Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. On

that exact point, if we were just reciting a litany of errors made in

the sense of an honest misreading after a genuine inquiry, that would

be one thing, but the really shocking evidence to the contrary is now

coming out. In fact, we even see reports about where was the press? Why

was this taking place? And it turns out the source for much of this

information, not just for those in the intelligence agencies, but from

those reporting on it, was coming from the same sources.

The general public listening to us might say, well, that is all well

and good for you folks in the Congress to be mentioning these things

now, to be commenting on it now, but we had no access to that. We were

not privy to that kind of inquiry on the basis of a position in the

Congress where we could actually ask in depth in closed briefings and

hearings as to what the source of this information was. Yet we find now

in the Washington Post just 2 days ago a report taken from the London

Telegraph on commentary from Ahmad Chalabi. That name has been on this

floor previously. The gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt) has

examined Mr. Chalabi's career in detail. The gentleman from

Pennsylvania (Mr. Hoeffel), I believe, has done the same.

Mr. Speaker, let me explain what Mr. Chalabi

admitted to. He is now on the Governing Council. This is the body upon

which the United States is presently relying. This is the body upon

which the United States is presently conducting policy in terms of

their being able to take over on June 30, this arbitrary date that has

been set by the Bush administration.

He now lays claim to the following. He was accused of peddling phony

tips about Iraq's weapons, the very thing that the gentleman from

Pennsylvania (Mr. Hoeffel) has been speaking of. Again quoting from the

Washington Post, he shrugged off charges that he had deliberately

misled U.S. intelligence, We are heroes in error.

He told the Telegraph in an interview Wednesday in Baghdad, As far as

we are concerned, we have been entirely successful. Our objective has

been achieved. That tyrant Saddam is gone and the Americans are in

Baghdad. What was said before is not important.

Quoting it now from the Washington Post, not even to the families of

all the killed and wounded?

Mr. Speaker, let me repeat then for those who may be

tuning in and trying to get the context here. Let me repeat exactly

what Mr. Chalabi said, our champion in Baghdad, the person upon whom is

the principal resource apparently for the intelligence that was

delivered to the President, delivered to the Congress, and apparently

delivered to reporters who were all supposed to be checking sources.

Part of the thing that we need to remind ourselves and remind the

public of is that we are dependent upon the professional integrity of

journalists as well. We are dependent upon it. We are certainly the

object of it often enough. We are dependent on them checking their

sources to make sure that they are reliable. Let me repeat what he

said.

The reason I want to do that is that this is as cynical and sinister

a pronouncement as I have heard in my political lifetime. I am quoting

Mr. Chalabi, as reported in the Washington Post, We are heroes in

error. As far as we are concerned, we have been entirely successful.

Our objective has been achieved. That tyrant Saddam is gone, and the

Americans are in Baghdad. What was said before is not important.

Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to

yield, the question now then becomes, unless I missed something, this

Chalabi is a hired gun. This Chalabi is a creature of the

administration. He has no executive authority here. He has no voting

power. He does not make recommendations to the President of the United

States as an adviser, other than as a hired hand. Where was the

verification? This man has a vested interest in getting this country

into war in Iraq.

What bothers me, what distresses me is that what he was saying fits

very conveniently into the ideology and the philosophy and the foreign

policy desires of some of the people who have been most adamant in

advocating war with Iraq before the weapons of mass destruction

principle was laid down as the foundation for war with Iraq.

It is not as if it is a conspiracy. It is not as if it is a hidden

plot. It is not as if it is some diabolical machination taking place in

secret. Matter of fact, we have had dialogue. I have had dialogue and

discussion personally with those who advocated this, like Mr. Perle,

Mr. Kristol, Mr. Boot, Mr. Woolsey, who himself was head of the CIA.

They published their articles. They have their books written. They have

had this position for some time.

So it is not as if this is something that I have suddenly discovered

or others have suddenly discovered and now are shocked. I am not. What

shocks me is that people would take ostensible information or

intelligence and assume it to be true without checking it out

thoroughly, precisely because it fit what they would like it to be.

I know when somebody is telling me something I want to hear,

something I would like to be true, something I hope is going to take

place, I know that a little bell goes off, a little tremor takes place

in me saying, wait a minute, let us make sure that I am not being told

something because I want to hear it, because I would like to believe

it, because I want it to be so, particularly when the consequences are

going to be those of life and death.

When you are making a recommendation and have the authority,

particularly as President of the United States, as the Commander in

Chief, have the capacity and the authority to act on that

recommendation and to make it in turn to the people of this country,

then it is incumbent upon you, more than perhaps any other person in

this Nation, to be absolutely sure you know what you are talking about,

what your sources are and how reliable they are, not just because

someone has told you what you want to hear, but because you know it to

be factual and the implications to be clear in terms of war and peace.

