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Iraq Watch A Sad Milestone September 8, 2004

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. Carter). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee) is recognized for half the time remaining to midnight, approximately 37 minutes.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, we have come here tonight, my colleagues the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Strickland) and others who may join us, as a part of our continued obligation under the Iraq Watch to present a discussion and an honest critique of the administration's policy in Iraq. My colleagues and I have been engaged in this series of discussions now for several months, and we have done this for one simple purpose. We do not intend to allow the incredible commitment by our armed services that are now engaged in Iraq to be forgotten on the floor of the House of Representatives.

Too often, people are sent into combat and then forgotten, and what the Federal Government did or did not do in sending them into combat is given little discussion and little note, but tonight of all nights, we think it is appropriate and vital for this chamber to discuss what this Federal Government did and did not do to lead us into our current predicament in Iraq. It is most appropriate for us to do this because tonight we have the very sad duty to report, as now Americans know, that we have lost 1,000 American lives in Iraq, a war started by a President under the belief and statement that weapons of mass destruction threatened the security of the United States.

Based on that statement made by the President from the chamber standing behind me some time ago, over 1,000 Americans have lost their lives, and those 1,000 Americans are from 49 States and members of every political party. They are short and tall, rural and urban, and they all served under the flag of the United States and did their duty proudly.

We, on a bipartisan basis, honor them because, no matter what they thought of their commander-in-chief's decision to go to war, they gave their highest measure of devotion to their duty, and we honor it, everyone in this chamber.

I would like to also not forget the men and women who tonight are rebuilding their shattered bodies from injuries, over 7,000 people, many of whom suffered very, very difficult injuries who tonight are recovering in our hospitals across America, in the Mideast and in Europe. Anyone who has talked to those soldiers and seen the incredible courage in their eyes when they are sitting there with pins in their legs and arms and missing limbs, and you ask them how they are doing and they say I am doing fine, sir; and you ask them what their plans are, and they say I want to get back to my unit as fast as I can; anyone who has seen those young soldiers would be incredibly proud of our people in Iraq.

But this does not reduce or obligation to hold the Federal Government accountable for its numerous mistakes in Iraq. It heightens that obligation to blow the whistle on the repeated, continued misjudgments, misstatements, incompetence, negligence and carelessness that has led to this situation in Iraq, and tonight we are going to discuss them.

I would like to, if I can, start this discussion with five rosy projections that, unfortunately, we have suffered in Iraq as a result of this administration's rosy projections. I just want to list these quickly.

Rosy projection number 1: This administration, and in the persons of the President, flew out to an aircraft carrier with a jaunty looking flight suit, landed on the deck of the carrier, proclaimed mission accomplished with a giant banner on the superstructure of that carrier.

Since the President told us mission accomplished, over 800 Americans have died in Iraq. The President's rosy projections were sadly wrong, and there is an emptiness in households and families across America as a result of that wrong rosy projection.

Number 2: The President told us that as soon as we could stand up a new government, this new government would be embraced with the warmth of the Iraqis, with rose petals not only at our feet but at the new government's feet, and that this bearing up of support for the Iraqis and their new flag would bring peace and milk and honey to Iraq. Since this new government has been ``stood up," we have had an increase in the number of Americans killed in Iraq. Another rosy projection by this President that was flat wrong.

Number 3: The President told us by now we would have a secure Iraq, beginning to be capable of having elections. Well, what did we read in the newspapers yesterday? The fact is that huge swaths of Iraq under this administration's policies have been given over to the Taliban and their associates, the militias in Iraq. Fallujah, the place where these folks desecrated the body of four contractors, that our proud marines went in there to do battle, this administration has given up to a militia that essentially is in cahoots with the

Taliban and a fundamentalist regime, and we have that now called a "no-go zone." Same in Ramadi, same in Najaf, same in parts of Sadr City. The fact of the matter is the President's policies have ceded huge parts of Iraq to what he says is the enemy. Rosy projection number 3, that we have essentially given up trying to disarm these militias and kicked the can down the road where eventually our military people are going to have to encounter these militias are now arming themselves and building themselves up in these "no-go zones." Rosy projection number 3 that our people are paying for.

