic Party in Congress. These are not Members of the Republican Party in Congress. This is senior military personnel.

"Army Major General Charles Swannack, Jr., the commander of the 82nd Airborne Division, who spent much of the year in western Iraq, said that he believes that at the tactical level at which fighting occurs, the U.S. military is still winning, but when asked whether he believes the United States is losing he said, 'I think strategically, we are.'"

“Army Colonel Paul Hughes, who last year was the first director of strategic planning for the U.S. occupation authority in Baghdad, said he agrees with that view and noted that a pattern of winning battles while losing a war characterized the U.S. failure in Vietnam.”

These are senior members of the military establishment in this country.

This is not about partisanship. This is criticism coming from the military itself regarding the lack or the incompetence, if you will, of the civilian leadership that currently resides in the Department of Defense.

Colonel Hughes went on to note that he lost a brother in Vietnam. “I promised myself when I came on active duty that I would do everything in my power to prevent that sort of strategic loss from happening again. Here I am, 30 years later, thinking we will win every fight and lose the war because we don't understand the war we are in.”

They are worried. This is the senior American military speaking. They are worried by evidence that the United States is losing ground with the Iraqi public.

Some officers say the place to begin restructuring U.S. policy is by ousting Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, whom they see as responsible for a series of strategic and tactical blunders over the past year.

Several of those interviewed said a profound anger is building within the Army at Rumsfeld and those around him. A senior general at the Pentagon said he believes the United States is already on the road to defeat. His quote is, “It is doubtful we can go on much longer like this. The American people may not stand for it, and they should not.” This is a senior general at the Pentagon.

I hope that the Republican chair of the Committee on Armed Services has an opportunity to read this particular report that was in the Washington Post last Sunday. He should not blame Democrats or any elected official for ever eroding the morale of the troops. We stand by the troops, but we do not stand by a policy that no one can understand.

As to who is to blame, this general pointed directly at Rumsfeld and Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz. “I do not believe,” and this is his quote, “we had a clearly defined war strategy and end-state and exit strategy before we commenced our invasion.”

Mr. INSLEE. Reclaiming my time, I just wanted to note, following the horrendous situations in our prison camps, a lot of folks thought the only reason people were calling for the Secretary of Defense's replacement was that problem. But that was only the straw that broke the camel's back. We had all these other 10 problems which I alluded to, all of which he was involved with. That is why many Members here believe that this Nation deserves better to serve our troops.

I would like to yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Hoeffel), the originator of this, who shows great leadership on being able to tackle these very great problems in Iraq.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I compliment the gentleman on his 10 opinions that opened the Iraq Watch tonight. I think the gentleman is right on the money, and I appreciate his summarizing the problems that we face.

I want to thank the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt), the new Chair of Iraq Watch, for his leadership and his stalwart support for what we are trying to do here.

The point that the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt) makes is a very good one. There has been no criticism of the military in any of the comments that I have heard or read about in the papers. We are not criticizing the military. That is the one good thing about what is happening in Iraq, is the performance of our young men and women in uniform.

We are criticizing the civilian directors of the Defense Department. We are criticizing the administration, the policymakers, the politicians.

I think we should criticize not just Mr. Rumsfeld and Mr. Wolfowitz and Mr. Feith at the Department of Defense, but I would throw in George Tenet as well at the CIA. I do not think any President has ever received more bad information in our Nation's history than George Bush has received from George Tenet and Don Rumsfeld.

The information was wrong about weapons of mass destruction. I am summarizing what the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee) has already summarized. They were wrong about weapons of mass destruction. They were wrong that we could do this on the cheap. We did not send enough troops in to Iraq to stabilize the country, and General Shinseki was right and he was run out of the Army for telling the truth, that we needed several hundred thousand troops, not the 120,000 that Mr. Rumsfeld thought he could do this with.

If you will recall, in the spring of 2003 Mr. Rumsfeld said by August of 2003 we would only need 40,000 troops. There would be only 40,000 troops left four or five months after the invasion. Of course, in August of 2003 there were 120,000 troops. We are up to 135,000 troops now, and we still have not stabilized Iraq.

Look what that means. You cannot have reconstruction without security. You cannot have a transfer of government without security. You certainly cannot have elections without security. And we do not have security in Iraq. After all this time, we do not have stabilized conditions in Iraq.

