given a ranking from 1 to 10 in each category, with 10 being the most favorable.

Recently in 2004 the USA scored well in economic systems and currency stability, et cetera; but it had a dismal ranking in the category of permit issues. This ranking is based on the time and expense required to get permits, not on stringency of regulations. In 2004, the U.S. had a numerical score of 4. That score puts the U.S. 19th out of 25 countries. The U.S. ranks below Peru, Ghana, Colombia, South Africa, Argentina, Canada, Brazil, Namibia and Bolivia. Only seven countries rank below the U.S.

Keep in mind that this is an improvement, that the Bush administration has made progress because previously under President Clinton, we had a 2 ranking. The U.S. was tied for 24th out of 25 countries with Indonesia. Just why does the U.S. have to have such a low rank in permit issues?

Mr. Speaker, we have covered tonight the many, many reasons that jobs are moving offshore in America while our industries are being decimated, why manufacturing is being sent overseas and our friends, while talking about it, continue to be a part of the problem. I thank the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. BEAUPREZ) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) for allowing me to participate in this Special Order.

## IRAQ WATCH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BISHOP of Utah). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I anticipate that shortly I will be joined by some colleagues for our customary Tuesday night hour where we discuss the situation in the Middle East with a particular focus on Afghanistan and Iraq. We have described this hour as the so-called Iraq Watch. As we did recently, I think it is an opportune time to explain to those watching us this evening and my colleagues who preceded us that the normal legislative business of the House of Representatives has concluded, and we are now in that period called Special Orders.

That is why we have an empty Chamber. Members are elsewhere, doing their homework and getting prepared for tomorrow's legislative business. Again, in terms of equity and fairness, Republicans are allocated 2 hours and Democrats are allocated 2 hours and we alternate back and forth. As I mentioned earlier, I anticipate that I will be joined relatively soon by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND), and the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE) to have our customary conversation.

But I would like to begin this evening's conversation with those that are viewing us and, as they join me, with my colleagues about the issue of credibility, because as I am sure we are all familiar, if our word is not trusted, if we are perceived to be untrustworthy, we encounter serious problems as we go through life. The same is true obviously of a nation, particularly a Nation like ours that claims justifiably a certain moral authority, a Nation that values truth and honesty and a Nation that is hurt when others speak of deception and deceit when it comes to the United States of America.

The reality is, Mr. Speaker, that our motives are being questioned. There was a recent survey done by the Pew Foundation. This was a survey done in seven nations spread across Europe and the Middle East. Majorities in those seven nations believe that our intervention in Iraq was motivated by a desire to control Mideast oil. Let me read to you those nation-states and the percentages that embrace this particular view of the United States of America. Fifty-one percent of the people in Russia accept as gospel that our intervention in Iraq was predicated on a desire to control Mideast oil. Fifty-eight percent of the population of France shared a similar view. Sixty percent of German society echoed those sentiments. In Pakistan, the number was 54 percent. In Turkey, an erstwhile ally, 64 percent, almost two-thirds of the population, believed that the United States launched the attack on Iraq because of our desire to control Mideast oil. In Morocco, that number was 63 percent. In Jordan, that number was 71 percent.

What is particularly disturbing, Mr. Speaker, is unfortunately this cynical view is reinforced by various news accounts that reveal American companies have been doing business with rogue nations. There was a recent CBS ''60 Minutes'' expose. I think most Americans were unaware that despite the fact that nations like Libya, like Iran, like Iraq were considered rogue nations, Iran particularly, being one of those nations designated by the President as part of the Axis of Evil, that in fact American corporations, or let me restate that, subsidiaries of American corporations could actually do business with those whom we considered our enemy, with those whom we had placed on a list described as being those states sponsoring terrorism.

