Mr. Speaker, a large majority of Members of the United

States House of Representatives voted on October 14, 2002, to allow the

President to wage war, probably an extra-constitutional delegation of

authority. There was no direct declaration of war, yet it was

authorized under the War Powers Act by this body, so a great deal of

the responsibility lies here.

The rationale at the time that was frequently mentioned in the weeks

leading up to the vote was the potential for mushroom clouds, as

mentioned by Ms. Rice, Mr. Cheney, President Bush and others very

prominently just before the vote in the House, just before an election,

when Members felt great pressure. There was a lot of talk about the

delivery system of Saddam Hussein for his widely believed-to-be-

extensive arsenal of chemical and biological weapons and links to al

Qaeda.

Now, I attended the briefings, saw the thin gruel that was presented

to Members, and I certainly was not convinced, but I am sure many

others were, particularly with a picture of a UAV, which looked like

something that could not fly. It had aluminum patches riveted on it and

it clearly could not carry anything. It seemed the Air Force guy giving

the briefing did not think much of it either. Be that as it may, a

large majority of this House bought into that rationale and authorized

the President to go to war.

Subsequent to that, revelations about ``yellow cake'' and Niger and

uranium and the potential for nuclear threat was totally dispelled

shortly, well, actually internally in the administration before the

President used it in the State of the Union, but publicly after that.

So much had been dispelled that on February 5, 2003, I introduced a

resolution suggesting that Members of Congress had been misled, had not

had good information, and should reconsider this extraordinary

delegation of war-making authority to the President.

The Congress failed to act, and we know what proceeded from then.

But now, I would believe that a majority of the Members, not just

those of us who opposed the war or some who now feel that they should

not have supported the war, but a large majority, would want to have a

full investigation of how this happened. How did this all happen? Was

it the result of a massive failure of intelligence? If so, then why did

the President pin the highest civilian honor, the Medal of Honor, on

George Tenet, the head of the CIA who is now an expensive consultant

and living in luxury. If he was responsible, then maybe he should

suffer some consequences.

Well, that did not happen, but they want to blame the intelligence

agencies. Now, is it all the intelligence agencies? Is it one

intelligence agency? Is it because of total misinterpretation and

incompetence by the administration, or was it selective use, cherry-

picking of intelligence, or was it something even worse, deliberate

manipulation? We do not know. We simply do not know.

The Senate held one set of hearings on the failure of intelligence.

They promised that after the election they would hold yet another set

and reveal a report on the use of the intelligence. They are now

refusing to do that with an emboldened and enlarged Republican

membership. So we do not know. The American people do not know.

Something that is costing $1 billion a day, almost 1,800 American

lives, more than 10,000 wounded, and we do not know exactly why this

administration took us to war and under what auspices they took us to

war.

Now we have a memo, the so-called secret Downing Street Memo from

British intelligence, saying that as early as July 2002 that many of

these facts were known.

Now, a number of us were disturbed by that and we wrote to the

President on May 5. Mr. Speaker, 122 Members have now signed that

letter. The President has not even acknowledged the letter from 122

duly elected representatives of the United States House of

Representatives. He should answer that letter.

But, better still, the majority should stop stonewalling an

investigation. If this was all very innocent or if it was just the

incompetence of the intelligence agencies, then let us find those who

were responsible. If it is something else, let us find those who were

responsible. You should not stonewall this important information, so

that we can learn from our mistakes and move forward with more

confidence in the Congress and the administration when it might come to

future threats against the United States of America.

Now, yesterday, we were sent to the basement, led by the gentleman

from Michigan (Mr. Conyers), because we were told there were no rooms

available to hold a hearing on this memo and these issues.

Unfortunately, it turned out that all of the rooms in that vicinity,

which were much larger, were vacant, as were many other hearing rooms.

This Republican leadership should have a full and fair and

nonpartisan investigation of how America was led to war.