Number four: The President told us that Iraq would pay for this. You recall the projection by Mr. Wolfowitz who came here and said that Iraqi oil was going to pay for this. Sad joke on the American taxpayers. We are now over \$200 billion into it with hundreds of billions of dollars to come, with no projection of how long it will be. Wildly optimistic, and in fact, we find out that the money we have appropriated cannot even be spent because of the lack of planning for the post-conventional war situation in Iraq. Because of this administration's lack of having a plan for the peace, only 2 percent of the money we have appropriated has actually been spent in Iraq of the \$18 billion. They will get around to spending it, and U.S. taxpayers will pay through the nose for it, but the fact that this administration had such a rosy projection is going to cost us over hundreds of billions of dollars to the American taxpayer. Rosy projection that was wrong, number 4.

Number 5: The President implicitly told us that there would not be war profiteering and gouging in Iraq in these hundreds of billions of dollars of taxpayer money, but in fact, we found that Halliburton, this corporation with incredible ties to this administration, has already been subject to millions of dollars of cost overruns which they cannot account for, that the Pentagon is now trying to get our money back for. In fact, they have talked about withholding 15 percent of further payments to Halliburton as a result of this lack of credibility to American taxpayer dollars. Rosy projection number 5.

So we would like to say that this President's projections have been accurate, but the sad fact is we stand here tonight with 1,000 Americans who have given their lives in Iraq. We have a continued tale of failed administration policies in Iraq, and this Nation deserves accountability for the people who have made these decisions in Iraq, which have cost us so dearly in life and treasure.

In fact, when you look at this entire administration, which has bungled this operation so badly, you cannot find a person who has essentially been held accountable for their multiple failures. There has not been essentially a person who has lost a vacation day or had their little perks taken away or their corner office.

This administration has a response to the American people when they are criticized. They simply say you are not an American if you criticize this administration. We are here to say it is not only a duty to criticize, a right to criticize this administration, it is a duty, and we are fulfilling it.

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

Mr. INSLEE. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Washington State for yielding.

It is a sad fact that just yesterday we observed the 1,000th death of a soldier in Iraq, and that is a tragedy. When you think of what that means, not only to the individual lives that have been lost, but when you think of the pain and tragedy of the families who are left behind, the moms and dads, the children, the loved one's wives, husbands and so on, they will have to endure the rest of their lives without their loved one.

I sometimes talk to people about this war, and they seem sort of uninvolved. The war seems to be something that is distant to them. They know of no one who is currently serving in Iraq. They know of no one who has been lost or terribly injured over there, but I say to them, if you are a mother or a father and you have a child, a son or a daughter, especially a teenage son or a daughter, you had better be paying attention to what is happening in terms of this war.

Senator McCain has said publicly that it is possible this war will require our soldiers to be in Iraq for 10 or 20 years, and if the administration currently in power and the people who are advising this President remain in power and they continue the same kind of foreign policy that we currently have, I believe it is inevitable that we will have to impose a military draft. So every mom and dad who does not want to see their son or daughter sent to fight this war in Iraq ought to be paying attention.

I would just like to take a few moments to share with my colleagues here, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Hoeffel), and the gentleman from Washington State (Mr. Inslee), and my friend, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt). We hear a lot of talk, and there have been a lot of political charges about the \$87 billion supplemental bill. The President recently made the accusation, I believe at his speech in New York, implying that when Senator John Kerry voted against the \$87 billion, he was voting to deprive our troops of body armor, and so I would just like to share the truth about the body armor issue.

I would remind my friends that the war began in March of 2003. March of 2003. And at that time, long before there was ever a vote on the \$87 billion, in fact 7 or 8 months before that vote occurred, this administration, this President, this Secretary of Defense sent our American soldiers into Iraq in that initial assault, an invasion of Iraq, without protective body armor.

The body armor that I am talking about is the interceptor vest, the body armor that was first available, I believe, in 1998. It is a high-tech piece of equipment. It is made of Kevlar, with ceramic plates. These ceramic plates have the ability to stop an AK-47 round. We knew, because they were used in the Afghanistan conflict, which was the war on terror, by the way, we knew that they were used in Afghanistan and that they protected

American lives. The Pentagon has indicated that a number of American soldiers were probably saved because they had interceptor vests, this body armor.

When we sent our soldiers into Iraq in March of 2003, thousands of them went into that country without this protective body armor. And I repeat, this was months before the \$87 billion vote on the supplemental request.

Now, last September, in September of 2003, I received a letter from a young soldier in Baghdad. He happened to be a West Point graduate, a gung-ho Army guy. He said to me in that letter, Congressman, I am so proud of what we are trying to do here, of the effort we are making to help these people. But he said to me in that letter, Congressman, the men that are serving with me are asking me why they do not have this body armor for protection, this interceptor vest.