This issue was really brought to light by the New York City comptroller who in his research discovered that the $80 billion in pension funds for all city workers were invested in corporations such as GE, ConocoPhillips and Halliburton that exploited, if you will, this loophole in the law. Obviously, people from all over the world are fully aware of the fact that the Vice President, RICHARD CHENEY, was the former CEO of Halliburton. So I know it comes as a surprise to them and certainly came, I think, as a shock to Mr. William Thompson, who was the New York City comptroller, that pension funds were invested in Halliburton, and Halliburton had created a subsidiary, a subsidiary in the Cayman Islands that purportedly was doing business with Iran.

As we have recently discovered, of course, Iran is suspected of developing a nuclear weapons program. Clearly, any business that would be done with a rogue nation would benefit that rogue nation. In any event, this particular expose by ''60 Minutes'' that established that there was an offshore subsidiary of Halliburton in the Cayman Islands was in fact operating during the tenure of the Vice President.

□ 2045

According again to the transcript of the 60 Minutes interview, the subsidiary sells about $40 million a year worth of oil field services to the Iranian government. This does not enhance our credibility, Mr. Speaker. I think it undermines our credibility. And when the 60 Minutes crew went to interview officials from Halliburton, they were denied access.

But again they got on a plane. They went to the Cayman Islands, and what they discovered in the Cayman Islands was an office with a phone and no employees. Subsequently, because of a conversation they had with an individual in the building which housed this so-called subsidiary or independent company, they were told that, no, that mailing gets rerouted to Houston. Subsequently, they learned that in Dubai, which is a city in the United Arab Emirates, that there was the operating arm of the particular embassy. But, again, no answer, no response.

So what we have is a parent company, Halliburton, declining a request by 60 Minutes for an interview but through e-mail communicated it has no intention of leaving Iran or addressing the questions that the interviewer had raised about the independence of its subsidiary.

So we wonder sometimes why we are perceived in a particular way, because, again, our credibility is so vital to our claim of moral authority. I do not have an answer, Mr. Speaker. But I think the American people are owed an answer. I along, with several other Members, my colleagues on the Iraq Watch, have requested to the Attorney General, Mr. Ashcroft, that a special prosecutor be investigating to determine whether there is potential criminal culpability. But it goes to our core value of transparency and honesty and truth.

Much has been stated recently about the testimony of Richard Clarke, and that continues to play out. As we have seen today, the National Security Adviser, Ms. Rice, apparently will testify before the 9/11 Commission. But I think the salient import of Mr. Clarke's position is that Iraq had been the focus of concern since the beginning of the administration, and that seems to be confirmed by the former Secretary of the Treasury Paul O'Neill.

So I went back and reread the book authored by Mr. Suskind in collaboration with the former Secretary of the

Treasury and his recount of the first meeting on January 30, 2001, it had to be just several days after the inauguration, and I would like to read to those that are viewing us here this evening just excerpts from that particular book.

I see I am joined by the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE). It is good to see him here.

But there is a discussion about the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the book reads as follows: ''The Arab-Israeli conflict was a mess and the United States would disengage. The combatants would have to work it out on their own.'' That was the position of those that were present or at least it would appear to be the consensus that was emerging at the time.

''Powell said such a move might be hasty. 'The consequences of that could be dire,' he said, 'especially for the Palestinians.'

''Bush shrugged, 'Maybe that's the best way to get things back in balance.'

''Powell,'' obviously a reference to Secretary Powell, ''seemed startled. 'Sometimes a show of strength by one side can really clarify things,' Bush said. He turned to Rice. 'So, Condi, what are we going to talk about today? What's on the agenda?'

'''How Iraq is destabilizing the region, Mr. President,' Rice said. In what several observers understood was a scripted exchange, she noted that Iraq might be the key to reshaping the entire region.''

This is an excerpt from the former Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. O'Neill's, book. That is 5 days after the President was inaugurated.

