Mr. Speaker, let me just say that I wish

there could be the kind of sunlight that our distinguished friend, the

gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. Abercrombie) has

said. Sadly, it is impacting your constituents and your company, but

let me say what it really means to the American people.

He is asking the real question who is in control? Who is providing

the firewall to ensure that the young men and women who have committed

themselves to putting themselves on the front lines, for whatever the

cause. We know there are young men and women on the front lines. Might

I say there are also civilians who are there, and some of them are

hostages. Today one of my companies announced that three of their

employees were found dead. We know there are hostages still held. We

want to offer our prayers for those families, and the military families

as well; but who is in charge?

Before we went off on break, I went to Walter Reed Hospital and saw

the results of unreinforced Humvees and saw the results of the misuse

of dollars in as much as rather than having the resources to ensure

that land mines or the explosive devices are not utilized against our

troops because maybe they are shorthanded, we are in the crux of

confusion with not enough resources to be able to restore Humvees.

Soldiers that I visited showed me limbs that were lost. When I was in

Iraq, they showed me that they were reinforcing them with sandbags. One

soldier said that he did not get hurt as badly as he might have because

they had used sandbags.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman

from Ohio's remarks, and of course the gentleman from Hawaii has made a

very pointed statement. I guess my optimism is that all of them are

young men and women with futures before them, and I recognize that we

embrace that population of youth, which ranges from the early teens or

the late teens all the way up to the ages that the gentleman has cited,

each and everyone of them have committed themselves to going forward to

provide the kind of protection for this country and to uphold their

oath.

I guess I rise today to follow up on several points that remain. But

in particular I just want to take a very quiet moment to acknowledge

that this Nation is not filled with wimps. There is no one that would

step aside when the Nation's, if the Members will, dignity and

honor need to be defended. None of us would run away from defending a

Nation that had been attacked. None of us would go against the efforts

to fight the war on terrorism. In fact, we have been united in the war

on terrorism. This Nation has rallied in World War II, in the Korean

War. We even rallied in the Vietnam War. We asked hard questions. It

was controversial, but we were united. But we understood that we needed

to learn a lesson from Vietnam. We were united, even though there were

political differences, ultimately in the Gulf War, and it was one of

the largest collaborations that we have seen around the world.

What I really struggle with here in these days of the Iraq war are

several points, and the gentleman has made them. But, first of all, I

have struggled with the direct and pronounced and distinct

misrepresentations to the American people. We have yet to find weapons

of mass destruction, nor can we find the connection to 9/11.

And then my good friend from Hawaii has said it very clearly. We have

young soldiers there. In the headlines in The Washington Post,

``Disappointed troops face extended tour with the need to get over

it.'' Part of their extended tour is the very fact of what the

distinguished gentleman has said, not enough troops; and so therefore

we are keeping those who are bruised and battered and torn and worn;

yet their spirits are responding to our call. But we are keeping people

over there who have, in fact, done their service. And this particular

battalion is now going to have to stay an extra 4 months.

Mr. Speaker, that is a draft by default. He

made an excellent point. And in the shadow of the draft by default is

the constant dying of these soldiers for lack of equipment, for lack of

a plan. For there are many of us on this floor that have agreed with

the war resolution and disagreed with the war resolution.

I have been to Iraq. Most of us or many of us have been to Iraq. And

what we all agree with is that there must be a plan to follow through

either on an exit or for the maintenance and reconciliation of peace.

My good, distinguished friend has already said there is corruption

there, that money is flowing in and out that cannot be accounted for.

And so the safety of Fallujah is not the only question we have in mind.

It is the question of what is the plan. What is the plan to understand

the people in Fallujah and to understand, once the governing council

makes a deal, whether or not the citizens of Fallujah are going to

adhere to it? It is to understand that we cannot put different groups

in a battalion of Iraqis, Shiites, and Sunnis and others, and then ask

the question when they go into battle why they dispersed and either go

in alliance with those who are fighting our troops. Because this

administration does not have a plan. And because they do not have a

plan, in the city, in the metropolitan area of Houston over this last

weekend, we lost 11 individuals in that area, 11 loved ones, 11

personnel in that area, 11 families mourning.

So this is not a question now of politics as much as it is what is

the future of this war. What is the recognition by this administration

that people are dying and that they are not in any way objecting to

dying for a cause, but the question is can the administration in good

faith suggest there is a cause, suggest that we have a plan, suggest

that we have a solution to be victorious.

And let me just say this: the gentleman had it right, and the

headline reads in The Washington Post, which is taken from the Woodward

book, ``Cheney was unwavering in desire to go to war.''