That was in September of 2003. I wrote Secretary Rumsfeld a letter that September, and I asked him how many of our soldiers had been killed or unnecessarily wounded because they were not protected with body armor. I asked him to commit to us that he would not make this protection available to foreign troops until all of our American troops were protected, because there were reports in the press that we were making these interceptor vests available to some of the foreign troops before our troops were equipped. And I asked him if he could give me a date certain when all of our troops would have this protection.

Now, that letter I sent to Secretary Rumsfeld in September of 2003, long before the vote on the \$87 billion supplemental.

I received a letter on October 27 from General Myers, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He said that Secretary Rumsfeld had asked him to respond to my letter. And in his letter to me, General Myers said that they expected that our troops would be equipped with this body armor by December of 2003.

Lo and behold, the very next day, on October 28, I received a letter from Secretary Rumsfeld's chief of staff; and in his letter he said it would probably be November of 2003. So even Secretary Rumsfeld and General Myers were not able to agree on the issue.

In regard to my question about how many troops had been killed or wounded without this protection, I was told in the letter from Secretary Rumsfeld that they did not collect that information on the battlefield, so he could not answer that question for me. Well, at least, I thought, I can believe what Secretary Rumsfeld has said and General Myers, that our troops will be protected by November or December.

Lo and behold, before we left this city for the Christmas holidays, I am talking about last year, the Pentagon held a briefing; and in that briefing a high-level Pentagon spokesperson told us that our troops would probably not be equipped with this body armor until January of 2004.

Now, I emphasize the war started in March of 2003. Now they are saying it is going to be January of 2004 before they are equipped. So I wrote a second letter to Secretary Rumsfeld in mid-January of this year. I reminded him that he had failed to keep his word regarding having our troops protected with this body armor by November, and I asked him once again to please step up to the plate, accept responsibility, and provide this equipment to our troops.

Finally, in March of 2004, one entire year after the war started, the war started in March of 2003, finally in March of 2004 I get a letter from the Pentagon telling me that at that point all of our troops had been given this lifesaving protection.

It was not Senator Kerry that made the decision to send our troops into combat without this protection. The responsibility rests with George W. Bush, the President; with Secretary Rumsfeld, the Secretary of Defense. That is where the responsibility rests. And it troubles me that the President would stand before the American people and fail to accept responsibility.

The President talks a lot about accepting personal responsibility, and yet he is trying to shift the blame for our troops going without this vital equipment, when it was the President and the Secretary of Defense that sent our troops into battle. And for those who may listen to this discussion and question me, I would just urge all Americans to check with the soldiers that are or have been in Iraq. Ask them how long they went without this protection. Ask them how many of their friends were injured, some of them killed, unfortunately killed because they were not adequately protected.

That is the truth. I have the letters that I sent to Secretary Rumsfeld and the letters that I received from him, which I would be happy to make available to every Member of this Chamber to verify what I have shared with my colleagues this evening.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back to the gentleman from Washington.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I was just going to offer an answer on how long it was until they got body armor. It was too long. And it is unfortunate that the same people that made that mistake are still running the show in Iraq and not one of them has been held accountable for this foul-up, and we are demanding accountability.

Mr. Speaker, I will now yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt).

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me, and I just want to follow up on the point the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Strickland) has made, and I welcome my friend, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Hoeffel), as well.

I found it particularly offensive that the President of the United States stood up once more and misled the American people and did not accept responsibility. As the gentleman indicated, the body armor issue was well-known or should have been well-known to this

administration prior to the invasion of Iraq. It was clear. It was something that we all again repeatedly encouraged, and with the leadership of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Strickland) presumed the matter was being attended to, and it was represented to us that it was being attended to. It had nothing to do with the \$87 billion supplemental budget.

Mr. STRICKLAND. If the gentleman will yield for one moment, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Of course.

Mr. STRICKLAND. In the letters I received from Secretary Rumsfeld and General Myers, there was never a mention of a shortage of money. They said there was a shortage of materials, which means that there was a failure to plan ahead. We knew months before this war began that we would likely need this body armor, and yet the plans were not made.

The fact is that initially they were not even wanting to give the body armor to all the troops. In the letters that I received from General Myers, he said that the body armor was initially planned only for the troops that were on foot. If a soldier was in a Humvee or in some other mechanized vehicle, they were not even issued body armor, and there were no plans to issue body armor to these. Only those who were foot soldiers, basically, were to be provided with this protection.

