

country. He is coming or she is coming for a job. That job is being offered by an American corporation or an American company or just an American citizen, and we have to stop that. Each are culpable. When those people died in Victorville, California, the people who are responsible for their death, beyond those individuals who put themselves in harm's way, who decided to actually take the risk of coming into this country illegally, beyond those people, there is still more culpability. Part of it goes to those American employers who enticed these people into the United States. Part of it goes to our own government and every Member of this Congress who refuses to deal with the issue of illegal immigration. Yes, it is our responsibility. Yes, their blood is on our hands.

Mr. Speaker, I state that categorically, that we have, over the course of the last couple of decades, made it enticing for them to come to the country illegally; made it illegal to do so, of course, to come without our permission; but, on the other hand said well, if you can do it, if you can make it, we will look the other way. So, of course, millions do, and some of them get caught in this trap, and some of them die. It is our fault. We share the blame. So does the Mexican Government for encouraging this flow, for doing everything possible to move unemployed young Mexican workers into the United States to reduce their own problems in Mexico and to increase remittances from people who come to the United States and send money back to Mexico, which becomes a significant part of their own GDP.

They also encourage the flow of illegal immigrants into the United States from Mexico in order to have them, as I was told by Juan Hernandez, who was at that time the head of the ministry in Mexico called the Ministry for Mexicans Living in the United States. He said that it helps them influence our government's policy, the massive number of Mexican nationals living in the United States helps them, he said, influence our government's policy vis-a-vis Mexico. So Mexico has a role to play and is equally culpable for the deaths of the people that have come across this border and found themselves in horrible circumstances and died as a result or were harmed in the process.

Mr. Speaker, all of these people have some role to play and some degree of culpability, and I say to every single one of them, I challenge you to actually deal with this forthrightly. Stand up in front of the American public and state unequivocally that what you want is, in fact, a Nation where there are no barriers to immigration, where people can come at their will. Say that. It may win. It may win a majority of the votes in the Congress of the United States and the President may sign that kind of a bill. I, as I say, am a "no" vote, but it may happen. I just want the debate. I want it to happen in this

body. I want it to be done in a de jure fashion, not in a de facto way.

I know that what we are doing in America today is in fact moving in exactly that direction. We are eliminating our borders, but we are not doing it through a legal process; we are doing it in a de facto way, by looking the other way. And there are many, many bad things that happen as a result of that desire on our part to look the other way. Well, I want to force this Congress, I want to force this Nation, I want to force the President of the United States to look at this straight in the eye, and say we are going to deal with it one way or the other. Open our borders or secure them. Those are the only two options open to us as a Nation. Take your pick. Vote on one side or the other. Let us get this job done. Let us tell the people where we really stand. Let us get this problem solved one way or the other.

POSTWAR IRAQ: WINNING THE PEACE AND FINDING WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

THE SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FEENEY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOEFFEL) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I will be joined by several colleagues this evening in a discussion about Iraq, with two fundamental questions to be addressed: First, are we winning the peace in Iraq after our impressive and important military victory, are we winning the peace in Iraq? And secondly, where in the world are the weapons of mass destruction?

I will be joined shortly by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the minority caucus chair and a senior member of the Committee on International Relations, and by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT), a senior member of the House Committee on International Relations, and several others. We would like to have a colloquy this evening amongst ourselves to discuss this issue, to raise these issues for the American people.

Let me make a few points to get us started. We all agree that our Armed Forces performed brilliantly in Iraq. We are very proud of our young men and young women in uniform, and the military victory we won was important in that it removed the threat posed to regional and even world peace by the murderous regime of Saddam Hussein. But while the military victory is ours, the military mission is not yet accomplished, because we have not found and dismantled the weapons of mass destruction.

There must be an accounting to Congress, to the American people, and to our allies regarding the weapons of mass destruction. They are certainly, in the hands of a terrorist, the greatest security challenge we face, and yet we do not know where the weapons of

mass destruction are today. We need to determine what we must do to disarm and dismantle them. We must determine who has the custody of those weapons and what steps we must require of any new custodian to render those weapons harmless. If the weapons have been destroyed, then how did that happen, and how is it possible that our security agencies would not have known? And, fundamentally, did the Bush administration overstate its case for war against Iraq, based upon weapons of mass destruction? Did the administration mislead the Congress and the American people intentionally, or not, about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction program? Did the Bush administration misuse the intelligence gathered by our national security agencies? Did they hear only what they wanted to hear? Did they believe only what they wanted to believe? Or did they tell us only what they wanted us to hear about the weapons of mass destruction?

