Mr. Speaker, that is one of the best rhetorical questions

the gentleman has ever posed and very successfully; and it is accurate

that the Senate and the House are now under the control of our friends,

the Republicans, for the last 2 years.

Let me answer that and quickly segue to tonight's

discussion. The presidency is under control of the Republican party,

the Senate is under control of the Republican party, the House is under

control of the Republican party, and if there is waste, fraud or abuse,

it is under the watch of the Republican party which controls the

government of the United States.

Our Republican friend speaking this evening talked about waste, fraud

and abuse. Let us cut to one of the most onerous, glaring, enormous,

stunningly scandalous waste, fraud and abuse that the Bush

administration, with Republican support, has supported, and that is

that they have given almost $40 million of taxpayer money to Mr.

Chalabi and his Iraqi National Congress who tonight stands accused of

giving away some of our most secret information to Iran.

This President, amongst the many mistakes that he has made,

squandered almost $40 million in waste, fraud and abuse, taking the

money from American taxpayers and giving it to this fellow that he told

us was going to be the ``Spartacus of Iraq.'' We were told by the Vice

President that we would be welcomed as liberators, with rose petals,

and that this administration believed with Richard Pearl and Dick

Cheney and the whole group of them and Paul Wolfowitz, we have heard

them described as the neo-cons. They are neo-cons, and they allowed Mr.

Chalabi to con this administration out of $40 million, and we have not

got a penny back.

Now, we 2 weeks ago, I think, tonight, held a meeting here on the

Iraq Watch, and we blew the whistle on Mr. Chalabi loud and clear.

Interestingly enough, the next morning, we were advised that the

administration had finally cut off this spigot of taxpayer money to Mr.

Chalabi. A week later, we find out that he is under investigation; and

they have now raided his offices to find out if, indeed, he did give

this secret information to Iran.

I just am encouraged, I suppose, that our Republican friends want to

root out waste, fraud and abuse. It would have been nice if they had

joined us in blowing the whistle on Mr. Chalabi months ago when we had

been saying that this whole plan was based on a house of sand.

Now the administration, just to make sure people understand what

happened here, Mr. Chalabi and his allies gave phony information about

weapons of mass destruction. The neo-cons in the White House and the

Defense Department bought it hook, line and sinker. They convinced the

President, who apparently did not need much convincing, that we would

just send Mr. Chalabi in there and he would be, as I said, the new

Spartacus of Iraq, the De Gaulle of Iraq.

So what did we do? We put him on the payroll of one of the biggest

welfare programs ever, to the tune of $40 million, and we flew him and

800 of his closest co-conspirators into Iraq about 4 days after the

invasion, 2 days after the collapse of the Iraqi Army, thinking he was

going to be our agent. It was a total scam, and the American taxpayers

paid for it, and he is the worst case of waste, fraud and abuse.

Well, I know, but I would like the gentleman to

articulate that, actually.

And Mr. Chalabi in the press reports said, well, somebody

in the agency of the United States government told me when they were

drunk, and this guy who had the President give $40 million to then

disclosed some of the most sensitive information possible, that we have

broken the Iranian code.

What is so disturbing about this, at least to me, is this

is almost a pattern of this administration blowing Top Secret security

information. They did it through Mr. Chalabi, although perhaps

unintentionally. They did it blowing the cover of a CIA agent in order

to punish Joe Wilson, the ambassador who blew the whistle on the

falsehood that the President gave in his State of the Union speech. Is

nothing sacred? Is nothing sacred in our security information? This

administration needs to be held to account.

Here we have a situation where the President of the United States

okayed $40 million of taxpayer money going to this scam artist who had

already been convicted of bank fraud in Jordan and could not set foot

back in his home country because of his previous conviction. We have a

situation where this information was found out to be totally false, all

of it. We started a war based on this false information.

And how many people have the President fired as a result of this

scandal, as a result of this failure? How many people has he let go?

