Mr. Speaker, I am joined here this evening by two of my

colleagues, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee) and the

gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Ryan). In the past, since the commencement of

military action in Iraq, four of us came together and created what we

called the Iraq Watch, which was an effort to assess the situation in

the Middle East with a particular focus on Iraq and Afghanistan, and

the global implications for our national security and for the role of

the United States in the world.

For some 19 months, we would convene here on the floor and have a

dialogue among us. Some of our colleagues are not here this evening,

but our regulars include the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. Abercrombie)

and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Strickland), the same State that is

represented by Mr. Ryan, who is a welcome new addition to the Iraq

Watch. So we welcome the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Ryan).

I would like to begin by just examining the current security

situation in Iraq and reporting to my colleagues and to the American

people.

Through July 17, 1,764 U.S. soldiers have died, and 13,483 have been

wounded in Iraq since the invasion. Now, I know many of my colleagues

on both sides of the aisle have visited our wounded military personnel

in the naval hospital in Bethesda and at Walter Reed. It is, to say the

least, a moving, poignant, and profoundly disturbing experience; and I

know we share, all of us share the absolute best

wishes for them as they move forward in their lives. We know that they

have many hurdles and many obstacles ahead of them, but that same

courage and that same heroism that they displayed in the war we know

will be with them as they proceed through life.

But it is our obligation here in this Congress, in this House to make

sure that they have every single benefit that they deserve and that all

of our programs are fully funded. I know the gentleman from Ohio (Mr.

Ryan) serves on the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and has been a

leader in that regard, and I congratulate him.

Since June 2003, 2,642 Iraqi soldiers and police have died. Estimates

of Iraqi civilian deaths since the beginning of the invasion range up

to 60,800. The New York Times recently cited Iraqi government figures

reporting that an average of 500 Iraqis are killed each month by so-

called insurgents. Over a 10-month period ending in May, that rate had

escalated to some 800 a month.

So those are the statistics. Those are the cold, hard statistics.

Now, I know that my colleague, the gentleman from the State of

Washington (Mr. Inslee), has an obligation in about 20 minutes, so I am

going to call on him and ask him for his observations to begin our

conversation.

I think it is interesting to go back a bit and to

remember that the Department of State had worked for months on a plan,

a plan that was fleshed out by bringing in experts from outside, by

bringing in those with different perspectives. And yet, because there

was some suspicion on the part of the Pentagon that State was not

enthusiastically in support of the military invasion of Iraq, that that

had to be put aside. And now we find ourselves, obviously, in a real

mess

I would like to make an interesting observation,

because during the debate tomorrow and during the debate today, and

during the course of our committee hearings, we constantly hear of a

profound concern by this administration and this government about Iran.

If you remember, Iran was described as a charter member, if you will,

of the Axis of Evil club. And there are legitimate concerns about the

development of nuclear weapons by Iran.

And here we are in Iraq, we have already appropriated in excess of

$330 billion. That is $330 billion. Estimates range that by the time we

have discharged our obligation, which is difficult to quantify, we will

be looking at $1 trillion from American taxpayers.

However, while we are expressing this concern about Iran, a story

appears in the Washington Post dated Tuesday, July 12, and the headline

reads as follows: Iraqi official says Iran will not train troops. But

there appears to be some confusion because the Iraq defense minister

reached an agreement, a military agreement with Iran the previous week.

And he claims it does not include any provision for the Iranian armed

forces to help train Iraqi troops. But this was contradicted by his

Iranian counterpart.

So here we are, America. We now have a military agreement between

Iraq, where we have expended billions, hundreds of billions of dollars,

and the blood of more than 1,700 Americans killed in action, and yet

what do we have? We have a military agreement between Iraq and the

Republic of Iran. And tomorrow, I can assure you, as we debate the

reauthorization legislation in terms of the Department of State, there

will be much said about Iran. There will be a pounding of fists and

there will be considerable consternation about Iran.

And yet, here we are, it is publicly disclosed, the Iranians and the

Iraqis have reached an accord in a military agreement. So maybe that

will take care of the training of Iraqi troops so that Americans can

learn. The Iranians can attract them.

Mr. DELAUNT. And what is it now?

Those numbers are mind boggling. And before I yield to

my friend from Ohio (Mr. Ryan), I have a question. And I need someone

to at least assist me in trying to understand how Iran, again, and a

charter member of the axis of evil, is now a military ally of Iraq. And

we are promoting democracy in Iraq.

It also should be noted again, according to this Washington Post

story, that while the Minister of Defense in the interim government

claims that, no, the Iranians are not going to train troops, but he did

acknowledge that Iran has pledged $1 billion in reconstruction aid to

the Iraqi government, some of which would be to the defense ministry.

Is this Allies in Wonderland? Is up down and down is up? The Iranians

and the Iraqis are engaged in a military accord?

This is the kind of information that we tried to bring out during the

course of our conversations once a week. We have just begun them again

after a hiatus of some 6 months. But that to me is inexplicable because

that will give Iran, Iran, that many on the floor tomorrow will say is

a potential enemy and something has got to be done. What is happening?

The burden is being carried almost exclusively by the

American military and the American taxpayer. And we have been joined by

2 colleagues, our friend, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. Larson),

and, again, one of the original members of the Iraq Watch, the

gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Strickland).

