Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, I think

Secretary Powell, as it was reported in the book just recently released

by the Pulitzer Prize winner Bob Woodward, my memory of the quote is

that if you go to Iraq, Mr. President, you own it.

Well, the truth is, we do own it. I was interested in hearing from

our colleagues and friends on the other side of the aisle, particularly

the chairman of the Committee on Armed Services, when he acknowledged

that it is really the American soldier that is doing the work today in

Iraq. Yes, we have allies there, the British obviously have made a

commitment and there are some Australians, but other than that, there

are very few substantial commitments to preserving security in Iraq

today.

As our colleague the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee) just

noted, we hear from some quarters that everything is fine, and we know

that is not true. I think it is important that the American people

understand that we are far past making this a partisan issue. This is

not about Republicans and Democrats, this is truly about the direction

of where this country is going, and it is absolutely essential that we

be clear and honest and forthright with the American people.

Let me just quote one very famous, highly regarded, well-respected

traditional conservative, William Buckley. We all know William Buckley.

He certainly has contributed through the years to discourse, to the

public discourse on major issues in this country. As we all know, he

recently resigned, retired, if you will, from the publication that he

brought forth many years ago. But even a traditional conservative

Republican like William Buckley expresses amazement about what is

occurring in terms of the stories and the fantasy that is coming from

this administration, particularly the White House.

He recently said that the White House has a dismaying capacity to

believe their own PR, and until we finally acknowledge what the reality

on the ground is, we cannot have a debate.

I am always brought back to that very famous statement by David Kay.

Now, David Kay, as we all know, and as I am sure many who are listening

to our conversation tonight are fully aware, was a former United

Nations inspector, an American, who earned an excellent reputation for

integrity, for knowledge, during the work done by the United Nations in

terms of ensuring compliance by the Saddam Hussein regime with a

variety of United Nations sanctions relative to the weapons of mass

destruction.

Prior to the war, he stated that he was convinced, from what he heard

from the administration, that in fact the Iraqi government possessed

weapons of mass destruction. He was assigned by this administration, by

this President, to lead a group to go to Iraq and conduct a survey and

do a thorough, exhaustive, extensive search for those weapons of mass

destruction.

When he came back, he made that famous statement before a Senate

committee, saying we were all wrong, and here it is depicted on the

cover of Newsweek Magazine. And as time has gone on, he continues to

express his concern that we are losing our credibility in the world and

that our role, our prestige, our claim to moral authority is eroding on

a daily basis, and he pleads with the administration to come clean.

So let me just suggest that until that occurs, that until there is

honesty on the part of this White House and frankness and candor, and

not just simply press releases and flyovers of Baghdad, we all know

that our troops are doing a job that reflects well, not only on them,

their families, but our country, but the truth is too that their morale

has eroded. And yet we never hear anything from this White House and

this administration about that reality, about the reality that a survey

was done by Stars and Stripes, a military magazine, that established

that 52 percent of Army personnel describe morale as low.

That is dangerous. Let us respect them for what they do, let us

acknowledge their heroism, but let us not paint an unrealistic picture,

or we do the American people and the American military a disservice.

Mr. Speaker, the evidence that supports that premise is

the reality that within the past week or two there has been a call-up

of the so-called ``ready reserve,'' almost 6,000. Now, these are men

and women who performed for their country, who obviously did their

active duty, did their active reserve, have returned to civilian life,

and in some cases for years have been civilians, and now, out of the

blue, they are back into the active military on their way to Iraq.

And that by this time, I say to the gentleman, there

would be less than 30,000 troops in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to note that the

Democratic minority in this House attempted to add an enhancement of

the penalties for fraud and abuse and profiteering, and yet the

majority in this House and in the Senate denied that proposal.

I would like to conclude, and I will be very brief because I think we

have got to go back to the initial question I think that was raised by

the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee), how did we get here?

If we are to believe Richard Clark, who led the anti-terrorism effort

under both Presidents Clinton and Bush until his retirement 2 years

into the Bush administration, if we are to believe the highly

respected, again, Republican conservative, who initiated the term of

this administration as Secretary of the Treasury, Paul O'Neill, it was

one week, one week after the inauguration that there was a meeting of

the National Security Council and what was discussed there was the need

for regime change in Iraq. Nothing about terrorism. And again, 6 weeks

later, according to Paul O'Neill, there was a meeting of the National

Security Council where it was discussed how the oil fields in Iraq were

to be divvied up and divided among nations and corporations. That is

according to Paul O'Neill and that is according to Dick Clark.