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

Hoeffel) but not just for this evening.

The Iraq Watch, which has been trying to bring a responsible voice to

Iraq policy now for many months, was the brain child of the gentleman

from Pennsylvania (Mr. Hoeffel), and he really did lead this effort,

and we are very appreciative of him, and I know his constituents are,

too.

I have to tell the gentleman, he has a lot of fans out in the State

of Washington that I hear about, why can you not can be as good as Mr.

Hoeffel. I hear that many times.

But seriously, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Hoeffel) did

something that does not happen all the time around here. He really led,

and he led in an important issue to make sure Americans heard a voice

about Iraq other than just from the White House, and that is important

we have that debate. This was a creation of his and I think has been

useful, and I know a lot of people have appreciated it, and I

appreciate his leadership on that. We look forward to when the

gentleman is back in public service. So we hope within 2 years, maybe

even shorter. Who knows?

But with that, let me turn to the subject here which is a tough one

tonight. I have to call a mother and father who lost their 19-year-old

Marine in Fallujah this week tomorrow, and it is very difficult because

all three of us here this evening voted against this war, and we have

all had this experience of talking to families. It is very, very

difficult.

What I am going to say is, what I know what we all have said, is no

matter what you think of the policy, these are all good Americans who

served, and no American has died in vain while serving under the flag

of the United States. I am going to do my best to make sure parents

appreciate that. No matter what you think of the policy, they died as

heroes, and the people who are sitting tonight in Fallujah, that is how

I think of them, no matter what you think of the policy. I know we all

share that view.

It is difficult because it does inspire some anger sometimes I think

in all of us as to what has happened in Iraq, where a war was started

based on false assumptions about weapons of mass destruction and false

assumptions and statements by the White House about Saddam's connection

to 9/11.

The trouble I have tonight is that the same type of source of the

mistake was made unfortunately is being perpetuated by the White House.

In other words, one would think after the White House started a war

based on two major falsehoods, that was given to him by certain people,

that the President would be doubly diligent to endeavor to get people

who would not perpetuate that same kind of mistake, but in fact, what

we have seen since the election on November 2 is sort of like a green

light for hubris, a green light to go ahead and actually make stronger

in the administration the very voices that fouled up in giving us bad

information about this war and making repeated misjudgments about how

to perpetuate it.

Just look at the decisions that have been made in the last week. The

man who himself admitted responsibility for putting a false statement

into the State of the Union address, where the President told people

that Saddam was trying to get uranium to build a nuclear weapon, it was

a clear falsehood in the State of the Union address, and the man who

himself admitted being responsible for telling Americans and the world

that falsehood did not get docked pay, did not get fired. He just got a

promotion to the National Security Council. So here we have the guy who

is responsible for a major failure of American information that led to

a war where 1,200 Americans have died. He gets a promotion. This is a

perpetuation of this arrogant attitude that has got us into this pickle

in Iraq.

What happens to the Defense Secretary who has had running arguments,

as we know, with the Secretary of State Colin Powell about whether to

go into this war and how to perpetuate it? Who is the one who leaves?

It is the guy who, we are told at least, said let us be scrupulous

about this, and the Secretary of Defense stays, the one who has been in

charge of this since Abu Ghraib and did not give us accurate

information, including the U.S. Congress, leading up to this.

Then what do we see happens at the CIA? Well, here's the capper for

me. Here we have a man who left this chamber. He is now heading the

CIA. What is the first thing he does, almost first thing he does? He

writes a memo to all the CIA employees. I have not seen this memo but

it is quoted in the paper. It says, he expects all employees that their

job is to support the administration and its policies in our work and

as agency employees we do not identify with, identify with, support or

champion opposition to the administration or its policies.

He sent a very strong message to CIA employees: what the White House

wants, it is going to get. And that is language that people understand.

The last thing this President needs is unanimity from his

intelligence agencies. He needs debate. He needs to be told some

information that may not square with his preordained view of the world.

And, in fact, they are going the wrong way at the CIA and firing people

who have deigned to give the President information that is different

from information he believes to be true.

I thank the gentleman for his comments, Mr. Speaker, and

let me continue.