The Bush administration has a growing credibility gap. Mr. Speaker, regarding the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, and we must have a full accounting.

Let me quickly touch on the second topic before turning to my colleagues, and that would be whether we are winning the peace in Iraq. We are faced with enormous challenges: peacekeeping, humanitarian aid, reconstruction, and building a new government. And the truth is that events in post-conflict Iraq are not going as well as they should. Security is a huge problem. Rampant lawlessness is blocking the economic recovery and the establishment of a civil society that we all want to achieve. Humanitarian aid is lacking. Reconstruction has not even started. And the establishment of a pluralistic and representative government seems a very long way off as the demands of religious and ethnic groups are loud and unresolved.

What are we doing in Iraq to deal with this? We have replaced all of the senior administrators that we first sent under Jay Garner and have replaced them with a new crew under Paul Bremmer. We have won the United Nations' approval by the Security Council of U.N. Resolution 1483 which names the U.S. and Great Britain as occupying powers, occupying powers under international law in Iraq. So we are responsible for the recovery, the reconstruction, the administration, and the establishment of a new government in Iraq as the occupying power.

Well, what have we done to get the ball rolling here? First came the Chalabi plan, Ahmed Chalabi, a 30- or 35-year exile from Iraq, head of the Iraqi National Congress. He visited my office on October 3, 2002. I believe he was making the rounds of members of the Committee on International Relations. To tell my colleagues the truth, I found Mr. Chalabi to be a blowhard, to be a blusterer, full of spin, the kind of man my grandfather would have called a four-flusher.

□ 2310

I am not quite sure what that means, but I think Achmed Chalaby meets the definition.

The Pentagon civilian leadership believed Achmed Chalaby, believed him when he said that Saddam Hussein had vast stores of weapons of mass destruction. Those weapons have not been found. They believed Chalaby when he said there was a close connection between al Qaeda and Hussein. That connection has not been established.

The Pentagon civilian leadership believed Chalaby when he said the Shiite Muslims in the south of Iraq would greet American military forces as liberators, greet them with open arms. Instead, they are treating us as occupiers and colonizers.

We flew Mr. Chalaby in with 700 followers. We armed him. We gave him arms, Mr. Speaker. We have now had to take those arms away because he does not have credibility.

The second plan was the Group of Seven plan to take seven so-called leaders, mostly exiles like Chalaby, and put them in as an interim authority to run Iraq. We have had to give up on that. Jay Garner could not get that to happen.

The third plan now is the Bremer plan. Under the Bremer plan, Paul Bremer, the new viceroy, American Viceroy in Iraq, will appoint a 25- to 30-person advisory council to give us advice on how to rule Iraq. We are not forming an interim authority or government, as we spoke of before. We hope to establish by fiat what really should come from within, from the people of Iraq.

So we have some very real challenges. I have more comments to make, but I have colleagues here who are anxious to join this debate and engage in a colloquy.

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

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me. I want to congratulate him on conducting this particular Special Order because I think it is very important.

Clearly, newspaper reports, interviews over the course of the past several days, have raised these issues, really, to a level that I know our respective offices are receiving numerous telephone calls by constituents that are expressing profound concern.

Earlier this evening, a Republican colleague of ours talked about these issues. I think he was suggesting that they were emanating from a crowd that he called Blame America First. I respectfully have to disagree with him. I think these are questions that have to be asked. I think it is our responsibility to ask them on behalf of the American people.

We are not the only ones that are asking these questions. If there is a Blame America crowd, there are many people in that crowd who are not only highly regarded and highly respected but are Members of both parties.

I think it is important to note that the top Marine officer in Iraq, Lieutenant General Jim Conway, and again, this is from a report in The Washington Post, when no such weapons had been found and the move was announced just hours ago, and we are talking about a reorganization of the group that is missioned or tasked to look for these weapons of mass destruction, he said in a press conference that U.S. intelligence was simply wrong in leading the military to believe that the invading troops were likely to be attacked with chemical weapons.

This is a statement by Lieutenant General James Conway. I doubt that he is part of any group that would blame America, but he is making a statement that deserves an answer.

The Republican Chair of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of this House, highly regarded, well respected on both sides of the aisle, in a letter dated May 22, 2003, and I am referring to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS), he co-signed a letter to the director of the Central Intelligence Agency. Let me just simply quote several sentences:

"The House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence believes that it is now time to reevaluate U.S. intelligence regarding the amount or existence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and that country's linkages to terrorist groups such as al Qaeda.

