Madam Speaker, just to follow up on the comment and the

discussion of the deficit, it is not only Democrats who are concerned

with the deficit; it is Republicans as well. Last night I was in a town

hall meeting attended by about 150 people in Snohomish County,

Washington, and I had a fellow stand up who said he was a Republican

and was extremely concerned that this government, which he understood

was controlled by the Republican Party lock, stock and barrel, was

running up these enormous deficit. His basic question was, What is

going on? He was flabbergasted to see that happening.

What I had to tell him was the news was actually worse than he had

heard. He had heard the number that the Republican government had run

up a $500 billion deficit, and it bothered him. It bothered him even

more when I told him the deficit was actually higher than that because

the administration and the Congress to some degree have played with

some funny numbers that make Enron blush how accounting is done.

One example, I had to tell him the President's budget, which has been

forwarded to the Congress proposing expenditures for next year, omitted

any sums for fighting the Iraq war, any sums for fighting the

Afghanistan war. You can kind of understand how a government can run up

giant deficits, the largest deficits in American history if they play

funny games of sending up budgets when we are in the middle of a war

spending $100 billion a year in Iraq, or a little short of that, and

then assess zero cost to that.

I just cannot understand, this administration must not think anybody

can read in America when they try to play games like that. I can inform

the White House that my Democrat and Republican constituents are very

aware of this and are very concerned about it.

Let me turn, if I can, to the Iraq issue which we have now been

talking about for some months.

The reason we are here is twofold: One, our proud men and women are

doing a job in Iraq tonight which all Americans are proud of. Over 500

of them have paid the ultimate sacrifice to the duty to which they

pledged honor to our country. Their sacrifice demands that the

government of the United States tell the truth to the American people

about what happened in Iraq and why this war started, based on false

information.

Just to set the stage for our discussion tonight, I would like to

point out at least some of that false information that ended up

starting this war. I want to be very specific on this so no one can say

that we have gilded the lily.

The fact is, sadly, that on March 17, 2003, the President of the

United States of America went before the American people and in an

address to the Nation said, and I quote, ``Intelligence gathered by

this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime

continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever

devised.'' That statement was false and the information gathered over a

year of spending over $100 million of seeking with a fine-toothed comb

in Iraq has demonstrated with some conviction that that statement was

false, unfortunately.

On August 2, 2002, the Vice President of the United States, Dick

Cheney, went before the Veterans of Foreign Wars and stated, ``Simply

stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass

destruction.'' That statement was false, false both on the issue of the

presence of weapons of mass destruction as indicated by Mr. David Kay,

who was the person hired by this country to find out, but also false in

saying there was no doubt, because a review by this Chamber, by the

three of us and others, has showed there was plenty of doubt about this

issue in Iraq that was covered up, was suppressed by this

administration.

Let me, if I can, say why that is a problem. We need the

administration to fulfill its obligation to the American people to help

get to the bottom of what happened in this situation. The fact is, I

will indicate in just a moment, every single chance we have had to peel

back the onion and peel back the draperies to find out what happened,

this administration has continued to suppress information.

I want to give the gentleman this one example. On January 28, 2003,

the President went before the Nation in the State of the Union address,

stood right behind where the gentleman is standing right now and said,

``The British Government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently

sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa. Our intelligence

sources tell us that he has attempted to purchase high-strength

aluminum tubes suitable for nuclear weapons production.''

That statement was false. The reason we know that is that the person

sent by the administration to Africa to find out whether it was true or

not, Ambassador Joe Wilson, who, at the request of the administration,

went to Africa and reported back before the State of the Union address

that that was a bunch of hokum, it was a bunch of malarkey, and it was

false.

And the President, in the State of the Union, despite that specific

response from our intelligence service, if you will, or someone acting

in their behalf, put it in the State of the Union anyway, or someone on

his behalf.

Everybody can make mistakes. We are all human. But let us see what

this administration's response to this falsehood and disclosure of

falsehood was. Was it a thank you to Mr. Wilson for helping us get to

the bottom of this? Was it a further inquiry to find out who was

responsible for putting this gross misstatement in the State of the

Union address? No.

