Maybe it is the wrong enemy, maybe it is the wrong war.

But before I explore that, I thought I would just take a few minutes

to amplify a bit on two of the points that the gentleman made. The cost

of this war in terms of dollars and cents. I have this memory of the

Under Secretary of Defense, Mr. Wolfowitz, testifying before a

congressional committee saying that there would be no cost to the

American taxpayers because Iraqi oil would obviously be more than

sufficient to pay for the costs, not just of our military presence, our

security presence, but the cost of reconstruction.

Well, that clearly was a mistake. In fact, I thought it was

interesting that the criticism from the other side of the aisle, from

Republicans, about the costs and the misestimates was probably even

louder than that that came from this side, from Democrats.

I have a memory of reading a particular column that was penned by

Senator Dick Lugar, the prestigious Chair of the Senate Foreign

Relations Committee, where he described the postwar phase. Of course, I

would suggest we are still at war. When one reads the casualty list, on

a weekly basis it is clear that American troops are still being killed,

and a large number of course are wounded. Many of us have visited them

at Walter Reed and Bethesda Hospital here in Washington, DC, but going

back to what Senator Lugar said, he said the postwar planning was

totally inadequate. And, again, where is that oil money?

And a further observation. If we remember the first Gulf War, the

cost to the American taxpayers was approximately $4 billion. We have

already expended somewhere between $150 and $200 billion, and as you

suggest, many hundreds of billions of dollars more will be added to the

bill, the bill that will be passed on to the American taxpayers for

generations.

In the first Gulf War, there was a real coalition, a genuine

coalition of the willing. There was participation in terms of the

military presence. There were more non-American troops in the first

Gulf War than there were American troops. Other than those forces from

Great Britain, as you indicated, there are only small detachments of

security forces from other countries.

And as was noted in a story last Thursday in the Washington Post,

four countries have already left, four more are due to leave by

September, and others are now making known their intention to lying

down a depart before the political transition is complete next year.

Norway pulled out its 455 military engineers this month. New Zealand

intends to pull out its 60 engineers by September, while Thailand plans

to withdraw its more than 450 troops that same month. The Netherlands

is likely to pull out next spring after the first of three Iraqi

elections, while Polish military officials told the Pentagon that

Poland's large contingent will leave probably in less than a year. And

as you indicated, the Filipinos withdrew already. The Spanish have

withdrawn. We are going to end up there alone, Mr. Speaker, and the

bill will be paid for by the American taxpayers.

Now, much was stated back five or six months ago about a donors'

conference in Madrid, Mr. Speaker, where the coalition was brought

together in an effort to have nations other than the United States

contribute, contribute financially even if they had no military

presence there.

Well, quoting the Los Angeles Times of July 12, ``Little of the $13

billion promised for rebuilding has been donated, and countries are

hesitant to waive that, frustrating the new Iraqi government.''

Countries have provided only a small fraction of the reconstruction aid

they promised at a conference nine months ago, Mr. Speaker. Of the $13

billion in nonAmerican aid pledged, less than $1 billion has been

turned over to the United Nations and the World Bank, funds set up to

take in most of the donations.

MA As was indicated, it is only going to get worse,

because I would suggest that what we are going to find is as time moves

on, there will be fewer and fewer even pledges that will be made, let

alone honored. We now know they are not being honored, at least if you

accept the report from the Los Angeles Times.

It is easy to go out and say, yeah, America, you come up with $19

billion to build roads in Iraq, to provide universal health care

coverage, to rehab schools and to build affordable housing. If you do

that, American taxpayer, we will promise that we will pledge or we will

pledge at least half of what you do, and now we find out that less than

$1 billion has actually been transferred to the appropriate agencies.

In fact, half of that $1 billion comes from a single nation, Japan.

But I would like to get on to something else for just a minute. The

President is prone to be saying, particularly at campaign rallies, that

America is safer than ever. It is safer than it was three years ago. In

fact, he extends it to the entire world. He is saying that the world is

safer than it was three years ago. And yet, ironically, yesterday, Mr.