Later on in the memo, Goss has language that says ``We provide the

intelligence as we see it and let the facts alone speak to the

policymaker.'' But when you send a memo to your employees suggesting

they dare not ever say anything to challenge the President's

preassumptions, that sentence does not bear out this memo. The message

was sent and I am sure received by the CIA.

And I am very disturbed about something I saw last night, a show I

was watching, and I cannot remember the name of it, but a former CIA

person who has now left the agency and who was the person in charge of

the unit searching for Osama bin Laden was on this program. This was

the gentleman whose professional duty it was, for about 6 years, to

lead the hunt for Osama bin Laden. In fact, he was so aggressive about

it, for about 2 years they took him off the job because he was driving

his superiors nuts because he was raising these red flags about Osama

bin Laden. After September 11, they put him back on the post because

they realized he was right about how serious this issue was.

He has now left the post, but last night he said there was absolutely

no credible evidence of a substantive link between Osama bin Laden and

Saddam Hussein. The number one guy in the employment of the Central

Intelligence Agency last night told Americans there was no link. And

for a year or more, the President, the Vice President, you name it, was

running around America trying to create this impression in America's

mind that there was a link in order to justify this war. That is

disturbing to me.

Here is a guy that ought to be in the CIA challenging the White

House's political decisions. He needs to be on the job rather than spit

out of the agency like a watermelon seed. That is what they are doing.

Anyone down there who is challenging the White House orthodoxy is

getting kicked out.

This is not a good thing for our future decisions. We have tough

decisions to make with regard to Iraq. This offensive in Fallujah,

where heroes died, and they were heroic, but it is not the end of the

trail. We have some tough, tough decisions.

I yield back to my colleague from Pennsylvania (Mr. Hoeffel).

Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up on what the gentleman

said on the failure to successfully pursue any international

involvement.

The bad news is that the President's plan is even unraveling with

those who originally made some commitments to him. I read in the paper

last week that Hungary has just announced that they will withdraw their

troops. This was on top of withdrawals, either actual or announced, by

Spain, 1,300 troops; Poland, 2,400 troops; the Netherlands, 1,400

troops; Thailand, 450 troops; the Dominican Republic, 322 troops;

Nicaragua, 115 troops; Honduras, 370 troops; the Philippines, 51

troops; Norway, 155 troops; and New Zealand, 60. These are relatively

small numbers, but I think it is a symptom of some bad decision making.

And the reason we talk about the past is the President is perpetuating

his decision making that created these conditions. He sees no reason

ever to change.

We had a small coalition to start this, and now the small number of

troops sent to help us are being withdrawn so our people are having to

bear the burden of the fighting.

In Fallujah, this long after the fight, we had token Iraqis with us,

and one of the reasons is the administration did not set up an

infrastructure for training the Iraqis. Last month, 4 weeks ago, all

that time since the original invasion, we still had only 40 percent of

the trainers that the plan called for on day one to train Iraqis

troops.

This thing has been botched, and the problem is the President is

promoting people who are responsible for it, and we are getting deeper.

One thing that bothers me, the gentleman mentioned the President knows

how to use power. He should not use it in a way that lets politics

dictate military decisions. It is pretty clear to any neutral observer

that is what happened in Fallujah, because this spring we had an

offensive into Fallujah. It was called off. Everybody knew we were

going to have to go back in there, and it would seem to me it would

make prudent sense to go back in there before we give thousands of

insurgents time to build bunkers, accumulate their communications

network. What did the President do? It is pretty clear. Not until after

the election because there is going to be American blood flow.

One week after the election, all of a sudden we get the attack on

Fallujah. Thirty-eight Americans die in the attack. It is pretty clear,

and it is sad to say what happened here. There was a political decision

to avoid this assault and, as a result, these insurgents had more and

more time to fortify Fallujah. That was wrong by a Republican, a

Democrat or anybody, to put our men in harm's way, to allow the enemy

to consolidate their position, and we had to walk our people into those

dens of fire.

