Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, the

answer would be, as has been enunciated in a series called The Spoils

of War on Marketplace. Members may be familiar with the program

Marketplace. It is on the radio and follows the National Public Radio

news, All Things Considered, the afternoon edition of it. There is a

business broadcast called Marketplace which reviews the market

decisions, the business activities of the country, and in their series

entitled The Spoils of War, Members will find that the money which

otherwise might have been spent, according to the contract that your

company represents, to provide armor for the Humvees is now going out

at the rate of tens of millions of dollars a week, perhaps a month, in

graft and corruption through the Bank of Iraq, with nothing in the way

of any kind of accountability under the Provisional Authority, Mr.

Bremer's Provisional Authority.

This is being done today. They are done with DGs, or director

generals, of the various Iraqi ministries. They are the equivalent of

under secretaries. They go into the bank and walk out with cardboard

boxes full of cash. Corruption is in the hands of clerks who simply

rubber-stamp the action, and the American companies that are over there

taking the money are paying bribes, are involved in mass corruption,

and this is where the money is going. This is what the Provisional

Authority is involved in. This is what is happening.

We cannot respond to you and your constituents in Ohio and those

people in Ohio who are capable of providing armor for our troops

because we have to make sure that those who say they were on our side,

those who say they were the sources of Iraqi information and

intelligence and upon whom we could rely are the very ones who are

involved up to their eyeballs in corruption and graft in Iraq and

Baghdad itself to the detriment of our own troops' capacity to be able

to defend themselves.

In that context, I can tell Members as someone who

was part of the first group to go into Iraq right after the initial

attack on Baghdad, going from the Baghdad airport to Saddam Hussein's

palace where Mr. Bremer was being installed and displacing General

Garner, and we were there the day after he had taken control there, we

said to him at that time, you can have all of the equipment in the

world, but as I said to him, Mr. Ambassador, driving from the Baghdad

airport to Baghdad itself and to this palace that we now occupy, you

are going to have to have 10,000 soldiers who guard that highway. I do

not care what kind of equipment and armor you have, you do not arm a

Humvee and then send somebody out to play lottery with their lives. No

matter what the equipment is, when you only have a strip of tar coming

across the desert, no lights, no protection, nothing, I said it is

going to take 10,000 soldiers.

The plain fact of the matter is when General Shinseki, who had

responsibility for the well-being of his soldiers, indicated as chief

of the Army that it would take hundreds of thousands of soldiers,

hundreds of thousands of Army and Marine personnel and support in order

to initiate and sustain such an attack and deal with the aftermath, he

was entirely correct. We need not just more equipment, we need a

political policy that provides a foundation to bring this to a

resolution.

And in order to accomplish that, we have to have sufficient personnel

unto the date, and the Secretary of Defense and the President

consistently have denied this to our people in the field and indicated

to me shamefully all along if they wanted more, all they have to do is

ask. We know what the message is. The message is they are not here;

they cannot be there. And why? I will tell the Members. Because many

members of our committee, Republican and Democrat alike, and when I say

our committee, the Committee on Armed Services, have tried for several

years now to increase the number of people in the Army and the Marine

Corps, that is to say that can be recruited and retained as active-duty

forces. It is called end strength. What is the end strength? The end of

the numbers that we have in the Armed Forces. We said, absent a

significant increase in the number of Army troops and Marines

available, we inevitably would have to call on Guard and Reserve.

I beg to differ with the gentleman's remarks and the gentlewoman's

remarks in one sense only, the phrase ``our young men and women.'' Let

me tell my colleagues something. Tune into the NewsHour with Jim Lehrer

every night on PBS, and respectfully and with dignity they close every

program in silence with the pictures and short biographies of the

people who have been killed, and chills run down my arm as I reach out

to say it, and we see over and over again sergeant so and so, 43 years

old; master sergeant somebody, 50-something years old; 38 years old.

These are teachers. These are police officers. These are fire fighters.

These are Guard and Reservists. They are not young men and women. Not

that being young in itself makes one a candidate for these pictures,

but that is who we tend to think of. This is a volunteer force, and the

Guard and Reverses are volunteers, and they are being shamelessly

exploited in this sense. We now have a draft in this country. We have a

draft by default because the Guard and Reserve are being pulled into

active-duty service and their terms of enlistment are being extended

arbitrarily by the Department of Defense.

Therefore, I conclude, and thank the gentleman for yielding, by

saying, yes, we have to provide the equipment; but we have to provide

the people and the policy behind it that will allow us to resolve this

issue.