How many heads have rolled in his administration to have accountability

for this Chalabi debacle? Zero. Zero. This President has shown zero

accountability throughout this entire mess, and the only people he has

fired are those who are the ones who have told the truth, General

Shinseki and Richard Clarke.

Paul O'Neill. He punished Joe Wilson's wife.

And, Mr. Speaker, if my colleague will yield, another

thing that cannot stand is this administration essentially sort of

pooh-poohing the enormity of this disaster of relying on Mr. Chalabi.

There are two groups that have suggested it is of no consequence, one

of which is Mr. Chalabi. He was interviewed in a major newspaper

sometime ago and the article said ``an Iraqi leader accused of feeding

faulty pre-war intelligence to Washington,'' and that is Mr. Chalabi,

``said yesterday his information about Saddam Hussein's weapons, even

if discredited,'' meaning wrong, meaning false, ``had achieved the aim

of persuading America to start a war.''

Mr. Chalabi has just kind of laughed off the fact that his false

information caused America to start a war in which over 700 Americans

have died. To him, that is okay because he described himself as a

``hero in error.'' Hero in error? Here is a man who took $40 million of

taxpayers' money, gave us apparently willfully, according to Colin

Powell, Colin Powell says willfully deceptive information, and started

a war in which 700 Americans have died, in which thousands have been

terribly wounded; and he describes himself as a hero. Well, he is no

kind of hero in this Chamber or in my district or any district in this

country.

But he, apparently, is still on some kind of a little bit of a

working relationship with the Bush administration. How do I know that?

Well, we have paid the man $40 million, and I have not heard the

President of the United States say ``give the taxpayers that money

back.'' I have not heard the President of the United States say, ``Mr.

Ashcroft, go get that $40 million back; this man started a war, gave me

false information.'' Still, with apparently now, or maybe people around

him cooperating with the Iranians and breaking our security

information, I have not heard the President say to go get that $40

million back.

What I have heard the President say, and what this administration has

done, although the President says it was not with his approval, but he

said, and there is a certain irony here, in the speech where the

President of the United States had Mr. Chalabi sitting up in back of

the First Lady, up there in the second row, at that very same speech

where the President gave the American people the falsehood that Iraq

was buying uranium from an African country, we now find out that was

false. And we know it is false, because Ambassador Joe Wilson, who

worked for the first President Bush, blew the whistle on that falsehood

and indicated that that was not true. And what was the response of the

administration? They blew the CIA cover of Joe Wilson's wife in an

attempt to destroy her career with the CIA.

So here you have a situation where this administration has squandered

$40 million of taxpayers' money and has not lifted a finger to get it

back, even though that created a fraud which started a war, which

destroyed the career of the person who told the truth about the

falsehood that Mr. Chalabi got the President to tell the American

people.

This is kind of an Alice in Wonderland moment, it seems to me, where

the truth-tellers are punished, and the President still says go ahead

and keep your money, I guess, that we gave to Mr. Chalabi. Something is

wrong with this picture.

This administration has failed to come to grips with the multiple

mistakes it has made in Iraq. And until it faces the music and admits

the multiple mistakes it has made, we will continue to make them.

If the gentleman would yield, I want to address why and

how that happened. This incompetence, as the gentleman describes it,

Mr. Speaker, was institutionalized. It was set up to be incompetent.

What happened here was the CIA had good reason not to trust the

information they were getting from Mr. Chalabi, and they kept telling

the White House that. But the people in this administration, if they

have a belief, it must be right, and it really does not matter what the

evidence is. So what they did was, Mr. Rumsfeld set up his own

intelligence agency, heretofore never in existence in the Pentagon; and

it was their special little intelligence shop which they staffed with

the people who worked for the neocons, who were basically going to tell

the neocons whatever they wanted to hear.

So when the CIA was telling them and the Air Force, for instance when

the Air Force told them these aluminum tubes the President told us

about were used to build a nuclear weapon, I think it was the Air Force

told him, or the CIA, one of the agencies, I have forgotten which one

now, they said that is not accurate. So they just went to the little

Pentagon fiefdom of the neocons and said, sure it is. They got their

yes men and made their yes men in control of America's foreign policy,

and this has led to the loss of 700 American lives as a result.