"The committee wants to ensure that the intelligence analysis relayed to our policymakers from the intelligence community was," and I am quoting the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS), "accurate, unbiased, and timely in light of new information resulting from recent events in Iraq." He goes on: "The committee is also interested in understanding how the CIA's analysis of Iraq's linkages to terrorist groups such as al Qaeda was derived."

No one in this body would ever describe the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS) as a member of the Blame America Crowd.

When we raise questions about the planning and the efforts of reconstructing Iraq after that war, I am confident that no one would ever accuse the Republican chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Richard Lugar, as part of the Blame America Crowd. Let me read, Mr. Speaker, to my colleagues and to the American people what Senator LUGAR, a Republican from the State of Indiana, chairman of the foreign relations committee, had to say in an opinion piece that he wrote on May 22 of this year:

"But transforming Iraq will not be easy, quick, or cheap." These are his words: "Clearly, the administration's planning for the post-conflict phase in Iraq was inadequate. I am concerned that the Bush administration and Congress has not yet faced up to the true size of the task that lies ahead or prepared the American people for it. The administration should state clearly that we are engaged in nation-build-

ing." That is Senator LUGAR's phrase. "We are constructing the future in Iraq. It is a complicated and uncertain business, and it is not made any easier when some in the Pentagon talk about quick exit strategies or saying dismissively that they don't do nation-building. The days when America could win battles and then come home quickly for a parade are over."

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the gentleman if he is aware of some of the comments made by the administration last fall in the lead-up to the votes, the very important votes taken in Congress and in the United Nations regarding the war on Iraq. Statements of certainty from the President and other high administration officials have not been supported by recent disclosures from the intelligence agencies, the kinds of problems that I believe are leading to the credibility gap that I see growing here.

Let me give the gentleman a couple of examples, and I would be interested in his comment.

President Bush said in the Rose Garden on September 26, 2002, that the Iraqi regime possesses biological and chemical weapons. The Iraqi regime is building the facilities necessary to make more biological and chemical weapons."

However, at the very time, the Defense Intelligence Agency was circulating a report in September of 2002 which said there was "no reliable information on whether Iraq is producing or stockpiling chemical weapons, or whether Iraq has or will establish its chemical agent production facilities."

□ 2320

This and other information led Greg Thielmann, who retired from the State Department in September 2002 as director of the Strategic Proliferation and Military Issues Office in the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, who reviewed this classified intelligence gathered by the CIA and other agencies in the run-up to the debate in the Congress and the U.N., to accuse the administration of distorting intelligence and presenting conjecture as fact. And he was quoted this week by the Associated Press as saying, "What disturbs me deeply is what I think are the disingenuous statements made from the very top about what the intelligence did say."

Is the gentleman aware of these statements and inconsistencies, and would he care to comment on them?

Mr. DELAHUNT. Yes, I am clearly aware of them and it even goes beyond to simply Mr. Thielmann. In fact, there is such outrage among intelligence professionals, people that have committed their lives to this work who I am sure are devoted to their country and are clearly not part of the Blame America Crowd; but they have come together and formed a group, Veterans Intelligence Professionals for Sanity.

They wrote recently to President Bush to protest what they call a policy, and, again, I am quoting here, "a

policy in intelligence fiasco of monumental proportions. While there have been occasions in the past when intelligence has been deliberately warped for political purposes," this is their letter, "never before has such warping been used in a systematic way to mislead our elected representatives in voting to authorize war."

That is a very serious accusation; and the American people deserve to have these individuals, other individuals come before in public session, the appropriate committees in Congress, and listen to what they have to say and provide us with an opportunity to inquire to them, let us lift the veil of secrecy. This is a democracy.

When we talk about American values, we talk about transparency and accountability; and I am profoundly concerned as to what I am witnessing over the course of the past 2 or 3 weeks, specifically as it relates to the issues of weapons of mass destruction and the issue of links with al Qaeda and the Saddam Hussein regime.

Mr. MENENDEZ. On the gentleman's very point, I want to thank our colleague for convening this opportunity to talk about a very important issue. I would like to ask both of the gentlemen, you sat, as I did here, during the State of the Union speech. You heard the President, as I did, say that one of the concerns is that Iraq sought to buy uranium in Africa. And that was included in the President's State of the Union speech, one of many compelling reasons why supposedly we had to be alarmed about Iraq and Saddam Hussein. And yet we read in today's Washington Post that the National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice conceded that that was an inaccurate claim. And yet here before the entire body of Congress and the American people, we were told that one of the compelling reasons, why do you buy uranium? You buy uranium for nuclear devices. Iraq is something that we need to be concerned about.

