On the average of almost $6 over the year. Today we are putting it in the ground for next year at $6.47, and some think gas will be 7 to $8 a thousand this winter.

The problem that raises is that we are not competitive. Europe pays $3.70 a thousand. North Africa $1.20; all the others are under that. So the rest of the world has natural gas much cheaper than us.

Now, what is that doing to business in this country? It is eliminating the fertilizer business in this country as we speak. You cannot afford to make fertilizer in America because they use it as an ingredient and as a fuel. It is harming the petrochemical industry, which is quickly moving to Europe. Polymers and plastics and anybody that heats, bakes, cooks, melts or dries products with natural gas has a problem. We produce 85 percent of our natural gas in this country. We import 14.5 percent from Canada; a percent and a half of liquefied natural gas from numerous parts around the world; and we export about 1 percent of our gas to Mexico.

A decade ago, a moratorium was removed on the generation of electricity with natural gas. I think it is an issue that really needs to be debated again today. At that time, 8 percent of our natural gas was only allowed to be used for peak power, in the morning and evening time when we need that extra surge. But when they removed that moratorium, in a few short years 25 percent of the natural gas in this country is now used to generate electricity.

We have 1,000 rigs drilling, a number higher than most, than normally, but the shortage remains. All of the gas-rich areas in America are off limits to drilling, many legislatively. It has been prohibited to drill the east and west coast offshore. Around the Florida coastline where there is lots of gas, it is off limits. Forty percent of the gulf, and we know the rest of the gulf is rich with gas because we get a lot of it there, is off limits to drilling. Sixty percent of the Midwest, which is owned by the Federal Government, much of it is off limits to drilling or it takes years to get a permit.

We must somehow figure out if we are going to use natural gas to generate electricity, how we replace that supply because we are threatening homeownership, we are draining commerce, and we are threatening industries in this country that particularly use a lot of natural gas.

The question I ask again, Can we afford to float down the river aimlessly with no plan of action, no energy policy on the President's desk?

Yes, we must conserve and we must use energy more wisely and we must promote renewables, but the growth has not been there. Wind and solar are only used part of the time so you have to have an abundant source. America needs an energy plan. It needs to be on the President's desk tomorrow.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PAUL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

BOGUS COLLEGE DEGREES COST GOVERNMENT DEARLY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. CHOCOLA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CHOCOLA. Mr. Speaker, tonight I rise in support and cooperation of my colleagues, the Washington Waste Watchers, who were here earlier this evening.

I unfortunately come to the floor tonight to share another example of wasted taxpayer dollars. Mr. Speaker, according to a report released by the General Accounting Office in May, taxpayers have paid hundreds and thousands of dollars and, in reality, probably much, much more for Federal employees to obtain bogus degrees from unaccredited postsecondary schools, also known as diploma mills. These so-called diploma mills sell academic degrees based upon life experience, sometimes based on negligible academic work, and some require no academic work at all. They simply sell degrees for a price.

The first 2 days of congressional hearings on fake degree-granting institutions, the director of GAO special investigations testified the data collected on just two of those diploma mills show Federal payments of almost $170,000 for bogus degrees. He also said the number is likely an underestimate, even for those two institutions; and he expects a broader investigation of nearly 140 known diploma mills would reveal many more cases of federally financed phony degrees.

The GAO report found that 463 Federal employees, including 28 senior-level officials, have listed diploma mill degrees on their resumes. And one of those senior-level officials even received a Federal tuition reimbursement of nearly $2,000 in connection with a phony degree from a bogus school.

Mr. Speaker, Democrats want to raise our tax to pay for more of this. That is just the tip of the iceberg because the GAO only received data from eight government agencies. The other agencies could not even respond to the inquiry. As an example, the Department of Health and Human Services told the GAO that it could not produce records of employee education payments because it maintains records in five different accounting systems. It has no way to differentiate academic degree payments from other types of training and does not know whether degree payments made with credit cards are even captured in its payment records.

What is worse, Mr. Speaker, is the taxpayers have given these fake-degree employees a raise. Now while their managers contend that their promotions were based on experience and not education, the GAO does not buy it and neither do I.

Mr. Speaker, developing simple standards for assessing the degrees used as credentials by Federal employees in determining which degrees, if any, the Federal Government should pay for, these agencies could have saved hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for the Federal Government to clean up its act. It is time to hold Federal employees accountable for its actions. And by eliminating this type of waste, fraud and abuse government-wide, we can save the taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, our measurement of success here in Washington should never be how much we spend, but simply how well we spend taxpayer dollars.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CONYERS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

IRAQ WATCH

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

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, we are here tonight, several of my colleagues will be joining me for our weekly hour that we describe as the Iraq Watch, which reviews issues of interest and concern to Members on both sides of the aisle as well as the American people.

But before we begin talking about events of the past several weeks in Iraq, Afghanistan, in the Middle East, I was conversing earlier with my colleague from the State of Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT) regarding some of the statements given earlier on the floor by our colleagues and friends from the Republican side of the aisle. And I want to commend them and congratulate them for taking this issue of waste and fraud and abuse seriously.

□ 2030

I understand that they are describing themselves as waste watchers. I can assure them that we will work together with them. We will cooperate and we will collaborate. Because, as the gentleman who last spoke indicated, it is absolutely essential that we use taxpayers' dollars efficiently, honestly and bring the highest possible return on the investment of those dollars in the American people.

