Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman from Washington will

yield just on that point, the last thing this country needs is for our

intelligence, our CIA to be politicized, to have decisions made,

conclusions reached that are based on political considerations rather

than on factual, objective data.

This memo from a newly appointed CIA director, Mr. Goss, is a blatant

attempt to politicize our intelligence operations, to politicize the

CIA. What that will do is place this country at great risk. Because if

we cannot trust the intelligence to be based on actual fact, actual

objective data as best we can collect it, but make decisions based on

political considerations, then that will put the American people at

risk, and it will put our troops at risk.

That is absolutely almost unthinkable, that a newly appointed

director of the CIA would be so insensitive and out of touch that he

would actually put such a directive into a written memo and have it

circulated.

And I yield back to the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding to me,

and as we stand here and talk this evening, there may be those

listening who wonder why are we talking about the past. I think there

is a very good reason for us to talk about the past and to remember

what has happened, because the very people who are responsible for

having made these erroneous decisions in the past are the same people

who are in positions of power and even being promoted in the present.

That means that they will be in a position to make decisions about the

future.

Now, many of the decisions that have been made have been deadly

decisions, and lives have been lost as a result of decisions that were

based upon false information or distorted or twisted information; quite

frankly, I believe information that was purposefully manipulated in

such a way as to try to get the support of the American people for

carrying out this President's foreign policy.

I just want to share with my colleagues some human consequences of

what has happened. About 3 weeks ago, I received nearly 20 letters from

various members of a family support group. This family support group

consists of family members whose loved ones are part of a

transportation reserve unit that has been activated and is now in Iraq.

And at the time they wrote me, they told me their loved ones were

around the Fallujah area, which is one of the most dangerous places in

which to be in Iraq.

The people who wrote me indicated at the time that they wrote that

out of this one reserve unit that is headquartered in Cadiz, Ohio, that

they had lost three of their loved ones. They have since lost a fourth.

So four soldiers have been lost out of that one reserve unit. It is a

transportation unit.

The letters told me that they were getting messages from their loved

ones, these troops, telling them that they were not being adequately

supplied with proper life-saving equipment. They were driving around in

vehicles that were not armed, for example. And we know that if you are

a member of a transportation unit and you are on patrols and you are

delivering supplies and so on, one of the great dangers in Iraq is

driving over these explosives that have been placed in the roadways.

So out of this one unit, four have already been lost. And these

letters that I received from the loved ones said to me, when we gave

our precious soldiers to go fight this war, we trusted our government

to provide them with every protection possible. Now they are deeply,

deeply disturbed and concerned that their loved ones are not being

adequately cared for.

Now, I believe that part of the problem in the execution of this war

has been the fact that it was initially based upon these false

assumptions and this false information. We were told basically this was

going to be a piece of cake; that we were going to be welcomed as

heroes; and there was not adequate planning, not adequate preparation.

It took the Pentagon, it took this administration, this President,

because he is the Commander in Chief, more than a year to be able to

say that all of our troops, each of our troops in Iraq was equipped

with basic body armor. Now, I think that is absolutely shameful.

I wonder how many of our troops have lost their lives because they

were not properly equipped, and how many of our troops right tonight,

as we stand here in the Chamber of the people's House, how many of our

troops are in danger tonight simply because this administration has

failed to properly plan and provide them with adequate materials. There

is a consequence to the kind of behavior that we have been describing.

There is a consequence when people use false information or distort

information or make such unrealistic assumptions, and it is absolutely

tragic.

In my congressional district, the Sixth Congressional District in

Ohio, we have lost five soldiers, a 20-year-old, a 21-year-old, and

three men who were in their late 30s. One of those men left five

children ages 3 through 12. We are talking here about real

consequences. We are talking about real people, real families. And

there are Americans tonight who are worried sick because they have

loved ones over there fighting this war, and they are doing the very

best they can under very difficult circumstances, and we honor our

troops, but that is one of the reasons that we stand here and advocate

that they be cared for in a way that is befitting a great Nation.

We should never send one of our soldiers into harm's way without them

having proper armor and equipment. And tonight I can say, based on what

I have heard from my constituents and some of the soldiers who are

currently in the field, we are not doing all that we can to keep them

as safe as they can possibly be kept.

I yield back to the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. Speaker, I want to reinforce what the gentleman

from Washington (Mr. Inslee) is saying. It was very obvious this

decision and the timetable attached to it was influenced by a political

clock. The fact is, we telegraphed to the world and the enemy what we

were going to do. We gave them time to prepare, and we waited until a

few days after the election and then the decision was made to go in.

That is a troubling thing to conclude. It really troubles me to think

that a decision like that that would involve a military operation that

was going to likely consume American lives would be in any way

influenced by a political clock, but the evidence seems quite clear

that is what happened. We had to build up for months and then more

intensely in the weeks leading up to the election, and the enemy knew

we were coming in. That gave them an opportunity to be ready for us, to

have supplies and equipment in place. There was no element of surprise

in our going into Fallujah. We basically let them know, as soon as the

election was over, it was going to happen. That truly troubles me. I

think it should trouble every American.

If the gentleman will yield, just listening to the

gentleman, I am reminded of a fact. The fact is this: that the only

people sacrificing for this war are the soldiers and the people who

love them. The President is not sacrificing for this war. The corporate

world is not sacrificing for this war. Those of us who sit in the

safety of this Chamber, we are not sacrificing for this war. We do not

have sons and daughters and loved ones in Iraq in harm's way.

So who is sacrificing? The taxpayer is not sacrificing for this war,

not the current taxpayer, because the President has decided that the

cost of this war is just going to be pushed into the future so the

children and the children yet to be born will bear the burden for

paying for this war. It is a shame that the President is asking nothing

of us as a Nation, save the lives and the time, the service of our

soldiers and the grief and the worry of the people who love them. It is

just almost beyond belief that we find ourselves where we are tonight.

Our country was attacked as a result of Osama bin Laden, the Taliban.

We supported going into Afghanistan, obviously, all of us. Out of 535

members of the House and Senate, only one voted against the war in

Afghanistan because it was wholly, totally justified and necessary. And

then all of a sudden the President and his advisers decided that we

were going to go to Iraq. No connection with the attack upon this

country. No weapons of mass destruction. No imminent danger to us. Yet

we divert resources and intelligence away from Afghanistan, away from

the search for Osama bin Laden, and here we find ourselves in Iraq and

we all knew that we were going to win the military battle.

There is not a country on the face of this Earth or a combination of

countries on the face of this Earth that can stand up to our military

and our fighting men and women. We all knew that. And so there is this

quick, so-called end of combat, and the President got on the aircraft

carrier, there was that sign up there Mission Accomplished, and look

what has followed. Thousands of people injured. Well over 1,000 of our

soldiers are now dead. Iraq has become a haven for terrorists. They are

coming from throughout the world, gathering in Iraq; and we find

ourselves bogged down with no plan, continuing death, continuing

injuries, continuing expense. And we have got an administration who is

wanting to continue to do the same thing they have been doing for the

last several months. It is truly alarming, saddening, that our Nation

finds itself in this situation tonight.