The next excerpt that I will read from was a meeting of the principals, the Cabinet members on the National Security Council. This was conducted on February 27, 2001. Again, the purpose clearly was the emphasis by the Secretary, the Secretary of Treasury, Mr. O'Neill, that it was all about Iraq. This is in February of 2001. Clearly this would corroborate, I would suggest, the import of Richard Clarke's recent book ''Against All Enemies.''

But what is interesting in this particular excerpt is a reference to oil, a reference again to oil. We are not talking about terrorism. We are talking about oil, and let me quote this passage.

''Beneath the surface was a battle O'Neill had seen brewing since the National Security Council meeting on January 30. It was Powell and his moderates at the State Department versus hard-liners like Rumsfeld, Cheney, and Wolfowitz, who were already planning the next war in Iraq and the shape of a post-Saddam country.'' Remember, this is February 27, 2001, months before the tragedy that befell us on September 11.

''Documents were prepared by the Defense Intelligence Agency, Rumsfeld's intelligence arm, mapping Iraq's oil fields and exploration areas and listing companies that might be interested in leveraging the precious asset. One document head 'Foreign Suitors for Iraqi Oil Field Contracts' lists companies from 30 countries, their specialties, bidding histories, and in some cases their particular areas of interest. An attached document maps Iraq with markings for super giant oil fields, other oil fields, and earmarked for production sharing while demarking the largely undeveloped southwest of the country into nine blocks to designate areas for future exploration.''

So I guess, Mr. Speaker, I should not be surprised that in seven nations, according to the highly respected Pew Foundation, a survey revealed that substantial majorities in those nations believe that it was the intention of the United States to invade Iraq to control Mid East oil. The excerpt I just read from Secretary O'Neill's book relates his impressions, not mine, not the gentleman from Hawaii's (Mr. ABERCROMBIE), and not the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE), my colleague who has just arrived. So we are talking about oil here and the interest of oil, and this is the impression that the Secretary of Treasury that served in the Bush administration concluded.

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

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Hawaii.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman might find it interesting, with regard to the points that he has just been making and the possibility of oil exploration, I believe was the phrase that was used, mapping of fields, potential drilling areas and so on. Well, does the gentleman recall that while we were unable to prevent looting, mass looting not just of the Baghdad museums, the history of the entire Middle East, really the Mesopotamian history there, but unable to stop looting in virtually every area of Baghdad and throughout Iraq, hospitals, schools, businesses, everywhere, was it not interesting the Oil Ministry was guarded? And I wonder how that took place. I wonder what the emphasis was.

Would the gentleman be interested in a story from USA Today of March 29, Monday, as follows: ''In 2002, troops from the Fifth Special Forces group who specialize in the Middle East were pulled out of the hunt for Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan to prepare for their next assignment in Iraq. Their replacements were troops with expertise in Spanish cultures. The CIA was stretched badly in its capacity to collect, translate, and analyze information coming from Afghanistan. When the White House raised a new priority, it took specialists away from Afghanistan in an effort to ensure Iraq was covered.''

USA Today added, ''Those were just two of the trade-offs required because of what the Pentagon and the CIA acknowledged is a shortage of key personnel to fight the war on terrorism,'' not the engagement in Iraq, the war on terrorism that we hear about all the time. ''The question of how much those shifts prevented progress against al Qaeda and the other terrorists is putting the Bush administration on the defensive.''

□ 2100

Troops with the capacity to hunt Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan were removed and sent to Iraq. Now I believe the gentleman will observe there is a renewed emphasis on catching and capturing or killing Osama bin Laden, as if this had been put into limbo for some period of time.

I wonder if the gentleman would observe, as I do, that there may be more than a coincidence here with respect to what he has just been sharing with us?

Mr. DELAHUNT. Well, again, all of this goes to the credibility of the United States.

When administration officials, and particularly the Vice President, make statements that in one case was contradicted the next day by the President himself regarding links between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda, when on a Meet the Press program the Vice President of the United States suggested that there were links and then the next day the President of the United States came out and unequivocally said there is no evidence linking 9/11 and Saddam Hussein, and then subsequent to that, subsequent to that, in January of this year the Vice President again repeats the assertion, the allegation, about linkages, there is a cumulative impact here.