In fact, I am really pleased that this is happening, and I dare say if our Republican colleagues reach out to Democrats that we will join with them and

make this a bipartisan effort. I would simply note that it is late in coming, however, because I think it is important to underscore who has been running the government here for the past 4 years.

I am joined by my friend from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOEFFEL); as I indicated earlier, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT), my colleague and friend; and, of course, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) and an original member of the Iraq Watch; and maybe I could pose a question to him.

Is it the gentleman's understanding that President Bush, who is a Republican, has served in that capacity for some 3½ years?

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, would the gentleman yield?

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

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, that is one of the best rhetorical questions the gentleman has ever posed and very successfully; and it is accurate that the Senate and the House are now under the control of our friends, the Republicans, for the last 2 years.

Mr. DELAHUNT. So is it true that the Republicans became a majority in this particular branch back in 1994? I was not here in 1994. I think the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT) was here in 1994. But who has been setting the agenda and running the House of Representatives since January of 1995?

Mr. INSLEE. Let me answer that and quickly segue to tonight's discussion. The presidency is under control of the Republican party, the Senate is under control of the Republican party, the House is under control of the Republican party, and if there is waste, fraud or abuse, it is under the watch of the Republican party which controls the government of the United States.

Our Republican friend speaking this evening talked about waste, fraud and abuse. Let us cut to one of the most onerous, glaring, enormous, stunningly scandalous waste, fraud and abuse that the Bush administration, with Republican support, has supported, and that is that they have given almost $40 million of taxpayer money to Mr. Chalabi and his Iraqi National Congress who tonight stands accused of giving away some of our most secret information to Iran.

This President, amongst the many mistakes that he has made, squandered almost $40 million in waste, fraud and abuse, taking the money from American taxpayers and giving it to this fellow that he told us was going to be the ''Spartacus of Iraq.'' We were told by the Vice President that we would be welcomed as liberators, with rose petals, and that this administration believed with Richard Pearl and DICK CHENEY and the whole group of them and Paul Wolfowitz, we have heard them described as the neo-cons. They are neo-cons, and they allowed Mr. Chalabi to con this administration out of $40 million, and we have not got a penny back.

Now, we 2 weeks ago, I think, tonight, held a meeting here on the Iraq Watch, and we blew the whistle on Mr. Chalabi loud and clear. Interestingly enough, the next morning, we were advised that the administration had finally cut off this spigot of taxpayer money to Mr. Chalabi. A week later, we find out that he is under investigation; and they have now raided his offices to find out if, indeed, he did give this secret information to Iran.

I just am encouraged, I suppose, that our Republican friends want to root out waste, fraud and abuse. It would have been nice if they had joined us in blowing the whistle on Mr. Chalabi months ago when we had been saying that this whole plan was based on a house of sand.

Now the administration, just to make sure people understand what happened here, Mr. Chalabi and his allies gave phony information about weapons of mass destruction. The neo-cons in the White House and the Defense Department bought it hook, line and sinker. They convinced the President, who apparently did not need much convincing, that we would just send Mr. Chalabi in there and he would be, as I said, the new Spartacus of Iraq, the De Gaulle of Iraq.

So what did we do? We put him on the payroll of one of the biggest welfare programs ever, to the tune of $40 million, and we flew him and 800 of his closest co-conspirators into Iraq about 4 days after the invasion, 2 days after the collapse of the Iraqi Army, thinking he was going to be our agent. It was a total scam, and the American taxpayers paid for it, and he is the worst case of waste, fraud and abuse.

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

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

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, is the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) aware of how Mr. Chalabi allegedly got the information that he allegedly shared with the Iranians?

Mr. INSLEE. Well, I know, but I would like the gentleman to articulate that, actually.

Mr. HOEFFEL. It is my understanding that the fact that the Iranians have an intelligence code in order for them to communicate secretly amongst themselves, that that code was broken by America, and we were able to know exactly what the Iranians were doing in Iraq with their agents in Iraq, and that that is the information that Mr. Chalabi allegedly gave to Iran, which is your code has been broken.

The question is, how did Chalabi know? Well, he is under investigation and members of the Bush administration are being investigated because somebody had to tell Chalabi that the Americans have broken the Iranian code.

Mr. INSLEE. And Mr. Chalabi in the press reports said, well, somebody in the agency of the United States government told me when they were drunk, and this guy who had the President give $40 million to then disclosed some of the most sensitive information possible, that we have broken the Iranian code.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Do not forget that the President sat Mr. Chalabi right behind Mrs. Bush in this year's State of the Union address, right up there in that balcony 4½ months ago. There he sat in all his double-chinned glory, Ahmad Chalabi, directly behind the First Lady of the United States in the seat of honor 4½ months ago.

Mr. INSLEE. What is so disturbing about this, at least to me, is this is almost a pattern of this administration blowing Top Secret security information. They did it through Mr. Chalabi, although perhaps unintentionally. They did it blowing the cover of a CIA agent in order to punish Joe Wilson, the ambassador who blew the whistle on the falsehood that the President gave in his State of the Union speech. Is nothing sacred? Is nothing sacred in our security information? This administration needs to be held to account.

