Mr. Speaker, the fact is, at the time he used those

weapons we were cooperating with him. The first Bush administration was

cooperating with him. He was a part of our team, so to speak, because

we felt it was best if Iraq would be able to prevail over Iran at the

time. And then to think that, 10 or 12 years later, there is no

evidence that I know of or that the administration has brought forth to

show that Saddam Hussein used chemical weapons following that incident

some 12 or so years ago. And then to come back after a decade and use

that as an excuse to launch a preemptive war simply does not make

sense.

When Saddam Hussein used these chemical weapons against his own

people, our government was silent. We knew it was happening, and we

were silent. And then for these self-righteous statements to be made a

decade later does not make sense.

Mr. Speaker, if I may just respond, I think many of

us watched the President's interview last Sunday morning with Tim

Russert, and the President continuously called Saddam Hussein a madman.

I have no problem with that. He is a despicable human being. The

President talked about the chemical and biological threat, and he

talked about the fact that he used chemicals on his own people.

What the President failed to say was that he did that in the late

1980s when the President's father was in the Oval Office, when Colin

Powell was a part of the administration, and we did nothing except

block the efforts of Congress to impose sanctions.

My point is all of these years later to come forth and try to use

that argument to convince the American people that we should launch a

preemptive war that to this point has cost over 530 precious American

lives, has resulted in the injury of thousands of our troops, has

consumed about $150 billion of resources, the word ``hypocrisy'' comes

to mind here.

The American people, when we hear that Saddam Hussein used chemical

weapons against his own people, assume that we are talking about

something that happened within the last few months or last few years,

not over 10 years ago. When you tell a half truth or a partial truth,

it gets pretty close to being a lie. I think the American people really

have been manipulated, misled and purposely deceived in the kind of

information that they have been given about why we needed to enter into

this preemptive war.

I think that special envoy is our current Secretary

of Defense.

That is Mr. Donald Rumsfeld, and we have pictures of

Mr. Rumsfeld shaking hands with Saddam Hussein. Back in those days, the

fact that he was a dictator and cruel and vicious to his own people and

used chemical weapons against the Kurds, back in those days it did not

seem to mean a lot, apparently, because we took no action. In fact, the

administration at that time actually blocked, proactively blocked, the

imposition of sanctions.

Tried to, certainly.

Absolutely. If I can just point out something that I

think the observer of this Iraq Watch may be asking, why are these

Members going so far back in history? Why are they regurgitating facts

that happened more than 10 years ago?

I think it is important to point out that the same people that were

responsible then are making decisions now, and the same people who I

think neglected to do the right thing more than 10 years ago are the

people who have advised this President and urged this President to

engage in preemptive war. They are the same individuals who want to

remain in power. We can only guess what their next adventure may be if,

in fact, they are allowed to remain in power. They continue to advise

the President. They continue to justify this preemptive war.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to share something else

which I think many Americans do not fully understand, and I think they

will find it interesting.

There is a story in The Hill newspaper here, which is one of the

Capitol Hill newspapers, about an effort by the gentleman from

California (Mr. Waxman) to get some answers regarding something that

happened in this country following the attack on September 11.

As it turns out, when our country was attacked, there were a number

of Saudi citizens, some of them relatives of Osama bin Laden, in this

country. They were here in this country. As we know, most of those who

flew those airplanes into the Towers and into the Pentagon and those

that were responsible for the plane crash in Pennsylvania were Saudi

citizens. They were not from Iraq or Iran or Syria. They were from

Saudi Arabia. Now this is what gets interesting.

A few days after 9/11, a significant number of those Saudi citizens,

including relatives of Osama bin Laden, were allowed to leave this

country. Apparently, they were allowed to leave this country before

they were ever questioned. Did they know anything about the al Qaeda

terrorism network? Did Osama bin Laden's relatives who were in this

country at the time perhaps know of his whereabouts?

We do not know. The FBI does not know because apparently they did not

bother to ask the question. We are trying to find out from Attorney

General John Ashcroft who made the request that these Saudi citizens be

allowed to leave our country. Who made the decision to allow them to

leave without being questioned? Can you imagine a few days after the

attack upon our country when these pilots were Saudi citizens and we

knew almost certainly that Osama bin Laden was responsible for those

attacks, that members of his family, two members especially, Abdullah

bin laden and Omar bin laden, were allowed to get on an airplane and be

taken out of this country.

