



# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 108<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

---

## *House of Representatives*

### **Iraq Watch A Bipartisan Commission July 21, 2003**

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. HARRIS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOEFFEL) is recognized for half the time remaining before midnight as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Madam Speaker, for 6 or 7 weeks a number of us have been coming to the floor to talk about our role in Iraq. We are calling ourselves the Iraq Watch, and we are back tonight. We are back with some of the challenges regarding Iraq fresh in the news. And I am joined by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT) coming as well as part of our four Iraq Watchers, the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL). I believe there will be others joining us as well this evening.

We are dedicated to the propositions of asking questions, seeking answers about what is happening in Iraq, trying to suggest policy changes that would improve the situation and certainly reporting back information to the American people.

Two of us voted in favor of the military authority sought by the President last fall, myself included. Two of us did not. All of us, of course, were told, as were the American people and Members of Congress, we were told with great certainty that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction and was trying mightily to develop more. And there is no question that in the past Hussein had such weapons. He used them in murderous ways against his own civilians and against innocent Iranian civilians in the past. None of that is in any doubt.

But it is becoming more and more clear as time goes by that last fall there were those in the White House and in senior levels of the administration and the President himself who, in my opinion, exaggerated the threat of the weapons of mass destruction in order to win support in Congress and in the country for the invasion of Iraq.

It is now known that our intelligence agencies were reporting to the White House and to the Pentagon with significant uncertainty and with serious doubts about certain aspects of the weapons of mass destruction program in Iraq; notably, the September, 2002, Defense Intelligence Agency report and the October, 2002, National Intelligence Estimate, both of which have been discussed in the news. I have reviewed parts of both of those which are classified documents in the custody of the intelligence agency.

It is interesting to note that the administration itself declassified some of the National Intelligence Estimate last week to try to prove their point that there was a legitimate threat from Iraq, and most analysts have concluded that that release of that information actually pointed out once again how many doubts and how much lack of certainty was being expressed by our intelligence professionals, but that information being used by the White House and the Pentagon civilian leadership with no uncertainty, with nothing but certainty in terms of trying to sell their case.

So let me just make a couple of quick points before yielding time to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt).

Because of the recent disclosures regarding the intelligence gathering by our professionals and the use that that intelligence was used for by the administration, I am joining others in calling for the creation of an independent commission, something the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT) has talked about for weeks here on the floor, an independent commission, a nonpartisan or bipartisan commission, that would be above politics, to investigate both the accuracy of the gathering of intelligence regarding weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and the uses of that intelligence by the administration.

We clearly won an important military victory in Iraq due to the brave and courageous fighting of our young men and young women in uniform, but I do not think that our military mission is complete until we have a full accounting of the weapons of mass destruction, both regarding their location and the custody of those weapons so that if they still exist we know they are in safe hands, and also a full accounting regarding the intelligence associated with those weapons of mass destruction.

Having won the military victory, we surely will not win the peace unless we seek and receive more international help in Iraq for the post-conflict phase of the challenges there, so I am giving my support to those that are calling for a United Nations Security Council resolution. We are seeking approval from this administration and urging President Bush to go to the United Nations Security Council to seek an over-arching resolution that would sanction NATO peacekeeping and United Nations reconstruction and humanitarian aid so that we can provide proper security in Iraq, which is obviously a huge problem, as now 38 American soldiers have been assassinated in attacks and ambushes since the President declared victory on May 1, 38 Americans in uniform assassinated by guerilla tactics in Iraq. Clearly we have not secured that country, and we will not be able to deal with the reconstruction and humanitarian challenges, first, without security, and, secondly, without more international help.

Let me stop at this point before I get too carried away, because there is so much to talk about and so much has happened since the time we were on the floor a week ago; so much has come out in the press and in public discussion.

Let me at this point yield to my good friend, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT), a senior member of the House Committee on International Relations.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I would just reinforce his words regarding the need for an independent commission, because, unfortunately, there are or have been accusations about political sniping occurring, when it is the purpose of many of us simply to pose questions that not just our constituents, but many Americans have, regarding the use of intelligence, whether in fact it was selective, the quality of the intelligence. But I think it is very important tonight to stress to the viewers that this is simply too important to be a partisan issue.

The reality is that many prominent, well-respected Republicans share our concern. This past weekend, Senator LUGAR of Indiana, who chairs the Foreign Relations Committee in the Senate, Senator CHUCK HAGEL from Nebraska, as well as the senior Democrat on the Foreign Relations Committee, Senator JOE BIDEN, all expressed their concern about the need for the White House, for the President, to start telling the American people the reality of how long the American presence will be required in Iraq.

