Madam Speaker, here we are again late at night asking

questions.

Madam Speaker, it is a rare commodity, unfortunately, in Washington,

D.C., when one speaks of courage. We witness courage all over America.

We witness courage in terms of our men and women overseas risking their

lives. We observe courage every day in our streets, particularly with

our public safety officials. We clearly witnessed an extraordinary

level of courage and heroism on September 11, but we seem to have a

paucity of political courage because I believe and I think that most

Americans share the view that political courage involves admitting that

you are wrong when it is clear that you have made a mistake.

Madam Speaker, all of the questions that the gentleman from

Washington (Mr. Inslee) posed to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr.

Strickland) elicited an obvious answer, that the President was wrong.

But what I find most disturbing is the inability of this President to

summon the political courage to acknowledge that he was wrong. It is

certainly no disgrace to make a mistake, to be wrong. We have all done

it. I do it every day. But what I think is particularly un-American,

undemocratic, is a reluctance to be forthright and honest about your

failures. We do not hear that from this President. That is sad. Because

that kind of courage would be the earmark of genuine leadership, of

leadership that would be embraced by all of us, irrespective of

partisan differences. But it is so sorely lacking at this moment in our

history.

We need a leader with political courage. I think it became clear to

me last March when David Kay, the man who led this White House postwar

effort to find the weapons of mass destruction that were purportedly in

Iraq, called on the President to come clean with the American people. I

think when he made that call, he felt that the President was receiving

poor political advice and that what was necessary was to acknowledge

that a mistake had been made. I know that the two of you remember his

appearance before a committee in the other branch that appeared on the

front page of, I think it was Time magazine, but it was eloquent in its

courage when he said, ``We were all wrong.'' It is not a sin to be

wrong, but it is not being patriotic and American to lack the courage

to admit a mistake was made.

David Kay said, and I am quoting from a story that appeared in the

Guardian, a highly respected English magazine. He said that the

administration's reluctance to make that admission was undermining its

credibility at home and abroad. He called for a frank admission, even

though it was embarrassing.

Not only are we losing our prestige, not only are we losing our claim

to moral authority but because of this President's failure to admit he

was wrong, let me suggest we are losing the war on terror, because we

are losing allies every day and the American people should know that.

Because when you review the hard evidence that shows that incidents of

terror are increasing dramatically every day all over the world,

particularly in Iraq and in Afghanistan, I fear that we are losing that

war, a war that every American wants to win. I thank the gentleman from

Washington for enumerating that list of mistakes. But I could even

forgive this President if he could accept responsibility, but he

cannot. That is a failure of courage.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Madam Speaker, not only was he wrong, but what the

administration did, and we have heard much about $87 billion, and the

White House attacks John Kerry because he voted against the $87

billion, but what they failed to do was tell the other half of the

story, like we all voted against the $87 billion also, because not only

did he fail to tell the truth about the cost of reconstruction but

rather insisted that the monies that were to be utilized in rebuilding

Iraq were to be a gift, a giveaway. So all of those American taxpayers

who are out there who were misled about the cost of the war being paid

for by the Iraqis in the first instance, they should understand that

all of the money we are pouring into Iraq is not a loan. It is a gift.

It is a giveaway. It is welfare, if you will.

We heard today about welfare, welfare to work. We are providing

welfare for the Iraqi people. We are building them 6,000 miles of

roads. We cannot get a transportation bill through here to help build

American roads and repair them. We are building schools in Iraq, and we

are rehabilitating schools in Iraq, thousands of them. But there is no

money to rebuild and rehab schools in America.

And do my colleagues know what else we are doing? We are building

affordable housing, 25,000 units, for Iraqi people. In the United

States, with our population, which is ten times that of Iraq, we are

building 5,000. And do my colleagues know what? Mr. and Mrs. Taxpayer

are not going to get a dime of it back. Sure, there are other nations

that are giving something, nowhere near what we are, but their

governments insisted it be a loan.

So, in short, Madam Speaker, we were misled, and the American

taxpayer has been duped, and the American taxpayer is not going to get

a dime back.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Madam Speaker, I would simply add to that is what we

have now is the President in terms of world opinion that has very

little credibility. Let us just state the truth, the reality: If we are

going to internationalize, we have to have an administration that has

credibility and respect throughout the world.

There was a recent survey of some nine Islamic countries, and in fact

Secretary Powell just indicated that the magnitude of anti-Americanism

throughout the world and specifically among Muslim nations is growing

at a fearful rate. But the survey that was done of these nine countries

indicated that the vast majority of those people in those nations

believed that we went there for oil; for oil.

I would like to leave you with this question: Before September 11,

according to an anecdote that was related in a book by the former

Secretary of Treasury, a Republican, a conservative who served in the

Reagan and the Nixon administrations, indicated that on February 26,

2001, months before our national tragedy, he saw a map. It was prepared

by the Secretary of Defense, Secretary Rumsfeld, with markings for a

super giant oil field and earmarked for production sharing and dividing

the largely undeveloped southwest of the country into nine blocks for

future exploration.

In other words, in February of 2001, according to Secretary of

Treasury Paul O'Neill, the administration had a map, and the map is to

my left. This was before any issue of weapons of mass destruction or

links to al Qaeda came up.

Now, where did this map come from? Well, it was produced as a result

of a lawsuit, a lawsuit by a group called Judicial Watch, which

certainly is no fan or ally of partisan Democrats. They secured it as a

result of discovery proceedings in a lawsuit against the vice president

of the United States, Dick Cheney, because of the secrecy surrounding

his Energy Task Force. That is where it came out. And here is the map

of Iraq.

We need some answers and the rest of the world needs some answers

about this map, about Secretary O'Neill's reference to it, so that we

can clarify, once and for all, what the real motive of our military

intervention in Iraq was all about, because it is stories like this

that lead the rest of the world to doubt our motives and our

proclamation, Madam Speaker, that we are bringing democracy to the rest

of the world.