Here we have a situation where the President of the United States okayed $40 million of taxpayer money going to this scam artist who had already been convicted of bank fraud in Jordan and could not set foot back in his home country because of his previous conviction. We have a situation where this information was found out to be totally false, all of it. We started a war based on this false information.

And how many people have the President fired as a result of this scandal, as a result of this failure? How many people has he let go? How many heads have rolled in his administration to have accountability for this Chalabi debacle? Zero. Zero. This President has shown zero accountability throughout this entire mess, and the only people he has fired are those who are the ones who have told the truth, General Shinseki and Richard Clarke.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And Paul O'Neill.

Mr. INSLEE. Paul O'Neill. He punished Joe Wilson's wife.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Larry Lindsey, and the role of those who disagree, who were independent thinkers, there is a lengthening list.

But I dare say that future generations could very well look back on this particular moment in our history and Ahmad Chalabi would have a very special status. Because, as the gentleman indicated, Mr. Chalabi is very skillful, has a sordid history, if you will; was convicted of embezzlement in the Nation of Jordan; was sentenced in Jordan, an erstwhile ally of the United States when it comes to the war on terror and an ally of the United States in an effort to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian issue; was sentenced in a Jordanian court to some 22 years.

At a meeting that the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOEFFEL) and myself and others had with King

Abdullah, I posed the question, was the king, our friend, our ally, ever consulted before Mr. Chalabi was named to the now-defunct Iraqi Governing Council? And his response was a terse no. I found that very disturbing because he went on to say that we, meaning the Jordanians, the Lebanese, have serious problems with Mr. Chalabi.

Well, I think what we are discovering is that we have serious problems with Mr. Chalabi. Mr. Chalabi has become an embarrassment to this administration.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOEFFEL) indicated earlier that he sat in the gallery to my left while the President delivered the State of the Union address. He sat directly behind the First Lady.

Mr. Chalabi has a relationship with the President of the United States. One only has to see, Mr. Speaker, this picture. It is my understanding that the President, who is dressed casually here, on his trip during Thanksgiving to visit the American servicemen there, and we applaud him for that, is pictured here with Mr. Chalabi, Mr. Chalabi who provided false intelligence, according to reports emanating from the Department of State and from the CIA, which led this Nation into war. It was defectors whom Mr. Chalabi brought to the administration's attention which talked about weapons of mass destruction, which talked about links with al Qaeda, which talked about links with Osama bin Laden, all of which have been proven to be patently false.

It is very disturbing when we reflect and think that this false information was utilized in the course of the debate on the resolution authorizing war and was never questioned by the White House, by the President, by Vice President CHENEY, by Mr. Wolfowitz, by Mr. Douglas Fife and by Mr. Pearl, who at that point in time served on the Defense Policy Board. That information was simply accepted because they were, in my opinion, looking for facts to support their desire to go to war against Iraq.

And here we are. Today, a front page story in the New York Times that, if this is true, this will represent, in my opinion, a scandal that will rock this Nation.

□ 2045

Not only, Mr. Speaker, were we given false information and false intelligence, but now we read in The New York Times that Mr. Chalabi, and let me quote for a moment before I defer to my colleagues: ''The Iraqi leader and former ally of the Bush administration disclosed to an Iranian official that the United States had broken the secret communications code of Iran's intelligence service, betraying one of Washington's most valuable sources of information about Iran, according to United States intelligence officials. They said about 6 weeks ago, Mr. Chalabi told a Baghdad station chief of Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security that the United States was reading the communications traffic of the Iranian spy service, one of the most sophisticated in the Middle East.''

If that be true, we have been betrayed. It was this President, George W. Bush, standing beside Mr. Chalabi in this very House during the course of a State of the Union address, who used that term ''axis of evil'' when he spoke of Iraq, when he spoke of North Korea, and when he spoke of Iran as being three members of that axis of evil. And here we have, according to The New York Times, and Mr. Chalabi has to be given an opportunity to respond, like the administration has to be given an opportunity to respond, to this absolutely outrageous potential alleged act of treason against the American people. It cannot stand.

Mr. INSLEE. And, Mr. Speaker, if my colleague will yield, another thing that cannot stand is this administration essentially sort of pooh-poohing the enormity of this disaster of relying on Mr. Chalabi.

There are two groups that have suggested it is of no consequence, one of which is Mr. Chalabi. He was interviewed in a major newspaper sometime ago and the article said ''an Iraqi leader accused of feeding faulty pre-war intelligence to Washington,'' and that is Mr. Chalabi, ''said yesterday his information about Saddam Hussein's weapons, even if discredited,'' meaning wrong, meaning false, ''had achieved the aim of persuading America to start a war.''

Mr. Chalabi has just kind of laughed off the fact that his false information caused America to start a war in which over 700 Americans have died. To him, that is okay because he described himself as a ''hero in error.'' Hero in error? Here is a man who took $40 million of taxpayers' money, gave us apparently willfully, according to Colin Powell, Colin Powell says willfully deceptive information, and started a war in which 700 Americans have died, in which thousands have been terribly wounded; and he describes himself as a hero. Well, he is no kind of hero in this Chamber or in my district or any district in this country.