Let me just say this: my understanding is that we have three branches

of government, the judiciary, the executive, and the legislature. I

have never been told that a declaration of war, decision to war, is

that of one person, be that person the Vice President of the United

States or maybe even one Member of Congress, who has the right to send

this Nation into war. So I am at a loss as to the power of the Vice

President to singularly take the United States into battle. He has no

solution now. I do not know whether Mr. Wolfowitz has a solution.

Certainly Mr. Rumsfeld, who indicated a couple of weeks ago he was

surprised with the response, and this happens to be the Secretary of

Defense who is over our United States military, he is telling us he is

surprised, while mothers' children are dying or fathers' children are

dying. What an outrage.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for

yielding.

Mr. Speaker, this is overwhelming in terms of the mounting evidence

that we have seen presented over the last couple of days and weeks that

goes to the point that I made, that the decision to go to war was

somewhere outside of the constitutional parameters that we should

adhere to.

Frankly, we were misrepresented to in terms of making a decision on

this floor, and then we have come to find out that maybe even in the

executive branch, the appropriate officials were not given at least the

opportunity to give and take, and that this was in fact the singular

decision of at least one individual, and then maybe two or three

others. So we have a real problem.

If I might, as I close, say this: I am going to apologize to the

American people. We know that the 9/11 Commission hearings were held

over the last 10 days, and a number of administration officials came

forward.

I guess I come from the old-fashioned home training. My parents and

grandparents always said that there is some dignity in an apology. It

does not in any way suggest that you are weak, that you have no

strength. In fact, it is all about character, that you can acknowledge

that you have made a misstep or mistake. Then you begin to gather

around so that you can embrace ways of improving your good condition.

When I see those men and women of all ages in the military hospitals

losing limbs, multiple limbs, quadriplegic, blinded in both eyes, heads

dented in from wounds, I wonder what I can say to their children,

looking for them to come and play Little League or football, their

wives, their mothers and fathers.

So I just want to come to the floor this evening and join my

colleagues, but I want it to be known that I apologize on behalf of

this country and am shamed by the fact that officials went before the

9/11 Commission, and I know that the two are distinct in some sense, 9/

11, of course, referring to the tragedy of 9/11 in New York and in

Pennsylvania and in Washington. But it was overlapping, that as the 9/

11 was used for us to go into Iraq, and we lost those precious lives

and we should have been committed to a vast war against terrorism,

bringing in all the allies that we could muster, so that we would be

able to stomp out the devastation of terrorism. Yet we got distracted,

and now we have men and women dying in Iraq, and we are at a loss to

find out what the cause is.

We are hearing that there is infiltration of corruption with dollars

that we have sent over there. We are understanding that no matter if

you are in a convey of civilians, even the civilians are not safe.

Family members who have sent civilians over just to get an honest day's

earnings for an honest day's work are in jeopardy of their lives. Even

our corporations who are working over there with their personnel are

jeopardized because they are not getting a fair shake to be able to do

the work they were supposed to do and as well to have their personnel

protected.

So, I would just say to my colleagues, I want to thank the gentleman

from Ohio (Mr. Strickland), first of all, for giving me this time to

join him and to join the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. Abercrombie), and

be able to say that together in this Congress we have got to find a way

to restore the constitutional parameters and to restore the authority

of the United States Congress to ask the hard questions; to support the

United States military, as we have done collectively, to provide the

resources; to ask the President why, and to expect, I might say, an

apology, which does not in any way diminish the Commander-in-Chief's

role of leading the troops; but to be able to say that with all that

has come out, I know we have made some missteps, and I apologize to

those who have lost their lives, their family members, bereaved members

who now have to be left alone.

There is one final point I want to make, and maybe the gentleman did

not hear it, but I want to get the transcript so I am not misstating,

because I thought I heard in the press conference some words about ``I

am disappointed in some of the performances of the troops.'' I am still

trying to research that, the President's press conference. I was

shocked that I might have heard those words. I cannot imagine how can

you can be disappointed in some of those performances when they do not

have all of the equipment they needed to have.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to end on one note and make it very clear, I

am apologizing, and I am not ashamed of doing so. I believe that this

Congress needs to stand up and take responsibility for how we are going

to gain dignity by responding, if you will, to the needs of the United

States military in the crisis that they are in in Iraq and provide them

the necessary equipment and plan for them to be able to exit in dignity

and to have the success of the rebuild of Iraq with an expanded

coalition, what we should be engaged in at this time.