Mr. Speaker, is the gentleman from Washington (Mr.

Inslee) aware of how Mr. Chalabi allegedly got the information that he

allegedly shared with the Iranians?

It is my understanding that the fact that the Iranians

have an intelligence code in order for them to communicate secretly

amongst themselves, that that code was broken by America, and we were

able to know exactly what the Iranians were doing in Iraq with their

agents in Iraq, and that that is the information that Mr. Chalabi

allegedly gave to Iran, which is your code has been broken.

The question is, how did Chalabi know? Well, he is under

investigation and members of the Bush administration are being

investigated because somebody had to tell Chalabi that the Americans

have broken the Iranian code.

Do not forget that the President sat Mr. Chalabi right

behind Mrs. Bush in this year's State of the Union address, right up

there in that balcony 4 1/2 months ago. There he sat in all his

double-chinned glory, Ahmad Chalabi, directly behind the First Lady of

the United States in the seat of honor 4 1/2 months ago.

Mr. Speaker, I admire the fervor that my colleague from

Washington has for pointing out the truth about the failings of

Chalabi; but the point he just made is a lot more important, frankly,

than the fun we are having piling on a guy like Chalabi, who is clearly

a fraud, clearly a spinmeister, the kind of guy that my grandfather

would have called a floor flusher. To meet Chalabi, as I did once, is

to understand that the guy is just full of hot air.

But the question that my colleague poses to us tonight and to the

Congress is, why did other people in the administrations not figure

this out? And why are those who made mistakes not being held

accountable for those mistakes? Because it would be a great injustice

if we were to allow anybody watching tonight to get the impression that

the problems of our policies in Iraq were solely the fault of Chalabi

giving us bad information. He did give us bad information; and I

believe, as Colin Powell believes, that it was willfully done, and he

ripped us off for $40 million. And the passion of the gentleman from

Washington on the subject is admirable, but the fact of the matter is,

why did so many people in the administration believe what Chalabi had

to say?

It seems to me that he was telling them what they wanted to hear, and

they did not listen to his information and apply a critical eye to it.

I know that the CIA has been skeptical of Chalabi for years. I know the

State Department has been skeptical of Chalabi for years. But the

civilian leadership of the Pentagon, Mr. Rumsfeld, Mr. Wolfowitz, Mr.

Feith, along with the support of the Vice President, Mr. Cheney, bought

Chalabi's lies hook, line, and sinker. It is because he was telling

them, in my judgment, what they wanted to hear.

They honestly believed that we would be treated as liberators and not

occupiers, and they made one policy mistake after another that has led

us to where we are today after a year.

Oh, it absolutely does.

But, Mr. Speaker, I must tell my colleague that not

everybody was being conned. The CIA saw through Chalabi, the State

Department saw through Chalabi, and yet the civilian leadership of the

Pentagon did not.

Mr. Speaker, it is not just that mistakes were made by

American policymakers, and it is not just that Chalabi gave us bad

information. The other part of the equation is that the ideologues in

the civilian leadership, in the Pentagon and in the White House

simplified, distorted, took information and twisted it in such a way as

to persuade the Congress and the American people that Saddam Hussein

had weapons of mass destruction and that we needed to invade to keep

that part of the world and this country safe from attack.

Let us not forget the fact that the intelligence information being

given to the White House in the fall of 2002, the Defense Intelligence

Agency report of September, 2002, the National Intelligence Estimate of

October, 2002, was not available to the three of us at that time when

we had to vote but was made available to us 6 or 7 months later. Those

intelligence reports given to the White House were replete with

uncertainty and caveats about the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

Now, they were wrong apparently to even think they might have been

there, although we do know Saddam Hussein had them in the 1980s. They

were wrong to conclude that he probably had them, but the reports were

saying we think he has these weapons of mass destruction. He probably

has them. We have been told he has them.

None of that uncertainty was passed on to the Congress in public

statements or private briefings that we all attended, or to the

American people in the fall of 2002 when we were asked to vote on the

war authority. We were told with complete certainty that Saddam Hussein

had weapons of mass destruction and we had to go get them.

In fact, the one member of the administration who had the most

credibility in my opinion, Colin Powell, repeated this didactic

approach, these statements with complete certainty, 4 or 5 months later

in February or March of 2003 when he spoke to the U.N. He identified

where the weapons were. He showed us pictures. He told us how much they

weighed. He has 500 pounds over here; he has such and such over there.

They talked about those two mobile chemical labs on flatbed trucks.

Colin Powell assured the United Nations and all of the world that these

things existed. They did not.

The intelligence they were basing these statements on was full of

uncertainties. They deceived us. They led us to war with deceptions,

and we have to hold them accountable for that. It is not just the

mistakes. It is not just Chalabi's lies. It is the fact that some in

the Bush administration were willing to twist that information, and

this

goes to the President himself, to get us to go to war.

Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield further, let me

just add to the gentleman's wise comments.

We are at risk of losing in Iraq if we do not get security in that

country. We all share the President's goals of creating a stable and

peaceful Iraq with a representative self-government, hopefully a

flourishing democracy. We all share that goal. But we cannot achieve

that goal or any of the benchmarks without security. We cannot

reconstruct that country without security, we cannot have a meaningful

transfer of sovereignty on June 30 or any other day without security,

and we certainly cannot have elections there without security. So we

have not accomplished the fundamental task of this occupation.

The President keeps saying, well, we are going to turn things over

June 30

and get out. Well, the military occupation is not ending, and it cannot

end because the country is not secure, and it is not able to secure

itself.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. I agree with the

gentleman that we have probably heard too many slogans and that slogans

do not really help resolve complicated problems. But I would say to the

gentleman that we need to get more troops in Iraq, preferably

international troops, so we can get security. That is essential. Then

we can get elections and get an Iraqi government freely elected in

charge so America can get out.