Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome my colleagues, the

gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. Abercrombie) and the gentleman from

Washington (Mr. Inslee). We have been here doing this so-called Special

Order for the past 8 months, discussing and reviewing developments in

the Middle East and, specifically, what has occurred over the course of

the past week involving Iraq, Afghanistan, and the war on terror.

As I had indicated earlier, there was a resolution that was

considered today by the House. There was a spirited debate, and I was

reviewing specific provisions for the benefit of the people that, at

least here on the East Coast, are up late and surfing the channels and

want to listen to the conversation that we have among ourselves. I had

indicated that as part of the resolution, there is a reference, and the

only reference, I find this interesting, to the issue of weapons of

mass destruction because, as we know, this was the premise that was put

forth by the President, the Vice President, and other administration

officials for the rationale for going to war. Of course, we have

discovered subsequently that the intelligence was faulty, that the

premise for the war, meaning stockpiles of nuclear, chemical, and

biological weapons simply did not exist, and the implication that was

put forth by the President and specifically the Vice President, because

he has reiterated it even recently, that there were links between

Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda, turned out to be without any substance at

all.

But the one allusion to the use of weapons of mass destruction is

contained in this resolution, and I will read it. It says, ``Whereas,

on March 16, 1988, Saddam Hussein's regime had unleashed weapons of

mass destruction against Kurdish citizens, killing nearly 5,000 of

them.''

Well, this is about a city in Iraq. That city is called Halabja. And

it is true that Saddam Hussein slaughtered some 5,000 Iraqi Kurds, men,

women, and children. The provision in the resolution that we did debate

today appears to suggest that this crime against humanity, and it is a

crime against humanity, provides some justification for the invasion of

Iraq 15 years later. The tragic truth is, and to our own shame, is that

we did nothing, nothing in 1988, in 1989, in 1990 about this crime,

this despicable act, this act of terrorism. We did not do anything

because under that Bush administration, Saddam was our ally, and many

of those currently serving in this Bush administration were key figures

during that moment in our history.

Our Secretary of Defense, Mr. Rumsfeld, was a special envoy to Saddam

Hussein. Even before his first visit to Baghdad in 1983, Iraq was

removed from the terrorist list, and after his full diplomatic

relations were restored and billions of dollars of loan guarantees were

provided to Saddam Hussein, the sale of dual-use technology for the

development of weapons of mass destruction was approved by the Reagan-

Bush administration.

I would suggest that no wonder, in the aftermath of the first Gulf

War, we learned that Iraq had an advanced nuclear weapons program

because, in reality, we helped to build it. And we let other countries

supply Saddam Hussein with American military equipment, and we even

shared highly sensitive satellite intelligence with Saddam Hussein.

Even though we knew that Saddam Hussein was using chemical weapons

against Iran, that Bush administration prevented the United Nations

from condemning Iraq.

The Vice President, this gentleman here, Mr. Cheney, was Secretary of

Defense for the first President Bush. The Secretary of State, Colin

Powell, served as both National Security Adviser and Chairman of the

Joint Chiefs of Staff. Well, according to a Congressional Research

Service report, not only did we support Saddam Hussein during Mr.

Cheney's and Mr. Powell's and Mr. Wolfowitz' time in service to that

Republican administration, but when the House and the Senate in 1989

and 1990 attempted to impose sanctions for the use of chemical weapons,

that Bush administration blocked it. They used their influence in

Congress to ensure that there were no sanctions imposed on Saddam

Hussein.

I fear that we are making the same mistakes now that they made back

then, the first President Bush and Richard Cheney and Colin Powell and

Paul Wolfowitz. Because like then, we are also today forging unholy

alliances in our war on terror.

For example, in Uzbekistan, we are supporting another dictator who,

according to our own State Department reports, heads an oppressive

regime that perpetrates gross violations of human rights and has more

than 5,000 political prisoners in custody today. The most recent,

notorious, was when this individual and this regime, through torture,

boiled in water a political prisoner. I am sure that conjures up

memories of Saddam Hussein.

