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

Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. Speaker, I think it is abundantly clear that the Vice

President has some explaining to do to the American people about what

happened and what his participation was in starting a war based on

false information. And there are two people I have met in the last 24

hours who I think are deserving of an explanation. One was a mother

whose son-in-law fortunately just got back from serving proudly in the

Army in Iraq, and she told me she is just incredibly happy that her

son-in-law came back healthy to the arms of his family and his wife,

but she is not happy that others have not and that the Federal

Government has not been candid about what happened in Iraq that got us

into this war with such devastating consequences. That mother-in-law is

entitled to an explanation from the Vice President of the United States

about why he made repeated statements that are inaccurate that started

a war that has cost over 1,000 American lives.

Today, on the plane flying out here from Seattle, which I go home

every weekend to Seattle, this morning sitting next to me was a major

heading for Iraq to do an inspection tour. And I just tell my colleague

that I feel so strongly that he and all of the 100,000-plus troops in

Iraq deserve an explanation from their Federal Government of what

happened here, and there are three questions I would like the Vice

President to answer.

Question number one, why on September 14, 2003, did the Vice

President say this: ``If we're 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 many

years but most especially on 9/11''? Vice President Cheney went to the

American people and told them that Iraq was responsible for the attack

on 9/11, and he wanted the Americans to believe that. And there was no

evidence to that then, as we have seen the intelligence. There was no

evidence at the time we took the vote, and there is no evidence today

that that statement was true. And a war was started based on a

statement that this Vice President made to Americans. They deserve an

explanation why this Vice President sold a bill of goods to the

American people, specifically saying that the folks had us under

assault but most especially 9/11?

And we know exactly what he was trying to do, which was create an

impression that we were going to attack the people who attacked us,

which we did in Afghanistan, and that is why we supported it with a

huge consensus in this body. The people who attacked us were based in

Afghanistan. But why did this Vice President then gild the lilly and

stretch the evidence and try to create this misimpression? We deserve

an answer to that question in this debate tomorrow night.

Second question for the Vice President: Why on August 26, 2002, did

the Vice President say, ``simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam

Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction''? We know now, and many of

us knew then from reading the intelligence, that there was massive

doubt about this issue, that the Vice President again gilded the lilly,

tried to say there was no doubt about this issue, and that simply was

not an accurate statement, and a war occurred as a result. And the

people serving then and our sons and daughters who might have to serve,

goodness knows how many years if this administration continues in

authority in Iraq, they deserve an answer why the Vice President said

that when it was false.

Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield further, let me

suggest why that is important. It is not a matter of culpability. That

is not the issue. But the fact of the matter is if we are going to have

a success, we have to have people in the administration, when you have

a failed policy, who are willing to evaluate it and change and decide

they had said some things that were not true and admit it and change.

But this administration refuses to accept failure. We continue to

have simply more of the same, and they want to say, well, we are at

least certain, we are at least sure, we are at least resolute.

The best description I had of that is resolution is a good thing,

certainty is a good thing, but it is not a good thing to have a firm

grip on the wheel if the car is heading over the cliff, and this

administration refuses repeatedly to recognize their errors so they can

change their policy.

I have a third question the Vice President owes Americans an answer

to. Why did the Vice President on March 16, 2003, say, and this is a

long quote, but I will get to the summation, ``And we believe he has in

fact reconstituted nuclear weapons.''

Why did this Vice President want to create this massive cloud of fear

in America about reconstituted nuclear weapons, when even the

intelligence reports at that time, and they are now in the public

domain, did not support that conclusion? I hate to think it was just to

sort of support their predetermined effort to start a war, but it is

very difficult to reach a different conclusion, when no one else was

saying that except the Vice President. And why, if we now find that is

inaccurate, why does the Vice President not just come clean and be

candid with the American people, so that we can show some willingness

to start a new policy in Iraq?

But they keep clinging to these falsehoods, clinging to these

misimpressions, clinging to this false information that they have

spewed out across America. And they have been successful in fooling

some Americans about the connection of Saddam with al Qaeda. Something

like 40 percent of Americans believe that, because they want to believe

their Vice President.

We all want to believe our Vice President, but the fact of the matter

is, as long as they cling to this, it will make it more difficult to be

a successful policy in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield further , I just

wanted to make one point in response to the statement of our friend the

gentleman from California (Mr. Cunningham).

One of the most telling things in the debate of the two presidential

candidates last night was where the President said that we had to

attack Iraq because the enemy attacked us, and his opponent challenged

that and said, ``Well, no, Osama bin Laden attacked us, not Iraq.'' The

President said, ``Of course, I know Osama bin Laden attacked us.''

But the problem is this administration and the Vice President has

been trying to create a misimpression from day one to tie Saddam

Hussein to the attacks of 9/11. I want to respond to the assertion of

the gentleman from California (Mr. Cunningham) to the contrary, to read

from the Commission report that says, and the language they used was as

categoric as you can get, there is ``no credible evidence,'' no

credible evidence, ``of a link between Iraq and the al Qaeda attacks

against the United States.''

They did not say that the evidence was suspect, they did not say the

evidence is de minimis, they did not say the evidence is debatable.

They said there is no, zero, zilch, nada, credible evidence of a

connection that this Vice President for the last 2 years has been

telling about, trying to create the impression that exists.

He needs to get up in that debate tomorrow, and the first thing he

needs to say is, ``You know what? We were wrong. Saddam Hussein for all

his faults and his terrible heinous, terrible things he did to Iraqis,

Iraq did not attack us on 9/11.'' He owes that statement to Americans.

I will be surprised

if we hear it, but I think it would be healthy if we did.