worldwide military operations. It may seem possible now because we have been afforded the historically unique privilege of printing the world's reserve currency.

Foreigners so far have been only too willing to take our depreciating dollars for their goods. Economic law eventually will limit our ability to live off others by credit creation; and trust in the dollar will be diminished, if not destroyed. Those who hold these trillion-plus dollars can hold us hostage if it ever becomes in their interest. It may be that economic law and the hostility toward the United States will combine to precipitate an emotionally charged rejection of the dollar.

That is when the true wealth of the country will become self-evident, and we will no longer be able to afford the extravagant expense of pursuing an American empire. No nation has ever been able to finance excessive foreign entanglements and domestic entitlements through printing-press money and borrowing from abroad.

It is time we reconsider the advice of the Founding Fathers and the guidelines of the Constitution, which counsels a foreign policy of nonintervention and strategic independence. Setting a good example is a far better way to spread American ideals than through force of arms. Trading with nations, without interference by international government regulators, is superior to sanctions and tariffs that too often plant the seeds of war.

The principle of self-determination should be permitted for all nations and all demographically defined groups. The world tolerated the breakup of the ruthless Soviet and Yugoslavian systems rather well, even as certain national and ethnic groups demanded self-determination and independence.

This principle is the source of the solution for Iraq.

Instead of the incessant chant about us forcing democracy on others, why not read our history and see how 13 nations joined together to form a loose-knit republic with emphasis on local self-government. Part of the problem with our effort to reorder Iraq is that the best solution is something we have essentially rejected here in the United States. It would make a lot more sense to concentrate on rebuilding our Republic, emphasizing the principles of private property, free markets, trade and personal liberty here at home rather than pursuing war abroad. If this were done, we would not be a militaristic state spending ourselves into bankruptcy, and government benefits to the untold thousands of corporations and special interests would be denied.

True defense is diminished when money and energy are consumed by activities outside the scope of specifically protecting our national interests. Diverting resources away from defense and the protection of our borders, while antagonizing so many around the world, would actually serve to expose us to greater danger from more determined enemies.

A policy of nonintervention and strategic independence is the course we should take if we are serious about peace and prosperity. Liberty works.

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

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

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the gentleman from Oregon's (Mr. DEFAZIO) time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

THE INCOMPETENCE MUST STOP

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

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, sadly I am here to talk about what we cannot ignore: the sad, sad chronicle of incompetence and blunder which marks this administration's conduct of national security policy.

I do not think in the history of the United States there has been a major national security effort handled so badly. I voted against the war in Iraq. I voted for the war in Afghanistan, and I am glad I did. I voted against the war in Iraq because I did not think it was justified, and I feel vindicated in that judgment; but even for those who thought it was justified, I do not understand how they can fail to join in the criticism of the shambles this administration has made of the policy.

I will insert in the RECORD here, Mr. Speaker, an article by Elisabeth Bumiller from the May 29 New York Times, and the headline is ''Conservative Allies Take Chalabi Case to the White House.''

[From the New York Times, May 29, 2004]

CONSERVATIVE ALLIES TAKE CHALABI CASE TO THE WHITE HOUSE

(By Elisabeth Bumiller)

WASHINGTON, May 28—Influential outside advisers to the Bush administration who support the Iraqi exile leader Ahmad Chalabi are pressing the White House to stop what one has called a ''smear campaign,'' against Mr. Chalabi, whose Baghdad home and offices were ransacked last week in an American-supported raid.

Last Saturday, several of these Chalabi supporters said, a small delegation of them marched into the West Wing office of Condoleezza Rice, the national security adviser, to complain about the administration's abrupt change of heart about Mr. Chalabi and to register their concerns about the course of the war in Iraq. The group included Richard N. Perle, the former chairman of a Pentagon advisory group, and R. James Woolsey, director of central intelligence under President Bill Clinton.

Members of the group, who had requested the meeting, told Ms. Rice that they were incensed at what they view as the vilification of Mr. Chalabi, a favorite of conservatives who is now central to an F.B.I. investigation into who in the American government might have given him highly classified information that he is suspected of turning over to Iran.

Mr. Chalabi has denied that he provided Iran with any classified information.

The session with Ms. Rice was one sign of the turmoil that Mr. Chalabi's travails have produced within an influential corner of Washington, where Mr. Chalabi is still seen as a potential leader of Iraq.

''There is a smear campaign under way, and it is being perpetrated by the C.I.A. and the D.I.A. and a gaggle of former intelligence officers who have succeeded in planting these stories, which are accepted with hardly any scrutiny,'' Mr. Perle, a leading conservative, said in an interview.