The three Senators indicated that they had reached a consensus that some 5 years was a reasonable period of time. I hope they are right. But I fear that it will even be longer, given the experience that we have had in the Balkans, given the experience we have had in the Korean Peninsula, and given the estimates that we have heard from others. But this is not a Democratic issue, a large D Democratic issue; it is not a Republican issue. It is an issue that affects each and every American, because it is about American credibility.

In some respects, it is more than simply our policy vis-a-vis Iraq, because the credibility and the competence of the President of the United States, no matter what party is in the White House, is essential to peace in this world. I do not think, as some pundits say on TV, that in a serious issue such as this there should not exist a "no spin zone." It is simply too important.

When I first suggested an independent commission, I pointed out the fine work that was conducted under the cochairmanship of the former Senator from New Hampshire, a Republican, Senator Warren Rudman, and the former Senator from Colorado, Gary Hart, and there were many well-respected, highly experienced Americans who were part of that commission, and they had an excellent staff.

Tragically, the quality of their work could not be disputed, because they filed a report back in February of 2001 that described in frighteningly prescient terms what would occur if America did not take seriously the threat of terrorism. They, for all intents and purposes, predicted the tragedy that occurred some 9 months later on September 11, 2001.

I feel confident that the kind of people that served on that commission would be willing, if asked by the President, to come to answer all of the questions that are currently being posed; and they could do it in a way that was transparent, that was open to the American people to hear, to see, and to reach their own decisions.

I notice we are joined by our colleague, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL). He looks like he wants to have something to say.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, as all of our colleagues here have noticed, this is our sixth week down here discussing what is going on in Iraq, what is happening to our troops, what has happened to the occupation, what has happened to the reconstruction.

A lot has been focused on the President's credibility. I have repeated before from this podium, as we have done this Iraq Watch, that although it is the President's credibility, it is very much America's credibility that is on the line, and that this inquiry would be so important as we face what is now becoming a consensus in the intelligence and security arena, an ever-present threat in North Korea.

Former Secretary of Defense Perry, a well-respected Secretary of Defense, on North Korea, our policy there, I think his words were clear. He fears war by end of the year. Unless we clear up the notion of America's credibility locked into and tied to the President's credibility, we will not be able to muster the international support for the choices we will make as we deal with that nuclear threat.

Just recently Iran, another member of the ``axis of evil," has prepared a missile with capability to hit American troops. There, too, we will need international cooperation and consensus.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Could I interrupt on that point, because it does follow an item that I read today in the New York Times. The President, while meeting with the Italian Prime Minister, accused both Syria and Iran of continuing to harbor and assist terrorists; and he warned those two nations that they would ``face consequences." I do not know what that means, but I am definitely concerned when I hear that language.

By the way, I think it should be noted, because I know our friend from Chicago has made the point again and again about the cost of the war and the need for international assistance, he did not discuss, according to the Time's piece, Italian troops coming to Iraq to assist and replace American troops. I would have hoped that he would have done that.

But while we are talking about Syria, in the words of the President, I do not know if you are aware, but recently an Under Secretary of State by the name of John Bolton was to testify before the House Committee on International Relations, which the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOEFFEL) and I serve on.

There was a report in the Miami Herald, and let me read certain excerpts from that report, because we are talking about credibility, the credibility of the President of the United States and the credibility of the administration.

Mr. EMANUEL. That is the testimony that was withdrawn, if I am not mistaken?

Mr. DELAHUNT. It was withdrawn because of the CIA insistence that it was exaggerated testimony. This gentleman, who is a leading neo-conservative, or a leading hawk, within the administration, also said back in May of 2002 that Cuba had a bio-weapons program that was being developed. At that point in time, neither Secretary Rumsfeld, Secretary Powell, nor General Gary Speer, in charge of the Southern Command, would support that statement. They talked about capabilities.

But just for one moment, if my friends will indulge me, because I think this is important, because we are talking about Syria, because the President of the United States said today they will face consequences, I hope he is getting sound intelligence.

But this is what the Miami Herald said last Tuesday. I am just going to read some excerpts: ``In a new dispute over interpreting intelligence data, the CIA and other agencies objected vigorously to a Bush administration assessment of the threat of Syria's weapons of mass destruction that was to be presented Tuesday on Capitol Hill. After the objections, the planned testimony by Under Secretary of State John Bolton, a leading administration hawk, was delayed until September. The CIA and other intelligence agencies said the assessment was exaggerated. Bolton's planned remarks caused a revolt among intelligence experts, who said they thought they inflated the progress Syria had made in its weapons programs, said a U.S. official who is not from the CIA but was involved in the dispute. The CIA's objections and comments alone ran to 40 pages."

