Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight, and I will be joined

later by some of my colleagues, to talk about Iraq and what is

happening in Iraq. This is an effort that we began literally several

months ago, myself and some of my colleagues, coming here to the floor

to talk about the policies that we are pursuing in Iraq and trying to

point out some of the concerns that we have.

I would just begin our Iraq Watch tonight by sharing an editorial

from the Columbus Dispatch, which is the capital city newspaper in

Ohio. The Columbus Dispatch has been publishing since 1871. They ran an

editorial this past Saturday in observance of the anniversary of

September 11. I see my friend, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr.

Delahunt), has joined me. Before I yield to him, I would just like to

share some thoughts from the Columbus Dispatch because I think they are

very relevant to our discussions here regarding Iraq.

The editorial is entitled, ``Remember Everything.'' It begins this

way: ``Three years ago, 3,000 people were murdered in coordinated

terrorist attacks in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania.

Yet, the man who orchestrated those atrocities remains free. For what

he did, Osama bin Laden should be dead or in U.S. custody. No evidence

suggests that he is dead, and he is not in custody. Because he remains

free, extraordinary security precautions surround today's Ohio State

football game.'' And, as I said, this is an editorial that appeared

last Saturday when Ohio State was playing Marshall University.

So the editorial says: ``These security precautions will surround

today's Ohio State football game, considered a terrorist target because

100,000 spectators will be gathered in the heart of a State that is key

to the Presidential election.''

The editorial continues: ``Because bin Laden is at liberty, election

and law enforcement officials nationwide are busy planning extra

security at polling places on November 2. Because bin Laden has not

been captured, the Nation's Capital and national monuments, including

the Statue of Liberty, have been militarized and fortified. The Bush

administration can claim that bin Laden and his cohorts are on

the run, but bin Laden and his cohorts plausibly can claim the

opposite. All bin Laden has to do is point to the armed men and

surveillance helicopters around Ohio Stadium.''

How did the destruction of bin Laden slip so far down the Nation's

to-do list, the Columbus Dispatch asks? Why are the bulk of U.S.

military and intelligence assets tied up in Iraq, which pose only a

hypothetical threat, while pursuit of the man who slaughtered thousands

of Americans on their own soil is on the back burner? Where is the

anger, asks the Columbus Dispatch? Where is the anger?

The September 11 victims were not killed by a natural disaster, such

as a hurricane, which cannot be brought to justice and against which

rage is futile. They were killed by a man. A man can be made to pay a

price. Why has he not paid?

The Columbus Dispatch continues in their editorial. This is the

question that President Bush should be answering today and tomorrow and

every day until November 2. And the Columbus Dispatch asks, where is

Senator John Kerry, who loudly proclaims his determination to strike

back at any attack on the United States? The attack has occurred. Where

is his pledge to make apprehension of bin Laden dead or alive job

number one?

The Dispatch continues. Would bin Laden's death eliminate terrorism?

Well, of course not. Quick victory over this kind of nihilism and

barbarism is impossible, but every day that bin Laden remains free is a

defeat for justice and for civilization. His continued existence, his

ability to poison a seemingly impotent world, incites and encourages

his followers and imitators.

Now, this is what we have heard from the heartland of America, from

Columbus, Ohio, from the Columbus Dispatch newspaper, and I would just

point out that the President told us, Mr. Speaker, at one time soon

after the September 11 attacks, when bin Laden had been identified as

the person responsible for attacking our country, the President told us

he can run but he cannot hide. But the fact is that he ran, and thus

far he has hidden successfully, and somewhere on God's Earth tonight

bin Laden is planning the next attack upon our country.

Tonight, now, I ask my colleagues in this Chamber, why did we divert

our attention from Afghanistan and from Osama bin Laden and focus on

Iraq? At the Republican National Convention in New York, they talked a

lot about September 11. The President gave a 63-minute speech and never

once did he mention Osama bin Laden. Never once did the President

mention the man who is responsible for attacking our country and who

today, tonight, is free planning the next attack. I think the American

people deserve an answer to that.

Why, after all of the resources that we have spent, some $200

billion, the over 1,000 lives that have been lost, the nearly 7,000

soldiers that have been wounded, why do we not know where bin Laden is

and why have we not captured him and why have we diverted our attention

from the effort to find this man? He is the enemy of America. He is the

one who attacked us, and yet, somehow, his name is not uttered by our

President anymore, and there seems to be no real attention directed

toward bringing him to justice.

Now, the fact is we heard a lot about Saddam Hussein.

