Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up on what Republican

Senator Chuck Hagel said, because I think it is accurate. He said,

discussing the situation in Iraq, ``It is beyond pitiful. It is beyond

embarrassing. It is now in the zone of dangerous.'' And I want to

reiterate that that is not just rhetoric; that is reality.

The reason I know it is reality is because we just lost a man from

Lynwood, Washington, last week, Corporal Steven Rintamaki, 21 years of

age, who will never be coming home, killed in action in Iraq while

serving proudly and with distinction in Iraq. Yes, indeed, this is in

the zone of dangerous. And this country deserves an administration who

will be forthright and truthful and is not looking through this

situation with rose-colored glasses.

What Chuck Hagel said, that we are now in the zone of dangerous, I

think we can say in spades that that is the situation.

I learned something tonight, Mr. Speaker, that is so disturbing I

just have to share it. Osama bin Laden, who is still at large somewhere

in the world tonight, after the President told us he would get him dead

or alive; he is still at large. The al Qaeda network is still

functioning and now attacking our troops in Iraq. And we have been very

concerned for some time that this administration, in its action in

Iraq, has taken its eye off the ball of destroying the al Qaeda network

and diverted resources and attention into Iraq, thereby increasing the

risk that al Qaeda would remain a threat. And, indeed, Osama bin Laden

is alive tonight and is a threat.

I learned something tonight. We knew about the administration moving

resources from Afghanistan that could be used in the hunt for Osama bin

Laden. The Predator aircraft, the drone that moves around, they moved

that to Iraq before we got done looking for Osama bin Laden. We know

that the administration has more people checking on people going to

Cuba as tourists than they do trying to interdict monies going to al

Qaeda. We know about those diversions in this prioritization.

But let me tell you about one I learned about tonight. NBC news today

reported that the administration three times had the opportunity to

take out terrorist Abu Musab al Zarqawi who, right now, could be

associated with some of the beheadings we have seen, actually, his

network. Three times the President quashed efforts to take out Zarqawi

before the war in Iraq started because they did not want to diminish or

undercut their argument of why they needed to go to Iraq.

In June, according to NBC news, in June 2002, the

Pentagon drafted plans to attack a camp Zarqawi personally was using

with cruise missiles and air strikes. The plan was killed by the White

House because they did not want to undercut their argument publicly

that we had to go into Iraq.

Again, 4 months later, Zarqawi planned to use ricin, this deadly

poison, in terrorist attacks in Europe. The Pentagon drew up a second

plan to go after Zarqawi. The White House killed it again because it

would interfere with the action, the public message that we had to go

to Iraq.

In January 2003, the pentagon drew up still another attack plan, and

for the third time, the White House killed it because ``military

officials insist their case for attacking Zarqawi's operation was air

tight. But the administration feared destroying the terrorist's camp in

Iraq could undercut its case for war against Saddam.''

If this is true, this is a gross dereliction of duty. We have now

seen multiple instances where this administration has moved forces that

could have been used to destroy the people that killed almost 3,000

Americans on September 11 and moved them in this effort to go into Iraq

under the pretense that there were weapons of mass destruction and

under the pretense that al Qaeda was responsible for September 11, both

of which have been shown to be false.

This bears scrutiny and investigation, and it demonstrates why we

need a new fresh approach in the war against the fundamental nihilists

who are still out there planning to attack this Nation.

It seems to me we are at a Y in the road; and as Yogi

Berra said, when you are at a Y in the road, take it. But this

administration is refusing to recognize the need for a change in policy

in Iraq. Their message to the American people is more of the same. Same

old, same old. We are doing just fine. It is hunky-dory in Iraq. So let

us keep doing what we have done here for the last year and a half.

I want to suggest there are four things that need a major change in

our Iraq policy or we will face certain failure and more deaths, as my

constituent did last week.