Mr. DELAHUNT. If the gentleman will yield further, the much-heralded efforts to train Iraqis as far as police and a new Iraqi Army, you only have to go back two or three weeks to remember that headline that screamed out the new Iraq battalion would not accompany

the U.S. Marines into combat in the City of Fallujah. So while the Secretary of Defense speaks about the training of some 70,000 personnel for security service, the truth is those that are adequately trained amount to only several thousand.

What we have here, what we have here is a failure of leadership, is a demonstration of incompetence unequalled in terms of my public life, and I have held elected office for some 30 years.

If you could bear with me for just one more moment, again, I want to come back to the military's perspective of the civilian leadership and what they are saying.

There was an editorial that appeared in the Army Times, the Marine Times, the Air Force Times and the Navy Times, and it was regarding the situation in the Iraqi prison. It is entitled "A Failure of Leadership At the Highest Levels."

I would remind those that are viewing our conversation this evening, this is not a partisan publication. This is a publication that covers the military that in many respects represents the majority view of the military in this country.

"Around the halls of the Pentagon, a term of caustic derision has emerged for the enlisted soldiers at the height of the furor over the prison scandal, 'the six morons who lost the war.' Indeed, the damage done to the U.S. military and the Nation as a whole by the horrifying photographs of U.S. soldiers abusing Iraqi detainees at the notorious prison is incalculable.

"But the folks in the Pentagon are talking about the wrong morons. There is no excuse for the behavior displayed by soldiers in the now infamous pictures, and an even more damning reported by Major General Anthony Taguba. Every soldier should be ashamed. But while responsibility begins with the six soldiers facing criminal charges, it extends all the way up the chain of command to the highest reaches of the military hierarchy and its civilian leadership.

"The entire affair is a failure of leadership, from start to finish. From the moment they are captured, prisoners are hooded, shackled and isolated. The message to the troops, anything goes. In addition to the scores of prisoners who were humiliated and demeaned, at least 14 have died in custody in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Army has ruled at least two of these are homicides. This is not the way a free people keeps its captives or wins the hearts and minds of a suspicious world.

General Richard Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, also shares in the shame. Myers asked "60 Minutes" to hold off reporting news of the scandal because it could put U.S. troops at risk. But when the report was aired a week later, Myers still had not read Taguba's report which was completed in March. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld had also failed to read the report until the scandal broke in the media; but by then, of course, it was too late. The Army Times, the Marine Times, the Navy Times, and the Air Force Times are correct: it is a failure of leadership at the highest level.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield for just a moment, and then I want to yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Hoeffel). One of the unfortunate reasons there has been a failure here is that there is a persistent practice or habit in this administration to ignore a principle of leadership, which is to reward competence and to sanction incompetence, to reward those who are right and sanction those who are wrong, to reward those who tell the truth and sanction those who do less than that. And look what happens in this situation.

Let us compare those who were wrong to those who were right. Those who were right, General Shinseki, right about needing new troops, canned. General Zinni, who was right about needing more armor and troops, canned. Ambassador Joseph Wilson, by the way, stood up personally to Saddam Hussein and saved hundreds of American lives to get them out of Iraq before the first Persian Gulf War, this guy has guts; he told the truth and pointed out that what the President told the American people about buying uranium from Niger was a falsehood, he told the truth, and they tried to destroy his wife's career in the CIA.

So we have three truth-tellers, all of them who were punished by the executive branch of the United States.

Now, look at the other three people. George Tenet, CIA, who, if there was a more massive failure of information in American history next to calling Benedict Arnold a good American, I do not know what it was; still on the job, has not been sanctioned. He has not lost an hour of vacation time. He does not have a pink slip, does not have a slap on the wrist, said by the President to be doing a great job, when we started a war based on false information.

Donald Rumsfeld, the man who ignored General Shinseki, ignored General Zinni, ignored the intelligence from Ambassador Joe Wilson, involved in a war where we have incompetent planning, failure of planning, and we are now in a deep morass in Iraq, called by the Vice President, and I want to quote here almost, the greatest Secretary of Defense America has ever seen.

Mr. DELAHUNT. That is just an unbelievable statement.

Mr. INSLEE. We have a different opinion. This gentleman has not been sanctioned. This gentleman has not lost an hour of overtime.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And that is leadership.

Mr. INSLEE. And if I can remember who the third one is, if I can read my notes here that I wanted to talk about. Help me out, gentlemen. Who is the third one I was thinking about here? The list goes on and on.