And my question to both of my colleagues is, does this not go to the fundamental issue that if the President's preemption doctrine, not that many of us agree with that as a doctrine that should be followed by the United States, but this doctrine of preemption which basically says we cannot wait for the risk to rise to a level that is a threat to the national security of the United States, we have to go in there in any country and preempt that threat, that even if one is to ascribe themselves to that view, that it is based upon the ability of the United States too gather accurate intelligence and make honest assessments? Does that not go to that very purpose of that doctrine?

When we see the revelations that seem to be coming forth like Condoleezza Rice saying, yes, that statement that the President made before Congress and the whole Nation about uranium purchases in Africa being false, that those begin to raise

concerns. How do we begin to have any credibility in any such preemption doctrine when the fundamental underpinnings seem to be at question, which is what I think the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT) is saying.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Exactly. I think the point is, how in the future, if we face a genuine threat to our liberty, to our democracy, do we turn to our allies and the rest of the world and say this is a moment when the United States must take action, given what appears to be, what appears to be issues surrounding the quality of our intelligence.

Let me just go a bit further with the example that you alluded to. It was so shoddy, the intelligence work, that a local police department, let alone our intelligence agencies, would have, I hope, discovered that this information was false. It was based on forged documents. It was one of the documents being signed by the foreign minister of this particular nation which happens to be Niger, not Nigeria, but Niger on the continent of Africa, signed by the foreign minister. And simply taking the name of the foreign minister and doing an Internet search would have revealed that the foreign minister whose signature appeared, in fact, had left that particular role, had resigned from government for 10 years, 10 years.

What does that say about the quality of the intelligence that was relied on by the President and by those who supported the military intervention in Iraq?

And yet some would suggest that to even pose these questions or raise these concerns is Blame America First? I respond by saying it is defending America, defending our democracy, defending our credibility, defending our claim to moral authority among the family of nations. Not to do so would be unpatriotic.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I think the gentleman's point is well taken. As a matter of fact, one of the things that I was additionally concerned about, and the gentleman did mention the Internet and how anybody who just did a casual search would see that this foreign minister had not been in office in a decade, and yet we rely upon it as fact by which we act and we do not even do a rudimentary study to find out whether that document had legitimacy.

It is interesting to note that one of our allies in this regard seems to have the same problem in this regard. There is an article that appeared in The New York Times that talks about how the top aide to Prime Minister Blair wrote to the head of Britain's Intelligence Service earlier this spring conceding that the government's presentation of a report on Iraqi arms was mishandled. And the report which is entitled, "Iraq, Its Infrastructure of Concealment, Deception and Intimidation," was used as part of the reason to pursue an invasion of Iraq and Saddam Hussein. And it is now referred to in the British news

media as the dodgy dossier because of evidence that part of it was down loaded from the Internet, completed with typographical errors from an American student's thesis that relied on 12-year-old public information. And it is now being reviewed by two parliamentary committees in Great Britain because it raises doubts about its central claim that Iraq's chemical and biological weapons were in such a state of readiness that they could be launched within 45 minutes, within 45 minutes.

□ 2330

That type of information is incredibly frightening when that is the basis under which we would deploy American troops, put at harm American soldiers.

There is no question, I think we would all agree, that Saddam Hussein was a dictator, was a bad actor, happy to see him leave from the world stage; but the question is, what invokes the policy of preemption, the use of U.S. forces and power abroad, under what basis? That is why so many of us who asked questions at the time and say, well, what is the foundation, what is the clear and present danger to the U.S., what is the imminent threat, have real concerns now as I think we see this intelligence information suggesting that there was not necessarily a clear and present danger, any imminent threat to the United States.

I think it puts us in a serious doubt with the international community when the next situation arises. I do not know what my colleague thinks about it.

Mr. HOEFFEL. The certainty that was used by the Bush administration to present this information in the fall of 2002 I think is a critical issue here. It is not completely clear at this point what all of the intelligence agencies were saying. Their information is becoming declassified and is beginning to be made public, but it is very clear what administration leaders were saying. In addition to the President, whom I already quoted also on September 26, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld told reporters, "Iraq has active development programs. Iraq has weaponized chemical and biological weapons." Yet a national intelligence estimate of October 2002, which was reputed to have said that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction, when we look at the backup material that is just being declassified, it is much more equivocal.

