Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr.

Conyers) for bringing the Seymour Hersh article to the attention of the

House today. I read that this afternoon, and I agree with my colleague,

the impact of that article clearly is this was a planned special

operation that did not originate with the privates and the sergeants

but at the highest levels of the Bush administration.

But the question I wanted to ask my colleague, what I got out of the

article was that not only was this a very clear attempt, if the article

is accurate, by the Bush administration to set up an intelligence-

gathering mechanism and operation that would be free and clear of any

congressional oversight, but that they were taking these procedures and

methods from Afghanistan, where we were clearly fighting terrorists and

had terrorists in custody, and were interrogating terrorists and where

we had announced, rightly or wrongly, that the Geneva Conventions would

not apply. Then we were taking these methods and procedures to a more

traditional war zone in Iraq and applying them to the detainees in the

Iraqi prisons, notably Abu Ghraib, where the detainees were a bunch of

people off the street, street criminals, rock throwers, hoodlums, maybe

some terrorists, but certainly a wide number of just disaffected Iraqis

who got swept up by the police and by the Army in an urban setting that

was a traditional war zone. Yet, here the American operation was using

these same interrogation approaches that we have been using against

known terrorists in a lawless situation in Afghanistan.

This seems to me to be the root of the problem. First off, there is

clear accountability to the very top of the Defense Department and the

White House, and every time those gentlemen talk about just a few bad

apples, it sets my hackles on edge because clearly they are trying to

avoid accountability and responsibility.

The fundamental error they made was, in my judgment, taking this from

a terror interrogation into interrogation of street criminals and

routine suspects that have so badly backfired on our image in Iraq.

So I wonder, does the gentleman read the article the same way as I

do?

Very aptly known as SAP, S-A-P.

Mr. Speaker, just over a year ago at one of our first

Iraq Watches, I recounted a visit that Mr. Chalabi paid to my office,

as I think he did to most members of the Committee on International

Relations in October 2002, just before the vote here in the House on

the war authority on Iraq.

I talked to Mr. Chalabi for 10 or 15 minutes. He had an aide with

him, and my chief of staff was with me. They left, and I turned to my

aide and I said, That is the kind of man that my grandfather would have

called a four-flusher. I do not think I have used that term since my

grandfather died in the 1980s. I am not quite sure what it means. I

think it must come from poker where a player has four cards for a

flush, does not have the fifth, and you are all hot air and cannot be

trusted and you are just a spin doctor.

That is exactly the impression that I got from Ahmed Chalabi that

day, that he was spinning. He was spinning me, he was spinning the

Congress, he was not a man of substance and not someone we should

trust.

The sad fact is, as my colleagues have said here tonight, the

administration trusted him. Paul Wolfowitz trusted him, Doug Faith,

Donald Rumsfeld trusted him, and because those individuals trusted him,

our President trusted him; and he is not worthy of our trust. As a

matter of fact, I think we need to talk about all of this talk about

resignations in the Department of Defense. I do not think we should

allow those civilian authorities in the DOD the luxury of resigning.

The President ought to fire them. He ought to fire Rumsfeld and Faith

for the bad advice they have given him, for believing in people like

Chalabi, for the lack of planning in Iraq, for sending troops over

there without enough numbers, without the armored vehicles to keep them

safe.

The failures of leadership in the Department of Defense are so great,

including believing Chalabi, that the civilian leadership ought to go.

While the President is at it, he ought to get rid of George Tenet for

the bad intelligence regarding the failure of the weapons of mass

destruction intelligence.

The only person that ought to resign in the administration is Colin

Powell, because his advice is not being listened to, but that is

another matter.

I remember. It was Mr. Chalabi.

Well, I was just going to say that we have as much of a

clue as the American officials in Iraq have, which is no clue at all. I

do not think anybody has any idea what is going to happen on June 30.