Mr. Speaker, we are here to have another week of the

Iraq Watch.

Before I start, I want to add my words of congratulations to the

gentleman from Illinois (Mr. Crane) for his outstanding career and what

we just witnessed on the floor, a very warm and rare moment of emotion

and friendship between two colleagues. I wish we had more of those

moments here, but I want to salute the gentleman from Illinois (Mr.

Crane) for his years of service and his dedication to this House.

A year and a half ago, Mr. Speaker, a number of us started what we

call Iraq Watch. We began to come to this floor once a week to talk

about Iraq, to talk about the problems that we saw with our policy

there, to ask questions and to suggest changes in our national policy.

Now, a year and a half later, like the gentleman from Illinois (Mr.

Crane), I will be leaving this House, and yet the questions regarding

our policy in Iraq remain.

Things have changed in Iraq over the last year and a half, but some

of the fundamental problems that were apparent at the beginning of our

involvement remain today and plague us today and challenge our best

national interest today.

A number of us involved in Iraq Watch, some like me who voted for the

military power that the President sought in October of 2002 and some in

Iraq Watch who opposed the President's request for military power, all

of us were alarmed in the spring of 2003 when the fighting actually

began in Iraq, that the President had used what we thought was such an

arrogant approach to this challenge, to the diplomacy, to the need to

move forward with as many allies as possible to confront what was

surely a murderous tyrant, Saddam Hussein.

We saw an arrogant approach. We saw a go-it-alone foreign policy,

what many of us thought was a cowboy diplomacy, where we pushed aside

our allies, where we told our international institutions, such as the

United Nations and NATO and others, that we did not need their help,

that we were happy to go alone into the challenge that faced us in

Iraq. A lot of us were raising questions about that a year and a half

ago.

Unfortunately, that approach has not changed. The President talks

about having the coalition of the willing supporting us in Iraq, but it

is not the kind of strong international coalition that we truly need to

share the burdens and share the costs and share the sacrifices that we

have faced in Iraq and not the kind of strong international coalition

that his father put together in the early 1990s for the Persian Gulf

War.

What the President is now doing since his reelection this November is

making changes in his Cabinet and promoting loyal members of his staff

to higher positions and to Cabinet positions in a way that, in my

judgment, will limit the options brought to the President for his

consideration; that he will begin to hear just what he wants to hear

from his Cabinet and top officials; that the advice they give him will

be the advice they know he already provides to himself; and that he

has, instead of turning in a second term to an independent and vigorous

Cabinet of obviously loyal Republicans, which is the President's due,

instead of building that kind of working relationship, he has decided

to build an echo chamber, to create a foreign policy advice and support

system in the State Department and in the CIA and in the National

Security Adviser that will tell him what he wants to hear.

Well, what he ought to hear, Mr. Speaker, with due respect to the

President and with due respect to his victory and the tough decisions

he has to make every day, what he ought to hear is that he still needs

international support in Iraq. He still needs to internationalize the

challenges, the financial challenges, the security challenges, the

military challenges in Iraq, and he still needs to Iraq-tize Iraq. We

still need to train up the Iraqis so that they can fight for their own

future, so they can provide their own security, so that they can be the

tip of the spear.

Currently, we are using American forces, brave American forces,

courageously led, and brave troops to battle the insurgency in Iraq,

door to door, in Fallujah and other urban settings, and our troops are

behaving magnificently, performing magnificently.

But it is my view, and I think shared by my colleagues here in Iraq

Watch, that we are doing ourselves more harm than good with the reality

that it is American troops fighting the insurgency, instead of Iraqi

troops, Arab troops, multinational troops with American support; that

the fact that we are having to fight door to door, facing the true

horrors of urban warfare. That we are doing this virtually alone,

without international help, without very much help from the Iraqis, is

generating such ill-will in the Muslim world that while Iraq is better

off with Saddam Hussein out of power and Iraq has some hope of moving

toward a tolerant and pluralistic society with some version of self-

government, hopefully a flourishing democracy sooner rather than later,

while Iraq is better off, the way we have gone about this has actually

done more harm than good to America; that we have created more

terrorists than we have killed; that we have created more ill-will than

goodwill in the Muslim world; and that the arrogant and go-it-alone

policies that we have pursued, the cowboy diplomacy that we pursue to

this day, has set back the relations between this country and the

Muslim world, while at the same time we do offer clearly hope to the

Iraqi people that they can have a flourishing country, free from the

abuses of the tyrant and murderer Saddam Hussein.

There is a lot more I would like to say tonight, but I am joined by

two of the stalwarts of Iraq Watch, the gentleman from Washington (Mr.

Inslee) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Strickland) who have been here

week after week for a year and a half. So let me turn to the gentleman

from Washington (Mr. Inslee) as he was the first on the floor, and I am

happy to yield to him.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues, and I am very

concerned about the problems we are seeing at the CIA. The reality is

that this administration, over the last couple of years, has a very

sorry record of

spinning the information that the CIA has given them. So we have got a

problem with the CIA intelligence not being as accurate as it needs to

be for a number of reasons, I guess, listening to each other parroting

back what other agencies have said. Not enough human intelligence

agencies in Iraq during the Hussein regime. There are a variety of

reasons.

The intelligence that they did produce about weapons of mass

destruction was incorrect. It was filled with caveats and

uncertainties. The reports that were being issued to the White House in

the fall of 2002 said we think he has these weapons, we believe he has

got these weapons, we have been told he has these weapons. But none of

that uncertainty was passed on to the Congress or to the American

people.