The question is was the intelligence wrong or were the political leaders who were getting that intelligence misusing it? Were they hearing what they wanted to hear? Were they telling us what they thought we ought to hear? Were these innocent mistakes? Were they unintentionally mishandling the information, or was it more sinister?

I think these are fundamental questions that need to be asked if the gentleman is right; that if we are going to evaluate this new doctrine of preemption, a fundamental part of that has to be faith and credibility that our fear of

imminent attack from another nation is an accurate fear, and if it is not an accurate fear, then the whole notion of preemption cannot possibly work.

I know my colleagues are anxious to respond, but we have been joined by a senior member of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT) who is sitting patiently and I think has quite a bit he would like to add to the discussion. So I would be happy to yield to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT).

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for coming out here at 11:30 at night to discuss this. The tragedy and really travesty of this whole thing of us being out here at this hour of the night, we have no mechanism to which we can get at the truth. They will never have an investigation in this House that ought to be done on what the President has said, what he has led to believe.

In Great Britain, they are calling for an independent judge to look at the whole question. What do we do in this House? Our distinguished colleague, who was mentioned before, from Florida was, Let's have the intelligence community look at their reports and see if they can evaluate how they did. That is about like asking the fox to go down to the hen house and check the lock, see if the key works. I mean, that makes no sense at all in my view.

It is clear we have two choices. We either have the choice that the President and those people who presented the evidence, or whoever presented him bad information, which implies stupidity, or we have a situation where they manipulated us. I voted against it because it was clear to me from September that they were so eager to go to war that they were going to say whatever they had to, and they shifted from al Qaeda to weapons of mass destruction to aluminum tubes to cake from Niger. Anything they could grab they threw up here and said this is the reason we have to go to war.

The other day Wolfowitz said the reason we had to go to war was because we did not have any other way to get at him. They were sitting on a lake of oil so we could not manipulate him financially anymore so we had to attack. North Korea, we can manipulate them financially because they are broke. We can squeeze them, but there was no way to squeeze the Iraqis.

In my view, we were going to go to war from about the first of September on. They had made the decision, and they came out here and repeatedly presented information.

In one of the training sessions before they went to the United Nations, they were rehearsing with Mr. Powell, and he finally got so frustrated looking at this stuff he threw pages up in the air and said bull-, and he used the word from the barnyard. He said this is nonsense. But yet the next day he got up and presented it to the whole world as this was the truth. And here we are, 80

days after they say the war is over. I mean, the President stages this photo op out there and lands and says, well, we have conquered it. You know why he does not say the war is over? Because if he did, he would have to face the reality or the real travesty of this thing is that they never planned for after the war.

The mess they have got over there right now is incredible, and I mean all we have to do is read the BBC. The BBC says that the incidence of diseases such as cholera, dysentery, and typhoid are 2½ times greater in the month of May 2003 than they were in the month of May 2002. That is what democracy brought the children of Iraq. That is what our President says he was going to bring. We are going to bring democracy, we are going to bring you cholera, we are going to kill kids on the basis of diarrhea.

The electric lights are not on. Why? Because they are having a big squabble with Bechtel about whether they ought to privatize the electric industry. The water is not clean because they are having a squabble with Bechtel about privatizing utilities.

And the worst thing was in today's newspaper. In today's newspaper, the New York Times on page 15, here we have a colonel that is responsible for 500,000 people in southern Baghdad. He has got 700 paratroopers and he is supposed to run a city of half a million people. He says, "I was in Haiti but I arrived here with zero experience running a city. We all wonder if we can go back and apply for an honorary degree in public communication. A lot of this stuff we are just completely feeling our way in the dark." This is a colonel in the United States military talking.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, if I can ask the gentleman a question, I am glad he moved us on to the questions of reconstruction and new governance in Iraq. It seems to me the biggest problem facing America in post-conflict Iraq is the perception, if not the reality, that we are an occupying colonial power as opposed to a liberating power, anxious to work internationally with existing organizations to develop a representative government.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. My colleague is absolutely correct. The Arab world has had this before. They saw the West come in into Palestine, into Algeria, into Egypt. They were going to be there just a couple of years to get things stabilized after the Ottoman Empire was over and the First World War was done, and they stayed for 25 years. These people see us, they have got a memory, and they are just saying, hey, get out of here, let us run it; you said we were going to be able to elect our own people. My colleague from Pennsylvania has already pointed out that we have already said we cannot have an election until you learn to pick the right people. So we are going to give you a group of 10 that we will select, and that way we will put an Iraqi face on the government.