But he, apparently, is still on some kind of a little bit of a working relationship with the Bush administration. How do I know that? Well, we have paid the man $40 million, and I have not heard the President of the United States say ''give the taxpayers that money back.'' I have not heard the President of the United States say, ''Mr. Ashcroft, go get that $40 million back; this man started a war, gave me false information.'' Still, with apparently now, or maybe people around him cooperating with the Iranians and breaking our security information, I have not heard the President say to go get that $40 million back.

What I have heard the President say, and what this administration has done, although the President says it was not with his approval, but he said, and there is a certain irony here, in the speech where the President of the United States had Mr. Chalabi sitting up in back of the First Lady, up there in the second row, at that very same speech where the President gave the American people the falsehood that Iraq was buying uranium from an African country, we now find out that was false. And we know it is false, because Ambassador Joe Wilson, who worked for the first President Bush, blew the whistle on that falsehood and indicated that that was not true. And what was the response of the administration? They blew the CIA cover of Joe Wilson's wife in an attempt to destroy her career with the CIA.

So here you have a situation where this administration has squandered $40 million of taxpayers' money and has not lifted a finger to get it back, even though that created a fraud which started a war, which destroyed the career of the person who told the truth about the falsehood that Mr. Chalabi got the President to tell the American people.

This is kind of an Alice in Wonderland moment, it seems to me, where the truth-tellers are punished, and the President still says go ahead and keep your money, I guess, that we gave to Mr. Chalabi. Something is wrong with this picture.

This administration has failed to come to grips with the multiple mistakes it has made in Iraq. And until it faces the music and admits the multiple mistakes it has made, we will continue to make them.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I admire the fervor that my colleague from Washington has for pointing out the truth about the failings of Chalabi; but the point he just made is a lot more important, frankly, than the fun we are having piling on a guy like Chalabi, who is clearly a fraud, clearly a spinmeister, the kind of guy that my grandfather would have called a floor flusher. To meet Chalabi, as I did once, is to understand that the guy is just full of hot air.

But the question that my colleague poses to us tonight and to the Congress is, why did other people in the administrations not figure this out? And why are those who made mistakes not being held accountable for those mistakes? Because it would be a great injustice if we were to allow anybody watching tonight to get the impression that the problems of our policies in Iraq were solely the fault of Chalabi giving us bad information. He did give us bad information; and I believe, as Colin Powell believes, that it was willfully done, and he ripped us off for $40 million. And the passion of the gentleman from Washington on the subject is admirable, but the fact of the matter is, why did so many people in the administration believe what Chalabi had to say?

It seems to me that he was telling them what they wanted to hear, and

they did not listen to his information and apply a critical eye to it. I know that the CIA has been skeptical of Chalabi for years. I know the State Department has been skeptical of Chalabi for years. But the civilian leadership of the Pentagon, Mr. Rumsfeld, Mr. Wolfowitz, Mr. Feith, along with the support of the Vice President, Mr. CHENEY, bought Chalabi's lies hook, line, and sinker. It is because he was telling them, in my judgment, what they wanted to hear.

They honestly believed that we would be treated as liberators and not occupiers, and they made one policy mistake after another that has led us to where we are today after a year.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, if my colleague will yield to me, does this not just come down to basic incompetence?

Mr. HOEFFEL. Oh, it absolutely does.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I mean, no one is questioning or raising at this point in time malice or inappropriate intentions on the part of those policymakers, but it is almost beyond comprehension to believe that they would have fallen for the likes of Ahmad Chalabi.

I mean, in a recent Newsweek magazine, the May 31 edition, it says it all: ''Bad intel and broken trust. Ahmad Chalabi and the road to war. Our con man in Iraq.'' We were being conned, if you accept the validity of these allegations made by intelligence officers.

Mr. HOEFFEL. But, Mr. Speaker, I must tell my colleague that not everybody was being conned. The CIA saw through Chalabi, the State Department saw through Chalabi, and yet the civilian leadership of the Pentagon did not.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Exactly. And that is pointed out in this edition of Newsweek. Again, let me quote: ''Chalabi has not always charmed his patrons. His first run as a CIA asset in the early and mid-1990s was a disaster. His case officer did not trust him. There was a lot of hanky panky with the accounting. Triple billing, things that were not mentioned, things inflated. It was a nightmare, says a former U.S. intelligence official who worked with Chalabi.'' His quote. ''His primary focus was to drag us into a war that President Clinton did not want. But he had more luck with a group of Republican hard-liners who formed a kind of government in exile, the so-called neoconservatives like Wolfowitz and Richard Perle and Doug Feith.''

As I said earlier, when we pause and think that we went to war in part because of information given by this individual standing with the President of the United States, and that we have lost how many men and women? The costs have exceeded already $200 billion, put aside the blood and the pain and the anguish that Americans serving in Iraq and their families have had to experience. This is outrageous.

And now we find on the front page of The New York Times, Mr. Speaker, a story claiming that he provided the most highly sensitive information to Iran, which, according to reports, is developing a nuclear weapons program, is being accused by the President of the United States as being a member of an axis of evil. What is happening? This is incompetence. These people are not running or managing this issue except in the most incompetent way. They are blinded by ideology.

Mr. INSLEE. If the gentleman would yield, I want to address why and how that happened. This incompetence, as the gentleman describes it, Mr. Speaker, was institutionalized. It was set up to be incompetent.