He has not responded. If I can just share this with

the gentleman, at a Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee

hearing just last year, Richard Clarke, who has headed the National

Security Council's counterterrorism security group said, and this is a

quote: ``What happened was that shortly after 9/11 when it became clear

that most of the terrorists of 9/11 were Saudis, the Saudi government

feared that there would be retribution and vigilantism in the United

States against the Saudis. That seemed to be a reasonable fear.''

If our government felt that vigilantism and retribution was going to

endanger the lives of these Saudi citizens and Osama's relatives who

were here in this country at the time, why did they not just simply

take them into protective custody, at least until the FBI had an

opportunity to question them? Is it possible that the Saudi citizens

and Osama bin Laden's relatives could have known about the attacks?

Might they have known where Osama bin Laden was located? We will never

know because our government let them leave without first of all

subjecting them to questioning.

I think it is legitimate to ask this question: Were

these Saudis, were these members of Osama bin Laden's family given

special treatment? Why would they have been given special treatment?

Can you imagine how we would have felt, how we would have reacted if

those who piloted those planes into our trade towers had been Iraqi

citizens? Or Syrian citizens? Can you imagine how we would have reacted

if there had been relatives of Iraqis or of Saddam Hussein in this

country after such an attack? Why were the Saudis given such special

treatment? Could it be because of the oil and because of the close

connection between the oil industry and the Saudi government and the

Bush family and the Saudi royal family? I think these are questions

that deserve to be answered.

I think Attorney General Ashcroft should answer questions regarding

who made the request that these citizens be allowed to leave the

country without questioning. I think we should find out for certain

that the FBI had said they had no interest in questioning them. I

cannot imagine the FBI within days of the towers being struck saying we

have no interest in questioning relatives of Osama bin Laden. I just

cannot imagine that that is the case.

I think it is appropriate that we bring this back to

the human price that is being paid for our policies, because Sunday

evening back in my district in southeastern Ohio, I visited a funeral

home, attended the wake of a young soldier who had just returned, a man

leaving a 14-year-old son, a 5-year-old daughter, three sisters, a

mother, and wife. Saturday morning I went to the air base in

Youngstown, Ohio. I met with about 30 soldiers and their families and

their children; and in that early morning hours as the snow was

falling, I saw those soldiers get on that plane, and I saw that plane

take off down that snowy runway and disappear into the heavens. Tonight

those soldiers are in the desert. The fact is that as we talk about the

policies of our Nation, I do think it is appropriate, and I thank the

gentleman from Washington for bringing our attention to the fact that

we talk about policies, we talk about decisions in an almost

theoretical sense sometimes here, but the fact is that there are real

families, real soldiers, real deaths, real injuries.

I also, and I will end my remarks with this, over this past weekend

was able to attend a happy occasion because I went to the homecoming

party of a young soldier who had just returned from Iraq. He was there

with his grandfather, his father and his 4-year-old son, four

generations. The mother of this 4-year-old son, the wife of this young

soldier who had just returned, told me that during this soldier's

absence, their 4-year-old son was so disturbed that the pediatrician

suggested that he may need to go see a child psychiatrist, and she said

his daddy is home and he is back to normal. Everything that we do here

in this Chamber, but especially the decisions that we make regarding

war and peace, affect real people, real families. I think we should

never, ever forget that.

I thank the gentleman for bringing up that situation that occurred in

his district as well as giving me a chance to talk about the situation

in my district.

Can I ask a question about that, because the heading

across the gentleman's chart says ``Licensed Dual Use Exports to Iraq

by U.S. Companies, 1985 to 1990.'' When we use the phrase ``dual use,''

does that mean that what has been exported can be used perhaps for

legitimate purposes but also could be used for illegitimate military

purposes or offensive purposes if that government chose to use them in

that way?

From 1985 to 1990?

More than 10 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, may I point out something to my friend.

The U.N. inspections worked. The U.N. inspectors were in Iraq. They

were asking for additional time. It was this government that terminated

the inspections right before this war began. And the fact is that if

the inspections had continued, we would have uncovered the fact that

these weapons of mass destruction did not exist in Iraq at the present

time. And it is so sad, it is tragic that we rushed to a decision, that

we told the U.N. inspectors their time was up and that we initiated

this preemptive war. And we cannot, we must not, forget that over 530

of our fellow Americans have lost their lives, and we are losing lives

in Iraq every day, and there is no end in sight.

Mr. Speaker, when the President was interviewed on

Sunday, he told the American people that the Congress had the same

intelligence available to them as he had available to him. And that was

not true. No one told us that there was ambiguity. The President and

the Vice President spoke with surety. They said, as the gentleman has

pointed out, there was no doubt.

We cannot even find out who served on the Vice

President's energy task force, let alone have access to all the

intelligence that the President has available.