Now, as my colleagues know, many of our soldiers that have been so terribly injured are injured as a result of being in vehicles and there are explosions and other kinds of artillery fire. This body armor could have protected many of them.

I am afraid some were wounded unnecessarily.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, it reminds me of the issue of weapons of mass destruction when the Polish Prime Minister at the request of the President of the United States made a commitment of Polish troops, obviously at some political risk to himself, and when it became clear that there were no weapons of mass destruction said publicly, "We were misled." What does that do to the credibility of the United States when the Prime Minister of Poland, an ally, someone who has made a contribution of men and women of his nation in terms of the effort in Iraq, the military invasion, makes that statement?

Again, we have the example of David Kay, appointed by this President, who took the charge of this White House, who went to Iraq, who led the efforts to determine whether there were weapons of mass destruction, who concluded that there were none, and then later and subsequently when this White House, this President and this Vice President refused to accept unequivocally the conclusion reached by their own appointee that there were no weapons of mass destruction, then finally David Kay, a hawk on the war, by the way, spoke to the Guardian, an English newspaper and said, "The administration's reluctance to make that admission was delaying essential reforms of U.S. intelligence agencies and further undermining its credibility at home and abroad."

Admit the mistake, Mr. Bush, come clean with the American people, accept responsibility rather than shift it because of an election-year gambit. That is what that is about.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I want to note one other thing that the administration needs to take responsibility about. The President during his speech during the Republican convention, which was quite a show, and some of us found Zell Miller mildly entertaining, there was a lot of discussion about Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and there was one thing that I really respected about President Roosevelt, and that is on December 8, 1941, after the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt did not suggest we bomb China, he focused on the group that attacked and killed thousands of Americans, which was the Japanese.

This President has not followed Franklin Delano Roosevelt's pattern. Roosevelt said, let us attack the enemy that has attacked us, which in our case was al Qaeda, a fundamentalist Islamic movement that this President has spent the last 2 years trying to confuse the American people, with some success, in confusing al Qaeda with Iraq, and he has done the equivalent of invading China after September 11, and we have suffered accordingly.

It is very important for us not to allow the power of propaganda to overwhelm the power of reason, and we cannot allow, with 1,000 Americans dead in Iraq, America to forget that this President had tried to whitewash the situation by calling the war in Iraq as the war on terror when there is no credible evidence of connection of Iraq with September 11, and the President and Vice President know it, and they keep saying it anyway.

The independent 9/11 Commission reached that conclusion despite the fact that the President and Vice President did everything they could to thwart the creation of the 9/11 Commission and now accept its recommendations enthusiastically.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Hoeffel) who has led the discussion on this subject.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I concur with everything that my colleagues have said this evening. For almost a year and a half, those of us engaged in Iraq Watch have been coming here raising questions and posing alternatives for our failed national policy.

The bottom line is, as the gentleman just said, we have lost our national focus on the real threat, which has been and remains Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda. We have allowed the Bush administration with its obsession with Saddam Hussein to distract us from what has been the real threat and obviously remains the real threat today.

We know the sordid history of misstatements and failed policies and misleading comments by the President and his top advisors. They misled us about the weapons of

mass destruction. As the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee) said, they misled us about a nonexistent connection about Saddam Hussein, al Qaeda and 9/11.

The President misled us about how he would use the military power that he asked for in the fall of 2002. He said he would not use it until he exhausted diplomatic options. He broke that promise. He said he would not use it until he put together an international coalition such as his father had done 13 years before. Broke that promise. And he gave us a number of commitments to allow the international inspectors once back in Iraq to conclude and complete their work, and he did not allow them to finish their work before using this power.

The reality is while it is a good thing for Iraq that Saddam Hussein is out of power because he certainly was a murderous tyrant, it has not made America safer. This has reduced our status in the world and has made the challenges and the risks of the war on terror more difficult for America, not easier.

What really gripes me tonight, in addition to all of the things that we have mentioned, is what now seems to be the use of our American military in Iraq to suit the dictates of Iraqi domestic politics. We have lost 150 brave American soldiers in defeating the Iraqi Army. It took us 19 days, and our soldiers did everything we asked them to do and fought bravely. We have lost 850 equally brave Americans in what has turned out to be the occupation of Iraq, and I think a big reason for that is the misuse of our troops.

