Mr. Speaker, first, I need to say I did not know

Congressman Edward Roybal; but if he did nothing more than bring his

daughter, Lucille Roybal-Allard, into this world, he brought a gift to

all of us. I honor him for that.

Mr. Speaker, I was struck by something that I heard the chairman of

the Senate Intelligence Committee say over the weekend. Now that it is

all too clear that the intelligence leading up to the Iraq war was

deeply flawed, he was brave enough to say, ``I think a

lot of us would really stop and think a minute before we would ever

vote for war or take military action.'' And then he added, ``We do not

accept this intelligence at face value anymore.''

Great. I am glad that the gentleman from Kansas, Mr. Roberts, is so

cautious and skeptical now, after more than 2,000 soldiers have been

killed, after we have poured $200 billion into this war, after we have

squandered America's global credibility and goodwill.

Back when this could have made a difference, the chairman and so many

others in this body and the upper Chamber fell in line behind the

President, rubberstamping his war with barely a peep of dissent.

Where were the hard questions then? Where was the oversight and the

scrutiny back when it could have saved lives and changed the course of

history?

The latest line of argument from the White House is essentially this:

Sure, we were wrong about Saddam and weapons of mass destruction, but

we did the best we could with what we had.

Leaving aside whether they were mistaken about the intelligence or

they actively manipulated it, I would like to see the President look a

widow or a grieving mother in the eye and use that line.

The other thing they are saying is maybe we were wrong, but so were a

lot of other people, including a lot of Democrats, so get off our

backs. This attempt at spreading the blame is dishonest, and it is

irresponsible. It was not the previous administration, nor was it the

President's opponents in last year's election who launched a preemptive

war and put American credibility on the line in selling it.

It was not some other Vice President that leaned on analysts at

Langley to reach certain conclusions. It was not some other White House

that was fixing the intelligence and the facts around the policy, as

the Downing Street Memo put it.

There is only one Commander-in-Chief, and the buck must stop with

him. Besides, there were plenty of us who were deeply skeptical about

the case for war; and for raising our concerns, many of us had our

patriotism called into question.

Ambassador Joe Wilson was among those who raised the red flag, and

look what they did to him and to his family.

But of course, as the President is now implicitly admitting, we who

questioned the intelligence were right. The very fact that they are

trying to rewrite the history of the run-up to war is evidence that the

war has been a disastrous mistake. If all were going well in Iraq, the

President would not be in this defensive posture, casting about for

scapegoats.

There is a way to make it right. There is a way to fix the problem.

By ending the war once and for all. It is time for the President not

just to admit his mistakes but to correct them. It is time to return

Iraq to the Iraqi people and return our troops home to the families

that have gone too long without them.