Mr. EMANUEL. One of the things that the bipartisan commission would look at, in my view, the reason the President said it was important that we had to go to war now, we could not wait another 2 weeks for maybe a possible U.N. resolution to get other countries and persuade them, was the imminent capability, I think he said in one speech, that Saddam Hussein and Iraq had the capability in 45 minutes of deploying a weapon of mass destruction.

The two criteria, this was done in a New Republic article that I thought was excellent, two essential pieces of the State of the Union backing up the nuclear threat of Iraq that the President delivered here: One was the infamous 16 words about the Niger memo which clearly proved there was no attempt, well, it proved that that documentation to that "approach to Niger" was inaccurate.

Second was the famous tube acquisition. In both cases the CIA said both, A, the tubes were not for nuclear capability because they were both coated with chemicals; and second, the acquisition of Niger for uranium or the yellow cake material, this memo was inaccurate, that this event did not occur.

In fact, today on the NBC Nightly News they showed three separate stories about the forgery and how anybody at any point could have easily, just by checking on Google, realized it was not correct because the name at the bottom by the government official of Niger was not accurate. The dates were not accurate. Just looking at it, anybody, not even with intelligence background, could have seen that.

So the two pieces of essential evidence supporting the fact that Iraq was on the threshold of nuclear capability did not meet the standard of both our intelligence community and, in fact, one can say it does not meet even a laughing standard out there in the international community. Hopefully, this will require an investigation of whatever body was formulated of eminent Americans would get to what happened, how did the President put it in his speech, who put it in his speech, who convinced and weighed in on the intelligence community?

I have worked on a few State of the Unions in my time, and I can see this back and forth, and I can see exactly if the White House wants something, and time and again you pressure an agency, time and again you have somebody pushing back, the ultimate compromise that squeezes out of the pressure is, we will say the British said it. So the CIA and the intelligence community who is resisting does not need to own this.

It was desire and a need for a political purpose to have that in the speech, to give the speech some immediacy, some urgency to the moment. That may have happened, may not have happened, but until we have an independent investigation or inquiry or whatever body looks at this, we will always have questions about America's credibility that will then, I think, hamper, not limit, whether Syria is or is not. Syria, we know they are harboring terrorists; whether they are developing weapons of mass destruction we do not know.

We need in the international community, it is clear, given we have 21 units stationed around the world of which I think 16 or 18 are in Iraq, America's military capability, not that they could not muster and respond to another situation, they could, but we are clearly spread very thin; and to convince the world community of the importance of what we see in Iraq, of what we see in North Korea, that North Korea being very relevant today, we cannot afford to have a credibility gap about the President's word, we cannot, as Americans, regardless of your political background.

So I say I would hope that this body of eminent Americans would look at the two points that substantiate the claim that Iraq was on the threshold, not on the threshold, had the ability, that is what the speech and the words say, in 45 minutes could launch a weapon of mass destruction. The nuclear pieces of that clearly did not pass the basic smell test.

Mr. HOEFFEL. You know what the real crime of this is, the really bad impact of this credibility gap that we are talking about that has been developed because of the exaggeration of the threat of weapons of mass destruction is in an age of terror, which we are certainly in, you can argue very persuasively that there will be times when a nation must act preemptively if faced with an imminent threat to protect itself.

We are not dealing, as we all know, with a traditional enemy where you see the ships amassing in the harbor or the armies amassing on the border; that if you are faced with an imminent threat from a terror source you may have to act preemptively, but you must have intelligence that you can rely upon.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Let me ask a question. According to this new doctrine articulated by President Bush, what are the new criteria for a preemptive strike? I have asked that question of experts. I have asked that question of administration representatives. I have asked those questions of people on the street. I do not know what those criteria are.

Are they clear and present danger? What is the amount of evidence that is enough to launch a military strike against a nation? Do we have evidence that Saddam Hussein was prepared to attack the United States either through Iraqi military forces or through the use of terrorist organizations?

Mr. EMANUEL. One of things that has surprised me, I come from the view there is no doubt if you look at the past of Saddam Hussein's actions. He has used chemical weapons on his own citizens. He has used them in the war on Iraq. He has engaged in a series of attempts to repress a regime.

Why would the administration conjure up a threat? Why would you in the State of the Union, in which you are on the threshold of war, decide to go with evidence that was not good enough for the Secretary of State to use a week later, that in October it was taken out of your speech by the various intelligence agencies?

To me, this is still one of the great mysteries. What was it that decided we were going to go on the flimsy evidence of this Niger memo that anybody within 1 minute of sitting down, as clearly on tonight's story on NBC News, they realized if you just looked at it and they looked at people that looked at it independent of our intelligence community.

