Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to apologize

for showing up late. I was detained, but I am glad you have been here

spreading the truth and letting the American people know the situation.

I am struck by the fact that right up there in the balcony during the

President's address to this great body with all of the Representatives

and Senators and the Supreme Court members and members of the

diplomatic corps present, that Mr. Chalabi, who now has been disgraced,

was seated right up there near the First Lady in an honored position as

a guest of the President right here in the Chamber of the House of

Representatives.

And we now know, sadly, that not only is he largely responsible for

much of the misinformation that was used to take us into this war, and

the gentleman is right, it is costing us from our national resources,

from our national treasury, but what eats at me is the fact that more

than 800 precious American lives have been lost in this war. We went

into this war based on bad information received from Mr. Chalabi, this

friend of the Vice President, a man who was getting hundreds of

thousands of dollars from this government while he was betraying us,

quite frankly, betraying us.

It hurts me to look up there at that seat in the balcony of this

Chamber and know that at one time he was seated up there and he

received the applause of this body as the guest of the President at the

same time he was deceiving us, taking our resources and ultimately

giving information to our enemies. This is a disaster. I think it is a

disgrace, and I hope it is thoroughly investigated and we get to the

bottom of those who are responsible.

It is about time that members of this administration took

responsibility for what they have done, took responsibility, and I look

forward to further discussion as the American people become

increasingly aware of what has happened.

Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, part of the

problem is we took the advice of Chalabi. It was because of information

that he had given, apparently to the Vice President, that we decided we

could go into Iraq with less force than we actually needed to bring

stability to that country; and the result is well over 800 precious

American lives have been lost, and more are being lost every day; and

thousands of Americans have been terribly wounded and are being wounded

every day.

We are going to have this handover, and the President boasts that

that is a very large milestone in the history of this country. The fact

is, the American soldier is going to be there, the American soldier is

going to have a target on his or her back, and we are going to continue

to lose soldiers and to have soldiers wounded.

Now, the President tries to set this up as a two-choice dichotomy. He

says, stay the course, and those who question his policies want to cut

and run. I do not hear anyone saying they want to cut and run. But

neither do we want to stay the course, as the President has laid it

out. We want to change the course. We want to internationalize and

Iraqitize this situation. We want to give other countries some of the

responsibility, have them carry part of the burden.

The fact is that I am tired of slogans when it comes to this war. I

have talked to too many loved ones who have their sons or daughters or

husbands over there fighting this war. I met with a number of them just

yesterday, and they are terribly concerned, as they ought to be, and

they are wondering what is going on, how long will my loved one be

there, and are they being protected as much as possible while they are

there.

I would just remind my colleagues that we continue to have troops

over there driving around in un-armored Humvees. We finally convinced

the other side of the aisle that we needed to put more money into that

project, but soldiers are still being needlessly wounded, and, in some

tragic cases, losing their lives, in part because we are not giving

them the proper equipment.

Part of it is we were told there would be rose petals, they were

going to welcome us as liberators; and much of it was based on the

information that came from this Chalabi, a man who we now know was not

our friend, in fact, was giving information to our enemies.

That is the sad truth. We cannot run from that truth. The

administration needs to face up to the facts that they used bad

information, they made bad decisions, and, as a result, we find

ourselves in this quagmire; and we need to change course and move in a

different direction.