There is a cumulative impact, because, after awhile, people are saying, you are conning us; you are misleading us. Like just recently, the Prime Minister of Poland, an ally in the coalition of the willing that is still in Iraq, said, ''We were misled. We were taken for a ride.''

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. If the gentleman will yield further, the people from Poland may be having second thoughts after today's activities. I do not know if the gentleman is aware that in Iraq today, those soldiers, part of the contingent from Poland, came under assault from those who, and I almost hesitate to say because it sounds as if I am making an ironic comment, and that is not really my intention, the situation speaks for itself, they were assaulted by those who are complaining that their applications to be police officers were not being properly processed. So, apparently, the people who want to be the police officers are now engaged in gang assaults in Iraq; and in this instance it happens to be against those who have been sent there from Poland. I think this is only a precursor of those things which are to come.

Mr. DELAHUNT. If I can interrupt, I believe that goes to the question of competence; and the issue of post-war planning has been roundly criticized.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. If the gentleman will yield further, that is precisely the point. In the context which

you mentioned of the Vice President, Mr. CHENEY, indicating that we should pay the closest attention and give the highest credibility to the idea that links, and those are the phrases of choice of the Vice President, Mr. CHENEY, links on the most peripheral basis, links on the periphery must be nonetheless taken very, very seriously.

I hope the gentleman agrees that is a fair characterization of what Vice President CHENEY has been doing, that the most elliptical connections must be taken with all seriousness. At the same time, he denies his links and connections to the Halliburton Company, to the oil companies that he has served slavishly throughout his career, have anything to do with the decisions that have been made with respect to Iraq, with the decisions, political decisions, made with respect to invading that nation.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Again, let me go back earlier to the excerpt that I recited from the O'Neill book. On February 27, the administration was a month old. Here we have a meeting of the National Security Council of the United States talking about exploration, mega-giant oil fields, contracts.

I would hope that those that might be viewing this conversation this evening, and I am not here shilling for Mr. Suskind and former Secretary O'Neill, but they should go out and read the book, because we know that Mr. O'Neill was castigated, and we also are fully aware that Mr. Clarke is being attacked and maligned.

But what I suggest is, read these two as companions. It is clear that there is no collaboration going on between Mr. O'Neill and Mr. Clarke. But the salient point is from the day they came into office, this was about Iraq. This was about Iraq.

Mr. INSLEE. If the gentleman will yield on that point, I would like to comment on what you just said, but before I do so, I would like to make a statement of why we are here tonight.

This is months after the Iraq war started, and I just want to state the reason I am here tonight is the people who are fighting this war deserve answers of how this war started based on false information. If it takes us years to get to the bottom of how this was started, why it was started and who started it so that they can be held accountable, we are going to be here until we get those answers.

But you have put your finger on a very, very important point; and that is that the people who this administration are attacking, Mr. O'Neill, Mr. Clarke, Ambassador Wilson, the actuary of the Medicare fund, all of whom are being attacked by this administration, their statements have proven to be true in the last several weeks. One of the great ironies of this is that this administration is attacking civil servants for telling the truth.

Look at Mr. O'Neill. As you indicated, he was attacked because he had the temerity, and this was the Secretary of the Treasury, a high-level person appointed by the President of the United States on a personal basis. Mr. O'Neill said, ''In the 23 months I was there, I never saw anything that I would characterize as evidence of weapons of mass destruction. There were allegations and assertions by people.'' That is from Mr. O'Neill's book.

He said that in January 30, 2001, before September 11, the President instructed at the National Security Council meeting, that the President directed the Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, to ''examine our military options'' with regard to Iraq.