Mr. Speaker, if I may ask the gentleman from

Massachusetts, who did the hand picking? Who did the hand picking? He

did not pick himself. Is there someone in the administration, are there

a group of people in the administration?

Perhaps the gentleman can enlighten me by answering

that question.

Mr. Speaker, I have never seen a picture or any film

of Mr. Chalabi when he was not smiling and when he did not have the

smuggest look on his face and when he did not have the demeanor of

someone who had pulled off a coup, when he did not have a patronizing

attitude towards those doing the interview. I can understand why. He

has played us for saps and suckers, and the result is we have dead and

wounded, grievously wounded. The result is the sacking of the Treasury

of the United States, and the result is that we have had people whose

ideological bent in the administration was such that they wanted to go

to war using each other, Chalabi using them, them using Chalabi, in the

most cynical fashion, the result of which we now see before us.

He said, and I remind Members and those listening to us, what was

said before is not important. That which became the justification for

what we did is not important. He got what he wanted. Those who wanted

to have war with Iraq got what they wanted. They are not paying the

price. They are not the ones who have to suffer for the rest of their

lives either by having grievous wounds or by having the irretrievable

loss of someone that they love as a result of this.

The question for us and the question that we have to ask not just

ourselves but the American people are going to have to ask, is, is this

going to be allowed? Is this going to be something that we are going to

pass off? The fact that the Newsweek cover that the gentleman from

Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt) referred to in his remarks just previously

could have a headline, ``How Dick Cheney Sold the War,'' the crass

indifference of a headline like that in terms of its implications, as

if you sell a war, not that you are driven into it, not that necessity

forced you to come to that sorry and reluctant conclusion, but rather

how you sold the war.

Nothing, I think, could be a commentary more persuasive to me of how

this has been manipulated, how this has been maneuvered in a way that

discredits this administration, discredits Mr. Cheney in that role. He

has yet to come to grips with it, and the White House and the

administration as a whole has yet to come to grips with it, because if

my information is correct and the information given to The Washington

Post is correct, and this is something that one would have the

opportunity to see whether it is correct unless it has changed since

its publication on February 22 was that the Web site for the White

House, the White House official Web site cites the same false

information today. It has not changed since March. I quote from the Web

site of the White House as of February 22: ``The United Nations and

U.S. intelligence sources have known for some time that Saddam Hussein

has materials to produce chemical and biological weapons, but has not

accounted for them: 26,000 liters of anthrax, enough to kill several

million people; 38,000 liters of botulism toxin; 500 tons of sarin

mustard and VX nerve agents; and 30,000 munitions capable of delivering

chemical agents.'' And finally: ``He recently sought significant

quantities of uranium in Africa, according to the British Government.''

These are the same lies and the same fabrications, the same

prevarications, the same falsehoods, the same misleading directions

that took us into this war and continue to be repeated in the face of

the knowledge that we know them not to be true.

How could it be that these continue to be repeated? Is it any wonder

that Mr. Chalabi laughs at us? Is it any wonder that he adopts a smug

disposition when we continue to support him, we continue to pay him, we

continue to support the policies that he espoused, and he is able to

say what was said before is not important because obviously there are

no penalties attached to it?

Mr. Speaker, where does the money come from?

Mr. Speaker, if Mr. Chalabi and his cohorts are

paying this kind of money, what is the principal source of income that

we have already enunciated for Mr. Chalabi and his friends?

In other words, the U.S. taxpayers are paying this

guy to in turn pay lobbyists in Washington to advocate his position and

influence Members of Congress.

If the gentleman will yield, not having seen the

article, does the article go on to elucidate for us who these

individuals are who are doing the lobbying? Are there firms here? Are

there American firms who are going to come to Members of Congress and

advocate on behalf of these individuals our appointees?

Would the gentleman consider submitting that article

for the Record so that those who want to read the article in the

Congressional Record subsequent to our discussion tonight will know all

of the details?

Mr. Speaker, I will ask to have the article that the

gentleman from Pennsylvania is referring to entered into the Record as

part of our deliberation.

If the gentleman will yield, I want to make sure I

understood really, because I have had some conversations with Mr.

Woolsey. They were affable. I considered them informative and

straightforward. I just want to make sure. You mean when he was talking

to me about these issues, he was part of a firm that was being paid

$10,000 a month by one of the individuals, by Chalabi himself?