Four things: number one, we have got to have a meaningful, timely

training program to train the Iraqi forces so that they can take

responsibility for their own country, which is the only way this is

going to be successful. What do we find this administration has done in

regard to retraining the Iraqi Army? We are now a year and a half after

the invasion of Iraq, a time period where we knew, if somebody was

thinking about it, that we were going to have massive retraining needs

to train about 250,000 troops. That was going to take some work to do

that. One would think people would figure that out. But it is a year

and a half after the invasion of Iraq, and this administration still

has less than 40 percent of even the people responsible for

training the Iraqis working for us to get this job done. We only have

half the capability, according to an article of September 20; 230 of

the 600 we knew were going to be necessary are on the job.

This administration has dropped the ball on a fundamental thing that

is required for success in Iraq, which is to train their security

forces. And why did they do this? I know why they did it. Because they

told us we were going to be greeted with open arms, rose petals, and

the Iraqi equivalent of champagne. Why would we have to train all these

soldiers and police officers? It was going to be a cake walk.

And we would not have to pay for it either, Mr. Speaker.

So here we are a year and a half after the invasion, this

administration still has less than half the infrastructure we need to

get this job done. So that is number one that needs a significant

change in policy.

Second, we need an administration who will say we have got to have

elections sooner rather than later. When we had a brief window where we

were not getting bombed and RPG'd for about 3 months early in this

campaign, we had a chance for elections. But the President sent Mr.

Bremer over there, and he put the kibosh on elections. Sistani wanted

elections. They would not allow them. And here we are in this pickle.

And this is why this is important. They are telling us, Mr. Allawi is

going to tell us tomorrow, that we are going to have great elections on

January 31 in Iraq. That is great except for one problem: there are

huge swaths of Iraq today, in late September, that are not under the

control of the Iraqi government. Fallujah, Ramadi. We heard about a

battle a couple of miles south of Baghdad yesterday. How are they going

to have elections to get this job done? They are not prepared to get it

done, and the only way we are going to do this is to only have about 50

percent of the country voting.

Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would further yield, those

large swaths are called no-go zones. And that means that nobody from

the Iraqi government or we go to.

What is happening tonight with those no-go zones? The Iraqi

insurgents are planning to kill Marines and building up their

capability of doing it, and we are not going after them. I am

concerned, I am concerned, that one of the reasons we have adopted

these no-go zones is because this administration wants no casualties,

which none of us want ever, but he particularly may not want them

before November 2. We never want casualties ever, but to allow these

insurgents to build their forces which they are later going to throw

back in our faces and shoot at our Marines and soldiers is most

troublesome.

There is a third thing that needs to change, and I want to note it.

We need to get busy allowing the Iraqis to rebuild Iraq. If we listen

to what these insurgents are saying, they are angry because they do not

have electricity, and they blame us for it. Frankly, I do not think

they should be blaming us for it. They should be blaming Saddam Hussein

for it. But they do blame us. We need to get a reconstruction program

that is working. And the reason it is not working, the reason we have

spent less than 10 percent of the money that we voted on a bipartisan

basis on a variety of occasions to apply, the reason that money has not

been spent, $18 billion have been appropriated, less than $2 billion

has been spent. Why have they not spent the money? For this reason:

this administration has insisted that instead of hiring Iraqis to do

the construction and Iraqi businesses and Iraqi employees, they want to

hire their pals at Halliburton; and they insisted that American

contractors, many of whom happen to be significantly connected to the

administration, do this.

And the Iraqis are the ones who are unemployed. Those are the people

we should be hiring to get this job done. Every Iraqi that gets a job

is one less Iraqi willing to join the insurgency. But, no, this

administration wanted to make sure Halliburton got the money.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the reason that Halliburton is

doing that is that they do not want to deal with the difficulty of

hiring Iraqis. With all due respect, we have to get the Iraqis involved

in their own economy, or they are never going to be on board in a new

government. And this administration, in their lust, in their lust, to

continue their relationship with Halliburton, has squandered this

opportunity to get Iraqis involved in their own reconstruction. And it

has hurt us big time in the insurgency that is now raging across wide

swaths of Iraq.

