Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue the

conversation here and switch gears here just a little bit with the

gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt) and continue the Iraq Watch

and talk a little bit about the foreign policy issues that have been

facing this Congress and facing the country for a few years now and

trying to figure out a way in which we can try to correct this problem

that we have gotten ourselves in.

Let me just first say that the whole Congress, Republican and

Democrat Parties, Independents, House and Senate, President, we are all

very much in support of the troops who are out on the front lines,

their families who are making tremendous sacrifices that many of us

will never ever know.

I have had the opportunity to be up to Walter Reed and visit some of

these injured soldiers, and there is nothing more heartbreaking than to

see a 19-, a 20-year-old kid who has lost his or her legs, an arm, and

just think about all their hopes and dreams that have, in many ways,

been washed away.

So we are taking this opportunity here as Democrats to talk a little

bit about how we got into this position, and I want to start on an

issue that I feel extremely passionate about.

When this all started after 9/11, the United States of America and an

international coalition moved forward in Afghanistan, and we moved

forward in Afghanistan because they were housing the Taliban and they

were housing or harboring Osama bin Laden, who was the main perpetrator

of 9/11 on the United States of America. So many of us are confused,

myself included, why we went into Iraq in the first place.

The reason is that we have only so many resources in the United

States of America, and we attacked and invaded with an international

coalition into Afghanistan. We ousted the Taliban government that was

harboring al Qaeda and harboring Osama bin Laden, and we sent Osama

running into the Tora Bora region on the Afghan-Pakistan border. We had

this international coalition, and we were going into Afghanistan and we

were going to rebuild this country, and we were going to make it a

thriving democracy. We were going to have a democracy in that region.

There is a great article in the Atlantic magazine this week, for

those of you who are at home who want to read it and get the complete

analysis and the timeline of how this happened. Then at one point, all

of a sudden, all of the generals and all of the military planners in

the United States of America began to shift their attention from

Afghanistan to Iraq, and they took in troops. We now have 130,000

troops in Iraq. In Afghanistan, we only have 17- or 18,000.

The Special Forces were moved as well, and then even as it states in

this article, the satellites that were focused on Afghanistan, that

were trying to provide intelligence, were also moved, and they were

shifted to Iraq. So how symbolic that we shifted our focus to Iraq and

took away from what was going on in Afghanistan.

Slowly but surely, Afghanistan began to unravel. We ended up with a

full-blown war in Iraq, and here we are, many, many months away from

that, stuck in a quagmire in Iraq that many of us have no idea how we

are going to get out of. I am glad to see that Senator Kerry has issued

a plan on how we are going to get out of there.

We have to bring in an international coalition. That is the only way

to do this. If we do not get troops in and support and money from the

international community, the only thing left is to have a draft in the

United States of America. If you ask the American people, would you

rather have a draft or try to unite the international community, I

think most Americans would say let us get the international community

united to put troops into Iraq, but this current President cannot do

that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr.

Delahunt), who has been a real leader on this issue and more articulate

than anyone else in this Congress on the problems and challenges in

Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, we had the same situation here when we

had the President of Afghanistan here, told us how great everything was

going in Afghanistan, how there was not a drug problem in Afghanistan,

we were going to have elections, on and on and on.

I would be happy to yield back, but just the American people need to

know that this is almost going to be a repeat performance of what we

heard a few months ago.