Mr. Speaker, I once again thank

distinguished members who will be joining me here on the floor to

continue a process that was begun by Mr. Delahunt, Mr. Abercrombie, Mr.

Kucinich, and Mr. Inslee called The Iraq Watch.

This was formed in the spirit of understanding, as I think the Nation

has come to understand, that within this Beltway and within this Nation

and specifically here in Congress, that we have one-party rule. The

Republican Party controls the administration and all of its agencies,

it controls the House of Representatives and the United States Senate,

and in the process, has stifled opportunity for oversight and review

and a thorough discussion on the pressing issue of Iraq that concerns

the entire American republic. I commend my colleagues for having

initiated The Iraq Watch.

This evening, as in others, we start with an acknowledgement that,

fortunately, because of the efforts of so many who have served in our

military, we in Congress on both sides of this aisle have come to

understand and differentiate between the war and the warriors, those

brave men and women who serve our country on a daily basis and who are

in harm's way in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and around this globe on our

behalf. We come here because we desire an opportunity to speak truth to

power.

Earlier this evening, one of our esteemed colleagues from the other

side rose and said, ``What are the Democrats for?'' We are for an

administration that will level with the American people, starting first

and foremost with leveling with our troops, especially the families of

our troops; specifically, the Reservists and National Guardsmen who

have been deployed, redeployed, deployed, and redeployed again in

Afghanistan and Iraq with no certainty given to them. And we are for an

administration that is worthy of the sacrifice that has been put

forward by the men and women of our armed services.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt said, ``The only thing we have to fear is

fear itself.'' And in this very solemn week where we pause to reflect

on our brave heroes of 9/11, those innocent people who perished in the

towers in New York, at the Pentagon, and in the fields of Pennsylvania,

and those brave and valiant first responders who rallied to the call in

New York, here at the Pentagon and in Pennsylvania, we are for the

vigilance of the survivors, and victims of 9/11 who called and

prevailed upon this body to pass all the 9/11 recommendations.

We are for passing all the 9/11 recommendations, more than half of

which have not been enacted by this Congress 5 years after September

11. We are for accountability, as Mr. Schiff pointed out in his

comments, because we understand that in a one-party town where there is

no oversight and review and no one willing on the other side of the

aisle to speak truth to power, that it falls on the shoulders of the

Democrats to speak out on behalf of the American public, to speak truth

where there has been little.

Graham Allison pointed out that the occupation in Iraq has placed us

in a situation where we have diverted essential resources from the

fight against al Qaeda, allowed the Taliban to regroup in Afghanistan,

fostered neglect of the Iranian nuclear threat, undermined alliances

critical to preventing terrorism, devastated America's standing with

every country in Europe, and

destroyed it in the Muslim world. We are for a new direction for this

country and for America's preeminent position on this globe where we

have such enormous responsibility.

We ought to start that new direction and send a very clear signal to

the world, to Iraq, and to the men and women of our military that it is

time for accountability. And we can start that, as Jack Murtha

indicated earlier, with a call for Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld

to step down, for, as Mr. Schiff pointed out and the Vice President

said clearly this past Sunday, if they had to do it all over again,

they would do it exactly the same way. And the President, in a moment

of candor, said in fact, the hardest thing that he has found has been

linking terror with the war in Iraq.

At this time I would like to recognize the gentlewoman from

California, Representative Lee, who has stood in this well so many

times and prevailed upon this body to come to grips with this war in

Iraq.

Representative Lee.

I thank the gentlewoman from California

for once again providing us with very clear insight into the

ramifications of the administration's failed policy. As our colleague

from Missouri (Mr. Skelton) points out, there are two distinct wars

that are going on. There is the war on terror, more appropriately it

should be called the war against al Qaeda, where, as the gentlewoman

points out, America has diverted its resources away from Afghanistan

and the chief target, the person responsible for bringing down the

World Trade Center towers and the bombing at the Pentagon and the

failed attempt to hit this Capitol with the downed plane in

Pennsylvania.

I commend the gentlewoman for her remarks and thank her for joining

us this evening.

If the gentleman will yield, because the

question has been put forward on this floor on more than one occasion,

and the query is: How is it that this great country of ours could go

from having virtually the entire world supporting us, because of

exactly what happened in your great New York City? In Paris, they said,

``Today We Are All Americans.'' We join with Americans in the fight

against al Qaeda in Afghanistan. And we went from having the entire

world with us to virtually having the world opposed to us, devastating

our standing around the world and ruining it with the Muslim world.

Mr. HINCHEY. Your point, of course, is a very good one. And what

caused that, caused the people of the world, who had been united with

us after the attack of September 11, 2001, but became disunited from

us, became questioning of our attitudes and actions, all of that came

about as a result of the falsification of information by this

administration to the Congress of the United States and the people of

the United States alleging that there was a connection between Iraq and

Saddam Hussein to the attack of September 11, 2001, and subsequently

alleging that Saddam Hussein had so-called weapons of mass destruction,

chemical and biological weapons, and a nuclear weapons program, when

all of the major intelligence given to the administration said that

there was no evidence of so-called weapons of mass destruction.

And it was clear that there was no connection between Saddam Hussein

and Osama bin Laden. If anything, the two were enemies, not united in

any way. They are antagonists, and certainly, then, no connection

between al Qaeda and Iraq. And the world saw the falsification of that

information and they began to back away from us. And eventually so many

people and so many countries around the world turned their backs on the

United States because of the falsification of information by this

administration and the perils that they saw our country engaged in in

the Middle East, and to some extent here at home.