Speaker, I think it was on Fox News, one of the magazine editions,

there was an interview with the current, the so-called interim director

of the Central Intelligence Agency, John McLaughlin.

And he said that while several al Qaeda plots against the United

States, against our homeland have been foiled, the truth remains that

the threat is as high as it ever was.

Now, there is an inconsistency here. All we have to do is count 14 to

15 days and there will be a new terror alert. How often do we turn on

one of the cable news networks or turn on our TV and we see the

Attorney General or we see Secretary Ridge talking about an elevated

threat? In fact, Secretary Ridge was in my hometown of Boston,

Massachusetts just recently talking about the threat. And here we have

the new Director of the CIA contradicting the President of the United

States who, and maybe he was simply indulging in campaign rhetoric,

saying that we are much safer now and the world is safer. And yet here,

``U.S. Spy Chief: Al Qaeda Threat Strong As Ever.''

Is this what we call winning the war on terror, Mr. Speaker. Is this

making the world safer? I do not know that answer. I do not think the

President really does either.

Let me give another example in terms of seriousness.

The administration's position, vis-a-vis tracking down the terrorists.

There was a Committee on Ways and Means hearing where a representative

of the IRS was posed a question and in response to the question

indicated that the IRS's request for an additional 80 investigators who

would be assigned to tracking terrorist financing throughout the world

was rejected by the White House through the Office of Management and

Budget. Is this how you fight the war against terror?

Is not it ironic that on Sunday there appears a story

in the New York Times about that report that will be forthcoming later

this week, and the gentleman alluded to it earlier, when he mentioned

Iran. And by the way, the acting director of the CIA confirmed the fact

yesterday on the Fox News Program, yesterday morning that, yes, there

was information that a number of the 9-11 hijackers had safe

passage through Iran, Iran, not Iraq but Iran. I guess we made a

mistake as far as what country to invade.

But seriously, let me just read several excerpts from the Sunday

editions of the New York Times. ``The final report of the commission

investigating the September 11 attacks will offer new evidence of

cooperative ties between Iran and al Qaeda including information drawn

from intelligence reports suggesting that Iran provided several of the

hijackers with safe passage in the year before the attacks, government

official said. The evidence raised enough questions about why the Bush

administration focused on the possibility of Iraqi ties to be Osama bin

Laden's terror network after 9-11 when there may have been far more

extensive evidence of the Iranian connection. The panel had recently

obtained intelligence showing that Iran had ordered guards at its

border stations not to stop the passports of al Qaeda members from

Saudi Arabia who were moving through Iran after training at terrorists

camps in Afghanistan.''

My memory is this Iran, according to the President, was a member of

the axis of evil club, but as you pointed out, there is no

collaborative relationship according to the commission between Iraq and

Iran. But why did we end up attacking Iraq rather than Iran?

Does it come as a surprise to you that at least

according to Bob Woodward in his most recent book, a book that was

praised by the White House, in fact, there are excerpts of it I

understand on the President's campaign Web site, but in that particular

book, it was noted by the author that Prince Bandahar was informed of

the attack on Iraq prior to the Secretary of State Colin Powell.

Let me go back just for a moment, because I know we are wrapping up,

to another observation by Mr. Woodward, and this I would suggest is

where ideology colors reality and affects the truth, the objective

truth.

The passion of some in this administration, and I put beside you

there a Newsweek cover with a picture of the Vice President Dick

Cheney, emblazoned that says how Dick Cheney sold the war. It was clear

that this individual was obsessed with Iraq, for whatever reason. I am

not questioning his motives.

But in the book by Mr. Woodward, it is noted on page 175, for those

who might have it, that the Secretary of State ``detected a kind of

fever in Cheney. He was not the steady, unemotional rock that he had

witnessed a dozen years earlier during the run-up to the Gulf War. The

Vice President was hell-bent for action against Saddam Hussein.'' It is

very dangerous when ideology colors the objective truth and reality. In

the end, it gets us in a mess, and this is where we are now.

No, I concur with those sentiments.