I thank very much Representative Larson. I would like to

thank you for the leadership that you are providing in putting together

these opportunities night after night on the floor to illuminate what

is going on in Iraq. You are absolutely right.

I am the Chair of the Out of Iraq Caucus, and we have our 1-year

anniversary as of this week. We organized because we understood very

well that something was very wrong with this war. It was not a popular

thing to do, but increasingly, Members began to join. We do have 72

Members. We have other Members who are recognizing, as they work in

their districts across this country, that the people of America are

sick and tired of this war. They believe that the President of the

United States has mismanaged this war, and they want to bring our

troops home.

The violence that we are witnessing on a daily basis in Iraq is

absolutely unconscionable. The violence is such that not only are the

Sunnis being attacked by the Shiias, but innocent people are being

killed. Civilians are being killed day in and day out, and to tell you

the truth, Mr. Larson, and other Members here and Mr. Delahunt who has

worked on this issue so long and so

hard, I think it is easy for us to conclude at this point, no matter

how difficult it is, that we have destabilized Iraq with our

occupation.

When we went into Iraq supposedly because they had weapons of mass

destruction and discovered that there were none; when we decided to

change our tune, that is, the President of the United States and talk

about wanting to instill a democratic government, the American people

said, okay, the President of the United States must know what he is

talking about.

So they have a new government. Saddam Hussein is behind bars. There

are no weapons of mass destruction, and you know what is going on? The

civil war that this President and this administration is in denial

about, but if you read the papers today, you even have Sunnis that are

saying, well, we do not like the Americans, we do not like this

occupation, but you know, we need them now to help us be protected

against these attacks that are coming at us on a daily basis.

So we recognize that the President of the United States started this

discussion about the training of the Iraqi soldiers and how we were

doing such a good job, there was a turning point, and they were going

to be able to take over and to provide security for that country.

Well, in the first place, we did not go there. The President of the

United States did not tell the American people we were going there, to

be in the middle of a civil war, to protect one group from the other.

Never said that. And now that is the only reason we are there, because

we have got to protect the Sunnis from the Shiias? I mean, that is what

our American soldiers are supposed to be doing. Our American soldiers

who come from these towns and these hamlets do not know a Shiia from a

Sunni, and then they get in situations where they are shooting to kill,

and people would criticize them when they do not know what it is they

are confronted with. We are there because we have to negotiate this

civil war by way of warfare.

I think it is unconscionable what is happening there, and I think it

is time for this administration to admit that not only have they made a

mistake, but they have not trained enough Iraqi soldiers to take over

the security of this country, and there is no number of Iraqi soldiers

being trained in sight that will take over the security of this

country. These groups who have been at each other's throats for

centuries and maybe were contained by a strong man, right or wrong, are

in the throes of a full civil war.

Madam Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, it was

alluded to earlier that not only were we distracted from doing the job

in Afghanistan and we have ended up in this morass in Iraq, it was

reported, and I do not have the documentation for it, that Mr.

Wolfowitz, Mr. Cheney and some of the other war hawks had said, once we

are in Iraq, we tie down; then on to Iran and on to Syria. Now, I do

not know if that is true, if Iraq was to be used as a staging ground to

then move on to the attack in Iran and in Syria, but I think that the

Iranians believe it, and I think the Syrians believe it.

I watch what we are learning every day about the fact that many of

those missiles that are being launched from Beirut are missiles that

have been manufactured in Syria, and we also know that the Iranians

have their hand in support of Hezbollah and what is going on.

Now, this says an awful lot, and you guys alluded to it a bit

earlier. Here we are, here we are tied down in the middle of a civil

war in Iraq and having threatened with no more than talking about the

axis of evil but even beyond that, going into these neighboring

countries, and now I think they are about to put us on the run, trying

to distract us and have us react in different parts of the Middle East.

And of course, we cannot do that with Kim Jong Il looking over our back

in North Korea, launching missiles over into the Japan Sea. And we have

got Tehran who has told us that they would certainly continue with

their development of nuclear capability.

So here we are, Afghanistan, we are spending much of our soldiers'

time trying to protect Karzai who is sitting in Kabul and not doing

anything, and as you said, the Taliban and the warlords are really

running it.

We are getting overwhelmed. We are getting outmaneuvered. We are

placing the American people at great risk, and it is about time we just

go ahead and tell it like it is. We have created more risk than not,

when in fact this war on terrorism was supposed to be about making the

American people safer.