Mr. Speaker, we come to the floor this evening in the

continued responsibility of keeping a very close eye on this

administration's policy in Iraq in the continued series of what we

style the Iraq watch.

I will be joined by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt)

this evening, and hopefully the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Strickland.)

We have been now coming once a week to the floor of the House because

we believe that the House has a duty not to sweep under the rug the

accumulation of errors, misjudgments and deceptions that have been

foisted on the American people by the Bush administration leading to

the war in Iraq.

The reason we are here every week is that there is too much tendency

to forget the sacrifices that are being made by our men and women in

uniform in Iraq; to treat them as sort of background noise; to sort of

say, well, the casualties are down to several a week, so we can just

sort of forget about Iraq. That is wrong.

We have been here for months blowing the whistle on this

administration's repeated failures in Iraq, and we will continue to do

so, because this Nation owes it to our men and women in uniform to

continue to be vigilant about what this administration is doing and not

doing in Iraq.

Perhaps, even more importantly, we owe it to the cause of democracy

itself not to allow it to go unnoted when a President of the United

States starts a war based on deception of the American people. We are

here to say there is perhaps no greater abuse of democracy, no more

dangerous event in the great American democratic experiment, than for

an American President to foist falsehoods on the American people to

start a war, which we believe occurred in this case.

Now, I would like to start our discussion tonight by quickly setting

the stage for the history of the Iraq war to date. Unfortunately, this

administration has made not 1, not 2, but 10 serious mistakes,

deceptions, errors of judgment, negligence, and carelessness that have

led to the troubles that our people are facing in Iraq. I would like to

run through those very quickly before I yield to the gentleman from

Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt).

There are 10 major errors the Bush administration has made in Iraq.

Error number 1: This administration told America in no uncertain terms,

with no doubt, with no vagueness, with no ambiguity whatsoever, that it

was required to start a war in Iraq because Iraq had weapons of mass

destruction. The President said, in a culmination of his multiple

statements, and this must not be forgotten; on August 26, 2002, the

President said, ``Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein

now has weapons of mass destruction.'' And there was not only no

weapons of mass destruction, there was plenty of doubt. This

President's statement was false, and this was falsehood number 1.

Error number 2: The President told us on repeated occasions, and his

administration, that they had clear, convincing and cogent evidence

that there was a working relationship between Saddam Hussein and al

Qaeda which led to the attack on September 11. They told us this over

and over and over again, and now that the evidence has been made clear

from the multiple reports that have come in on a bipartisan basis, this

President's statement that Saddam Hussein was associated with the

attack on this country, this venal, evil attack on this country was

false, and it led to a war. And there is no greater error, breach of

democracy than an American President saying that when this was false.

And it continues to this day. With all of this mountain of evidence

showing the falsehood of this President's statement, the Vice President

of the United States has the chutzpa, if one can stretch that word that

far, to try to continue to foist this on the American people, and it is

falsehood number 2.

Number 3: The American people were told repeatedly that we would be

welcome as liberators in Iraq. We would be welcome with rose petals at

our feet. We would be welcome with nothing but clear sailing because

the people would see us as liberators. There is no question in the

belief that Saddam Hussein was an evil tyrant, and there is no question

he abused thousands of Iraqis. But this President made a massive

misjudgment by listening to Mr. Chalabi, one of the great sycophants in

failures of predictions in international history, and the President was

suckered and the American people were suckered by this misstatement,

and we have paid dearly with our treasure and our lives and the health

of our service personnel in Iraq.

Falsehood number 4: This President ignored the clear, professional

judgment of people who said we needed to have more boots on the ground

to prevent anarchy in Iraq, but this President ignored that advice

because he has wanted to fight this fight on the cheap from day 1, and

we have suffered as a result. General Shinseki told him that we needed

several hundred thousand people in Iraq to quell disturbance after the

Iraq war, and he ignored it, and our people paid dearly for error and

falsehood number 4.

Number 5: The President said we did not need the United Nations, we

could go in there alone, as long as we had the Philippines and a couple

of other small island nations. Well, the Philippines have now

withdrawn. This President decided to go it alone in Iraq, and our

people have suffered dearly. Falsehood number 5.

Falsehood number 6: The President said that by implication,

everything would be aboveboard. There would not be any war profiteering

in Iraq, people would not make millions of dollars worth of profits in

Iraq. Now we see Halliburton, this company so intimately tied with this

administration, reaping millions of dollars of taxpayers' money,

wrongfully. The GAO has reported on it. This is a scandal, and Harry

Truman rooted out world profiteering in World War II. We need to get to

the bottom of this war profiteering by Halliburton and the like.

Falsehood number 6.

Falsehood number 7, and error number 7: This President and this

administration led us down one of the most

embarrassing breaches of American integrity, and that is the horrendous

occasions of abuse at the Abu Ghraib prison, and it happened because

people at the top of this administration gave a green light to

stretching our well-accepted rules of following the Geneva Convention.