What happened here was the CIA had good reason not to trust the information they were getting from Mr. Chalabi, and they kept telling the White House that. But the people in this administration, if they have a belief, it must be right, and it really does not matter what the evidence is. So what they did was, Mr. Rumsfeld set up his own intelligence agency, heretofore never in existence in the Pentagon; and it was their special little intelligence shop which they staffed with the people who worked for the neocons, who were basically going to tell the neocons whatever they wanted to hear.

So when the CIA was telling them and the Air Force, for instance when the Air Force told them these aluminum tubes the President told us about were used to build a nuclear weapon, I think it was the Air Force told him, or the CIA, one of the agencies, I have forgotten which one now, they said that is not accurate. So they just went to the little Pentagon fiefdom of the neocons and said, sure it is. They got their yes men and made their yes men in control of America's foreign policy, and this has led to the loss of 700 American lives as a result.

□ 2100

Now what has this President done to bring accountability to that system? Has he changed the director of this Pentagon intelligence agency? No. Has he disbanded it? No. Has he taken away the washroom privileges of anyone in the Pentagon? No. Has he canned the Secretary of State? No. Has he changed the Director of the CIA? No.

The only thing he has done or his administration has done is to break the security secrecy of the identity of a CIA agent in order to punish the one man who told the truth about the falsehoods that the President gave the American people. That is the only person that has lost their job associated with this, except General Shinseki who also told the truth about needing several hundred thousand American troops to provide security in Iraq.

We are seeing that the first step to a successful Iraq policy is to admit the mistakes of the past, clean house and get some new, fresh ideas in Iraq. Clinging to these folks and these agencies which have been so wrong on Iraq so many times is not going to allow us to be successful in Iraq, is not going to allow us to bring our troops home in a reasonable period of time.

We are asking the President to finally demand some accountability; and if this Chalabi scandal does not wake up the President to this need, it is hard to imagine what will.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, it is not just that mistakes were made by American policymakers, and it is not just that Chalabi gave us bad information. The other part of the equation is that the ideologues in the civilian leadership, in the Pentagon and in the White House simplified, distorted, took information and twisted it in such a way as to persuade the Congress and the American people that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction and that we needed to invade to keep that part of the world and this country safe from attack.

Let us not forget the fact that the intelligence information being given to the White House in the fall of 2002, the Defense Intelligence Agency report of September, 2002, the National Intelligence Estimate of October, 2002, was not available to the three of us at that time when we had to vote but was made available to us 6 or 7 months later. Those intelligence reports given to the White House were replete with uncertainty and caveats about the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

Now, they were wrong apparently to even think they might have been there, although we do know Saddam Hussein had them in the 1980s. They were wrong to conclude that he probably had them, but the reports were saying we think he has these weapons of mass destruction. He probably has them. We have been told he has them.

None of that uncertainty was passed on to the Congress in public statements or private briefings that we all attended, or to the American people in the fall of 2002 when we were asked to vote on the war authority. We were told with complete certainty that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction and we had to go get them.

In fact, the one member of the administration who had the most credibility in my opinion, Colin Powell, repeated this didactic approach, these statements with complete certainty, 4 or 5 months later in February or March of 2003 when he spoke to the U.N. He identified where the weapons were. He showed us pictures. He told us how much they weighed. He has 500 pounds over here; he has such and such over there. They talked about those two mobile chemical labs on flatbed trucks. Colin Powell assured the United Nations and all of the world that these things existed. They did not.

The intelligence they were basing these statements on was full of uncertainties. They deceived us. They led us to war with deceptions, and we have to hold them accountable for that. It is not just the mistakes. It is not just Chalabi's lies. It is the fact that some in the Bush administration were willing to twist that information, and this

goes to the President himself, to get us to go to war.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And look where we are now. The rest of the world does not believe us. A recent poll was taken in Latin America among the economic elite, not the poor, the disadvantaged, the down-trodden, if you will. It was done in seven countries. In five countries, the negative opinion of President Bush exceeded 90 percent. The average was 87 percent. This hurts us at many, many different levels.

Now we are faced with a scandal of a magnitude that I dare say we have not seen since Watergate, where we paid somebody who was conning us, that was betraying us to a potential adversary in Iran that the President of the United States described as a member of the Axis of Evil Club. Now we have the President of the United States today, according to CBS, has sought the help of an outside lawyer to represent him in the probe into who leaked the name of a CIA operative to a newspaper columnist. Believing that Bush will be interviewed or asked to testify before a grand jury, White House officials confirm that the President has put a Washington attorney on hot stand-by, CBS reported tonight.

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND) is now joining us, our other stalwart member of Iraq Watch.

What we have here is a growing morass, if you will, of investigations, of embarrassment, of loss of prestige, of the erosion of our moral authority in the world. And, most importantly, in addition to costing the American taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars, we are now putting our men and women who have performed so valiantly and professionally in Iraq, we are putting our military at risk, we are putting our national security at risk.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND).

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to apologize for showing up late. I was detained, but I am glad you have been here spreading the truth and letting the American people know the situation.

I am struck by the fact that right up there in the balcony during the President's address to this great body with all of the Representatives and Senators and the Supreme Court members and members of the diplomatic corps present, that Mr. Chalabi, who now has been disgraced, was seated right up there near the First Lady in an honored position as a guest of the President right here in the Chamber of the House of Representatives.

