I rise today as we reexamine why Congress

and the administration diverted attention from our fight against

terrorists and terrorism in order to invade Iraq.

The current administration has gotten too many things wrong in Iraq

and has totally misinterpreted the lessons of the post-9/11 world. It

is up to Democrats to get things right in Iraq so we can refocus our

military efforts to fighting terrorists around the world who want to

harm us.

Today I ask my colleagues: Will we realistically confront terrorists

and terrorism with all the elements of our national power, or will we

continue to ignore a proven approach to follow a shop-worn, idealistic

approach that drains our military of its resources and America of its

good will with the very partners that we need to fight terrorism? That

is the choice our country faces.

The administration has made countless mistakes since the start of the

war in Iraq. As Congress looks to clean up the mistakes that have been

made, Democrats must speak out against this administration's tendency

to overlook problems and instead push for a policy that centers on

oversight of U.S. taxpayer dollars. We must respond to the public's

frustrations by creating a secure future for our military and

reestablish a foundation for American efforts to fight terrorists and

terrorism around the globe.

We can only do that by confronting and repairing the waste, fraud,

and abuse that plagues our efforts in Iraq. We need to emphasize that

our commitment to U.S. taxpayers is equally as important as the

commitment we have made to the Iraqi people.

I ask the American people to consider the legacy this administration

has handed us in the defense budget as we spend billions of U.S.

taxpayer dollars without the tools and ability to track these dollars.

Will we tolerate the squeeze that will force choices between weapons

and warriors because of a lack of administration foresight and lack of

congressional oversight? I believe the answer is no.

We must consider the legacy of waste, fraud, and abuse in Iraq. Why

are we not getting results for our taxpayer dollars? We do not know

because the institution endowed by the Constitution that is responsible

for protecting your taxpayer dollars is practicing overlook instead of

oversight. Parents who are monitoring their children on the Internet

are providing more oversight than the United States Congress.

We learn of events and stories through the media once the waste,

fraud, or abuses have reached comic proportions. We know that

Halliburton has overcharged both the U.S. Government and the

Development Fund for Iraq by over $260 million. The Department of

Justice brought criminal indictments against a former CPA contracting

official and a contractor for a series of frauds costing taxpayers $13

million, and the CPA lost control of $19.6 billion in Iraqi oil funds.

As Congress overlooks expenditures of billions of U.S. taxpayer

dollars in Iraq, it ignores responsibility to provide a secure future

for our military.

Just in closing, I join my colleagues in commending our U.S. military

working in conjunction with Iraqi security and Iraqis themselves for

locating and eliminating Abu Musad al-Zarqawi. His terrorist violence

is gone. But we have learned in Iraq that fighting a ``classic

guerrilla-type war'' means that a victory like killing Zarqawi cannot

be celebrated too long. Much remains to be done in Iraq, and Democrats

have to make right where the administration has gone wrong. Our

obligations compel us to ask the tough questions that are currently

ignored.