So we have a responsibility. And I think that that responsibility

falls mainly on the Democratic Party. Because, as you pointed out in

your remarks just a few minutes ago, we have here, in effect, a rubber

stamp Congress, a monolithic government here in Washington, a Congress

that has abandoned its responsibilities under the Constitution to

ensure that the administration is behaving in a lawful way; to be

certain that the administration is adhering to the provisions of our

law and the provisions of our constitution.

In fact, we see clearly that this administration is violating the law

and violating the Constitution, but the Republican majority in this

House has done absolutely nothing about it. So the opportunity that you

present here tonight by reserving this hour is an important one, and

there are other people who will come and speak about this issue also in

very important ways.

Everything we do has got to be focused on the illegality of these

actions and the way in which they are to be corrected so that we can

begin to reensure the security of the United States and begin to

reestablish our position in the world of admiration and respect from

other people around the world. We have a big job to do and we must

engage ourselves in that job very pointedly and aggressively, and I

thank you for reserving this time.

I thank the gentleman from New York for

his insightful comments. And, again, we all share with you and all New

Yorkers, as well as people from the Pentagon and in the fields of

Pennsylvania, Flight 93, a great sorrow at the loss of so many valiant

Americans. And I want to commend you for your willingness to come to

this floor and speak truth to power.

Someone who has done so on more than 170 occasions, from the same

spot on this floor, is Lynn Woolsey. She has risen and called out and

has spoken out against the war in Iraq, and so at this time I yield to

the gentlewoman from California.

I thank the gentlewoman for her vigilance

in this matter and in coming to the floor. To her point, as Thomas

Friedman has pointed out, in Iraq with regard to the occupation and the

United States' once-lofty goal that was envisioned in terms of creating

democracy in Iraq, categorized us as no longer midwifing a democracy,

but in essence baby-sitting an insurrection and a civil war.

So even people that were slow to come around to your point of view

and the point of view held by many others have now been joined by no

less than eight generals, as Mr. Delahunt points out time and time

again on this floor.

But also if you go back to the very beginnings and the lead-up to

this war, who were the most outspoken critics leading up to this war?

In fact, it was

not Maxine Waters or Barbara Lee or even Lynn Woolsey, it was

Scowcroft, Eagleburger, and Baker because they understood as

internationalists the problem that would be created in Iraq if we

diverted resources from Afghanistan and didn't pursue the goal of

capturing and bringing to justice Osama bin Laden, but instead got

involved in a war of choice that was misguided and misdirected by an

administration that was blind on two fronts. Blind to the sacrifice

that would take place on behalf of our brave men and women, and also to

the policies that they were pursuing and the ramifications of those

policies both abroad and here at home.

Someone who understands that and has been an advocate of human rights

for his entire career here in the United States Congress, someone who

has traveled all over this globe and addressed the issue of human

rights is the Congressman from New Jersey, Donald Payne, and at this

time I recognize him for his remarks.

I thank the gentleman from New Jersey, and

I am reminded in the poignancy of his story, having traveled to the

Middle East several times with Jack Murtha, of a discussion we were

having with our ambassador to Saudi Arabia who, when I inquired of him

that it seemed like there was a gathering storm in Saudi Arabia with

more than 35 percent unemployment and median income amongst the people

there dropping from $28,000 to under $7,000, he said to me:

``Congressman, gathering storm?'' He said, ``You're from New England?''

I said, ``That's right.''

He said, ``I assume you've either read the book or you saw the movie.

What we have here is not a gathering storm, what we have here is a

perfect storm; and if we attack this toothless tiger, whereas you point

out we had no-fly zones over the north and south, we will unwittingly

accomplish what Osama bin Laden failed to do. We will create a united

Islamic jihad against the United States.''

Someone who understands that more keenly than most is the gentlewoman

from California who chairs the Out of Iraq Caucus and has been equally

vigilant in her efforts and leadership on that front.

I now recognize Maxine Waters.

I thank the gentlewoman, and I thank her

also for factually pointing out what is happening, especially with

regard to the heroin trade, and again how that only furthers and

fosters the efforts of al Qaeda all around the globe.

Before I call on the gentleman from New York, Major Owens, who has

served with distinction in this great body of ours and who represents

the great City of New York, I want to point out that our next two

speakers, both Mr. Delahunt from Massachusetts and Mr. Inslee from

Washington, are the founders of the Out of Iraq Caucus.

Mr. Delahunt, especially, having heard specifically, going back to

his district, people often ask what led you to come to this floor and

speak out against the war in Iraq? Well, it took place in small towns

and communities where people were yearning for the truth and wanted to

hear voices that because a majority rule here in a one-party Congress

were notable to break through.

Is this the same Prime Minister that also

has said that he will grant amnesty to those involved in the

insurrection that are killing and mutilating American soldiers?

Mr. Speaker, as Mr. Delahunt so eloquently

pointed out, and has time and again, the Iraq Watch, which you four

Members initiated along with Mr. Abercrombie and Mr. Kucinich, has done

a great job for the Nation.

People often ask, why do you come down and speak in what is an empty

Chamber? And my response is, out of love of country. It is for love of

country that you get to ask the unwelcome questions to this

administration. But in a one-party town where the administration

controls every agency and both Houses of Congress, we can't penetrate

through, except for all of those meetings that are taking place in town

halls and at forums and now on the blogs, that people all across this

country get it.

Someone who has gotten it throughout his entire career and someone

who has served his Nation out of love of country and a great city is

Major Owens. I would like to recognize him at this time.