And we now know, sadly, that not only is he largely responsible for much of the misinformation that was used to take us into this war, and the gentleman is right, it is costing us from our national resources, from our national treasury, but what eats at me is the fact that more than 800 precious American lives have been lost in this war. We went into this war based on bad information received from Mr. Chalabi, this friend of the Vice President, a man who was getting hundreds of thousands of dollars from this government while he was betraying us, quite frankly, betraying us.

It hurts me to look up there at that seat in the balcony of this Chamber and know that at one time he was seated up there and he received the applause of this body as the guest of the President at the same time he was deceiving us, taking our resources and ultimately giving information to our enemies. This is a disaster. I think it is a disgrace, and I hope it is thoroughly investigated and we get to the bottom of those who are responsible.

It is about time that members of this administration took responsibility for what they have done, took responsibility, and I look forward to further discussion as the American people become increasingly aware of what has happened.

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

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I think responsibility is the right word, and I think what has been so stunning to us is the failure of the President to hold people and agencies responsible for their multiple foul-ups. This is not the way to run a railroad or a war, and other Presidents in other difficult circumstances have had the gumption and leadership to hold people accountable.

I had the honor of joining my dad, a World War II vet, at the dedication of the World War II Memorial this weekend. We were very proud of many people, including my father, at the dedication.

The memorial is a very moving place, and I encourage people to visit it. It is a very moving place. They have 4,000 stars representing our losses in World War II, and framing that wall of stars are two pillars, both of which have quotes from President Harry Truman.

I was talking to my dad, and he reminded me that Harry Truman did something. He held somebody who was very popular at the time accountable. He fired General MacArthur. It was an extremely controversial thing for the President to do. But he recognized in war you have to have accountability and responsibility.

There is nobody in this administration as popular as General MacArthur. I can guarantee the President that. And if President Bush had half the gumption of President Truman, he would fire some of these people tomorrow to send a message that we are not going to tolerate this incompetence anymore, and we are going to send a message to the world that we are going to be accountable to it as well.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman has provoked a thought. What we have here is the absolute converse of what occurred back in the early 1950s. We have a professional military, a military that every American supports and a military that has conducted itself with valor and a military that all Americans can be proud of, but a civilian leadership that is incompetent. If we are ever going to win the war on terror, if we are going to defeat terrorism in this world, it is absolutely essential, as the gentleman said, for a new team.

I was at a hearing today in the Committee on International Relations which the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOEFFEL) and I serve on. We all remember, it was a unanimous vote in this Chamber to go into Afghanistan and go after the real enemy, al Qaeda, the fundamental Islamists, eliminate them and reduce the threat. We had the support of the entire world. We had a genuine coalition.

Oftentimes, the French are castigated and denigrated on this floor, but if Members remember, it was the French national paper Le Monde that on September 12 said, ''Today we are all Americans,'' and now we have gone in another direction.

Members all know who Robert Novak is, an extremely conservative columnist, certainly not one who in most cases we would share the same viewpoint on a variety of issues, but here are his comments in a column he did recently. ''The handful of valiant American warriors fighting the other war in Afghanistan is not a happy band of bothers. They are undermanned and feel neglected, lack confidence in their generals, and are disgusted by Afghan political leadership. The overlooked war continues with no end in sight. Narcotics trafficking is at an all-time high. If U.S. forces were to leave, the Taliban or something like it would regain power. The U.S. is lost in Afghanistan, bound to this wild country and unable to leave.''

□ 2115

It is Special Services that is given the task of confronting armed narcoterrorists on a day-to-day basis.

Mr. Speaker, we are losing; not just in Afghanistan, but we are losing everywhere. This is a highly volatile, highly dangerous moment in our national history.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield further, let me just add to the gentleman's wise comments.

We are at risk of losing in Iraq if we do not get security in that country. We all share the President's goals of creating a stable and peaceful Iraq with a representative self-government, hopefully a flourishing democracy. We all share that goal. But we cannot achieve that goal or any of the benchmarks without security. We cannot reconstruct that country without security, we cannot have a meaningful transfer of sovereignty on June 30 or any other day without security, and we certainly cannot have elections there without security. So we have not accomplished the fundamental task of this occupation.

The President keeps saying, well, we are going to turn things over June 30

and get out. Well, the military occupation is not ending, and it cannot end because the country is not secure, and it is not able to secure itself.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, part of the problem is we took the advice of Chalabi. It was because of information that he had given, apparently to the Vice President, that we decided we could go into Iraq with less force than we actually needed to bring stability to that country; and the result is well over 800 precious American lives have been lost, and more are being lost every day; and thousands of Americans have been terribly wounded and are being wounded every day.

We are going to have this handover, and the President boasts that that is a very large milestone in the history of this country. The fact is, the American soldier is going to be there, the American soldier is going to have a target on his or her back, and we are going to continue to lose soldiers and to have soldiers wounded.

Now, the President tries to set this up as a two-choice dichotomy. He says, stay the course, and those who question his policies want to cut and run. I do not hear anyone saying they want to cut and run. But neither do we want to stay the course, as the President has laid it out. We want to change the course. We want to internationalize and Iraqitize this situation. We want to give other countries some of the responsibility, have them carry part of the burden.

The fact is that I am tired of slogans when it comes to this war. I have talked to too many loved ones who have their sons or daughters or husbands over there fighting this war. I met with a number of them just yesterday, and they are terribly concerned, as they ought to be, and they are wondering what is going on, how long will my loved one be there, and are they being protected as much as possible while they are there.

