Mr. Speaker, last night in his State of the Union

address to the Nation, President Bush attempted to deride critics who

have called upon him to broaden the coalition and internationalize the

effort to provide security to Iraq and rebuild that war-torn nation.

The President said, ``This particular criticism is hard to explain to

our partners in Britain.'' And then he named 15 other countries and

cited 17 others.

I respect the contributions that these other nations have made in

Iraq, some of which like Spain, Italy and Japan have also lost sons to

the war in Iraq.

But let us not be disingenuous on the subject of our allies in Iraq.

With the exception of the United Kingdom, none are engaged in the

arduous combat-related work that confronts the 130,000 American troops

in Iraq who have endured over 500 dead and thousands of wounded among

their ranks. And none carry the financial burden that the American

taxpayer provides for the security of Iraq. President Bush should not

trivialize the need to create a genuine international coalition capable

of sharing the burdens of building a safe, secure and democratic Iraq.

I would like to have heard President Bush talk about how the United

States needs the help, support and expertise of the United Nations,

which has also paid in blood for our Iraq policy to ensure that the

democracy-building and election process in Iraq are inclusive and

successful. I would have liked to have heard President Bush talk about

how the international community could help in the prosecution of Saddam

Hussein so that his trial has credibility both inside and outside Iraq.

I would have liked to have heard just one word from President Bush that

indicates that he gets it, that he understands the United States must

work with allies, NATO and the United Nations in order to secure the

manpower and money necessary for a secure and stable Iraq. Certainly

those of us concerned about the resources of our Federal budget

understand this as we prepare to receive another supplemental spending

request for at least $50 billion sometime later this year. That is $50

billion in addition to the more than $120 billion we have already spent

so far on Iraq over the last year.

And, most of all, our troops on the ground understand this, including

the members and families of our National Guard and Reserves who have

served so valiantly, despite open-ended deployments and equipment

shortages. But President Bush simply does not get it and last night he

outlined how he will stay on the same go-it-alone course that has so

alienated the rest of the world, diminished the credibility of U.S.

foreign policy and intelligence, undermined international institutions,

and left us resented rather than respected.

I do not believe the United States needs a permission slip to act

when our security is genuinely threatened, but we now know that with

Iraq, our security was never in imminent danger. There were no weapons

of mass destruction. Instead, last night the President talked about

``weapons of mass destruction-related program activities,'' whatever

that means. There were no ties to Osama bin Laden, whose name the

President never even mentioned last night.

There was only a driving hunger to overthrow the Iraqi regime from

the moment this administration entered the White House.

The unilateral and arrogant way in which the Bush administration has

handled the Iraq war and its aftermath has resulted in a U.S.

occupation that has cost us dearly in terms of human life and precious

resources. It would have been nice if the President had even

acknowledged last night the 500 American soldiers who have sacrificed

their lives in Iraq and the thousands more who have been wounded.

Mr. Speaker, the exaggeration and the manipulation of intelligence

and our changing rationales for our involvement have diminished the

credibility and standing of the United States around the globe in ways

that I truly believe undermine our security. Now we have a moral

obligation to rebuild Iraq and to safeguard the Iraqi people, and we

can only do that successfully with the help and support of the United

Nations and the broader international community. It would have been

nice if President Bush had taken just a few seconds in an hour-long

speech to acknowledge that reality last night.