MR. DELAHUNT. I would like to ask the question, if I could, to the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. Abercrombie), can you or can the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee) articulate clearly and definitively for us and for the Americans, for us, those of us who were watching it, what are the standards, what are the criteria under the Bush doctrine of preemption?

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Naturally, you turn to me when you ask for that.

Mr. HOEFFEL. That will show you to come late for Iraq Watch.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. I was letting you get warmed up.

Mr. EMANUEL. This was his senior high school thesis.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. The question that you pose and was answered rhetorically with another series of questions, really observations by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. Emanuel), I think bear answering. I think there is an answer and it is an unfortunate answer. It has nothing to do with plots and conspiracies, but it has everything to do with a philosophy and an attitude and an ideology which has been expressed again and again by some of the people that have been mentioned here earlier this evening.

If you take a look at the spectrum of essays and books and articles written by those who were now in charge of policy in the administration, Mr. Krystal's book on the mission in Iraq, our mission in Iraq, Mr. Perle, Mr. Booth, some of the think tanks here in Washington, these nonprofit, untaxable think tanks that operate thanks to the tax loopholes that we have which allow them to operate and comment and infest themselves in halls of

government. There are more than one set of interest groups in this town, let me state, and some of them are in charge of this policy.

So the answer, I am sorry to say, in my judgment is this has been a clearly articulated policy of people now associated with the administrations who were determined to start a war in Iraq, to include Syria and Iran, because of the policies that they feel this country should be not only espousing but pursuing in terms of world domination beginning in the Middle East.

So it is clear, even with the publishing of the documentation now over the weekend, that the bombing that took place for perhaps a year or more before the actual launching of the attack on Baghdad was following a pattern to try to knock out selected targets in Iraq before the formal hostilities in terms of an attack actually started.

So I think I am forced to conclude, and this is why I think the idea of having an independent investigation committee is so important, I am forced to conclude that there was a pattern already being articulated publicly and in writing to set this Nation on a course of imperial attack beginning with Iraq.

Mr. HOEFFEL. We wanted to hear from the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee), but it looks like the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. Emanuel) has 60 seconds here.

Mr. EMANUEL. I wanted to make two closing comments on my side on this point.

One, I think we have a serious problem with North Korea. There is no doubt North Korea is on the verge of developing nuclear weapons, and unless America's word and its credibility can be trusted, our ability to muster the international community's outrage and capability to handle this will be questioned. Unfortunately, the President's State of the Union has called the question of our credibility and our ability to muster in the international community when it says this was an immediate threat.

I think the American people, unfortunately, because of this now, are exhausted in dealing with the international crisis which we will have to do.

Secondly, what I want to report and talk about in this group is dealing with the cost. We are paying \$1 billion a week for the occupation of Iraq. There was a story two nights ago, four nights ago on the nightly news of how our troops are now organizing soccer teams in Iraq and sports in Iraq for the young.

We have cut programs here dealing with Title IX which is under attack in this country.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I can tell my friend that there are sports programs that are being cut in my district back home in south shore Cape Cod.

Mr. EMANUEL. I would like to say to all of my colleagues that there is not a Member in this body who does not have playgrounds in their district that are badly in need of repair. We are literally for sports teams.

Now, I am for the reconstruction of Iraq. I have no problem. I just find it interesting that our military, who are never going to be involved in a mamsy-pamsy activity of nation building are out organizing soccer leagues and soccer clubs in Iraq, and yet playgrounds in America go dilapidated. Swings do not get fixed. Youth clubs are not organized in the United States. Title IX is under attack here in America. And we are paying a billion dollars a week in Iraq.

I have said this before on the floor. We have a plan for 20,000 units of housing in Iraq. The President's budget has only 5,000 units of affordable housing here in the United States planned. We have 13 million Iraqis; we are thinking about providing universal health care to half the population. We have 45 million Americans without health insurance who work full time in this country.

I have no problem, Americans have been since World War II and prior to that, one of the most generous people in the world, yet, if you offer them a smaller vision here at home for themselves and their children, their generosity will come into question.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I think we all agree with the gentleman, but at the same time you are not factoring in the \$250 million a week that we are paying to occupy Afghanistan and provide security and stability here. So would you please aggregate the sum from now on?

Mr. EMANUEL. The aggregate sum would be \$4.2 million a month.

Mr. DELAHUNT. This is not for reconstruction efforts.

Mr. EMANUEL. This is just for occupation efforts and our troops overseas. And that totals well over \$50 billion a year for our foreign efforts. I want to say this, members of our body, Democrats, have a Rebuild America account for investment in highways, bridges, investments in sewers and water treatment. All that would lead to greater economic development. It costs \$50 billion.

