Mr. Speaker, in order to solve the problem, you have to

recognize that you have a problem in the first place.

For 3 years, the President and his administration contended that

everything was going fine in Iraq, that we were winning, and they

openly questioned the motivations and the patriotism of anyone who

questioned or disagreed with them.

Now we are finally getting some straight talk from people who have

been in the administration since the very beginning. The U.S.

Ambassador to Iraq says the country is nearing a civil war and we have

opened ``Pandora's box'' by toppling Saddam Hussein.

Director of National Intelligence, John Negroponte said, ``Even if a

broad, inclusive national government emerges, there will almost

certainly be a lag time before we see a dampening effect on the

insurgency.''

And today, General Peter Pace, the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

said, ``The Iraqi people themselves are standing at a crossroads, and

they are making critical decisions for their country right now about

which road they want to take,'' whether it is going to be a civil war

or the road to democracy.

These are sobering assessments, but they were a welcome change from

the standard White House line of everything is fine, everything is

hunky-dory, we are winning in Iraq, the road to victory is in Iraq. In

fact, we are at the precipice of a civil war. We are on the doorstep of

a civil war.

Now that we have this honest talk finally, we are finding from people

who are telling us what the beginnings were because we did not get here

by accident. We got here by people not listening to the people on the

ground. Our first ambassador, Paul Bremer, writes in a recent book,

even on page 10, you don't even have to finish the book, he had asked

for more troops. The President of the United States, the Secretary of

Defense for years maintained nobody had asked for more troops. We had

enough troops, if the generals needed more troops, they would have told

us. Now the lead ambassador, the point man for the President of the

United States, in fact, asked for more troops.

One of the big problems we had, we had 500,000 troops to get Iraq out

of Kuwait, but somehow some genius over at the Department of Defense,

that is the Secretary of Defense, thought you could do it for less than

100,000, both occupy Iraq, win a war in Iraq, and do it for less than

100,000 when we needed 500,000 just to get them out of Kuwait. In fact,

somebody did ask for more troops, and the President of the United

States and the Secretary of Defense refused to listen to the

ambassador, their point person.

That is not the only mistake they made. In fact, today, going back to

one of the early days of the insurgency, we now realize from the last 2

days of The New York Times, generals were saying we had to not try to

topple Iraq, we had to deal with the Feyhadeen. Otherwise, we are going

to have the beginnings of an insurgency. The generals on the ground

were overruled.

Again, contrary to the line, which is, we are going to listen to the

generals and whatever they need, we did not listen to the generals.

When we finally get to Baghdad and did finally topple the government,

and there was all this chaos going on, the Secretary of Defense once

again used his famous line

which is ``Freedom is messy. Sometimes it is followed by chaos,'' after

a country has been headed by an authoritarian dictatorship for so long.

Every problem we are facing today, too few troops, not listening to

the generals to literally suppress and put down the insurgency early

on, not having a plan for the occupation, is what has gotten us to this

point today, where we are on the precipice of a civil war. And all is

not hindsight, Monday morning quarterbacking. At the very time these

problems were emerging, people said you are doing the wrong thing. And

the Secretary of Defense and the President of the United States and

others around his administration refused to listen.

And this Congress has acted like the ``hear no evil, see no evil''

Congress. We have $10 billion on Iraq reconstruction that nobody can

account for, and there have been no hearings and no accountability by

the administration. Paul Bremer has not asked to come up and tell us

what happened when he said he needed more troops. What happened to the

generals when they said we have to put down the insurrection?

Yet, this Republican Congress refuses to hold anybody's feet to the

fire, refuses to ask any question, ask the questions and get the

answers for the people that we represent want to know.

On page 10 of ``My Year in Iraq,'' Bremer writes that he was alarmed

by a RAND Corporation report stating we did not have enough troops on

the ground to stabilize the country. Bremer continues, ``I found the

conclusions persuasive. And troubling. That afternoon, I had a summary

of the draft copied and sent down the corridor to Don Rumsfeld. `I

think you should consider this,' I said in my cover memo. I never heard

back from him about the report.''

Troop levels were not increased. The Feyhadeen were never put down.

We have lost $10 billion, never to be accounted for, and we never had a

plan for the occupation we have today. And now we are the precipice of

a civil war.

Mr. Speaker, we can do better than this. These problems that are

repeating in Iraq where nobody is held accountable and nobody is asked

questions are not isolated to the problems of Iraq. Look at Hurricane

Katrina and all of the trailers down there and the money wasted. Again,

nobody was in charge. Nobody listened, and American taxpayers' hard-

earned dollars are seen wasted away.