Now, if you cannot ask where is our democracy, I do not know. They certainly have a right to choose their own government. It should not be decided by our government who is going to run that country.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Massachusetts I think has a comment.

□ 2340

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, let me pick up on the issue that the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOEFFEL) raises and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT).

Our troops made us proud. We all support them. Every American supports them. Now they are being asked to do something, as the gentleman indicates, that they have not been trained for. There they are on the ground in a situation that at best is unstable. I do not even want to calculate the number of dead American soldiers on a weekly basis that have occurred as a result of guerrilla-type attacks, ambushes. It is simply not fair.

And the irony of this is that the Army Chief of Staff, General Shinseki, indicated before the war that it was his judgment, his estimate that we would need several hundred thousand troops in Iraq for an extended period of time. He was dismissed by the Secretary of Defense. I think maybe it was the Under Secretary of Defense, Mr. Wolfowitz, maybe Mr. Rumsfeld.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. It was Mr. Rumsfeld.

Mr. DELAHUNT. But that was grossly exaggerated. Now we discover that General Shinseki is absolutely correct. When I asked during the course of a House Committee on International Relations hearing to the Under Secretary of Defense, Mr. Dan Fife, simple questions, I think his responses are informative; and if I could indulge, I asked Secretary Fife, "We read different estimates of the cost of reconstruction to the American taxpayers. What is the current estimate of the administration in terms of the cost to the American taxpayers for the reconstruction of Iraq?"

"Mr. Fife: There is no total estimate for the whole government for the whole range of things."

"Mr. DELAHUNT: There is no estimate. Is there a range?"

"Mr. Fife: I am not aware that anybody has pulled together all of the threads."

So then I said, "Well, I would hope that they would pull the threads together, and if you can get that information to me in writing, I would appreciate that."

This is maybe several weeks ago rather than at the end of the combat, the hostilities announced by the President. I would hope, in fact, that these estimates would have occurred months before the military intervention was launched. Then I go on, "You have answered my question, but I would like to receive something in writing, Mr. Secretary, and I would like to share it

with my colleagues. I think it was General Shinseki that estimated some 200,000 troops would be necessary to secure stability in Iraq. What is the current estimate from the Department of Defense and for how long would they be required?"

The Under Secretary's response: "These kinds of questions have been an issue for some weeks, and we are continually being asked. And we are, obviously, not getting through on a key point which is there are so many things, so many different aspects of reconstruction and security, and each aspect depends on events and it depends on things we do not know about and we cannot know about. For example, how smoothly is the transition to an Iraq interim authority going to take place, and how quickly are the Iraqis going to be organizing?"

I responded, "I respect that, Mr. Secretary, but at the same time I would hope that the department would have been prepared to provide a range in terms of worst- and best-case scenarios. I think we have a right to that information. Let me ask you another question: Do you have an estimate in terms of when an election in Iraq may occur?"

The Under Secretary responded, "No, we do not."

"I appreciate your answers. You indicated there appears to be a narrow popular support for a theocracy similar to the one in Iran. Do we have polling data to support your thesis, or is this just an opinion through intelligence?"

Mr. Fife responded, "It is an opinion that comes from intelligence. It comes from diplomatic reporting."

"But there is no polling data, I take it?"

"I do not know whether there are. I do not know off the top of my head whether there is polling data."

So then I said, "Let me ask this question. Let me pose you a hypothetical question. If we have a free and fair election and if as a result of that election there is a leadership that does not necessarily feel warmly towards the United States, are we unconditionally willing to accept that particular leadership, presuming again free and fair elections?"

Mr. Fife answers, "We are going to be working with the Iraqis to get a government organized, and part of that is going to be organizing a constitution and a bill of rights."

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I think the questioning was a precursor, as mine was, when Secretary Powell appeared before the committee before that, and I asked the Secretary how long, how many lives will we lose, how long will we be there, how much will it cost, and are we nation building?

And I know that my colleagues have listened certainly for the decade that I have been here, listened to our colleagues on the other side of the aisle talk about how they abhorred the concept of nation-building when we were in Bosnia and other places, stopping

real atrocities that were taking place, and hearing we are into nation-building.

And yet as the gentleman was trying to elicit from the witness before our Committee on International Relations, which we both sit on, we have no real planning. There was Jay Gardner, who was designated as the head of the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance. Here we have the Department of Defense doing nation-building, something that we consistently heard our colleagues on the other side of the aisle rail against, and he in essence was on the job a full 3 weeks, and after all of that preparation that supposedly took place for him to be there, we get rid of him in 3 weeks. He was going to develop a national assembly of Iraqis, and that did not work. And then his State Department successor, Ambassador Bremer, thought that perhaps seven opposition groups might be able to work effectively as an interim government. That was soon abandoned.