The memos are now in and public information that multiple memos were

sent saying that we did not have to give the protections of the Geneva

Convention to people. This is something we do to protect our own troops

so that they will be not abused if they are captive. This is a long

held principle of America. But out of hubris, out of outright

arrogance, this administration ignored those rules and we have suffered

in the eyes of the world grievously. Make no mistake, 99.9 percent of

our troops are doing a magnificent job, but this was error number 7.

Error number 8: This President sent American troops into battle

without adequate armor. Even today, our troops are driving around thin-

skinned Humvees that should have armor, and I believe our people have

been injured with shrapnel grievously.

Error number 9, and this is one that is going to haunt us for a long

time: The President started and continued a war with absolutely no plan

whatsoever in how to pay for it. He has tried to hide the ball over and

over again on the costs of this war to the American taxpayer, and he is

still doing it. This year, this budget my colleagues in the majority

party put out with $25 billion, we know it is going to be $60 billion

next year. There is no question about this. Why did they hide this

information from the American people? Do they think the American people

will be so sleepy they will ignore the fact that another $60 billion

will go to Iraq instead of schools and health care in America? Do they

think that will be forgotten? I do not think so. This deficit is now in

the billions of dollars and it is growing rapidly because the President

wants our children to pay for the Iraq war rather than us. And this is

that continued attitude of trying to fight this war on the cheap. This

President needs to be honest and forthright with the American people

about the real costs of this war, which are grievous. Error number 9.

And error number 10: And this one rankles me greatly as a person who

has read the casualty reports of what hot steel and shrapnel has done

to our troops, sending our troops into combat without flak jackets, and

it took us a year-and-a-half to get this administration to get flak

jackets. Is that too much to ask of an administration for our troops?

Error number 10.

Those are a quick summary of the errors that have been made in Iraq.

Today we heard about some new ones. We found out that, in fact, it was

Iran that was allowing 10 of the terrorists who injured us so terribly

on September 11, they were passing through Iran, not Iraq. The

President never leveled with us and told us that. It turns out it was

Iran that was trying to buy the Iranian yellow cake, not Iraq. It is

not a good enough excuse that they are one letter apart. That is not a

good enough excuse for this President.

I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

I think it is important to realize what this President's

unilateralism has done to the American taxpayer by putting it in

context, vis-a-vis the first Iraq war, because the first President Bush

did in fact work with the rest of the world community, and as a result,

the rest of the world paid well over the majority. I think it was close

to 80, 90 percent of the total cost of the first Iraq war. It was not

borne by the American taxpayer.

But the cost of this second President Bush's go-it-alone strategy to

the American taxpayer is enormous, because as of May the American

taxpayers had spent $174 billion. Now, to put that in perspective, we

are going to pass the total inflation-adjusted cost of World War I

sometime early next year in the cost of Iraq, which was $199 billion.

And, again, the insidious part about this is that the President,

because he is unwilling to do what Winston Churchill did, which was to

call for blood, toil, sweat and tears, this President just wants to put

this war on the credit card, and every single dollar of the Iraq war is

going to deficit spending.

We have a $7 trillion debt. This President Bush's budget is out of

balance $368 billion a year, and he is adding every single dollar of

this going straight on our national debt. And it is our children that

are going to suffer as

a result of this. Why? Because the President is unwilling to really

face the truth in Iraq. He was unwilling to face the truth about

weapons of mass destruction. He was unwilling to face the truth about a

purported connection with al Qaeda. He was unwilling to face the truth

about how many troops we were going to need. He was unwilling to face

the truth about the armor that we needed. He was unwilling to face the

truth, you name it, about anything you can think of in Iraq. And this

is a continuing sore on our fiscal house as well as the suffering that

we have had.

Mr. Speaker, I will yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr.

Delahunt).

The fact of the matter is, and the sad fact is that this

administration has taken its eye off the ball of the people who killed

almost 3,000 Americans on September 11, al Qaeda, Osama bin Laden.

When is the last time you actually heard the President of the United

States say the name Osama bin Laden? It is like he is the great

forgotten person in this terrible tragedy that we suffered. I remember

him and I think that our focus ought to remain on him.

Let me give an anecdote why it is not. We found out the other day in

the Committee on Financial Services, the secret of stopping terrorists,

you cut off their money. You cut off their money, you kill the beast,

in part.

We found out that this administration has more people, more agents of

the Treasury Department, this is the agency that is supposed to be in

charge of lopping off the conduit of funds to al Qaeda, this

administration has more agents chasing American tourists going to Cuba

than it does chasing off money that goes to al Qaeda.

That is just one sort of sad indication that this administration has

not focused on where the real threat has been which is al Qaeda which

is still out there and which is still a meaningful threat.

I bet they have got 80 bean counters that the American

taxpayer are funding who work for Halliburton. This administration has

no problem dishing out the dough for Halliburton and we cannot get 80

inspectors to track down Osama bin Laden. How is that for a sad

commentary on taking your eye off the ball.

