Mr. Speaker, as we begin this second session of the

108th Congress, there is a great deal of very important work that

remains for us to accomplish.

Primarily, among those things that need to be done is simply this:

this Congress needs to focus its attention on the basis for the war in

Iraq, why we are there; why that war was carried out; and what were the

basic reasons behind it.

We were told initially by the administration that there was a

connection between Iraq and the attack on our country of September 11,

2001, and that there was a relationship between al Qaeda and Saddam

Hussein. That has proven to be completely false.

Subsequently, this Congress was told repeatedly, even in classified

briefings right here on the floor of the House of Representatives,

carried out by the Secretary of Defense and others, that the reason we

were going to war in Iraq was because of the fact that Iraq possessed

chemical and biological weapons, so-called weapons of mass destruction.

And as the President put it, Iraq constituted a deep and ongoing threat

to the United States; and as Vice President Cheney put it, Iraq

constitutes an imminent threat to the United States because of these

so-called weapons of mass destruction, chemical and biological weapons,

which were alleged to be in Iraq in large numbers.

We have now come to learn quite clearly that that was wrong, that

there were no weapons of mass destruction, no chemical or biological

weapons in any significant amount held in Iraq by Saddam Hussein or by

anyone else. Many of us knew that. Many of us knew that 15 months ago

when this Congress voted on a resolution authorizing the administration

to carry out a war in Iraq. We knew it, we said so, and we voted

against that resolution.

Nevertheless, many others were taken in by what was coming out of the

White House and elsewhere within the administration. And they voted for

the war in Iraq, many of them, based on the belief that they were being

told

the truth about the possession of weapons of mass destruction by the

regime of Saddam Hussein. Again, now we know very clearly that that was

not the case and that the administration knew it was not the case.

Most recently we have the report from the outgoing head of the

American weapons inspection team in Iraq, David Kay. David Kay has now

completed his report as he retires from that position, and he has said

to us very, very clearly in that report that there were no weapons of

mass destruction in Iraq, no chemical or biological weapons; that the

biological and chemical weapons that were there, many of them were

destroyed in the first Gulf War in 1991 and the rest were discovered

and destroyed by the ongoing United Nations weapons inspection program.

We also have information from the Carnegie Endowment for

International Peace, which has done a very comprehensive study of the

issue of so-called weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. The Carnegie

Endowment for International Peace has set forth in a very detailed

report that there were no weapons of mass destruction held by the

Saddam Hussein regime not since the end of the first Gulf War, and

shortly thereafter they were destroyed as a result of weapons

inspection program, the U.N. weapons inspection program.

Again, another clear indication that the premise that was laid forth

by the administration to this Congress in order to get a resolution

passed authorizing the carrying out of that war was false. It was

fabricated. And this Congress was misled.

That leaves us with the very serious problem of finding out why that

was done and who was responsible for doing it. That is important

because of the situation we currently find ourselves in in Iraq,

including the situation we find ourselves in with regard to the war on

terrorism.

Our attention has been diverted away from al Qaeda and away from the

war on terrorism. And we find ourselves in Iraq in a war that has

already cost more than 500 American lives. The lives of more than 500

American servicemen and -women have been lost. Another more than 2,500

American servicemen and -women have been seriously wounded, all on the

basis of pretense.

Therefore, we must conduct a complete and thorough investigation as

to what happened, and that investigation must commence immediately.