Let me quickly quote from a Washington Post article dated August 24, 2004, with the title "In Najaf, Iraqi Politics Dictate U.S. Tactics." The point of this article published a few weeks ago is that Acting Prime Minister Allawi is deciding when American troops are used, when they are held back as suits his purposes for the domestic Iraqi political situation that he faces.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, the President frequently says, I will not allow our troops to be under the control of foreign commanders. Well, that may be technically correct, but what the gentleman has pointed out is the fact that our troops are serving at the behest of the Interim Iraqi Government. They are being told, you cannot go into this city, you can go into this city, you can go there, you cannot go there. It troubles me that young men and women from my district, from southern and southeastern Ohio, many of them have probably never traveled very far from home ever, are now in a foreign land, and they are basically serving the needs of the Iraqi Interim Government rather than looking out for the international interests of this Nation.

Mr. HOEFFEL. What enrages me is that the American politicians who whip themselves up into a foaming rage over the notion that someday, somehow, someday American troops might be under foreign generals' command in a U.N. peacekeeping force or something of the kind are completely silent when something much worse is happening here. Our troops today in Iraq are not under foreign generals' command, they are under

the command of foreign politicians. It is outrageous. Let me read from this article and yield back. I do not want to monopolize this time. But in this Washington Post article, August 24, 2004, entitled "In Najaf, Iraqi Politics Dictate U.S. Tactics," at one part it says here in the article:

"If there is any doubt that the new Iraqi government is calling the shots in this country, the supporting evidence is mounting daily in Najaf. Here, on the order of interim Prime Minister Allawi, night raids bolt forward or are halted, bombs fall from the sky or remain snuggled beneath the wings of F-15s, howitzers roar or are silenced, and ambitious combined arms operations are meticulously planned and then shelved, only to be revived a day later when a shift in the political winds has been detected."

A quote from Captain Brian Ennesser, intelligence officer for the First Cavalry's First Battalion, Fifth Regiment: "This mission is like Normandy. Only instead of the weather, we're waiting on the politics."

One more quote and I will yield back. Later in the article:

"Since the U.S.-led occupation authority transferred power to the Iraqis on June 28, the chain of command has kept its structure but changed personnel." A quote from Major General Peter Chiarelli, who commands the First Cavalry: "It's civilian control of the military. That's what our system's all about." But the article then says: "Except now the civilians are not Americans. They are Iraqis. And we are losing brave Americans because they are being put in the middle of disputes between Allawi and Sadr. They are being used to push forward domestic political agendas for this interim government that is interested in holding onto its power."

It is my view that we need to refocus on the war on terror and Osama bin Laden and redeploy troops that are bogged down there. We have got 170,000 troops in the Iraqi theater, 140,000 in Iraq, 30,000 in Kuwait, peacekeeping, border patrol, police work. We have got one-tenth of that number, 17,000, in Pakistan and Afghanistan doing everything we ask them to do, working bravely around the clock but clearly not enough of a focus to get bin Laden and destroy al Qaeda.

We have lost our focus. We need to get our troops out of the midst of this domestic strife in Iraq and get them back to bases. We cannot abandon Iraq, but we do not have to be in daily patrol between these warring factions trying to feather their own nests and pursue their own domestic agendas. We can make sure that the country does not fall without having our troops in daily combat because of the inability of this administration to focus on what is really challenging this country, which is the problem in Afghanistan and Pakistan posed by Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. Carter). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee) is recognized for the remainder of the hour, approximately 23 minutes.

Mr. INSLEE. The point the gentleman has made is the cost that we have suffered in addition to this horrendous loss of life is that the real war on terrorism has been injured by the war in Iraq, and I want to talk about some of the ways that has happened.

Symptom number one of a failed war on terrorism: you do not finish the job against the enemy that attacked you, and we have not finished the job in Afghanistan which is the source of the attack of September 11. September 11 came from a group trained in the camps of Afghanistan; and we appropriately, on a bipartisan basis, started a war in Afghanistan because it was necessary, but now it is, in a way, abandoned by this administration because this administration has not given what we need in Afghanistan to finish the job, to build up a meaningful stable government in Afghanistan. The very place that attacked us has been put on the back burner.

Senator Graham the other day disclosed that a year before the Iraq war started, General Franks or one of the generals told him that they had started to move Predators that were being used in the hunt for Osama bin Laden to get ready for the attack on Iraq. So we took our resources against, if I can use the 1941 example, out of the war on Japan and attacked Beijing.