Now, I have adequately indicated to the sponsors of that legislation that when we come up to authorizing the supplemental for Iraq and Afghanistan, that we should attach the Rebuild America to the Iraqi reconstruction project. If we are going to pay \$50 billion for Iraq over a year, I have got \$50 billion I think we can find investments here in the United States. And there is not a Member in this body whose district does not need economic investment in the areas of a new road, new mass transit, new water treatment facilities.

Again, the occupation of Iraq is essential now that we are there. But we cannot deinvest and deconstruct America in the word of reconstructing Iraq.

Mr. HOEFFEL. We are also aware of the gentleman's American parity act which we are all cosponsors of.

Mr. EMANUEL. Which would require that we invest the United States equal to the goals we are setting in Iraq, whether it is in the area of health care, education, in the area of road reconstruction.

In America, our highway fund will be cut by over \$6 billion, yet in Iraq we are building over 3,000 miles of road which would connect New York to California.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I dare say that if we expended the amounts of resources that we will be expending in Iraq for security and for reconstruction that we could have a prescription drug benefit plan, not just for seniors in this country, but for just about every American. My friend from Washington is here.

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

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

Mr. INSLEE. Madam Speaker, I am glad to join my colleagues because I feel this message needs to be repeated, that Congress is going to get to the bottom of this intelligence fiasco, and the best way to do that is

through a bipartisan public commission to really find out what happened with the American people not getting the straight scoop about Iraq before this war started.

I have heard certain people in the administration think that this is just going to kind of go away; it is going to kind of drift off and Americans will watch reality TV and forget this. I think the administration is very wrong on this; and we need them to embrace this idea of a bipartisan, led by a Republican, perhaps Warren Rudman, some esteemed Republican figure, to lead this bipartisan commission.

I have got four points why this is so important, and the first two come back to the gentleman from Massachusetts' (Mr. DELAHUNT) question, which is what should be the standard for starting the preemptive war. I would suggest two, at least two.

Number one, that the administration will not start a war unless the truth will convince the American people it is the proper thing to do, not the fudged intelligence, not the exaggerated intelligence, not the selective intelligence, but the whole intelligence. What clearly happened here is that this administration did not have confidence enough in their argument about freeing Iraqis, which might be a legitimate reason for a war, there are people who believe that, but they did not have confidence in that so they had to exaggerate intelligence and use selective intelligence and not tell us the whole thing. That is the first fundamental standard we have to meet before a preemptive war.

The second fundamental standard we ought to insist on on a bipartisan basis is that we do the intelligence first and then we make the decision whether or not to go to war. We do not make the decision to go to war and then ask everybody to give the intelligence that fits that preconceived notion. The neutral evaluation of the scenario that occurred here is that some folks in this administration made an early decision to get rid of Saddam Hussein, and yes, there may be some legitimate reasons to do that; and some Americans believe even with no security threat to the United States, but we cannot start a preemp war on that basis, and that is what this bipartisan commission ought to say.

I will just say two other points.

I think some folks are so hung up on this uranium yellow cake they do not realize this is just the tip of the iceberg. This is the smallest tip of the iceberg of this selective intelligence failure.

I heard today a gentleman point out four things that I do not recall the President telling us. The two highest al Qaeda operatives, officers if you will, in our custody in Guantanamo before the war started, told us that they had no relationship with Saddam Hussein. I do not recall the President standing in the State of the Union and telling us that the two highest al Qaeda operatives said they had nothing to do with Saddam Hussein. Maybe I missed that, but I do not recall that.

I do not recall him telling us that a retired national security fellow named Beers has said that looking at the intelligence he could not find any evidence of an ongoing relationship between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein.

I do not recall him telling us that the Central Intelligence Agency told The Washington Post that, although there might have been some communication, there was no outstanding relationship between these entities. I do not recall any of these facts.

What I recall is the administration trying to paint a picture, an implicit assumption of Americans that Saddam Hussein was behind September 11, and all this intelligence was excluded from public information and that was

just wrong. This President said, and it is almost a quote, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein has some of the most lethal weapons systems devised by man. It is almost a direct quote.

When we peel back these intelligence reports, we know there are lots of doubts about these issues.

Mr. DELAHUNT. My colleague is aware under the administration of his father, back in the late 1980s and almost to the inception of the 1990 war, invasion by Iraq against Kuwait, that that administration was actually transferring dual technologies to Iraq and that it was

under the Reagan-Bush administration that Saddam Hussein was taken off the terrorist list; that in 1986 it was the Reagan-Bush administration that installed an embassy in Baghdad; and that during the course of that war, during the course of that war, it was the Defense Intelligence Agency that was providing the Iraqi Army with intelligence; and that it was that administration that provided billions of dollars of agricultural credits to Iraq; and it was that administration that when this Congress, the Congress, a Democratic Congress back in 1989 and 1990 passed legislation which would have imposed sanctions on the Saddam Hussein regime for using chemical weapons against their own people, blocked the passage of those sanctions. Is my colleague aware of that?