Mr. DELAHUNT. What the gentleman is basically saying is that loyalty is prized above competence.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to make sure that we include this gentleman in this discussion: Assistant Secretary Paul Wolfowitz told this Chamber on repeated occasions he was dead right sure, not only that we would be greeted as the great liberators of the Mideast, spreading democracy through the Mideast, not only that that would happen but, bonus time, I say to my colleagues, the Iraq oil fields would pay for this whole thing. American taxpayers would not have to put out a dime for this. He came and told us he knew this was going to happen, we would not have to do anything with taxes, taxpayers would not have to pay a dime. If there has been a greater failure of analysis, I do not know what it could possibly be.

Now, what has the President done to the man who totally misled the United States Congress? On both sides of the aisle, by the way, he told this to Republicans and Democrats. Nothing. So we have the three people who have gotten us into a war based on false information with lousy planning, with incompetent preparation for our troops, people losing their lives in Iraq who are greeted as the greatest civil servants in human history, and the three guys who told us the truth were fired, lost their jobs.

I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. If we just focus on the prison scandal for a minute and see the failures of leadership there, as the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt) has been talking about, there are not enough prison guards assigned to Abu Ghraib or I am sure to the other prisons that were running as a

result of the Iraq war. There simply are not enough guards assigned. Those guards are not properly trained. That is abundantly clear. They are not properly supervised, and there is no accountability up the chain of command.

So we start off with a disaster waiting to happen. Then what does Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld do? Well, he ignores the Red Cross, who, apparently, for over a year, has been complaining about conditions and abusive activities in our prisons. He fails to respond. He does not read the report in a timely fashion that is finally done by his subordinate, and he does not tell his President what is at stake. He even hangs his own President out to dry who is embarrassed by the disclosure of this information to the media, rather than in the normal chain of communication between cabinet Secretary and President.

One more failure. I think we ought to stop talking about resignation. I do not think Donald Rumsfeld should be allowed to resign. He should be fired for his failures to inform and properly advise the President. And the reality is, we cannot stay the course in Iraq. We have to change the course in Iraq. We cannot keep doing what we are doing, because we are failing, and we cannot achieve our goals of creating a stable and a peaceful country with a representative form of self-government. We cannot do that with the level of insecurity and instability in Iraq today. We have to get more troops in there.

There ought to be international troops, NATO, Arab nations, Western European nations. They have a bigger stake in a stable Iraq than we do. But right now, 90 percent of the troops, 90 percent of the money is American; and it is not working. We have to change our course.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, it is really time to be honest with the American people. As David Kay said, who was sent and appointed by this administration to conduct a search for the weapons of mass destruction, came back, said there are none, and implored the President, it is time to come clean with the American people. Otherwise, he had grave concerns about our credibility all over the world.

It is like this administration is incapable, incapable of dealing with the truth. I do not think they intend to lie; I just do not think they can grasp reality. It is like again going back to the morale issue. In "Stars and Stripes," a magazine that is funded by the Pentagon, reported better than a year ago on the issue of morale of U.S. troops in Iraq: high-ranking visitors to the country, including Department of Defense and congressional officials, have said it is outstanding, but the "Stars and Stripes" itself, the magazine did a survey and concluded that some troops on the ground would beg to differ about what they call low morale on their part and on the part of their units.

So as a result, the Pentagon went and conducted a survey of troops, and it was reported again about a month ago in The Washington Post before the scandal broke out, and it concluded that a slim majority of Army soldiers in Iraq, 52 percent reported that their morale was low, and three-fourths of them said that they felt poorly led by their officers, according to a survey taken at the end of the summer and released yesterday by the Army.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, we have about 30 seconds, and I just wanted to wrap up and thank the gentleman for his work tonight. I just want to say one thing. One of the worst possible things that can happen to our soldiers is base the war on wishful thinking. And the failures we have been talking about tonight have largely occurred because of civilian decisionmakers who have based decisions on wishful thinking that are not in touch with the reality and the difficult situation in Iraq. We are very hopeful that this administration will start to recognize the challenges we have in Iraq and start listening to military advisers, rather than basing their decisions on the fantasy that they have that this can be done on the cheap. We have paid too dearly in blood for that misassessment, we have paid too dearly in treasure for that misassessment; and it is time for a fresh, new strategy in Iraq. Just sticking with the same old same old is a recipe for disaster.