Last week, Mr. Speaker, all 28 Democrats of the House

Armed Services Committee signed a letter to Chairman Duncan Hunter

asking for the reinstatement of the Subcommittee on Oversight and

Investigations. Now why do we do this? Because 10 years ago when the

Republicans took over control of Congress that subcommittee on the

House Armed Services Committee was eliminated and the intent was that

oversight, bipartisan oversight was to be conducted by the other

subcommittees. That has been a failure and we have seen that as members

of this committee, some of us for almost a decade now. It has been a

failure particularly during this time that our Nation is at war.

Our troops deserve the kind of effective government oversight that

they deserve. So what are we talking about? We have had corruption, we

have had fraud, we have had gross mismanagement; and it undermines the

war in Iraq. Anthony Cordesman, the noted expert from CSIS, concluded

that we have wasted about half of the $22 billion of U.S. funds that

have been spent so far in reconstruction, and much of the $34.6 billion

of Iraqi funds. The Special Inspector General for Iraq reconstruction

concluded that ``corruption is another form of insurgency in Iraq.'' So

what are we talking about? We have spent about $1.8 billion on

electricity reconstruction projects, but the pre-war capacity has not

yet been reached for electricity generation.

We have spent $650 million of USAID money on oil production

infrastructure, but we still have not reached the pre-war level

production capacity. We have spent about $690 million of U.S. dollars

on water and sanitation projects in Iraq, and yet the percentage of

Iraqis with access to drinkable water has fallen to 32 percent from the

pre-war level of 50 percent, and the percentage of Iraqis with access

to sewer and sanitation has dropped from 24 percent to 20 percent.

Here is the problem: our troops are dying and bleeding to give the

Iraqi people a chance to do well for themselves and their family, to

have drinkable water, to have a safe place to raise children, to have

the kind of electricity and the kind of things they need for modern

civilization. And yet, because of the inadequacies of the way the

administration is conducting the war and monitoring the payments of

these monies, that work is not getting done and the Democrats on the

House Arms Services Committee are saying tonight we have got to do

better.

I would now like to yield to Mr. Rick Larsen from the State of

Washington, also a member of the House Armed Services Committee.