That was never revealed to me. I must say, and I

want it on the record, that I resent that. If I knew that at least,

that is okay. I am an adult. I am perfectly capable of differentiating

between someone's sincerely held views and business associations they

might have. If somebody represents to me that, look, I just want to

tell you that we have a business relationship with this person, but I

hope you will grant me that I am speaking to you, giving you my best

and sincerest personal judgment regardless of my connection, I can

accept that, and I would have, surely, because I like to think that I

am a person, I hope, of some integrity, and I would do the same. If I

have strong views about something, I will certainly tell people the

whys and wherefores of it. But as a Member of Congress and having had

conversations with Mr. Woolsey concerning some of these issues, not to

have that kind of information, I think, is a subterfuge.

I am sorry to say it. It pains me. It pains me to say that. What you

just said to me is, in fact, shocking. If people want to be cynical

about it or think that I am just making some rhetorical flourish, they

can think so, but it is not. I do not conduct my affairs that way. I do

not deal with other people that way. I feel personally offended, to

tell you the truth, that such a thing could take place. I had no idea

that there was that kind of relationship, because I think that might

have colored what was said to me.

If the gentleman will yield further, Mr. Woolsey has

appeared on television numerous times as a commentator. He has been

introduced as the former head of the CIA. I have seen him often making

commentary and being asked for his perspective, and never once have I

heard on any of those television shows, never once, unless I missed it,

maybe I tuned in in the middle, maybe there is something that I missed,

but I do not believe ever once on any of those shows that any of those

hosts ever indicated that he is being paid by a member of the Governing

Council, or that his firm is being paid by a member of the Governing

Council, and that therefore, at the very least, on the basis of full

disclosure that we should know that so that you can take that into

account if you think that is pertinent with respect to what he is

saying.

I wonder if the hosts of some of these television shows and radio

shows and even those newspaper columnists who are quoting Mr. Woolsey

are aware or whether they have made the inquiry as to whether or not

such a situation exists. What bothers me as a Member of Congress, does

this mean that I have to ask every single person that speaks to me,

every single person with whom I have a conversation for a list of

particulars as to what their associations are before I engage in a

conversation or can expect on my part to receive information that is

the best judgment of this person rather than the paid retorts and paid-

for positions of someone who is in the hire of somebody else?

Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield again to

me, the newspaper article, again, I am presuming that it is accurate.

Does it indicate that this is a current relationship?

Mr. Speaker, I realize I am taking time up here, but

I am genuinely upset and shocked by this because I feel personally

used. I mean, some of these conversations took place on official trips

of the United States Government.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say in that regard

that this is my 30th year in public service. I have made friendships

and conducted business, legislative business, and evolved personal

relationships over those 30 years with a great number of individuals. I

have particularly valued those who are sometimes disparagingly referred

to as special interests or lobbyists as if that is seen by many people

as a derogatory term or a term of denigration. And I do not see it that

way. I want to make it clear in terms of my expressed disappointment

with regard to this revelation about Mr. Woolsey; and now I guess I am

going to have to wonder about everybody else too that I have a

conversation with, I am not trying to keep people from making a living.

It does not bother me any. As I say, I have friends who lobby on

behalf of what are called special interests. We all have special

interests. We are a multiplicity of special interests. One has only to

read the Federalist Papers to understand that. In fact, it can be seen

as the bulwark of a democratic republic because we do have factions and

many interests competing with one another for attention and for

approbation. There is no question about that. The only question to be

answered in that is do we know that, do we know who they are and what

they are and why they are and so on so we can discern what the

difference is?

I have no problem with people who are our friends, personal and

otherwise, making their positions known to me or to anyone else in the

Congress or anywhere else in public office. What bothers me is when

positions are represented to us and we do not know that someone, in

fact, is a paid representative, particularly on issues of war and

peace, life and death. The folks know and the Speaker knows that I am a

member of the Committee on Armed Services and those are the kinds of

things we vote on every day, and I think every member there, regardless

of party, takes seriously, deadly seriously, I might say without any

sense of irony attached to it, take seriously their responsibility.

But we are dependent in the Congress on getting good information. The

President of the United States is dependent upon getting good

information and making solid judgments based on that information.

Anybody who fails to give the best possible information with the

fullest knowledge behind it and the resources is undermining the

Constitution of the United States and failing their responsibilities as

a citizen. In this regard, then, I feel ill used in this process by Mr.

Woolsey, and I feel very definitely that the press and the Congress

need to make inquiries of everybody who comes before us presenting that

information and perspective to us upon which we have to act in matters

of life and death. Everybody has to have the fullest inquiry made of

them as to what their sources of income are and what their sources of

information are, whether they are tainted.

Can we conclude, Mr. Speaker, by saying that, at

least for the three of us I think I can speak, there will be openness

and transparency and accountability on this floor.