Mr. STRICKLAND. I just want to point out that the person who was responsible for the attack on this country was Osama bin Laden. He has taken credit for that. He has boasted to the international community, to the world, that he was responsible for the attack upon our country. The President stood right at that podium and he said, Osama bin Laden can run, but he cannot hide. Well, he ran and thus far he has hidden. Osama bin Laden is somewhere free on the face of this Earth tonight planning the next attack upon our country. So the person who was responsible for attacking us has gone free and we have diverted our resources to Iraq, costing 1,000 of our soldiers' lives, 6 or 7,000, I guess nearly 7,000 injured now. And Osama bin Laden is a free man tonight.

Mr. INSLEE. I would like to add, Osama bin Laden is not only free physically, he is free apparently from the interest of the President of the United States who has not mentioned his name, as far as I can tell, for about a year. The man that he promised us he would get dead or alive, this President does not even allow his name to pass his lips because it may distract some of the attention from Iraq. That is way too free for my tastes.

I want to mention one other thing about why we have not been as successful with al Qaeda as we should have been. Obviously, cutting off the money of al Qaeda is extremely important. If you can kill the money trail, you can dry up some of their attacks on us. We found out we have more inspectors and investigators with the Department of the Treasury tracking American tourists who go to Cuba than we do tracking the money going to al Qaeda. We are spending over \$200 billion a year in Iraq, but we cannot fund enough people to find Osama bin Laden and really cut off his money. We are more interested in Cuba and Iraq. That is a distortion.

One other thing I want to mention. We have a tremendous threat in this country, and the President is right about one thing, that there is a real threat against this country. One of those threats is there are 20,000, in a sense, loose nuclear weapons from the former Soviet Union that are not in secure locations tonight, that some terrorists could get ahold of. But what have we done to try to increase our rate of locking up that fissionable material so al Qaeda cannot get ahold of it since September 11? What has this administration done? Essentially nothing to improve our efforts to try to lock up that fissionable material. They have not increased their appropriation, as far as I know, a dime to get rid of this material that al Qaeda, we know, is interested in using to attack us. Why not? They are spending \$200 billion in Iraq to chase weapons of mass destruction that there were zero weapons of mass destruction, zero nuclear weapons in Iraq. We know there are 20,000 nuclear weapons that are running around the former Soviet Union, some of which were locked up in a chicken shed with a little lock on it you could break with bicycle lock busters, literally; and this administration will not put more money into that effort to lock up those loose nukes. This is a misprioritization.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I appreciate this conversation tonight. I think what is interesting is that while we speak about Osama bin Laden, we have to be very clear that because of the delay that has occurred and the diversion of effort and resources into securing Afghanistan and nurturing democratic institutions, not only has Osama bin Laden, who is obviously a symbol to those who share his world view but has encouraged new groups, al Qaeda has morphed into a number of groups, some of which have names, some of which do not have names, and that terrorism is spreading throughout the world as we speak today. If the President is suggesting that the invasion of Iraq somehow served as a deterrence to these terrorists, he is absolutely wrong.

It is interesting to read that in terms of the efficacy of Iraq, of the invasion of Iraq, an NBC news analysis that was reported September 2 of this year showed that of the roughly 2,900 terrorist-related deaths since the 9/11 attacks on our homeland, 58 percent of them, in excess of 1,700, have occurred this year.

This year. So terrorism is burgeoning. We identified the wrong enemy, and now we are playing catch-up, and the world is more dangerous.

And I would like to just to conclude with a quote from someone whom we all respect who has served this country well, a good Member of Congress, the Vice Chair of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of this branch, a conservative Republican from Nebraska who retired recently to assume a new position of some stature in terms of foreign affairs, by the name of Doug Bereuter. He wrote a letter to his constituents because he recognized what we have been talking about, and this is what he said: "It was a mistake to launch" the invasion of Iraq. "Our country's reputation around the world has never been lower." In other words, our credibility is suffering. "And our alliances are weakened. Now we are immersed in a dangerous, costly mess, and there is no easy and quick way to end our responsibilities in Iraq without creating bigger future problems in the region and, in general, in the Muslim world."

That is from Doug Bereuter, a good Member, someone who made substantial contributions to the debate and discourse in this House, who is a Republican with excellent conservative credentials.

This is nonpartisan. It should not be a partisan issue. This is about identifying the right enemy and taking the necessary action to defeat those who would harm the United States.