Mr. O'Neill was quite viscerally attacked by the administration for making those statements. But now it turns out in listening to statements by Condoleezza Rice and essentially Donald Rumsfeld and Mr. Clarke, those things were true. From their own lips, of people still in the administration, that statement was true.

Mr. Clarke a week or so ago had the temerity to point out that on the day after September 11 the Secretary of Defense said something to the effect like ''let's get ready to bomb Iraq,'' and it was pointed out to the Secretary of Defense that al Qaeda, who at that point we knew was behind the September 11 attack, that al Qaeda was in Afghanistan, not Iraq. Mr. Rumsfeld responded, ''Well, there are not any targets in Afghanistan.''

Mr. Clarke originally said, ''Well, I thought he must have been kidding.'' It turned out he was not kidding, and when asked about that on a talk show this weekend, Mr. Rumsfeld, I did not hear him deny it. Incredibly, I did not hear him deny it.

What I heard was Mr. Clarke pointed out that on September 12, when he talked to the President of the United States, the President of the United States took him aside and said, essentially, ''I want you to look and scrub to see if you can find any evidence whatsoever that it was Iraq behind this.''

Mr. Clarke wondered about that, because he felt the President was essentially pushing to find something that had not been reported to date.

Originally, you know what the administration said? They said Mr. Clarke was not there that day. Well, today we find from Condoleezza Rice not only was he there, but, yes, those conversations apparently took place.

So what we are finding is we are finally getting down, after peeling the layers of the onion, to the truth of what happened in Iraq. And what happened in Iraq is that this administration very early on was bent on taking a course of action involving military action in Iraq.

It is not that they were forced to by this overwhelming intelligence, this mountain of intelligence that led us to the inescapable conclusion that Iraq had these weapons of mass destruction. As early as the day after the attack on September 11 they were looking for some reason to start a war in Iraq. This is something that has been confirmed today by their own statements.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. If the gentleman will yield on that point, and looking, I might add, for an opportunity to deny that ongoing sanctions would prevent, should those weapons actually exist, their utilization, either against us, certainly, or against neighbors, other than by assertion.

Mr. INSLEE. It is apparent the questions asked by the President were not about the inspection program. The statements were ''let's go bomb Iraq, because there are no targets in Afghanistan,'' or something to that effect.

Mr. DELAHUNT. If I can interrupt, I think we are usually in agreement, but here I have to disagree, because it was not immediately after 9/11. Yes, I believe the President did make that statement, and I presume he will acknowledge he made that statement. It has been acknowledged implicitly by the spokesperson for the White House.

But if you go back and examine the record, this administration, and particularly the Vice President of the United States, for whatever reason, presumably this grand vision of a Middle East rearranged in a manner that purportedly would move democracy forward, believed that Iraq was the linchpin to having that happen, and a conclusion had been reached and they were simply looking for the opportunity to invade Iraq. That was before 9/11.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. If the gentleman will yield, perhaps he could spell the word democracy for me. I believe it is spelled O-I-L. I believe they are synonymous with the gentleman to whom you are referring.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I have to say this about the Vice President, and, again, those who might be listening to us tonight, if you have access to a computer, go on line. On March 10, the headline reads, page 1 of the New York Times, ''CIA chief says he corrected Cheney privately.'' Even today, it is the Vice President, more than anyone in this administration, who will not let it go.

David Kay said, and, remember, David Kay was the chief arms inspector for the United States, embraced by this administration to go and search for the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, David Kay said we were all wrong. It is time to give it up.

He indicated in a speech just recently in Cambridge, Massachusetts, I think he used the term ''Waiting for a Hail Mary pass, like Vice President Cheney is doing, presents us with grave threats.''

That is David Kay speaking. That is not some partisan Democrat. That is not the putative nominee for the Democratic nomination for the President. This is beyond politics.

Mr. INSLEE. If the gentleman will yield further, I think what the gentleman is pointing out is that there were huge falsehoods that are now apparent that were told to the American

people, to the U.S. Congress, that were used as a premise to start this war.