Now what has this President done to bring accountability to that

system? Has he changed the director of this Pentagon intelligence

agency? No. Has he disbanded it? No. Has he taken away the washroom

privileges of anyone in the Pentagon? No. Has he canned the Secretary

of State? No. Has he changed the Director of the CIA? No.

The only thing he has done or his administration has done is to break

the security secrecy of the identity of a CIA agent in order to punish

the one man who told the truth about the falsehoods that the President

gave the American people. That is the only person that has lost their

job associated with this, except General Shinseki who also told the

truth about needing several hundred thousand American troops to provide

security in Iraq.

We are seeing that the first step to a successful Iraq policy is to

admit the mistakes of the past, clean house and get some new, fresh

ideas in Iraq. Clinging to these folks and these agencies which have

been so wrong on Iraq so many times is not going to allow us to be

successful in Iraq, is not going to allow us to bring our troops home

in a reasonable period of time.

We are asking the President to finally demand some accountability;

and if this Chalabi scandal does not wake up the President to this

need, it is hard to imagine what will.

Mr. Speaker, I think responsibility is the right word,

and I think what has been so stunning to us is the failure of the

President to hold people and agencies responsible for their multiple

foul-ups. This is not the way to run a railroad or a war, and other

Presidents in other difficult circumstances have had the gumption and

leadership to hold people accountable.

I had the honor of joining my dad, a World War II vet, at the

dedication of the World War II Memorial this weekend. We were very

proud of many people, including my father, at the dedication.

The memorial is a very moving place, and I encourage people to visit

it. It is a very moving place. They have 4,000 stars representing our

losses in World War II, and framing that wall of stars are two pillars,

both of which have quotes from President Harry Truman.

I was talking to my dad, and he reminded me that Harry Truman did

something. He held somebody who was very popular at the time

accountable. He fired General MacArthur. It was an extremely

controversial thing for the President to do. But he recognized in war

you have to have accountability and responsibility.

There is nobody in this administration as popular as General

MacArthur. I can guarantee the President that. And if President Bush

had half the gumption of President Truman, he would fire some of these

people tomorrow to send a message that we are not going to tolerate

this incompetence anymore, and we are going to send a message to the

world that we are going to be accountable to it as well.

If the gentleman will yield, I want to just kind of recap

some of the things we have talked about as to why we are so adamant

that this administration change and improve its policies in Iraq. We

have talked about some things tonight, but I want to talk about the 10

significant failures of this administration. I just want to recap them

quickly as to why we feel so strongly, why we have been here every

week. I want to list them quickly.

Failure number one: the President told us, ``Simply stated, there is

no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction.''

That and his other statements, many others, were false. Failure number

one.

Failure number two: they told us that they had clear and convincing

evidence of the connection between Saddam Hussein and the attack, the

heinous attack on us on September 11. Those statements were false.

Failure number two.

Failure number three: they told us we would be greeted as liberators,

with rose petals at our feet. Mr. Chalabi would be the Spartacus of

Iraq. That statement was false.

Failure number four: they ignored clear evidence and clear advice

from

General Shinseki and many others that we would need several-fold the

number of troops that they gave to this effort in order to secure Iraq,

and they ignored this clear advice. Why? Because they wanted to fight

this war on the cheap so they would not have to pay for it. Well, we

have suffered from their effort to fight a war on the cheap with a lot

of dead good American people in Iraq.

Failure number five: they refused to involve the United Nations until

maybe 2 weeks ago, when they finally went back on their knees to the

U.N.

Failure number six: they refused to have elections.

Failure number seven: they had no command and control system on the

prisoner camps.

Failure number eight: no armor.

Failure number nine: no plan to pay for this war.

Failure number ten: they gave $40 million of taxpayer money to a con

man that got us into this war.

These are 10 failures, and they demand accountability from people in

this administration.