Mr. Speaker, a question that should be asked here in

Congress but there is resounding silence from the majority because they

do not want to embarrass the Bush administration is how could the Bush

administration have been so wrong about Iraq? How could they have been

so wrong about the nonexistent weapons of mass destruction, about the

nonexistent mobile biological warfare laboratories, about the fantasy

that American troops would be greeted with flowers and there would be

an immediate transition to a robust democracy in Iraq,

so, therefore, there would be no need for a robust force post-war to

keep the peace, no need for body armor for the troops or armored

Humvees.

And, in fact, the administration fired the head of the Joint Chiefs

of Staff because he did not believe that stuff and said we would need

300,000 troops or more to maintain the order. Of course, he was right;

they were wrong. But how could they be so wrong?

I guess you could be wrong if you took your intelligence from a

convicted fugitive, bunko artist, bank embezzler, and that was the

chief source of intelligence and information for this administration.

Despite the fact that the CIA severed all ties with Mr. Chalabi 7 years

ago, despite the fact that the State Department rejected Mr. Chalabi

quite some time ago, the Bush principals involved in planning and

executing this war, particularly Mr. Wolfowitz who was one of Mr.

Chalabi's dearest friends and compatriots, believed Chalabi over their

own CIA, over the people at the State Department and in other

intelligence agencies.

They said, oh, no, Ahmad, he is telling us what is really going on in

Iraq. He is giving us good information.

In fact, Chalabi was invited to a meeting of the Defense Policy Board

9 days after September 11, and he said, hey, skip Afghanistan and go

into Iraq. Luckily, that initial advice from Mr. Chalabi was ignored.

But at the same time he began building the case that there would be no

guerrilla warfare and there would be quickly a new democratic

government with him as its chosen head and that showers of flowers

would come upon the troops and Mr. Chalabi and others.

He was close and met with Condoleezza Rice, Vice President Cheney and

Secretary Wolfowitz. Mr. Chalabi, despite the protestations of this

administration and all attempts to hide their ties to him, was provided

$39 million for his phoney intelligence by this administration,

$340,000 a month in a stipend that continued even after his lies

regarding weapons of mass destruction and the post-war environment in

Iraq. Even then the administration continued to give him $340,000 a

month.

He was flown into Iraq before the war was over by the Pentagon with

the idea that he was going to become the new anointed president and

leader. They had to quickly evacuate him when they found out that the

Iraqi people did not think as much about this convicted bunko artist,

fugitive, bank embezzler as did the CIA and others. They basically ran

him out of the country until the U.S. established control.

He is, of course, not repentant about the bad information he gave us.

He said,

He went on to say the U.S. intelligence agencies are at fault because

intelligence people are supposed to do a better job for their country

and did not do such a good job. That is Mr. Wolfowitz and others who

believed his lies were at fault, according to Mr. Chalabi, not he or

the others who lied to us, misled us, and caused death of American

troops and a lot of chaos in Iraq.

Now the director of DIA testified in March that all of the

intelligence he gave us was either fabricated or embellished. The

National Intelligence Council now says the intelligence was useless. Of

course, his money was cut off last month. But, unfortunately, he did

more damage than even that.

He has compromised the U.S. dramatically in the Middle East. As we

see today, a headline story in the New York Times,

which will mean

incredible problems for the United States in gathering intelligence in

that region where we already had scant resources.

Now the Bush administration, Mr. Wolfowitz and others, are trying to

pretend like they never met this guy before. They did not give him $36

million, they did not base their war strategy on his phony

intelligence, and they are not ``best buds.''

Well, you are judged by the friends you keep, and they cannot

separate themselves from this. It has caused tremendous harm to our

country, and those in the Bush administration who pushed Mr. Chalabi's

information should be held to account. It has caused deaths of American

troops.