If the gentleman will yield, I certainly respect and

agree with the comments of the gentleman from Washington. This

sovereignty in Iraq does seem like a false sovereignty, when you

realize the facts on the ground.

Number one, this new Iraq government has no ability to protect itself

or its citizens or defend against the violent insurgency. All of the

security requirements remain on American troops, approaching 140,000

American troops, and the sad fact is we have yet to stabilize that

country. We have not been able to contain the insurgency.

The highest suggested number of people in that insurgency, the

highest estimate is 10,000, and 10,000 violent insurgents have not been

controlled, cannot yet be contained by 140,000 brave American troops.

The reality is we do not have enough troops to stabilize Iraq; we have

not had enough; we do not have the international troops; and we do not

have the Arab League troops that we should have.

This new sovereign government does not seem so sovereign. They are

also not in control of their own reconstruction. The $20 billion of

American funds appropriated by this Congress for reconstruction, the

gentleman is absolutely correct, has not yet been spent, and, when it

is spent, it will be controlled by the American embassy. This is

probably the right thing, because it is American dollars, but it is an

all-American list of contractors, many of them picked with no-bid

contracts, no-bid awards, like Halliburton, and the so-called sovereign

government of Iraq will have no control over that money.

Thirdly, they were talking the other day about delaying elections.

The White House said no, you are not. We are going to have elections,

whether you are ready or not, in January of 2005.

I do not want to see elections delayed either. I would like to see

them moved up even sooner. But here is this Iraqi sovereign government

that does not control its own security, does not control the

reconstruction in Iraq, cannot even decide when to have elections, and

yet the President wants to continue this fiction that we have

established a sovereign nation of Iraq.

It has not happened yet because we do not have security.

Fundamentally we do not have security. We cannot meet our shared goals.

I think every member of the Iraq Watch, today and for the last 15

months we have been doing this, has agreed with the President's goals

of a stable, peaceful Iraq that is pluralistic and hopefully

democratic. None of those goals can be reached without security. We

cannot have reconstruction without security; we cannot have a sovereign

nation under a new government without security; we cannot have

elections without security.

This President has been unable to attract the international troops,

the NATO troops, the Western European troops, the Arab League nation

troops, that clearly need to be added to our brave American troops to

get up to the several hundred thousand troops that Army Chief of Staff

Shinseki quite rightly said a year and a half ago would be needed.

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Strickland) is absolutely

right about this. And one of the important reasons that we are talking

about the mistakes that were made is to make sure that it does not

happen again. We do not want history to repeat itself.

I think every member of Iraq Watch would agree that in the age of

terror that we find ourselves, it may be necessary in the future to use

our American force preemptively to protect America. The days of the

armada, of an opposing enemy forming off our harbors or an army

amassing on our borders, are probably over and we may need to quickly

use preemptive force in the future. That is the Bush doctrine,

preemptive use of force, but it has certain requirements that were not

present this time.

First, you need accurate intelligence. You need an honest assessment

of what is happening on the ground and the need for the President to

level with the American people, and you have to be willing to use that

force only as a last resort, not on a basis before necessary. We see in

this case the President exaggerated the existence of weapons of mass

destruction. He has fabricated a relationship between Hussein, al Qaeda

and 9/11. He failed to exhaust diplomatic options.

What would have happened if he had allowed those international arms

inspectors the extra 3 months they were requesting after their first 2

months found no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq? He failed to put

together a meaningful coalition, as all of us said tonight. Ninety

percent of the troops in Iraq, 90 percent of the money is American. And

he has failed to commit enough troops. We have got 140,000 brave

Americans in Iraq today, but it is not enough to contain this violent,

deadly insurgency, and they were sent there with inadequate equipment,

as my friend, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Strickland), has been

telling us for 15 months during Iraq Watch.

And what confidence do we have that this group of political leaders

in the White House and the civilian leaders in the Pentagon will not do

this thing again and again and again? They do not seem to understand

their mistake. They will not admit their mistakes, and we have got to

bring this to the attention of the American people.