Mr. Perle, referring to both the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency, said the campaign against Mr. Chalabi was ''an outrageous abuse of power'' by United States government officials in Washington and Baghdad.

''I'm talking about Jerry Bremer, for one,'' Mr. Perle said, referring to L. Paul Bremer III, the top American administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority in charge of the occupation of Iraq. ''I don't know who gave these orders, but there is no question that the C.P.A. was involved.''

In Baghdad, coalition authorities vigorously denied Mr. Perle's assertion. ''Jerry Bremer didn't initiate the investigation,'' Dan Senor, the spokesman for the Coalition Provisional Authority, said in a telephone interview.

Similarly, Mark Mansfield, a C.I.A. spokesman, called Mr. Perle's accusation that the agency was smearing Mr. Chalabi ''absurd.'' A Defense Department official who asked not to be named said that Mr. Perle's accusations against the D.I.A. had no foundation.

Mr. Chalabi has been a divisive figure for years in Washington, where top Pentagon officials favored him as a future leader of Iraq and top State Department officials distrusted him as unreliable. Either way, Mr. Chalabi and his exile group, the Iraqi National Congress, fed intelligence to the Bush administration about Iraq's unconventional weapons that helped drive the administration toward war.

Intelligence officials now argue that some of the intelligence was fabricated, and that Mr. Chalabi's motives were to push the United States into toppling Saddam Hussein and pave the way for his installation as Iraqi's new leader.

Although Mr. Chalabi's supporters outside the administration have been caustic in their comments about his treatment, there has been relative silence so far from Mr. Chalabi's supporters within the administration. Deputy Defense Secretary Paul D. Wolfowitz, who favored going to war in Iraq and was a patron of Mr. Chalabi, did not respond to numerous requests this week for an interview.

Mr. Wolfowitz's spokesman, Charley Cooper, said in an e-mail message that Mr. Wolfowitz believed that Mr. Chalabi and the Iraqi National Congress ''have provided valuable operational intelligence to our military forces in Iraq, which has helped save American lives.'' Mr. Cooper added in the message that ''Secretary Wolfowitz hopes that the events of the last few weeks haven't undermined that.''

The current views of Vice President Dick Cheney and his chief of staff, I. Lewis Libby,

are not known. Both strongly supported Mr. Chalabi before and during the war in Iraq.

Last Saturday, participants in the meeting with Ms. Rice and her deputy, Stephen Hadley, said Ms. Rice told them she appreciated that they had made their views known. But she gave no hint of her own opinion, participants said, and made no concessions to their point of view.

Newt Gingrich, the former speaker of the House of Representatives, also attended the meeting. A larger meeting later that day, with Mr. Hadley alone, included Danielle Pletka, a vice president of the American Enterprise Institute, a research institution in Washington.

In an interview, Ms. Pletka said that Mr. Chalabi had been ''shoddily'' treated and that C.I.A. and State Department people had been fighting ''a rear guard'' action against him.

''They've been out to get him for a long time,'' Ms. Pletka said. ''And to be fair, he has done things and the people around him have done things that have made it easier for them. He is a prickly, difficult person and he drives them crazy. He never takes no for an answer, even when he should.''

Ms. Pletka added: ''There are questionable people around him—I don't know how close—who have been involved in questionable activities in Iraq. He is close to the Iranian government. And so all of these things have lent credence to the accusations against him.''

Mr. Perle said the action against Mr. Chalabi would burnish his anti-American credentials in Iraq and possibly help him to be elected to political office. ''In that regard, this clumsy and outrageous assault on him will only improve his prospects,'' Mr. Perle said.

Mr. Perle said that he had no business dealings with Mr. Chalabi, but that he believed the C.I.A. and D.I.A. were spreading false information that he did. He also said that Mr. Chalabi was not alone in supplying intelligence to the United States government that turned out to be false.

''I know of no inaccurate information that was supplied uniquely by anyone brought to us by the Iraqi National Congress,'' Mr. Perle said.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chalabi, if I am pronouncing it right, people will remember, is the man who we had thought was someone the President approved of, whom the President now tells us he cannot quite remember.

I do think, Mr. Speaker, as an aside, that probably we should be investigating Chamber security here because apparently at the last State of the Union address a man largely unknown to the President managed to seat himself next to the First Lady. Mr. Chalabi was seated next to Laura Bush. Now the President has no idea or only a vague idea who this man is; and when a stranger, apparently a stranger of some disrepute, if we listen to the White House, is allowed to seat himself next to Laura Bush, then I begin to feel nervous. In general, I think the people who run security do a very good job, I do not know, and this point probably was not their fault. They may have been misled by somebody in the Defense Department, but we better look into it.

