Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say that I think

the Secretary of Defense, Secretary Rumsfeld, should resign. He was

quoted in the paper today responding to a question as to why he had not

asked to see the pictures, and he indicated that he had asked, but they

were not available.

Now, if the Secretary of Defense of this country cannot acquire

pictures that he asks for, is it any wonder that we have troops in Iraq

tonight who are driving around in unarmored vehicles? Is it any wonder

that we had troops in Iraq for an entire year without protective body

armor? If the Secretary of Defense cannot get pictures that he

requests, my God, what are we facing over there? It just is

indescribable.

I yield to my friend, the gentleman from Washington State.

Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, I wrote

Secretary Rumsfeld about the body armor issue months ago and he wrote

me back and he said all of our troops will be protected with this body

armor by November.

A day later I get a letter from General Myers, and he says it will be

December. Before we leave here for the

holidays, they had a briefing at the Pentagon; they said it is going to

be January. Do you realize it was March of this year, one full year

after the beginning of this war, before the Pentagon was willing to say

that all of our troops had been equipped? And now they are over there

without uparmored Humvees, and they are driving over these roadway

explosives. They are getting their arms and legs blown off. They are

losing their lives, and we are not correcting that problem as quickly

as we are capable of correcting it.

How do I know that? Because the only company the Pentagon has a

contract with to provide these uparmored Humvees is an Ohio company

located in Fairfield, Ohio. They are capable of producing in November

of this year, by November of this year, 500 of these uparmored Humvees

per month. How many is the Pentagon willing to buy? Only 300 per month.

That means that we are not addressing this problem as quickly as it is

possible to address it.

How can the President, how can the Secretary of Defense, how can Paul

Wolfowitz look the American citizen, the American family, the American

soldier in the eye and explain to them why we are not doing everything

as quickly as possible to protect our soldiers?

One more thing before I yield, Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz, who I

believe and I think most people believe was largely responsible for

helping formulate this policy of going into Iraq as we did, was asked a

few days ago how many American soldiers had been killed. And he

indicated that it was something over 500. And at that time we had lost

well over 700 American soldiers. To think that the Deputy Secretary of

Defense was not paying attention to the number of American deaths is

almost unthinkable, almost unthinkable.

I have got 8th and 9th grade students who come to Washington, D.C.

from my district, to visit me in Washington, D.C., who are better

informed about the price this country is paying in terms of deaths and

the injuries of our soldiers than apparently is the Deputy Secretary of

Defense, Paul Wolfowitz. He should be ashamed of himself.

I cannot fathom that one in his high position would not on a daily

basis take note of the number of American soldiers who have lost their

lives in this conflict.

Mr. Speaker, if my friend would yield, I dare to say

that this smells like a cover-up, and I think Secretary Rumsfeld has to

assume responsibility. He is the Secretary of Defense of this Nation,

and when he was asked, have you asked, Mr. Secretary, to see all of

these pictures depicting this abuse, and he indicates, as was reported

in the paper, well, I was told they were not available, I mean, talk

about someone trying to shirk responsibility. It is almost laughable.

He is the Secretary of Defense.

Then General Myers, I saw him interviewed just a couple of days ago,

and

he had indicated that he had not even read this outrageous report. He

had not read it, and so it seems to me, rather than the grunts on the

ground, that someone like General Myers and Secretary Rumsfeld should

step up, assume responsibility, admit their failure of leadership and

have the good graces to submit their resignations to the President of

the United States, and if he is not willing to do it, I would hope the

President would ask for it.

Who do they work for?

Mr. Speaker, the history of this administration is

anyone who questions is shoved aside. General Shinseki said we would

need hundreds of thousands of troops. He was literally ridiculed by the

Secretary of Defense and others.

Absolutely, because you do not question these folks.

They seem to know everything.

What we are finding out is that their understanding is so immature

that they are almost child-like in their fantasies. It is almost like a

make-believe. They want the world to be a certain way, and so they just

assume it is; and then who pays the price? The American people pay the

price, the families of our soldiers and the soldiers pay the price.

If I can say something about the need to come up with a plan as the

gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee) and the gentleman from Hawaii

(Mr. Abercrombie) have suggested. The papers reported today that the

troop levels that we are going to have in Iraq will stay at about

135,000 throughout 2005. I submit that is just the beginning. It is

going to be 2005, 2006, 2007, we know not when this is going to come to

an end.

This is my prediction. My prediction is this: If we do not change our

policies, if we do not come up with a plan to extricate ourselves

honorably from that situation, we are going to find ourselves facing

the strong possibility of a military draft and the moms and dads in

this country who may feel very detached from this war right now because

they have a 13 or 14 or 15-year-old son or daughter, and they do not

think it is going to touch them, we cannot sustain our military needs

around the world and continue to do what we are doing in Iraq without

the possibility, I think the strong possibility of a military draft.

If we have a military draft, I do not think we will have those

exemptions that we had when I and Vice President Cheney were draft age.

I think every person of draft age will be subjected to it. I hold that

out not as a threat, but I think it is realistic. We have National

Guard persons and Reservists over there, and they are being extended

beyond the normal time of service. We cannot continue this for years

and years and years into the future.