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

Mr. INSLEE. I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee). It has always been clear that we need to internationalize the challenge in Iraq, and we need to "Iraqatize" the challenge in Iraq. We need international support from what is happening. I do not believe this President can do it. But from the first day we should have been returning to the United Nations to do the reconstruction. We should have turned to NATO and the Arab League nations for security. Those countries are a lot closer to Iraq than we are and have a much bigger stake than we do in a stable Iraq. But we have not done that. We have done the occupation of Iraq with 90 percent of the troops being American and 90 percent of the money being American, and we have not yet stabilized that country.

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

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

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, our occupation in Iraq is being characterized by ineffectiveness, by incompetence. If one just reads the daily newspaper and sees comments and admissions by the Secretary of Defense Mr. Rumsfeld and the Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Myers, the number of cities in Iraq that are no longer under the control of the Interim Iraqi Government and American occupation forces grows on a daily basis. Fallujah, Ramadi, Baquba, Samarra, Najaf, Karbala, and perhaps soon a significant section of Baghdad are no longer under the control of the Interim Iraqi Government. The Baath Party is experiencing a resurgence, President Bush, except Saddam Hussein is no longer the head of it.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee) would yield, what we have here is a situation where we have lost 1,000 of our troops, nearly 7,000 injuries, \$200 billion has been spent, and we are in effect giving over Iraq to the bad guys. The President is not willing to admit it, but when we have huge cities and large geographic areas in Iraq where American soldiers cannot even enter, it seems to me that we are capitulating, that we are giving in and giving over this country that we have shed blood to try to liberate.

I would just like to say something, though. I know our time is nearly coming to an end. We have talked about several things here. What we have talked about I think can be

characterized as miscalculation. That is the word the President used. He said he miscalculated. He miscalculated, and 1,000 soldiers have died. He miscalculated, and almost 7,000 soldiers have been injured. He miscalculated; over \$200 billion of the taxpayers' resources have been spent there.

But this is what I would like to just emphasize in my closing remarks. The only people sacrificing really for this war are the soldiers who are fighting and risking their lives and the families back here at home who love them and who worry about them. They are the only ones sacrificing. None of us here in this Chamber are sacrificing, or over in the Senate Chamber, or down there at the White House. We do not have sons and daughters fighting this war. I think there may be two Members out of the 535 Members of the House and Senate with a child that is an Active-Duty soldier, and I do not know how many at the White House. I doubt if there are many, if any at all. And yet it is easy, it is easy, under those circumstances to talk tough, to say we will pay any price.

We are not paying a price. We are not even paying for this war. The cost of this war is being passed on to the children and the grandchildren that will follow us. They are the ones being asked to pay the cost of this war. What did the President ask us to do to sacrifice for this war? He told us to go shopping. He told us to go shopping. Where is the sacrifice other than those who are at this very moment risking their lives for us, the moms and dads who are grieving and will grieve for the rest of their lives over the loss of their son or daughter, the husbands and the wives and the children who will live out the rest of their lives without their loved one because of the miscalculation of this administration and their unwillingness to even recognize what they have done?

That is what bothers me. We all should be sacrificing and sharing in the sacrifice, but we are not being asked to do so. Go out and live our life. Go shopping, go to the ballgames, spend money, do what we want to do, and let someone else's kid fight this war for the Iraqi Interim Government. That is totally unacceptable.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I would point out since the Republicans wanted to show respect for Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Roosevelt in the throes of World War II did not say, let us all enjoy a tax cut. He said, let us tighten our belts, grow victory gardens, buy Liberty Bonds, and get this job done. But this President is not willing to ask Americans to make those sacrifices for reasons that we have to ask ourselves why, but he will not do it.

And when we talk about the people whose lives are on the line in Iraq, there is a draft already going on in that country. There is a silent draft, and that silent draft is if one was in military service at any time in the last 2 years or 20 years by the sum of what they count, they are potentially going to haul them back in and send them to Baghdad, and that is what they are doing. There is a silent draft going on right now, and it is unfair to the families who had their lives disrupted, who thought their military service was over. And thousands of Americans are getting dragged off of their jobs and away from their families this month because of the poor planning that went on.

I want to mention, just talking about the future if I can, as Laurel and Hardy said, you know, this is a fine mess that we are in. But the question is, what do we do now? Because we are in it, and we are in it together. Republicans are in it, Democrats are in it, urban and rural, we are all in this mess together, so what are we going to do?

Let me suggest that there are some things we need when it comes to a leader of America right now to find a way to solve the problem in Iraq. I would suggest there are three things we need in a leader right now, in a President right now.