Now, I want to suggest how this has happened a little bit, how this

emphasis has been misplaced. And it has because of this President's

administration's focus on Iraq and their efforts to hoodwink the

American people into believing that the real culprit or at least one of

the culprits behind September 11 was Saddam Hussein. I want to spend

just a moment talking about that because I think one of the single most

serious affronts and dangers in a democratic system is for elected

officials, particularly in the powerful position of the President, to

tell things to the American people which are false that end up starting

a war.

We found out that last September a poll of American people said that

65 percent of American people believed that Saddam Hussein was behind

the attacks on us on September 11, and Saddam Hussein has a list longer

than my arm of his depredations against the Iraqi people. But 65

percent of the Americans had been convinced by someone that Iraq was

behind the attack on September 11.

Now, who was that someone? Where did the American people get that

idea which has turned out to be false and it is pretty clear where they

got it. They got it from the President of the United States who was

standing right there and tried to convince, and he did by and large,

convince the American people of something that is false. The President

did not let this slip on one iota. We all make mistakes and misspeak on

occasion. This was a concerted, organized and consistent effort to fool

the American people into believing that the culprit was Saddam Hussein

behind September 11.

Look at some of his quotes. May 1, 2003, the President says, ``The

liberation of Iraq is a crucial advance in the campaign against terror.

We have removed an ally of al Qaeda and cut off a source of terrorist

funding.'' Vice President Cheney, September 14, 2003, says, ``If we are

successful in Iraq, then we will have struck a major blow right at the

heart of the base, if you will, the geographic base of the terrorists

who had us under assault for the many years but most especially on

September 11.''

What do we find the truth is? Our intelligence people knew at that

time but was shielded from the American people? The bipartisan

committee under the chairmanship of a Republican Governor Keen

concluded there was ``no credible evidence of a link between al Qaeda

and the attacks against the United States.'' No credible evidence. Not

some credible evidence but not much. Not just a scintilla of credible

evidence. Not a couple of ounces.

They said no credible evidence, but this President stood right there

and started a war based on a falsehood, and he knew he was doing this

to the American people and he is responsible for this. He is personally

accountable for this and the American people need to hold him

accountable for this depredation and affront to democracy as soon as

they can.

Mr. Speaker, I will answer that question. The reason we

attacked Iraq is that the day after September 11, maybe it was 2 days

after, it has been reported that the Secretary of Defense goes in to

the President and says now is our chance, now is our chance to go after

Iraq. This was like 48 hours after September 11. There was no evidence

whatsoever that Iraq was associated with September 11, but this

President and his political advisers knew one thing. They knew if they

could fool the American people into believing that Saddam Hussein was

behind September 11, the neo-cons could con the American people into

supporting a war in Iraq, and to some degree, their maliciousness was

successful to the detriment of our proud men and women in service who

are there tonight in the heat of Iraq, 130 degrees, suffering, dying in

the sands of Iraq because an American President's administration was

not forthright with the American people and consciously, willfully gave

false information to our fellow countrymen.

This is not just a little happenstance. We have a memo from a

political operative of the President about how to talk about this. This

was a cold-blooded, calculated act, and you talk about having your

missed priority and what country you would be involved in.

I have been asked by one of my constituents if I have seen the movie

``Fahrenheit 9/11.'' He said, Jay, is it true, did the President allow

the family members of Osama bin Laden, who are Saudi Arabian, to fly

out of the country when all the other planes were grounded in the

country? Did this administration let his friends from Saudi Arabia fly

out of the country without a full and thorough investigation of their

relationship? Did that really happen?

The sad fact is, yes, it did, and we have discovered that, in fact,

did occur in our Committee on Financial Services hearing, and I pressed

for an answer of who made that decision. I never got that answer, who

made that decision, and 3 days later, the President is on the south

portico of the White House smoking cigars with Prince Bandahar, the

ambassador of Saudi Arabia, where two-thirds of the terrorists came

from that attacked this country, and we let their families fly out

without even a decent interrogation of them. Talk about having a mixed-

up relationship about who our enemies are and who our friends are.

Well, I am going to close with a couple of comments.

We are here to discuss a basic principle of American democracy, and

that is, accountability, that people in public service need to be held

accountable, both for their successes and their failures.

There is a group that we should recognize for valor and effectiveness

and honor in our government and our government personnel, and that is

our Army, navy, air corps, Coast Guard, marines, who are serving in

Iraq. Those folks deserve to be held accountable by being praised for

their tremendous service to this country in difficult circumstances

tonight, and they are still continuing to suffer the pangs of war

tonight, and we have come here to make sure that their sacrifice is not

forgotten and that we treat them with as great an honor as we can and

that we restore our Veterans Administration health care system so that

when they come home they are not exposed to the cuts in the veterans

health care system that this administration has proposed.

This group of public servants, we cannot forget their contribution.

It should never be forgotten, but there is another group of public

servants whose massive failures and deceit should not be forgotten

either, and that is the Bush administration who has made at least 10

major failure, falsehoods, negligence and carelessness, to the great

cost of the American public, and those public servants should not be

forgotten in their failure either and should be held accountable, and

we will continue to have this discussion until they are.

Would the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt) like to close?

Do you have any closing comments?