Mr. Speaker, can I interrupt, because I think that is

very important because that has been an assertion that I think is

extremely misleading to the American people.

My colleague referenced the no fly zone; yet I imagine that there are

many of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle and a number of

Americans that are watching this conversation tonight that we are

having and if you hear it without understanding some of the nuances,

you hear al Qaeda was in Iraq, but as that famous radio commentator, I

think his name was Paul Harvey, said, there is another half of that

story.

Yes, there was a group that had some nebulous link to al Qaeda, and

they were in Iraq; but they were not in Iraq in the part that Saddam

Hussein had sway over. They were not in the part of Iraq where Saddam

Hussein had influence. They were not in the part of Iraq that Saddam

Hussein had any control. They were in the part of Iraq, as my colleague

mentioned, in the so-called Kurdish area up in these mountains.

There was a group of some 200 or 300, and they were not directly

linked to al Qaeda; but, yes, they were a terrorist group and one that

we should not in any way countenance. They were a threat, if you will,

to people of goodwill all over this world; but they were not a part or

had any relationship, collaborative or otherwise, with Saddam Hussein.

And yet again and again, this White House continues to talk about al

Qaeda and Iraq, but what they do not say is that it was a group that

was in Iraq that was outside of the influence of Saddam Hussein. It was

in, as indicated, in the so-called no-fly zone. Saddam Hussein did not

dare enter that zone.

I would like to submit that the real danger here is

because of this diversion which is a military intervention, a war on

Iraq that it subverts, detracts from the real war that threatens the

American people.

The war by fundamental Islamist terrorists that, because of our

intervention in Iraq, are every day spawning new groups and new

terrorists. The policy of this administration in terms of the so-called

war on terror is creating, I would submit, a situation where if it

continues, yes, we have won the war in Iraq, but we will lose the war

on terror. It is very important that the American people, those that

are watching our conversation here tonight, understand that there is a

profound distinction between this adventure in Iraq for reasons that at

some point in time we should really get into: Why did we end up going

to Iraq? Well, we know this from people within the administration, far

in advance of September 11, the day of our national tragedy, plans for

war against Iraq were being designed.

Why did we not go into Iran? Why?

Mr. Speaker, Mohammed Atta, by the way, for those who

are watching us, was the leader of the 19 hijackers that were

responsible for our national day of tragedy.

It is called the big lie theory.

Mr. Speaker, if I can interrupt, and we are joined by

the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. Abercrombie).

We all remember, of course, that it was again this White House that

assigned a former United Nations inspector to go and search for the

weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. His name is David Kay. He is

universally described as someone of great integrity, of great

expertise. He does his job, and he comes back and he claims that we

were all wrong. That is months ago. This particular cover of Newsweek

is dated February of this year. We were all wrong. There were no

weapons of mass destruction. There were no links to al Qaeda and Saddam

Hussein. And yet he is befuddled and disturbed by the fact that this

President and this Vice President will not own up to the fact. He was

interviewed by a British newspaper, and his recommendation to President

Bush and particularly Vice President Cheney, because if there is anyone

who has pushed this particular adventure, it is the Vice President of

the United States, Richard Cheney. Let us just put it out here tonight.

And I am quoting him, assigned by this White House, presumably a

Republican, a hawk on the war, he says, ``It is about confronting and

coming clean with the American people, not just slipping a phrase into

the State of the Union speech. He should say we were mistaken and I am

determined to find out why.'' And they will not let go. They will not

let go.

Mr. Speaker, when are they going to go and fight the

war on terror and absolutely defeat terrorism?

If the gentleman will yield, can I ask a very brief

question? What did he say about the terrorist cells that now exist in

Iran, in Syria, in Pakistan, in Sudan, in Indonesia, and I could list a

long litany of other terrorist cells that are a threat to the United

States? What did he say, if anything; or is he just simply focused on

Iraq?

Have the terrorists left Iran and Syria and Sudan? What

is he saying?

That goes back to the issue of competence, and that is

where, in addition to the issue of credibility, this administration,

this White House, has failed miserably.

If the gentleman will yield, can the gentleman tell me

and tell those that might be watching our conversation tonight, what

has been the cost, not in terms of the lives of our children, but what

has been the cost to the American taxpayers for this adventure?

Already to date it has cost the American taxpayers $200

billion to build roads in Iraq, to provide Iraqis with good health

care, to clean up their environment and to stimulate their economy.

Mr. Speaker, we know, we know what the commander of the

VFW, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, a highly-esteemed organization

serving veterans in this country, had to say about this

administration's submission of a veterans budget to the United States

Congress. That commander called it a sham and a fraud. So this is not

inconsistent.

If I could just leave my colleagues with one question. We have talked

about we could not find the weapons of mass destruction. We cannot find

the links, if you will, of the collaborative relationship between

Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda.

Has anyone looked for the plans that were crafted by Saddam Hussein

that indicated that he was prepared to attack the United States?