I want to talk about just a couple of those and see what the administration has done in response to those.

The President on March 17, 2003, said, ''Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised.

□ 2115

''This regime has already used weapons of mass destruction against Iraq's neighbors and against Iraq's people.'' The second half of that is true, but the first statement is false. Yet, no one in the administration has admitted the falsity of that statement, despite overwhelming intelligence information to this effect. We have people serving, and we have lost over 500 Americans in this war that was started based on a falsehood, and no one in this administration has had the courage and the willingness to straight talk, to say these statements were false that were the basis for this war.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield a moment before he continues on that point. The gentleman cited a part which implied, or not implied but I believe explicitly stated was true with respect to utilization of poison gas on Iraqis, more particularly Kurdish Iraqis. Does the gentleman know, and if he does not, perhaps he would find it of worthy interest to pursue, whether or not that gassing or the reference to it took place before or after the first Bush administration was in Iraq doing business with Saddam Hussein? And, if I am not mistaken, the person representing George Herbert Walker Bush and his administration is the present Secretary of Defense.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, it is clear that our country did not have things to be proud of at the time that the Kurds were gassed. We could talk at length about that.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would further yield on that point, my reference to that is not to disparage anything that the Secretary did in pursuance of policies which he was clearly following with respect to his service in the first Bush administration, but rather to illustrate that it is at best a bit tiresome, if not hypocritical, for the present Bush administration to cite that as if the United States was some innocent standby observer, shocked at the fact that this took place, disturbed that it had taken place, doing anything in the way of diplomatic activity to indicate that we disapproved of it in any way, shape, or form. Quite the contrary.

What the United States did is stand by and not try to ''complicate'' the issue, and I say that with quotation marks around it, by making, from what I am best able to determine, any kind of significant demurer with respect to what Saddam Hussein had done in that instance.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, we should have clearly raised a siren internationally when that was going on, but let us not compound the error by leaving these falsehoods to lie like sort of a stinking mackerel in the moonlight right now without this administration clearing this up and shooting straight with the American people. Because on January 28, 2003, the President of the United States stood right behind the gentleman from Hawaii and addressed the Congress and the American people and said, ''The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa.'' That statement was false, and the administration knew it was false.

He went on to say, ''Our intelligence sources tell us that he has attempted to purchase high-strength aluminum tubes suitable for nuclear weapons production.'' That statement was false.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BURGESS). If the gentleman will suspend, the Chair will remind all Members not to engage in personal abuse of the Vice President or the President.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, we appreciate the reminder.

That statement was false, and it was false at the time it was made. The reason I know that is that subsequent information has revealed that our own agencies have reported that they concluded that those aluminum tubes were probably going to be used for some standard rockets, not anything to do with centrifuge tubes; and yet the President of the United States told the American people there is no doubt that Iraq had some of the most lethal weapons devised by man. Now, the fact of the matter is, if this is some innocent thing that occurred, we need the President to address the American people about how this happened.

Now, I am glad that the President has finally allowed Condoleezza Rice to publicly answer some of the questions around what has happened in some of this affair. It is unfortunate that it has taken so long to be drug to the public spotlight; but, nonetheless, we hope this will shed some light on this.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, a question that I would like to have answered by the 9/11 Commission. Well, maybe it is not appropriate for the 9/11 Commission; let me retract that. However, I think it is a question that this administration should answer via some mechanism, because we were all here that night when we heard those words regarding the search for highly enriched uranium in the African nation of Niger, which turned out to be totally false, and which had been discredited and discounted by a variety of intelligence agencies throughout the world and particularly, not the CIA, but the DIA and the appropriate agency within the Department of State. They just simply did not accept it.