Now we are talking about a so-called advisory council of 20 or 25 Iraqis, but this latest plan of an advisory council seems to minimize, not increase, the participation of Iraqis in the process for months, if not longer.

So here we are in this preemption doctrine for which we now have serious questions about the underpinnings under which we committed massive force because it was alleged at the time that there was a clear and present danger to the United States. We are told by the administration, well, you have to have a lot more time; and yet we did not want to give any more time to U.N. weapons inspectors, but we are asked to give enormous amounts of time here. And we have the full roam of the country uninhibited. And then we supposedly were prepared for the post-Saddam era, and we seem not to be able to put that together, or I am not sure what our intent is.

□ 2350

We do not seem to know where Saddam Hussein is. We also do not seem to know where Osama bin Laden is, and that is a whole other issue in terms of Afghanistan and what happened. And so you have the confluence of all of these issues.

Mr. McDERMOTT. There is one other one you have left out. That is our allies, the British. Their defense chiefs are quoted in the newspaper as saying they are resisting calls for British troops to be sent to join American forces in Baghdad because they could, quote, be sucked into a quagmire. They do not want British troops caught up in the rising tide of anti-American violence. So even our allies are stepping back now and saying, hey, look, you guys got over in there and you said you knew what you were doing.

It is more complicated even than our own problems.

Mr. MENENDEZ. The point really is that it is the congressional responsi-

bility for oversight that we have on behalf of all of the American people to raise the questions and get the answers that ultimately lead us to make the right choices in the future, informed choices, based upon real substantive information, not perceived or possibly manipulated information, and to be understanding that we have got to be prepared. We won the war; we salute the men and women who did not ask whether this was the right conflict or not but just responded to the Nation's call. I visited one of our bases and the young men and women there told me, Congressman, we don't ask whether this is right or wrong, we don't pick the time, the place or the conflict, we just respond. We salute them for that. But before we send those young men and women, sons and daughters of Americans of this country, we should know that we are sending them on the right information, that we have a plan not only to win the war but then to achieve the peace and to make sure that the seeds that we seek to sow in terms of democracy take place. Those are some of our concerns I think in this process.

Mr. HOEFFEL. The gentleman from New Jersey speaks very eloquently about congressional responsibilities, the things we ought to be asking about. You were talking about how to get a representative government started in Iraq. It seems to me that what Congress ought to be pushing the administration to focus on in our efforts to create liberty is to create the institutions of liberty first. We cannot have a democratic system in Iraq if they do not have the institutions of a free press and a functioning judiciary and the traditions of free speech and a civil society and a noncorrupt bureaucracy. In fact, all that needs to be founded in some written constitution that has public support and public input. What does my colleague think we need to do to achieve that, if he agrees with me that that is the fundamental goal that we have got to establish first before democracy is ever going to come to the people of Iraq?

Mr. MENENDEZ. I think there are a variety of things. I am sure some of our colleagues have some ideas as well. But fundamentally you have to get Iraqi civil society back engaged. You have to create the wherewithal to show that not only were we liberators, hopefully, but at the end of the day that we have also come to help really create a better society and to assist Iraqis to be able to do that. That comes with, first of all, at least having the functioning entities of civil society be able to take place, as you suggested, some of those institutions. As our colleagues suggested, to get some of the basic fundamental services that Iraqis would expect from a liberating force to take place and to begin to act. So, clean water, running sewerage systems, the opportunity for electricity to be present, the return to schools of children, the opportunity for hospitals to

be able to take care of the sick. The rudimentary elements of a civil society start there. And then to engage civil society within Iraq to begin to perform some of their own functions and to also ask the beginnings of Iraq's natural resources to go for the purposes of helping Iraq rebuild itself. I think the American people have the right to know how long are we going to continue to be there? How many more lives will we lose? How much will it cost? And, as I always listen to our colleagues here in the House and in committee, what is our exit strategy? What is our exit strategy?

Mr. DELAHUNT. We do not seem to be hearing that anymore.

Mr. MENENDEZ. No, we do not hear about exit strategies or nation building anymore.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Or lockboxes, either, for that matter. As the both of you were talking about the men and women that really made us all proud, and we consider our very best, I think it is important to state unequivocally that when they return, it is not simply about parades, it is about respecting them and delivering the promise and the commitment to veterans that I know each and every member of our party is willing to make. No cuts in veterans' benefits. None at all. That is unacceptable and would be unconscionable.