I yield, since he is one of the originals I have to yield first of

course, to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Strickland) and welcome him.

No, the gentleman's remarks are excellent, and, Mr.

Speaker, they are on point. The tragic reality is that this is an

American war, with some help from the British. This is becoming every

day almost an exclusive American venture, both militarily and in terms

of the reconstruction phase.

A recent report indicated that Italy is prepared to withdraw its

3,000 troops come this fall. This fall is 2 months away. The coalition

of the willing is ``getting out of Dodge.'' That is the tragic reality

here. Because they are hearing from the people in their societies who

are saying we do not want to participate.

We find ourselves in a real conundrum. And my colleague was

absolutely right, in the aftermath of 9/11 every single one of us stood

here and voted in favor of going after al-Qaeda, in Afghanistan, along

with the Taliban, and we prevailed. But then, then we became distracted

and we took resources from Afghanistan. What is happening in

Afghanistan? It has become a narco state. President Karzai has a

terrible situation on his hands.

And I know we all remember here that the day after 9/11 the entire

world was with us. The French, their leading newspaper Le Monde, summed

it up when it said ``Today We Are All Americans.'' We had that good

will. And now? And now what do we see because of these policies? Well,

I will tell you what we see. According to the independent nonpartisan

Government Accountability Office, and the American people should know

that that is an arm of the U.S. Congress, this is what they had to say

just this past April:

``Recent polling data show that anti-Americanism is spreading and

deepening around the world. Such anti-American sentiments can increase

foreign public support for terrorism directed against Americans. It

impacts the cost and effectiveness of military operations, thereby

escalating the cost of supporting our troops in the multiple venues

that they presently patrol, and it weakens the United States' ability

to align with other nations in pursuit of common policy objectives and

dampen foreign publics' enthusiasm for U.S. business services and

products.''

This has huge implications for the American people. It is absolutely

stunning to see some of this polling that has currently become

available. When posed this question, ``Please tell me if you think each

of the following are having a mainly positive or mainly negative

influence in the world,'' and they single out the United States, in

Great Britain, our most staunch ally, 44 percent say it is mainly

positive, with fifty percent saying it is mostly negative. That is

Great Britain.

In Australia, 40 percent say it is mostly positive and 52 percent say

American influence in the world today is mostly negative. Our neighbors

to the north, in Canada, 34 percent say American influence in terms of

the international order is mostly positive, 34 percent, and 60 percent

say it is mostly negative. Germany, 27 percent positive, 64 percent

negative. Japan, 24 percent positive, 31 percent negative. Mexico, our

neighbors to the south, 11 percent mostly positive in terms of American

influence in the international community, and 57 percent mostly

negative.

I could go on and on and on.

And hopefully that will also staunch that rising

virulent, anti-Americanism that does such harm to our national

security, that breeds terrorists and directs their anger toward the

United States.

We saw what happened in London. Again, we hear from those in the

Islamic world that by virtue of what we are doing in our policy, why we

speak of democracy and our rhetoric is comprised of the most noble of

word, we are not seen that way because our actions belie them.

If I may go to that issue of anti-Americanism once

more, it was interesting during the course of the debate today on the

reauthorization of the Department of State when during consideration of

the rule an amendment put forth by myself and the gentleman from Texas

(Mr. Doggett) was not made in order because I would suggest that the

seeds of that anti-Americanism is a perception that the United States

operates on two different standards, and that is interpreted by many in

this world to be rank hypocrisy.

It was the President that said during his inaugural address that the

United States ``will persistently clarify the choice for every ruler

and every Nation: The moral choice between oppression, which is always

wrong, and freedom which is eternally right. America will not pretend

that any human being aspires to live at the mercy of bullies. We will

encourage reform in other governments by making it clear that success

in our relations will require the decent treatment of their own

people.''

Noble words, a noble cause, and we all of course embrace that. Yet

when we put forth this amendment which would have admonished and

required a certification by the President that the thug, the bully, if

you will, that rules Uzbekistan would change his ways, it was not made

in order. One of our partners in this coalition of the willing is the

thug, and I will take a moment here and put his picture up so Members

and the viewing audience can see. This is Islam Karimov. This victim

here was boiled alive in water, scalding water. This is a member of the

coalition of the willing.

According to our own State Department, Karimov heads a regime that

does not allow freedom of speech or religion, that makes a mockery of

elections, that holds thousands of political prisoners, and where

security forces routinely use torture. This is the product of the thug

Karimov's security forces utilization of torture, torture that goes

back to the medieval times.

And then 2 months ago his troops massacred hundreds of civilians who

were simply protesting for justice and for liberty. And yet we continue

to give him military assistance, some $400 million to date. The

amendment that was offered by myself and the gentleman from Texas (Mr.

Doggett) would have terminated that aid unless Karimov changed his

behavior.

Exactly.

Mr. Speaker, just think of the message that this sends

to the rest of the world. When crowds were demonstrating in the

Ukraine, we were cheering. We approved. We welcomed the so-called

Orange Revolution. And we speak about bringing the fire of freedom to

dark corners of the world, and yet here is one dark corner of the world

where there is no light, there is no hope, and we do not bring the fire

of freedom. And we wonder why polling data indicates that country after

country, our traditional allies, look at us as having a mainly negative

influence in the world, all because of the war in Iraq. That was the

genesis.

Mr. Speaker, it will have implications for us.