Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and I

want to commend his efforts as the ranking Democrat on the Armed

Services Committee for making sure, as other Democratic members have,

that the men and women who serve this country get the equipment that

they need to succeed. Many of us were stunned to see so many of our men

and women put into harm's way without having enough uploaded Humvees

and Kevlar vests.

I also want to acknowledge the gentleman for considering the

casualties that we are taking. I believe the gentleman said a battalion

per month. A battalion per month.

What effect is this going to have on the long-term implications for

national security and our military? One of the things a country has to

do in a time of war is tell the truth about what is happening in Iraq

and Afghanistan. Yet the administration continues to think that the

American people cannot handle the truth or do not want the truth. We

experience setbacks. We have strategies that do not work. They continue

to tell us we should stay the course and everything will be all right.

We have no accountability on the part of the Congress, either the House

or the Senate, to hold the administration accountable for what their

policies are or aren't.

Members of the Armed Services Committee tonight, Democrats on that

committee that have served on the committee traveled, I think every

Democrat has been to Iraq at least twice, will follow me and tell you

that the administration is simply not being candid, honest and truthful

with the American people about the situation in Iraq. As Mr. Skelton

indicated, we went into Iraq without enough troops. General Shinseki

told us we were going to need a few hundred thousand troops. What did

they do at the Pentagon, they put him out to pasture as if he did not

know what he was talking about.

The reality is that the situation in Iraq is deteriorating. Mr.

Skelton talked about the insurgency in Iraq. Ninety to 93 percent of

the insurgents in Iraq are from within Iraq. There is an outside group

of somewhere between 8 and 10 percent terrorists that have come over

the border. It makes you wonder why the President said to every

terrorist in the world, Bring it on. Bring it on.

There are more attacks today in Iraq by the insurgency than ever. The

situation is growing worse because the insurgency is growing stronger.

Sectarian violence is becoming more common, and violent crime is on the

rise. I am not just saying these things, the facts support these

things. Despite the claim that the available combat power of the Iraqi

security forces is increasing and the operational tempo has

significantly stepped up, violent insurgent attacks have increased

every month this year. That is a fact.

Violent crime in Baghdad is at its highest level since August 2003.

That is a fact.

Insurgent attacks have increased every month this year, and that is a

fact. But we keep hearing about how things are getting better.

Insurgency is as large today as it has been at any point in Iraq. That

is a fact.

The administration has been stressing to us that reconstruction is

going well and that progress is being made, and certainly in some parts

of the country that is true. But you cannot look at the totality of the

circumstances and say that the administration is being honest or

truthful with the American people.

While we debate here tonight, residents of Baghdad receive 3.9 hours

of electricity per day. Let me repeat that: 3.9 hours of electricity

per day. So it is great that those satellite dishes are up, but people

are unable to use them. Before the war, people in Baghdad could depend

on 16 to 24 hours a day of electricity, and this past month, it is only

17 to 20 percent of the prewar output.

It is really hard to focus on democratization when you live by

candlelight and cannot store your food. Drinking water is not readily

available either. Back in 2003, the Coalition Provisional Authority

stated that the goal was to have 23 million of the 26 million Iraqis

with access to potable water.

Do you know where we stand today in that goal? Just a little over 8

million Iraqis have safe access to drinking water. This is

significantly lower than pre-war levels and about a third of what the

CPA was aiming at. We have failed to do our jobs in terms of providing

electricity, providing the water, providing the economic development,

providing jobs. Any country in the world with a 40 percent unemployment

rate is going to have an insurgency.

Now, maybe the administration could point to success in building a

train station, but we can't have success without providing the

necessities of life. So the administration talks about how much safer

things are. But the reality is, if you look at the facts, you see that

staying the course is just not an option for the United States. We have

to look at the facts. We have to look at the fact that the challenges

in Iraq are growing every day. Our military is stretched to the limits.

20,000 Americans, brave American soldiers have either been injured,

seriously injured, or have been killed. So what we would like is a

debate on Iraq, not some kind of political statement that merges Iraq

with Afghanistan, with Spain, with London, and put it all together and

call it the war on terror and say we support our troops. We all want to

win the war on terror. We all want to make sure that we support our

troops. But we really ought to have a discussion of what is going on in

Iraq. And there are members of the Armed Services Committee who have

been trying to get that discussion, trying to get that accountability

who are here today. And I want to yield to the gentlewoman from

California to continue this discussion.