Mr. INSLEE. Madam Speaker, I am certainly aware of it.

I tell my colleague what perhaps I was not aware of, and I was stunned when I heard our Secretary of Defense say this the other day. I was stunned. He said that we went to war not based on new intelligence, but by a new impression we had after September 11. We all had the new mindset after September 11. It is clear about that, but the impression this administration gave to the American people, consciously I believe, is that there is a new round of intelligence that necessitated this preemptive attack. Our Secretary of Defense came and told us there was no new intelligence that did not exist through the whole decade of the 1990s to justify the preemptive war. I was stunned when I heard that, when we heard the administration for 4 months tell us that there was all this imminent threat that was going to occur.

I will mention another thing, perhaps unsolicited advice to this administration. They are on the cusp of making some bad decisions. I do not like to use the word "cover-up" because it is too weighted with emotion; but they are not helping figure out what happened here, and there is great danger. I will give my colleagues an example.

Ambassador Wilson, the ambassador who blew the whistle on the uranium yellow cake, the forgery that ended up in the State of the Union speech, I just heard on NBC News tonight, his wife, her sort-of security clearance was jeopardized at the CIA because somebody sort of outed her, if you will, about her CIA contact which essentially could devastate her career. That kind of shenanigans is not going to be helpful to this administration. That is why we need a clear, publicly oriented, bipartisan review, above the table, nobody playing games with this. This is what America needs.

Mr. EMANUEL. Madam Speaker, I would like to add one thing. In all this, we forgot that it only, I think, was like 8 weeks ago Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz announced that the reason they made an argument about weapons of mass destruction was that way they could get consensus within the bureaucracy. They told us that it was somewhat imminent or the new intelligence is or the look of new intelligence.

This was a string to thread the beads together, but it was not exactly something new. It was not something exactly imminent. In fact, it was quite clear, based now if you can kind of peel back some of the pieces and disparate information you get from the newspapers, other magazines, journalists, that there were a lot of questions about the relevance of some of the information they were using to justify the war or the need for the immediacy and the urgency which gets to the question.

In an era of terrorism, there is a logic to preemption, which really is a dressed up code for self-defense; but if that urgency is not there, if the facts he used to establish that urgency are not there, then the justification for preemption, known in normal parlance as self-defense, is then stripped away. Then we have a threat, and the question is do we have war or do we have containment? Isolated military strikes? That is then a legitimate question to postulate, but the information necessary to have that was withheld from the public debate and from this hall.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Madam Speaker, I have mentioned it down here before. I said that we are going to bring the hammer of truth down on the anvil of inquiry, and this is resonating across the country; and we have mentioned here before that in this Iraq Watch that we are doing we have to do it after hours, during Special Orders, because we are not having the opportunity to do this. The press galleries, I will say again, are empty here this evening. We cannot have anybody from these big networks that are trying to make sure that they do not cross the Federal Communications Commission. They all want to be able to consolidate even more, own even more of what message gets out there. The press is not covering the outrage that is taking place across this country with respect to the points that the gentleman from Illinois is raising.

If my colleagues will go to [moveon.org](http://moveon.org), we will find that there are over 300,000 people right now across this country who have indicated that they want an independent commission to look into all the questions, all the inquiry that is being raised in these sessions that we are having in this Iraq Watch, 300,000 people and growing. That does not get the coverage. It is the kind of grassroots movement, the net-roots if you will, that is taking place all across this country, that says we are not going to take it, our democracy is not going to be taken away from us by some self-appointed elitists who have an anti-imperialist attitude about what the United States is going to be or not be and that we are going to be informed about it later and that the sons and daughters of those elitists will never have to pay the price in blood and treasure that it takes to impose that imperialist vision on the world.

I will tell my colleagues that all across this country men and women are realizing they do not have to take it. They can do something about it. They are letting us know about it. Our colleagues have been reading on the floor of this House in some of the shorter special sessions message letters. They are reading communications that are coming in from the [moveon.org](http://moveon.org) petition drive from all over the country, in every State, in every nook and corner of this country, people who do not want to be lied to.

You can fool people. There is no doubt you can fool people, but you cannot keep it up and you cannot get away with it forever. People do not mind facing up to hard truths. Like Ronald Reagan said, facts are stubborn things. People do not mind facing up to it. They do not want to be lied to, they do not want to be finessed, they do not want to be fooled, and they do not want to be played with; and we need to bring this truth forward, and that is why we better have this commission or let me tell my colleagues, this administration and the elitists that support it are going to pay a fearful price.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Madam Speaker, I want to tell my colleague something that might surprise him. You have heard of Pat Buchanan?