It is almost incomprehensible that the person who was

responsible for attacking our country, who has claimed responsibility,

who has boasted in claiming that responsibility is a person who is free

tonight. He ran and he hid, and the President does not even utter his

name. It is as though we have forgotten that the real enemy, the real

architect of the attack upon our country was Osama bin Laden. He has

been referred to as Osama bin Forgotten, and it is quite sad to me that

we have not been able to bring to justice the leading terrorist in this

world.

As we contemplate a possible terror attack on this country, there has

been discussions that it may happen before the election, that it may

happen around the inauguration of the next President. We are not afraid

that that attack is going to be directed and masterminded by Saddam

Hussein. He is in jail. We are concerned about al Qaeda. We are

concerned about the terror network that was established by Osama bin

Laden. We are concerned about Osama bin Laden and his effect.

Just this week we heard from our military leaders in Afghanistan that

they believe Osama bin Laden is actively calling the shots, even today,

and yet, as I repeat, during the Republican Convention in New York,

with all of the discussion of September 11, it was as if the person

responsible for September 11 was unknown. The President did not utter

his name during a 63-minute speech.

This is the man that we should be going after. He is the one

responsible for killing nearly 3,000 of our citizens. He is the one

that is heading up the al Qaeda terror network. He is free tonight

somewhere on this Earth. We do not know for sure, but I want to tell my

colleague I think we would have had this man in custody if we had not

diverted attention and resources and our intelligence apparatus away

from the hunting of Osama bin Laden to Iraq.

Every day, sadly, tragically, we are losing soldiers

in Iraq. It is almost as if it is no longer news when we lose one or

two or three or seven at a time. It is almost as if we have become numb

to that reality. We are up to well over 1,000 now. Senator McCain has

indicated that he thinks we could be in Iraq for 10 to 20 years.

If I can speak to that issue.

The President frequently says we have this coalition;

and it is true that there are a number of countries, for one reason or

another, some of them maybe with very noble reasons, who support us in

our policy there. But the fact is that we have somewhere around

135,000, 135,000 American troops there. The next country with the

largest number of troops is Great Britain; and they have, I believe,

less than 6,500. Most of the other countries have a few hundred troops.

It is the American troops that is the target. We are losing the

lives. We are paying the bill. About $200 billion thus far.

If we paid for it.

If I could reclaim my time, Mr. Speaker, during that

debate on the $87 billion, the vast majority of the people in this

country, according to public opinion polls, felt that we should provide

assistance in the form of a grant, a grant that would be paid back to

our citizens once Iraq was stabilized. And the gentleman is right, the

President said that if we did that that he would veto the bill.

That is right.

Oh, absolutely.

Well, as someone said, it does not make sense for us

to be opening firehouses in Iraq while we are closing firehouses and

laying off firefighters in this country.

But the fact is this $87 billion vote is being used in the most

political way, and there have been accusations that somehow when

Senator Kerry opposed that, that he was opposing body armor for our

troops. I would just like to point out something that I have shared

with my friends here in this Chamber before. The war started in March

of 2003. We did not have that vote on the $87 billion until months

after the war started. Our troops were initially sent into battle

without body armor. And that was a decision made by Secretary Rumsfeld

and ultimately the responsibility of the President as the Commander in

Chief. We sent our troops into battle without body armor.

Now, that is a fact that cannot be disputed. And it took the Pentagon

one full year, from March of 2003 to March of 2004, to provide me with

a letter stating that finally, after a full year, our troops had been

equipped with body armor.

I questioned how many of our troops were unnecessarily injured or

wounded or how many lost their lives simply because this administration

sent them into combat without body armor. That was not a money problem;

it was a planning problem. And the letters that I received from

Secretary Rumsfeld and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General

Myers, verified that it was a supply problem. They did not order that

equipment in a timely manner. Months passed leading up to this war when

those orders could have been placed. That body armor could have been

available at the time the war started, but it took 12 full months for

this administration to make sure that our troops were fully protected

with body armor.

And even tonight, now, Mr. Speaker, we have troops in Iraq driving

around in Humvees that are not armored in a way that will provide them

at least some protection from these roadside bombs that are maiming and

killing so many of our soldiers on a daily basis.

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killing so many of our soldiers on a daily basis.

If the gentleman will allow me to reclaim my time, it

seems, and I think this is verified by the September 11 Commission,

that al Qaeda has gone from being an identifiable group to becoming a

philosophy and an idea and a movement. And the fact is our policies

have spread terror around the world. We now have Taliban/al Qaeda

operatives in Iraq. There is no evidence that they were there before we

invaded that country.

There are now huge cities in Iraq referred to as ``no-go zones,''

where our troops cannot enter those cities. They are under the control

of al Qaeda and Taliban operatives. Huge geographic areas of Iraq that

we liberated, supposedly, are now under the control of terrorists,

terrorists that prior to our invasion of Iraq were not in that country.