I would just remind my colleagues that we continue to have troops over there driving around in un-armored Humvees. We finally convinced the other side of the aisle that we needed to put more money into that project, but soldiers are still being needlessly wounded, and, in some tragic cases, losing their lives, in part because we are not giving them the proper equipment.

Part of it is we were told there would be rose petals, they were going to welcome us as liberators; and much of it was based on the information that came from this Chalabi, a man who we now know was not our friend, in fact, was giving information to our enemies.

That is the sad truth. We cannot run from that truth. The administration needs to face up to the facts that they used bad information, they made bad decisions, and, as a result, we find ourselves in this quagmire; and we need to change course and move in a different direction.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. I agree with the gentleman that we have probably heard too many slogans and that slogans do not really help resolve complicated problems. But I would say to the gentleman that we need to get more troops in Iraq, preferably international troops, so we can get security. That is essential. Then we can get elections and get an Iraqi government freely elected in charge so America can get out.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, if I can just for a moment speak to the issue of America's standing in this world. I am reminded of DeTouqueville when he came to this country, a Frenchman who toured the original 13 States, and he made this observation. He spoke of America's greatness, and he said America is great because America is good.

The world has always looked towards the United States of America, not just because of its military strength or its economic power, but because of our moral authority. Americans through the generations have earned that title, that title of ''American,'' because we are a moral and a good and generous Nation.

But that perception of the United States is changing. We hear a lot about oil and our motives in terms of why we went into Iraq.

I remember reading the book ''The Price of Loyalty'' that was done by an author regarding the experiences of Paul O'Neill, former Secretary of the Treasury. I would ask my friends on all sides of this particular issue to take the time to go to page 96, because I have been asking this question for months now, and I cannot get an answer. Maybe I am simply frustrated.

But at a meeting of the National Security Council on February 27, some 7 months before our national tragedy on September 11, this is Secretary Paul O'Neill, a highly respected Republican who served in the Reagan administration, who served under this President Bush's father, let me just take an excerpt and read it to you:

''Beneath the surface was a battle O'Neill had seen brewing since the National Security meeting on January 30, which was about a week after the inauguration. There was Powell and the moderates at the State Department versus hardliners like Rumsfeld, Cheney and Wolfowitz, who were already planning the next war with Iraq and the shape of a post-Saddam country. Documents were being 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.

''This was occurring weeks after the inauguration. There was a document entitled 'Foreign Suitors for Iraqi Oil Field Contracts.' It lists companies from 30 countries, including France, Germany, Russia and the United Kingdom, 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 earmarks for production sharing.''

So we wonder, we wonder why the perception of this great and generous Nation is now being attacked, is now being questioned.

Recently there was a survey done by the Pew Foundation, and it was particularly disturbing because many across the world doubt our motives and believe that our real intent is to control Mideastern oil. In Russia, 51 percent of that population believes that that was why we invaded Iraq; in France, 58 percent; in Germany, 63 percent; in Pakistan, 54 percent; in Turkey, 64 percent; in Morocco, 63 percent; and in Jordan, 71 percent. This, I submit to my friends, is most disturbing.

Then we have a report in Time magazine, all Americans by now are aware that DICK CHENEY, the Vice President of the United States, whom in Bob Woodward's most recent book, ''The Plan of Attack,'' is described as having a ''fervor for war.'' That was by Colin Powell. Colin Powell said that, not one of us. It now appears that Time magazine reports that an e-mail from the Army Corps of Engineers says that ''Douglas Feith, an Undersecretary of Defense, approved arrangements for the Halliburton contract, contingent on informing White House tomorrow. We anticipate no issues, since action has been coordinated with the Vice President's office.''

And we wonder why our bona fides and our motives are being questioned? What happens now when the rest of the world reads that information in a journal that is generally regarded with respect, that represents American thinking?

Mr. INSLEE. If the gentleman will yield, I want to just kind of recap some of the things we have talked about as to why we are so adamant that this administration change and improve its policies in Iraq. We have talked about some things tonight, but I want to talk about the 10 significant failures of this administration. I just want to recap them quickly as to why we feel so strongly, why we have been here every week. I want to list them quickly.

Failure number one: the President told us, ''Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction.'' That and his other statements, many others, were false. Failure number one.

Failure number two: they told us that they had clear and convincing evidence of the connection between Saddam Hussein and the attack, the heinous attack on us on September 11. Those statements were false. Failure number two.

Failure number three: they told us we would be greeted as liberators, with rose petals at our feet. Mr. Chalabi would be the Spartacus of Iraq. That statement was false.

Failure number four: they ignored clear evidence and clear advice from

General Shinseki and many others that we would need several-fold the number of troops that they gave to this effort in order to secure Iraq, and they ignored this clear advice. Why? Because they wanted to fight this war on the cheap so they would not have to pay for it. Well, we have suffered from their effort to fight a war on the cheap with a lot of dead good American people in Iraq.

Failure number five: they refused to involve the United Nations until maybe 2 weeks ago, when they finally went back on their knees to the U.N.

Failure number six: they refused to have elections.

Failure number seven: they had no command and control system on the prisoner camps.

Failure number eight: no armor.