Number one, we need a President who can have the respect and good working relationship with the rest of the world, to try to get the rest of the world to pitch in and help in Iraq. We need someone who has not burned his bridges with friends or potential allies, someone who has not offended the rest of the world, someone who has not ended up getting a 90 percent disapproval rating with some of our purported allies on our policy in Iraq, someone who can really lead a world alliance. We have to ask whether we have a President who is capable of that right now.

The second thing we need is we need a President who is willing to fire the boobs and incompetents who have made ridiculous decisions that have cost thousands of American lives and injuries. We need somebody who is willing to clear the decks of the individuals who ought to be held accountable for the lack of body armor, the lack of armor, the poor planning, the decision now to let these militias go out and breed where our people are going to suffer eventually when we have to face them. These people need to go. We need a President who is not great friends with these people and who will not fire them. I have to seriously question whether we have a leader right now in the White House who is capable of that.

The third thing we need is we need a President who is basically willing to take a fresh approach in Iraq. We need a new strategy in Iraq. We need someone who is truly willing to break with the past, try new approaches, talk to different people, hire different staff, get new intelligence and get new strategies in Iraq.

Unfortunately, this President has a quality of refusing to change, no matter what the evidence is. The evidence be darned, he is going to continue the route he chose.

That is not good enough right now for America. We need better and we need a fresh approach. This country needs to ask whether we have a leader in the White House who is capable of adopting a fresh approach in Iraq. That is a serious question Americans will be asking this November, and I hope it is something they chew on.

I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Hoeffel).

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I agree with the gentleman. Clearly we share the President's goals of creating a stable Iraq that can choose its own government. But the policies that he has chosen and the rigidity in which he has implemented those policies and the inability to change course when the policies are failing are clearly leading us to a

disaster in Iraq, where our troops are in the middle of the domestic political striving of competing ethnic and religious interests, unable to stabilize the country because we are doing it alone, because we do not have the international support that we need, nor have we trained up the Iraqis that we fired from the Iraqi army and fired from the Iraqi border patrol. We have not trained up Iraqis to do the police work and the peacekeeping that they ought to be doing for themselves.

The President continues to act with arrogance, with a cowboy diplomacy and an unwillingness to admit error, compounded by the outrages expressed on the campaign trail, the intentional efforts to mislead Americans, trying to connect 9/11 with Hussein, which is a bogus connection, and with the Vice President saying the other day, outrageously, that if the voters make the wrong choice on November 2, that will lead to more acts of terror against this country.

I do not know that I have ever heard a more outrageous or reckless statement made by any leader of this country, unless it would be the President's statement himself in the summer of 2003 that they should "bring it on," and 800 Americans have died since the President said that.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield further, what the Vice President should do, he should reveal those statistics that I reported to you earlier about the increase in the incidents of terrorists' acts all over the world that are directly related to the failed policies of this administration.

To my left there is a photo of the President with an individual by the name of Ahmed Chalabi, who is the source of much of the faulty intelligence that the administration was looking for to base its case on for the American people.

Now we have the FBI investigating the Pentagon, the office of one Douglas Fife, to determine whether Mr. Chalabi received information that was passed on to Iran, to Iran, about our policy initiatives and considerations relative to Iran.

Here we have the President of the United States with an individual which reports indicate, I am not reaching a conclusion, but which reports indicate was a spy or a double agent for Iran. This same gentleman was in this Chamber during the State of the Union address by this President last January and sat up directly behind the First Lady.

Now, I have to tell you, to follow up on the gentleman from Washington's point, I would think that anyone who was involved or connected or listened to Mr. Chalabi, who, by the way, was a convicted felon in Jordan for embezzlement of some \$300 million from a bank in Jordan and had to flee Jordan, anyone who listened to that individual should have been fired a long time ago. What an embarrassment to this administration, what an embarrassment to the United States.

Mr. STRICKLAND. If the gentleman will yield for a moment, I remember being in the Chamber that night of the State of the Union address and looking up there and seeing Mr. Chalabi. I believe Mr. Chalabi was fairly close to Vice President Dick Cheney.

Now, the accusations are, as the gentleman says, and they are credible accusations, yet to be proven but under investigation, that Mr. Chalabi got information from a member of this administration, from the Pentagon, took that information and shared it with Iran. Iran, this country that we all now recognize is developing nuclear weapons, probably a much greater threat to this country directly than Iraq ever was, and it is under investigation that this man took information and shared it with Iran. If that proves to be true, that is a terribly, terribly serious thing that has happened.