Mr. Speaker, would the gentlewoman agree then that

that is a draft by default?

If the gentleman will yield a moment on that, I just

want to ask a question at this point: Would the gentleman agree then

that the President of the United States is all for free trade, unless

it happens to be with oil, and in that instance then he seems to have

no problem at all with a cartel being able to decide how much it is

going to produce, when it is going to produce it and how much it is

going to charge for it?

Would the gentleman agree that when it comes to free trade, that is a

foreign term to the President, that is a foreign term to the free trade

people in this country, who want us to be able to send our jobs

overseas, want free trade and the free circulation of international

funds for the purpose of that trade, except when it comes to oil and

the oil cartels?

I yield to the gentleman the point that

international robbery from pharmaceutical companies is right up there

next to, if not parallel exactly, with the oil cartels.

Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, the

gentlewoman from Texas made a very, very strong point of the necessity,

I believe I am quoting her correctly, that we have to find a way. We

have to find a way to get this message out. We have to find a way to

get our message, we have to find a way to engage the American people in

a discussion and a dialogue. That is what we are trying to do here.

To the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Strickland), if you would indulge me

for a moment in yielding, I think it might be apropos that we do take

upon

ourselves the admonition of the gentlewoman from Texas. We have to find

a way.

This is our way. Not everyone may understand what it is. They may be

going up and down the television and see what is going on. This is

called Special Orders. Special Orders means the regular business of the

House, that is to say the scheduled business of the House, is completed

for the day. This is our opportunity as Representatives, this is the

opportunity of the 435 of us, who have had the faith and trust of our

constituents placed in us, to come to the floor and engage in a

dialogue not just with ourselves, but with the American people. Because

part of the difficulty has been is the American people are watching

this on television, or reading it in the newspaper, participating, if

you will, at a distance, as to what is taking place, unless and until,

of course, it hits you full force because a loved one has been hurt or

harmed or killed, or someone that you know has had that experience. So

it happens sporadically, and, from the point of view of the cosmos,

indifferently around the country at various times.

So we are here on the floor, and I might say to those tuning in, we

are here on the floor of the House of Representatives, surrounded by

the galleries. In fact, our good friend the gentleman from Illinois

(Mr. Costello), the distinguished gentleman from Illinois has a group

of his constituents in this gallery right now observing our

proceedings.

He is explaining to them as we are speaking now what it is we are

doing on the floor here. It does not matter that the Chamber is not

filled right now.

We spent our time this afternoon naming post offices. I was happy to

do it. A good friend of mine had one of the post offices named after

him. I was pleased to cast my vote for it. A wonderful opportunity to

show our expression of what we would say in Hawaii is ``aloha'' for our

good friend and others. We were happy to do that.

But our business here in these Special Orders is to engage the

American people as best we can with that which we have before us. And

as the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. Costello) now is talking with his

constituents here in the gallery, this is the freedom granted to us by

the Constitution that we need to take advantage of, that we were

obligated to take advantage of.

So the regret to me is, as the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. Costello)

no doubt has pointed out, right behind me here is the press gallery.

Empty. Night after night empty. Now, maybe they can say, well, they are

watching on television, if they care to.

But who wants to pay attention to Special Orders? Well, I will tell

my colleagues what happens in Special Orders. Not just this kind of

discussion, but my good friend, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr.

Smith), night after night engaged in a conversation on the Social

Security trust fund, what it takes to make the Social Security trust

fund.

In fact, he just walked in right now. That is synchronicity. I did

not know he was coming. Did my colleague happen to hear what I had to

say? I do not know whether the cameras are on us or not. But the

gentleman from Michigan (Mr. Smith) has just come in.

I cite him as an example, as a prime example of someone who has

faithfully come to the floor to explain his position on the Social

Security trust fund, the implications of it for our country. That is

the kind of thing that needs to be done. That is what this is about.

This Iraq Watch that we have faithfully committed ourselves to since

the beginning of our concern that this war was going off on the wrong

track, that this was taking place, that is why we are here. That is why

I appreciate the gentleman yielding. I appreciate the fact that our

good friend, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. Costello), and his

constituents have observed us this evening, have seen democracy in

action.

I am here to tell you as far as this gentleman is concerned, that I

am going to take advantage of this opportunity that we have here on the

floor and continue to exchange in the kind of dialogue that I hope will

illuminate the issues of our day so that we can get a resolution on

behalf of these brave men and women who are serving our country.