Yet a week later, on February 5, the Secretary of State made a very powerful presentation at the United Nations; and in that particular presentation, Secretary Powell made no reference, no allusion to that particular situation, to the fact that or at least the assertion that was presented by the President regarding looking for uranium in Africa. I am sure that he did that because, as was reported in a variety of media outlets, he sat down with the CIA, the Director and analysts within the CIA, and discarded that information.

Why was it inserted in the State of the Union, and yet approximately a week later was not part of the Secretary of State's presentation before the United Nations? And did the Secretary of State communicate to the President of the United States, to the Vice President of the United States his basis, his rationale for not including a very serious allegation that was made by the President in the State of the Union address and not included in his presentation at the United Nations before the world? It is incomprehensible.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, I would contend to him that it is not incomprehensible if the intention all along was to go into Iraq and to go into Iraq at the expense of the war on terror in Afghanistan. We can see what the results are.

I would quote to the gentleman from the Financial Times of Monday, a report which indicated that a United Nations body will warn this week that Afghanistan is in danger of reverting to a ''terrorist breeding ground.'' That is the phrase utilized in the Financial Times story characterizing the United Nations' report, that Afghanistan is in danger of reverting to a terrorist breeding ground with an economy dependent on the illegal drug trade, unless the international community significantly increases development funding for the war-torn country.

Now, we have billions and billions and billions, tens of billions of dollars to be expended in Iraq at the present time with its economy in collapse, except, we are told, for its ability to produce oil. The economy in Afghanistan is now reverting to the pre-Taliban days. If the gentleman will recall, we supported the Taliban to the tune of $40 million because it was involved in eradicating the drug trade. The drug trade has come back with a vengeance. It is now supplying funding in the absence of any international effort being made in Afghanistan and, as a result of the switch in emphasis on terrorism from Afghanistan to Iraq, particularly in the wake of what I contended to the gentleman at the beginning of my statement that it was deliberate. It is not incomprehensible if it is a deliberate policy of the administration to find a methodology of presentation to the country sufficient to raise the fear factor to a level that would allow this invasion to take place. That was the purpose and the intent all along, and the result that the

administration has to be held to account for is that Afghanistan now is reverting to a status in which it could be called a terrorist breeding ground in a United Nations report.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, is my friend aware of the fact that the President of Afghanistan recently was compelled to delay the elections that were scheduled in June to September?

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Hopefully, September.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Hopefully, September.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Yes.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And I dare say that that election date is very much at risk, as the gentleman suggests that Afghanistan, as a viable nation-state embracing democracy, is very much at risk, because we have ignored Afghanistan since we achieved a stunning military success, but then diverted our efforts and our resources and our attention to Iraq where there was only one terrorist, and that was Saddam Hussein, who terrorized his own people. But the terrorists in Afghanistan were the terrorists that were training, that were appearing again to attack America. And today, we are still searching for them.

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield for a moment, I just want to sort of reiterate basically what the gentleman is saying. I keep hearing more and more evidence that with the President taking our eye off the ball of al Qaeda, it has damaged our ability to bring them to the ground; and it has done that in multiple ways.

We had a hearing the other day in the Committee on Financial Services about our ability to track down and cut off the funds of al Qaeda coming out of Saudi Arabia, because that is where the money came, largely, from al Qaeda. It turns out the administration has had a lot of the forces that could have been used to cut off the money going to al Qaeda, the people who killed 3,000 Americans, to chase Saddam's funds all around the world. Now, it would be nice to get ahold of Saddam Hussein's funds. That is fine. I am sure he abused and did the Iraqi people tremendously, not only personally, but fiscally. But the guy who killed over 3,000 Americans is at large; and his network of raising money is still intact, because this President took our eye off the ball and cut off some of the resources we had to cut those resources off from al Qaeda.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield on that point, I would contend and do contend that the biggest supporter of the invasion in Iraq was Osama bin Laden. It does not take a cracker-jack specialist in strategy to understand that when your enemy, i.e., the United States of America, is addressing all of its attention, its military prowess, and its funding in a direction opposite from where you are, that that is, in fact, very good for you.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I think it is really important to the people who are watching this to understand this: that historically, Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden were bitter enemies. In fact, in the mid-1980s, there was a group akin to al Qaeda in terms of its world view, fundamentalist Islamist, a perverted form of that holy religion, that great religion, that attempted to assassinate Tarik Aziz. Saddam Hussein, the tyrant and the thug that he was, just eradicated him. So historically, we should have known that those that attacked us were the same people that as recently as this month, as recently as this month killed hundreds of people in Madrid, Spain; and we need the help of the entire world. That is why I go back to this issue of credibility: Who is going to believe us?