What did they do? They tried to punish Joe Wilson, the citizen who

did his patriotic duty to disclose this misstatement, by outing his

wife who worked for the CIA, attempting to destroy her CIA career, to

send a message to the world and to America, ``Don't tell the truth

about this administration because we'll attempt to destroy you.'' That

is what they have attempted to do.

Thank goodness there is a grand jury investigating what could be a

Federal crime here, because this is a pattern with this administration.

Look what is happening tonight.

Madam Speaker, I think the proper characterization, I

heard one of our colleagues at a town meeting say to one of our

colleagues never in this country have so many been misled by so few,

and now we are going to find the truth as to why that happened. And the

reason we are going to find the truth are two principles: principle

number one, facts are stubborn things; and, two, the truth comes out.

It is coming out now, and it has come out yesterday on television, and

it is coming out tomorrow in the commission.

I want to read some of this truth that I believe we are going to

hear. The question is whether or not this administration was compelled

by intelligence reports of weapons of mass destruction that forced them

to action in Iraq or whether this administration had a preconceived

judgment and decision to go after Iraq and then went looking for

something to substantiate that preconceived decision to the American

public. And it is the latter, and we know it is the latter, because

every day more and more truth is leaking out of this White House.

What did we hear last night? We heard in a book by Mr. Richard

Clarke, who was the White House's former counterterrorism chief, a

pretty high individual in the White House who is responsible for

counterterrorism, which was quoted in the New York Times, where he said

that Mr. Bush pressed him, Mr. Clarke, three times to find evidence

that Iraq was behind the attacks on the World Trade Center and the

Pentagon. The accusation is explosive because no such link has ever

been proved. Mr. Clarke says, quoting the President, `` `I want you, as

soon as you can, to go back over everything, everything,' '' Mr. Clarke

writes, and Mr. Bush told him `` `See if Saddam did this. See if he's

linked in any way.' '' When Mr. Clarke protested that the culprit was

al Qaeda, not Iraq, Mr. Bush ``testily ordered'' him, he writes, to ``

`look into Iraq's Saddam,' '' and then left the room; then demanded a

report, which was prepared, which came back and gave the same answer

that there was not a meaningful connection between al Qaeda and Iraq,

sent the report up the chain from CIA and FBI. It got bounced back and

sent back saying, `` `wrong answer, do it again.' ''

A war was started on a false premise of a connection between Iraq and

al

Qaeda, and the truth as to why that happened is coming out. Basically,

as far as I can tell, the White House's principle is that their

Secretary of the Treasury, who essentially said pretty much the same

thing, that it had been Iraq, Iraq, Iraq even before September 11.

Their counterterrorism chief, Richard Clarke, who said on the day of

the attack they said let us go get Iraq and try to gin up some evidence

to support this, in a manner of speaking; Joe Wilson, who was sent by

this administration to find out whether this is a bill of goods about

this uranium that got into the State of the Union address, the White

House is saying that all these people who worked for the White House in

these high positions have no clue as to what was going on. As far as I

can tell, what the White House says is their position is nobody who

ever worked in the White House has a clue as to what went on there

because whatever they said has got to be wrong. And now, instead of

welcoming a critical analysis as to what went wrong here and where the

foul-up is, what is this administration doing?

According to the New York Times, the way they characterize it, and I

think it is fair, they have ``opened an aggressive personal attack

against its former counterterrorism chief, Richard Clarke.'' What did

they do to Joe Wilson, the ambassador who found out that they told a

falsehood in the State of the Union address? They tried to destroy his

wife's career. What did they do to their former Secretary of the

Treasury, who said essentially that they had been trying to go after

Iraq from day one in the administration? And I paraphrase a little bit,

but generally that was the thrust. They attacked him personally.

Madam Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, frankly,

again, I want to reiterate we are all human and we have all made

mistakes and every administration has made mistakes in the past, and we

ought to be somewhat understanding of that. But this administration has

been an abject failure in helping us find out what happened here and

finding responsibility for those and taking action to hold them

accountable so we can demonstrate to the world and to the American

people that we are not going to countenance starting wars based on

falsehood.

Let us look at the record of this administration in that regard.