In fact, I was briefed at the White House with 20 of our colleagues,

a bipartisan group, in the Roosevelt Room of the White House on October

2, 2002, by George Tenet, then Director of the CIA, and Condoleezza

Rice, then the National Security Adviser to the President, and they

spoke with complete certainty: we know that Hussein has weapons of mass

destruction, they said to us. We know how many he has got. We know

where they are. We know how much those weapons weigh.

It turns out that 7 or 8 months later, when the reports that George

Tenet's CIA was giving to him and to Condoleezza Rice in the fall of

2002 finally became public, or actually became available for rank-and-

file members to review, those reports were filled with caveats, filled

with uncertainties, filled with hesitance; and yet none of that was

passed on.

So I would say to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee) that

there has been spinning at the White House for quite a while. And as my

colleague says, the Deputy National Security Adviser has now been

promoted and the National Security Adviser is now going to be the

Secretary of State. I must say, based upon her intentional misleading

of the 20 Members of the Congress who were briefed by her and by George

Tenet on October 2, 2002, I do not have confidence in Condoleezza Rice.

I am afraid she is going to tell the President what he wants to hear

and will not tell the Congress and the American people what we need to

hear and will not face up to the President when she needs to.

I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Strickland).

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio. That is a

very human account of what is happening in Iraq.

There is no question that this President knows how to use American

power, but what I fear is that he is not aware or willing to use the

totality of American power, which certainly starts with military power

but is much more than that. We are certainly the strongest military in

the world, and we need to stay that way. It is a dangerous world. The

war on terror is going to be a challenge for years to come, and we must

maintain our military strength. But there is more to American power

than the military power that we possess, and this President does not

seem to appreciate or understand or value the totality of our power,

which includes diplomatic power and economic power, our cultural ties,

the powers of moral persuasion.

We are the only superpower left in the world, and I am thankful we

are. It gives us an opportunity to lead, inspire, cajole, push,

advocate, and pressure. We have the ability through diplomacy and trade

and economic ties and cultural ties to bend people to our will, up to a

point, if we have a good argument and we are right on the facts and it

is in their interest too. Obviously, every situation is different from

the prior. But this President does not seem to put any value in the

totality of American power.

The military strength we have needs to be maintained and nurtured,

but it has to be used as a last resort, not a first resort.

As strong as we are, we cannot be the world's policemen. We cannot

impose our will through military strength alone, and yet that is the

circumstance that we face in Iraq. We are trying to do very good things

there, and we all share the President's goals of creating a pluralistic

society, a tolerant, democratic society. And yet the unilateral, go-it-

alone, arrogant strategy, the cowboy diplomacy, the failure to admit

mistakes, the inability to train up the Iraqis for them to do their own

fighting and provide their own security, and the mistakes that were

made. The first thing we did was dismiss the Iraqi Army and the border

patrol, and the second thing was dismiss the Iraqi civil service, and

there was nobody left to run the country but Americans.

This President does not seem capable of acknowledging error and

fixing it. The people he has been promoting in this echo chamber seem

unwilling or incapable of standing up and saying, Mr. President, you

have to change these policies.

Mr. Speaker, that is very kind of the gentleman from

Hawaii, a bit overblown and exaggerated, but very kind of him.

Next year I am going to be watching. I am going to be

tuning in. I know my colleagues will be fighting the good fight as they

have been for the last year and a half.

I wanted to comment upon your views, that what is virtually a purely

military approach to our challenge in Iraq is not working, cannot work

in the face of a guerilla opposition that melts away when we attack en

masse and comes up and attacks us where we least expect it a few days

later in another location. It is consistent with my earlier statement

that as strong as our military is and as strong as we have to keep it,

we have got to use more than just our military power in our dealings

with the rest of the world. We have to use the totality of our power,

which includes diplomatic power, economic power, cultural ties, the

powers of moral suasion.

One of the things I wish this President would talk about and I hope

the next Congress will talk about is the need for economic

revitalization in the Middle East and in Eurasia. We need a modern day

Marshall Plan. We need to address the challenges in Iraq and the rest

of that part of the world not just with a military strategy but we have

got to give to those young men and women, mostly young men, although

there are now suicide bombers who are women, who are so desperate, who

are so hopeless that they would believe it is in their best interests

to strap a bomb on and kill innocent civilians rather than have some

hope that they can build a better life, that they can find a job, they

can improve the quality of life for themselves and their families. We

have got to address the economic needs. I do not mean by handing out

money. I mean by making the kinds of investments, along with Western

Europe and other industrialized societies, the kinds of investments

that will build some economic strength.

In the Marshall Plan after World War II, over a period of 4 years we

invested $13 billion in 14 countries. That in today's dollars would be

$100 billion over 4 years, $25 billion a year. Our total foreign aid

now is about $20 billion a year. So if we a little bit more than

doubled our foreign aid, we could create a similar economic

revitalization plan as we did so successfully in the late 1940s.

It is a different challenge. The countries we are trying to help here

are frankly much worse off than the Western European countries were

after World War II. Those countries had a labor force that was trained.

They had been industrial countries. The Afghanistans, all the Stans,

Iraq, Iran, those are countries with much greater needs. But if we try

to solve the problems of the world with military solutions only, if we

try to keep ourselves safe with military solutions only, if we try to

win the war on terror with only a military response, we will not

succeed. Our military will perform well, as they always do; but there

is not a military solution, a purely military solution, to the

challenges that face us.

We have got to pay attention to the hopes and aspirations. It is more

than just the poverty these people face. It is the grinding

helplessness and hopelessness they must feel. We have got to create a

sense of opportunity in this part of the world.