We have created a breeding ground for those who hate us.

We may be there 10 years, 20 years, no one knows. How many more

deaths are going to result from these failed policies? We have already

had over a thousand. Ohio lost two soldiers last week, a 19-year-old

man and a 36-year-old man. How many more?

Now we stand here and talk about this. Some may wonder why go over

history, why talk about past failings and past circumstances.

Because the same people who have brought us to where

we are tonight, who have created this debacle that we face in Iraq, the

same people who have made the decisions which have led to this terrible

tragedy and loss of life and horrible injuries, these same people want

to remain in charge of the decision making apparatus of this government.

I think it is fair to ask: What will they do next? They have acted in

the most naive manner. The Vice President and others indicated that we

would be welcomed into Iraq.

Just yesterday we had helicopters that fired on a group of Iraqis

that were celebrating around a dysfunctional piece of U.S. military

equipment. Many of those people laughing and dancing around were

children. They were children. You could see their pictures, they could

not have been more than 10 or 12 years of age. What are we doing in

Iraq, we are creating hatred toward our government. That hatred is

spreading around the world. That does not make us safer.

I believe the President has an obligation to stand up and admit

mistakes, but there is a difference between an irrational pursuit of an

ideology that is failing. What we need are mature leaders that will act

upon a rational basis to secure friends around this world and help us

extricate ourselves from these terrible circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to yield to the gentleman from

Washington (Mr. Inslee) but before I do, I would like to say the

gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. Abercrombie) absolutely spoke the truth when

he said this Nation will make a decision on November 2 regarding

whether or not they want to tolerate the continuation of our current

policy or whether or not they think we should change course.

The President says we either have to stay the course or cut and run.

Well, I think there is a third possibility and that is to change

course. The fact is if there are mothers and dads listening to us

tonight who may feel disconnected from this war, who may feel they have

no part of it, they do not know anyone who is participating in it, they

do not know anyone who has lost a life or been seriously injured, but

if they have a child, they should listen because if this administration

continues its current foreign policy, I believe it will be mandatory

that we impose a military draft. We cannot maintain our personnel

numbers with this current foreign policy without imposing a draft. We

can no longer continue forever to keep our reservists and our national

guardsmen on active status. We cannot withdraw soldiers from all over

this world simply because of what is happening in Iraq. So every

American should be engaged in the same kind of discussion we are having

tonight.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee).

Mr. Speaker, the first death was too many, and every

death that has followed has been too many because for that individual

and that individual's loved ones, it will absolutely be the most

devastating experience they will ever endure.

I do not think we should develop that type of amnesia.

The second amnesia that I think is very dangerous to us is to some

degree the executive branch is developing amnesia about who actually

attacked us, which was al Qaeda. You have talked about this earlier, I

believe. But we cannot have the Commander in Chief leading us in this

war to preserve our security and not identify who the enemy was that

actually attacked us and go a year now without identifying the name of

the person who is Osama bin Laden that the President refuses to even

say. That lack of leadership has infected to some degree our efforts to

track down and cut off al Qaeda.

Let me give you an example in the real world how that is. I found out

a week ago that we have more employees in the Department of Treasury

tracking down American tourists who go to Cuba than we do Treasury

officials trying to cut off the money going to Osama bin Laden. What

kind of prioritization is that? Why have we developed amnesia about how

deadly al Qaeda is?

Another piece of amnesia. We have loose nukes all over the former

Soviet Union, all this fissionable material that we know al Qaeda wants

to get. But we cannot get the cooperation of the executive branch to

put money into the system we have for vacuuming up those loose nukes

and keeping them out of the hands of al Qaeda.

Why has this amnesia happened? It is pretty clear. The executive

branch took their eye off the ball of Osama bin Laden and put it on

Iraq. And this amnesia is a more dangerous situation rather than a less

dangerous one.

Let me just suggest why I think the President has been successful to

some degree in conflating Iraq with what happened on September 11. That

is, that we have all sort of, I think, gone down a little primrose path

calling this the war on terror. I am not sure that is the right

nomenclature for us to use for this reason. It is really important to

realize who your enemy is. Our enemy is a person and a group, not a

tactic. Terror is a tactic. It is not a country, it is not a group, it

is not an individual. It is a tactic. Calling this a war on terror

frankly is a little bit like calling our response to Pearl Harbor a war

on torpedo planes. Torpedo planes were a tactic. They were not the

enemy. We need to call this what it is, a war on al Qaeda and a war on

some fundamentalist Islamic movements that are way out of the

mainstream of Islamic belief in this world and have perverted that

faith and taken advantage of it for their nihilistic ends, and that is

an enemy we need to keep in our sights.