How many people have been held to account for the fact that a war

started based on false information? How many people? The answer? Zero.

Zero. Five hundred people have lost their lives in Iraq, but zero

people has George Bush held accountable for this false information, and

it is wrong. Only one person in America has lost their job over this

false information, and that was a radio talk show host.

We need accountability for this mistake, and this administration

needs to get busy, instead of stonewalling and covering up the truth,

to help us find the truth and find who is accountable.

If the gentleman will yield, the question you are asking

is what Americans are asking all over the country. Yesterday, one of my

constituents asked, I thought, a very interesting question. He said,

after September 11, who did the President focus on? According to Paul

O'Neill, the Secretary of the Treasury, including the President's own

counterterrorism chief, Richard Clark, the answer was Iraq.

What my constituent asked me then, he said, well, you know, 15 out of

the 19 hijackers were from Saudi Arabia. Did the President ever ask

about Saudi Arabia, the country where historically a lot of these

companies he has had dealings with in the oil and gas industry are? No.

He never asked about Saudi Arabia. Iraq, Iraq.

I wanted to read what the counterterrorism chief says happened,

because it is important, in trying to find out whether they focused on

Iraq without justification.

Mr. Richard Clark said, ``Mr. Rumsfeld was saying we needed to bomb

Iraq, and we all said no, no, al Qaeda is in Afghanistan; we need to

bomb Afghanistan. And Mr. Rumsfeld said, there aren't any good targets

in Afghanistan, and there are lots of good

targets in Iraq. I said, well, there are a lot of good targets in a lot

of places, but Iraq has nothing to do with it.''

This is the counterterrorism chief of the White House. He went on:

``Initially, I thought when he said there aren't enough targets in

Afghanistan, I thought he was joking. Initially. I think that they

wanted to believe that there was a connection, but the CIA was sitting

there, the FBI was sitting there, I was sitting there, saying we have

looked at this issue for years; for years we have looked, and there is

just no connection.''

This is the White House's counterterrorism chief telling the

Secretary of Defense there is no connection between Iraq and al Qaeda.

And what did the President tell the American people over and over and

over? He said essentially you cannot even think of them as distinct

entities. He wanted to create a fear, to create an image in America

that al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden had been morphed into Saddam Hussein,

because he believed it was in the Nation's best interest, for whatever

the reasons are.

But he did not have the right to tell these falsehoods to the

American people. Now that the truth is coming up, he owes us an

obligation to hold accountable in his administration whoever is

responsible for this, and he owes us the obligation to stop

stonewalling the distribution of truth to the American people, and he

needs to come clean, as his arms inspector, David Kay, says he should

do. This is an obligation to the people who are serving in Iraq

tonight, our brothers and sons and daughters and husbands and wives.

If the gentleman will yield, the obligation that I think

is paramount, forgetting for the moment the need for allies, but the

real paramount obligation is to the families who have lost loved ones

in Iraq.

Now, the family I think of is one that I spent some time with last

weekend who lost their husband and son in the Tigress River, a U.S.

soldier awarded the Bronze Star for his heroism and service in Iraq.

That family is owed an explanation by its government as to why their

husband and son died in a conflict that was started based on false

information from the Government of the United States, and that ought to

be a bipartisan position that that obligation is owed.

Amongst questions that need to be answered are these: Why did the

President of the United States of America and his administration 10

times on nine separate public appearances tell the American people that

Saddam Hussein and Iraq had obtained aluminum tubes for use in a

reconstituted nuclear program, when its own Department of Energy had

told it that that was false before they made those statements?

How can they possibly now stonewall this information when we have

already peeled back the onion to find out that the Department of Energy

had told the White House that they were wrong about this claim and they

still used it to start this war? That is a question this family is owed

an answer to.

Second, why did this administration tell Americans that Iraq had

developed these robot drone aircraft for the purpose of spraying

chemical and biological weapons on us here in the continental United

States when its own Air Force in analyzing the information had

concluded that these robots were used for photography, not aerial

spraying of biological and chemical weapons?

Why did the President of the United States authorize doing that, and

if he did not do it, who did? Who did that? Because those people need

to be held accountable, if necessary, with their jobs at least. This

administration has done nothing of the sort.