And in Turkmenistan, we are allied with another Stalinist thug by the

name of Sherman Bashi who is creating a personality cult that rivals

that of Saddam Hussein. He has renamed the month of January after

himself and the month of June after his mother.

And this is who we are allying ourselves with in the war on terror,

just like we allied ourselves with Saddam Hussein back in the late

1980s. And, of course, we know the results.

So I would suggest to my friends and to those that are watching at

this late hour that we remember those lessons of history. And I

specifically would recommend that the Vice President, who constantly

refers to the fact that Saddam Hussein used chemical weapons against

his own people, remember that he was part of an administration that was

aware of that and did nothing back then, much to the chagrin of the

rest of the world and the United States House of Representatives and

Senate that served in this building and this institution back then.

And what happened? Did we encourage Saddam Hussein? I guess that is a

question we will never know. But we should remember the lessons of

Halabja, that city in Iraq, where chemical weapons were used against

Iraqi citizens by Saddam Hussein. Because I believe if we speak of

democracy and liberty, let us practice it.

And every time the President and the Vice President stand up and

proclaim that we are fighting this war on terror to promote democracy,

what about Uzbekistan? And what about Turkmenistan? What are we doing

there, allying ourselves with despots and tyrants and thugs that at

some future point could very well be the new Saddam Hussein?

Let us not ally ourselves with illegitimate heads of state if we are

sincere about the war on terror, who are truly terrorists who terrorize

their own people. That would be my position.

Mr. Speaker, if I could, clearly there is language in

the resolution that we considered here today that praises the troops.

But the reality is that the rhetoric does not match the action.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to welcome our friend,

the gentleman from Florida (Mr. Meek), as part of our conversation

tonight.

It is easy to indulge in rhetoric. It is easy to involve in a

resolution with laudatory words about the courage and the heroism and

the professionalism of the American military. It is just a little bit

more difficult to ensure that all of our veterans, from whatever

struggle, from whatever war, from wherever in terms of our history, are

delivered, for example, the health care that we promised.

And this administration has failed them. This administration, this

Vice President and the President of the United States, is failing them.

The talk is fine, and the actions are not matching the rhetoric.

As the commander-in-chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars recently

stated within the past 2 weeks, the budget submitted by the President

of the United States and the Vice President of the United States is a

sham and a disgrace. So, if this resolution is about the veterans, then

I dare say that should be there, support from the Vice-President and

the President to ensure that the funding source for veterans' health

care benefits in this country is mandatory and not discretionary. Stand

up and do the right thing by our veterans and just do not simply

indulge in rhetoric

Mr. Speaker, I think you make an excellent point, and I

see our colleague and friend the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Inslee)

standing up, and I am going to recognize him in a minute.

I heard the word today on the floor ``appeasement.'' I think it is

important for those that are watching to understand, and I think I

speak for every Democrat, appeasement is not part of our vocabulary

when it comes to the war on terrorism, absolutely. I think there was

only a single exception out of the entire body, but it was with one

exception, one vote, a unanimous authorization by this body and by the

U.S. Senate to authorize the attack against the Taliban and the al

Qaeda in Afghanistan, and we will never surrender to terrorism. We will

never indulge in appeasement of terrorism, but Mr. President and Mr.

Cheney, we insist on the truth. Never appeasement, but always the

truth.

What I find fascinating is in recent testimony in the United States

Senate, the CIA chief, Mr. Tenet, told a Senate committee that he had

privately intervened on several occasions to correct what he regarded

as public misstatements on intelligence by Vice-President Cheney and

others and that he would do so again. I would just make a simple

request of this administration and the Vice President. Just tell it

like it is. As David Kay, the weapons inspector, said recently in an

interview in The Guardian, a British publication, ``Come clean.'' Just

level with the people.

If you know, how many Saudis were implicated in the

attack on America on September 11?

Mr. Speaker, by the way, how many Iraqis were on that

plane?

One of you noted recently that the individual who was

responsible, the Pakistani who is responsible for the proliferation of

nuclear weapon technology to North Korea and Iran has been identified,

and what have we heard from this administration, this President and

this Vice-President about that? Nothing.