We now go back to the spectacle of this administration's internal warfare. We read recently that the Secretary of State was very angry at the CIA because he now acknowledges that they gave him misinformation. I do not know if that is one of the reasons that the director of the CIA resigned. He is the man who, of course, told the President that it was a slam dunk that there were weapons of mass destruction. Apparently, he slammed when he should have dunked, and he is no longer with us, but the chaos continues.

Here we have in this story the conservative allies, according to Mr. Richard Perle, who is a close adviser to the Defense Department, and according to this article last Saturday, several of these Chalabi supporters said a small delegation of them marched into the West Wing of Condoleezza Rice, the national security adviser, to complain about the administration. For some of these people, who have been consistent advocates of war, marching into Condoleezza Rice, it was the only marching they ever did because certainly they have not been in uniform to march in any wartime conditions, but we have them denouncing the Bush administration, Bush advisers denouncing Bush advisers.

Mr. Powell was quoted in the New York Times last Sunday, well, big surprise, ''we disagree with each other.'' That is not the problem. It is not a problem that the President's advisers disagree with each other. The problem is that the President appears to agree with each of them who disagree with each other. The President does not solve these problems. We have had this ongoing dispute. It is extraordinary to have someone being paid $40 million or more by the American Government, supported by the Defense Department, Mr. Chalabi, then overthrown by the State Department or the CIA.

Here is Mr. Perle, again, a close ally of the Defense Department, remember the Defense Advisory Board, saying there is a smear campaign under way being perpetrated by the CIA and the Defense Intelligence Agency. This is Mr. Perle, and then he denounces Mr. Bremer. We are told you, Democrats, do not be critical of the people in Iraq who are running our policy, you will undermine them.

I am nicer than Mr. Perle to these people. Mr. Perle is being much more vitriolic, and he has even managed, Mr. Perle, because he is the epitome of niceness, to find a way to defend Mr. Chalabi who we are now told by this government may have leaked important information to the Iranians.

Here is Mr. Perle's defense of Mr. Chalabi, and Mr. Perle is a man who chooses his words carefully. I wish he chose his friends as carefully as he chose his words, but he does choose his words carefully; and here is what he said about Mr. Chalabi's organization, the Iraqi National Congress, from the New York Times of last Saturday: '' 'I know of no inaccurate information that was supplied uniquely by anyone brought to us by the Iraqi National Congress,' Mr. Perle said.''

In other words, he does not deny that Mr. Chalabi lied to us. He does not deny that Mr. Chalabi in effect boasted he gave us misinformation and does not mind that it could help us go to war. His point is that Mr. Chalabi was not the only one who lied to us. I do not think it is much of a defense of Mr. Chalabi to say he is the only one who lied to us, nor does it say much for this administration that they listened to so many liars. The incompetence must stop.

□ 1530

GRAVE SHORTFALLS IN NATO'S INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE FORCE IN AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FRANKS of Arizona). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member rises to inform our colleagues about grave shortfalls in NATO's International Security Assistance Force, ISAF, in Afghanistan and about efforts to ensure the mission has the resources needed for success.

This Member returned to Washington yesterday from Bratislava, Slovakia, where the spring session of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly was held. This Member serves as the President of the Assembly, which for the last 50 years has served as the parliamentary adviser and support organization for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO.

The inability of the Alliance to meet its commitments in Afghanistan was the most important issue we discussed in Bratislava. This Member cannot overstate how critical the next few weeks will be for the future of Afghanistan and for the credibility of NATO.

Several members of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly visited Afghanistan on behalf of the Assembly 2 weeks ago. They were unanimous in their praise for the professionalism of our soldiers but were equally convinced that, without additional resources, the Alliance faces failure in Afghanistan and risks losing all that it has currently invested.

The problems, as noted by those members, relate to the unwillingness of Alliance member countries to provide the personnel and the key air assets required to deploy additional provincial reconstruction teams, or PRTs, to provide security beyond Kabul and the surrounding environs.

In addition, the allies must provide ISAF with the extra forces needed to give the forthcoming elections the best chance of success. This is a matter of great urgency. If our allies do not commit more forces and the support assets to sustain them in the next 4 to 6 weeks, the September elections in Afghanistan will likely do little more than to legitimatize the warlords and drug traffickers who are increasingly controlling much of the country.