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. I certainly have.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Very conservative Republican.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. No question of it.

Mr. DELAHUNT. A commentator I am sure that many of those that are viewing are aware of. This is what he had to say in an op-ed piece that was printed today.

In ruthless candor, these are his words, President Bush does not have the surplus of resources, military, strategic, financial, political, to hold the empire. As some of us predicted a decade ago, the compulsive interventionism of the Bushites might lead to imperial overstretch. Something has to give. It is going to be the empire. From here on it begins to recede. Either President Bush starts discarding imperial responsibilities we cannot carry and bringing the troops home or his successor will.

That is not me. That is Patrick Buchanan.

Mr. HOEFFEL. What I think we need, before I get back to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE), who has only had one bite at the apple night and is going to get another one, we have got to have straight talk about what is happening now and a clear reality and acknowledgment of what is happening now. Let me give one example.

We have a new U.S. commander in Iraq, General John Abizaid, I hope I said his name right, who has acknowledged that we are facing a guerrilla opposition, which I think is an obvious reality that we all know. What he has described as "a classical guerrilla-type campaign" is being waged against our armed services in stark contrast to what the Secretary of Defense has refused to acknowledge. Donald Rumsfeld has refused to acknowledge that we have got an organized resistance or a guerrilla resistance; and as Trudy Rubin of the Philadelphia Inquirer in her commentary said, "You can't fight a war unless you recognize the enemy."

Even on the military side of this conflict, until this new commander has told us the truth, General Abizaid, the civilian leadership of the Department of Defense has not faced the reality. What has happened, as we all know, is since the military victory was announced on May 1 by the President on the ship off San Diego, the American forces have been subjected to repeated ambushes and attacks.

Some 35 Americans have been assassinated since that day. And 10 have occurred since the President said the other day "Bring it on." Since the President said, "We have enough force to protect our forces in Iraq, so 'bring it on,'" ten more Americans have been assassinated.

Last week, Minnesota Public Radio quoted Mary Kewatt, the aunt of a soldier killed in Iraq, who said "President Bush made a comment a week ago, and he said 'bring it on.' Well, they brought it on, and now my nephew is dead." The lack of straight talk and too much arrogance and too much bragging is bringing on this credibility gap.

And so I do not have a credibility gap, Madam Speaker, I am going to honor my commitment to hear from the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) one more time.

Mr. INSLEE. Madam Speaker, one thing that I think is important to say about this commission that we are urging is that it is not a commission to debate the Iraq war or the reasons for the war or the propriety of the war. I represent constituents who have divided opinion about that today. Some of my constituents believe that a removal of Saddam Hussein was justified even if he had toothpicks and that is all he had. Some of my constituents believe that was a legitimate exercise of military force by the United States.

Now, I do not agree with that, but some of my constituents feel like that sincerely. But those same constituents tell me that they did not appreciate being kept in the dark about the reams of intelligence which suggested that the President concluded that there was no doubt about Iraq's having these weapons, when, in fact,

there was massive doubt; that he had no doubt there was a connection with al-Qaeda, when, in fact, there was massive doubt; that he made the decision after he had the intelligence; when, in fact, he made the decision before he had the intelligence. Those same people who believed the war may have been justified do not appreciate that because they recognize this is a threat to democracy.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Madam Speaker, I want to ask a question, because I think that was an excellent point. But there is such a thing, as the gentleman knows, but maybe the viewers do not, as a National Intelligence Estimate, and that is all of the information on a particular crisis that is drawn from all of the agencies that possess intelligence in the United States Government. That was done, and it was concluded in October of 2002.

Now, the President's State of the Union address was on January 28 of 2003, some 3 or 4 months later. Within that National Intelligence Estimate it has been reported, and we have no reason to disbelieve it, that there was significant expressions of doubt; that particularly the Department of State insisted on a footnote which said we have serious reservations about the credibility of this, and they were referring specifically to the securing of uranium from that west African country of Niger.

So let me ask this question of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL), who served in the previous White House. Did President Clinton read the National Intelligence Estimates when he was faced with crises?

Mr. EMANUEL. Well, Madam Speaker, first of all, the National Intelligence Estimate is based on the National Security Intelligence Entities, the Defense Intelligence Entities, the CIA, and I think, if I am not mistaken, FBI contributes to that. So there are four separate entities that get funneled through to the National Security Council that then present that document.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Did President Clinton read it?