Mr. Speaker, it troubles me because I am going to call

some parents tomorrow who lost their 19-year-old son in that battle. I

am not going to broach this with them. I do not know if the thought has

crossed their mind, but I cannot reach any other conclusion. What

possible reason was there to wait 6 months to go into Fallujah except

the fact that there was an election on November 2, and then do it just

a few days after the election. What possible reason could there be

other than the fact of the election schedule?

We saw how horrendous the fighting was in Fallujah. Some of these

tunnels were reinforced with steel, and we gave them 6 months to do

that. People's heads should roll in the administration for that.

Again, what we hear tonight is the people responsible for that have

been promoted into higher positions of authority. We are not going in

the right direction in Iraq.

Unfortunately, let me note a reality in Iraq, we have to some degree

obtained some degree of success over Fallujah, but just read what

happened everywhere else.

In Samarra, we had a Fallujah-like assault several months ago, and we

thought we were successful there, but this week the Iraqi police

stations were raided by the insurgents, and 33 Iraqi soldiers and

policemen were killed, injured 48.

In Ramadi, a slew of suicide car bombers wounded 20 U.S. Marines.

Guerillas raided three police stations, killing 22 officers.

In Diyala Province, a governor's aide and two members of the

Provincial Governing Council were killed, and bombs exploded across

Baghdad at a Catholic Church and against U.S. convoys along the main

road to the airport.

We still cannot secure the main road to the airport in Baghdad. We

still are hiring the people responsible for these debacles and giving

them promotions. It is wrong.

I just want to say that there is a future in Iraq. The

one thing we should recognize and we are in it together, Democrats and

Republicans, whether we voted for this war or not, and we all have

responsibilities to try to make tough decisions about what to do now.

Our discussion of the past does not mean to suggest that we can walk

away in the next 24 hours from Iraq, but I think what we are saying is

that we need people that we can trust with decision-making in Iraq,

that we will have a rational, decision-making process that is based on

the facts rather than just hopes and wishes.

I remember just even 6, 8 months ago listening to the Vice President

talking about how things were going so remarkably well in Iraq and we

had the Mission Accomplished incident. We had Ambassador Bremer telling

us and Wolfowitz telling us that this entire thing was going to be

financed with oil revenues from Iraq. He told us, to Congress, I

remember this very well. He said, ``There won't be a single taxpayer

dollar associated with this project.'' How many billion are we in it

now? It is hard to tell.

As the gentleman from Ohio pointed out, the one thing we know about

every billion dollars this President has spent, it has been of my

grandchildren's money. He has not asked any sacrifice of us. Winston

Churchill said, ``All I have to offer you is blood, sweat, toil and

tears.'' This President has said, ``Just go shopping.'' That is how he

has approached this. So we are asking this horrific sacrifice of our

men and women in Fallujah tonight. But this President wants to keep

cutting taxes for the wealthiest folks, his friends. That is how he

handles it. He is the only President in American history who has

insisted that in the middle of war when our warriors are out there

risking their lives, he does not want to risk anything except his tax

cuts, and he will not even risk that.

He is the only American President who has ever done major tax cuts in

a war. I would assert that he is in the panoply of those who are the

most economically and morally irresponsible. This is a moral issue to

ask our soldiers to go die in Fallujah and go back here in the

homestead and try to boost his popularity by giving tax breaks to the

rich.

That is a moral issue. And there has been a lot of talk about moral

values in this last election.

I want to say, I look at that as a violation of the values that I

hold and I think a majority of my constituents hold. We ought to be in

this together as Americans, and this President does not want any

American to be in it except those on the frontline because he does not

want people to know how costly war is. And it is not cheap. And that is

a moral failure.

And if we raise our voices on occasion, it is because there is cause

for anger here. And there is cause for anger when I hear in the last

week that this President gives promotions. There is not a guy who has

lost his extra vacation day in this administration as a result of the

debacle in Iraq. What kind of message is that to send on personal

accountability when a guy who told us that it was not going to cost the

taxpayers a dollar is sitting fat and happy as the Secretary of

Defense, has never got his hand even slapped, did not even get a memo

in his personnel file, and his buddy takes over the National Security

Council and had the President tell us something that was a blatant

falsehood to start this war? And now we are going to make calls, all

four of us, to family members who lost people in Fallujah. That is a

moral insult. It is not just bad public policy.