Madam Speaker, I heard a very disturbing report today.

While we are engaging in a very important and legitimate debate about

our strategy in Iraq, one thing for sure we ought to be united on, and

that is Americans ought to have access to the truth and not to be the

subject of spin by their own government and should not have their own

government suppressing the truth about Iraq. Things are difficult

enough about Iraq without the Federal Government suppressing the truth

about Iraq.

Unfortunately, that appears to be what is going on in this

administration. Today in the Washington Post an article related that

the USAID ordered the restriction of preventing distribution of reports

by the contractor Kroll Security International which had previously

shown that the number of daily attacks by insurgents in Iraq had

increased significantly. In response to the news that these insurgent

attacks are increasing, about 5 weeks before this election, this

administration decided apparently to suppress that information and the

agency ordered that this information no longer be disseminated to the

American public.

This is information generated with U.S. American taxpayer dollars

that this administration, 5 weeks before the election, does not want

the American people to hear about.

The article in The Washington Post says: ``The Kroll reports suggest

a broad and intensifying campaign of insurgent violence.'' In response

to that bad news, the agency official at USAID sent an e-mail to

congressional aides stating, ``This is the last Kroll report to come

in. After The Washington Post story, they shut it down in order to

regroup. I'll let you know when it restarts.''

There is no excuse for this administration shielding information

about Iraq and the fact that we have great difficulties there from the

American people. We have a legitimate right to know this information.

We have an important debate in our national body politic to figure out

the right strategy in Iraq, and it is wrong to suppress this

information.

We cannot decide the right decision in Iraq by looking through rose-

colored glasses anymore. Hope is not a strategy. Simply saying we are

going to have the same old, same old in Iraq and shield and hide the

ball from the American people just will not cut it. Tonight it would be

nice if the administration and the President admitted that we have some

difficulties in Iraq and admitted we need to make some changes in

strategy or we are going to have deep trouble.

But this is not the only symptom of an administration that is

refusing to face reality in Iraq. In that same story in The Washington

Post, I read that Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's office is now

sponsoring a sort of happy talk, good news tour through our bases and

that we are using taxpayers' money to bring Iraqis to spread the good

news of Iraq to our military bases here in this country. The memo

disclosing this tour paid for by taxpayer dollars says it is ``designed

to be uplifting accounts with good news messages.'' Rumsfeld's office,

which will pay for the tour, recommends that the installations seek

local news coverage, noting that ``these events and presentations are

positive public relations opportunities.'' We do not need a public

relations campaign. We need a campaign for success in bringing our

troops home in Iraq. We are not getting that from this administration.

The memo went on to suggest that the commanders at each base ``are in

the best position on how to market this voluntary attendance program

effectively.'' We do not need a marketing campaign. We need an honest

discussion of how to get a strategy to bring our troops home after

success. But that is not what we are getting from this administration.

Instead of recognizing and coming clean with the American people about

their failures to find weapons of mass destruction, their failures to

tell the accurate situation about connections with al Qaeda, their

failures to have enough troops on the ground, their failures to have

enough body armor, they have given us a marketing technique protocol

paid for with taxpayer dollars. It is wrong. We need a strategy, not a

marketing campaign.