If the gentleman will yield, the gentleman makes

reference to the question of a grand jury. I believe that if one takes

an oath to speak before a committee of the Congress or one that is

authorized by the Congress and the executive, that one is subject to

perjury. I believe that is the case.

I would have to defer to the gentleman from Massachusetts, I suppose,

on the question of prosecution of that, but we have a commission now,

the so-called 9/11 Commission, which is now meeting, and there have

been severe criticisms that amount to open accusations that Mr. Richard

Clarke, referred to in various ways by different officials in the

administration as someone who apparently, if one is to believe the

designations attached to him by members of the administration, is

lying. Not distorting, not misinterpreting, not misunderstanding, not

having a different point of view, not engaged in an academic exercise

of confrontation and different contending visions of what might have

taken place, but on the contrary, specifically that Mr. Clarke is

lying, that he is not telling the truth.

I believe Mr. Clarke is going to testify to the Commission tomorrow.

I am not familiar with whether or not the witnesses taking the stand

there in front of that Commission are under oath. But given the

seriousness of the circumstances, I certainly hope that they are.

If the gentleman will yield on that point, I have no

difficulty with that. My point here was in response to the gentleman

from Washington's observation that there is at least one grand jury

meeting right now.

That is what I say, at least one meeting now.

Perhaps there may be more. My point is that there are so many

accusations with respect to why, how, when, should we, et cetera,

having to do with Iraq that you simply cannot continue to assassinate

the personalities or the characters of the various individuals that we

have been citing and at some point not say, look, somebody's either

telling the truth or not, and let's put it to the test.

Madam Speaker, it is quite clear that Mr. Kay is

clearly taking the high road in terms of his characterization of what

took place and is giving the broadest benefit of a doubt with respect

to whether there were misinterpretations or misunderstandings as to

what the true facts were and what the implications of those facts were

in terms of whether we went into Iraq or not.

Others have a different interpretation. I quite agree with the

gentleman that this is the most profound issue that we have faced

perhaps in our lifetime because we have to go all the way back to the

Nixon Administration to find a situation in which there was a

deliberate misleading of the American people as to what the facts were

with a given situation, in this instance the general question of

Watergate, everything that that implied and involved. But at least

there what was being done was a cover-up, essentially, of rather sordid

and almost banal and mundane political machinations. The rather sad

spectacle of the President of the United States engaged in third-rate

theatrics, burglaries, false presentations as to where money came from

and where it went and so on, sordid and stupid and tawdry.

But in this instance, I would posit for my friend and for those who

are listening, in this instance we have accusations made that there was

a deliberate undertaking geared towards moving this Nation to war, a

preemptive war, based on information and perspectives presented to the

American public which were untrue, were known to be untrue, and were in

fact the ideological leanings of a small group of people determined to

take this Nation into war with Iraq regardless of whether it served

either the strategic interests of this Nation or whether it satisfied

anybody's definition by any measure of the truth.

Madam Speaker, he was publicly rebuked, the chief of

staff of the Army who had come up, I will tell the Members, from the

ranks. I happen to know about General Shinseki because he is a true son

of Hawaii. The son of humble people whose family was interned in World

War II for the crime of being Japanese Americans, who served our

country from the ranks on up to becoming chief of staff of the Army,

was rebuked by this little man.

Hans Blix.

If the gentleman will yield, the gentleman might be

interested in the view of former President Carter in that regard.

In an interview today in the Independent, the British newspaper, the

Independent reports that President Carter ``strongly criticized'' Mr.

Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair ``for waging an unnecessary

war to oust Saddam Hussein, based on lies and misinterpretations.''

This is not me speaking; this is former President Carter. This is not

a reporter giving an editorial point of view. This is former President

Carter.

I will repeat: ``for waging an unnecessary war to oust Saddam

Hussein, based on lies and misinterpretations. There was no reason for

us to become involved in Iraq recently. That was a war based on lies

and misinterpretations from London and from Washington claiming falsely

that Saddam Hussein was responsible for the 9-11 attacks, claiming

falsely that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. And I think that

President Bush and Prime Minister Blair probably knew that many of the

allegations were based on uncertain intelligence. A decision was made

to go to war. Then people said, let's find a reason to do it.''

Madam Speaker, if the gentleman will yield on that

point, there is a lesson for all of us, and I think we have all said

tonight, and if I have not said it yet, I will certainly reiterate the

gentleman's point that we all make mistakes, we all have our

weaknesses, we all have our elements of shortsightedness. But I will

tell my colleagues this: as much as I opposed this attack on Baghdad

and, as I

termed it at the time that a war would break out after we made this

dash to Baghdad which is, in fact, what happened, as much as I opposed

that, we bear responsibility too. And I want to indicate to people that

we are down on this floor not just because we need to hear ourselves

talk; we are down on this floor because this Congress needs to be

accountable too. The very questions that the gentleman from Washington

(Mr. Inslee) has been asking, this Congress should have been asking. We

should not have allowed ourselves to be pushed into doing the most

profound and fundamental thing that any Congress can do and that any

President can do, which is take us into war. This should be a lesson to

all of us, including and perhaps starting with the Congress.

The Constitution says only the Congress can declare war. When did it

happen that we turned it over to the President to make his or her own

decision on that issue? We have a responsibility, too; and I want to

indicate to everybody, at least for this Member, and I think I am

probably speaking for the other Members on the floor here, we intend to

come back here, not because we are doing penance, but because we are

doing oversight, the oversight that we should have done before. Maybe

the same conclusion would have been arrived at, I do not know, I doubt

it; but we should have been doing these things.

No commission should be looking into this right now. The plain fact

is we should be looking into it, and that is what this Iraq Watch is

going to do. We may not have the benefit of having the President in

front of us or Mr. Cheney or others, but we have the benefit of

understanding what the revelations have been and what their meanings

are and to search for the truth, and that is our obligation. And I hope

that if nothing else comes out of all of this, that in future the

Congress will take seriously its obligation and carry forward on the

understanding that only the Congress can declare war; and it should be

only done over the most thorough and complete examination as to what

has taken place and what the strategic and moral interests of the

United States are.