I know that there are some that will strut and swagger and be tough and say, we can do it alone. Well, I do not want to do it just with American men and women.

□ 2130

This will only be successful, this war on terror, if we do it working with others and we have to have their trust. We have to have their confidence. We will never accept appeasement, but we have got to be honest

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield on that point, I will point out in turn that come June 30 you are going to see what it is like to be alone. We are going to be cut loose in less than 100 days in Iraq, not just in Baghdad, but in Iraq; and our Armed Forces there will be adrift. There will be no one to report to.

We have no status of forces agreement with anyone that can be enforced. We have no idea with whom we would enforce such an agreement. All our armed services, all our Armed Forces in Iraq after June 30 will be left to fend for themselves and make decisions on the spot as to what they will do and how they will operate and who they are working for and with. There will be no operative government whatsoever, and this is being done entirely for political reasons because of the utter failure of this operation.

The gentleman will recall that I indicated back at the time of this invasion that this would not be a war, that this would be a lightning attack on Baghdad, and then the war would start. I trust the gentlemen, both of them, will recall me saying that; and I think it was quite clear to those of us serving on the Committee on Armed Services that was going to be the result, and even then we indicated as a result of the testimony of people like General Shinseki and others, upon whom we have relied to good effect in the past, that unless we were properly prepared with the logistics, even that lightning attack would suffer casualties and set us in circumstance less than what we could be in terms of the military might of this country.

That is precisely what happened. That lightning attack was accompanied by consequences in terms of supply and logistics which harmed us and harmed those who served in that attack, and then the war began, and we are suffering from that kind of war right now, as we speak tonight; and on June 30, I can assure you that the level of combat in terms of what the United States is going to suffer is scarcely beyond imagination

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, in retrospect General Shinseki, who was treated in an extremely dismissive manner, his advice should have been heeded and, maybe just maybe, today we would be looking at a totally different situation in Iraq than what we are currently embracing.

I am sure you are aware that the leader, the dominant leader of the Shiites in Iraq, Ayatollah Al'sistani, is already circulating information, pamphlets, decrying the Constitution. I mean, it has been reported that CIA analysts are concerned about a civil war in Iraq

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, we have got people there tonight who are sitting ducks for this terrible situation in Iraq, and there are two things really galling to me about this.

Number one, I have heard some people in these Chambers sort of suggest, well, we only lost a couple today; we only lost 10 this week; we only lost 100 this last couple of months; it is not like Vietnam. Well, I have got to say when I went to a family 2 weeks ago to spend the Sunday with them when their father and husband of two young kids is never coming home again, it is just like no other war; and these numbers, this is not a numbers game.

These people who are serving tonight deserve something. They deserve their government to be accountable to them, to be responsible to them as to why this war started based on false information given to the American people, and we are now learning that there was lots of false information given to them. They are entitled to that. The American people are entitled to that, and we are intending to get that one way or another.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield on that point, all this is true, and I think we have to reiterate it, but that is retrospective. Prospectively, I think we have to look at June 30, and I hope, Mr. Speaker, that when we have the opportunity next to come before you, Mr. Speaker, that we will be able to address that question.

## PREDICAMENT WE ARE FACING WITH SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BURGESS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, last week the actuaries of the Social Security Administration and the