But let me end my digression and go back to the issue of nation building and just read a paragraph from the May 19 Washington Post. It is entitled "Plan to Secure Postwar Iraq Faulted." The author writes the following paragraph:

"In interviews here and in Washington and in testimony on Capitol Hill, military officers, other administration officials, and defense experts said the Pentagon ignored lessons from a decade of peacekeeping operations in Haiti, Somalia, the Balkans and Afghanistan."

Let us be candid and let the American people hear this: that in Afghanistan, we are at great risk of returning to that kind of chaos, that kind of volatility, instability that occurred prior to our invasion of Afghanistan. It is a mess in Afghanistan. The President of that country, President Karzai, cannot leave Kabul. The rest of that nation and many sections of Pakistan bordering Afghanistan are rife with Taliban and with other terrorist groups. And we have failed miserably in reconstruction efforts there. I would hope that this administration and this House would look to Afghanistan as an example of what not to do and go forward with a sensible plan that we can all support, because we know our responsibility.

Mr. HOFFFEL. Would the gentleman agree that using NATO as a peacekeeping force might be the right thing to do in both Afghanistan and Iraq?

Mr. DELAHUNT. I think what is rather ironic, of course, is in Afghanistan, our NATO ally Germany is play-

ing a key and vital role. Afghanistan militarily was truly a coalition of the willing, not a coalition of the coerced, the bribed, but a coalition of the willing. But I think it is important that we approach the reconstruction of both Afghanistan and Iraq on a multilateral basis. We cannot ask the American people to continue to bear the full burden. We have already made a comment in Iraq which practically guarantees a new hospital in every Iraqi city, 100 percent maternity coverage for Iraqi women that is going to be funded by the taxpayers of the United States. And what are we doing here in this Congress under this Republican leadership to Medicare? We are cutting it by \$95 billion. That is not fair to the American taxpayer. It is not fair to the American people.

Mr. HOFFFEL. I thank the gentleman for his comments, for his leadership in the House and his eloquence on the House Committee on International Relations.

Would my friend from New Jersey like to make some final remarks as our time is short?

Mr. MENENDEZ. Very briefly, I appreciate the gentleman's engaging in the dialogue, and I hope we will continue it in the future. I think we owe America's young men and women who went into harm's way, that before we call upon them again for a preemptive strike, that we are doing so based upon sound information, that we are based on intelligence that is honest, truthful and transparent, that we ultimately have a plan not only to win the war but to win the peace, because we are losing soldiers every day. It is not as well publicized, but we are losing soldiers every day. We deserve, before we send the finest to answer the Nation's call, and that is where the congressional responsibility takes place, in asking these questions, in getting answers and being able to prepare for the future.

Mr. HOFFFEL. I thank my colleagues for joining me.

CORRECTION TO THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD OF THURSDAY, JUNE 5, 2003, AT PAGES H 5036-H 5037

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE MEXICO-UNITED STATES INTERPARLIAMENTARY GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PORTER). Pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 276h and the order of the House of January 8, 2003, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Members of the House to the Mexico-United States Interparliamentary Group, in addition to Mr. KOLBE of Arizona, Chairman, appointed on March 13, 2003:

Mr. BALLENGER of North Carolina, Vice Chairman,
Mr. DREIER of California,
Mr. BARTON of Texas,
Mr. MANZULLO of Illinois,
Mr. WELLER of Illinois,

Ms. HARRIS of Florida,
Mr. STENHOLM of Texas,
Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA of American Samoa,
Mr. PASTOR of Arizona,
Mr. FILNER of California, and
Mr. REYES of Texas.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. BAIRD (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of an event in the district.

Mr. BECERRA (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of personal reasons.

Ms. KILPATRICK (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of official business.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and June 10 on account of a family illness.

Mr. REYES (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of personal reasons.

Mr. SMITH of Washington (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and the balance of the week on account of personal reasons.

Mr. HOUGHTON (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today and June 10 on account of family matters.

Mr. TOOMEY (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today on account of official business.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

The following Members (at the request of Mr. PALLONE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:

Ms. PELOSI, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MILLER of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. KIND, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. EMANUEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. SOLIS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MCDERMOTT, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WATSON, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

The following Members (at the request of Mr. GUTKNECHT) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:

Mr. BURTON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, today and June 10.

Mr. GUTKNECHT, for 5 minutes, today and June 10, 11, and 12.

(The following Members (at their own request) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. RODRIGUEZ, for 5 minutes, today.