Madam Speaker, when the doctrine of preemptive war was

first introduced, I suggested that it was unconscionable. Then the

original case for war, weapons of mass destruction and a link between

al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein, turned out to be erroneous at best and a

pack of lies at the very worst.

So the war was immorally conceived. That is strike one. And

deceptively marketed, that is strike two.

Strike three is the incompetence, the bungling, the repeated

misjudgments in the execution of the war plan. From the dismantling of

the Iraqi army to the lack of protective armor, to the failure to

safeguard munitions and on and on.

The most recent proof of mismanagement appeared in a story in this

weekend's Washington Post. Americans shooting at Americans in Iraq in

the President's war that has become so mismanaged that I believe we are

fighting ourselves. Have we become our own prisoners of war?

Now, finally, someone has begun to own up to the mistakes. Outgoing

Pentagon official Douglas Feith in an interview with the Washington

Post conceded that, among other things, we may have gone to Iraq with

too light a force. The amazing part of that insiders' information and

others like Mr. Feith's is that they have been cooking up the Iraq

invasion since the early 1990s, more than a decade in the making. And

they still could not get it right. It is inconceivable to me that we

would send our troops into battle not only under-equipped but also

undermanned.

One way the military has tried to keep troop levels down is by

outsourcing many functions to private contractors. By some estimates,

there are as many as 100,000 contractors roaming around Iraq. Many of

them armed, apparently accountable to no one, acting independently of

the military chain of command without any oversight, unbound by an

official code of conduct.

Let us leave aside the issue of how contractors are paid much more

than our troops or whose pockets are getting lined here. It has been

documented that companies with close ties to the administration have

been rewarded with these lucrative contracts, and the government has

been, shall we say, very forgiving when their buddies overcharge and

bilk American taxpayers.

But think about what it means to our troops on the ground to have

well-healed contractors co-existing with underpaid active duty soldiers

who are cogs in a rigid hierarchy, who are doing the unglamorous work,

who are lucky if full health care benefits are awaiting them when they

get home. The result is resentment, low morale, and a weakened

military.

The only real solution is to bring our troops home from Iraq as soon

as possible. I have been calling for an end to the occupation for many

months now, and nothing has happened in Iraq that would force me to

reconsider. Ending the war would be the beginning of a complete

reassessment of U.S. national security policy. I have offered what I

call SMART Security. That stands for Sensible, Multilateral, American

Response to Terrorism.

At the heart of SMART is the belief that military action should be an

absolute last resort, to be reluctantly pursued only after every

channel has been exhausted.

SMART Security means fighting terrorism with strong diplomacy, robust

multilateral alliances, and improved intelligence capabilities. It

means being vigilant about nuclear proliferation and the spread of

other weapons of mass destruction. It means more investment in homeland

security and energy independence, and less in obsolete, Cold War

weapons systems. And SMART Security is about attacking terrorism at its

very roots with an ambitious, international development agenda that

brings education, debt relief, democracy-building, and economic

development to the impoverished nations of the world.

SMART is tough, pragmatic, and patriotic. It protects America by

relying on the very best of American values: our commitment to freedom,

our compassion for the people of the world, and our capacity for global

leadership.

Mr. Speaker, there was nothing smart about a war plan that tried to

cut corners by sending in too few soldiers. In fact, there is nothing

smart at all about this war. Nearly 2,000 Americans dead, a recharged

insurgency, political and economic chaos in Iraq, and no end in sight;

an immoral war, a dishonest war and, now, even a senior Pentagon

official, Douglas Feith, admits, a mismanaged war. That is strike

three, they are out.