No-go zones, Mr. Speaker. And the problem is the no-go

zones are not going to be no-go zones permanently. At some point we are

going to have to ask American sons and daughters to go into Fallujah,

and they are going to be fired at by insurgents. And the problem is

those insurgents tonight are building bunkers and recruiting and

building taps and they are building car bombs. They think many of them

are assembled in Fallujah and driven around the country, and we are not

rousting those groups out. And we are going to have to face their guns

when they are emboldened and empowered and in a tougher position. That

is terrible military doctrine. It is a mistake. And it is going to cost

American lives. And I think that it is one of those things that needs

change.

If the gentleman will yield, you mentioned a pretty

explosive word, which is ``incompetence.'' When we have our sons and

daughters at risk for their lives, over 1,000 of whom we have lost now,

it is a pretty serious charge to suggest that an administration has

been incompetent in the prosecution of this mission.

So I just want to quote a Republican Senator in this regard, or two

Republican Senators in regards to points two and three that I talked

about in saying that we need a major change in American policy in Iraq.

On point two, the issue of rebuilding Iraq, when Senator Lugar,

Republican Senator, was asked----

Well, Mr. Speaker, let me rephrase. When a prominent

Republican individual who served in public office in a post that

involves a 6-year term was asked why only $1 billion of $18 billion

appropriated last year for Iraqi reconstruction, why less than 10

percent of that had actually invested in Iraq, he said, ``Well, this is

the incompetence of the administration.''

``This is the incompetence of the administration.'' That is what this

has been. We need someone competent running the operation in Iraq.

Point three, the point we have been saying, that our military people

are going to be endangered as a result of not training people and

getting into these no-go zones, another prominent Republican, who once

recently ran for President and suffered grievously at the hands of a

fellow Republican in South Carolina, said ``it was a major error in

allowing insurgents to keep control of the City of Fallujah after

vowing to oust them.''

The same quote: ``As Napoleon said, if you say you are going to take

Vienna, you will take Vienna,'' this unnamed prominent Republican

person in a 6-year post said.

The fact of the matter is, these are major policy failures of this

administration. It is costing us in lives, and we need a change.

Unfortunately, this administration has one prominent rule in Iraq,

and an economic policy, for that matter: Do not bother me with the

facts. I told you guys it was going to be roses. I told you we were

going to be treated as liberators. Despite the fact we have this

horrendous problem in Iraq, we are not going to change our policy one

wit.''

We need a fresh policy in Iraq, and, one way or another, we have got

to get it.

Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, there is

another aspect of this $87 billion that we need to point out, of whose

money the President wanted to spend. He wants to spend our

grandchildren's money. Because every single one of those $87 billion he

committed to Iraq, which had to be spent in some sense, but instead of

us paying for it and dealing with it with taxes, he wanted, and he

consciously decided to make it all deficit spending. We had a proposal

to pay for it so that our grandchildren would not have that deficit

spending obligation on them.

Now, why is this? I think this is symptomatic of why we need a new

administration with a fresh policy. Winston Churchill said, all I have

to offer you is blood, sweat, toil, and tears. This President said, you

can fight this battle on the cheap. It will be sugar candy, roses, and

Champaign corks all the way. And as a result of that, we got $87

billion deficit spending, 1,000 dead, and a silent draft that is going

on now drafting our people to serve longer times than they really did

sign up for when they went into the military. That is why everybody in

this chamber is hearing stories about 50-year old people who left their

career for a year, came back, now have to go back for another year, and

goodness knows how many years, because they have not committed the

troops that are necessary to get this job done like General Shinseki

told them.

This President wanted to fight this war on the cheap. It has cost us

in lives, it has cost us in deficit spending, and we need a new policy.

We do not say this just to be critical; we say this to get a new policy

in Iraq. Unless we get that, we are heading into deep, deep trouble.