I want to raise an issue that I think has

really not gotten a lot of attention, and that is the fact that our

troops have been asked to play roles that they really didn't train for.

One moment our troops are being asked to work with civilians in Iraq

and with the local governments. They are being asked to teach them

negotiating skills. And then in the next minute, they are being asked

to go outside and control the chaos that is swarming in the streets.

Well, you know what? We know that our soldiers have answered these

calls, and they do it better than anyone could have ever expected them

to. But the fact that they have had to perform these different roles is

disturbing evidence of the way the President and his civilian leaders

have planned so poorly for this war and the aftermath that we are still

in today.

But don't listen to me. Listen to General McCaffrey who has made

numerous trips to Iraq and to Afghanistan and he has publicly stated

that that critical interagency coordination that was really important

to get the kind of provincial reconstruction themes are just beginning

to emerge now up and running. What disturbs me is not just the fact

that our military has been asked to perform those tasks; but in the

place of people who should have been performing those tasks, we have

very inexperienced and young individuals who really have never played

that role before.

So just now we see some changes; we see that they are trying to put

together the right Foreign Service officers in the field. Even today,

Secretary Rice said she is still struggling to do that in many cases.

What was needed was a plan for post-occupation Iraq that honored the

sacrifices of our troops. And instead they have been given this burden

unnecessarily and at great cost.

I join in applauding my colleagues, as we all are, trying to raise

the facts and the realities of Iraq today. And I yield to Mr. Skelton.