Mr. EMANUEL. There is no doubt he read those that were presented, and especially on the doorstep of war.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Then tell me how this President can have any doubt.

Mr. EMANUEL. In fact, I think it was mentioned, and I want to say one thing to our colleague from Washington, that not only did the President not read it, or it has been reported he did not read it, but I think it has also been reported, though I want to have enough doubt, a question mark about what I am going to say, that, in fact, the National Security Adviser said she did not read the whole report. I think that is also in that same story.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I find that unbelievable.

Mr. EMANUEL. Well, one would think on the doorstep of war one would read that. But I want to stress one thing about what our colleague from Washington mentioned. He said the President was certain about his opinion about the imminent danger of Iraq and Saddam Hussein, but the people around him in the agencies and departments had their questions. Yet the President was certain.

Again, I want to underscore this is not to relitigate why we went to war, this is to litigate how we got to war.

Not the Iraqi war. We are not going to relitigate that. We are in, and so we have to support our men and women. It is how that happened so this mistake does not happen again.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. HARRIS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOEFFEL) is recognized for the remainder of the 60 minutes, approximately 5 minutes.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Madam Speaker, let me, in our final 5 minutes here, see who among us might like to make additional comments or perhaps quickly raise a new issue, and I think the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE) has something to say.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. I do not want to raise a new issue, Madam Speaker, but I do want to reiterate the idea of inquiry and how important that is. Because what we are doing can easily be dismissed by those who want to color it with a brush that has politics all over it, and that is not what this is about. It is not about politics in the sense that we are trying to make some particularly partisan point.

I notice in the photographs coming from the rehabilitation wards right here in Washington, DC that the young men and women who have been grievously wounded are not identified as Republicans and Democrats or supporters of a particular policy or not. These are the people that have had to pay the price for other people's arrogance. These are the people that have had to pay the real price. We are not paying any price here.

We all know that someone else will occupy these slots one day. I learned that the first time I was elected when I went to the office to which I was assigned and I realized they slid the names off the door.

They were not screwed on, painted on; they came right off the door. We occupy that only so long as we have the faith and trust of the people of this country. That is what is at stake here. That is what this inquiry is all about. Is our faith and trust being played fast and loose with? That is the issue that is involved. That is why I want to say that as far as I am concerned, we are going to continue these inquiries. This Iraq Watch I hope perhaps can come out into the country, maybe off the floor of the Congress and perhaps go elsewhere. I would be very pleased to take this inquiry perhaps into a town meeting-kind of context anywhere in the Nation so that we can break out of the stranglehold on opinion that is taking place right now. We cannot trust the national media to do it. They are in the grip of the people who own the networks. We cannot trust them. We have to trust the people out there. And so I hope that perhaps with Iraq Watch, we can go elsewhere and go directly to the people, and we can get streaming on the Internet and follow through and let people judge for themselves on the people's network that is out there.

Mr. HOEFFEL. I think that is a wonderful suggestion.

Mr. INSLEE. A brief comment. I went and visited with two Marines who had some pretty significant wounds at Bethesda awhile back serving in Iraq. One was crushed by a tank and one was shot. I just think that those gentlemen understood the value of democracy and what we are here today is to say the Congress needs to understand the value of democracy, and democracy does not work where the executive branch of the United States Government does not level with its own people. I have one question for our next week that I hope we would have answered. Why did the White House in the run-up to the war in Iraq not seek CIA approval before the President of the United States went to the Rose Garden and charged that Saddam Hussein could launch a biological or chemical attack within 45 minutes as administration officials now say? That is a question every American deserves an answer to, and the best way to do it is through Republicans and Democrats working together; and I hope this commission does that. I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for his leadership.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for his leadership. Let me echo the sentiments expressed by the gentleman from Washington. Unfortunately, this past week India stated that they would not provide a division of troops to help us win the peace. It is becoming clear that we are going alone, and maybe

this is the problem of a particular brand of foreign policy. I know that we all are working together; we are in the process of drafting a letter to the President requesting that he go to the United Nations and seek a resolution internationalizing the security and reconstruction efforts in Iraq. I would hope all Americans would call our offices, would call the offices of our colleagues.

I would close with the words and the admonition of Tony Blair that was so eloquent in his speech this past week. He was speaking about the tensions between Europe and the United States. He said: ``Don't give up on Europe. Work with it. Europe must take on the anti-Americanism that sometimes passes for political discourse. And what America must do is show that partnerships must be based on mutual respect and persuasion, not on command. America must listen as well as lead. And then the U.N. can become what it should be, an instrument of action as well as debate."

Mr. HOEFFEL. The Iraq Watch is alive and well. I thank the colleagues for being here this evening. We will be back next week.