Failure number nine: no plan to pay for this war.

Failure number ten: they gave $40 million of taxpayer money to a con man that got us into this war.

These are 10 failures, and they demand accountability from people in this administration.

PROVIDING LIFELONG OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL AMERICANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FEENEY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HAYES) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, we have tonight the subject of lifelong learning and education, making sure that our friends, our families, and working people in America have careers, opportunities, and chances to have the financial rewards that come with being American.

But, first, I would like to yield to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. TIAHRT), who I think would like to help with the rewriting of history and set the record straight on some comments made by our colleagues across the aisle.

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to spend just a little bit of time before we talk about how we are going to bring jobs back into America talking about the things we just heard about.

Now, a lot of the Democrats and liberals want to ignore what happened on September 11, 2001. They want to ignore that terrorists brought the war on terrorism right down home to America. It was an attack on America, just like Pearl Harbor was an attack on America.

□ 2130

They have forgotten that we are at war against terrorism, and it is on a global scale.

And what do the terrorists want? They want a Taliban-style society right here in America. They want us to lose our freedom. They want our women to lose their rights. They do not want our women to have any property. They do not want them to have any voting rights. They do not want them to drive without having a male partner with them. They want them to wear burqas and look out through a mesh.

This is a total change to what our western society is. If you just look at Fallujah where we tried to give those people in the terrorist organization a chance to peacefully surrender, we backed off, we allowed the Iraqis to go in, and what happened? Well, we have a Taliban-style government there. The women are threatened to wear burqas. The men cannot shave their beards anymore. What is at stake here around the world is our culture.

The liberals want the U.N. to take charge. We heard that just over the last hour. They want the United Nations to take over this battle. Well, let us look at the record the United Nations has.

In Cambodia, after we left Vietnam because of the pressure of the liberals, 2 million people died, another million in Vietnam. But the U.N. was in control. We should be comforted, we should be satisfied that they took over, where 2 million people died in Cambodia.

Rwanda, the U.N. turned a blind eye; and 500,000 people died in Rwanda.

Today, in the Sudan, there is a racist war going on where the Arabs are killing Africans. They are killing the black people. Nearly 100,000 people may be dead as of this point.

The U.N. cannot fight the war on terrorism. The U.N. cannot make the United States safe.

Well, then they said, the liberals just said earlier that we had a bad decision because of the ''neocons.'' What they were referring to is the neoconservatives. It is some kind of label they are trying to put on people who are serving this country within the Department of Defense.

They said that we made a big mistake because we trusted Chalabi who was an expatriate. Well, we did make a mistake trusting Chalabi, but I have to tell my colleagues that we trust people who are expatriates all over the world today. Why do we do that? We do that because we think they have the best information coming out of the nation, and we trust them because they have the freshest information, and we trust them because we have no other alternative, thanks to the liberals and the Clinton administration.

We totally decimated our human intelligence all over the global. We decided, according to a rule that was placed on the CIA, that we could not deal with any ''shady characters.'' Well, who knows this information? It is the people who are on the inside in these countries that are corrupt. They are all shady characters that we have to deal with, but we have no human intelligence to verify it.

That is why we trusted Chalabi. We trusted him because it was the only information we were getting was from him. We trusted it, but we needed to have some human intelligence to go inside the country of Iraq before we went in and say, yes, this is right, or, no, this is not right. But thanks to the Clintons and the liberals, we could not deal with them. We did not have anybody there to verify it. So we trusted him, and we made a mistake. I think we ought to admit that, and we ought to move on.

Chalabi passed on information to the Iranians. It was reported in The New York Times. How we got that information, the reporter from The New York Times, I do not know. We need to check that out as well, because we are talking about very important secrets that this Nation held.

But we wanted to verify what was going on in Iraq before we entered, we want to verify what is going on around the globe, and we are trying to rebuild that human intelligence network. But thanks to the Clinton administration and the liberals, we do not have any of those contacts right now.

But in Iraq what we have done as Americans is we have taken the fight to the terrorists. We are not sitting back and waiting for them to come to New York or Washington, D.C., or Wichita, Kansas. We are taking the fight to them.

Now the liberals want us to withdrawal from Iraq. We cannot do that. I think that we have to stay there.

I talked to a young soldier over in Iraq when I was there myself, and I said, what do you think about being here in this hot spot where all the terrorists from all over the globe are coming here, they are arming themselves, they are trying to take out Americans?

He said, you know, this is the one spot in the whole globe where every American here is carrying a gun. I want the terrorists to come here. I do not want them going to my home. I want them to come to Iraq. Because this is where every American is carrying a gun, and we can take care of our ourselves, and he patted his machine gun.

We have to take the fight to the terrorists. We cannot wait for them to come to us. We do not want them here on the floor of the House of Representatives. We do not want them on the streets of Washington, D.C. We do not want them in Wichita, Kansas, or New York City or anywhere else in America. We want to take the fight to them.

Well, the liberals say, now, we are in this because of the oil; and they quote people in France and in Germany. Well, if we check about the Oil for Food program that the U.N. had, all of the kickbacks that were coming out of the Oil for Food program went to France, Germany, some of them went to Russia. Does that not sound familiar when you compare that to the list of countries that would not support us in our effort to free Iraq and kill the terrorists? They are the same people that benefited from the Oil for Food program by